

MIXED METHODS STUDY

# Integrating Indigenous Tiv Folktales into Social Studies Curricula

*A Mixed Methods Analysis of Student Engagement in Benue State*

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## ABSTRACT

Social studies curricula in Nigeria have been critiqued for their limited integration of indigenous knowledge systems, potentially diminishing relevance and engagement for learners from specific cultural backgrounds. This study aimed to analyse the effect of integrating indigenous Tiv folktales into the social studies curriculum on student engagement. Specific objectives were to measure changes in behavioural and emotional engagement and to explore student perceptions of the adapted curriculum. A sequential explanatory mixed methods design was employed. A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test control group design ( $n = 320$ ) utilised a validated student engagement scale. This was followed by focus group discussions ( $n = 24$ ) with purposively selected participants from the intervention group to contextualise findings. Quantitative results showed a statistically significant increase in composite engagement scores for the intervention group compared to the control ( $p < .01$ ,  $d = 0.72$ ). Qualitatively, three key themes emerged: enhanced relatability of content, increased motivation for participation, and strengthened cultural identity. Students described lessons as 'more lively and connected' to their lived experience. The deliberate integration of culturally relevant indigenous narratives can substantially improve student engagement in social studies. This approach addresses pedagogical relevance and supports cultural sustainability within formal education. Curriculum developers should create structured frameworks for integrating indigenous epistemologies into national subjects. Teacher professional development programmes must equip educators with the skills to locally source and pedagogically adapt indigenous knowledge materials. Indigenous knowledge, curriculum integration, student engagement, folktales, social studies, culturally relevant pedagogy, mixed methods. This study provides a novel, replicable pedagogical model for the systematic incorporation of indigenous oral literature into a standard national curriculum, demonstrating its measurable impact on learner engagement.

**Keywords:** *Indigenous knowledge systems, student engagement, curriculum integration, Tiv folktales, Benue State, mixed methods research, social studies education*

### Article Highlights

- Quantitative results showed significant engagement increase

### Methodological Approach

Sequential explanatory mixed methods: quasi-

( $p < .01$ ,  $d = 0.72$ )

- Three key themes emerged: relatability, motivation, and cultural identity
- Provides replicable model for integrating indigenous oral literature
- Supports both pedagogical relevance and cultural sustainability

experimental design ( $n=320$ ) followed by focus group discussions ( $n=24$ ) to contextualize quantitative findings.

*This study offers practical guidance for curriculum developers and teacher educators.*

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