



## Decolonising research methods to indigenous knowledge system

Nobutu Mooka Kalenga<sup>1</sup>, Harrison Shanduba<sup>2</sup>, Joseph Mate<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The University of Zambia, Kabwe, Zambia

<sup>2</sup> Kabwe District Health Office, Kabwe, Zambia

<sup>3</sup> Kwame Nkrumah University, Kabwe, Zambia

### Abstract

Eurocentric research methodologies have been in use for many years in Zambia. This hegemony was imposed by all former colonies of the colonialism and imperialism. Because of this, the indigenous knowledge and its holders have been sidelined resulting into little or no developmental achievements for centuries even after political liberation. Hence Codestria (2019) proposed a need to come up with contemporary and new authentic Afrocentric research methodologies that will climatise to the African academic and professional environment. This can be done by decolonizing research methodologies to emerge from indigenous Knowledge System. Decolonisation creates just and equitable systems away from Eurocentric research methodologies, thus addressing inequality through education, dialogue, communication and action. It is about cultural, psychological and economic freedom for indigenous people towards achieving sovereignty, the right and ability to practice self-determination in research (Beifi and Sandiford, 2021). The aim was to establish whether research methods are decolonized to indigenous knowledge system in Zambia. The objectives were to find out what decolonizing research methods to indigenous knowledge systems meant to Zambian researchers, to establish research methods that decolonizes to indigenous knowledge research methodologies and extract the benefits of decolonizing research methods to indigenous knowledge systems. The study design was qualitative and had twenty (20) participants comprising researchers and non-researchers. Interviews were used to collect the data. The findings were that most non-researchers were not aware of decolonizing research methods. Others had no problems with the current research methods though expressed a need to come up with new or modified ones. Some participants were of the view that most of the Indigenous knowledge systems research methodologies were not documented. The conclusion was that ethical research teams were hindering publications of papers through altering topics by following colonized rules. The study recommended that decolonized research methods should be employed to change things that colonises policies and education systems.

**Keywords:** Decolonisation, decolonised research methods, indigenous knowledge systems, Eurocentric research methodologies, Afrocentric research methodologies

### Introduction

#### Background

Research is a phenomenon that has been carried out worldwide including the African countries. The puzzle is, with all those research done, the continent still lags behind. The reality is that most research activities have been and continue to be guided by Eurocentric methodologies from colonial time to contemporary times (Chigebenga, 2022). Codestria (2019) lamented that despite using these methodologies most of the African communities have remained marginal and little has been achieved due to alien ways used among the indigenous people in Africa (Zambia Inclusive). Despite attaining political independence, African research methodologies have continued on Western worldview and epistemology (Keane and Seehawen, 2017). Because of this, indigenous knowledge and its holders have been jeopardized for perpetual use of Eurocentric methodologies. Thus, Codestria (2019) proposed that as African continent must come up with contemporary and new authentic Afrocentric methodologies to address the issues affecting its communities.

In view of the above, decolonizing research methods to Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) was the focus in this study to address the knowledge gap identified. Inadequate decolonisation impetus to the creation of just and equitable systems, addressing inequality through education, dialogue, communication and action. This decolonisation is about

cultural, psychological and economic freedom for indigenous people towards achieving sovereignty, the right and ability to practice self-determination over systems (Beifi and Sandiford, 2021). In their study on decolonizing Research Method, Dombrowski, Rotenberg and Black (2013) found that native people have been notoriously misrepresented, romanticized and denigrated as lazy and ignorant. This distorted view was used to justify, killing, confining them, destroying their cultures and taking their lands. In agreement, Williams (2023) explains that this has resulted in many indigenous people often understandably skeptical on how they and their knowledge are represented. Much of the colonialists of indigenous groups achieved their agenda by stamping out their knowledge and imposing theirs upon the local people.

Researchers are requested to reflect on various research methods that can have positive results and impact on society and challenge existing methods riddled with colonial epistemology. This entails having a research agenda that is owned locally and employs local knowledge, values and beliefs. Besides, there is a call to pay more attention to the relevance of research and researchers in the global scene (Mawere, 2019, Ndege and Onyango, 2021 and Mate, 2023)<sup>[7]</sup>. It has been discovered that some research has in fact resulted in Africa suffering from a resource curse of collectors and discoverers of African material resources, cultural artifacts and knowledge for a long time now. This

has prompted these researchers to carry out research on decolonizing research methods to indigenous knowledge systems in Zambia.

### Literature Review

This section reviewed literature highlighting decolonized research methodologies as well as indigenous knowledge system.

Decolonized research methodology is one that is utilized to challenge the research methods that undermine the local knowledge and experiences of the marginalized population (Goduka *et al.*, 2014). For research to be relevant and improve the quality of life of indigenous people, it should be driven by indigenous worldviews, cultural values and a language that is relevant to the indigenous group with whom research is undertaken (Taylor and Francis, 2019). It should also be propelled by constructive discussions on knowledge systems and how these systems restrain and exclude other forms of knowledge and the kind of actions needed for these systems to be more open and integrated. Zavala (2013) advises researchers to note that decolonizing research is not as much about the method but more about the spaces that can enable the research process and that through this process, researchers' identities also become reshaped or transformed. Minorities often feel bothered and misrepresented by Social Science Research (Trembath, Koord and Borchardt, 2017). As a result, there is a need for African researchers to use methodologies that take into consideration of its people.

More attention to the relevance of research in the global and how researchers are addressing current sustainability challenges is being called. For instance, the case of Covid-19 pandemic gave attention to the role of research and evidence in decision making. Coronavirus hastened methodological innovations in allowing and forcing researchers to conduct various types of research differently through accelerated reviews, synthesis for evidence and the use of digital technologies such as online platforms and social media. Researchers explored methods for their own contexts and reflected on the decolonizing research. (Ndege and Onyango, 2021) [7].

A look at coloniality reveals that it has not only been associated with territorial control, but also education general life of the colonised even resulting in controlling research (Ndege and Onyango, 2021) [7]. The struggles for decolonizing have evolved from the undoing of colonial rule to the even more fundamental challenge of freeing knowledge, practice and culture in light of the growing global decolonization movement, which questions various aspects of coloniality. According to Ndege and Onyango (2021) [7], decoloniality comprises of four thematic areas such as opening up space for free thinking, critique positions of power and dominant culture, considering the relationship of the researcher with the researched and unpacking disciplinary tensions and conflicts. All these imply that free thinking should be in context with local knowledge and experience in research methodologies that challenge the dominant. Further re-doing colonial rule means looking for some level of positionality to contradict aspects around serving power. Furthermore in decolonization, a researcher should see a researched beyond mere subjects of a research but key stakeholders and co-creators of local knowledge. Hence a need of

acknowledging these components of research disciplines and exploring how to contextually build functional research. In addition, Ndege and Onyango (2021) [7] suggested that continuous debates on complexities, critiquing research methodologies and considering the various world views could be a powerful tool. This is possible by understanding the powerful forces that shape research, supporting a deliberate and continuous engagement of current dominant views. The fight for documenting cases that challenge the normative could be considered and effectively documented. Decolonizing the policies and political power which stresses some methods and closing down others is an important key in the process of expressing methods that would literally support alternative thinking. Lumpa (2017) [6] stresses on how African rural communities have over many years, depended on indigenous knowledge on several aspects such as climate, agriculture, medicine, health, education in the absence of conventional knowledge generated by scientific research or statistical information. Researchers should note that indigenous knowledge is part of the lives of the rural communities. Such people's livelihood depends almost entirely on specific skills and essential knowledge of their culture. Indigenous knowledge in Zambia comprise of the construction and maintenance of the canal systems which are used for transport and irrigation in the Baroste Plains, Lukanga Swamps and Bangweulu Swamps, *chitemene* (tree, branches and burning) traditional system of agriculture among the Lala, Bemba Bisa and others, salt making and traditional medicine in various parts of Zambia. Therefore, it is clear that indigenous knowledge is the basis for self-sufficiency and self determination for the local communities although rapid changes globally are viewing it as being extinct today. Several communities are losing the indigenous knowledge skills, technologies, artifacts, problem solving strategies and expertise. Due to this, the younger generation is commonly impoverished, unemployed and often destitute as they are unable to fend for themselves in the abundance of natural resources Zambia is endowed with. Therefore, it is important for modern researchers and local communities to work together to avoid the manipulation and commercialization of indigenous knowledge and exclusion of local communities from benefiting indigenous people.

Research by Mbewe, Phiri and Siyambango (2019) [4] hypothesize that for centuries, many communities have used indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) as a critical knowledge base and survival tool for adapting to extreme climate events and other natural hazards. They have developed resilient techniques and strategies for forecasting weather events and managing climate variability including coping mechanisms to respond to harsh conditions of the local environments. The indicators for weather predictions do not generally differ among communities that are in the same areas. These indicators are broadly classified as meteorological (moon and sun), biological (tree flowering and fruiting leaf burst, bird and insect movement and behavior), geographical (temperature extremes and wind movements) and some bird types are common indicators for short term forecasting (Cruz, 2007). Traditionally, farmers have also based their decisions about crops and irrigation cycles on indigenous knowledge for weather prediction. Chambers (1997) states that it is always important to learn from a community before starting to teach them anything else. In contemporary times, indigenous knowledge is seen

as part of the solution though on its own it is not adequate just as well as scientific knowledge (Agrawal, 1995, Briggs, 2005). According to Davis (2005), other research approaches have sought to problematise indigenous knowledge, which is not beneficial at all. Some researchers argue that indigenous knowledge offers a new methodological approach that builds on engaging rural communities as citizens in their own development trajectory.

### Research Methodology

The study approach was qualitative and had twenty (20) participants comprising researchers and the researched. Unstructured interviews were used to collect the data. The study used a descriptive research design adopted to establish possible measures to allow for an in-depth investigation in Zambia's local communities. The participants were drawn from Mulungushi University, Kwame Nkrumah University and Kabwe and Kapiri Mposhi communities. Non-random sampling method such as purposive and snowball techniques were used. The snowball technique was deemed appropriate used for community participants with expertise in Indigenous Knowledge while purposive sampling was utilised for researchers. The data was analyzed using qualitative methods such as content and thematic analysis.

### Results of the Study

The results were presented as follows according to the objectives of the study as headlines for easy handling and understanding:-

#### 1. The Meaning of Decolonizing Research Methods to Indigenous Knowledge Systems from Zambian Researchers

The participants were asked to express their knowledge on the meaning of 'decolonising research methods'. Most of the researchers interviewed exhibited unawareness while others were comfortable with current research methodologies and therefore, they had little or nothing to think of new methodologies of doing research such as decolonised research methods as can be tracked from the nine participants below.

R1 "May be if you could explain further what it means"

R 2 "There is no problem with the way we conduct research but what I see is issue of dissemination and when it comes to publishing we just go for any journal. We don't sit and look at a journal which could be good enough for our publication to have our information disseminated and the other thing is that I see a number of us don't attend the conference to go and disseminate."

R 3 "Current methods are ok it depends on how it is conducted, how an individual conducts the research. What is important when you are doing research, collecting data you have to explain to your respondents, explain clearly and you have to use the language that they understand and currently that we are allowed as researchers to interpret even the questionnaire into local language."

R4 "It is a question of mixing"

R5 "When I look at research it is something universal and so there is no way we can have other new methodologies that suits African community"

R6 "I have never thought about it."

R7 "We need to be where the world is, that is important".

R8 "Decolonised research method is to try to divorce ourselves from the colonial system and the colonial ways of knowing and colonial ways of doing things. If you look at colonization, how it started and its influence on us it has affected us politically, linguistically, culturally and economic this is because colonial system continues to impact on us even after independence we still have a lot of things that are still colonized"

R9 "decolonization is now using the tools of the local societies, the voice of the local people, the voice of the local community that is what we are talking about, how it can be outspoken research at present that is what we are looking at in this case"

The responses revealed that there seemed to be some limited understanding of the concept of *decolonizing research methods* among Zambian researchers. Some explicitly expressed lack of knowledge (R1, R6). Other researchers acknowledged the issue only vaguely or conflated it with unrelated concerns such as dissemination and publication practices (R2). This suggests a gap in exposure, training, or discourse around decolonial scholarship in Zambia.

Secondly, the study established the dominance of Western or Eurocentric paradigms. Several participants equated research with universality and standardization, implying that Western methods are the norm and sufficient. For instance, participant R3 emphasized using "current methods" as long as they are applied respectfully (such as using local languages) without questioning their epistemological foundations. In addition, participant R5 dismissed the idea of alternative methodologies, framing research as "universal" and thus resistant to indigenization (Mate, 2023). Similarly, participant R7 stressed the importance of keeping pace with the "world," reinforcing Eurocentric dominance by equating global with Western practices. This indicates an internalization of colonial epistemologies, where Western knowledge systems are positioned as the global standards. In fact, there emerged some resistance and tension among research staff. Some researchers resist the idea of decolonising (R5, R7), possibly due to perceptions that decolonial approaches undermine academic credibility or global competitiveness.

Despite the general unawareness, it was interesting to find 'emerging critical voices' from minority of participants demonstrated a more critical stance. One participant, R8 explicitly connected colonialism to ongoing political, cultural, linguistic, and economic impacts, framing decolonization as a necessary response. In agreement, participant R9 described decolonizing methods as privileging local voices and tools, which align with broader global decolonial discourse. These responses reflect an incipient awareness of decolonial approaches, though they remain exceptions rather than the norm.

If the lack of or inadequate sensitization, on questioning the dominance of Eurocentric methodologies, the contemporary studies and those to be conducted in future, they will be more western oriented thus less fruit-bearing in effectively addressing Zambia's indigenous problems and to the extension, African problems too. The continued missed opportunity for indigenous knowledge integration without deliberate efforts, entails that research risks continuing to marginalize African epistemologies and privileging Western frameworks. The findings point to a need for capacity building, workshops, and dialogue around decolonizing

research, as most participants had not engaged with the concept meaningfully.

## 2. Research Methods that Decolonises Knowledge on Indigenous Knowledge

The study collected the data that related to the research methodologies that could aid to decolonize and integrate indigenous knowledge system in studies.

### Research Design

The participants recommended that qualitative research designs such explanatory, exploratory, narrative inquiry, ethnography and case studies were well placed in the effort of decolonizing research methodologies. Participants generally felt that such designs would promote the understanding and safeguarding indigenous knowledge system and people's cultural heritage. For instance:

R8 "the research design is one of the areas we are fighting to decolonize. We must go to the non probability kind, qualitative research design and narrative. When we are designing ethnography theory is developed while data is being collected but we also have ethnography where we go in a society and live with people, eat what they have, practice their cultural practice from that we can now build the knowledge and document case study."

R4 "Indigenous Knowledge System for example if I talk of quantitative, most of the times it is quiet difficult when you want to administer but when you talk of qualitative, a method that helps people to explain themselves in their own language where you just allow someone to just tell their experience in their own way of understanding things, that way you may get richer information than when they are tied to certain methods that you may be using as a researcher. For example you tell them, I have a questionnaire and these are the questions, it will be different when you just allow them to share just the experience in a certain area. I think we should be more flexible and allow people to just share their stories."

From the voices of the participants, the study established that there was a need for changing the narrative on how research on Zambian and African oriented phenomena and their solutions be interrogated by designs such as narrative and case studies that need to be advocated to be appropriate for African research methodologies, which are essentially qualitative.

### Sampling

The study sought to explore the perceptions of the key informants on sampling research related to indigenous systems. On this matter, the participants felt that purposive sampling and snowballing would be some of the ideal type of sampling techniques for the African set-up.

R8 "Western knowledge is a representative. If interviewed 3 people for PhD or 2 people they will say no that is not valid because the sample was too small. You ask them what is the standard sample size that can be used they will also not tell you. So if there is no standard sample, I sampled 2, if I picked 3 experts in quantitative they will tell me to have 300, 500 for me to sample from but what I am searching is valid data. We are not using a probability sampling. In local is to look for someone with experience. For example who has experienced the flood. Why should I give an equal chance? Violence at home and use simple random there is a chance that some of the participants I will choose may not

have experienced such. In decolonization we argue that we target those people who have the knowledge. We should not cast our net so wide if we do so we shall have fish, tortoise, and crocodile in that net then in the end we start removing the things we don't want. Can't we get the things we want only and leave out what we don't want, that is liberation. That is why we rely mainly in purposive sampling and snowballing."

When there is no new data it is enough validation and the data collection stops. Why should we continue collecting data? therefore when we are looking for indigenous in the field we target the eldest people men and women because they are the custodian of the culture and then target the middle age to see people have moved this information, they have shared it for continuity and target the young ones to see if they have experienced. When I was in Chief Musokotwane and Chief Sikute areas, I found one old lady may be in her 80s, during the interviews one aspect was on indigenous knowledge. People have known foods that we have been eating from way back in memorial, the young people are no longer eating them because they have gone western and we are losing that. When we are doing sampling we target those purposively and also using snowball because they know each other."

The results here indicated that sampling methods should be none random, with suitable techniques which could, among others, purposeful and snowballing which will enable collecting data that is suitable to solve African problems. This is because the purpose may not be so much about generalization but more of immersing oneself in establishing in-depth realities; in studies for understanding the contextual scenarios.

### Data Collection

One of the participants (R8) lamented the way data is collected using Eurocentric methodology which are bureaucratic and advised a correct way of collecting data in an African setting that are accepted. He proposed unstructured method, Participatory, observation, flexibility way of collecting data and not rigid. He further recommended a researcher him/herself as a tool.

R8 "We use unstructured method and the researcher. We use a researcher as a tool for data collection. For example in participatory and observation. The renown Professor Mtonga, then of the University of Zambia, did a PhD study about the *Nyau* of Eastern Province. These are a protective group, they don't share that information to everyone, in wanting to know what happens inside, someone is initiated and being trained into *Nyau*. Therefore, an interview cannot be the best method to collect data nor questionnaire. In this case a researcher is the best to become a tool by joining and be one of them. Prof Mtonga became one of adult outsiders to penetrate this highly secretive group and ended up being trained as a *Nyau*. This enabled The Professor to collect enough data to write a dissertation and it sits at UNZA. He did it as a participatory data. As an outsider one can't see what is inside such as Kuomboka only when one become part and parcel. Eurocentric will argue that a researcher is not a tool, a tool is a questionnaire. Indigenous researcher must be part and parcel. A researcher must experience and see, listen and participate. The Westerners have a different perception, they interpret things just from what they see. Whites claimed that they came to Africa and they discovered. They found those things in Africa but they went

to claim they discovered. The White man went to the Victoria falls and found it. Who took them their? It was the Leya, Lozi and the Kololo. David Livingstone named it Victoria Falls using western orientation of naming thing and claiming they discovered such even when indigenous knew about it for centuries but Whites came to claim such heritage which created and still promote colonization. It is not Victoria Falls, The Leya's and age-owners call it *Shungu Namutitima* 'meaning' *the rainbow that cause vibration*. The Lozi told him that it was called *Mosi oo Tunya* (the smoke that thunders' but him comes Victoria falls and we are very happy with Victoria falls decolonization should be removed."

Further, R8 advocated "We decolonize data collection" and lamented. Flexibility of collecting data not a rigid one where we cannot change. As a researcher one can change depending on what has been found that is decolonizing. We make it to our test so that we collect the data we want. The whites want certain information we give and that has gone in politics in Africa and it has come to neocolonise Africa. We have been decolonized but now we are colonizing ourselves. Africa colonizing another Africa If you don't have information you are colonized the ones with information are decolonized." Information found in Europe but it is African information. A Zambian failed to collect a Zambian Data and we have accepted a European way of Bureaucratic that only the Permanent Secretary can allow, go to the director not available, being stopped by Zambians. I have just walked out, the white man walks in he collects the data. In Special collection don't come with a gadget only paper and pen, the white man had a camera and he was capturing the data meanwhile a Zambian pen and paper. We are still colonized and regarding the white as superior and Zambians inferior. Once the data collection is disturbed the entire research is disturbed. We need authentic data. Data must be accessible. We need to decolonize this aspect. Too much colonization, Zambian information was free out there. We are still colonized and we cannot save our colleagues the information even when we have a need, whites have more information than ourselves. For us was tradition, you just go to the chief and through the chief you get the information."

Here, the findings were that the effective ways of collecting data were the unstructured methods, participatory ones, observation and other flexible ways. Such methods were discovered to be tools that could resonate well with local people and culture thus appropriate in the collection of data in Zambia and Africa.

### **Data Analysis**

In terms of data analysis Participant R8 narrated that; "For us analysis of data is thematic analysis. Data that is safe not theories and the data that saves the community. Anything that has value from the local should be preserved. Boys would collect firewood that would be used in the evening to make fire and be told stories. They had value for old people. Our traditional stories were called folktales. Stories are not for entertainment. Stories hold cultures and traditions and they are narratives and at the end of the stories there was a morale wisdom, children knew how to interpret and not just a story but attaching life story."

Summary of the finding, data analysis recommended was thematic as it displays information very well and in details

and validation is about the importance of the findings to people.

The participants who favour the decolonisation of research methodologies emphasized the significance of qualitative research designs such as narrative inquiry, ethnography, exploratory and explanatory approaches, and case studies as central to decolonising methodologies. The main argument was that these designs were seen as better suited for capturing lived experiences, cultural practices, and indigenous perspectives. Participant R8, for example, highlighted ethnography as a way of immersing oneself in communities. He said that researchers "live with people, eat what they have, practice their cultural practice" to build knowledge from within. This reflects an awareness that positivist, standardized methods may erase or flatten local voices and epistemologies, perpetuating colonial patterns of knowledge extraction.

Participants saw research design itself as a site of decolonization hence the need of decolonising research through the way of designing research. R8 explicitly stated that "the research design is one of the areas we are fighting to decolonize." This suggests that the struggle is not only about data collection techniques but also about rethinking the foundations of inquiry whose questions matter on how knowledge is validated, and what forms of evidence are valued. Ethnography, narrative, and case study methods were found suitable as they are framed not just as methodological choices but as philosophical alignments with African contexts (Afrocentric worldview). The narrative inquiry and storytelling, for instance, emerged as powerful vehicles for indigenous knowledge. R4 emphasized the richness of stories told in participants' own words and languages, pointing out how flexibility and openness allow deeper understanding. This underscores the cultural resonance of oral traditions and narrative forms in African contexts, where knowledge is often transmitted intergenerationally through stories rather than abstract metrics.

Advocacy for qualitative dominance: The findings suggest that researchers see qualitative designs not as supplementary but as essential for African-oriented research. This leads to the integration of cultural practices where there are methods that allow researchers to immerse themselves in communities and respect local cultural practices are perceived as vital to safeguarding indigenous knowledge. This becomes one of the key cornerstones of the much needed advocacy for qualitative dominance. This calls for a need for paradigm shift as study designs such as narrative inquiry ethnographic reflects an effort to reshape African research epistemologies; from extractive, external analysis to collaborative, community-rooted knowledge production. The findings highlight a growing recognition among Zambian researchers that decolonizing research requires privileging qualitative methodologies that align with African ways of knowing. Narrative, ethnography, and case study approaches are valued not only for their methodological flexibility but also for their philosophical resonance with indigenous traditions of storytelling, community immersion, and lived practice. By moving away from rigid, quantitative-dominated models, researchers aim to reclaim African epistemologies and ensure that research reflects local realities, voices, and heritage.

When it comes to sampling, purposive and snowball sampling were identified as most suitable for indigenous

contexts. Participants critiqued Eurocentric insistence on large, representative samples, noting that this often undermines the value of in-depth, experience-based data. R8 vividly explained that in African contexts, the goal is not to cast a wide net, but to intentionally target knowledge holders (e.g., elders, cultural custodians, and middle-aged people who transmit traditions). Sampling was thus framed as contextual, knowledge-driven, and purposive, rather than statistical or generalizable.

The interpretation was that sampling in decolonised research prioritizes depth over breadth. By deliberately selecting those who carry cultural memory (elders) and those who inherit and transmit it (youth and middle-aged groups), researchers safeguard continuity of indigenous knowledge. This represents a shift from Eurocentric ideals of randomness and representativeness toward Afrocentric principles of relevance, wisdom, and authenticity. Some of the key insights from the participants were called for unstructured, participatory, and observational methods, where the researcher becomes a tool. An example of the late Prof. Mtonga's Nyau study, where he immersed himself and was initiated into this masqueraded secretive group, illustrates the need for insider participation rather than detached observation. Participants in favour of indigenising research methodologies blamed rigid Eurocentric tools like structured questionnaires for not being participatory and they thus rejected such tools as inappropriate, bureaucratic, and alienating. Several participants critiqued colonial bureaucracy in accessing data, where African researchers face restrictions while foreign researchers often gain easier access, reinforcing epistemic inequality. Storytelling, oral traditions, and community participation were identified as culturally resonant approaches. The effort and process of decolonising data collection emphasize immersion, participation, subjectivity, and flexibility rather than detachment, rigidity, and objectivity. In such studies, the researchers are not "neutral outsiders" but participants, listeners, and co-creator of knowledge. This reflects African epistemologies that value experience, relationality, and trust. It also exposes systemic barriers (bureaucracy, unequal access, privileging of foreign scholars) that perpetuate colonization of African knowledge.

Key insights that were in the thematic analysis was suggested as the most appropriate approach. Participants emphasized that analysis should be community-centered and should preserve values, morals, and cultural wisdom. Know validation was described not in statistical terms, but in terms of cultural relevance and community recognition. This is supported by a study done among Batoka and Baleya people in southern Zambia (Mate, 2023) For instance, Mate observed that folktales were seen as carriers of wisdom, morality, and communal interpretation, not mere entertainment.

The interpretation was that conclusively, data analysis in a decolonised framework shifts from abstract theorizing to meaning-making rooted in lived realities. This view focuses on appreciating that knowledge is validated when it is useful, meaningful, and morally aligned with community values and not when it passes Western criteria of validity and reliability. The participants situated research as an act of preservation and transmission of cultural heritage (Mate, 2023).

### **3. Benefits of Decolonising Research Methods to Indigenous Knowledge Systems**

The study explored the benefits of decolonising the research methodologies to suit the African research landscape. Below are the views of the participants:

#### **Decolonising research methodologies and publications**

R2 "Paper to be marked has to meet the standard that has been laid down by the colonial masters. Due to this people have not published. If we could come up with our own decolonization research methods a lot of people would have been publishing papers."

"I can give myself as an example I did research at bachelor level "On knowledge attitude and practice of antenatal mothers towards an early booking for antenatal" because we were following those old systems where one need to have a certain number of respondents and participants and that was a Bachelor of Science in Nursing some 10 years back. That paper up to now is not published. I am mending it now to march the master's and other papers standards which were laid down by colonialists." I am now saying if we could come up with our own methods, we decolonize so that we have our own standards.

R4 "Not comfortable with the current situation, the methodologies as it does not encourage to publish more. The system when it comes to the research there is so much bureaucracy, the researchers have to go through all the stages for them to rich there, it takes time because of the huge number of people that are applying for example you as a researcher to be cleared it takes time. I think there should be ways of shortening these processes so that people can publish more. I think it could be better to talk about learning institutions like University of Zambia, as a student you have to take research to ethics committee at Ridgeway from there you have to take it again to National Research Authority and when it is approved that is when you collect the data. Just for the research to go through these two research groups sometimes it takes more than four months. The process delays even when a student is able to work through and finish within six months, they are not able to do all these and I am thinking all these could be because of few people reviewing these documents and they are so. If all these could be worked on I think more Zambians would publish."

R4 "The problem starts with our systems when it comes to publishing. Students can even publish our research with our university but those who have attempted to publish with the university it takes forever so they decide to just publish with these international urgencies. so we need to work on our system ourselves as Zambians we should be able to work efficiently the way these international urgencies are able to work because when you pay money within a short period of time they will look at your research and give you feed back to do corrections and then you publish but then our system you will not graduate if you say I will publish with our university it takes forever. If we are able to publish using our own university it means we will have our own standards as Zambians. We are forced to follow these standards because our systems are not ok starting from clearance urgencies like ethics committee they take months to clear the studies and then if you want to publish it takes forever and give up that is why we are tied to following colonized standards because we have no choice somehow we are colonized by choice because we can do something on these systems ourselves and make them more flexible acceptable

by Zambians. Zambians should prefer to publish locally than publishing international.”

The findings on decolonising research methods to indigenous systems would encourage more researchers to conduct research and disseminate. Further, such moves will lead to collecting true and useful data for developing African countries. In fact, most participants were of the view that to decolonise the methodologies benefits include Afrocentrically conduct studies, viewing of African realities, document indigenous knowledge systems. Another benefit was based on engineering and generating more articles and publication, collecting of authentic data and solving Zambia’s own problems in an African way.

### **Decolonising research methodologies, collecting authentic data and solving our Zambian problems**

As researchers build relationship with the research participants by interacting with them it is easy to collect authentic data through experiences and observation.

R8“As we interact with the people during that process we learn what the people experience and what the people know and together we construct knowledge and so we decolonize research methods.”

Relating to solving our own problems in Africa and Zambia at large will be an obvious as it can be seen from the research that was carried out by one of the participants.

R3“I put it upon myself to make sure that this information these women have told me is going to benefit them and I went to ministry of health I made an appointment with ministry of health that is what the women are saying. I went to clinics and I said this is what the women are saying and through that we have what is called Maternal care ‘they have come up with guidelines on how to have respectful maternal care because the women were talking about how we receive them”

Summary of the finding. In representing real needs of the people as in reflecting their experiences and solving their problems being authentic is cardinal.

### **Discussion**

#### **The Meaning of Decolonizing Research Methods to Indigenous Knowledge Systems from Zambian Researchers**

It was clear from the results that most of the researchers do not understand what decolonising research methods to indigenous mean. This implies that researchers might not decolonize the research methods that could impact and solve the indigenous problems as Ndenge and Onyango (2021) are advocating. These writers are calling researchers and research community to reflect on various research methods that could have positive outcomes and impact society and challenge existing methods. Onyango (2021) emphasizes that decolonization must be a continuous process of anticolonial struggle that honors indigenous approaches to knowing the world that recognizes indigenous land, peoples and indigenous sovereignty. Considering the indispensability of the matter, the only remedy to achieve viable decolonized research methods is to sensitise the researchers on studies like this one. Keikelame and Swartz (2019) [5] highlight on increasing importance of researchers critically reflecting on approaches that can have a positive impact on the health outcomes of indigenous people.

### **Research Methods that Decolonises to Indigenous Knowledge**

The examination of decolonising research methods to indigenous Knowledge systems brought out more tilted ways of doing research in a Zambian way perhaps Africa as a whole. Research instruments suggested are Researchers themselves through observations and participatory instead of questionnaires and interviews. Keikelame and Swartz (2019) [5] supports the revealed research methods in this study that when indigenous people become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed. For research to be relevant and improve the quality of life of indigenous people it should be driven by indigenous worldviews, cultural values and a language that is relevant to the indigenous group with whom research is undertaken. Research designs as qualitative, narrative and case study. Sampling Method which is flexible and one that brings results from the right people harboring the information. Data collection must be unstructured and participatory. In support of the above, we see Ndenge and Onyango (2021) [7] calling the researchers to decolonise research and research agendas which are often detached from local contexts and situations. Further they say that there is need to open up space for free thinking with regard to context, where local knowledge and local experiences in research methodologies challenge the Eurocentric (often dominant) approach to research. Scholars writing in this field of decolonization argue that researchers should use an indigenous lens in all phases of the project to scrutinise the choice of theoretical frameworks and methodologies they use and how research findings can be translated into activities that promote social justice (Keikelame and Swartz, 2019) [5].

### **Benefits of Decolonising Research Methods to Indigenous Knowledge Systems**

The endowments of this arrangement cannot be overemphasized. The benefits are several. The study reviewed such benefits as more articles being published, collecting authentic data, solving our own problems in an African way. According to Warren *et al.*, (1995), Indigenous knowledge is relevant, valid and useful for most rural development projects.

Another benefit is the advancement of Afrocentric perspectives in the research landscape of the Zambian and African worldview. Decolonisation enables research to reflect African realities, priorities, and indigenous systems, rather than imported frameworks (Mate, 2023). Here, the interpretation is that the benefits are both practical (easier publication, reduced bureaucracy, more authentic data) and philosophical (African ownership of knowledge, validation of indigenous epistemologies, empowerment of communities). Ultimately, decolonising research is not only about methods, but also about academic sovereignty-reclaiming the authority to define standards, processes, and knowledge systems for Africa.

The overall synthesis is that cross sampling, data collection, and analysis, participants emphasized:

### **Implication to Research and Practice**

Research to change certain things that are decolonising such as policies, education system that is sharp at the top made

by whites. By design the Africa child was not supposed to reach the top. Majority should enter primary that is why at the time they left us with no universities but they left primary schools and some secondary school. Our research in this decolonised should give informed decision and transform the systems.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Indigenous Knowledge System passes through to the community by word of mouth and not documented. Therefore Researchers should ensure documenting and disseminating all what is being done in the motherland of Zambia. Only Research Methods that are tilted to African culture should be adapted. Research Ethical Committees to only examine what jeopardizes the safety in the land. Flexibility Research Systems are cardinal.

### **Future Research**

Implementation of Decolonising of Research Methods to indigenous knowledge in Zambia

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