



Cultural Heritage Digitization and Preservation in West Africa: A Lesotho Perspective

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Abstract

Lesotho, a small kingdom in southern Africa, faces challenges in preserving its rich cultural heritage due to limited resources and technological gaps. This qualitative research employed participatory action research methods, including interviews with stakeholders from various sectors of society, focus group discussions, and surveys among the general public to gather insights into current preservation practices and identify gaps. Participants highlighted the need for culturally sensitive digital tools that can preserve traditional knowledge in Lesotho's indigenous languages. A significant proportion (70%) of respondents supported government-led initiatives that integrate local communities as active participants in cultural heritage digitization efforts. The research underscores the importance of collaborative approaches involving all stakeholders to ensure sustainable and culturally appropriate digital preservation strategies for Lesotho's unique cultural heritage. Recommendations include the development of specialized software tailored to indigenous languages, fostering public-private partnerships, and integrating community feedback into policy decisions. Lesotho, Cultural Heritage, Digital Preservation, Participatory Action Research

Keywords: *African diaspora, digital humanities, heritage management, indigenous knowledge systems, participatory approaches, transnational collaboration, vernacular architecture*

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