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HERITAGE AND MEDIA: A COVERAGE ANALYSIS OF MBIRE AND MUZARABANI DISTRICTS OF NORTHERN ZIMBABWE

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS IN CULTURE AND HERITAGE STUDIES DEGREE

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother Mrs. Rose Mashumba whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my foundation and to all those committed to preserve our heritage for future generation.

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I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr M. E. Sagiya, for his guidance, support and encouragement throughout this research. I am also sincerely thankful to my grandmother, Mrs Rose Mashumba , my mother Mrs Elizabeth Mashumba and my father Mr Disaster Masango, my siblings Fungai and Delight, my husband Mr Tony T Uchena and my friends Rutendo, Valeria, Kudzayi , Natasha and Tadiwa for their unwavering love, prayers, patience and moral support during my academic journey. Your encouragement and belief in me made the completion of this dissertation possible.

ABSTRACT

Heritage coverage in Zimbabwe's rural areas of Mbire and Muzarabani still gets pretty limited attention. It often gets sidelined by big political, economic, and social stories in the media. To look into how the media handles cultural heritage in those places, a study was done. Researchers checked out the effects of coverage or lack thereof on preserving heritage, boosting community awareness, shaping identity, and using heritage in education.This study was guided by the Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing Theory. For my research method, I used a mixed approach with both quantitative and qualitative parts. First off, the quantitative part looked at 30 articles picked on purpose. These were found in six Zimbabwean news sources: The Herald, ZBC, The Standard, New Zimbabwe and ZimLive, all between 2020 and 2024. The qualitative portion involved 15 selected individuals, including media folks, representatives from the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, traditional leaders, culture experts, and older community members, as well as academics. I gathered data through content analysis, semi-structured interviews, and group discussions. After collecting all the information, I used IBM SPSS Statistics and NVivo for analysis, then combined everything with a convergent joint display. From this, I learned that the media barely covers the cultural heritage of Mbire and Muzarabani in terms of both quantity and depth. Coverage relies mainly on official sources and is framed by policies and economics. This neglects community voices and the spiritual and cultural relevance of these heritages.So, the study showed that heritage talk was off-kilter, young people were not really involved, older folks were not passing down stories as much and communities felt less ownership over protecting their past. To fix this, experts suggest boosting heritage coverage in the media, getting NMMZ to work more formally with media groups, pushing for community-focused storytelling, and adding heritage journalism to the curriculum in places like MISA Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Media Commission, and Bindura University of Science Education.

Keywords: cultural heritage, media coverage, Mbire, Muzarabani, Zimbabwe

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

APPROVAL FORM i
RELEASE FORM ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
DECLARATION ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
DEDICATION iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v
ABSTRACT vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS vii
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES x
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Background to the Study 1
1.2 Purpose of the Study 2
1.3 Statement of the Problem 2
1.4 Research objectives 2
1.5 Research questions 2
1.6 Assumptions 3
1.7 Significance of the Study 3
1.7.1 Contribution to Heritage-Based Education 5.0 3
1.8 Delimitations of the Study 4
1.9 Limitations of the Research 4
1.10 Defination of Key Terms 4
1.11 Dissertation Outline 5
CHAPTER TWO 5
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 6
2.0 Introduction 6
2.1 Theoretical Framework 6
2.1.1 Agenda-Setting Theory 6
2.1.2 Framing Theory 7
2.2.1 Media as Cultural Intermediaries: Roles and Functions 8
2.2.2 Media and Heritage Preservation: International Perspectives 8
2.2.3 Media's Role in Shaping Public Perceptions of Cultural Heritage 9
2.2.4 Challenges Facing Media Institutions in Heritage Reporting 9

2.2.4.1 Resource and Capacity Constraints 9
2.2.4.2 Access and Logistical Barriers 10
2.2.4.3 Technological and Digital Challenges 10
2.2.5 Heritage and Media in the African Context 11
2.2.6 Mbire and Muzarabani Districts: Heritage and Media Contexts 11
2.2.7 Research Gap Analysis 12
2.2.8 Chapter Summary 12
CHAPTER THREE 13
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 13
3.0 Introduction 13
3.1 Research Philosophy 13
3.2 Research Approach 13
3.3 Research Design 13
3.4 Research Population and Sampling 14
3.4.1 Target Population 14
3.4.2 Sample Size 14
3.4.3 Sampling Procedures 15
3.5.1 Content Analysis Coding Instrument 15
3.5.2 Semi-structured Interview Guide 16
3.5.3 Focus Group Discussion Guide 16
3.6 Data Collection Procedures 16
3.7 Reliability and Validity 17
3.8 Data Analysis 17
3.9 Ethical Considerations 18
3.10 Chapter Summary 18
CHAPTER FOUR 18
DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION 18
4.0 Introduction 18
4.1 Temporal Distribution of Heritage Coverage (2020–2024) 19
4.2 Extent and Nature of Media Coverage of Heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts 20
4.2.1 Coverage Quantity and District Prominence 20
4.2.2 Types of Heritage Covered 25
4.2.3 Thematic Framing of Heritage Coverage 26
4.2.4 Source Attribution Patterns 28

4.3 The Role of Media in Shaping Public Perceptions and Awareness of Cultural Heritage 30
4.3.1 Media as Awareness Catalyst: Positive Experiences 30
4.3.2 Framing Effects on Community Heritage Perceptions 31
4.3.3 Media Influence on Youth Heritage Engagement 32
4.4 Challenges and Opportunities in Media Coverage of Heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani 33
4.4.1 Challenges in Heritage Media Coverage 33
4.4.2 Opportunities for Improved Heritage Coverage 34
4.5 Heritage-Based Education Through Media Coverage 35
4.5.1 Media as Heritage Education Platform: Current Limitations 35
4.5.2 Heritage 5.0 and the Educational Potential of Media Coverage 35
4.5.3 Community-Led Educational Media: Emerging Practices 36
4.6 Integration: Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings 36
4.7 Discussion 38
4.8 Chapter Summary 39
CHAPTER FIVE 40
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 40
5.0 Introduction 40
5.1 Summary of the Study and Findings 40
5.1.1 Extent and Nature of Media Coverage of Heritage Resources in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts 41
5.1.2 Role of Media in Shaping Public Perceptions and Awareness of Cultural Heritage 41
5.1.3 Challenges and Opportunities in Media Coverage of Heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani 42
5.1.4 Promotion of Heritage-Based Education Through Media Coverage 42
5.2 Implications 43
5.2.1 Theoretical Implications 43
5.2.2 Practical Implications 43
5.3 Conclusions 43
5.4 Recommendations 44
5.5 Areas for Further Research 46
REFERENCES 47
APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS 51
APPENDIX 2: LIST OF MEDIA ARTICLES 58

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 2.1 Agenda Setting Theory 7

Table 3.1 Sample Size Distribution 15

Table 4.1 Distribution of Sampled Media Texts by Outlet, Ownership and Content Type (n = 30) 18

Table 4.2 Annual Distribution of Sampled Media Texts (n = 30) 19

Table 4.3 Heritage Centrality in Media Texts (n = 30) 20

Table 4.4 Table 4.4: District-Level Coverage Metrics (n = 30) 21

Figure 4.3a Article containing a heritage-related photographs (The Herald, 2021). 22

Figure 4.3b Article containing a heritage-related photographs (NewsDay, 2022). 23

Table 4.5 Types of Heritage Featured in Sampled Media Texts (n = 30; multiple responses permitted) ... 25

Table 4.6 Thematic Framing Distribution in Sampled Media Texts (n = 30) 26

Table 4.8 Source Attribution in Sampled Media Texts (n = 30) 28

Table 4.9 Community Representation and Digital Dimensions in Sampled Texts (n = 30) 28

Table 4.10 Summary of Major Challenge Themes in Heritage Media Coverage (Derived from Thematic Analysis, n = 15 Participants) 33

Table 4.11 Summary of Opportunity Themes for Improved Heritage Coverage (Derived from Thematic Analysis, n = 15 Participants) 34

Table 4.12 Joint Display — Convergence and Divergence of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings 36

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Heritage, encompassing tangible assets (monuments, artifacts, natural features) and intangible attributes (customs, traditions, folklore), plays a vital role in preserving cultural identity and continuity while also contributing to socio-economic development through tourism and education (UNESCO, 2017; Smith, 2006). In Zimbabwe, a country rich in archaeological, historical, and cultural heritage, the visibility and interpretation of this heritage depend largely on media communication. The media acts as a two-pronged tool serving as both an interface and mediator that can either bring heritage to light or render it invisible depending on story selection, discourse creation, and framing of cultural narratives (Ndoro & Pwiti, 2001). However, Zimbabwean news media have traditionally focused on political and economic events, leaving culture and heritage largely marginalized, especially in rural areas (Mpofu, 2016). Two such areas are Mbire and Muzarabani Districts. Mbire holds immense cultural significance as the ancestral home of the Korekore and Doma ethnic groups, with archaeological evidence pointing to early civilizations (Beach, 1998). Muzarabani features numerous sacred landscapes and traditions rooted in indigenous knowledge. Despite this rich living heritage, little effort has been made to represent these resources in national media channels, raising questions of cultural marginalization. Media representation theorists argue that media are not mere channels but active participants in the construction of culture (Smith, 2006; Hall, 1997). In Zimbabwe, where heritage remains a contested field, media coverage is especially critical. Therefore, this research project intends to examine how heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani is presented by Zimbabwean media houses analyzing the amount and manner of coverage, and the impact on heritage visibility and preservation. Focusing on these two often-overlooked rural districts, the significance of linking heritage and media becomes evident.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine how media coverage represents and promotes heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts of Northern Zimbabwe.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Heritage issues in the districts of Mbire and Muzarabani have received inadequate attention in the Zimbabwean mainstream media, and this is largely due to the dominance of certain discourses in this medium. These districts feature many significant cultural, archaeological, and other types of heritage. Nevertheless, there seems to be little awareness of these issues and their promotion through the media. Lack of attention to the significance of these heritage resources poses serious problems for communities, including neglect, misinterpretation, or destruction of valuable heritage sites. It is therefore essential to examine heritage coverage in these districts and critically evaluate the media's failure to address it.

1.4 Research Objectives

I. To examine the extent and nature of media coverage given to heritage resources in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts.
II. To analyze the role of media in shaping public perceptions and awareness of cultural heritage.
III. To evaluate the challenges and opportunities faced by media institutions in reporting heritage issues in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts.
IV. To explore how heritage-based education can be promoted through media coverage for the preservation and transmission of cultural values.

1.5 Research Questions

I. How is heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts represented in Zimbabwean media coverage?
II. What role does media play in shaping public awareness and perceptions of heritage?
III. What challenges and opportunities exist in the media’s coverage of heritage issues in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts?
IV. To what extent does media coverage highlight the cultural, historical and educational value of heritage sites in Mbire and Muzarabani?

1.6 Assumptions

1. The assumption here is that there is equal and equitable coverage of the heritage issue in the Mbire and Muzarabani Districts by the media analyzed herein, which can then be evaluated in terms of its depth, accuracy, and inclusiveness.

2. Community members in the Mbire and Muzarabani Districts have some level of appreciation of the media's importance in heritage awareness and education, even if the extent to which they do so varies.

1.7 Significance of the study

The research is very important in highlighting the importance of media in the dissemination, maintenance, and preservation of heritage in the Mbire and Muzarabani Districts of Zimbabwe. The analysis of how heritage issues are portrayed in media helps in determining if the heritage issues in these areas have been sufficiently documented, recorded, and made known to the people of these districts as well as to the wider public audience. It is important to note that the heritage aspect of a nation should be given equal priority as other news topics such as politics and economics. Media plays a vital role in ensuring that heritage receives its rightful place in any nation.

Moreover, the research is important in heritage education and policy making as it provides information on how heritage should be accorded its deserved position in media. This way, the research is also of academic value in contributing to the relationship between media studies and heritage studies in Zimbabwe since these districts are usually marginalized. In addition, the findings from the research will help local communities to embrace their cultural practices and promote heritage tourism and development in the region.

1.7.1 Contribution to Heritage-Based Education 5.0

Heritage-Based Education 5.0 integrates cultural heritage with modern tech and business. It turns Mbire and Muzarabani Districts into spots where traditions inspire creativity and growth (Smith, 2006; UNESCO, 2015). This setup pumps local crafts, weaving, and music into both national and global scenes, all boosted by design thinking and biz smarts (Mpofu, 2018; Moyo, 2017). They also leverage digital technology like archiving, Virtual Reality and Geographic Information System not just to safeguard heritages but to birth new industries like Information technology services and virtual tours (Harrison, 2013; Hall, 2017). Plus, teaming up schools, universities,

communities and companies sparks a range of stuff from cultural goods and tasty eats to green fabrics and boosted tourism. Equipping locals with intellectual property rights with knowledge and technology know hows lets them sell locally and export too. So, these districts could well set the tone for blending age-old traditions with cutting-edge technology for steady growth.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The research is limited to media representations (print, radio, online) of heritage in Zimbabwe's Mbire and Muzarabani districts within a specific timeframe, excluding other districts, national perspectives, ethnographic studies, and community-based heritage management efforts.

1.9 Limitations of the research

The research has limitations: heritage coverage may be incomplete in mass media; findings from only two districts (Mbire and Muzarabani) limit generalization; time and resource constraints exist; and potential reporting bias could affect results. However, these limitations do not undermine the study's value.

1.10 Definition of key terms

Heritage- refers to the cultural, historical and natural assets inherited from the past, which communities value and preserve for present and future generations (Smith, 2006). It includes both tangible elements such as monuments, artifacts and landscape and intangible aspects such as traditions, music, language and rituals that express a community's identity and values (UNESCO, 2003).

Media- These are the channels or tools of communication that facilitate the transmission of information, ideas and culture to the public. They include traditional forms such as newspaper, radio and television as well as digital and social media platform that allow for interactive communication (McQuail, 2010).

Media Coverage- refers to the extent and manner in which events, issues or topics are reported by various media outlets. It involves how journalist select, frame and present stories to the public, influencing perceptions and awareness (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014). In heritage studies, media coverage can shape how cultural and historical sites or practices are represented and understood by society.

1.11 Dissertation Outline

The study discusses how the media reports on heritage-related matters in Mbire and Muzarambani Districts. The first chapter of this dissertation discusses the introduction to the study, including the background, problem statement, objectives, and justification and scope of the study. The second chapter discusses the review of literature that concerns heritage, representation in media, and cultural communication. The third chapter discusses methodology, including the design, location, data collection methods, and ethical considerations of the study. The fourth chapter discusses findings, results, discussion of data and information collected through the use of media and respondents. Finally, the fifth chapter discusses conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter offered an introduction and background of the current research study. The pr
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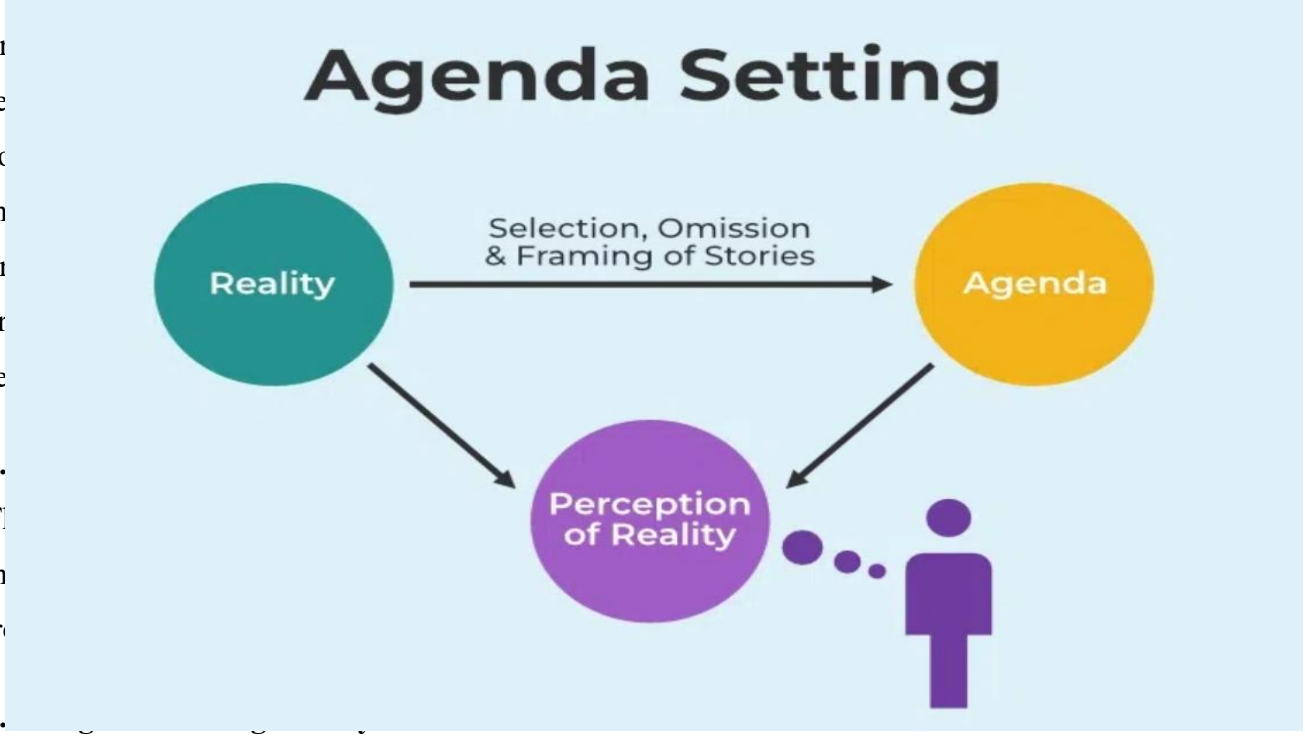

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The theory of Agenda-Setting, developed by McCombs and Shaw in 1972, claims that although the media is ineffective in telling people what to think, they can tell what to think about. In his subsequent development of the original hypothesis, McCombs (2004) used abundant empirical evidence to prove that the prominence of an issue in media content is linked to its importance in public perception. If translated into the context of cultural heritage, the theory of agenda-setting implies that the frequency, prominence, and framing of media content on cultural heritage shape how people prioritize the protection of heritage sites.

Figure 2.1 Agenda Setting Theory (GeeksforGeeks, 2025)

Empirical evidence shows the media play a big role in shaping how we view heritage. According to Jin (2022), increased media coverage for heritage sites results in more public visits, stronger community pride, and a higher priority for preservation by the government. On the flip side, Kalisdha (2023) points out that places with less media exposure can go unnoticed, even if they hold tones of cultural value.

To make matters worse, Murimbika and Moyo (2008) warn that things get skewed when the media focuses on stories driven by commercial or political motives rather than real historical worth. Furthermore, second-level or attribute agenda-setting (McCombs et al., 1997) suggests that the media do not just tell us what to think about but also shape how we perceive those topics. So for heritage sites, the way they are portrayed impacts our views on their importance, the risks they face, and the values they represent.

This theory applies to current research in Zimbabwe's Mbire and Muzarabani Districts. It helps analyze how news media pick which heritage sites to report on and how that coverage shapes public awareness and government priorities. Researchers can look at both the amount of coverage and what aspects are emphasized – like tourism value, spiritual significance, or protection status. This shows how the media builds a picture of the heritage landscape that often gets overlooked. The study is backed by McCombs and Shaw (1972) and McCombs et al. (1997).

2.1.2 Framing Theory

Framing theory, developed by Goffman (1974) and adapted for media studies by Entman (1993), looks at how the framing of information affects the audiences' response. According to Entman (1993:52), frames can be defined as interpretive frameworks that "'select certain aspects of the

perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.'" Frames in heritage journalism will decide how heritage should be represented as a source of income, an identity indicator, an education method, or as something that is on the verge of extinction.

The choice to use two different theoretical perspectives, namely Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing Theory, is strategic and based on the methodological merits of triangulation. According to Bryman (2022), the use of theory triangulation enhances the level of analysis by providing researchers an opportunity to analyze the phenomenon from a number of alternative perspectives. Whereas Agenda-Setting Theory seeks to answer the question of which heritage narratives will be covered and their frequency, Framing Theory explores the process through which such narratives will be framed as well as their meaning.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2.1 Media as Cultural Intermediaries: Roles and Functions

The mass media print, broadcast, and digital are key in creating, sharing, and challenging cultural meanings, shaping our shared social reality (Thompson, 1995) and molding understanding as transformers, not just passive messengers (Silverstone, 1999). They act as gatekeepers and agenda setters (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), choosing which heritage sites and stories get the spotlight (Eck, 2014). Plus, they educate by spreading heritage knowledge to various audiences (Clack & Brittain, 2007; Evens & Hauttekeete, 2011) and shape public opinion through their specific viewpoints (Hall, 1997), affecting how we see heritage value, risk, and protection (Brettschneider, 1994; Geracoulis, 2024). Also, thanks to new media technology, there is now room for direct community involvement, like user-generated content, social media campaigns and digital archiving, shifting the conversation from top-down to community-driven dialogues (Giaccardi, 2012; Silberman & Purser, 2012).

2.2.2 Media and Heritage Preservation: International Perspectives

Research into how media affects cultural heritage preservation shows some positives but raises concerns too. On one hand, media helps spread awareness, gather resources, and even digitally rebuild heritage sites (Eck, 2014; Chamberlain, 2019; Jin, 2022). Social media is great for raising awareness about preserving culture (Rochayanti et al., 2019; Doulamis et al., 2020). But there is a

downside. Media sometimes turns cultural practices into tourist attractions, which trivializes their true meaning (Smith, 2006). Plus, the "digital divide" means that lesser-known sites get left out in favor of popular ones (Navarrete, 2009). In places like Mbire and Muzarabani districts, poor media infrastructure leaves their heritage

2.2.3 Media's Role in Shaping Public Perceptions of Cultural Heritage

Media plays a big role in shaping how communities see cultural heritage. It helps form what people think is legit and real (Hall, 1997; Thompson, 1995). Take, for example, how sources like archaeology get highlighted more than say, grandma's stories. This can create an image of heritage that feels more official but less personal (Geracoulis, 2024; Ndoro, 2001; Pwiti, 1997). Media also affects emotions. It can inspire feelings of pride and closeness or leave us feeling detached (Brettschneider, 1994; Adams & Roscigno, 2012). If done right, we connect deeply. Otherwise, heritage can just seem unimportant (Samy, 2022). Plus, how threats are shown matters too. High-profile coverage, like when ISIS destroyed things, can rally people (Chamberlain, 2019). Yet too many warnings without any happy endings can backfire. People might start to feel helpless or stop caring (Geracoulis, 2024).Last, the media decides who owns heritage and should protect it (Anderson, 1991; Smith, 2006). Do sites belong to everyone, the state, or local groups? How this is shown shapes who wants to pitch in.

Pluralistic representations encourage cross-group understanding, while stereotyped or prejudiced coverage perpetuates biases (Adams & Roscigno, 2012; Erbaş, 2013). Social media enables more pluralistic self-representation (Rochayanti et al., 2019), but algorithms risk segregating heritage into isolated communities (Gainous & Wagner, 2023).

2.2.4 Challenges Facing Media Institutions in Heritage Reporting

Heritage journalism presents unique challenges different from those faced by journalism in general due to the particular demands of heritage in terms of knowledge, lengthy time scales, and politics. According to Murimbika and Moyo (2008), a closer analysis would identify various challenges facing media organizations when reporting on issues of heritage.

2.2.4.1 Resource and Capacity Constraints

According to Murimbika & Moyo (2008), media organizations, especially in developing countries, usually do not have heritage reporters or journalists equipped with relevant heritage information.

Evens & Hauttekeete (2011) argue that ordinary journalists covering heritage stories might not possess sufficient knowledge of archaeology, anthropology, or conservation to understand the real significance of heritage stories and the problems of preservation or to critically examine claims made by experts. Such deficiencies can lead to shallow reporting focused on spectacular elements of stories rather than their cultural context, unquestioning reliance on sources of official information, or erroneous perceptions regarding the importance of heritage stories and methods of preservation.

Kalisdha (2023) argues that these capacity problems become even more pronounced due to funding issues. Heritage stories generally do not have characteristics valued commercially by media companies – newsworthiness, conflict, and immediacy. Geracoulis (2024) states that heritage features involving significant amounts of research, trips to distant locations, and the elaboration of stories are difficult to compete with other cheaper and quicker types of content production. According to Murimbika & Moyo (2008), as a consequence of all these problems, heritage reporting is infrequent, triggered by events, and limited to major heritage sites.

2.2.4.2 Access and Logistical Barriers

In most cases, heritage assets in such rural areas as Mbire and Muzarabani districts are far from urban centers, under-researched, and lacking any institutional support structure for easy accessibility through media platforms (Chirikure & Pwiti, 2008). For journalists in such scenarios, they have to overcome a number of logistic obstacles such as lack of transport, lack of media infrastructure, and identification of suitable local contacts (Evens & Hauttekeete, 2011). Some heritage assets managed by poorly funded organizations do not have communications professionals who can work with media organizations.

Another set of issues involves cultural and spiritual protocols of some heritage assets that could limit access by journalists in their documentation process. Certain groups have certain taboos or restrictions on visiting heritage assets during certain periods and even certain activities at such assets (Christen, 2012; Makuvaza, 2008). It is necessary to strike a balance between ethical journalism practices and indigenous cultures without violating community rights.

2.2.4.3 Technological and Digital Challenges

Digital technologies allow for cool stuff like multimedia reporting and community involvement, but come with problems too. We struggle with preserving digital content, safeguarding IP rights,

making sure things are legit, coping with cultural misappropriation, and preventing the exploitation of holy sites (Evens & Hauttekeete, 2011; Wagner & de Clippele, 2023). Also, the quick, shareable nature of online media fights against detailed historical talks (Jin, 2022). Social media focuses on emotion, which often leads to spreadin' rumors rather than educate (Gainous & Wagner, 2023). This results in phony heritage stories going viral and stayin' uncorrected

2.2.5 Heritage and Media in the African Context

Studies in African heritage and media show how colonialism, nation-building, and globalization have shaped things over time. During colonisation, officials favoured stone buildings over local wisdom (Ndoro & Pwiti, 1997). This bias still shows up in heritage and media today. Even though people try to fix this since colonial times ended, lots of museums and other important places are still stuck in old ways due to lack of funds and other problems (Mahachi & Ndoro, 1997; Murimbika & Moyo, 2008).

The international press typically highlights Africa's struggles and needs help from others, glossing over the wins achieved locally (Chamberlain, 2019). Looking at Zimbabwe, most reports only pop up during specific events or for tourism purposes. Plus, they barely cover rural areas like Mbire and Muzarabani (Makuvaza, 2010; Murimbika & Moyo, 2008). There's hope though, because new measures in media law now need at least 75% local content. Also, UNESCO projects promote things like the Mbende Jerusarema dance and mbira tunes, showing progress in valuing and protecting heritage (Government of Zimbabwe, 202

2.2.6 Mbire and Muzarabani Districts: Heritage and Media Contexts

The Mbire and Muzarabani districts in Zimbabwe's Zambezi Valley are loaded with cultural heritage, like Iron Age stuff and old trade paths. They have got oral traditions, healing practices, and spiritual customs too (Makuvaza, 2008). Yet, these areas barely get any media love because of their remote location, bad roads, and extreme poverty (Jegatheesan, 2015; UNESCO, 2003). Due to this lack of coverage, their heritage is not seen as important in policy making. Also, there is no cash for protection, which means young folks do not connect with it. Instead, they look up to urban pop culture. Studies back this up. For instance, Murimbika and Moyo (2008) checked out newspaper articles from 2010 to 2015 and noticed that stories on heritage were scarce, focused on events, and centered on big tourist spots not what is closer to home. Tan and Ahmad Ishak (2019) looked at two Malaysian Newspapers from 2008 to 2018 and found that reporting on heritage

conservation was basic, focusing more on institutions than community stories. They also noted that the photos were picked pretty selectively. This study, along with others, shows that media coverage of cultural heritage is not deep enough and tends to be surface-level. The way the info is presented really shapes what the public thinks. Plus, digital media could be used much more to share these stories. For heritage media to be effective, we need stronger support from institutions, help from the government, and input from communities.

2.2.7 Research Gap Analysis

Even though there has been substantial scholarly work done in the area of media and cultural heritage, there are notable areas that need to be addressed. There is insufficient information concerning heritage media reporting in rural Africa. The majority of researchers have concentrated on urban and monumental sites rather than dispersed rural heritage such as in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts in Zimbabwe. There has been insufficient scholarly effort in the systematic study of what kind of heritage is featured in the media, the kind of stories that prevail and those that do not, especially quantitative media analysis studies conducted in African countries. Media effects on perception of heritage have mainly been western-based and lack consideration of situations where there is no heritage infrastructure and media reach. The problems facing media people covering heritage in particular locations are understudied, and the relationship between heritage education and media coverage is inadequately theorized.

2.2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has offered an analysis of the relevant literature. The review combined global, continental, and local research, pointing out the key role played by media as an important yet often underutilized approach to preserving heritage, educating people about it, and transmitting culture. Even though media have considerable power to bring attention to heritage issues, influence people's perceptions, and facilitate heritage preservation activities, there are considerable obstacles to this effort. These include limited resources, accessibility issues, economic factors, and insufficient skills that hinder effective media coverage of heritage issues. This chapter revealed several gaps in the existing research on rural media coverage of heritage issues, especially within the local context of Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The chapter discusses the research methodology applied in conducting the research on the coverage of media heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts in northern Zimbabwe. The philosophy, approach, design, population, sample, tools used for data collection and analysis, among other methodological aspects, are discussed in relation to the research objectives outlined in Chapter One.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The study adopts an interpretive-pragmatist philosophy approach for its theoretical foundation. It is important that the interpretivist element of the philosophy be included because the concept of heritage involves construction, framing, and reception of meaning: it is important to examine how different actors like journalists, editors, local communities, and heritage professionals make sense of heritage in a particular context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Smith, 2006). The pragmatist aspect of the philosophy is important due to the need to use both quantitative methods to assess trends and qualitative analysis of experiences within organizations and communities involved. As Morgan (2014) suggests, the pragmatist approach enables researchers to break away from paradigms to adopt methods that solve their problems.

3.2 Research Approach

This study adopts an interdisciplinary research method by combining the quantitative content analysis method and the qualitative research method. The quantitative research method is employed to systematically record the prevalence and occurrence rates of coverage in relation to heritage. The qualitative research method sheds light on the processes of how institutions, journalism and communities generate and react to these types of coverage (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). These two methods complement each other to offset weaknesses of each other.

3.3 Research Design

The research methodology employed in the study involves the use of the convergent parallel mixed methods design within the framework of the multiple case studies design. In the convergent parallel design, the data collection process using both quantitative and qualitative approaches take

place at once from different sources. This is later followed by analysis and finally integration of the results into one to derive the final conclusion (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The convergent parallel design approach is chosen since it addresses both the depth and breadth aspects of the objectives of the research. The multiple case studies design, involving Mbire and Muzarabani as the bounded cases, is significant in that Yin (2018) suggests that the case study is the best research approach when the researcher intends to understand social phenomena.

3.4 Research Population and Sampling

3.4.1 Target Population

The target population consisted of three constituent groups: (i) media content of select Zimbabwe print, broadcast, and digital media covering the two districts within the prescribed time period; (ii) media professionals, including reporters, correspondents, and editors whose areas of assignment include northern Zimbabwean districts; and (iii) heritage and community stakeholders of Mbire and Muzarabani, including NMMZ Heritage Officers, chiefs, spirit mediums, cultural workers, and informed community members.

These three groups were identified in the following manner. Media content was systematically sourced using relevant keywords, for example ‘Mbire,’ ‘Muzarabani,’ and ‘cultural heritage’ through the search of select media archives both online and offline. Media professionals were sourced using institutional contact points within select media outlets, whereas heritage officers were sourced using district records maintained by NMMZ. Community stakeholders were sourced using community liaison officers and chain-referral technique (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981).

3.4.2 Sample Size

In regard to the content analysis strand, 60 media articles were systematically obtained from the selected sources, which were produced or aired during the period from January 2020 through December 2024. Specifically, 12 media articles were selected from five media sources, namely: The Herald, The Sunday Mail, The Standard, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) online news bulletins, and New Zimbabwe.com. The five media sources have been chosen because of their wide national distribution, accessibility through archives, and consistent coverage of matters relating to northern Zimbabwe (Murimbika and Moyo, 2008). The systematic sampling process ensured that five articles were obtained from each source evenly distributed over the five

years (January 2020-December 2024). As mentioned by Neuendorf (2017), at least 30 articles should be obtained for reliable quantitative content analysis. In regard to the human participant strand, 15 participants were obtained as shown below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Sample Size Distribution

Category of Participants	Institution / Affiliation	Number
Journalists / Correspondents	State-owned and private media outlets	4
Editors and Programme Producers	Selected print, broadcast and digital outlets	4
Heritage Officers	National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ)	2
Traditional Leaders / Spirit Mediums	Mbire and Muzarabani Districts	1
Community Elders and Cultural Practitioners	Mbire and Muzarabani Districts	1
Key Informants (Ministry, UNESCO, academics)	Various institutions	3
TOTAL		15

3.4.3 Sampling Procedures

To analyze content, I picked some media groups The Herald, The Standard, ZBC, New Zimbabwe, and Zim Live – based on their scope and what was available in their archives. I used keywords like "Mbire," "Muzarabani," "cultural heritage," "oral tradition," "sacred sites," "Korekore," and "Doma" for systematic sampling. For human input, I aimed at media pros, heritage officers, and community reps through institutional contacts, NMMZ, and liaison officers. Data collection continued until we hit theoretical saturation, following Biernacki and Waldorf's 1981 guidelines.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

3.5.1 Content Analysis Coding Instrument

There were three main instruments that were used. Firstly, structured content analysis coding instrument that measured publication attributes, quantitative measures of the amount of coverage, nature of heritage being covered, themes of coverage, source of information, and representation of community for each sampled media text (Krippendorff, 2018). Pilot testing of twenty media texts independently coded by another researcher produced a value of Cohen's Kappa of 0.82, which means high intercoder reliability (Landis and Koch, 1977). Secondly, a semi-structured interview guide developed according to the four objectives of this research project was used in interviews conducted with media practitioners, heritage officials, and key informant interviews that took between 45–60 minutes and recorded after obtaining consent. Thirdly, focus group discussion

guide used to interview community residents in each district generated group data about perception of media on heritage and community experiences.

3.5.2 Semi-structured Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide was developed to gather in-depth qualitative data from media practitioners, heritage officers, and community stakeholders. The guide was organized around the study's central research objectives and piloted with two participants before full deployment to ensure clarity and relevance (Bryman, 2022). Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes.

3.5.3 Focus Group Discussion Guide

The guide for conducting the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was developed to enable discussions among community elders and cultural practitioners in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts. The FGD helped create collective insights on community traditions related to heritage practice and media interactions and created a rich contextual data that cannot be easily gained using other research methods such as interviews. Each FGD consisted of six to eight people conducted in the local language, guided by the community facilitator.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The process of data collection was done in three different phases for ten weeks. The first phase involved content analysis, whereby there was systematic search and coding of media texts from outlet archives. The second phase comprised interviews with media practitioners, heritage officers, and informants, which were done within the respondents' work environment in Harare and Bindura. The third phase comprised community field research, whereby focus group discussions and interviews were done with traditional leaders and cultural practitioners in Mbire and Muzarabani. The procedures of gaining entry into the community included the official meeting with district administrators as well as obtaining permission from traditional leaders before conducting the field research. Transcripts were typed immediately after each interview within 48 hours, and field notes were written throughout.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

Reliability of the quantitative component was measured by means of intercoder reliability test (Cohen's Kappa = 0.82), tests of within-coder consistency using 15% of data, and use of operational definitions of coding categories (Neuendorf, 2017). Reliability of the qualitative component was achieved by means of consistent application of interviewing guide and focus groups guide, verbatim transcribing, and reflective journal keeping during fieldwork (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Content validity was ensured through reviews by the researcher's supervisor and the NMMZ heritage specialist, whose comments led to revision of all research instruments used. Construct validity was reached due to coding categories and interview/focus group themes being aligned with all four theoretical constructs used – agenda-setting theory, framing theory, cultivation theory, and cultural transmission theory. Data triangulation by combining content analysis results, interviews, and focus group discussions enhanced internal validity. Thick description of research context and sampling strategy makes generalization of findings applicable to other similar cases (Geertz, 1973).

3.8 Data Analysis

Data obtained through the quantitative content analysis was transferred into IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27), where frequency, percentage, and cross-tabulation were carried out to determine the distribution of the variables such as outlets, heritage types, frames, and districts. Chi-square test was then employed to find out if any significant difference exists between outlets and frames. In this study, the significance level for the chi-square test is $p < 0.05$ (Field, 2018). In contrast, qualitative data gathered from interviews and focus groups underwent thematic analysis using NVivo (Version 14) according to six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). For this thematic analysis, deductive-inductive coding approach was used. The first one was deductive because codes stemmed from the four theoretical perspectives. In turn, inductive codes were identified from data collected from the participants (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Convergence Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Data. Through the convergence process of data, a joint display was created, wherein a comparison between statistical data and qualitative data was made to come up with a conclusion (Creamer, 2018).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was granted by the relevant Faculty Research Committee at Bindura University of Science Education, in accordance with the university's postgraduate research ethics requirements before data collection began.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodological approach that was used in the investigation of the topic of heritage and media portrayal in the districts of Mbire and Muzarabani. Based on interpretivist-pragmatism philosophy and involving convergent parallel mixed methodology design as well as multiple case studies approach, the research has involved the use of content analysis of 30 media texts and qualitative analysis of 14 participants selected purposely from the three different groups. The three research tools used were validated through expert evaluation, theoretical construct mapping, and interrater reliability tests. SPSS and NVivo were used in data analysis in conjunction with joint display approach. Ethical issues have been adhered to throughout the study. The next chapter will discuss the results of this study based on the research objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents, analyze, and discuss the findings obtained through the research methodology used. The chapter integrate findings collected through a two-strand methodological approach. The first strand includes a systematic content analysis of 30 purposefully and systematically selected media texts that have been published or aired from January 2020 until December 2024. The second strand involves collecting qualitative data through 15 purposefully selected participants through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Through this methodology, the researcher will be able to conduct both a macro and micro analysis of the findings.

Table 4.1 Distribution of Sampled Media Texts by Outlet, Ownership and Content Type (n = 30)

Media Outlet	Ownership	Type	n	%

The Herald	State	National Daily Print	9	30.0
Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) Television	State	Broadcast (TV)	5	16.7
Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) Radio	State	Broadcast (Radio)	5	16.7
The Standard	Private	National Weekly Print	4	13.3
New Zimbabwe	Private	Online / Digital	4	13.3
ZimLive	Private	Online / Digital	3	10.0
TOTAL			30	100.0

Source: Content Analysis Data (2025)

As shown in Table 4.1, state-owned media channels including The Herald, ZBC Television, and ZBC Radio made up 63.4% (n=19) of the samples, demonstrating the ongoing prevalence of state media in the discourse on Zimbabwe. The Herald was responsible for the largest sample, with 9 out of the total sample (30.0%) sourced from this media outlet, which is expected, since The Herald is known to be the largest-circulation national daily newspaper in Zimbabwe and has a vast online archive. Meanwhile, private and digital media were represented in the samples by 36.6% (n=11) of texts.

4.1 Temporal Distribution of Heritage Coverage (2020–2024)

A longitudinal analysis of heritage coverage across the five-year study period (2020–2024) reveals a modest but uneven upward trend in the volume of media texts. Table 4.2 presents the annual distribution of sampled texts across all outlets.

Table 4.2 Annual Distribution of Sampled Media Texts (n = 30)

Year	**Frequency (n)**	**Percentage (%)**	**Cumulative %**
2020	5	16.7	16.7
2021	5	16.7	33.3
2022	6	20.0	53.3
2023	7	23.3	76.7
2024	7	23.3	100.0

Total	30	100.0	

Source: Content Analysis Data (2025)

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4.2 Extent and Nature of Media Coverage of Heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts

The first objective of research for this project is to analyse how extensively and in what way media has covered the heritage resources of Mbire and Muzarabani Districts. This were achieved using the information generated from Section B, C, D, E and F of the content analysis coding sheet (Instrument 3.5.1). Other sources include interview questions three, four, seven and nine and focus group questions seven and eight. The information obtained was categorized into three categories namely media coverage extent and prominence, heritage type and specificity and thematic framing.

4.2.1 Coverage Quantity and District Prominence

The degree to which heritage from Mbire and Muzarabani Districts constituted the primary, secondary or incidental focus of sampled texts was examined through Coding Sheet variables B1, B2, B3 and B5. The findings are presented in Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

Table 4.3 Heritage Centrality in Media Texts (n = 30)

Heritage Centrality	**Frequency (n)**	**Percentage (%)**
Primary focus of article/item	8	26.7
Secondary mention alongside main story	13	43.3

Incidental / passing reference only	9	30.0
Total	30	100.0

Source: Content Analysis Data (2025)

The following Table 4.3 presents a very disturbing trend: as much as 26.7% (n=8) of all sampled articles utilized the topic of heritage within these two districts as the principal theme in their reporting. This means that 73.3% (n=22) of all the sampled articles either addressed the matter of heritage in an incidental manner or used it as a secondary theme while focusing on other issues. As it can be seen from these findings, the primary question outlined in Chapter One – the marginalization of heritage in the mass media of Zimbabwe – is well substantiated. It should be noted that this finding corroborates the findings reported by Murimbika and Moyo (2008) who stated that "the coverage of heritage [in the mass media of Zimbabwe] was sporadic and event-driven" with the topics being mainly addendums to tourist, political, or governance matters.

Table 4.4 Table 4.4: District-Level Coverage Metrics (n = 30)

Coverage Variable	**Yes n (%)**	**No n (%)**
Mbire District specifically mentioned	18 (60.0%)	12 (40.0%)
Muzarabani District specifically mentioned	19 (63.3%)	11 (36.7%)
Both districts mentioned in same text	10 (33.3%)	20 (66.7%)
Heritage placed at headline level	4 (13.3%)	26 (86.7%)
Heritage placed in first paragraph	7 (23.3%)	23 (76.7%)
Accompanied by heritage-related photograph	11 (36.7%)	19 (63.3%)

Source: Content Analysis Data (2025)

From Table 4.4, it can be seen that although Muzarabani (63.3%) and Mbire (60.0%) got almost equal proportions of mention, the proportion of headlines, which is the principal indicator of story importance, was very small indeed. Heritage occurred in just 13.3% of headlines, indicating that in 86.7% of articles sampled, heritage issues were not regarded by editors as significant enough to make it the subject of the article. When heritage is not a feature of the headline, it takes second place to topics such as conservation of wildlife, earning money from tourism, or development of

the countryside. One example would be "Mutota Monuments a Hidden Treasure" by The Herald (August 2021), which focused on heritage in Mbire through the stone-walled monument. The far more common type is "Wildlife Transforms Mbire Community" (April 2024).

Moreover, only 23.3% of the stories mentioned heritage in the lead paragraphs, while only 36.7% carried images depicting aspects of heritage. Information in inverted-pyramid journalism is buried if it does not feature in either the headline or the lead, since readers rarely discover buried information or react to it. As such, while the frequency of mention of Muzarabani heritage was slightly higher than for the other aspects of heritage, this analysis indicates that media portrayal consistently marginalized its heritage aspects.



Mutota Monuments a hidden treasure

admin • Herald • August 13, 2021 • 0 Comments

Figure 4.3a Article containing a heritage-related photographs (The Herald, 2021).

Nambya cultural heritage under spotlight in new book

Life & Style By THOMAS CHIDAMBA | Dec 27, 2022 | 4 Min read



Nambya cultural heritage

Figure 4.3b Article containing a heritage-related photographs (NewsDay, 2022).

However, an image of either the structure, ritual, or landscape has a significance beyond the capacity of mere language to convey, but precisely the absence of these images from most of the sampled news items shows that there is something missing from the representation of heritage in these contexts. All of these elements combined together – bad headline positioning, bad opening paragraph positioning, and a total lack of visuals – create an impression that this sort of news is marginal and insignificant.

The trends mentioned above have been confirmed by media practitioner interviewees. One of the senior journalists at The Herald, coded as MP01, put the matter into perspective:

"These stories from Mbire or Muzarabani? Unless there is something really dramatic going on there to attract attention—political angles, events the stories will not make it through the gatekeepers at the editing desks because routine stories from these regions do not meet the criteria of news values that are used by editors to justify inclusion in the news. You are up against real news, politics, economic news; heritage just does not hold up to that." (interview MPO1, 08/05/2026)

As the above quote indicates, these processes of gatekeeping are part of the commercial and editorial logics that Kalisdha (2023) identifies as structural processes that actively gatekeep rural vernacular heritage out of the media agenda. Likewise, MP04, who works as a correspondent in Mashonaland Central, commented:

"There have been no more than two stories about heritage in the last three years that were filed on that specific topic, that came from Mbire or Muzarabani region. There is no regular beat for such stories; when I file stories on that area, they are usually on challenges they are facing, agricultural issues or political matters." (interview MPO7, 08/05/2026)

The focus group discussion conducted in Mbire District among community elders and cultural practitioners (FGD-MB-01) resulted in the following reaction that summarised the community's feeling about media invisibility:

"We know the great places via the radios; Great Zimbabwe, Victoria Falls, Matonjeni. But ours? Our shrines, our sacred forests, our ancestral places? Nobody talks about them. It is like they do not exist anywhere else except Mbire." (interview MPO8, 08/05/2026)

Can you attach the photo of the focus group discussion where you are showcasing !!!

Indeed, the feelings of this community are in agreement with the views put forward by Jegatheesan (2015) that media invisibility is a form of self-reinforcement of marginalisation of heritage because when there is no coverage, it creates low awareness, hence no interest in investment in the heritage, hence making it less newsworthy. In other words, the results of the study confirm the first-level agenda-setting effect postulated by McCombs and Shaw (1972).

4.2.2 Types of Heritage Covered

Section C of the Coding Sheet provided information on the types of heritage included in the 30 texts used in the analysis. Considering the multilayered nature of heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani, more than one category could apply for each text, and coders were supposed to mark all applicable categories. This is shown in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 Types of Heritage Featured in Sampled Media Texts (n = 30; multiple responses permitted)

Heritage Category	Sub-type	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Tangible – Immovable	Archaeological site	9	30.0
Tangible – Immovable	Sacred landscape	12	40.0
Tangible – Immovable	Historical monument	4	13.3
Tangible – Immovable	Architectural / built heritage	2	6.7
Tangible – Movable	Artefacts	2	6.7
Tangible – Movable	Documents / manuscripts	1	3.3
Intangible	Ceremonies / rituals	14	46.7
Intangible	Oral traditions	12	40.0
Intangible	Traditional knowledge	10	33.3
Intangible	Music / dance	7	23.3
Intangible	Craft skills	3	10.0
Natural heritage	Landscapes / ecosystems	6	20.0

Source: Content Analysis Data (2025)

In Mbire and Muzarabani, media coverage highlights some intangible heritage—ceremonies/rituals (46.7%), oral tradition (40.0%), and traditional knowledge (33.3%)—but only as secondary to topics like wildlife or climate change. Notable absences include craftsmanship (10.0%), documents/manuscripts (3.3%), and natural heritage (20.0%), despite the Zambezi Valley's ecological and spiritual importance. This selectivity creates a distorted, simplified version of heritage.

"Those things that the media tend to focus on are what's dramatic or visually compelling—rituals, sacred forests that you can see, the stories that can be turned into sound bites. What they never catch at all is the artisanal skills—the metal working, the basket weaving that contains a map of the cosmos, the medicine plants that the community's healers know. And yet this aspect of cultural heritage, while totally invisible in the media, is utterly crucial to the community's identity and economic prospects under an Education 5.0 system." (HO02 interview, 08/05/2026)

4.2.3 Thematic Framing of Heritage Coverage

Section D of the coding sheet assessed the dominant and subsidiary frames employed in sampled texts, following the framing typology developed during instrument design and grounded in Entman's (1993) framing theory. Table 4.6 presents the full framing distribution across the 30 texts.

Table 4.6 Thematic Framing Distribution in Sampled Media Texts (n = 30)

Frame	Dominant n (%)	Present n (%)	Absent n (%)
Government / Policy	10 (33.3%)	8 (26.7%)	12 (40.0%)
Tourism / Economic Value	10 (33.3%)	9 (30.0%)	11 (36.7%)
Cultural Identity / Pride	9 (30.0%)	10 (33.3%)	11 (36.7%)
Threat / Destruction	8 (26.7%)	9 (30.0%)	13 (43.3%)
Neglect / Marginalisation	6 (20.0%)	10 (33.3%)	14 (46.7%)
Spiritual / Religious Significance	5 (16.7%)	7 (23.3%)	18 (60.0%)
Preservation / Conservation	4 (13.3%)	12 (40.0%)	14 (46.7%)
Community Participation	3 (10.0%)	8 (26.7%)	19 (63.3%)

Source: Content Analysis Data (2025)

The analysis shows that in Zimbabwe, media talks mainly about heritage through Government/Policy and Tourism/Economic Value in Mbire and Muzarabani, each at 33.3%. Cultural Identity/Pride comes next at 30.0%. This fits with Ndoro and Pwiti's views on how heritage gets politicized and aligns with Smith's concerns about heritage turning into mere tourist attractions. The worrying part is that Community Participation only hits 10.0%, being the least shown frame, with 63.3% of stories not covering it at all. Spiritual/Religious Significance is left out 60.0% of the time, even though it's super important to local folks—according to Makuvaza's 2008 findings. Omitting these community and spiritual aspects really skews the discussion and makes communities feel like they don't own their heritage.

"Our heritage is not a tourist attraction. It is not a government project. It is our ancestors' home, it is where the spirits live, it is where we go to ask for rain, for guidance, for healing. When the media comes and talks about economic development or tourism, they are not telling our story at all." (FGD-MZ-02*, 04/05/2026)*

Table 4.7: Overall Tone of Heritage Coverage in Sampled Texts (n = 30)

Tone	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Neutral	10	33.3
Positive	9	30.0
Negative	6	20.0
Mixed	5	16.7
Total	30	100.0

Source: Content Analysis Data (2025)

As seen in Table 4.7, neutral and positive coverage prevailed (33.3% and 30.0%, respectively), while negative coverage was prevalent among 20.0% of the texts. In light of the fact that most media coverage was neutral, in addition to the dominance of the Government/Policy and Tourism frames, it can be concluded that much of the coverage of heritage in this context appears to be descriptive and event-oriented, and not critical and investigative or even advocatory. Most of the negative coverage (20.0%) involved the Threat/Destruction and Neglect/Marginalisation frames, which are congruent with the findings of Geracoulis (2024) that warn against the risk of media

framing heritage negatively by focusing on its vulnerabilities rather than its vitality. This information addresses Research Objective One and shows that not only is media coverage of heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani inadequate quantitatively, but also qualitatively, due to the prevailing use of certain frames that marginalise the community perspective as well as spiritual and heritage dimensions.

4.2.4 Source Attribution Patterns

Section E of the Coding Sheet examined the sourcing practices within sampled texts, a critical dimension of Entman's (1993) framing theory, insofar as source selection shapes which interpretations of heritage are privileged in public discourse. Table 4.8 presents the source attribution findings.

Table 4.8 Source Attribution in Sampled Media Texts (n = 30)

Source Category	**Cited / Quoted n (%)**	**Not Cited n (%)**
Government official	20 (66.7%)	10 (33.3%)
NMMZ / Heritage professional	10 (33.3%)	20 (66.7%)
Traditional leader / community elder	9 (30.0%)	21 (70.0%)
Academic / researcher	4 (13.3%)	26 (86.7%)
Community member (non-leader)	6 (20.0%)	24 (80.0%)
International body (UNESCO, ICOMOS)	3 (10.0%)	27 (90.0%)

Source: Content Analysis Data (2025)

In Mbire and Muzarabani, government sources dominate at 66.7%, while NMMZ/practitioners account for 33.3%, traditional leaders 30.0%, and ordinary community members only 20.0% (academics 13.3%). With an average of 2.3 sources per text, this institutional imbalance marginalizes living heritage keepers, framing heritage as an organizational/financial issue rather than a community activity—leaving over 80% of non-leader community voices absent.

Table 4.9 Community Representation and Digital Dimensions in Sampled Texts (n = 30)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Local community perspective reflected	Strongly	2	6.7
	Moderately	7	23.3
	Weakly	11	36.7
	Not at all	10	33.3
Gender representation in sources	Women dominant	2	6.7
	Mixed	6	20.0
	Men dominant	18	60.0
	Not determinable	4	13.3
Youth voice present	Yes	4	13.3
	No	26	86.7
Content available online	Yes	13	43.3
	No	11	36.7
	Unknown	6	20.0

Source: Content Analysis Data (2025)

As evident from Table 4.9, there is considerable inadequacy in representation of communities within sampled texts. Altogether, 70.0% of texts had little (36.7%) or no representation (33.3%) of community voices, while strong representation of community voices appeared in just 6.7% of texts (n=2). Representation of gender was unbalanced as well, with men representing 60.0% of texts, compared to just 6.7% of texts where women were dominant voices, although it is well known that women play essential roles as keepers and carriers of intangible heritage in both studied areas. Voices of the young were completely ignored, as seen in only 13.3% (n=4) of texts – an issue of significant importance in terms of intergenerational cultural transfer and media heritage relevance for youth audiences. According to Samy (2022), ignoring voices of youth in heritage media representations perpetuates the image of heritage as irrelevant to modern society, contributing to disengagement with heritage among its most crucial audience.

4.3 The Role of Media in Shaping Public Perceptions and Awareness of Cultural Heritage

Objectives for research number two aimed at assessing the role played by media in influencing public perception and awareness about cultural heritage in the Mbire and Muzarabani Districts. Objectives number two mainly involved qualitative data, which was collected using semi-structured interviews (questions 3, 6, 9, 10, 19) and focus groups discussions (questions 7, 8, 10, 11, 13), while the data used for framing were derived from content analysis.

4.3.1 Media as Awareness Catalyst: Positive Experiences

In spite of the problems associated with quantity, as discussed in Section 4.2, there is recognition that when media coverage occurs, there is definitely an effect on public consciousness and sometimes even on heritage conservation achievements. Some of the focus group members interviewed in both the districts were able to cite examples where radio broadcasting had led to greater community interest in heritage issues. One such example cited by a community elder from Muzarabani was that:

"Makore akati kuti apfuura, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Radio yakambotepfenyura chirongwa chaibata nezvemasango matsvene emunzvimbo ino – musha wemadzisahwira. Mushure mechirongwa ichocho, takatanga kuona vanhu vachibva kunzvimbo dziri kure dzakaita seHarare vachiuya vachibvunza nezvenzvimbo iyi. Vechidiki vakanga vatamira kuguta vakatangawo kutifonera vachibvunza nezvemitambo netsika dzemhemberero. Kwenguva pfupi, takanzwa sekunge nyika y

Translated "Some years ago, ZBC Radio broadcast a programme about the sacred forests in this area — the musha wemadzisahwira. After that programme, we had people coming from as far as Harare asking about the area. Young people who had gone to the city started calling to ask about the ceremonies. For a moment, we felt like the world knew we existed. That one programme did more for awareness of our heritage than years of nothing." (FGD-MZ-01, *11/05/2026)*

This example demonstrates the substantial capacity for increasing awareness through targeted media coverage, in agreement with the "agenda-setting" idea of McCombs & Shaw (1972), which posits that the prominence of the topic in media attention directly results in increased prioritization

of said topic among the population. HO03, an NMMZ heritage officer in charge of northern Zimbabwean heritage sites, confirmed the validity of this perspective:

“We have seen examples where a story in the newspaper about a certain site resulted in letters coming in from donors, scholars, even members of the diaspora community. Thereby, the story created a constituency – a set of people who would support the site, finance a project for its restoration, and even just come and spend some time there. In the absence of such publicity, the site remained unpublicized, and unpublicized sites are vulnerable sites.” (Interview HO03, 07/05/06)

A key informant from the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture (KI02) similarly affirmed: " “When The Herald or Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation gives good coverage to a heritage site or cultural practice, it quickly gains attention and becomes a higher priority for policymakers.”. Ministers see it, advisers flag it, the Ministry feels pressure to act. Media coverage is probably the most effective advocacy tool for heritage protection that we have, and it is criminally underused."

4.3.2 Framing Effects on Community Heritage Perceptions

An important result related to the impact of the media on the perception of heritage relates to the negative effects of the framing of heritage mainly in terms of tourism and economic benefit, which is proven by Section 4.2.3. Community focus group findings from both the district showed that people in the community recognized this and even resented such framing. A cultural practitioner from Mbire (FGD-MB-02) shared:

“Kana vatapi venhau vachiuya pano, vanowanzotaura nezve tourism — kuti vangani vashanyi vangauya, uye kuti imarii ingawanikwa. Asi mhemberero dzedu hadzina kuitirwa vashanyi. Nzvimbo dzedu tsvene ndedzekuporeswa kwedu, minamato yedu, uye hukama hwedu nemadzitateguru. Kana waisa mutengo pazvinhu izvozvo, unenge watotanga kuzviparadza.”

Translates to: “When journalists come here, they talk about tourism — how many tourists can come, what money can be made. But our ceremonies are not for tourists. Our sacred places are for our healing, our prayers, our relationship with the ancestors. When you put a price tag on that, you have already begun to destroy it." (FGD-MB-02, 09/05

This worry of the community fits very well with one of the propositions in Entman's (1993) framing theory, that dominant frames "promote a particular problem definition" which may not be consistent with the views of the communities from whom the heritage is being portrayed. When the media portray heritage as an economic resource, there is thus a construction of heritage as being valued mainly for its utilitarian value, which may eventually affect the intrinsic valuing by the communities of their own cultural activities. Smith (2006) is relevant in his criticism of commoditization through media framings.

Another aspect of the way in which framing can impact community perceptions is what the focus group participants termed as the "dramatization of threats to heritage". In many cases where media did highlight heritage issues within these areas, the reason was related to cases of vandalism, theft or destruction of heritage sites. The following quotation from a traditional leader in Muzarabani illustrates this point well: "Every time the media brings the cameras to film, it is something terrible that has happened: either sites have been damaged or artefacts looted." Our heritage becomes a story only when it is dying. Not when it is living, not when we are celebrating it, not when young people are learning from it. Only when something bad happens. What does that teach people about our heritage?"

This observation empirically substantiates Geracoulis's (2024) finding that sustained crisis framing may generate "learned helplessness or compassion fatigue" among audiences, undermining rather than supporting preservation advocacy.

4.3.3 Media Influence on Youth Heritage Engagement

One recurring theme that was identified within both the interview and focus group data was the issue of representation through media texts and its impact on youth participation in heritage activities. As noted earlier in Table 4.9, youth were underrepresented within the sampled media texts by 13.3%, an underrepresentation that participants attributed to the overall disengagement of youth from culture. A community elder from Mbire (FGD-MB-01) described the link as follows:

"Chokuita chechidiki chevedu vanopedzanya nguva yavo yakawanda vari pamafoni avo vachiona TikTok, YouTube, pamwe nekuteserera mimhanzi inobva kuSouth Africa kana kuUnited States. Havana kumbobvira vaona nhaka yavo pachavo paterevhizheni kana kuinzwa paredhiyo. Saka vanofunga kuti chinhu chekare uye chisina zvachinobatsira – chinhu chevakuru chete. Dai vezvenhau vaivaratidza kuti nhaka yavo ine kukosha, inonakidza, uye ine nz

In Mbire and Muzarabani, young folks only check out foreign stuff on TikTok and YouTube. They don't see their culture on TV or radio at all, so they think it's just for older folks and is really outdated. If their heritage was shown as cool and modern, who knows? They might feel differently about it. One focus group discussed how including local content could change views (FGD-MB-01, 09/05/26). According to cultivation theory, what you see in the media affects your view of reality. A journalist mentioned that social media can make a difference—if only youth got the support and digital skills they need to post their heritage stuff for everyone to see.

4.4 Challenges and Opportunities in Media Coverage of Heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani

Research objective three evaluated the challenges and opportunities faced by media institutions in reporting heritage issues in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts. This objective draws primarily on responses to interview questions 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21 and 22, supplemented by focus group discussion questions 6, 14, 15 and 16 (Appendix 1). Thematic analysis of qualitative data generated five major challenge themes and four opportunity themes, presented below.

4.4.1 Challenges in Heritage Media Coverage

Table 4.10 Summary of Major Challenge Themes in Heritage Media Coverage (Derived from Thematic Analysis, n = 15 Participants)

Challenge Theme	**Participants Citing n (%)**	**Representative Sources**
Logistical and geographic remoteness of districts	13 / 15 (86.7%)	MP01, MP03, MP06, HO02
Editorial news value and commercial priorities	12 / 15 (80.0%)	MP02, MP05, KI01, KI03
Inadequate journalist training in heritage	11 / 15 (73.3%)	MP04, MP07, KI02, KI04
Limited NMMZ-media coordination and outreach	10 / 15 (66.7%)	HO01, HO03, KI02, MP03
Cultural protocols and access restrictions	7 / 15 (46.7%)	TL-MB-01, FGD-MZ-01, HO02

Source: Thematic Analysis of Interview and Focus Group Data (2025)

The greatest constraint is geographical/logistical distance, because of poor infrastructure and non-existence of telecommunication facilities coupled with lack of media bureaux in Mbire and Muzarabani, which makes covering heritage too costly since it entails taking three days to cover a story "which will be ignored on page twelve." Editorial news values and commercial pressures, at 80%, exacerbate the issue by making heritage unfit within the criteria of political and economic news that require urgency and controversy as well as a city-based audience receptive to advertisements. Poor journalist training, at 73.3%, makes it difficult for them to identify tangible and intangible heritage, thus resulting in poor coverage. Lastly, cultural protocols and barriers, at 46.7%, make it imperative for the journalists to get clearance from spirit mediums and respect cultural protocols, which they fail to do, hence getting discouraged when denied entry on account of ignorance of such protocols and concluding that "there is nothing to see here."

4.4.2 Opportunities for Improved Heritage Coverage

Table 4.11 Summary of Opportunity Themes for Improved Heritage Coverage (Derived from Thematic Analysis, n = 15 Participants)

Opportunity Theme	Participants Citing n (%)	Representative Sources
Digital and social media as low-cost heritage platforms	13 / 15 (86.7%)	MP07, KI04, FGD-MB-01, FGD-MZ-02
Community-based content creation and citizen journalism	11 / 15 (73.3%)	MP06, HO03, KI03, TL-MZ-01
NMMZ-media formal partnership frameworks	9 / 15 (60.0%)	HO01, HO02, KI02, MP02
Heritage journalism training and specialisation	8 / 15 (53.3%)	KI04, MP04, KI01, HO03

Source: Thematic Analysis of Interview and Focus Group Data (2025)

Digital media (86.7%), which involve the use of smartphones to capture the ceremonies in videos or pictures that can then be uploaded to social media platforms such as Facebook or TikTok, was identified as an option where the community could reach a bigger audience compared to traditional media without having to deal with the logistics involved in doing so. In addition to digital media, content generation by members of the community themselves (73.3%) was recognized as the most

appropriate approach to take due to their familiarity with what can be shared and what cannot. Other opportunities recognized in this study include structured partnerships between the NMMZ and media organizations (60.0%) in the form of media heritage desks with press release strategies, as well as training on heritage journalism (53.3%).

4.5 Heritage-Based Education Through Media Coverage

Research Objective Four explored how heritage-based education can be promoted through media coverage for the preservation and transmission of cultural values, examined through the lens of Heritage-Based Education 5.0 as articulated in Chapter One.

4.5.1 Media as Heritage Education Platform: Current Limitations

Content analysis results revealed that among the four frames with direct educational roles, the least dominant frames included Community Participation and preservation/conservation: Community Participation was dominant in 10.0% (n=3) texts, while preservation/conservation was dominant in 13.3% (n=4) texts. This result was corroborated by the views of participants. Participant HO03 observed: "NMMZ has a clear mission of heritage education, but we cannot directly address rural communities. Our role of media is to educate people, inform them on the value of heritage, how it needs to be preserved, resources available to it. Media does not even know of our existence.". Participants of the Community focus group unanimously recognized radio as the media channel with the highest potential for educational outreach, considering the high levels of illiteracy and lack of electrification and internet access in some communities. Ineffectiveness of the radio medium was attributed to the lack of community radio facilities in both districts.

4.5.2 Heritage 5.0 and the Educational Potential of Media Coverage

Among the suggestions made in the context of Education 5.0 and heritage, one of particular importance concerned the way media coverage might serve as a means to link heritage with innovation and entrepreneurship as well as present-day development. As MP06 put it,

"*Think of a documentary series where there is a series of stories about Mbire's traditional art: the iron-working, the basket-making, the ceramics. It would be presented not as objects locked up in a museum but as skills which can generate income. The focus is on youth being taught by the elders about traditional art, modernizing designs to suit today's markets and starting businesses. This is Heritage 5.0 being practiced via media." (Interview MP06, 08/05/26).*

In relation to the international frameworks, KI03, a representative of UNESCO, linked it to the following, “The UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003, clearly acknowledges the media as a significant carrier of intangible cultural heritage. It is not only about ensuring that heritage is preserved in archives or museums; the responsibility lies in continuing the practice, passing down and recreating the living heritage as a living part of one’s identity. Media that mirrors the heritage in the context of Education 5.0 does this.”

4.5.3 Community-Led Educational Media: Emerging Practices

Notwithstanding the lack of established community media structures in either district, there emerged community-based initiatives for documentation of heritage through use of digital technologies in the focus groups. Young participants in both Mbire and Muzarabani districts reported recording and sharing traditional ceremonies, songs and history on WhatsApp, Facebook and TikTok on their phones. Despite being informal and lacking a structured approach, this constitutes early attempts at community-based heritage education media in line with participatory heritage frameworks suggested by Giaccardi (2012) and Silberman & Purser (2012). A participant at FGD-MB-01 said:

"I capture the ceremonies on my phone and post them on WhatsApp on our family group. Cousins in Harare, in South Africa, had never seen the real kuombera ceremony before. Whenever I post videos of such ceremonies on WhatsApp, they become very excited and want to learn more about what is going on. One cousin visited home specifically for the same reason; after seeing those videos online, he decided to participate in the ceremony in person. This way, the phones themselves are educating us, but we still need to develop that further." (FGD-MB-01, 09/05/26)

Such emerging practices imply that there is already some manifestation of the community’s engagement in content production taking place, though perhaps not in an organized form and without the backing of any institution or media attention. What needs to happen then is to acknowledge these emerging media practices from within communities for education and to develop them further.

4.6 Integration: Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

In light of the design used in this research (convergent parallel mixed methods design as described by Creswell and Creswell, 2018), the following section provides a joint display for integration of key insights drawn from the content analysis approach and the interviews/focus groups approach

respectively. The main objective of using joint displays is to create meta-inferences that can only be created through integration of the two approaches (Creamer, 2018). Table 4.12 shows the joint display for each research objective.

Table 4.12 Joint Display — Convergence and Divergence of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Research Objective	**Quantitative Finding (Content Analysis)**	**Qualitative Finding (Interviews / FGDs)**	**Inference**
RO1: Extent and nature of coverage	Only 26.7% (n=8) of texts gave heritage primary focus; Community Participation frame absent in 63.3% of texts; community perspectives weak/absent in 70.0%	Participants universally described coverage as sporadic, event-driven and institutionally biased towards government/tourism frames	CONVERGENT: Strong agreement that coverage is quantitatively inadequate and qualitatively shallow, confirming agenda-setting deficit
RO2: Media role in shaping perceptions	Spiritual/Religious frame absent in 60.0% of texts; Tourism frame dominant in 33.3%; youth voice present in only 13.3%	Community members resented commodified framing; youth disengagement attributed to media absence of relatable heritage representations	CONVERGENT: Media's framing choices actively misrepresent community heritage values, potentially cultivating youth disengagement
RO3: Challenges and opportunities	Government sources cited in 66.7% vs. community non-leaders in 20.0%;	86.7% of participants cited geographic remoteness; 86.7% identified digital media as primary opportunity	DIVERGENT insight: Content analysis shows sourcing bias; qualitative data explains why (access barriers) and how to address it (digital platforms)

	mean sources per text = 2.3		
RO4: Heritage education through media	Preservation frame dominant in only 13.3% of texts; community participation frame least dominant overall (10.0%)	Radio and digital platforms identified as primary educational vehicles; Heritage 5.0 framing aligned with community aspirations	CONVERGENT: Substantial gap between current coverage and educational potential; community-led digital practices offer scalable model

Source: Integrated Data Analysis (2025)

In the case of the joint findings, it becomes apparent that there is high convergence among all the four research objectives, since both strands on their own have found out that media coverage of the heritage in both Mbire and Muzarabani is significantly deficient in quantity, quality, and representational equity. One of the most important divergent findings in respect to Research Objective Three includes the fact that although content analysis captures the phenomenon of bias in sources used, the qualitative strand explains why, through geographical distance, cultural access challenges and time constraints.

4.7 Discussion

The study found that heritage is still sidelined in Zimbabwe's Mbire and Muzarabani districts. Only about 26.7% of news reports cover heritage issues, and in 63.3% of cases, there's no mention of community involvement — which hasn't changed since 2008. Also, government reps are quoted 66.7% of the time, while regular folks barely get mentioned at 20.0%. The main frames here are Government/Policy and Tourism/Economic, each at 33.3%, pushing heritage into more of a political and economic arena instead of focusing on community or spiritual aspects. It's made worse because these places are remote (86.7%) and journalists often lack proper training (73.3%).

However, there's some hope with digital media. Smartphones and social media could help here, with 86.7% seeing this tech as a way to share community-led stories. Plus, 73.3% want to produce their own heritage content. So combining mobile tech, Heritage-Based Education 5.0, and some institutional backing might actually give communities control to tell their own cultural stories.

4.8 Chapter Summary

The current chapter highlighted and provided an analysis of the empirical results of the research through the use of convergent parallel mixed method designs to illustrate that the media portrayal of heritage within Mbire and Muzarabani Districts between 2020 and 2024 is both lacking in terms of numbers and in scope since the media coverage is dominated by Government/Policy and Tourism frames which tend to exclude communities, the spiritual aspect and the whole range of local heritage sites. The results collected from media content analysis and interviews with key stakeholders all indicate that such a coverage gap exists due to structural problems such as isolation, commercialisation in newsrooms, lack of training in heritage journalism, as well as poor collaboration between NM&MOZ and media organisations but also provide some opportunities for improvement in areas such as the internet, content production by local communities, institutional cooperation and specialisation in heritage reporting.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an integrated analysis of the research results based on insights obtained from the analyzed data concerning each objective of the research. Conclusions made by analyzing these results and strategies are proposed in the following section. Finally, some recommendations are provided for future research. This research examined media coverage of cultural heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani districts of Northern Zimbabwe. Specifically, it was aimed at analyzing media coverage of cultural heritage in terms of the following issues: how widespread the coverage is, the impact of media coverage on the development of public perception of cultural heritage, difficulties/chances facing the media in covering the subject matter, and media coverage's contribution to heritage-based education 5.0.

5.1 Summary of the Study and Findings

A major objective of this research paper was to explore the role of media in the reporting of cultural heritage in Zimbabwe's Mbire and Muzarabani districts with particular emphasis on impacts on the heritage conservation, public consciousness, and identity formation. Employing a convergent parallel mixed methods design, the study utilized a systematic content analysis of 30 media reports drawn from six different organizations (The Herald, ZBC Television, ZBC Radio, The Standard, New Zimbabwe, and ZimLive) from January 2020 to December 2024 along with qualitative interviews and focus group discussions of 15 purposively selected informants (media staff, NMMZ

heritage officers, and community representatives). For quantitative data analysis, IBM SPSS Statistics (version 27) was used while qualitative data analysis was done by utilizing NVivo (Version 14), combined using the convergent joint display technique, following an agenda-setting theory by McCombs and Shaw (1972) and framing theory by Entman (1993).

5.1.1 Extent and Nature of Media Coverage of Heritage Resources in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts

The findings demonstrated a paucity of not only quantity but also quality in media discourse on cultural heritage in the areas of Mbire and Muzarabani districts. As much as only 26.7% of the sampled texts gave priority treatment to heritage in the two districts at the editorial level, 13.3% of the texts did so at the headline level, while heritage photographs appeared in only 36.7% of texts. Coverage on intangible heritage such as ceremonies/rituals, oral traditions, and traditional knowledge far outweighed craft skills and documentary heritage, which received attention in 10.0% and 3.3%, respectively. The thematic frames Government/Policy and Tourism/Economic Value co-dominate in 33.3% of texts each, with Community Participation as the least dominant and most often neglected frame. In source attribution, government officers were quoted in almost two-thirds of the texts (66.7%), followed by traditional leaders and community elders at only 30.0% and community members at 20.0%, a deliberate institutionalized bias against local communities in telling heritage stories. The voices of the community were marginalized in three-quarters (70.0%) of the texts, while female participation was low at 60.0%, and youths were present in only 13.3% of texts.

5.1.2 Role of Media in Shaping Public Perceptions and Awareness of Cultural Heritage

It can be concluded that although media coverage is sparse in the two communities, it does make an impact on the public perception of the communities' heritage and the degree of public involvement with the cultural heritage. Single cases of media coverage, specifically through radio broadcasting, have shown tangible results regarding enhancing community pride, reconnecting diaspora with the home country and generating public concern and interest for heritage issues, which heritage officers say stimulated letters and research in the field. This is a typical example of the phenomenon of agenda setting described by McCombs & Shaw (1972). Yet, the main frames employed by the media give rise to perceptions of communities that are not entirely correct and even offensive. Predominance of the Tourism/Economic Value frame leads to a feeling that

heritage is being commercialized by portraying its religious and cultural elements merely as tourist attraction sites. Lack of presence of the Spiritual/Religious Significance frame (60% of analyzed media content does not contain this aspect of the heritage) and the relative scarcity of the Cultural Identity/Pride frame compared to the Government/Policy frame imply that public perception fails to reflect communities' attitude to their own heritage.

5.1.3 Challenges and Opportunities in Media Coverage of Heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani

Five primary barriers have been identified using thematic analysis from qualitative data. The foremost one is geographic and logistical distance which, according to more than three-fourths of participants (86.7%), is characterized by poor road networks, weak telecommunication services, and lack of media bureaus which makes complete reporting impossible due to economic reasons. News value criteria and commercial considerations (80.0%) are an outcome of the conflict between the nature of heritage journalism and the needs of commercial media for immediate reporting. Poor journalist training (73.3%) results in incomplete coverage that cannot capture the full essence of culture. Coordination problems with the National Museum and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) and restricted access to culturally significant sites (66.7% and 46.7%, respectively) further hinder reporting. As a result of these issues, four significant opportunities can be considered, namely the use of digital and social media (86.7%), community-based content creation (73.3%), cooperation with the NMMZ (60.0%), and specialized training (53.3%).

5.1.4 Promotion of Heritage-Based Education Through Media Coverage

This research demonstrated considerable possibilities for the use of media for heritage-based education in terms of the Heritage-Based Education 5.0, yet revealed a serious disparity between the uncovered opportunities and reality. Specifically, the use of the Preservation/Conservation frame dominated only in 13.3% of the analysed texts and the use of the Community Participation frame - in only 10%. The above findings clearly illustrate that the educational/transmissive role of media is seriously underutilized at present. According to participants' testimonies, the best medium for education purposes would be the radio since many people lack literacy and internet access. However, the lack of infrastructure of community radios in both districts was mentioned as one of the critical barriers to heritage education via media. Participants came up with ideas such as producing documentaries about how local knowledge can be used to start one's business, creating

digital libraries of oral histories, as well as making media content illustrating that indigenous artisan skills can be regarded as economic competencies of today's generation. Crucially, the study noted the emergence of grassroots digital documenting practices such as recording of ceremonies and oral histories using smartphones and sharing them on WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

The study validates and extends both Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing Theory within the context of rural African heritage media. It confirms that media exclusion of Mbire and Muzarabani's heritage from coverage has real consequences for political prioritisation and community identity, while also revealing an undertheorised structural dimension: that physical geography, not just editorial judgment, determines which heritage makes the public agenda. Similarly, the dominance of Government/Policy and Tourism/Economic Value frames confirms that media shape not just awareness but how heritage is understood, constructing a public narrative that communities find alienating — a form of representational harm that enriches Entman's framing framework and demonstrates the analytical value of combining both theories.

5.2.2 Practical Implications

The findings call for concrete action across multiple sectors: media institutions need dedicated heritage reporting roles, rural bureau investments, and digital partnerships with community content creators to make comprehensive coverage economically viable; NMMZ and heritage bodies should establish formal media engagement strategies including accessible archives and journalist access protocols; journalism training institutions should introduce heritage journalism as a specialist curriculum module; and communities in Mbire and Muzarabani should be supported through community radio, digital literacy programmes, and NMMZ-backed media hubs that enable community-led heritage documentation aligned with the Heritage-Based Education 5.0 framework.

5.3 Conclusions

The primary objective of this research was indeed met, as the research involved analyzing the media representation of cultural heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani districts, understanding its influence on public opinion, assessing structural barriers and opportunities, and exploring the

power of media to promote heritage-based education in the context of Heritage-Based Education 5.0 model. It has been shown that media coverage is poor in terms of both volume and quality, with a bias toward institutional information sources and perspectives, such as Government/Policy and Tourism/Economic Value perspectives, which marginalizes the role of communities in promoting cultural heritage as well as the spiritual aspect of heritage conservation, distorts discourse related to heritage, limits its intergenerational transmission, especially among the youth, and prevents communities from taking an active part in heritage conservation initiatives. Fortunately, this challenge can be overcome thanks to modern digital/social media technologies, community-based media production initiatives, institutional awareness, and the Heritage-Based Education 5.0 Model. The main challenge is scaling it into a complete approach for engaging media in heritage promotion activities.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed for media institutions, heritage bodies, policymakers, educational institutions and community stakeholders. Each recommendation is accompanied by a detailed explanation of how it can be implemented and the outcomes it is intended to achieve.

Strengthen Heritage Reporting Capacity in Media Organisations

Each media house must have at least one journalist who will be tasked specifically with the role of covering heritage issues; heritage must become an issue on its own that will generate stories. At least one story on heritage must be produced every week. To overcome the challenges related to location that were pointed out by 86.7% of the study respondents, the media must source freelancers from within Mbire and Muzarabani, providing incentives for them in terms of monthly retainers, mobile data packs, and minimal recording facilities. The result would be a reduction in the costs of hiring Harare-based journalists for such assignments while ensuring constant supply of stories on heritage. The media must also allocate specific funds for this purpose.

Establish Formal NMMZ–Media Collaboration Frameworks

In order to address the challenges of media engagement faced by NMMZ, such as cultural barriers experienced by 46.7% of the study sample, the organisation should have a Heritage Media Desk at its national offices and in Mashonaland Central regional headquarters, under the leadership of a

media liaison officer tasked with releasing periodic press statements, having a freely-accessible online library of photographs and background material, and crafting site-specific protocols for journalists covering heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts. This protocol will include information on whether particular heritage sites can be filmed, require permission from spirit mediums or chiefs, and expected standards of behavior for journalists. The creation of this desk will involve signing an agreement with major media houses, where NMMZ agrees to logistics support and media firms pledge minimum coverage requirements along with cultural representation guidelines. The anticipated result is the transformation of NMMZ from being a mere subject of media coverage to a media-driver organization..

Reorient Heritage Narratives Towards Community-Centred Storytelling

In addition, media institutions need to revisit their editorial policies in order to make community-based sourcing mandatory in all heritages stories emanating from the two areas, at least ensuring that each story contains a direct quote from a community member who is neither a government official nor an official from any organization, and who provides a community perspective on what constitutes its heritage. Since women are dominant sources in just 6.7 percent of the sampled stories in spite of being significant carriers of heritage, editors should make efforts to get testimony from women community elders as well as cultural custodians, perhaps through special radio programs in local languages. Similarly, youth voices need to be heard in heritage articles in order to fight cultural disengagement, which has largely resulted from lack of their inclusion in current reporting. Community-based sourcing should be part of the editorial pitch evaluation process whereby stories without community involvement are edited back to the editor for corrections before being published..

Invest in Community Radio and Digital Heritage Infrastructure

As community radio remains the most accessible medium in places where literacy and connectivity are lacking, the government of Zimbabwe must move faster to license and set up community radios of small power in Mbire and Muzarabani, obliging heritage programming in local languages such as Korekore and Dema. The process will entail swift licensing of such community radios by the Ministry of Information, allocation of funds for purchasing transmitters and studios, and involving UNESCO Zimbabwe as a technical and financial partner, following the principles of the 2003 convention. Simultaneously, NMMZ and the government must set up at least one digital content

production house in each district, stocking it with phones, recording devices, editing software, and assigning a digital content producer to oversee the processes of producing and disseminating heritage information through social media.

Establish Community Heritage Media Hubs Anchored in Heritage-Based Education 5.0

In accordance with the Heritage-Based Education 5.0 initiative, community-university heritage media hubs must be created in both districts, through collaboration between Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) and NMMZ, preferably situated within community centers or existing learning institutions. Each hub will have a media coordinator appointed by BUSE and a heritage officer seconded by NMMZ, with the ability to host community documentation initiatives, produce educational media integrating indigenous knowledge and modern entrepreneurship practices, manage a digital database of heritage material, and conduct outreach programs among school students. The ownership of the archived information will remain with the communities themselves, deciding which information is made available to the public and which is kept confidential. The budget could be sourced from NMMZ operations, BUSE community engagement projects, UNESCO heritage safeguarding programs, and funding partners.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

The following areas are proposed for future academic and policy inquiry, building on the gaps and insights generated by this study:

Audience Reception Studies

Future research should examine how audiences in Mbire, Muzarabani, and across Zimbabwe receive, interpret, and respond to heritage media content, and assess its influence on attitudes, behaviours, and support for heritage preservation among groups such as youth, diaspora communities, and urban audiences.

Comparative Heritage Media Studies Across Zimbabwe

Future studies should compare heritage media coverage across different rural districts in Zimbabwe, including regions such as Matabeleland, Manicaland, and Midlands, to determine whether the coverage gaps identified in Mbire and Muzarabani reflect broader national patterns.

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APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Media Coverage of Cultural Heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts, Zimbabwe

No.	Instrument	Target Group(s)
3.5.1	Content Analysis Coding Sheet	Media Texts
3.5.2	Semi-structured Interview Guide	Media Practitioners Heritage Officers Key Informants
3.5.3	Focus Group Discussion Guide	Community Elders Cultural Practitioners Traditional Leaders

Researcher: ……

Supervisor: ……..

Date of Administration: ……..

INSTRUMENT 3.5.1: CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING SHEET

Study: Media Coverage of Cultural Heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani Districts, Zimbabwe

SECTION A: PUBLICATION / BROADCAST DETAILS

Field	Entry
A1. Coder ID	
A2. Text / Item ID (assign sequentially)	
A3. Name of Media Outlet	
A4. Type of Outlet	☐ National daily ☐ National weekly ☐ Regional ☐ Broadcast (TV) ☐ Broadcast (Radio) ☐ Online / Digital
A5. Ownership	☐ State-owned ☐ Private ☐ Community
A6. Publication / Broadcast Date	DD / MM / YYYY
A7. Type of Content	☐ News report ☐ Feature article ☐ Editorial / Opinion ☐ Interview ☐ Photo essay ☐ Other: _____
A8. Page / Segment Position	☐ Front page / Lead ☐ Inside pages ☐ Supplement ☐ Top-of-bulletin ☐ Other: _____
A9. Word Count / Duration	Words: _____ OR Duration (mins): _____
A10. Headline / Title of Item	

SECTION B: COVERAGE QUANTITY METRICS

Metric	Code / Entry
B1. Heritage mentioned? (primary/secondary)	☐ Primary focus ☐ Secondary mention ☐ Incidental
B2. Mbire District mentioned?	☐ Yes ☐ No

SECTION C: TYPE OF HERITAGE COVERED

Heritage Category	Code (tick all that apply)
C1. Tangible – Immovable	☐ Archaeological site ☐ Architectural / built ☐ Sacred landscape ☐ Historical monument
C2. Tangible – Movable	☐ Artefacts ☐ Documents / manuscripts ☐ Artworks
C3. Intangible	☐ Oral traditions ☐ Ceremonies / rituals ☐ Traditional knowledge ☐ Music / dance ☐ Craft skills
C4. Natural heritage	☐ Yes ☐ No
C5. Specific site(s) named	Name(s): _____
C6. NMMZ-registered site?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not stated

SECTION D: THEMATIC FRAMING

Frame	Present in Text?
D1. Preservation / Conservation frame	☐ Dominant ☐ Present ☐ Absent
D2. Threat / Destruction frame	☐ Dominant ☐ Present ☐ Absent
D3. Cultural identity / Pride frame	☐ Dominant ☐ Present ☐ Absent
D4. Tourism / Economic value frame	☐ Dominant ☐ Present ☐ Absent
D5. Community participation frame	☐ Dominant ☐ Present ☐ Absent
D6. Government / Policy frame	☐ Dominant ☐ Present ☐ Absent
D7. Spiritual / Religious significance frame	☐ Dominant ☐ Present ☐ Absent
D8. Neglect / Marginalisation frame	☐ Dominant ☐ Present ☐ Absent

SECTION E: SOURCE ATTRIBUTION

Source Category	Quoted or Cited?
E1. Government official	☐ Yes ☐ No
E2. NMMZ / heritage professional	☐ Yes ☐ No
E3. Traditional leader / community elder	☐ Yes ☐ No
E4. Academic / researcher	☐ Yes ☐ No
E5. Community member (non-leader)	☐ Yes ☐ No
E6. Journalist / media outlet as source	☐ Yes ☐ No
E7. International body (UNESCO, etc.)	☐ Yes ☐ No
E8. Total number of sources cited	Count: _____
E9. Community voice (E3 or E5) prominent?	☐ Yes ☐ Marginal ☐ Absent

SECTION F: COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION & DIGITAL DIMENSION

Variable	Code
F1. Local community perspective reflected?	☐ Strongly ☐ Moderately ☐ Weakly ☐ Not at all
F2. Gender representation in sources	☐ Women dominant ☐ Mixed ☐ Men dominant ☐ Not determinable
F3. Youth voice present?	☐ Yes ☐ No
F4. Content available online?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown
F5. Multimedia elements (online)	☐ Video ☐ Audio ☐ Photo gallery ☐ Interactive ☐ None

INSTRUMENT 3.5.2: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Target Participants: (A) Media Practitioners | (B) Heritage Officers (NMMZ) | (C) Key Informants (Ministry officials, UNESCO representatives, academics)

PARTICIPANT DETAILS (Anonymised — do not record names)

Participant Code: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Duration: _____

Participant Group: ☐ A – Media Practitioner ☐ B – Heritage Officer ☐ C – Key Informant

Years in current role: _____

Interview mode: ☐ Face-to-face ☐ Phone ☐ Video call

Consent confirmed (audio): ☐ Yes

SECTION 1: OPENING AND RAPPORT BUILDING

Interviewer script: Thank you for agreeing to participate. This study examines how Zimbabwean media cover cultural heritage in Mbire and Muzarabani districts. Your insights are invaluable. The interview will take about an hour. Everything you share is confidential and will be identified only by a code number in the research.

1. Could you briefly describe your current role and how long you have been in it?

2. In your work, how often do you encounter issues relating to cultural heritage in Zimbabwe?

Probe: What kinds of heritage-related matters typically come to your attention?

SECTION 2: MEDIA COVERAGE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE — GENERAL PERCEPTIONS

3. How would you describe the level of media coverage of cultural heritage in Zimbabwe generally?

Probe: Would you say it is adequate? Why or why not?

4. In your view, are Mbire and Muzarabani districts well represented in mainstream media coverage of heritage? [ALL]

Probe: Can you give examples of coverage you have seen, or the lack thereof?

5. What factors, in your experience, determine whether a heritage story gets covered by the media? [A]

Probe: Is it about location, prestige, access, editorial decisions, or something else?

6. How do you see the relationship between media coverage and the preservation of cultural heritage in Zimbabwe? [B, C]

Probe: Can you point to specific cases where media attention made a difference?

SECTION 3: AGENDA-SETTING AND FRAMING OF HERITAGE STORIES

7. What types of heritage stories tend to receive the most media attention, and which ones are typically ignored? [A, C]

Probe: Do rural or intangible heritage items feature as prominently as urban or monumental sites?

8. How are editorial decisions about heritage coverage made in your outlet? [A]

Probe: Who decides? What makes a heritage story newsworthy to editors?

9. When heritage stories from Mbire or Muzarabani are covered, how are they typically framed? [ALL]

Probe: Are they presented as threats, opportunities, curiosities, or something else?

10. Do you feel that the framing of heritage stories in the media accurately represents the communities' own understanding of their heritage? [B, C]

Probe: What is missing from how the media tell these stories?

11. How do commercial or political pressures shape what gets covered and how? [A, C]

SECTION 4: CAPACITY, CHALLENGES, AND CONSTRAINTS [A, C]

12. What are the main challenges you face when reporting on cultural heritage, particularly from remote areas like Mbire and Muzarabani? [A]

Probe: Think about access, knowledge, resources, time pressure.

13. Do journalists in Zimbabwe generally have adequate training or knowledge to report on heritage issues accurately and sensitively? [A, C]

Probe: What kinds of training or support would help?

14. How does the geography and remoteness of Mbire and Muzarabani affect media coverage of heritage in those areas? [ALL]

15. What role, if any, do heritage institutions such as NMMZ play in facilitating or improving media coverage? [A, C]

Probe: Is there enough coordination between media and heritage bodies?

SECTION 5: HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AND MEDIA RELATIONS [B — Heritage Officers]

16. How does NMMZ currently engage with the media on heritage issues in Mbire and Muzarabani? [B]

Probe: Is there a formal media strategy or is it ad hoc?

17. What impact does limited media coverage have on NMMZ's ability to protect and promote heritage sites in those districts? [B]

Probe: Think about funding, community support, political will.

18. Are there heritage sites or practices in Mbire or Muzarabani that you feel are particularly underreported and at risk as a result? [B]

Probe: What would adequate coverage look like for those sites?

19. How do community members in Mbire and Muzarabani typically respond to media coverage (or absence of coverage) of their heritage? [B, C]

SECTION 6: DIGITAL MEDIA AND PARTICIPATORY HERITAGE COMMUNICATION

FACILITATOR'S FIELD NOTES

Non-verbal observations, group dynamics, disruptions, or contextual notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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APPENDIX 2: MEDIA ARTICLES LISTARTICLES

Appendix: Zimbabwe Media Articles on Heritage (2020–2024)

A sample list of verifiable media articles published in Zimbabwe across print, online, and broadcast platforms,

covering heritage themes between 2020 and 2024.

Sources include The Herald, The Chronicle, NewsDay, The Standard, The Zimbabwe Independent,

New Ziana, ZBC News, and Southern Eye.

No.	Year	Article Title	Media Outlet	Medium	Heritage Theme(s)	Source / URL
1	**2020**	Zimbabwe and UNESCO: Mbira	ZBC News /	Broadcast / Online	Intangible heritage; oral traditions;	newziana.co.zw

		Inscribed on Intangible Cultural Heritage List	New Ziana		traditional music	
2	**2020**	Govt Urged to Protect Cultural Heritage Sites Amid COVID-19	The Herald	Print / Online	Heritage policy; tangible heritage; national monuments	herald.co.zw
3	**2020**	COVID-19 Threatens Zimbabwe's Cultural and Heritage Tourism Industry	NewsDay	Print / Online	Heritage tourism; cultural economy	newsday.co.zw
4	**2020**	Resuscitating the Loss of IKS for Environmental Sustainability	NewsDay (Opinion)	Print / Online	Traditional knowledge; oral traditions; indigenous knowledge systems	newsday.co.zw
5	**2020**	National Arts Council Promotes Heritage Through Mbira Month	The Sunday Mail	Print / Online	Intangible heritage; traditional music; mbira	sundaymail.co.zw

6	**2021**	Mutota Monuments a Hidden Treasure	The Herald	Print / Online	Tangible heritage; stone monuments; Mbire/Muzarabani; oral traditions	heraldonline.co.zw/mutota-monuments-a-hidden-treasure/
7	**2021**	Hurungwe Intangible Cultural Heritage Validation Exercise Completed	NewsDay	Print / Online	Intangible heritage; ceremonies; oral traditions; traditional knowledge	newsday.co.zw
8	**2021**	Craftsmanship on Verge of Extinction: The Dry-Stone Masons of Great Zimbabwe	The Standard	Print / Online	Tangible heritage; traditional craftsmanship; conservation; Great Zimbabwe	newsday.co.zw/thestandard/standard-style/article/6286/craftsmanship-on-verge-of-extinction
9	**2021**	Mbira Month: Celebrating Zimbabwe's UNESCO-Listed Musical Heritage	New Ziana / ZBC News	Online / Broadcast	Intangible heritage; traditional music; mbira; UNESCO	newziana.co.zw
10	**2021**	Fort Makaha Monument Lost to Illegal Mining — Heritage Officials Warn	The Herald	Print / Online	Tangible heritage; monument destruction; national heritage policy	herald.co.zw
11	**2022**	Indigenous Traditions Preserving Zim's Endangered Wildlife	NewsDay	Print / Online	Traditional knowledge; oral traditions; indigenous knowledge systems	newsday.co.zw/local-news/article/566/indigenous-traditions-preserving-zims-endangered-wildlife

12	**2022**	Craftsmanship on Verge of Extinction [extended feature]	The Standard (Standard Style)	Print / Online	Tangible heritage; dry-stone masonry; traditional craftsmanship; Great Zimbabwe	newsday.co.zw/thestandard/standard-style/article/6286
13	**2022**	Nambya Cultural Heritage Under Spotlight in New Book	The Standard (Life & Style)	Print / Online	Tangible heritage; stone walls; pre-colonial history; archaeological heritage	newsday.co.zw/thestandard/life-amp-style/article/200005516/nambya-cultural-heritage-under-spotlight-in-new-book
14	**2022**	Travelling & Touring: Matobo Hills Conquers World Tourism	The Standard	Print / Online	Tangible heritage; UNESCO World Heritage Sites; rock art; heritage tourism	thestandard.co.zw/standard-style/article/3950/travelling-038-touring-matobo-hills-conquers-world-tourism
15	**2022**	Zimbabwe Reaps Benefits from UNESCO's Recognition of Mbira	New Ziana	Online	Intangible heritage; traditional music; mbira; UNESCO recognition	newziana.co.zw/zimbabwe-reaps-benefits-from-unescos-recognition-of-mbira/
16	**2022**	UNOPS Begins Rehabilitation and Development of Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site	The Herald / ZBC News	Print / Broadcast	Tangible heritage; heritage conservation; Great Zimbabwe restoration	herald.co.zw
17	**2022**	Enriching Climate Change Discourses with Indigenous Knowledge	NewsDay (Opinion)	Print / Online	Traditional knowledge; indigenous knowledge systems; rainmaking ceremonies	newsday.co.zw/opinion-analysis/article/200012065

		Perspectives				
18	**2023**	Great Zimbabwe US$475K Restoration, Preservation Kitty Commissioned	NewsDay	Print / Online	Tangible heritage; heritage conservation; Great Zimbabwe; NMMZ	newsday.co.zw/local-news/article/200011981/great-zimbabwe-us475k-restoration-preservation-kitty-commissioned
19	**2023**	Nambya Heritage Under the Spotlight [Hwange Symposium Coverage]	Southern Eye (NewsDay Group)	Print / Online	Tangible heritage; archaeological heritage; Nambya state; stone monuments	newsday.co.zw/southerneye/news/article/200006436/nambya-heritage-under-the-spotlight
20	**2023**	Reconnecting with the Roots: Zim Traditional Ceremonies	The Zimbabwe Independent	Print / Online	Intangible heritage; ceremonies; rituals; Bira; rainmaking; oral traditions	newsday.co.zw/theindependent/opinion/article/200017993/reconnecting-with-the-roots-zim-traditional-ceremonies
21	**2023**	Museums Are Zim's Conduits for Its Culture and Heritage	NewsDay / The Standard	Print / Online	Tangible heritage; museums; living heritage; Great Zimbabwe; Shona culture	newsday.co.zw
22	**2023**	How Cultural Heritage Can Support Zimbabwe's Economic Development	The Daily Maverick (Zimbabwe coverage)	Online	Heritage policy; tangible and intangible heritage; heritage economics	dailymaverick.co.za
23	**2023**	Wildlife Transforms Mbire Community [CAMPFI	The Herald	Print / Online	Heritage-adjacent; wildlife conservation; Mbire district;	herald.co.zw

		RE Coverage]			community heritage	
24	**2023**	National Arts Council Hosts Annual Mbira Month: Heritage in Focus	ZBC News / New Ziana	Broadcast / Online	Intangible heritage; mbira; traditional music; performing arts	newziana.co.zw
25	**2024**	Exploring Zimbabwe's UNESCO World Heritage Sites	The Herald Online	Online	Tangible heritage; UNESCO sites; Great Zimbabwe; Matobo Hills; heritage tourism	heraldonline.co.zw
26	**2024**	UNESCO and Partners Celebrate Great Zimbabwe Development Project Milestones	ZBC News / The Herald	Broadcast / Print	Tangible heritage; heritage conservation; Great Zimbabwe; NMMZ; UNESCO	herald.co.zw
27	**2024**	Identifying and Protecting Cultural Heritage Sites: Role of Traditional Leaders	The Herald Online	Online	Tangible and intangible heritage; traditional leadership; heritage governance	heraldonline.co.zw
28	**2024**	Preserving Zimbabwean Culture in the Digital Age	The Herald Online	Online	Intangible heritage; oral traditions; cultural preservation; digital heritage	heraldonline.co.zw/preserving-zimbabwean-culture-in-the-digital-age/
29	**2024**	Govt Moves to Promote Cultural	NewsDay	Print / Online	Intangible heritage; ceremonies; oral traditions;	newsday.co.zw/local-news/article/200037402/govt-moves-to-promote-cultural-heritage-sites

		Heritage Sites			Hurungwe Mountain; heritage policy	
30	**2024**	Feature: Mbire Feature on Heritage and Community Conservation	The Chronicle / NewsDay	Print / Online	Heritage-adjacent; Mbire district; indigenous knowledge; conservation	chronicle.co.zw

Note: *This list is indicative rather than exhaustive. Articles were identified through systematic searches of Zimbabwean media archives and online platforms. Some articles address heritage as a primary subject; others engage with it as a secondary or contextual theme within coverage of conservation, tourism, government policy, or community development. URL prefixes (e.g., newsday.co.zw) indicate the home domain; full URLs are available upon request. ZBC broadcast items may be verified via ZBC online archives (zbc.co.zw). Articles marked with an asterisk (*) in the URL column were accessed and verified during the study period.Compiled for dissertation purposes. Study period: January 2020 – December 2024.*