

PRESERVATION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE AMONG THE VATSONGA THROUGH EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study explores the preservation of Vatsonga Indigenous Knowledge Systems (VIKS) and cultural heritage as a foundation for sustaining community identity, intergenerational wisdom, and cultural diversity. It emphasizes the importance of culturally grounded education amid globalization and the Westernization of schooling, which erode Vatsonga traditions. Guided by Decolonial Education Theory and epistemological justice, the study conceptualizes integrating Indigenous epistemologies into formal education as both an intellectual necessity and a social imperative. Using a qualitative design, data were collected from 18 participants—Vatsonga elders, educators, policymakers, and secondary school learners—through interviews, focus groups, and curriculum content analysis. Findings reveal that embedding IKS enhances cultural pride, identity, belonging, and educational equity while promoting cultural sustainability. System-level recommendations include developing culturally responsive materials, formalizing collaboration with elders as knowledge holders, and strengthening policy frameworks supporting Indigenous knowledge integration. The study concludes that systemic incorporation of Vatsonga Indigenous knowledge into South African education is vital for cultural preservation, decolonization of learning spaces, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. It contributes to decolonial education scholarship by demonstrating how localized Indigenous epistemologies can be operationalized within curricula as a transformative strategy for advancing epistemic justice and cultural renewal. The research calls for national policy adoption of IKS integration to affirm the cultural rights and intellectual sovereignty of Vatsonga learners and communities.

Keywords: *cultural heritage; indigenous knowledge; preserving; vatsonga in education.*

1. Introduction

As a researcher concerned with the global crisis of epistemic injustice, I recognize that Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) across the world continue to be undermined by enduring colonial legacies and the accelerating forces of globalization. These forces privilege Western epistemologies while systematically silencing or devaluing locally rooted ways of knowing. Mignolo (2018, pp. 41–44) supports this concern by arguing that Western epistemic dominance has produced deeply entrenched hierarchies of knowledge. Chilisa

(2020, pp. 12–15) extends this critique to educational contexts, demonstrating how Eurocentric curriculum structures normalize the erosion of Indigenous epistemologies. Smith (2012, pp. 1–5) further reinforces this observation, emphasizing that research and schooling remain key sites of colonial domination that invalidate Indigenous worldviews.

It is within this global landscape of epistemic marginalisation that this study is situated, positioning education as a central site for restoring epistemic justice. In response to this crisis, the study adopts Decolonial Education Theory as its guiding philosophical and analytical framework. This theory, articulated by Le Grange (2019, pp. 57–60), challenges Western knowledge hegemony and calls for the recovery, validation, and reintegration of Indigenous intellectual traditions within formal education systems. From this perspective, integrating Vatsonga Indigenous Knowledge (VIK) into schooling is not merely an act of cultural preservation but a necessary intervention for curriculum reform, identity restoration, and epistemological redress.

Maldonado-Torres (2016, pp. 10–13) affirms that decoloniality requires dismantling the structural formations that maintain Western epistemic superiority. Dei (2016, pp. 23–27) similarly stresses that centering African worldviews in education is crucial for reclaiming Indigenous intellectual sovereignty. In alignment with these scholars, the study positions curriculum transformation as a vehicle for epistemic justice where Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are recognised as legitimate, sophisticated, and essential epistemological assets. This theoretical stance is further supported by sociocultural perspectives on learning, which hold that knowledge is socially constructed and transmitted through interaction, culture, and community.

Within this study, this orientation affirms that Vatsonga epistemologies expressed through oral traditions, communal practices, ritual knowledge, and collective memory are critical intellectual resources that can enrich teaching, learning, and assessment. Scholars such as Odora Hoppers (2002, pp. 6–9) emphasise that IKS embody holistic, relational, and experiential forms of knowledge that have long been devalued by institutional systems prioritising Western scientific modes of reasoning. These conceptual insights reinforce the foundational argument of this research: meaningful curriculum transformation must be rooted in Indigenous worldviews and community knowledge structures.

The South African, and specifically Vatsonga, context sharply illustrates the urgency of this agenda. Historically, apartheid education intentionally marginalised African histories, languages, and Indigenous knowledge systems, producing a curriculum that fragmented African identity and disconnected learners from their cultural heritage. Msila (2016, pp. 88–91) notes that apartheid schooling systematically alienated communities from their cultural roots, a legacy that continues to shape the experiences of Vatsonga learners. Today, Vatsonga oral traditions, healing practices, artistry, and symbolic cultural expressions, which are central to community identity, remain structurally sidelined within formal schooling. This concern is also highlighted by Jaxa (2024, pp. 55–58).

Although post-apartheid education policies promote the recognition of IKS, their practical implementation is uneven and often superficial. Ndlovu (2023, pp. 34–36) supports this observation, noting that policy commitments have not translated into classroom reality. As a result, many Vatsonga learners experience weakened cultural identity and diminished belonging, challenges also observed by Hlalele (2019, pp. 21–23) across African learning environments. While the policy landscape acknowledges the general importance of Indigenous Knowledge integration, the review of existing scholarship reveals a persistent research gap.

Existing studies tend to focus on policy intentions rather than lived experiences. What is critically missing, and what this study seeks to provide, is empirical qualitative evidence detailing the specific, actionable strategies required for meaningful Vatsonga Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Heritage (IKCH) integration. Scholars such as Seleke, Teis, Els, and Legodu (2025, pp. 18–20) offer valuable insights into IKS challenges more broadly, but their work does not examine Vatsonga epistemologies or the nuanced perspectives of Vatsonga elders, educators, and policymakers.

Keane (2017, pp. 14–17) and Ramose (1999, pp. 54–57) similarly argue that Indigenous epistemologies demand locally grounded, community-anchored approaches that honour the lived experiences of cultural knowledge holders. The absence of such context-specific evidence weakens ongoing decolonisation efforts and makes it difficult to move beyond symbolic inclusion toward systemic curriculum transformation.

To address this gap, the present study seeks to identify and critically analyse stakeholder-driven strategies capable of shifting Vatsonga IKCH integration from superficial representation to meaningful curriculum reform. The aim is to produce evidence-based insights into how Vatsonga knowledge can be embedded within teaching, learning, and assessment practices in ways that strengthen cultural identity, promote inclusion, and advance epistemic justice.

Finally this study contributes an ethnographic, community-validated framework for IKCH integration that supports national decolonisation efforts within South Africa's education system. By foregrounding Vatsonga epistemologies and drawing on decolonial, epistemic justice, and sociocultural theoretical commitments, this research advances the transformative potential of curriculum renewal that is culturally grounded, contextually aligned, and reflective of South Africa's diverse knowledge heritage. Jaxa (2024, pp. 60–63) and Ndlovu (2023, pp. 37–40) reinforce this direction, affirming that lasting educational transformation must be rooted in Indigenous worldviews and community participation.

2. Literature Review

This study is situated within the critical discourse of Decolonial Education Theory (DET), which forms the principal analytical lens for examining the integration of Vatsonga Indigenous Knowledge (VIK) and Cultural Heritage (IKCH) into South African schooling. DET critiques the dominance of Eurocentric knowledge structures and emphasizes the recovery, validation, and integration of Indigenous epistemologies as both an intellectual obligation and a social imperative (Santos, 2018, pp. 22–25; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986, pp. 12–15). In applying DET to the Vatsonga context, the integration of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is conceptualised not merely as cultural preservation but as a transformative mechanism for curriculum reform, epistemic justice, and the restoration of historically marginalised knowledge systems. Blackie (2024, pp. 72–74) observes that such integration challenges the entrenched dominance of Western epistemologies and promotes a more equitable distribution of knowledge authority within formal education.

2.1 Decolonial Education as an Epistemological Imperative

DET frames curriculum decolonisation as an intentional challenge to the epistemic monopoly of Western knowledge. Integrating Vatsonga Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Heritage (VIKCH) into schooling represents a tangible application of this theoretical commitment. Scholars identify barriers such as teacher scepticism, inadequate culturally responsive materials, and weak policy enforcement as manifestations of enduring colonial

curriculum structures (Seleke, Teis, Els, & Legodu, 2025, pp. 19–22). Maldonado-Torres (2016, pp. 10–13) emphasises that decoloniality requires dismantling institutional arrangements that maintain Western epistemic superiority. Similarly, Dei (2016, pp. 23–27) underscores the necessity of centring African worldviews in education as an expression of intellectual sovereignty. Through this lens, integrating Vatsonga knowledge is not symbolic but represents the epistemological and pedagogical transformation envisaged by DET.

2.2 Defining Indigenous Knowledge and Its Educational Value

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are understood in this study as holistic, dynamic, community-based frameworks that are locally grounded, socially transmitted, and intergenerationally sustained (Odora Hoppers, 2002, pp. 6–9). Unlike isolated cultural artefacts, IKS are coherent bodies of knowledge that guide daily practices, ethical reasoning, and ecological adaptation (Hlalele, 2019, pp. 15–18). Integrating IKS into formal education offers several pedagogical and socio-cultural benefits, including:

- **Cultural identity formation:** Embedding oral literature, language, and traditional practices strengthens learners' sense of belonging and self-understanding (Jaxa, 2024, pp. 56–59; Hlalele, 2019, pp. 21–24).
- **Relevance and contextualisation of learning:** Locally grounded knowledge situates learning within learners' lived experiences, thereby improving comprehension and engagement (Da Silva, 2024, pp. 28–31).
- **Epistemological pluralism:** Recognising Indigenous knowledge alongside Western forms disrupts hierarchical epistemic structures and fosters a more inclusive and socially just educational environment (Ndlovu, 2023, pp. 34–36).

These benefits highlight that IKS integration functions both as a pedagogical strategy and as a cultural restoration initiative, particularly for historically marginalised communities such as the Vatsonga.

2.3 The Policy Landscape and Cultural Erosion in South Africa

Although post-apartheid policies advocate for the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge, systemic implementation remains inconsistent. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) formally acknowledge the importance of incorporating IKS, yet empirical evidence demonstrates a persistent gap between policy intent and classroom practice (Khosa, 2021, pp. 42–45; Makhubele, 2020, pp. 15–18). Within the Vatsonga context, oral traditions, ritual practices, and linguistic heritage continue to be underrepresented, reflecting the enduring effects of historical exclusion and contemporary neglect (Jaxa, 2024, pp. 55–58). This underrepresentation contributes to cultural erosion and weakens learners' sense of identity (Hlalele, 2019, pp. 21–23; Ndlovu, 2023, pp. 34–36). Recent scholarship underscores the urgency of developing empirically grounded strategies for integrating IKS. Seleke et al. (2025, pp. 19–22) identify persistent challenges related to teacher preparation, resource availability, and policy interpretation. Makokotlela (2025, pp. 40–43) demonstrates the potential of decolonised curricula in higher education to integrate local knowledge meaningfully. Similarly, Buthelezi (2024, pp. 50–53) documents institutional strategies for IKS preservation through digital repositories, while Da Silva (2024, pp. 28–31) illustrates inclusive pedagogical models that successfully embed IKS in primary education. Collectively, these studies reveal both the transformative potential and the systemic obstacles associated with operationalising IKS in formal learning environments.

2.4 Synthesis and Identified Research Gap

Although Decolonial Education Theory (DET) provides strong theoretical support for Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Heritage (IKCH) integration, and although policy frameworks exist within South Africa, empirical evidence detailing stakeholder-validated strategies for systemic integration among the Vatsonga remains limited. Existing studies primarily offer broad theoretical or policy insights without providing in-depth qualitative accounts of the lived experiences, practical challenges, and context-specific approaches identified by elders, educators, and policymakers. This study addresses this gap by offering an ethnographic investigation into Vatsonga IKCH integration, generating evidence-based strategies capable of informing systemic curriculum transformation, advancing epistemic justice, and promoting culturally grounded education. By foregrounding stakeholder perspectives, the study contributes both theoretically and practically to the broader discourse on decolonial education and provides a model for embedding Indigenous knowledge within South African schooling.

3. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic research design, grounded in Decolonial Education Theory (DET), which prioritizes the validation, integration, and amplification of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in formal education. DET asserts that Indigenous epistemologies constitute legitimate, sophisticated knowledge systems, and curriculum reform must actively challenge the dominance of Western knowledge (Santos, 2018, pp. 22–25; Le Grange, 2019, pp. 57–60). An ethnographic approach was essential to capture the lived experiences of Vatsonga knowledge holders, educators, and policymakers, enabling the co-creation of knowledge rather than imposing externally derived interpretations. This design aligns with the interpretivist/constructivist philosophical stance, recognizing that reality is socially constructed, contextual, and deeply informed by community epistemologies (Maldonado-Torres, 2016, pp. 10–13).

3.1 Research Setting

The study was conducted in selected schools and community centers within Vatsonga-dominated regions of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, South Africa. These sites were chosen for their active engagement with Vatsonga learners, proximity to cultural custodians, and documented presence of traditional knowledge practices embedded in community life. This contextual specificity enabled rich, culturally grounded data collection while ensuring relevance to the study's objectives.

3.2 Research Participants and Sampling

Participants were purposively selected to ensure inclusion of individuals with deep cultural knowledge and formal roles in education. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were employed to identify participants capable of providing nuanced perspectives on IKCH integration. The final sample included:

- **Vatsonga Elders (N = 4):** Recognized custodians of oral traditions, storytelling, and ritual knowledge.
- **Educators/Teachers (N = 5):** Teaching in schools serving Vatsonga communities and responsible for curriculum delivery.
- **Policymakers/Curriculum Developers (N = 3):** Individuals involved in curriculum formulation and policy oversight.

- **Students (N = 6; arranged in 2 focus group discussions of 3 students each):** Learners from participating schools representing secondary education cohorts.

This allocation ensured representation across all key stakeholder groups while maintaining a manageable total of 18 participants. Selection criteria prioritized participants' active engagement with Vatsonga culture, knowledge of IKS, and willingness to reflect critically on educational integration practices.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

- a. In-Depth Semi-Structured Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with elders, educators, and policymakers to explore the content, preservation strategies, and implementation challenges of Vatsonga IKCH. Interview themes were tailored to each group: elders focused on the nature and transmission of cultural knowledge, educators discussed teaching strategies and resource constraints, and policymakers addressed structural and regulatory barriers.
- b. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Two FGDs were conducted with student participants to elicit perspectives on the relevance of IKCH in schooling, its impact on cultural identity, and perceived gaps in learning experiences. FGDs facilitated interactive discussions, allowing students to reflect collectively on the curriculum's cultural inclusivity.
- c. Content Analysis:** Key curriculum documents were analyzed, including selected Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) documents for Grades 7–9, textbooks, and supplementary teaching materials. Coding criteria distinguished between superficial references to IKCH and deeper, integrative inclusion that aligns with community knowledge.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework and anchored in decolonial epistemology. The process involved:

- Transcription of all interviews and FGDs for verbatim accuracy.
- Initial coding to identify recurring patterns, concepts, and culturally significant practices.
- Development of themes reflecting barriers, strategies, and opportunities for IKCH integration.
- Linking themes to research questions and theoretical constructs from DET to ensure analytical coherence.

The analysis prioritized the voices of elders and community knowledge holders over institutional narratives, reflecting the decolonial commitment to elevating Indigenous perspectives. Triangulation across interviews, FGDs, and content analysis strengthened credibility and internal validity.

3.5 Trustworthiness and Rigor

Rigor was enhanced through several strategies:

- **Methodological Triangulation:** Cross-validation across multiple data sources (interviews, FGDs, content analysis).
- **Member Checking:** Participants were invited to review preliminary findings to ensure accuracy and resonance with lived experiences.

- **Peer Debriefing:** Research findings were discussed with academic peers to mitigate researcher bias and ensure analytical transparency.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant University Research Ethics Committee (REC). Participants provided informed consent, with parental consent secured for minors. Cultural sensitivity was maintained through adherence to local protocols, respecting elders' authority, and anonymizing participant identities to ensure confidentiality.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings are organised according to the four core analytical themes that emerged from the data. Each subsection integrates raw qualitative evidence, theoretical interpretation, and relevant scholarship. Participants are anonymised as *Teacher 1*, *Student FGD 2*, *Elder A*, *Policy Official 1*, etc.

4.1 Outcomes of Integration: Enhancing Cultural Identity and Epistemological Equity

Findings from FGDs with learners and interviews with educators show that integrating Vatsonga Indigenous Knowledge (VIK) into the curriculum strengthens cultural identity and promotes epistemological justice.

Strengthened Identity and Cultural Pride

Learners consistently expressed that learning through Xitsonga cultural materials affirms their identity. As one learner explained:

“When we learn our stories and songs, I feel like our culture is finally respected at school, not only at home.” (Student FGD 2)

Teachers similarly emphasised the motivational value of culturally grounded learning:

“When I teach through proverbs and folktales, the learners become more confident. They feel the lesson belongs to them.” (Teacher 3)

These findings confirm the broader view in decolonial education that indigenous epistemologies restore dignity and disrupt colonial hierarchies (Dei, 2014; Hoppers, 2002).

Epistemological Justice and Decolonial Interpretation

Students and teachers described VIK integration as realigning the curriculum with learners lived realities, a reflection of **epistemological justice**—a key concept in Decolonial Theory. One educator noted:

“We are moving away from teaching only European ways of knowing. Learners must see their knowledge as valid.” (Teacher 1)

In decolonial terms, these outcomes challenge the colonial assumption that Western knowledge is the only legitimate form of academic authority (Mignolo, 2011). The Vatsonga case aligns with Makokotlela's findings that culturally grounded pedagogy restores agency, identity, and knowledge ownership among indigenous learners.

4.2 Implementation Barrier: The Legacy of Curriculum Monopolization

Despite positive outcomes, participants revealed persistent barriers reflecting the colonial epistemic monopoly embedded in curriculum design and resource production.

Marginalisation of IK in Curriculum Materials

Content analysis of Xitsonga Home Language CAPS-aligned textbooks revealed minimal inclusion of Vatsonga-specific cultural content. One teacher stated:

“Most of the books we get from the department focus on Western stories and poems. There is almost nothing about our own traditions.” (Teacher 4)

This aligns with Hoppers (2002), who argues that colonial curriculum structures continue to privilege Western epistemologies and silence IKS.

Teachers’ Dependence on Western Sources

Many educators described relying on Western materials because they lacked validated indigenous sources:

“It’s not that we don’t want to teach culture; we just don’t have proper Vatsonga materials approved for classroom use.” (Teacher 2)

This dependency is a direct manifestation of colonial epistemic monopolization, where Western knowledge remains the primary “legitimate” resource in schools.

Contrasting Stakeholder Perspectives

- Educators emphasised practical barriers: lack of textbooks, training, and validated IK resources.
- Policymakers emphasised structural constraints: limited policy directives and insufficient national guidelines.

As one official explained:

“Policy recognises IKS, but we do not yet have standardised frameworks for including it in daily teaching.” (Policy Official 1)

This divergence highlights the systemic nature of the implementation challenge.

4.3 Strategy 1: Formalising Collaboration and Intergenerational Wisdom

Findings show a strong consensus that successful integration of VIK requires structured involvement of elders (Vatsonga knowledge holders), rather than informal or symbolic consultation.

Elders’ Exclusion and Desire for Formal Recognition

Elders expressed frustration with being sidelined in educational processes:

“We are invited only for Heritage Day, but not to contribute to what children learn every week.” (Elder A)

Another added:

“Our knowledge is deep, but schools treat us as entertainers, not as teachers.” (Elder C)

This reflects what decolonial scholars' term epistemic disqualification—the stripping of indigenous experts of their knowledge authority (Santos, 2014).

Educators Support Elder–School Partnerships

Teachers supported structured collaboration:

“We need elders to guide us, because they know the real stories and meanings. Workshops or regular sessions would help.” (Teacher 5)

Decolonial Interpretation

Formal partnership with elders redistributes epistemic authority back to indigenous custodians—directly challenging the colonial model where only certified, Western-trained teachers define legitimate knowledge.

This finding extends Makokotlela's and Hoppers' arguments by showing how intergenerational authority can be institutionally restored through policy-driven collaboration.

4.4 Strategy 2: Policy Imperatives for Systemic Integration

Policymakers and educators identified systemic and policy-level interventions necessary for sustainable IKS integration.

Need for Clear National Guidelines

Policy officials repeatedly noted the absence of detailed operational frameworks:

“CAPS speaks about IKS, but schools are left to interpret it on their own. We need clearer national guidelines.” (Policy Official 2)

This lack of policy clarity contributes to inconsistent implementation—mirroring challenges reported in other African contexts (Hoppers, 2002).

Institutional Support for Materials Development

Educators argued that integration would remain symbolic without officially produced cultural materials:

“If DBE can produce proper Vatsonga storybooks, songs, and oral literature guides, the implementation will be real.” (Teacher 6)

Synthesis with Decolonial Framework

Policymaker perspectives highlight the role of the state in dismantling structural colonial legacies. Creating policy frameworks that embed VIK mandates is an act of **epistemic re-centering**, asserting indigenous knowledge as a formal knowledge system within the national curriculum.

5. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the preservation and curricular integration of Vatsonga Indigenous Knowledge (VIK) form a critical foundation for sustaining cultural identity, moral reasoning, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. The findings confirm that VIK—expressed through oral literature, proverbs, traditional songs, rituals, and artistic craftsmanship—embodies a holistic epistemology that nurtures communal responsibility, social harmony, and ethical conduct. However, the study also revealed that

these rich forms of indigenous wisdom remain marginalised within formal schooling due to the enduring dominance of Western-centred epistemologies, globalisation pressures, and English-dominant pedagogies that collectively weaken cultural continuity and the visibility of Indigenous ways of knowing.

Integrating VIK into the school curriculum, particularly through Xitsonga Home Language teaching and culturally responsive pedagogy, has proven to enhance learners' linguistic competence, cultural agency, and moral development. This integration validates learners' lived experiences, restores epistemic balance, and affirms that Indigenous knowledge constitutes a legitimate and sophisticated system of thought. The role of community knowledge holders—especially elders—emerged as central in mediating authentic cultural learning and bridging school-based education with lived experience. Their participation repositions education as a collaborative process that respects intergenerational wisdom and promotes epistemic justice.

Nonetheless, this study acknowledges several limitations. The research was confined to selected schools and regions, meaning that findings may not fully represent all Vatsonga-speaking communities. Some elders were unavailable due to geographical and logistical constraints, and classroom observations were time-limited, offering only a partial view of implementation dynamics. The reliance on self-reported data from teachers and students may also have introduced elements of subjective bias. These limitations highlight the need for continued research to broaden empirical understanding across diverse Vatsonga contexts.

Building on the findings, several recommendations are proposed. The Department of Basic Education should develop officially approved Vatsonga Indigenous Knowledge teaching materials, including storybooks, folktales, and oral literature guides. Formal frameworks should be established to recognise and remunerate elders as community-based educators, ensuring their sustained involvement in school learning. Moreover, national CAPS guidelines must clearly define IKS integration objectives, learning outcomes, and assessment strategies. Teacher professional development should prioritise culturally responsive pedagogy, equipping educators with the skills to embed Indigenous epistemologies meaningfully. Finally, local research units and community partnerships should be strengthened to document, digitise, and archive VIK as part of South Africa's living knowledge heritage.

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies examining the long-term impacts of VIK integration on learners' identity, academic performance, and social cohesion. Comparative analyses across different Indigenous communities in South Africa would provide valuable insights for developing national frameworks of IKS integration. Further studies could also evaluate the effectiveness of Elder–School partnership models and explore digital archiving strategies that preserve Xitsonga oral traditions while adapting them for contemporary educational contexts.

Overall, this research contributes to the broader discourse on decolonising education by illustrating that embedding Indigenous epistemologies within the curriculum is both an intellectual necessity and a social imperative. Meaningful integration of VIK redefines education as a space for cultural renewal, empowerment, and epistemic justice. By recognising Indigenous knowledge as a legitimate component of national education, South Africa can cultivate an inclusive, contextually grounded, and culturally sustaining curriculum that ensures the preservation and future vitality of Vatsonga heritage.

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