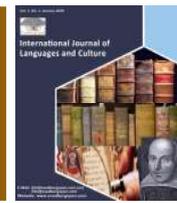




International Journal of Languages and Culture

Publisher's Home Page: <https://www.svedbergopen.com/>



Research Paper

Open Access

Decolonized Siswati Storytelling and Intrapreneurship: A Path to Cultural Recovery

Nontokoza Gladys Mdhuli^{1*} and Isaack Mndawe²

¹African Languages, and Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, University of Venda, Private Bag X5050, Thohoyandou 0950, Limpopo Province, South Africa. E-mail: nontokoza.mdhuli@univen.ac.za

²African Languages, and Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, University of Venda, Private Bag X5050, Thohoyandou 0950, Limpopo Province, South Africa. E-mail: ikmndawe@uj.ac.za

Article Info

Volume 5, Issue 2, December 2025

Received : 24 August 2025

Accepted : 03 December 2025

Published : 25 December 2025

doi: [10.51483/IJLC.5.2.2025.14-23](https://doi.org/10.51483/IJLC.5.2.2025.14-23)

Abstract

This study investigates the function of decolonized Siswati storytelling in fostering cultural recovery, identity development, and intrapreneurship in contemporary African civilizations. The study looks into how indigenous narratives can be used to reclaim cultural heritage, build individual and communal identity, and inspire new practices within organisations and communities. The study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How can Siswati storytelling help with cultural recovery and identity development? (2) How might these tales influence intrapreneurial activities in local contexts? The study is based on postcolonial theory and indigenous knowledge systems frameworks, emphasizing storytelling as a tool for fighting colonial legacies and disseminating communal wisdom. A qualitative approach taken, including textual analysis of selected folktales and semi-structured interviews with storytellers, educators, and community leaders. The findings show that Siswati stories incorporate moral ideals, historical memory, and communal ethics, which promotes cultural identity and provide novel approaches to problem solving and intrapreneurial thinking. It emphasizes storytelling as a link between tradition and modern practice, demonstrating its ability to foster creative, culturally grounded solutions in local and organizational settings. The study adds to the corpus of knowledge by presenting Siswati folklore as a dynamic epistemic resource that guides both cultural preservation and entrepreneurial innovation. The recommendations include incorporating Siswati narratives into school curricula, supporting community-led innovation projects, and using storytelling as a paradigm for intrapreneurial training. To summarize, decolonized Siswati storytelling is an effective tool for cultural recovery, identity creation, and fostering intrapreneurial potential, indicating that indigenous epistemologies may drive both cultural and economic change.

Keywords: Traditions, Community, Sustainability, Epistemology and Innovation

© 2025 Nontokoza Gladys Mdhuli and Isaack Mndawe. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if changes were made.

1. Introduction

As many communities still struggle with the legacy of colonialism, cultural deterioration, and linguistic marginalization,

* Corresponding author: Nontokoza Gladys Mdhuli, African Languages, and Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, University of Venda, Private Bag X5050, Thohoyandou 0950, Limpopo Province, South Africa. E-mail: nontokoza.mdhuli@univen.ac.za

2788-404X/© 2025. Nontokoza Gladys Mdhuli and Isaack Mndawe. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

the preservation and regeneration of indigenous knowledge systems have emerged as major issues in postcolonial African studies. Siswati storytelling is particularly noteworthy in this regard as an essential cultural practice that embodies collective memory, indigenous epistemologies, and moral teaching. African societies have historically used storytelling as a means of maintaining cultural identity, passing along societal values, and encouraging innovation (Osei-Tutu, 2023; Odularu *et al.*, 2024). The potential of decolonized Siswati storytelling to promote cultural recovery, identity development, and intrapreneurial thinking in modern African countries is still largely unknown, despite its crucial role in traditional education and moral formation. This disparity emphasizes the necessity of reconsidering oral traditions as dynamic instruments for social and economic change as well as as a type of heritage.

The underutilization of indigenous storytelling as a means of cultural reclamation, empowerment, and creativity is the issue that drives this study. The creative and intellectual potential ingrained in African oral traditions has been silenced due to the prevalence of Western frameworks in education, development, and entrepreneurship, which have frequently suppressed indigenous forms of knowing (Tella and Oladokun, 2024; Osei-Tutu, 2023). Many African nations experience a gap between their traditional customs and modern methods, which causes identity fragmentation and a decreased respect for indigenous knowledge systems. Siswati storytelling offers a culturally grounded method of knowledge production that connects traditional wisdom with contemporary innovation and intrapreneurial endeavours, it is pertinent to examine it as a decolonial technique.

The study makes extensive use of Afrocentric ideas to address this issue, especially Molefi Kete Asante's writings (1987 and 2007), which support re-centering African perspectives and values in cultural expression, education, and research. The Afrocentric paradigm places more emphasis on agency, cultural integrity, and the validation of African worldviews than Eurocentric frameworks that have historically excluded African knowledge systems. According to this theory, Siswati storytelling is a storehouse of native creativity and philosophy that Africans may use to express their reality, reassemble their identities, and create self-sufficient social and economic structures. Therefore, by arguing that Africans must see themselves as subjects, not objects, of their own histories and intellectual traditions, Afrocentricity is consistent with postcolonial and indigenous knowledge frameworks. This approach reaffirms the importance of African-centered perspectives in forming identity and creativity by transforming storytelling into an act of both cultural affirmation and epistemological opposition (Asante, 2007; Moses, 2024).

By showcasing the potential of indigenous storytelling as an epistemic and developmental tool, this study aims to make a significant academic and practical contribution. By placing Siswati storytelling within the larger discussions on postcolonial identity and indigenous inventiveness, the research advances the academic conversation on folklore (Campbell, 2022; Eddine, 2025). In practice, it provides avenues for using storytelling as an organizational and pedagogical tool promoting intrapreneurial learning, community-driven innovation, and culturally sensitive education. This perspective reinterprets Siswati storytelling as a dynamic tradition that can spur economic innovation and social revitalization in the present rather than as a static artifact of the past.

According to the present body of knowledge on African folklore, academics have long recognized its significance in fostering communal cohesion, preserving collective memory, and forming moral conscience (Diko, 2024; Masipa *et al.*, 2024). However, not much research has looked at how these stories may be reframed to address contemporary issues including economic underdevelopment, unemployment, and cultural alienation. Even while postcolonial theorists like Smith (2000), Wa Thiong'o (1986) and Parveen (2025). Postcolonial Literature and the Decolonization of Higher Education. Vaccarino-Ruiz *et al.* (2022) have argued for the democratization of knowledge, there are still few practical studies demonstrating how oral art may be used as a vehicle for intrapreneurship and innovation. By highlighting Siswati folklore's function in cultural recovery and entrepreneurial transformation, as well as its status as a cultural archive and a creative force, this study contributes to the body of existing scholarship. By highlighting Siswati folklore's function in cultural recovery and entrepreneurial transformation, as well as its status as a cultural archive and a creative force, this study contributes to the body of existing scholarship. The research places Siswati storytelling within an African-centered intellectual framework that emphasizes creativity, interconnectedness, and collective wisdom as the cornerstones of sustainable development by using Afrocentric philosophy.

The idea of storytelling as a fundamental component of African education and socialization serves as the backdrop for this inquiry. Siswati folktales, or (*tinganekwane*), serve as educational tools that promote cooperation, respect, and strategic thinking in addition to being a source of amusement (Thwala, 2020; Lubambo, 2022). The storyteller preserves social norms and fosters social cohesiveness by acting as a cultural historian and educator. However, the storytelling tradition is in danger of going extinct due to the spread of globalization and the loss of native languages in official

settings (Ngulube, 2012). Restoring storytelling's standing as a valid epistemic framework that can influence both individual and group development is therefore necessary for its decolonization. This restoration is further supported by Afrocentric philosophy, which reclaims indigenous narratives as legitimate knowledge sources that shape socioeconomic paradigms and African-centered pedagogies.

The study's goal is to investigate the ways in which decolonized Siswati storytelling might support identity creation, cultural rehabilitation, and intrapreneurial growth in contemporary African society. The study specifically aims to address the following two main research questions: (1) How may Siswati storytelling support identity development and cultural recovery? and (2) How may these stories encourage intrapreneurial activities in nearby organizations and communities? By answering these queries, the study sheds light on the relationship between traditional knowledge and modern creativity.

The Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) framework and postcolonial theory serve as the foundation for the methodology's qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews with storytellers, educators, and community leaders are among the methods used to collect data, as is textual analysis of a few chosen Siswati folktales. By identifying themes pertaining to moral education, social values, and creativity, this interpretative approach reveals how storytelling fosters problem-solving and intrapreneurial thinking in local contexts (Hester, 2024). A comprehensive understanding of storytelling as an art form and a social practice is ensured by the integration of textual and experiential material.

The study's discussion is set up to develop gradually. The first segment examines the historical and cultural significance of Siswati storytelling while placing it within postcolonial and indigenous epistemological frameworks. Selected folktales are examined in the next part to uncover their moral, ethical, and creative undertones. A summary of the interview results that relate storytelling to cultural identity and intrapreneurial potential follows. The discussion that follows highlights storytelling as a link between tradition and contemporary innovation by integrating these findings with previously published works. Recommendations for educational policy, community development, and intrapreneurial training based on indigenous storytelling concepts are presented in the last part.

This study concludes by presenting decolonized Siswati storytelling as a complex tool of change that fosters identity creation, cultural healing, and intrapreneurial potential. The study shows that storytelling can be a viable paradigm for recovering African intellectual traditions while encouraging creativity and independence by reclaiming indigenous knowledge as a cultural and economic resource. By doing thus, it supports the larger decolonial endeavours that aims to reassert African epistemologies as essential to modern advancement and cultural continuity.

2. Methodology

In order to investigate the cultural, social, and philosophical aspects of decolonized Siswati storytelling, this study used a qualitative research design. The researcher was able to gather detailed, descriptive insights on the ways that storytelling supports identity development, cultural recovery, and intrapreneurship in modern African contexts by using a qualitative technique. The design placed a strong emphasis on interpretative inquiry, letting participants' values, beliefs, and life experiences inform how indigenous stories are understood and their applicability in the contemporary world. Afrocentric and postcolonial theoretical frameworks, which value African worldviews, decolonized knowledge systems, and indigenous voices as valid sources of theory and practice, served as the study's foundation (Melo, 2025). These viewpoints influenced the design and interpretation procedures, guaranteeing that the research stayed grounded in Siswati communities' cultural logic and epistemology.

Semi-structured interviews and textual analysis were the two main techniques used to gather data. A purposive sample of Siswati folktales with themes of moral instruction, group collaboration, and inventive problem-solving were subjected to textual analysis. In order to ensure a representation of both traditional and modern storytelling methods, these texts were chosen from both oral and written sources. A wide range of people participated in the semi-structured interviews, including community leaders, educators, cultural guardians, and seasoned storytellers from various Siswati-speaking regions. The purpose of the interviews was to learn more about the role that storytelling plays in local entrepreneurship, education, and daily life. Participants were able to freely express their opinions through open-ended questions, which enhanced the data with individual and group perspectives. Throughout the whole research procedure, ethical principles like informed consent, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity were closely adhered to.

Thematic content analysis, a technique that can be used to find recurrent patterns and underlying meanings in qualitative data, was used to examine the gathered data (Humble and Mozelius, 2022). The researcher found key themes,

symbols, and character roles in the folktales that represented elements of resistance, creativity, and identity. The verbatim transcriptions of the interviews were coded inductively, enabling the participants' stories to be categorized. Multiple readings were made during the coding procedure to guarantee accuracy and nuanced interpretation. Themes were then arranged according to three main study questions: intrapreneurship, identity development, and cultural revival. Afrocentric interpretive lenses were also incorporated into the research, emphasizing indigenous philosophies, collective ethics, and the spiritual value of storytelling as a tool for learning and growth. The study was able to integrate cultural theory and practice thanks to this analytical framework, showing how Siswati storytelling encourages innovative and entrepreneurial thinking in contemporary African countries in addition to preserving cultural history.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The Afrocentric paradigm and postcolonial theory serve as the theoretical foundations for this study. They both offer a lens through which the role of decolonized Siswati storytelling in promoting identity formation, cultural recovery, and intrapreneurship can be comprehended. Together, these frameworks place a strong emphasis on reclaiming indigenous knowledge systems, confirming African epistemologies, and elevating African voices in scholarly and cultural discussions.

A fundamental paradigm for examining the legacy of colonialism's impact on culture, identity, and knowledge creation is postcolonial theory (Felsch, 2023; Sagar, 2021). It looks at how indigenous languages, customs, and knowledge systems were suppressed by colonial regimes and replaced with Eurocentric narratives that still influence African countries today. Postcolonial theory is used in this study to reveal how Siswati storytelling functions as a kind of cultural resistance that empowers communities to fight against historical erasure and recover their cultural agency. The study shows how Siswati folktales serve as decolonial instruments vehicles for reestablishing indigenous memory, ethics, and social order by placing them inside a postcolonial framework. Thus, the theory offers a crucial framework for comprehending how, in postcolonial contexts, traditional storytelling can be repositioned as a tool for self-definition, empowerment, and resilience.

Molefi Kete Asante (1987 and 2003) developed the Afrocentric theoretical paradigm, which places Africa and its people at the center of the study of intellectual, social, and cultural phenomena. It makes the claim that African experiences ought to be examined from within African cultural contexts as opposed to using Western viewpoints that are imposed from without. Siswati storytelling is interpreted in this study as a living epistemology an indigenous system of knowledge transmission based on creativity, spirituality, and collective ethics using an Afrocentric framework (Osei-Tutu, 2023; Mdhuli and Masipa, 2025). The Afrocentric approach recognizes that storytelling is a comprehensive activity that includes moral instruction, leadership development, and creativity rather than just being an artistic endeavours. By adopting this viewpoint, the study places Siswati folktales in the role of cultural archives and developmental tools, highlighting their applicability in tackling contemporary social issues such social disintegration, identity crises, and economic marginalization.

Afrocentric and postcolonial theories are combined to produce a thorough analytical framework that critically examines the consequences of colonial dominance while valuing indigenous epistemologies. Afrocentrism offers the reconstruction, stressing the re-centering of African knowledge systems as instruments for empowerment and change, while postcolonial theory offers the critique, revealing how colonial history created cultural loss and displacement. When combined, these frameworks provide an interpretative comprehension of how Siswati storytelling serves as a catalyst for cultural innovation and recovery by bridging the gap between tradition and modernity.

Using this combined theoretical framework, the study shows that decolonized Siswati storytelling is a dynamic process of intellectual and economic renaissance rather than just a cultural preservation effort, reflecting Africa's ability to produce its own models of innovation, progress, and entrepreneurial spirit.

3. Literature Review

Through the lens of Siswati oral traditions, the review of relevant literature examines earlier studies on the connection between storytelling, cultural identity, decolonization, and intrapreneurship in African contexts. Using postcolonial and Afrocentric theoretical frameworks that acknowledge the intellectual and transformational power of indigenous knowledge systems, it critically investigates how storytelling functions as a cultural and developmental instrument.

It has long been acknowledged that one of the main tenets of African oral traditions and cultural continuity is storytelling. According to academics like Ngoepe and Bhebhe (2023) and Falola (2023), African stories serve as archives

of social memory, ethics, and collective ideals in addition to being a source of amusement. Storytelling or (*kuteka inganekwane*), is a Siswati tradition that preserves intergenerational communication, upholds social standards, and communicates indigenous wisdom. Folktales help younger generations develop a sense of cultural awareness and belonging by using symbolic patterns and moral precepts. Such indigenous forms of knowledge combat the epistemic violence perpetrated by colonial education systems that destroyed African epistemologies, making their reclaiming crucial to the restoration of postcolonial identity (Mutongoza, 2025).

According to postcolonial and decolonial historians like Smith (2000) and Wa Thiong'o (1986), colonialism aimed to dominate Africans' cultural narratives and linguistic manifestations in addition to displacing them from their land. Therefore, reclaiming indigenous languages, customs, and ideologies as valid sources of knowledge and advancement is a necessary step in the process of decolonization, which entails epistemic emancipation. In this way, Siswati storytelling turns into a decolonizing activity that gives African communities their historical awareness and moral power back. By expressing communal wisdom relevant to current social and economic challenges, storytelling connects traditional and modern knowledge, according to recent studies on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) (Nomlomo and Sosibo, 2016). This is in line with the Afrocentric movement's demand that Africa be re-centered in its own development and self-definition narratives (Asante, 2003).

Oral storytelling have adaptive societal functions beyond cultural preservation, according to empirical research conducted throughout Africa. For example, Hofman-Bergholm (2023) notes that indigenous storytelling in Southern Africa aids communities in resolving moral quandaries and reassembling broken social identities, while Boya (2023) emphasizes that storytelling in Yoruba communities promotes leadership, creativity, and moral decision-making. Stories from the Siswati culture embody principles like hard work, respect, and solidarity values that can guide modern approaches to community development and creativity. Thus, storytelling serves two purposes: it preserves cultural legacy while fostering fresh perspectives based on African moral and cultural frameworks.

Storytelling functions as a tool for self-assertion and cultural resistance from a postcolonial perspective. Reclaiming narrative power allows formerly colonial nations to challenge imposed hierarchies of knowledge, as explained by Shamsan (2025) and Thwala (2020). In this context, Siswati storytelling offers a counter-discourse to colonial depictions of African inferiority and turns into an act of reclaiming both language and identity.

The Afrocentric viewpoint, on the other hand, stresses the need of examining African phenomena from inside African cultural contexts (Asante, 2007 and 2003). Indigenous epistemologies that foster creativity, wholeness, and connectivity are embodied in storytelling, according to Afrocentric thinkers. These oral traditions are a component of Africology, an epistemology that incorporates practice, community, and spirituality (Kapuya, 2020). Scholars that employ Afrocentric perspectives understand storytelling as a comprehensive intellectual activity that combines socioeconomic change with cultural continuity.

In African contexts, recent research has started to connect storytelling to intrapreneurial and entrepreneurial activities. Garg (2025), contend that by ingraining virtues like adaptability, creativity, and problem-solving, cultural narratives help foster entrepreneurial mindsets. According to Kiggundu (2002), traditional African values that are conveyed through myths, proverbs, and folktales still have an impact on corporate ethics and leadership. The term intrapreneurship, which describes innovation within enterprises, speaks to the sense of community that characterizes African nations, where moral responsibility and group creativity are highly prized. Organizations and educational institutions can use indigenous principles of innovation based on collaboration, ethics, and adaptability by taking inspiration from Siswati folktales.

Few studies have specifically looked at Siswati storytelling via the combined lenses of decolonization, identity reconstruction, and intrapreneurship, despite the fact that there is a large body of literature on African storytelling. The majority of earlier studies have concentrated on either entrepreneurial education or cultural preservation separately. By showing how decolonized Siswati storytelling may function as a developmental model that fosters creativity and socioeconomic resilience as well as a cultural epistemology, this work closes that gap. It advances the conversation on how African epistemologies can influence contemporary knowledge and practice systems by providing a paradigm that links indigenous oral tradition to modern innovation.

4. Findings

The study investigated how decolonized Siswati storytelling may support identity development, intrapreneurship, and cultural rebound in modern African countries. Several important conclusions that highlight the cultural, educational,

and developmental potential of storytelling as an indigenous knowledge system and a contemporary tool for transformation were drawn from textual analysis and semi-structured interviews with storytellers, educators, and community leaders.

Siswati storytelling is essential for recovering and conserving cultural material that was suppressed during colonial and postcolonial modernization processes, according to the findings. Participants underlined that indigenous values, ideologies, and historical consciousness are still preserved through storytelling. Community ethics, which act as tenets for moral behaviour and social order, are embodied in folktales and include cooperation, humility, honesty, and respect for elders. Retelling these stories helps communities reaffirm their cultural identity in a time when Western epistemologies predominate, re-establish linkages to ancestral wisdom, and revitalize traditional knowledge. This supports the claims made by Lubambo (2015) and Wa Thiong'o (1986) that oral traditions serve as tools for identity restoration and cultural resistance in postcolonial nations.

According to the study, Siswati folktales play a major role in the formation of both individual and collective identities. Participants viewed storytelling as a way to foster continuity, pride, and a sense of connection across generations. According to reports, children and young people who read Siswati stories grow more self-aware and have a stronger sense of cultural identity, which helps them combat the alienation brought on by globalization and Western cultural domination. Characters like kindness, loyalty, and self-control qualities that influence moral and social identities were highlighted in stories like Libhubesi Nalogwaja (*The Lion and An Hare*), the legend shows the importance of patience and kindness. Using compassion and intelligence (*bucili*), a gentle hare finds ways of getting food for an elderly, ravenous lion. The hare maintains its composure and humility even after the rapacious lion devours all the meat, leaving only the bones and skins/leader. True strength, the story demonstrates, is not power but self-control, humility, and intelligence.

The values of patience, kindness, and intrapreneurship are emphasized in the folktale *Indvodza Nelidada (A Man and a Duck)*. Despite his honest and loyal efforts for his boss, the man only gets a duck in return. Through perseverance and thankfulness, he learns that the duck produces golden eggs, demonstrating that good deeds are usually rewarded in surprising ways. His astute choice to sell the eggs and put the proceeds into investments demonstrates independent thought and intrapreneurial spirit. According to the narrative, patience, humility, and hard effort can result in long-term success and prosperity.

Thus, the results support Asante's (2003) Afrocentric assertion that identity creation in African contexts is essentially narratively driven, communal, and moral.

One significant finding is that Siswati storytelling encourages both individuals and groups to think creatively and entrepreneurially while solving problems. Participants emphasized that characters in traditional stories frequently display qualities essential to contemporary intrapreneurship, such as adaptability, inventiveness, and resilience. These stories offer symbolic frameworks for overcoming obstacles in community, educational, and organizational contexts. Stories that highlight group problem-solving, for instance, reflect the cooperative culture present in productive intrapreneurial teams. In line with Smith (2000) theory that indigenous narratives foster entrepreneurial mindsets based on moral responsibility and social awareness, the study discovered that storytelling stimulates local innovation by establishing creativity in cultural values.

According to research, Siswati storytelling serves as a decolonizing teaching technique that upends Eurocentric teaching methods and modernizes indigenous epistemologies in classroom settings. In ways that Western teaching approaches frequently ignore, participants especially educators confirmed that storytelling promotes empathy, critical thinking, and participatory learning. By integrating folktales into classroom activities, learners interact not only with language and culture but also with moral and cognitive skills that mirror African worldviews. This bolsters the claim made by Smith (2000) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021) that in order to create culturally grounded students who are capable of social change, decolonized education needs to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems.

The results show that Siswati storytelling skillfully combines tradition with contemporary relevance. Storytelling is being reimagined in digital, educational, and organizational settings rather than being limited to historical or rural settings. According to the participants, folktales are utilized to foster creativity, ethics, and teamwork in leadership workshops, youth development initiatives, and cultural entrepreneurship projects. This proves that storytelling is still a dynamic and adaptable cultural practice that may be used to address moral and financial issues in the modern world.

The results also show that storytelling promotes intergenerational knowledge sharing and community cooperation. Formal or informal storytelling sessions are social gathering places where people exchange moral lessons, comedy, and wisdom. According to elders, storytelling ensures identity continuity and cultural literacy by passing on cultural knowledge to young people. Storytelling fosters mutual respect and community cooperation, two fundamental principles of African humanism (*buntfu*).

Basically, the results show that decolonized Siswati storytelling is an active, transforming process that strengthens cultural identification, fosters moral and intellectual development, and stimulates creative innovation rather than a passive preservation of tradition. According to the study, storytelling serves as a decolonizing and developmental technique that shapes Africa's intellectual and economic future while linking its history and present. The study places Siswati oral tradition as a crucial tool for cultural recovery and long-term change in postcolonial Africa by acknowledging storytelling as an epistemological, pedagogical, and entrepreneurial resource.

5. Discussion

According to the study's findings, decolonized Siswati storytelling is a potent cultural, educational, and developmental tool that can support identity formation, cultural rehabilitation, and intrapreneurial thinking in modern African civilizations. Once written off as archaic or folklore under colonial regimes, storytelling now reveals itself as a complex instructional and epistemic system that holds both inventive potential and cultural memory. This section highlights the connections between identity formation, cultural reclamation, and the development of creative problem-solving within indigenous paradigms. It also discusses the findings' implications in relation to the literature and theoretical frameworks, specifically postcolonial theory and Afrocentricity.

According to the study, Siswati storytelling serves as a storehouse of historical awareness and collective wisdom, allowing communities to rediscover their precolonial identity and values. In order to understand who they are, where they're from, and what values keep them feeling like they belong, participants repeatedly underlined the importance of narrative theories that characterize cultural continuity. Communities reinforce their cultural sovereignty by reviving cultural manifestations that were suppressed during colonization through the process of telling and interpreting stories. This process, which reclaims indigenous spaces of knowledge creation and validates the Siswati worldview as a valid intellectual framework, is an act of epistemic resistance from a postcolonial viewpoint (Wa Thiong'o, 1986; Sibanda *et al.*, 2024).

The significance of narrative in forming both individual and group identity is another major theme that comes out of the research. According to the participants, folktales serve as philosophical and moral manuals that impart virtues like cooperation, humility, respect, and perseverance qualities that still shape Siswati communities' social cohesion. This perspective is supported by the Afrocentric paradigm (Asante, 2003), which positions identity as a collective experience based on a shared history and cultural mission rather than as an individual construct. Indigenous identity is frequently undermined by globalization influences on younger generations. The stories examined in this study show that identity reconstruction takes place via thought, symbolism, and conversation; each story provides a moral guideline that validates social cohesiveness and belonging.

This study makes a significant contribution by identifying the potential of storytelling to foster innovative and intrapreneurial mindsets in both local and organizational contexts. The concepts of intrapreneurship are reflected in Siswati folktales, which frequently include characters that collaborate, solve issues imaginatively, and overcome obstacles with resourcefulness (Smith, 2000). Thus, storytelling turns into an educational tool that encourages moral leadership and innovative thinking in institutional and community settings. Critical thinking, collaboration, and moral decision-making can all be improved by incorporating cultural narratives into learning and work settings. This perspective is supported by the Afrocentric paradigm, which acknowledges storytelling as a whole educational process that combines moral instruction with intellectual and practical empowerment (Nabudere, 2011).

Additionally, the results show that decolonized storytelling serves as a link between traditional and contemporary practices. Participants viewed storytelling as a dynamic cultural form that could adapt to modern demands rather than as static or outdated. Storytelling thus turns into a dialogic process that connects traditional knowledge to contemporary issues like governance, education, and entrepreneurship. This realization supports the claim made by Hofman-Bergholm (2023) that indigenous storytelling provides adaptable frameworks for resolving contemporary societal issues while maintaining cultural integrity. Theoretically, narrative can be viewed as a constant cultural adaptation rather than a sentimental throwback thanks to the combination of postcolonial critique and Afrocentric reconstruction.

According to the research, adding Siswati storytelling to community initiatives and school curricula may improve social innovation, identity affirmation, and cultural literacy. Indigenous educational philosophies that prioritize holistic development are in line with storytelling-based pedagogy, which encourages intergenerational discourse and participatory learning (Perry, 2024). Additionally, companies can foster moral leadership and community-driven innovation by using storytelling as a developmental paradigm. Therefore, the study promotes institutional recognition of storytelling as a strategic tool for sustainable development and transformation in African nations, rather than only as cultural legacy.

In conclusion, the conversation demonstrates how decolonized Siswati storytelling functions as a multifaceted cultural system that serves as a link between tradition and change, identity and creativity, and memory and modernity. This study, which is based on postcolonial and Afrocentric ideas, confirms that indigenous epistemologies have a significant impact on how Africa develops intellectually and economically. Siswati oral traditions are essential to local resilience and the creation of knowledge worldwide because storytelling is a living methodology for cultural recovery and creative empowerment rather than a relic of the past.

6. Recommendations

In order to support decolonized knowledge and cultural regeneration, it is advised that Siswati storytelling be methodically included into educational curriculum and community development initiatives. In order to use indigenous narratives as instructional materials that represent Afrocentric values, ethics, and worldviews, educational institutions, cultural organizations, and schools should work together. In addition to strengthening learners' language and cultural identities, this integration would foster their critical thinking, creativity, and moral reasoning. Additionally, teacher preparation programs must to give instructors the know-how to use storytelling as a teaching method that encourages student participation and cultural sensitivity. Storytelling can be a decolonizing educational tool that satisfies the moral and intellectual needs of contemporary African nations while reestablishing students' connection to their past through curricular reform and policy assistance.

It is also advised that storytelling programs be extended into social, economic, and entrepreneurial domains in addition to educational ones. Storytelling festivals, digital storytelling platforms, and community workshops that encourage intrapreneurship and innovation based on indigenous values should be supported by government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and regional cultural groups. Promoting the use of folktales in programs for community empowerment, corporate growth, and leadership training can inspire innovative problem-solving and moral decision-making. In order to preserve the linguistic diversity and thematic depth of Siswati folktales for future generations, scholars should also keep recording and examining them. These initiatives will guarantee that storytelling continues to be a dynamic and transforming cultural force that actively shapes Africa's sustainable and self-determined future in addition to conserving the past.

7. Conclusion

Decolonized Siswati storytelling has been shown in this study to be a versatile tool for intrapreneurial growth, identity creation, and cultural rehabilitation in modern African civilizations. Through the analysis of a few chosen folktales and interviews with storytellers, educators, and community leaders, the study found that storytelling not only provides frameworks for creativity, problem-solving, and innovative thinking, but also preserves moral values, historical memory, and communal ethics. The results highlight the value of indigenous knowledge systems in tackling today's societal issues by demonstrating that Siswati oral traditions are dynamic epistemic resources that can bridge tradition and modernity rather than being solely artifacts of the past.

Based on Afrocentric and postcolonial theoretical frameworks, the study confirms that storytelling serves as a means of re-centering African viewpoints, decolonizing knowledge, and fostering culturally based solutions to social, educational, and economic problems. Siswati tales foster cultural pride, moral growth, and cooperative creativity, which advances individual and collective development and shows how indigenous epistemologies can spur significant change in contemporary African situations. The potential of oral traditions to maintain cultural continuity, cultivate identity, and propel creative practices that aid Africa's intellectual, social, and economic renaissance is highlighted by the way decolonized Siswati storytelling emerges as a strategic cultural and developmental resource.

Acknowledgement

My supervisor, Dr. Ik Mndawe of the University of Johannesburg, has provided me with important advice, support, and mentorship during this study, for which i am incredibly grateful. His knowledge, support, and perceptive criticism were crucial in determining the focus, level of rigor, and caliber of this study.

I am also appreciative of the community leaders, educators, and storytellers who so kindly gave of their time, expertise, and experiences, offering deep insights that served as the study's cornerstone. My knowledge of Siswati storytelling and its significance for identity creation, cultural healing, and intrapreneurial growth has greatly expanded thanks to their efforts.

Lastly, I would want to thank my family, friends, and coworkers for their constant support and encouragement, which kept me going during the research process. This study could not have been completed without the direction, collaboration, and motivation of these people.

References

- Asante, M.K. (2003). *The Afrocentric Idea in Education. Afrocentricity and the Academy: Essays on Theory and Practice*, 37-49.
- Asante, M.K. (1987). *An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance. Polity*.
- Boya, T.B. (2023). *The Implications of Setswana Hare Folktales Contemporary for South African Children. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pretoria.*
- Campbell, N.I. (2022). *Indigenous Storytelling and Literary Practices. Doctoral Dissertation, University of British Columbia.*
- Diko, M. (2024). *An Existential Phenomenological Approach on Folklore as South Africa's Wealth in Context. African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies*, 6(1), 1-10.
- Eddine, A.S. (2025). *From Achebe to Afrofuturism: How African Literature is Rewriting its Narrative.*
- Falola, T. (2023). *African Memoirs and Cultural Representations: Narrating Traditions. Anthem Press.*
- Felsch, M. (2023). *The Scientific Shortcomings of Postcolonial Theory. International Studies*, 60(1), 113-130.
- Garg, S. (2025). *Cultivating the Entrepreneurial Mindset: Resilience and Innovation for Success in the Modern Business World. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Approaches in Psychology*, 3(1), 40-48.
- Hester, A.D. (2024). *Encouraging Intrapreneurship in American Manufacturing: Leadership, Motivation, Culture, and Navigating Implementation Challenges. Doctoral Dissertation, National University.*
- Hofman-Bergholm, M. (2023). *Storytelling: The Ancient Tool of Using Stories to Communicate Knowledge for a Sustainable Future. In Integrated Education and Learning*, 237-253, Springer International Publishing, Cham.
- Humble, N. and Mozelius, P. (2022). *Content Analysis or Thematic Analysis: Similarities, Differences and Applications in Qualitative Research. In European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies*, 21(1), 76-81.
- Kapuya, Z. (2020). *Phenomenology of Decolonizing the University: Essays in the Contemporary Thoughts of Afrikology. African Books Collective.*
- Lubambo, L.M. (2022). *Curiosity of Children Characters in Siswati Folktales. Master's Thesis, University of South Africa, South Africa.*
- Lubambo, R.J. (2015). *The Role Played by Siswati Folktales in Building the Character of Boys: A Socio-Functionalist Approach. Doctoral Dissertation, University of South Africa.*
- Masipa, M.J., Mdhuli, N. and Mphasha, L.E. (2024). *Ubuntu, an Imperative Fingerprint of Morality in African Literature: A Case of Selected Works of JJ Thwala and OK Matsepe.*
- Mdhuli, N.G. and Masipa, M.J. (2025). *Indigenous Music as Moral Pedagogy: A Study of Cultural Transmission in South African Folklore. e-BANGI Journal*, 22(3).
- Melo, N. (2025). *Decolonizing Research Methods: Indigenous, Afrocentric, and Participatory Approaches: Challenging Colonial Epistemologies and Centering Community-Led Knowledge Production. Nouridin Melo.*

- Moses, R.M. (2024). *Looking Back to Look Forward: An Afrocentric Critical Examination of Agency-Amplifying Methodologies within Indigenous west African Socialization Systems and American Culturally-Based Pedagogy*. Temple University.
- Mutongoza, B.H. (2025). *Reclaiming Epistemologies of Woundedness: Pain and the Politics of Knowledge in African Higher Education*. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Rural and Community Studies*, 7(1), a04-a04.
- Nabudere, W.D. (2021). *Internationalisation of Higher Education for Pluriversity: A Decolonial Reflection*. *Journal of the British Academy*, 9(1), 77-98.
- Ngoepe, M. and Bhebhe, S. (2023). *Indigenous Archives in Postcolonial Contexts: Recalling the Past in Africa*. Routledge.
- Ngulube, P. (2012). *Revitalising and Preserving Endangered Indigenous Languages in South Africa Through Writing and Publishing*. *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science*, 78(1), 11-24.
- Nomlomo, V. and Sosibo, Z. (2016). *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Early Literacy Development: An Analysis of IsiXhosa and IsiZulu Traditional Children's Folktales and Songs*.
- Odularu, O.I., Sone, E.M. and Puzi, M.E. (2024). *Globalisation Perspective of Libraries as Curators of Oral Tradition and Storytelling Activities*. *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*, 7(2), 136-156.
- Osei-Tutu, A.A. (2023). *Developing African Oral Traditional Storytelling as a Framework for Studying with African Peoples*. *Qualitative Research*, 23(6), 1497-1514.
- Parveen, S. (2025). *Postcolonial Literature and the Decolonization of Higher Education*. *Idealistic Journal of Advanced Research in Progressive Spectrums*, 4(04), 211-215.
- Perry, C.R. (2024). *Telling Stories to Improve Indigenous Language Education: How the Integration of Indigenous Storytelling Can Support Indigenous Language Curriculum in Canada*. Master's Thesis, University of Toronto, Canada.
- Sagar, R.K. (2021). *Imperatives of Decolonization: Insights from Fanon, Quijano, and Mignolo on Colonial Legacy*. *Social Science Chronicle*, 1, 1-20.
- Shamsan, B.T. (2025). *Decolonizing History: Rewriting Narratives of Colonialism in the 21st Century*. *European Journal of Humanistic Studies and Social Dynamics (EJHSSD)*, 52-61.
- Sibanda, M., Khumalo, N.Z., Fon, F.N. and Ndou, Z.L. (2024). *The Contemporary Politics of Knowledge Systems: A Critical Reflection Through the Decolonisation Lens*. In *The Focus Conference (TFC 2024)*, December, 452-467, Atlantis Press.
- Smith, R. (2000). *Postcolonizing the Commonwealth: Studies in Literature and Culture*. Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press.
- Tella, A. and Oladokun, B.D. (2024). *Assessing the Role of Indigenous African Traditional Practices in Facilitating Cultural and Intellectual Revitalization and Decolonization*. In *Evaluating Indigenous African Tradition for Cultural Reconstruction and Mind Decolonization*, 99-111, IGI Global.
- Thwala, J.J. (2020). *Folktales as a Performance Art is a Mirror of Siswati Culture*. *Int. J. Arts Humanit. Soc. Stud.*, 5, 23-30.
- Vaccarino-Ruiz, S.S., Gordon, D.L. and Langhout, R.D. (2022). *Toward the Democratization of Knowledge: Using Photovoice, Social Biography, and the "Five Whys" in YPAR with Children*. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 28(3), 440.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1986). *The Writer in a Neocolonial State*. *The Black Scholar*, 17(4), 2-10.

Cite this article as: Nontokozi Gladys Mdhuli and Isaack Mndawe (2025). *Decolonized Siswati Storytelling and Intrapreneurship: A Path to Cultural Recovery*. *International Journal of Languages and Culture*, 5(2), 14-23. doi: 10.51483/IJLC.5.2.2025.14-23.