

Reviving Zimbabwean Traditional Dance through Popular Youth Culture

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Abstract

As Zimbabwean youth increasingly gravitate toward modern, globally influenced music and dance, traditional cultural expressions risk fading into obscurity. This study investigates how traditional Zimbabwean dance forms can be integrated into contemporary youth culture to preserve cultural heritage in the face of globalised trends. Grounded in Raymond Williams' concept of "culture as a whole way of life" and Homi Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity, the research also employs the positive deviance approach to engage a group of young creatives in experimenting with cultural fusions. The study was conceived as action research, and data was collected through field observations and interviews with dancers and creatives. Findings suggest that by identifying and promoting those individuals who have already begun blending traditional and contemporary dance, the revitalisation of Zimbabwean dance heritage can foster cultural continuity and serve as an avenue for youth self-expression. The results contribute to ongoing discussions on cultural preservation, innovation in cultural expression, and the role of the arts in civic engagement and social change.

Keywords: Cultural promotion and preservation; traditional music and dance; cultural hybridity; liquid modernity; youth culture

Introduction

Zimbabwe boasts a tapestry of diverse musical traditions, each deeply intertwined with dance. As a multi-cultural country, Zimbabwe's traditional music genres are just as varied as the ethnic groupings inhabiting the country. Welsh-Asante (2000,6) argues that "one cannot discuss Zimbabwean dance as an entity when Zimbabwe contains so many different ethnic groups, each with their own particular history and subculture." However, there is a consensus that the Shona and the Ndebele are the two major ethnic groups in Zimbabwe (Bhebhe and Ngoepe 2023; Zvingowanisei 2024).

Although the Shona and Ndebele are the dominant ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, smaller ethnic communities continue to practise and preserve their distinct cultures and traditions. One key aspect of this cultural preservation is through traditional dance. For example, the Shangwe have the *jichi*; the Kalanga have the *amabhiza*; and the Ndau identify with the *muchongoyo*. Similarly, *mbakumba*, *jerusarema*, and *shangara* are associated with the Shona, whereas the *amabhiza*, *amantshomane*, and *isitshikitsha* are linked to Ndebele people (Mutero 2018).

Notwithstanding the rich diversity, traditional music and dance are losing their appeal among Zimbabwean youth. In this era of *liquid modernity* (Bauman 2013), where cultures and identities are constantly shifting, young people are drawn more to fleeting, fast-changing trends rather than traditional forms rooted in conservative values. This study investigates how traditional Zimbabwean dance forms can be creatively integrated into contemporary youth culture and assesses their potential to rekindle interest in traditional expressions among a generation increasingly drawn to globalised musical trends. Understanding this integration is significant as it addresses cultural preservation amidst global influences, explores innovation in cultural expressions, and examines the potential of traditional forms to remain relevant in an evolving social landscape.

Background Overview

Traditional cultural expressions are increasingly at risk of disappearing as global connections grow stronger. Cultural theorists like Appadurai (1990) have noted the "disjuncture" between global cultural influences and the resilience of local traditions. Similarly, Ulf Hannerz has explored how global and local cultures blend, often resulting in "cultural hybridity" that undermines traditional practices as discussed by Yelvington and Ramassote (2019). This tension is particularly evident in Zimbabwe, where vibrant indigenous dances are fading as young people increasingly embrace globalised pop culture. Mubaya and Dzingayi (2014, 136) lament that traditional music and dance are being pushed to the periphery, especially in urban areas, as youth turn toward more transient, globalised cultural forms.

The decline in the appeal of traditional music among the youth in Zimbabwe can be attributed to several interrelated factors, including the rise of contemporary music genres, socio-economic challenges, and the influence of global popular culture. One

significant factor shaping contemporary youth culture is the rise of Zimdancehall, a genre that blends reggae rhythms, dancehall beats, and Zimbabwean lyrical expressions, gaining immense popularity among young people. The allure of Zimdancehall and similar genres has overshadowed traditional music forms, leading to a cultural shift where the youth gravitate towards music that resonates more with their contemporary experiences and aspirations (Tivenga and Manase 2019). This shift reflects a broader trend where urban music, characterised by its fusion of local and global influences, has become the dominant form of musical expression among Zimbabwean youth (Tivenga 2018).

The socio-economic context in Zimbabwe also plays a crucial role in this transition. The youth face significant existential challenges, including high unemployment rates and economic instability, which drive them to seek solace and identity in music that reflects their realities (Mabuto and Saidi 2018). The themes prevalent in urban grooves and Zimdancehall often resonate more with the lived experiences of the youth, as they address issues such as love, struggle, and resilience in a rapidly changing society (Tivenga and Manase 2019). This connection to contemporary issues makes these genres more appealing compared to traditional music, which may not address the current socio-political landscape directly. Additionally, the impact of global popular culture cannot be overlooked.

The youth are increasingly exposed to global music trends through digital platforms, which influences their musical preferences and cultural identities (Chari 2009). As a result, traditional music, which often embodies historical and cultural narratives, struggles to compete with the immediate gratification and relatability offered by contemporary genres (Chari 2009; Tivenga and Manase 2019). The blending of international music styles with local genres has in some ways diluted the cultural significance of traditional music, as evidenced by its waning popularity. Dance groups are rapidly increasing in number, but they predominantly focus on contemporary styles like hip-hop and Zimdancehall. Conversely, established performing arts organisations face challenges in attracting young dancers. Membership statistics from prominent groups such as Siyaya, Batsiranai Traditional Dance Group, and Pamuzinda reveal a notable lack of interest among youth in traditional dance performances. Most dancers in these groups are above 24 years of age.¹

Zimbabwe has a rich history of musical fusion and innovation, albeit the fusion of traditional and contemporary dance styles seems less common. Artists like Oliver Mtukudzi, Thomas Mapfumo, Mokoomba, and the late Chiwoniso Maraire have successfully incorporated Western elements into their music, demonstrating the resilience and adaptability of Zimbabwean culture. Adapting traditional music and dance to address contemporary issues and resonate with modern musical tastes could help revitalise its relevance. Mutero's (2018) work with the Tavirima Traditional Dance

1 Personal interview with the chairperson of the Traditional National Dance Association of Zimbabwe.

Group demonstrates that this functional metamorphosis of traditional music and dance can serve as a powerful tool for addressing social and political challenges, allowing the culture to actively contribute to society, even in times of political instability.

Precedence has shown that it is possible to reinstitute and perpetuate cultures through media that reach the target society. Rani and Tjiptono (2012, 499) argue for the use of the internet to teach young people about traditional music on the grounds that digital and interactive devices are convenient and easily obtained. On the other hand, Agu (2012) advocates for the safeguarding of Nigerian traditional culture through teaching young people in schools. Schools provide a good catchment of young people because schoolchildren are a captive population without the liberty to choose not to dance or sing as the syllabus dictates what they should do. One problem with this is that it can lead the pupils to develop an aversion to singing and dancing because it is forced on them. Young people like freedom. Sadly, “in Zimbabwe traditional dance as fostered by the Ministry of Education has been restricted largely to competitions...” (McLaren 2001,1). While these competitions are important in making sure that people continue practising indigenous dances, they have made the dances lifeless objects used for sheer amusement and resistant to any attempt at a metamorphosis. Therefore, outside the competitions and occasional performances for tourists and at national events, the dances are moribund.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in three key theoretical perspectives: Raymond Williams’ concept of “culture as a whole way of life,” Homi Bhabha’s theory of cultural hybridity, and the positive deviance approach. It employs Raymond Williams’ concept of “culture as a whole way of life” to underscore the significance of preserving traditional dance forms amidst modernisation (Williams 2011). Williams’ framework emphasises that culture is not merely a set of artistic or intellectual achievements but encompasses the entire way of life of a society, including its values, traditions, and everyday practices. In the context of this research, Williams’ concept helps to highlight the importance of traditional Zimbabwean dance as an integral part of the nation’s cultural identity. By viewing culture as a holistic system, the study underscores the need to preserve and promote traditional dance forms, not just as artistic expressions, but as vital components of Zimbabwean heritage that reflect the community’s history, values, social structures, and progress. This perspective is particularly relevant in the face of globalisation, where traditional practices risk being overshadowed by modern, globalised trends.

Furthermore, Homi Bhabha’s theory of cultural hybridity is used to explore the coexistence and mutual influence between traditional and contemporary dance forms (Bhabha 2012). Bhabha’s theory posits that cultures are not static or monolithic but are constantly evolving through interactions and exchanges with other cultures. In the context of this study, cultural hybridity provides a lens through which to understand how traditional Zimbabwean dance can be revitalised by blending it with contemporary

youth culture. Bhabha's concept suggests that cultural practices are not lost in hybridisation but are instead transformed, creating new forms that retain elements of the original while adapting to new contexts. This theory is particularly relevant to the study's focus on integrating traditional dance with modern genres like hip-hop, as it allows for an exploration of how these hybrid forms can appeal to younger generations while still preserving the essence of traditional dance.

However, to frame the issue of innovation, the project was primarily framed within the positive deviance approach (Dodge, 1985), recognising that within communities facing challenges, individuals often possess the knowledge and agency to create positive change. Positive deviance has emerged as a significant approach in the preservation and revitalisation of cultural traditions, particularly through community engagement and the identification of successful behaviours within local contexts. This concept, which refers to behaviours or strategies that deviate from the norm but lead to positive outcomes, can be instrumental in fostering cultural heritage sustainability. In a context where cultural onslaught is imminent, positive deviants can play a crucial role in preserving and revitalising the performance of traditional music and dance among young people. Their actions, we hoped, would work as a model for other young people, demonstrating that traditional dance can be both relevant and exciting in the modern context. This research emphasises the unique agency of positive deviants in sparking interest and inspiring change within their communities.

The prospects of continued performance and survival of Zimbabwean traditional dances lie in young people, who are better placed as agents for posterity of Zimbabwean culture (Navei 2023; Rani and Tjiptono 2012). Ignoring young people's lack of interest will effectively mean that in the not-so-distant future, Zimbabwean traditional dances will be largely confined in the domain of academia, buried in academic papers, archives or examination recitals. A more favourable prospect would be to have young people use traditional music and dance to speak to their present realities, as espoused by Nzewi (2003), who asserts that musicianship in Africa that excludes shared human sentiments and social contexts for co-creativity in participation is diabolically conceived. Drummond (in Grant (2012,40) adds to the debate on safeguarding music and dance through practice, arguing that culture is dynamic and evolving, not a static entity that can be preserved in a museum. While preserving cultural traditions is valuable, it is essential to ensure that the community actively uses and revitalises these traditions. This allows cultures to adapt and grow while maintaining their heritage.

Drummond's assertion implies that the survival of traditional music depends on its relevance in contemporary society. This raises questions about the ability of people today to connect with historical musical forms, such as hunting songs, in a modern context. While we no longer live as hunter-gatherers, the preservation and evolution of traditional music remain crucial. Mutero (2013) argues that traditional music and dance is not static and has never been static nor does it develop *in situ*. It rather morphs as dictated by how it is used by the community to present people's daily realities, often

resulting in a functional metamorphosis of either the dance, the song, or both. It could be argued that this constantly changing nature of music/dance/culture implies that the aim of “preserving” a traditional or indigenous culture does not make much sense because there has never been an unchanging indigenous culture. What we label as indigenous is only a snapshot of a process of continuous change that existed long before colonial times. So, we can preserve only elements of the culture that happened to prevail when the first explorers, missionaries, and anthropologists appeared on the scene.

While a comprehensive demographic analysis of Zimbabwe is beyond the scope of this discussion, it is important to acknowledge the nation’s youthful population. This demographic presents a vital opportunity for cultural preservation efforts. However, current platforms for promoting traditional dances appear to have limitations. The Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition and the Jikinya Traditional Dance Competition, while boasting nationwide reach and consistency, exhibit a focus on specific age groups. The former prioritises community-based arts groups, while the latter caters solely to primary school learners. This focus creates a paradoxical situation where a significant segment of the youthful population—high school students—is excluded from participation.

To address this decline, we assumed that integrating traditional dance into popular youth culture could be a viable strategy to prevent the extinction of Zimbabwean dance heritage. Sahin (2006) emphasises the importance of novelty in cultural innovation, suggesting that even if the idea itself is not entirely new, it must be presented in a way that is fresh and engaging to the target audience.

The Process

This project followed an action research approach, a methodology highly regarded by applied ethnomusicologists due to its capacity to directly drive change. According to Korth (2005), the primary goal of critical research is not simply to document or present a community’s life for external audiences, like capturing a photograph, but rather to engage with and comprehend the community’s perspectives for their own benefit and the wider good. Action research was suitable for this study because it focuses on working with people to achieve a shared, workable understanding of their lived reality and, in the process, rescue research from the monopoly of knowledge production by academic researchers by allowing the study participants to actively and autonomously map and implement the social change agenda. This approach required me to engage directly with young people in the field, collaborating on the fusion of traditional dance with popular youth culture, specifically hip-hop. As a result, the young people envisioned and implemented this transformation.

I used purposive sampling to select the study participants who were active urban dance practitioners, willing to take part in a process which fuses their preferred urban dances with traditional dance (Kumar 2018). Data was collected using participant observation,

together with personal experiences and engagement techniques through unstructured personal interviews with participants. These occurred as part of an ongoing participant observation fieldwork and relied entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction (Patton and Cochran 2002).

After realising my limitations as an opinion leader, it was crucial to work with someone who is approved by almost everyone as an opinion leader. Since I was working for Jibilika Dance Trust, Plot Mhako, the founder and artistic director of Jibilika Dance Trust, became the natural choice. Jibilika Dance Trust is a leading dance company which promotes popular youth culture for engagement, empowerment, and development purposes. Plot is also an arts journalist and a graphic designer, and he has been adjudged twice as one of the hundred most influential young Zimbabweans.² Plot's duty was to select the dance group which we would work with as well as give them confidence in me. Using purposive sampling, we decided to work on the experiment with the Royal Family dance crew who are residents in the Mbare suburb in Harare, the capital. Royal Family are the winners of the Jibilika Dance Festival of 2012, and they command respect within the Harare urban dance community.

We met with the Royal Family leadership, and we sold our idea to them. Fortunately, around the same time, Jibilika was commissioned by the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to present a dance performance during the Auxicillia Chimusoro Awards, and we used this event as an incentive to motivate the group to participate in the experiment. Just as I had initial communication with Plot, we decided to speak with the group's leadership so that they in turn carry the message to their fellows. Since the performance was one essential component of Jibilika Dance Trust's pitch to PEPFAR, Plot assigned me to direct the performance. How the performance was directed and made constitutes the crux of the results of this study. Arguably, the move was based on my experience in arts for social change. I had worked for Patsime Trust as a work-related learning intern during my third year of my studies at Midlands State University. In addition, over the years, I had worked with and led various community-based theatre productions for development organisations.

After all was set for research, we agreed on rehearsing in Mbare, at the Royal Family's usual rehearsal space. Since I was an outsider, I used the first sessions to create rapport with all the group members, adopt the group's culture as well as observe the grounding characteristics of the urban dance(s) performed by the Royal Family. Observing the dances was particularly important for finding out the variances and parallels between the urban dances and the traditional dances in question.

Moving forward, we soon realised that even though the group was enthusiastic, it lacked knowledge of traditional dances. The members knew the names and moves but they could not assign a name to each specific move. In addition, the group did not have any

2 Plot Mhako profile: <http://www.zimlink.org/plot-mhako-and-jibilika/>

female members, yet the messages we wanted to communicate required female representation. Through Plot Mhako, we suggested inviting additional female members and the group obliged. I had to look for two female traditional dancers who were willing to take part in this project, which by the way had no seed funding. It relied solely on strong social capital. I managed to persuade Francisca Nyaradzo Nhongonhema, an assertive university graduate who holds a Bachelor of Arts Honours in Theatre from the University of Zimbabwe, to team up with Royal Family and participate in all of the group's preparations. Plot managed to convince Noni Nyasha Madzinga, who at that time was an enthusiastic novice dancer already known to and resented by the group. Interestingly, Noni is one of the leading lights in urban dance in Zimbabwe today.

This project was conducted with a strong commitment to ethical principles, ensuring that all participants were treated with respect and dignity, both of which are key tenets of participatory action research. Informed consent was obtained from all individuals involved, including explicit permission for the use of photographs and the mention of names where applicable. Participation in the project was voluntary, and individuals had the option to withdraw at any stage without any need to justify their choices.

Findings and Discussion

This study sought to find out if popular youth culture can be used as a vehicle to encourage youth appreciation and performances of Zimbabwean traditional dances.

Royal Family is a B-boy dance crew. B-boying is an extraordinarily difficult body movement, which is a very acrobatic and creative way of contorting the body in tune with the beat of the music.³ It was therefore in order that we settle for a Zimbabwean traditional dance that is highly energetic and acrobatic. We had two options to choose from and these were *dinhe* and *muchongoyo*. We settled for *dinhe* as I was confident at it and could teach it easily if needed. However, I was not the only one leading the teaching of the *dinhe* dance. The *dinhe* dance originates from the Korekore people of Zimbabwe and is a vibrant expression of celebration and gratitude, often performed to mark a bountiful harvest. This energetic dance brings the community together, young and old, men and women, to express their joy through captivating movements accompanied by powerful drumming, singing, and chanting.

Though we had created a rapport with Royal Family, I felt that they were not free to suggest new things to me, so I suggested that Nyaradzo should help. I assume that I failed to blend in or to be seen at the same level as the rest of the group because of an unjustifiable and somewhat exaggerated introduction of me by Plot Mhako. In addition, when we did this experiment, it was not conceived as a research project but as a product to include in our pitch, and by that time I was the Jibilika Dance Trust Programme Coordinator. This, in my opinion, created an imagined rift between me and the dancers.

3 More information on B-boying can be accessed at <http://hiphop.sh/bboy>

We, however, learnt a lesson and made sure to give a humble introduction of Nyaradzo, the female dancer who led the process.



Figure 1. Author stressing a point at the rehearsals of the Royal Family (photo by Plot Mhako)

We used a workshop format in which the participants were expected to be able to sing two *dinhe* songs, *Watema tsanga*, and *Murombo huya tipinde richo*. We also expected the participants to learn six *dinhe* dance variations—*kusakura*, *kudzurira* and *kuputa fodya*, *kukusha*, *kukuya*, and *kunyaradza mucheche*, as well as play the *bhurubhesi* and the *mhito* drums. The workshop format ensured that we used oral methods of transferring knowledge as is the norm in Zimbabwe. We also felt that because the group uses the same method to learn and exchange their preferred dances, there would be a high likelihood of them learning fast and sharing what they had learnt with their peers.

The process meant that either Nyaradzo or I would introduce a dance by name and explain its symbolic importance within the *dinhe* dance pattern. For instance, one would introduce *kusakura* as a dance in which members would imitate weeding with a hoe. *Kusakura* is a Shona word for weeding, and the dance was important because it showed how the Zimbabwean farming community, especially the peasant farmers, weed out grass using uncomplicated but effective and readily available tools. In addition, the leader would explain how song accompanied work, providing rhythm to the workers as well as spurring them on.

Dinhe dance movements follow multiples of two, especially four and eight, and to that end, the performers were encouraged to use an agreed count before the introduction of the drum. Teaching this crew, the dance proved to be the easiest part of the research process as they are natural dancers and almost all of them had at least a second-hand experience with *dinhe* either through watching performances on TV or in stadiums during national gatherings. Drumming, on the other hand, proved to be a difficult task for the dancers.

The *dinhe* drumming pattern is easy on the ear although complex with a fast rhythm. Consequently, we broke down the drumming using much bigger note values instead of smaller notes which came in quick succession. For instance, where an experienced drummer played the drum to a value of four semi-quavers, we encouraged the new drummers to play using the corresponding quaver or the minimal value of the same notes. The process was good for the group to learn but it dragged our progress towards creating a near-perfect piece to showcase for the potential funding partners.

Fusing the Dances

Royal Family led the fusion of the dances as at this stage they could dance perfectly to both *dinhe* and hip hop. The ladies had learnt a few not-very dangerous B-girling movements. First, Royal Family decided that they did not want traditional drums on their set or any live music for that matter. They went on to suggest the inclusion of men in some dance moves which women traditionally do. *Dinhe* dance is a harvest celebratory dance whose movements clearly define gender roles. We went ahead with the mix without the traditional instruments being played live. At this stage, it was evident that we might not reach our end goal of resuscitating traditional dance within popular culture if I kept on giving the group the leeway to lead the way. I intended to limit my role to be that of a mere observer during the rehearsal process, as I did not want to tell the group what to do or what not to do or how to do it, but I ended up insisting that the section in which they perform traditional dance should be accompanied by appropriate traditional music. We ended up settling for a pre-recorded *dinhe* song by Hope Masike. Since the production was a commissioned piece and we were in the process of soliciting for funds from PEPFAR to run a civic engagement programme, my main aim was the packaging of messages.



Figure 2. Royal Family performing at the Auxicillia Chimusoro Awards (photo by Thando Sibanda)



Figure 3. *Dinhe* and B-boy moves on display at the Auxicillia Chimusoro Awards (photo by Thando Sibanda)

The production was an amazing mix of traditional dance and hip-hop, which was performed at the residence of the United States of America Ambassador in Zimbabwe and received rave reviews. Consequently, Jibilika Dance Trust was to partner with PEPFAR in using popular youth culture to engage youth on HIV and related issues. Infusing hip-hop dance with traditional dance was one such show of innovativeness

which helped the organisation create a “Zimbabwean Rooted” hip-hop dance pattern. The new dance is eccentrically Zimbabwean hip-hop and unique to the market, possibly positioning them well on the global market. Wanyama and Shitubi (2012) posit that despite the current and future dynamism in “African Dance,” it is possible to sustain and give visibility to the African style.

In later years, Jibilika Dance Trust rolled out a national move to encourage young people to perform traditional dances, through a festival themed “Urban Roots.” The youth readily accepted the innovation because it was being championed by someone they looked up to. In addition, through years of experience, Plot Mhako and by extension Jibilika Dance Trust has built a strong network of dancers and urban dance groups in Zimbabwe. Larson and Dearing (2014, 27) postulate that important innovations spread quickly when they have been highly approved by influential people within a closely tied social network. Jibilika runs a national dance festival and competition which reaches out to all provinces of Zimbabwe. It starts with provincial preliminary rounds which attract an average of ten groups per province, each with an average of eight members. The winners then proceed to the finals where they battle for national honours. The festival thus reaches out to approximately 800 youth dancers and thousands of youth audiences.

According to Plot Mhako, the festival’s artistic director, “their goal is to get young people to know and appreciate their culture and preserve it at the same time giving them the liberty to be creative and use their own preferred art form, thus creating a unique dance style.” Jibilika Dance Trust managed to create a youth platform which enables young people to freely express themselves within traditional dance, speaking to the realities of their context, while at the same time safeguarding the dance. Grant (2012, 5) posits that “for the sustainability of music genres, an appropriate performance context seems a crucial requirement.”

It is apparent that in the diffusion process, the enticing power of an opinion leader or change agent is an invaluable asset. In an analysis of 40 years of diffusion research, Haider and Kreps (2004) stress that diffusion involves four interacting factors which ultimately encourage change. These four areas are: (a) innovation, (b) communication channels, (c) social systems, and (d) time. It is therefore imperative for ethnomusicologists and public folklorists to come to terms with the ever-changing times and their demands. While it is important to ensure authenticity when packing and passing traditions, it is also very important that the traditions become useful to their owners, lest they become nothing more than ornaments with no significance to the existential realities of the culture bearers.

In the context of this study, we worked on a traditional harvest dance, *dinhe*, with an urban hip-hop group. The harvest celebration—as a significant cultural event—is certainly not central to the lives of urban youth, and it is unlikely that any amount of ruralisation of the city will change this in the near future. As such, in urban settings,

these dances often persist as nostalgic reflections of rural life or as cultural showcases, which allows their form and technical elements to survive even if their original meaning is diminished by changing social conditions.

However, while the meaning associated with the harvest may have diminished in urban areas, these dances still carry vitality in rural spaces, where Zimbabwe's largely rural population continues to practise them within their living cultural context. Furthermore, the functionality of these dances extends beyond the harvest. The same songs and movements are performed at funerals, football matches, and other communal gatherings, both in urban and rural settings. Their adaptability demonstrates that these traditional forms are not static relics but dynamic cultural practices that continue to evolve.

Conclusion

Integrating traditional music and dance into popular performance forms familiar to the youth holds promise for safeguarding and promoting the continued practice of indigenous cultures. There is an absurdity in assuming that music and dance can carry on unchanged in all domains of use and unchanged by all people especially seeing that the world is more connected than ever before. This study has demonstrated that cultural expressions can be both innovative and adaptable, offering new ways to engage younger generations by merging traditional and contemporary forms. Such integration not only helps keep traditional practices alive but also creates a dynamic cultural exchange, where old and new intersect, enriching the broader social landscape. There is potential for traditional dance to evolve, remain relevant, and foster a deeper connection to cultural identity among Zimbabwean youth.

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