

Exploring the Realities of the Unknown: Dreams and their Interpretations

Rendani Tshifhumulo

*University of Venda, Sociology Department, Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province,
Box 5050, Thohoyandou, South Africa 0950
Telephone: 015 962 8404, E-mail: <rendani.tshifhumulo2@univen.ac.za>*

KEYWORDS Figures. Images. Mind. Symbols. Supernatural. Venda Culture

ABSTRACT Dreams have been considered important throughout history by most cultures. Dreams are considered prophetic or to have an ominous significance. This paper explores the reality of dreams in prophetic functions within the Tshivenda speaking people in South Africa. Ten students from the School of Human and Social Sciences were interviewed qualitatively on their experiences on dreams and the understanding of interpretations thereof. The researcher was motivated by a dream, which was experienced by a minor in the family and it came to pass within three months. Dreams in this study are categorized into those that emanate from continuous thoughts of a human being and those that are supernatural from divine intervention. The second category is the one that can come to pass, either as it is or as interpreted.

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to construct knowledge on dreams and their social interpretations as related to Vhavenda speaking people. Dreams are successions of images, emotions, and sensations that occur involuntarily in the mind during certain stages of sleep. Hall defined dreams as “a succession of images, predominantly visual in quality, which are experienced during a sleep”. A dream, commonly, has one or more scenes, several characters in addition to the dreamer and a sequence of actions and interactions involving a dreamer. It resembles a motion picture of a dramatic production in which a dreamer is both a participant and an observer. Since the events of a dream do not actually take place, the dreamer experiences it as though he was seeing something real (Faraday 1972, from Osore 2011). Osore added that dreams have survival value to the human species at its present age. It is assumed that dreams can bring out all hidden talents and potentialities one never knew one possesses. One of the great physicists who ever lived got his breakthrough in a dream and a theory of relativity was born.

Many ancient societies like Egypt and Greece have for years considered a dream as a supernatural communication or an omen of divine intervention whose message people with certain powers could unravel. Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Calvin Hall spend time studying content analysis of dreams, but in spite of the univer-

sal and common experience of dreaming, its purpose and mechanism is still unknown (Menczer 2014). Freud in Gordon (1998) retrieved the dream from the domain of soothsayers and diviners. He looked beyond the physiological description as mere bodily and sensory stimuli. Freud recognized the cogent determinants of dreams. He emphasized the significance of dreams as a royal road to knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind. He argued that the dream is embedded in the unbroken ‘enhancement’ of the memory material. Freud considered the free associations of the dreamer to be of decisive importance. He regarded dreams to be the most important complement of the theory of neuroses (Gordon 1998). Gordon (1998) asserts that provided one can remember the dreams, one can have confidence that one is in touch with the subconscious, and if one can associate to them mentally and use amplifications to find their meanings, one is on speaking terms in touch with the unconscious.

Objectives

Very few scholars throughout the centuries have written about dreams and their interpretation. Among other authors are Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung on whose work psychoanalysis was founded and published in the 1900s. Schon (2003) argued that dreams deserve attention as an aspect of importance. Schon (2003) explained that it should be realized that the interpretation

of dreams is a difficult task to harness, both theoretically and academically.

This study seeks to advance the scientific study of dreams, oneirology by looking at the social interpretations of dreams and the relevance of dreams in the modern world. The researcher is motivated by a visitation at her home by a little girl, Kindness (pseudonym). She was studying in Grade 6 at a local primary school. She said she had had a dream where she saw someone planning to cause an accident that would kill the whole of the researchers' family because in her view, they are pompous and haughty (regard themselves highly). Still dreaming, the plan failed to materialize except that one of the girls within the family could not escape the ill plan. Indeed, before realizing the dream came to pass, on the second of February 2009 around six o' clock in the evening while the daughter was playing on the street next to her home, she was knocked down by a car. She spent three weeks in the Intensive Care Unit struggling for her life in a coma. She had internal bleeding and swelling of the brain. The question then was how did Kindness know beforehand that which has happened? What explanations can be attached to her dream in a scientific manner?

METHODOLOGY

The University of Venda's second and third year students in Sociology were chosen as the population for this study. The study is qualitative in nature and semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather data. An interview is a two-way conversation where the interviewer asks the interviewee questions to collect data and learn about ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviors of participants. The aim of a qualitative interview is to see the world through the eyes of the participants (Maree 2007). The interviews added the benefit of building rapport as well as a deeper understanding of responses (Steina 2009).

Sampling

This study used accidental sampling as a method of collecting data. Any student crossing the researcher's path and willing to be part of the study was interviewed until the desired number was reached. Sarantakos (2000) states that these are case points where a researcher simply reaches out and takes cases at hand, con-

tinues the process until the sample reaches a designated size. Ten students, regardless of their age and sex but Venda speaking and from the group of sociology students as mentioned, were interviewed.

Ethics

The study was guided by the following research ethics, that is, informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality. Devos et al. (2005) states that an informed person will knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently give his/her consent to undergo research study. Free and informed consent here incorporated the introduction to the study, its purpose as well as an explanation about the research subject and procedures to be followed. Voluntary participation in consent ensures each participant's ability to exercise the power of free choice without the intervention of force, fraud, deceit, duress or other forms of coercion. Anonymity and confidentiality guarantee the respondents that their identities are only known to the researcher. Reporting purposes was done using pseudonyms instead of real names to ensure anonymity.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using the common steps of qualitative data analysis. The steps flow from the coding of themes and categories. It was followed by making memos about the context of and variations in the phenomena under study, verifying the selected themes through reflection on the data, refining the categories, recording of support data and identifying proportions (Brink 2007).

RESULTS

General Beliefs on Dreams

From the study of ten respondents, eight believed that dreams exist and they are a reality in human life. This is in agreement with Jung who recommended stripping the dream of its details and presenting the gist of the dream to the dreamer. Jung stressed that a dream is not merely a devious puzzle invented by the uncon-

scious to be deciphered, so that the *true* causal factors behind it may be elicited. In addition, dreams are not to serve as lie detectors, with which to reveal the insincerity behind conscious thought processes. Rather, dreams, like the unconscious, had their own language. As representations of the unconscious, dream images have their own primacy and mechanics (Schon 2003).

Personal Dreams That Have Come to Pass

It was found that seven respondents believed that dreams can come to pass exactly as dreamt, and three respondents believed that dreams need to be interpreted to bring meaning to the dreamer. The three are in accordance with Jung (1963), who argued that the language of dreams is not easy to understand, since dreams tell the truth symbolically. He added that symbolism is the natural language of dreams, which expresses events and feelings in the form of images rather than rational thoughts. It is a phylogenetic ally move of thought, which resembles myths, primitive ideas and rites. Dreams are figurative. In addition they are sensuous, concrete imagery and they draw on analogies readiest to hand and contain typical motifs. Jung took a link between dreams and mythology, the universal and the perennial and made it a base of his work Schon (2003). A higher percentage of respondents believed that the things that they dream mostly come to pass. They have different ideas regarding dreams. They believe that dreams predict realities of things unknown and that, which will surely come to pass. Ninety percent or more of dreams are negative in nature, that is, in other words, they speak of bad things that will happen. It may either be the death of someone, misfortune, danger and so on. Most of the time, unless there is divine intervention, like prophecy, dreams cannot be altered. Respondents gave different dreams that came to pass in their lives, either exactly as dreamt and those with symbols for interpretation, as culturally believed. This is beyond science and scientific knowledge.

Experiences Where Dreams Came to Pass in the Respondents' Life

Respondent number 1 shared her story, “*I have had dreams that came to pass. Let me single out a recent one for the purpose of this in-*

terview. This year I dreamt that I was crying. There was monkey dung in my room. I was angry with my parents and siblings, asking why they let the monkey mess up my room. I saw myself out of my physical body. I said, “good-bye my friend,” to my other body. It was on a Monday and on Thursday my closest friend from my Primary School years passed on.” So is seen here the dream coming to pass but with interpretations. In the Venda culture, dung is considered as culminating in the death of a person a dreamer is close to. Here it is seen that the respondent saw herself dead. However, it is her best friend who died and the statement, “good-bye my friend” came true.

She added her experience by sharing that she dreamt of a big black snake inside the ceiling of her house. In her dreams she could hear the snake making a hissing noise. She was scared and she took her younger sister and they slept in her parents' room that day. After a few days the cleaner found a snake's skin behind the cupboard in a room. They ignored it. The little girl (a sister to the respondent who was still a toddler) also mentioned that she physically saw a snake in the room, which she thought was a result of the respondent's dream. One day they found a big black snake in the kitchen. The respondent's father killed it and it was very big. Then the family assumed that it is the same snake seen in the dream by the respondent.

Respondent 9 believed dreams happen exactly as seen. He dreamt that he was eating something. He was very sick the next morning and was rushed to the hospital. The next morning a girl from the neighborhood came and said she was there with her grandmother the previous night. It was a surprise. Steward and Zaaïman (2014) argued that different cultures have different beliefs on causes of diseases. In some societies, it is believed that disease is caused by supernatural forces, angry gods or ancestral spirits that inflict suffering on those who have broken moral codes or forces called up by witches and sorcerers. In South Africa, the Venda speaking people, the Ngunis, the Shangaans, Zulus and Sotho believe that a person can be given spiritual food in their sleep. These foods can inflict illness on a person being fed. One sees here the respondent reflecting a dream where one is given food. The following morning he was sick and the child informed him that the previous night she had visited him, which did not happen in his conscious mind.

Respondent number 7 said, “When I was 16 I dreamt that my brothers were digging a grave but there was one absent who absence when others were busy digging. The next morning we got a message that the brother who was not digging the grave in my dream had passed away. This is an example of a dream coming true, but with little interpretation. The absence of a brother meant that he would not be there when others were burying him.”

The respondent shared another dream where in 1996 she dreamt of her father who had passed away in 1976. He was saying that her sister has some information she should not be keeping away from the family, as it would solve some problems in the family. In the dream he lifted a carpet under the sister’s bed. Under it was a map of the family’s problems. She confronted the sister the following morning that ended up explaining why she does not come home and problems she had experienced before that were not solved. This brought a solution to the family hostilities and feuds. The respondent would always see the father speaking to her and alerting her of things to come. This happened frequently. This can be linked to the cultural African beliefs on the ancestors and their existence. However, the same response will be unacceptable to many Christians as speaking to the dead is considered hedonistic and is referred to as demonic and evil practices.

Respondent 5 said, “Whenever I dream of something it happens even though it may affect a close person. One night I dreamt that a lady who worked in a cafeteria died. When I arrived at school I heard that a cleaner was raped and killed. Then I knew my dream had come to pass. Last week, I dreamt of a cleansing ceremony that was supposed to take place at my home. The next morning I phoned my mother who told me there would be a cleansing ceremony at home in August. This is hereditary, as my mother and all her sisters always dream about things before they happen, even most of the deaths that have taken place.”

Respondent 3 shared, “I dreamt that I was crossing a river. After crossing some crocodiles came out but I was already out of the water. Because I was writing an examination, I knew evil crocodiles had failed to eat me. This meant I would pass my exams. Last year when I was writing my psychology exams, I dreamt being told that I should keep my psychology book. I failed the exam that year, so I needed the same book for use the following year. It was very help-

ful as I would have given the book away, as I do after the exams annually.”

Respondent 2 said, “I dreamt that I was telling my sister-in-law that my son has a sore (fata). That information is interpreted to mean that someone in the family is pregnant. When my sister called I told her and she confirmed that indeed she is pregnant.”

Respondent 8 shared an experience wherein she dreamt that her uncle was mentally disturbed and it came to pass soon afterwards. She added that she dreamt that her aunt was moving in the graveyard, and then she saw her in a coffin. The aunt had a headache and the same week she died. The other time she dreamt of an accident involving a car that her son uses to go to school. She said she woke up and prayed, then asked the mother to change the transport that is used by the child to school. The same week the car was involved in an accident but her son was not in it. She said that she has dreams that come to pass at least three times a week. These dreams happen exactly as they are visualized in the dreamer’s unconscious mind.

Whether Dreams are a Result of Day Thoughts or If There is No Relation Between Dreaming and Ideas During the Day

Eight respondents agreed that there is a relationship between day thoughts and dreams whereas only two respondents said there is no relationship between the two variables. In agreement with Freud, 7 respondents agreed that dreams includes hallucinatory fulfillment of repressed wishes evoked during the day. The dream exemplifies and constitutes a form of unconscious or primary process of thinking. Here the dreamer will know that he or she has been thinking about the issue before.

Respondents identified sources from their school of thoughts on where a dream comes from. There are different views expressed by respondents and it includes the Creator, negative spirit, ancestors and other spirits (Table 1).

Table 1: Ideas on the origin of dreams

God	2
Devil	2
Ancestors	3
Spirit	3

Experiences Shared with Respondents about a Dream

Respondent 10's mother dreamt that she was at a party, and her aunt asked her for a coat, which she gave her. In the dream the aunt put some *muti* (medicine used for evil purposes according to traditional beliefs systems) in the coat. Later the same year there was a family gathering and her mother attended the meeting as well. The aunt came and asked for the coat and unfortunately it was the same coat she saw in the dream. The aunt later brought it back and the mother asked her to put it on top of a bed. She never touched it but later asked a friend to burn the coat. From that day her aunt, although she did not see what her mother did with the coat, did not speak to her mother again while filled with hatred.

Respondent 3 said her husband would always dream about lottery numbers. If he bet using the same numbers dreamt, he always wins. If he sees his dead grandmother, he will know which number it will represent. People in the community always phone him and tell him their dreams and he will interpret them so that they can win the lottery and it always came to pass.

Respondent 2 mentioned that her little brother dreamt about a voice saying 'wake up'. He left the room and went to sleep in another room. Later his grandfather started crying, 'fire, fire'. The house was burning and the smoke was from the room vacated by the little brother. Everyone else ran out of the house but the uncle suffered from smoke inhalation. Her brother would have been burnt if it was not for the dream that helped him leave the room before the fire started.

Respondent 5 mentioned that a friend in her church dreamt of her late father saying that he is cold where he is resting and he needed to be taken to a better place. The dream continued and it started affecting her. She told the local pastor who told her to consult with the elders at home. They decided to dig the grave and remove the body to relocate it somewhere else. The body though was buried many years ago, it was found wrapped in a wet blanket surrounded by water. They removed the body and reburied it.

Respondent 1 dreamt about a mother's friend who had passed away and within 2 months the father of her friend passed away. In accordance

with Jung's arguments, dreams not only speak of what is repressed by the dreamer. Rather, they are forward looking or prophetic and tap into a realm beyond the dreamer's personal experience. Dreams are not a disguise, but rather reveal a true state of affairs. They are not just wishes related to two basic instincts. Rather, they depict a myriad of different instincts and behavioral patterns (Schon 2003)

DISCUSSION

Material

Freud's Work on the Interpretation of Dreams

Freud (2004) argued that the motivation of all dreams content is wish fulfillment and the instigation of a dream is often found in the events of the day preceding the dream. Freud called the process 'day residue'. Dreams construct a situation of predominantly visual images, to which the dreamer attached a complete belief. They take up internal or biological experience (hunger, thirst), external perceptions, which may or may not be registered while waking, recent happenings, the previous day and experiences dating back throughout the dreamer's life to earliest times. Dreams, according to Freud, include hallucinatory fulfillment of repressed wishes evoked during the day. The dream work both exemplifies and constitutes a form of unconscious or primary process of thinking (Gordon 1998).

The most controversial aspect of Freud's theory is his emphasis on the sexual drive as the primary motivating force for human behavior. In his views primary thinking is the earliest form of thought. It is dominated by instinctual urges and sensory experience. It is the first experience available to the infant. The secondary process unfolds when the ego develops, which inhibits and overlays the primary process. Instinctual urges are repressed and relegated to the unconscious. Freud believed that dreams are triggered by events, thoughts or feelings of the preceding day, which have been denied, sub-minimally perceived or remained unassimilated. Freud aimed that his theory on neurosis as well as his interpretation of dreams will uncover hidden wishes of motives and brings the unconscious disguised thoughts (Gordon 1998).

Carl Jung: Epitomes (Archetypes)

Archetype is a primary imprint and it indicates a universal predisposition to construct an image, usually in an emotionally aroused state. Jung assumed that the matrix of social relationships was a culture, in the sense of enduring symbolic representations recorded and passed down within social groups. Psychological images arising in dreams and in emotionally charged moments of waking life are metaphoric models that map early interpersonal intra psychic experiences. These forms correspond to basic images of instincts such as attachment, curiosity, sexuality and morality (Young 1991)

Myth and Metaphor: Unknown Worlds

Jung believed that the illumination of unknown worlds and of unconscious simulations produced from experiences lying outside ordinary awareness, introduces myth to humankind. The metaphoric language of myth is a symbol. Symbols arise spontaneously in dreams, creative expressions and relationships. Jung acknowledged Freud's enormous contribution to the understanding of dreams but he diverged to develop his own theory.

Carl Jung (1963) alleged that Freud's notion of dreams as representations of unfulfilled wishes are simplistic and naïve. He claimed that Freud's procedure of collecting associations to a dream would bring insights into the dreamer's mental complex, a person's associations to anything will reveal the mental complexes, but not necessarily closer to the meaning of the dream. Jung was convinced that the scope of dream interpretation was larger, reflecting the richness and complexity of the entire unconscious both personal and collective.

Myth, he argued, is what is believed always, everywhere and by everybody. His ideas on mythology developed into a new conceptual understanding, a division between the personal and the collective unconscious. Some dreams are not derived from personal experience but reflect a deeper realm common to mankind. Jung coined the term collective unconsciousness. He reasoned that there are many human instincts not limited to just the sex and aggression drives. Both Freud and Jung argued that dreams are closely linked to myth. The Oedipal myth found

in most dreams represents a fulfillment of repressed childhood wishes. Jung focused on a range of myths and found that the focus on primary wishes or instincts is limiting in the light of the variety of instincts and behavior of patterns evident in the myth or dreams (Young 1991)

Looking at the table the symbols and their interpretation is very close to culture. For example, during a funeral within the Vhavenda people there is a huge feast and cows are slaughtered so that people can feast after the burial. Now a wedding has the same features, as people gather and they feast. Cow dung is used to polish the mud floor so, when someone dies, in preparation for the burial and visitors who will come, cow dung is used to polish the floor. So, when a person dreams a floor polished by cow dung, then it symbolizes the departure of someone closely related to the dreamer. In the Venda culture, seeing people feasting, or seeing meat in someone's dream will mean that there will be a death of a close person in the near future. Meat is a symbol of funerals, and this might be because when there are funerals in this society, a cow is always slaughtered for the feast after the burial. Whether a person is poor or rich, it does not matter a cow should be slaughtered for the people who gather to bury the dead person. In some cases, however, meat can be bought from butcheries. The Venda people also believe that when you dream about human excretion or people wearing black, it is also a symbol of death. Parties, ceremonies or social gatherings with feasts are also unacceptable in a dream, as they also symbolize death, just like the gathering of people. Contrasting Freud's interpretation of a snake, the Venda speaking people will interpret a snake in one's dream as a sign that witches have visited one's home. A snake can also symbolize trouble to be caused by a woman or an evil thing. It is believed that witches use a snake to hurt people. Sometimes it is believed that witches may appear as people of other racial backgrounds visiting the home. Water that runs along the river is a good omen as it represents luck or progress. In contrast to Jung, being chased by a dog will symbolize that one will be arrested by the police. However, for Jung if the dreamer is being chased by an animal in a dream, the dreamer may eventually come to recognize his own homicidal impulses. In relation to dreams are premonitions. For example, if an old person falls it means death is coming to the family. If a

person finds ants (vhudada), which are small red ants that go in a group, that is a symbol of death of a close relative. An itching upper eye is a symbol that a visitor will come, whereas the lower eye means a person will cry. An itching palm means the person will receive a letter. Itchy fingers symbolize that a person will receive some money (Table 2).

Table 2: Dreams and their social interpretations according to the Venda culture

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Dung	Death
Ceremonies, pregnancy and meat	Death
Snake, crocodile	Witches and evil things
Still clean water	Calmness, pregnancy
Dirty water	Evil
Cattle/ snake	Ancestors
Fire	Death, fights
Wind	Bad omens
Catching fish	Good luck
Wedding	Death
Ant hill	Pregnancy
Picking fruits	Prosperity, money or good things
White person	Angel
Meat	Bad luck
Being chased by dogs	Arrested by police
Vhudada (red ants)	Death
(Muchaina as a game is also based on dreams before players bet)	Number 5
Dead body	Number 26
Party	Number 46
Dry wood	Death

Although Jung acknowledged the universality of archetypal symbols, he contrasted this with the concept of a sign images having a one to one connotation with their meaning. His approach was to recognize the dynamism and fluidity that existed between symbols and their ascribed meaning. Symbols must be explored for their personal significance to the patient, instead of having the dream conform to some predetermined idea. This prevents dream analysis from devolving into a theoretical and dogmatic exercise that is far removed from the patient's own psychological state. In the service of this idea, he stressed the importance of 'sticking to the image' exploring in-depth a client's association with a particular image. This may be contrasted with Freud's free association, which he believed was a deviation from the salience of the image.

In his early writings, Jung (1963) proposed two basic approaches to analyzing dream material, namely, the objective and the subjective approach. In the objective approach, every person in the dream refers to the person as they are presented, that is, a friend in a dream is a normal friend, and a stone will also be a stone. In the subjective approach, every person in the dream represents an aspect of the dreamer. Jung argued that the subjective approach is much more difficult for the dreamer to accept, but that in most good dream-work, the dreamer will come to recognize that the dream characters can represent an unacknowledged aspect of the dreamer. Thus, if the dreamer is being chased by an animal, the dreamer may come eventually to recognize his own homicidal impulses.

Jung (1963) believed that archetypes such as the animus, the shadow and others manifested themselves in dreams, as dreams are symbols or figures. Such figures could take the form of an old man, a young maiden or a giant spider as the case may be. Each represents an unconscious attitude that is largely hidden to the conscious mind. Although an integral part of the dreamer's psyche, these manifestations were largely autonomous and were perceived by the dreamer to be external personages. An acquaintance with the archetypes as manifested by these symbols serves to increase one's awareness of unconscious attitudes, integrating seemingly disparate parts of the psyche and contributing to the process of holistic self-understanding he considered paramount.

Jung (1963) believed that material repressed by the conscious mind, postulated by Freud to comprise the unconscious, was similar to his own concept of the shadow, which in itself is only a small part of the unconscious. Jung cautioned against blindly ascribing meaning to dream symbols without a clear understanding of the client's personal situation. He described two approaches to dream symbols, that is, the causal approach and the final approach. In the causal approach, the symbol is reduced to certain fundamental tendencies. Thus, a sword may symbolize a penis, as may a snake. In the final approach, the dream interpreter asks, "Why this symbol and not another?" Thus, a sword representing a penis is hard, sharp, inanimate, and destructive. A snake representing a penis is alive, dangerous, perhaps poisonous and slimy. The final approach will tell one additional things

about the dreamer's attitudes. Jung believed that dreams might contain ineluctable truths, philosophical pronouncements, illusions, wild fantasies, memories, plans, irrational experiences and even telepathic vision. Just as the psyche has a diurnal side, which one experiences as conscious life, it has an unconscious nocturnal side, which one apprehends as dreamlike fantasy. Jung would argue that just as one does not doubt the importance of the conscious experience, then one ought not to second-guess the value of unconscious lives.

Jung (1963) argued that Freud's retrospective views of dreams, though valid, are not a full picture. Dreams though they look backward in time, they also point forward, they are prospective in two ways. Jung argued that dreams do not only constitute unfulfilled potential, rather, they draw on more than what is repressed on once known, they also reveal a pattern of things to come. Jung did not mean that dreams are necessarily prophetic but more that they result from a fusion of perceptions, thoughts and feelings not consciously recognized. He observed that dreams might be telepathic material including premonitions (Jung 1963).

CONCLUSION

People have subterranean beliefs on the existence of dreams. Some people still believe that even dreams can be given interpretations and some will happen exactly as dreamt. Dreams interpretations are culture related. From the study it can be deducted that the Venda people believe in the reality of dreams. The dreams that are to be taken for granted are the ones that a person recalls when he or she awakens. A person will feel that the dream is meaningful when they wake up. Dreams related to the day thoughts of a dreamer are also recognized as mere reflection that reoccurs in the human being as they sleep. People who dream about things that subsequently come to pass exactly as dreamt agreed that they have a special gift. This makes dreams have a special significance in the lives of the Vhavenda people.

The fact that people believe that dreams are sent by God, spirits or ancestors makes it very difficult to study them scientifically. This is knowledge beyond ordinary senses and cannot be measured anyhow. One cannot prove that ancestors exist scientifically to an extent that

one can let the other people verify the information. The actualities then remain with people who hold the beliefs. Whether it is dreams, witchcraft, sorcery, sangoma practice, ritual murder or other spiritually related matters, as scientists the researchers continue to struggle to comprehend the gist of the perspectives, which in African countries have remained for centuries and not displaying signs of being abated. Dreams are owned by the supernatural and are given to humans, therefore as scientists the knowledge about the supernatural will always be limited as this is information one cannot see with the naked eye to verify their realities. What one has is given information by those who can connect to the world of the spirits and to believe one can experiment with their information by allowing the dreamers to tell the dreams in advance, like early in the morning and await confirmation to measure how often the dreams will come to pass and to verify the interpretations thereof.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends further research on oneirology to tap on its origin and ways, to see if dreams can assist in solving the social ills faced today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researchers thank the University of Venda Research Office, especially Professor G.E. Ekosse for funding the study. Special appreciation goes to all participants in the study as well as Professor Sibusiso Madondo who organized the conference of the Myth Study Group in the University of Iceland in October 2014, which gave birth to the ideas of the paper thereof.

REFERENCES

- Brink H 2007. *Fundamentals of Research Methodology for Health Care Professionals*. Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Co.
- Caifang Z 2013. Jung on the nature and interpretation of dreams: A developmental delineation with cognitive neuroscientific responses. *Behavioral Sciences*, 3(4): 662-675; doi:10.3390/bs3040662
- De Vos AS, Strydom H, Fouche CB, Delport CSL 2005. *Research at Grass Roots: For Social Science and Human Service Professions*. 3rd Edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

- Denzin NK, Lincoln E 2012. *Hand Book of Qualitative Research*. USA: SAGE Publications.
- Freud S 2004. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Chicago: Kessinger Publishing.
- Freud S 1965. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. New York: Avon.
- Gordon Lawrence W 1998. *Social Dreaming @ Work*. London: Karnack Books.
- Jung CJ 1963. *Memories Dreams Reflections*. Germany: Collins and Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Maree K 2007. *First Steps in Research*. Pretoria : Van Schaik Publishers.
- Menczer V 2014. *Connecting Dreams Networks Across Cultures*. Center for Complex Networks and Systems Research. Bloomington, USA: Indiana University.
- Osore MK 2011. Reconstructing reality in the Kiswahili Novel: The Role of Dreams in Euphrase Kezilahabi and Said Ahmed Mohamed's novels. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1: 9.
- Sarantakos S 2013. *Social Research*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schon J 2003. Dream and dreaming: Perspectives over the century. *Psycho-analytic Psychotherapy in South Africa*, 11: 2.
- Steina K 2009. *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage Publication.
- Young P 1991. *Jung' Self Psychology: A Constructivist Perspective*. New York, London: The Guilford Press.
- Zaaiman S 2014. *Introduction to Sociology*. South Africa: Juta.

Paper received for publication on April 2015

Paper accepted for publication on July 2016