




Exploring Intervention Strategies for Effective Integration of Indigenous Games in Teaching Market Structures in Economics Class in Thabo-Mofutsanyane Education District, Free State, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The teaching of market structures is often hindered by learners' difficulty in understanding abstract concepts, and while indigenous games offer a culturally relevant, experiential approach, their classroom use remains inconsistent. This study addresses this gap by exploring context-specific intervention strategies for effectively integrating indigenous games in rural Economics classrooms. Guided by the interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative case study design, data were generated through semi-structured interviews with six purposively selected Economics teachers from three rural schools in the Thabo-Mofutsanyane Education District. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse participants' narratives. The findings revealed that although teachers value indigenous games such as Morabaraba, Kgati, and Diketo for promoting learner engagement and contextual understanding, their implementation is constrained by systemic challenges. Two key intervention needs emerged: the development of structured teaching guidelines and the provision of targeted professional development. Teachers highlighted the absence of curriculum-aligned frameworks, lesson exemplars, and assessment tools, resulting in fragmented pedagogical practices. Additionally, limited training restricted their ability to translate gameplay into structured economic instruction. The study concludes that institutionalising indigenous game-based pedagogy requires curriculum integration, policy recognition, and sustained teacher capacity-building initiatives. This study contributes to existing literature by moving beyond descriptive accounts of indigenous games to provide empirically grounded, context-specific intervention strategies for their structured integration in rural Economics classrooms.

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1.0 Introduction

The teaching of market structures in secondary school Economics remains one of the most conceptually demanding areas of the curriculum. Market structures encompass abstract theoretical constructs such as perfect competition, monopoly, oligopoly, monopolistic competition, price determination, elasticity, revenue

behaviour, and profit maximisation. These concepts require learners to interpret graphical models, simulate firm behaviour, and understand complex interrelationships between producers and consumers. In many classrooms, particularly within rural schooling contexts, learners experience persistent difficulty engaging meaningfully with abstract economic concepts such as market structures and graphical analysis (Madondo & Tsikira, 2022; Mwinsa & Dagada, 2024). Teaching often relies on lecture-driven explanations and textbook representations that privilege theoretical description over experiential learning, thereby limiting conceptual depth and learner participation (Mosimege, 2020; Maimela et al., 2024).

In response to these pedagogical challenges, there has been increasing scholarly attention toward culturally responsive teaching approaches that integrate Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into formal education. Indigenous games such as Morabaraba, Kgati, and Diketo have been recognised as culturally embedded learning resources capable of mediating abstract knowledge through experiential participation (Tachie & Galawe, 2023; Matafwali & Mpofu, 2023). These games embody principles of competition, strategy, cooperation, resource allocation, and decision-making, which parallel core economic processes. Their classroom integration enables learners to visualise market interactions, simulate economic decision-making, and participate actively in knowledge construction.

Within the South African context, indigenous communities possess rich cultural traditions that include a wide range of indigenous games used for socialisation, skill development, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. These games are embedded within everyday cultural practices and reflect communal values, cooperation, and problem-solving processes that shape learning in indigenous societies (Nxumalo & Mncube, 2019).

Indigenous games such as Morabaraba, Kgati, and Diketo have been recognised as culturally grounded pedagogical tools capable of mediating abstract knowledge through experiential participation (Tachie & Galawe, 2023; Matafwali & Mpofu, 2023). Morabaraba, a traditional strategy board game widely played in Southern Africa, promotes critical thinking, planning, and competitive decision-making, which align with economic concepts such as competition and strategic interaction (Mwinsa & Dagada, 2024). Kgati, a rhythmic rope-skipping game, develops coordination, pattern recognition, and collaborative engagement, while Diketo, which involves manipulating stones, enhances counting, sequencing, and resource distribution skills (Mosimege, 2020; Maimela et al., 2024).

Empirical scholarship supports the pedagogical value of indigenous games in enhancing learner engagement and conceptual understanding. Tachie and Galawe (2023) found that indigenous game-based pedagogies promote learner participation and deepen comprehension by situating learning within culturally familiar contexts. Similarly, Madondo and Tsikira (2022) observed that game-based instruction fosters collaborative learning, enhances motivation, and strengthens learners' interpretive abilities when engaging with abstract subject content. These findings position indigenous games not merely as recreational activities but as pedagogical tools capable of transforming classroom engagement and meaning-making processes.

1.1 Background to the study

Despite the pedagogical affordances of indigenous games, their integration into Economics teaching remains inconsistent and largely informal. Teachers often rely on personal innovation and improvisation when incorporating games into lessons, resulting in uneven classroom implementation. One of the most significant barriers identified in the literature is the absence of structured teaching guidelines that link indigenous games to formal curriculum outcomes. Mwinsa and Dagada (2024) argues that the institutionalisation of indigenous pedagogies requires curriculum-aligned frameworks that validate and standardise their use within formal schooling. Without such frameworks, teachers are left to interpret curriculum expectations independently, leading to fragmented pedagogical practices.

Supporting this concern, Matsekoleng et al. (2022) and Matafwali and Mpofu (2023) emphasise the importance of co-developed instructional manuals and teaching resources in legitimising indigenous pedagogical practices. Their studies demonstrate that when teachers, researchers, and community stakeholders collaborate in developing culturally grounded teaching tools, classroom implementation becomes more structured, credible, and sustainable. Conversely, the absence of such scaffolds discourages teachers from experimenting with innovative strategies, even when they recognise their pedagogical value (Bhuda, 2021).

The lack of curriculum-linked guidance also reinforces broader structural marginalisation of indigenous knowledge within formal education systems. Ekeh (2024) notes that when indigenous pedagogies are excluded from official instructional frameworks, they are often perceived as supplementary rather than legitimate teaching approaches. This disconnect between policy rhetoric and classroom practice perpetuates reliance on Western-centric pedagogies and constrains culturally responsive innovation. However, where structured guidelines are provided, teachers demonstrate greater confidence and consistency in integrating indigenous pedagogies into formal instruction (Renwick & Edstrom, 2022; Ogbonnaya, 2024).

In addition to the absence of teaching guidelines, the literature identifies teacher professional development as a critical intervention area. While teachers recognise the motivational and cultural value of indigenous games, many lack the pedagogical training required to translate gameplay into structured subject instruction. Moloji (2020) observes that although teachers support the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, they often lack the professional preparation necessary for effective classroom implementation. Mosimege (2020) similarly found that contextual, game-based training enhances teacher creativity and instructional confidence, enabling educators to align indigenous pedagogies with curriculum content.

Further empirical evidence underscores the transformative potential of targeted professional development. Maimela et al. (2024) demonstrate that community-based workshops strengthen teachers' pedagogical competence and cultural identity, enabling them to integrate indigenous knowledge meaningfully into subject teaching. Likewise, Ali and Tangkur (2023) argue that professional learning programmes that combine curriculum guidance with cultural pedagogy empower teachers to innovate while maintaining instructional coherence. These collaborative training models position teachers as active curriculum interpreters capable of adapting indigenous resources to diverse classroom contexts.

1.2 Research problem

Although indigenous games have significant pedagogical potential for enhancing the teaching of market structures, their integration in Economics classrooms remains constrained by systemic and institutional limitations. Curriculum environments do not formally recognise indigenous pedagogies, and teachers receive limited professional development to support culturally responsive instructional innovation (Ekeh, 2024; Mwinsa & Dagada, 2024).

This problem is particularly pronounced in rural secondary schools within the Thabo-Mofutsanyane Education District, where contextual challenges such as limited access to teaching resources, large class sizes, and inadequate institutional support further restrict pedagogical innovation (Nxumalo & Mncube, 2019). In such contexts, teachers often rely on traditional, teacher-centred approaches due to the absence of structured guidance and professional training on integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems into the formal curriculum (Moloji, 2020; Mosimege, 2020). Additionally, the marginalisation of indigenous pedagogies within official curriculum frameworks, such as CAPS, creates uncertainty among teachers regarding their legitimacy and alignment with assessment standards (Matsekoleng et al., 2022; Matafwali & Mpofu, 2023). Consequently, the integration of indigenous games is largely dependent on individual teacher initiative rather than systematic institutional support, resulting in inconsistent and fragmented classroom practices (Bhuda, 2021; Renwick & Edstrom, 2022). These contextual constraints make it particularly difficult to sustain culturally responsive teaching approaches, thereby reinforcing the need for structured intervention strategies tailored to rural school environments (Maimela et al., 2024; Ali & Tangkur, 2023).

A major challenge is the absence of formal teaching guidelines linking indigenous games to curriculum outcomes. Teachers lack standardised frameworks, lesson exemplars, and assessment tools to guide the instructional use of games such as Morabaraba, Kgati, and Diketo, resulting in fragmented and inconsistent classroom application (Bhuda, 2021; Matsekoleng et al., 2022; Matafwali & Mpofu, 2023). Furthermore, limited subject-specific training restricts teachers' capacity to translate gameplay into structured economic learning, reducing instructional confidence and innovation (Moloji, 2020; Mosimege, 2020). Although studies show that targeted professional development and curriculum support can strengthen pedagogical competence and legitimise Indigenous Knowledge Systems (Ali & Tangkur, 2023; Maimela et al., 2024; Renwick & Edstrom, 2022; Ogbonnaya, 2024), such intervention frameworks remain limited. The absence of structured guidelines and sustained teacher training therefore constitutes the central problem, constraining the effective institutionalisation of indigenous game-based pedagogy in teaching market structures (Mwinsa & Dagada, 2024; Maimela et al., 2024).

1.3 Main Research Question

- How can intervention strategies support the effective integration of indigenous games in teaching market structures in secondary school Economics classrooms?

1.4 Sub-Research Questions

- What teaching guideline frameworks are required to support the structured integration of indigenous games into the Economics curriculum?
- How do teachers perceive the role of professional development in enhancing their capacity to use indigenous games for teaching market structures?

2.0 Literature review

As this study revealed, the integration of IG, such as *Morabaraba*, *Kgati*, and *Diketo*, into the teaching of economics presents a transformative opportunity to reimagine pedagogy in rural classrooms. However, this potential remains constrained by several persistent challenges, chief among them being limited teacher preparedness and the lack of curriculum-aligned resources. Recent empirical research affirms that two critical interventions can address these challenges effectively: the provision of structured, context-sensitive professional development and the creation of CAPS-aligned curricular frameworks that legitimise and support the practical implementation of IKS within formal education.

2.1 A guideline for indigenous games

While teacher professional development is essential for effective integration of IKS, it must be complemented by curriculum-aligned frameworks that offer clear, practical guidance for lesson planning, content integration, and assessment. The absence of such structured tools remains one of the most significant barriers to implementing IG as a formal pedagogical strategy in South African classrooms (Mwinsa & Dagada, 2024). Despite the progressive aims of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), there is still limited articulation on how teachers can align indigenous play-based methods with prescribed learning outcomes, assessment standards, and core economics concepts (Kieninger & Kopish, 2023; Ogbonnaya, 2024). A growing body of scholarship emphasises the need for contextually grounded teaching frameworks that link IKS to curriculum objectives. Studies such as Matsekoleng et al. (2022) indicated that contextualising learning around indigenous activities strengthens conceptual understanding and improves learner engagement. Similarly, Matafwali and Mpofu (2023) demonstrated that structured resource banks, lesson exemplars, and rubrics grounded in cultural practices enhance lesson coherence and learner participation.

The value of curriculum-guided frameworks is further illustrated by the work of Moloi (2020) and Mosimege (2020), who both argued that mapping indigenous cultural activities and games onto specific learning outcomes enhances the legitimacy and consistency of IKS-based teaching. Teachers who participated in such structured interventions found these models practical and affirming, noting improvements in learners' confidence, cultural identity, and cognitive engagement. In addition to these contributions, Ali and Tangkur (2023) contend that successful curriculum integration requires the co-design of learning tools that reflect both indigenous and formal epistemologies, ensuring a balance between cultural authenticity and academic rigour. Likewise, Ekeh (2024) emphasises the necessity of adaptable frameworks that allow teachers to modify indigenous activities according to context, learner ability, and available resources, an essential requirement in resource-constrained rural schools.

The absence of a formal guideline continues to impede the consistent application of IG in teaching abstract subjects such as economics. Bhuda (2021) and Renwick and Edstrom (2022) both note that while teachers recognise the potential of IKS, the lack of standardised instruments, such as rubrics, exemplar lessons, and performance indicators, creates uncertainty about how to assess learner outcomes effectively. This gap is compounded by limited administrative support and inadequate collaboration between curriculum developers and local knowledge practitioners (Matsekoleng et al., 2022; Maimela et al., 2024). In this context, the current study sought to address these shortcomings by developing a CAPS-aligned Indigenous Game Pedagogical Framework (IGPF) specifically tailored for Grade 11 economics. The framework will illustrate how IG, such as *Morabaraba*, *Kgati*, and *Diketo*, can be systematically aligned with economic learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and pedagogical strategies. In doing so, it aimed to transform the integration of IG from an informal, ad

hoc approach into a structured, evidence-based teaching methodology that enhances conceptual understanding, engagement, and cultural relevance.

2.2 Teachers' professional development

A critical intervention strategy for promoting the integration of IG into economics education is the establishment of practical, context-sensitive, professional development programmes that empower teachers to adapt pedagogy to their cultural and institutional contexts (Galawe, 2023; Mosimege, 2020). Although the CAPS encourages cultural responsiveness, many teachers remain uncertain about how to apply Indigenous IKS in economics classrooms due to limited professional preparation and institutional support (Madondo & Tsikira, 2022).

Empirical evidence emphasises the importance of structured training that moves beyond theoretical awareness toward hands-on, participatory engagement. Prasetyono et al. (2021) observed that while teachers generally endorse the inclusion of IKS, they often lack the pedagogical frameworks and instructional materials necessary for effective implementation. Complementing this, Ekeh (2024) engaged in simulation exercises using locally relevant examples. The programme not only improved teachers' confidence and creativity, but also enhanced their ability to align IG, such as *Morabaraba* and *Diketo*, with economics concepts like market equilibrium and elasticity.

Collaborative, community-based training has also proven to be an essential mechanism for embedding indigenous pedagogies in classroom practice. Ali and Tangkur (2023) demonstrated that co-developing lesson plans with teachers using local games enhanced both pedagogical competence and cultural authenticity. Similarly, Matsekoleng et al. (2022) found that teachers, after attending culturally responsive workshops, began using IG to teach economic topics such as production, supply, and consumer behaviour. Their study revealed that contextualised mentorship and peer collaboration fostered long-term pedagogical change.

The value of participatory professional development is further supported by Matafwali and Mpofu (2023), who assert that culturally embedded teacher training helps bridge the divide between indigenous knowledge and formal education. Likewise, Ekeh (2024) maintains that integrating local games into professional development programmes strengthens teachers' reflective practice and enhances their ability to sustain learner engagement. From a theoretical standpoint, these findings align with Vygotsky's SCT, particularly the principles of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) [Van Hover & Hicks, 2017].

Maimela et al. (2024) advocate for professional development models that integrate technology with indigenous knowledge, enabling teachers to blend digital tools with traditional pedagogy while preserving cultural integrity. This view resonates with Moloji (2020), who found that teachers who underwent targeted TPACK-based workshops demonstrated greater versatility in adapting local games to illustrate abstract economics concepts such as market competition and price elasticity.

The literature revealed that sustainable integration of IG into economics teaching depends on continuous, community-oriented professional development that emphasises collaboration, practice, and cultural grounding rather than top-down policy compliance (Bhuda, 2021; Nxumalo & Mncube, 2019). The current study built upon this foundation by advocating for interactive, participatory training models that draw from teachers' lived experiences, involve local cultural experts and create a supportive ecosystem for embedding IKS pedagogy in the economics curriculum.

2.3 Theoretical framework

This study was guided by Social Constructivist Theory (SCT), developed by Lev Vygotsky (1978). Rooted in constructivism, originally associated with Piaget, SCT views learning as a socially mediated process shaped by interaction and cultural experience (Mohammad, 2021). Vygotsky emphasised that knowledge is constructed through engagement within socio-cultural contexts rather than acquired in isolation (Mohammed & Kinyo, 2020). This perspective was particularly relevant to the study, as the teaching of market structures in Economics often overlooks learners' cultural realities. The integration of indigenous games (IG) therefore provided a means to bridge abstract economic concepts with learners' lived experiences.

Key SCT principles, social interaction, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), and scaffolding, framed the study (Vygotsky & Cole, 2018). These principles posit that learners develop understanding through collaboration with teachers, peers, and cultural tools, with guidance gradually

withdrawn as competence increases (Mohammed & Kinyo, 2020; Van Hover & Hicks, 2017). Within this study, indigenous games functioned as cultural learning tools that enabled guided participation, peer engagement, and collaborative problem-solving around market structure concepts.

Scholars affirm SCT as a strong foundation for contextualised and cooperative learning. Omotayo and Adeleke (2017) highlight active knowledge construction, while Lui (2012) and Mohammad (2021) emphasise learning through shared experiences. In Economics classrooms, games such as Morabaraba, Kgati, and Diketo enabled teachers to scaffold learners' understanding of competition, pricing, and market behaviour through culturally familiar activities (Mwinsa & Dagada, 2024). SCT therefore provided an analytical lens to interpret how indigenous games mediated learning and supported conceptual engagement in market structures teaching. In addition to informing the conceptual framing of the study, Social Constructivist Theory also guided the data analysis and interpretation of findings. During thematic analysis, key SCT constructs, namely social interaction, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), and scaffolding, were used as analytical lenses to interpret how teachers described their classroom practices and intervention needs (Mohammed & Kinyo, 2020; Zajda & Zajda, 2021).

For example, themes related to teaching guidelines were interpreted as forms of pedagogical scaffolding that support both teachers and learners in engaging with complex economic concepts. Scaffolding enables learners to progress from supported to independent understanding through structured guidance (Mohammed & Kinyo, 2020). Similarly, themes relating to teacher professional development were analysed through the concept of the MKO, where training, mentorship, and collaborative learning environments function as sources of expert guidance that enhance teachers' instructional capacity (Van Hover & Hicks, 2017). The emphasis on collaborative learning and shared classroom experiences was further interpreted through the principle of social interaction, which is central to knowledge construction in SCT (Zajda & Zajda, 2021).

Furthermore, the progression from familiar cultural activities, such as indigenous games, to abstract economic understanding was analysed within the framework of the ZPD, which explains how learning occurs when individuals are supported to move beyond their current level of understanding (Mohammed & Kinyo, 2020; Van Hover & Hicks, 2017). In this way, SCT was not only used to frame the study theoretically but also to interpret the empirical findings and explain how indigenous games function as mediational tools in Economics teaching.

3.0 Method

3.1 Research approach

The study adopted a qualitative research approach because the aim was to generate in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences rather than numerical measurement of variables (Merriam, 2009; Korstjens & Moser, 2022). This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore how Grade 11 Economics teachers integrate indigenous games into the teaching of market structures within rural classroom contexts. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews conducted with six purposively selected teachers from three rural secondary schools in the Thabo-Mofutsanyane Education District. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to capture participants' lived experiences, instructional practices, and reflections on the use of indigenous games such as Morabaraba, Kgati, and Diketo in their classrooms. (Shava & Nkengbeza, 2019; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Unlike quantitative research, which emphasises statistical generalisation, qualitative research prioritises depth, meaning, and contextual interpretation (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Mohammed, 2021).

In this study, the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to explore teachers' conceptions of indigenous games, their pedagogical applications in teaching market structures, and their reflections on learner engagement, classroom challenges, and intervention strategies. The flexible and iterative nature of qualitative inquiry allowed probing, clarification, and exploration of emerging issues during interviews, thereby producing nuanced accounts of classroom practice that structured instruments could not capture (Korstjens & Moser, 2022). Furthermore, qualitative methodology foregrounds reflexivity and transparency, ensuring that interpretations remain grounded in participants' voices and socio-cultural realities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

3.2 Research design

An interpretive case study design was adopted to examine the integration of indigenous games in teaching market structures within a real-life rural school context. (Yin, 2018; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Research design provides a structured plan linking research questions to empirical data, ensuring methodological coherence and feasibility (Ngwenya & Shange, 2019; Muzari et al., 2022). The case comprised three secondary schools in the Thabo-Mofutsanyane Education District, while the unit of analysis consisted of six Grade 11 Economics teachers. This design enabled the researcher to compare teachers' practices across different schools while maintaining contextual depth. The interpretive orientation allowed for the exploration of teachers' meanings, experiences, and pedagogical interpretations of indigenous game-based teaching.

An interpretive orientation was appropriate because the study sought to understand teachers' subjective meanings and pedagogical interpretations regarding indigenous games rather than to test causal relationships (Stake, 2005; Mohammed, 2021). The case focused on the use of indigenous games to teach market structures in Grade 11 Economics classrooms within a rural district context. An embedded single-case design was utilised, in which the broader case comprised rural secondary schools in the Thabo-Mofutsanyane Education District, while individual Economics teachers constituted sub-units of analysis (Yin, 2017; Merriam, 2009). This design enabled cross-participant comparison while maintaining contextual depth (Yin, 2018; Stake, 2005). Although case studies are sometimes critiqued for limited generalisability, they provide strong contextual insight and support analytical transferability through rich description (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018).

3.3 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process of selecting participants from a broader population to generate data relevant to the study's objectives (Obilor, 2023; Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). In qualitative research, sampling prioritises information-rich participants capable of providing deep insight into the phenomenon under investigation (Mwinsa & Dagada, 2024). The study was conducted in three rural secondary schools located in the Thabo-Mofutsanyane Education District, Circuit 10, in the Free State Province of South Africa, where Economics is offered within the Further Education and Training phase.

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants. Purposive sampling allows researchers to deliberately identify individuals who possess the knowledge, experience, and expertise necessary to address the research problem (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2020; Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). In this study, participant selection was guided by clearly defined criteria to ensure the inclusion of information-rich cases. Participants were required to: (1) be actively teaching Grade 11 Economics within the Further Education and Training (FET) phase; (2) possess subject specialisation in Economics or Economic and Management Sciences; (3) have a minimum of five years teaching experience to ensure sufficient classroom exposure; and (4) demonstrate familiarity with, or prior use of, indigenous games such as Morabaraba, Kgati, or Diketo in their teaching practice.

These criteria ensured that participants had both pedagogical and contextual knowledge relevant to the study focus. Teaching experience was therefore not the sole criterion, but was considered alongside subject expertise and practical engagement with indigenous game-based pedagogy to enhance the depth and relevance of the data generated (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

The sample comprised six Grade 11 Economics teachers drawn from the three participating schools. The selection of six participants was guided by the principle of information richness, whereby participants were deliberately chosen based on their knowledge, experience, and familiarity with the integration of indigenous games in teaching market structures (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The sample size was further justified through the concept of data saturation, which refers to the point at which no new themes or insights emerge from the data (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). During the data collection process, the researcher observed that recurring patterns related to teaching guidelines and professional development began to stabilise by the fifth interview, and no substantially new information was generated in the final interview. This indicated that sufficient depth and coverage of the research phenomenon had been achieved. Therefore, the sample size of six participants was considered adequate to provide detailed, contextually grounded insights into teachers' experiences, while ensuring the depth, richness, and credibility required for qualitative case study research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Participants were assigned codes (SAT1, SAT2, SBT3, SBT4, SCT5, SCT6), where 'S' represents school, 'A-C' indicates the school site, and 'T' denotes teacher. These codes were used to ensure anonymity while maintaining

traceability of responses. The demographic profile of participants reflected diversity in gender, teaching experience, and professional qualifications, thereby strengthening the breadth of perspectives captured. As presented in Table 1 below, three participants were male and three were female, ensuring gender balance. Teaching experience ranged from five to fifteen years, incorporating both early-career and highly experienced educators. Participants also held varied academic and professional qualifications, including Honours, postgraduate certificates, and master’s level training in education and curriculum studies. This diversity enriched the dataset by ensuring that findings reflected multiple pedagogical viewpoints shaped by training, experience, and professional exposure (Ngwenya & Hlophe, 2021; Sharma et al., 2024).

Table 1: Biographical Profile of Participants

Participant	Years of Experience	Gender	Qualifications
Teacher 1	12 years	Male	B.Ed. Honours (Economics Education)
Teacher 2	7 years	Female	B.Ed. (Senior Phase & FET)
Teacher 3	10 years	Male	PGCE (Economic & Management Sciences)
Teacher 4	5 years	Female	B.Com + PGCE
Teacher 5	8 years	Male	B.Ed. (EMS, Economics Major)
Teacher 6	15 years	Female	M.Ed. (Curriculum Studies)

The demographic composition illustrated in Table 1 indicates that participants possessed substantial professional exposure to Economics teaching within the Further Education and Training phase. Their qualifications demonstrate formal pedagogical training as well as subject specialisation, while their teaching experience suggests familiarity with curriculum implementation, learner engagement strategies, and classroom innovation. Selecting teachers with direct experience teaching market structures and familiarity with indigenous games such as Morabaraba, Kgati, and Diketo ensured that the data generated were contextually grounded and pedagogically relevant (Lohr, 2021; Obilor, 2023). The demographic diversity therefore strengthened the credibility of findings by incorporating perspectives from teachers at different career stages and professional backgrounds.

3.4 Data collection

Data were collected exclusively through semi-structured interviews. Interviews are a widely used qualitative data collection method that enable researchers to explore participants’ perceptions, experiences, and interpretations in depth (Rahman, 2023; Mohammed, 2021). They are particularly valuable in educational research because they provide access to teachers’ professional reasoning, classroom experiences, and reflective insights (Shava & Nkengbeza, 2019; Hadebe-Ndlovu, 2022).

Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews conducted at the participants’ respective schools in quiet and private settings to ensure comfort and confidentiality. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants’ informed consent. The interviews were conducted primarily in English, with occasional clarification in local languages where necessary to ensure participants could fully express their experiences and perspectives. An interview protocol was developed in advance, aligned with the research questions, and was pilot-tested with one non-participating teacher to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questions (Merriam, 2009). Minor adjustments were made following the pilot to improve question wording and flow. During the interviews, the researcher used probing questions to elicit deeper explanations and clarify responses. Field notes were taken to capture contextual observations and non-verbal cues that complemented the audio data. The combination of audio recordings and field notes enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the data collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Semi-structured interviews were selected because they balance structure and flexibility. While guided by predetermined questions, they allow participants to elaborate freely and enable the researcher to probe, clarify, and follow emerging issues (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2024a). To enhance transparency and replicability, the semi-structured interview guide included a set of predetermined questions aligned with the study objectives. These guiding questions were designed to elicit teachers’ experiences, perceptions, and practices regarding the integration of indigenous games in teaching market structures. The key interview questions included: What teaching guideline frameworks are required to support the structured integration of indigenous games into the Economics curriculum? How do teachers perceive the role of professional development in enhancing their capacity to use indigenous games for teaching market structures?

These guiding questions ensured consistency across interviews while allowing flexibility for probing and follow-up questions based on participants' responses, thereby maintaining the depth and richness of qualitative inquiry (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

This flexibility was essential for exploring how teachers selected indigenous games, how they linked them to Economics concepts, how learners responded, and what challenges and intervention strategies emerged. Semi-structured interviews also foster rapport and trust, which enhances the authenticity and depth of responses (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2020). Interviews were conducted face-to-face, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim to preserve participants' voices and ensure analytic accuracy (Ahmed, 2024; Braun & Clarke, 2024b).

3.5 Data analysis

Data were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework. Thematic analysis is a rigorous qualitative method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within textual data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2023). The analysis began with familiarisation, during which transcripts were read repeatedly to gain an overall sense of participants' narratives (Braun & Clarke, 2024a). Initial codes were generated through detailed line-by-line engagement with the data, ensuring that coding remained grounded in participants' meanings rather than researcher assumptions (Mwinsa & Dagada, 2024; Daud, 2023).

This process resulted in the identification of 42 initial codes, reflecting recurring ideas, patterns, and concepts across the dataset. These codes were subsequently grouped into 12 broader categories based on conceptual similarity and relevance to the research questions. The categories were then refined and synthesised into two overarching themes, namely: (1) teaching guidelines and (2) teacher professional development. The development of themes was guided by clearly defined criteria, including: (i) recurrence of codes across multiple participants, (ii) conceptual relevance to the study objectives, and (iii) the explanatory power of the theme in capturing patterns within the data. Codes that appeared frequently across participants were prioritised; however, unique but conceptually significant responses were also retained where they contributed meaningfully to the interpretation of the findings. Codes were developed inductively based on participants' responses, and themes were constructed using criteria such as recurrence across participants, conceptual relevance, and alignment with the research questions (Ngwenya & Hlophe, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2024a). This systematic and iterative coding process enhanced the transparency, consistency, and analytical rigour of the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2023). To ensure trustworthiness, coding decisions were reviewed repeatedly, and themes were refined through constant comparison across transcripts to ensure internal coherence and distinctiveness.

4.0 Findings

This section presents the strategies proposed by teachers to address the challenges they encountered when using IG to teach market structures in economics. The findings revealed that teachers did not only identify challenges in implementing indigenous games (IG) in Economics classrooms but also proposed practical intervention strategies to strengthen their pedagogical integration. Two dominant intervention priorities emerged from the data: the development of structured teaching guidelines and the provision of targeted professional development. Teachers viewed these interventions as essential for legitimising indigenous game-based pedagogy and for supporting consistent curriculum implementation. These findings and their key-related codes are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Themes and key-related codes

Theme	Dominant Key-Related Codes
Teaching guidelines	Need for curriculum mapping of games to concepts
	Need for approved Departmental guidelines

Theme	Dominant Key-Related Codes
	Legitimisation of indigenous games as pedagogy Guidelines as professional support tools Need for CAPS-aligned training
	Need for modelling of game integration Demand for step-by-step implementation guidance
Teacher professional development	Need for classroom management strategies for gameplay Need for assessment training linked to games Professional learning communities

4.1 Teaching guidelines

Teachers highlighted the need for clear and well-organised specifications to make the best use of IG in economics lessons. The absence of clear direction leads to inefficient lesson planning, characterised by uncertainty and the potential for error. When teachers are required to rely on improvisation, it undermines their confidence and compromises quality instruction. SAT1 shared:

"How are we supposed to use these indigenous games as a teaching material? There are no official materials or models, so I have to create everything from scratch - the activity design, how it links with the curriculum, and how to assess pupils. Sometimes I feel that without pre-prepared protocols, all added work is needed. On the other hand, there are all sorts of reasons for doing something in this genre as well. At present, there are no lesson notes, no materials to go by, which, taking into account indigenous games, would rise to a certain standard.

Another teacher, SBT2, commented on the confusion inherent in following curriculum designs and how policy files provided no clear direction:

"We are told to be imaginative, but there is no guide. When I wanted to use a game for the first time, I didn't even know where to start. Indigenous games aren't in the textbooks, and CAPS documents have nothing about them. So, I am left wondering if it is right to teach at all. It bothers me what the school management or subject advisors will say about it. If there were some standard examples or recommendations, then lots of teachers would be quite happy to use these games."

SCT5 focused on the lack of emotional support mechanisms and the challenges created in practice:

"You must create everything for yourself. Not only the learning goals, the game activity and assessment: it is an endless, wearying chore. Often, I stay up late into the night preparing a lesson and have no clear idea whether it will be respected as proper teaching. If the Department of Education could provide examples and guidelines that had been approved, then it could really help. Teachers will be helped to feel supported and confident."

The findings showed that teachers see formal guidelines as a key solution for supporting the use of IG in economics lessons. This problem is also linked to social interaction, because without shared frameworks, teachers work alone and have few chances to collaborate or share ideas. SAT2 and SBT3 pointed out that without examples or templates, teachers struggle to build teaching knowledge together, share good practices, or have meaningful discussions about culturally relevant teaching. Clear guidelines would provide teachers with a common structure, making it easier to plan together, exchange ideas, and support one another, which would strengthen professional learning. The idea of the MKO is also significant here. Official guidelines would act as an MKO for teachers by providing expert support, clear strategies, and practical examples of how to use games in teaching. These resources would help teachers link games to curriculum goals and design assessments to achieve clear learning outcomes. SAT2's comment that guidelines would "make this method feel legitimate" shows that such support would not only guide teaching but also recognise IG as a valid and trusted teaching method, increasing teacher confidence and encouraging more teachers to use them.

From the perspective of the ZPD and scaffolding, guidelines would enable supporting learners more effectively. Clear frameworks would allow teachers to design activities that challenge learners while still being achievable with support. Lesson templates, clear rules, and reflection questions would help teachers guide learners, step-by-step, from familiar cultural games to abstract economics ideas. SCT6's concern about spending too much time experimenting without guidance affirmed how official guidelines could reduce trial and error. With proper support, learners would receive structured and well-planned lessons that help them understand and apply complex concepts more easily.

4.2 Teacher professional development

Teachers also identified professional development as a key intervention strategy, emphasising the importance of training that is practical, curriculum-linked, and subject-specific. They reflected on how the absence of such support leaves them relying on trial-and-error approaches with limited confidence. To illustrate the impact of a lack of training, SAT1 reflected on the gap between policy rhetoric and actual support:

"We don't get any training on how to use games, especially indigenous games, in teaching. Most of the training focuses on assessments or new policies, but not on practical classroom strategies. I've learned to use some games through trial and error. It would help a lot if there were workshops that showed us how to use these games in line with CAPS. We need someone to demonstrate how to link the game to the content, how to guide the learners, and how to reflect on what they've learned."

Another teacher, SBT4, spoke about the absence of models or peer-led sessions that could build confidence and competence, adding:

"I've had to teach myself everything. There's no official training or even peer workshops that touch on using traditional games as teaching tools. That makes it harder for teachers to try something new. You're afraid to fail. If someone could just show us a few examples or run a session where we practise using games in a classroom setup, it would boost our confidence and give us something concrete to follow."

SCT5 emphasised the need for demonstrations that are content-specific and practically guided:

"We need training that is practical and subject-specific. It's one thing to say games are useful, but it's another to show how to apply them in a subject like economics or Mathematics. Right now, we're guessing. I'd like a workshop or video that shows step-by-step how to introduce a game, how to manage the class, and how to assess what learners have learned. Otherwise, it just feels like a free period instead of real learning."

The findings indicated that teachers identified structured professional development as a critical intervention for the effective integration of IG into economics lessons. This directly enhances social interaction by creating formal opportunities for teachers to collaborate, share experiences, and co-construct pedagogical knowledge. SAT1, SBT4, and SCT5 highlighted that current practice relies heavily on trial and error, limiting peer learning and professional dialogue. Structured workshops, training sessions, or collaborative forums would foster a supportive professional community, enabling teachers to exchange strategies, collectively reflect on classroom experiences, and refine culturally relevant, game-based teaching practices.

Professional development also strengthens the role of the MKO by providing teachers with expert guidance on linking IG to curriculum objectives, managing gameplay, and facilitating reflective discussions. SAT1 emphasised the need for demonstrations and practical guidance on connecting games to CAPS content, illustrating how external expertise functions as a MKO to enhance teachers' instructional capacity. Through structured training, coaching, or video-based modelling, teachers receive scaffolding for their own professional growth, equipping them to mediate learning effectively, guide learners within their ZPD, and ensure meaningful engagement during game-based activities.

Finally, structured professional development supports scaffolding and learners' ZPD. Equipped with practical strategies, teachers can design activities that appropriately challenge learners while providing sufficient guidance, enabling the development of critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and conceptual understanding. SCT5 noted that without training, lessons can feel unstructured or unproductive, limiting learners' ability to operate within their ZPD. By providing step-by-step methods for explaining rules, monitoring gameplay, facilitating reflection, and linking activities to assessment outcomes, as highlighted by SBT4 professional development, ensures that scaffolds are implemented systematically.

5.0 Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that although teachers faced multiple barriers when implementing indigenous games in Economics classrooms, they also proposed realistic and context-sensitive interventions to address these challenges. These strategies underscore teachers' professional insight and their commitment to culturally grounded teaching that bridges abstract Economics concepts with learners' lived realities. The success of indigenous pedagogies depends on systemic support, practical teacher training, and structured curricular guidance. Two main sub-themes emerged: the development of structured guidelines for integrating indigenous games, and professional development initiatives to strengthen teachers' capacity for culturally responsive instruction.

5.1 Teaching guidelines

The study found that teachers consistently emphasised the need for structured and standardised guidelines to support the integration of indigenous games into formal Economics teaching. Teachers noted that while they valued the pedagogical benefits of games such as Morabaraba, Kgati, and Diketo, there were no official resources, such as curriculum frameworks, lesson exemplars, or assessment tools, linking these games to specific economic outcomes. As a result, teachers relied on personal creativity and informal experimentation, leading to inconsistent application across schools. While this finding confirms existing literature that highlights the importance of curriculum-aligned frameworks for legitimising Indigenous Knowledge Systems (Mwinsa & Dagada, 2024; Matsekoleng et al., 2022), it also extends previous research by demonstrating that the absence of such guidelines does not merely limit implementation but actively shifts the burden of curriculum interpretation onto individual teachers.

Unlike earlier studies that primarily frame this challenge as a lack of resources, the findings of this study reveal a deeper structural issue: teachers are required to independently construct pedagogical meaning in the absence of institutional scaffolding (Bhuda, 2021; Ekeh, 2024). This condition leads to fragmented and uneven instructional practices across classrooms, thereby reinforcing inequities in learners' access to meaningful learning opportunities (Renwick & Edstrom, 2022; Ogbonnaya, 2024). In this respect, the findings move beyond merely confirming existing knowledge and instead illuminate the systemic consequences of policy–practice misalignment within rural school contexts (Mwinsa & Dagada, 2024; Matsekoleng et al., 2022).

From the perspective of Lev Vygotsky, these findings highlight the absence of structured scaffolding within the teaching process. In Social Constructivist Theory (SCT), scaffolding refers to the support provided to learners (and in this case, teachers) to enable them to engage effectively with complex concepts. The lack of formalised guidelines suggests that teachers themselves are required to operate without adequate scaffolds, limiting their ability to mediate learners' understanding of abstract economic concepts such as market structures.

Mwinsa and Dagada (2024) argues that formal integration requires national and provincial education departments to issue curriculum-aligned guidelines that validate indigenous teaching methods. Similarly, Matsekoleng et al. (2022) and Matafwali and Mpofu (2023) found that co-developed teaching manuals and instructional resources, created collaboratively between teachers, researchers, and community members, enhance the reliability and legitimacy of indigenous pedagogical practices.

The results of this study reinforce that developing clear instructional guidelines would help teachers integrate indigenous games consistently across schools. Such frameworks could map games to Economics topics, classroom activities, safety protocols, and assessment rubrics. Embedding Indigenous Knowledge Systems into CAPS would institutionalise culturally relevant pedagogy and ensure sustainability.

The findings further suggest that structured guidelines are not only necessary for consistency but are central to pedagogical legitimacy. Teachers' uncertainty about whether the use of indigenous games would be recognised as valid instructional practice reflects a broader tension between curriculum policy and classroom innovation. While previous studies (Ekeh, 2024; Bhuda, 2021) have identified the marginalisation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, the present study provides empirical evidence of how this marginalisation manifests in teachers' day-to-day decision-making. This shifts the discussion from a general need for resources to a more critical understanding of how institutional validation influences pedagogical adoption. Without formal recognition, innovative practices such as indigenous game-based learning remain peripheral rather than integrated into mainstream teaching.

Within SCT, these structured guidelines can be understood as enabling teaching and learning within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). By providing step-by-step instructional support, teachers are better positioned to guide learners from familiar cultural experiences, such as gameplay, toward more abstract economic concepts. In this sense, guidelines do not merely regulate practice but actively support cognitive development by bridging the gap between what learners already know and what they are expected to learn.

Teachers' reflections further revealed that professional development greatly shapes what they believe and practice in class, suggesting that implementing indigenous games in Economics would require continuous, hands-on training. Moloji (2020) notes that although teachers support Indigenous Knowledge Systems, they often lack structured guidance. Mosimege (2020) similarly reported that contextual game-based training boosts teacher confidence and creativity. Teachers' reliance on intuition therefore reflects a broader training gap. However, Maimela et al. (2024) and Ali and Tangkur (2023) demonstrated that community-based workshops strengthen pedagogical competence and cultural identity, reflecting the collaborative model envisioned by participants in this study.

These observations are strongly supported by Bhuda (2021), who found that the absence of instructional scaffolds discouraged teachers from experimenting with innovative strategies, even when they were motivated to do so. Similarly, Ekeh (2024) emphasised that, without formal curriculum-linked resources, teachers are left to interpret educational objectives subjectively, resulting in inconsistent practices across classrooms.

From an SCT perspective, this absence of scaffolding reflects a systemic limitation in the learning environment, where neither teachers nor learners are adequately supported in constructing knowledge through social and cultural mediation. This reinforces the notion that effective learning is not solely dependent on content delivery but on the availability of structured support systems that enable guided participation and collaborative meaning-making.

In the context of indigenous pedagogies, such gaps reinforce the marginalisation of non-Western teaching approaches, perpetuating a disconnect between policy rhetoric and classroom reality. This alignment suggests that the lack of guidance is not merely a logistical challenge but a structural barrier to legitimising culturally responsive, game-based teaching. Conversely, empirical evidence from Renwick and Edstrom (2022) and Ogbonnaya (2024) illustrated that where structured guidelines and professional exemplars are provided, teachers adopt indigenous pedagogies more confidently, standardise their practice, and successfully integrate games into formal learning objectives. This dichotomy highlights that the effectiveness of game-based strategies depends heavily on institutional support and the availability of clear pedagogical frameworks.

The findings further revealed that teachers did not necessarily seek rigid, prescriptive guidelines but rather flexible frameworks that could be adapted to their classroom realities. For example, participants such as SAT2 and SBT3 emphasised the need for "simple examples" and "guidance that allows flexibility," indicating a preference for adaptable rather than fixed instructional models.

Based on these empirical insights, the study proposes a pragmatic hybrid model of curriculum guidance. This model emerges directly from teachers' experiences and reflects their need for both structure and professional autonomy. It combines a CAPS-aligned framework that provides clear learning outcomes and assessment standards with flexible implementation strategies that allow teachers to adapt indigenous games to their specific classroom contexts.

This finding challenges earlier literature that conceptualises guidelines as static, top-down instruments (Renwick & Edstrom, 2022). Instead, the present study demonstrates that when guidelines are perceived as enabling rather than controlling, they function as dynamic pedagogical tools that support innovation while maintaining curricular coherence.

5.2 Teacher professional development

The study further revealed that teachers called for targeted professional development to enhance their ability to use indigenous games effectively in Economics education. Participants noted that while they appreciated the cultural and motivational value of these games, many lacked the pedagogical knowledge to translate them into structured Economics lessons. While this finding aligns with existing research emphasising the importance of teacher training (Mosimege, 2020; Madondo & Tsikira, 2022), it also extends prior work by highlighting that the absence of practical, subject-specific training leads to reliance on trial-and-error approaches.

Participants' descriptions of "guessing" and "teaching themselves" suggest that current professional development models are insufficiently aligned with classroom realities. This finding challenges the assumption that general pedagogical training is adequate, instead demonstrating the need for context-specific, practice-oriented professional development that directly models the integration of indigenous games in Economics teaching.

Within Lev Vygotsky, professional development can be conceptualised as a form of guided learning in which teachers themselves operate within their Zone of Proximal Development. Through workshops, mentorship, and collaborative learning communities, teachers engage in social interaction with more knowledgeable others, enabling them to develop new pedagogical competencies.

Participants proposed in-service workshops, mentorship programmes, and collaborative learning communities where teachers could share strategies, co-design lessons, and reflect on best practices for game-based pedagogy. These interactions align with the SCT emphasis on social interaction as a central mechanism for knowledge construction, where learning emerges through dialogue, collaboration, and shared practice. Tachie and Galawe (2023) observed that when teachers participate in hands-on, experiential workshops, their confidence and creativity in applying Indigenous Knowledge Systems-informed strategies increase significantly. Likewise, Mosimege (2020) and Madondo and Tsikira (2022) demonstrated that sustained mentorship and peer collaboration foster long-term integration of indigenous games into classroom practice.

The findings also identified two significant areas of divergence from existing literature. While some studies conceptualise pedagogical guidelines as largely static, externally imposed structures that regulate classroom practice from a top-down position, the teachers in this study perceived guidelines as flexible, locally co-constructed tools that could be meaningfully adapted to contextual realities. Rather than seeking rigid, prescriptive templates that dictate uniform instructional practices, teachers expressed a preference for simple, practical frameworks that provide direction without constraining professional judgement or pedagogical creativity. This perspective contrasts with earlier studies that portray guidelines as centrally imposed instruments that limit teacher autonomy and inhibit innovation in classroom practice. In contrast, the findings of this study suggest that when guidelines are interpreted as enabling rather than controlling mechanisms, they function as empowering resources that legitimise contextual adaptation, reduce planning fatigue, and enhance pedagogical confidence.

Building on this divergence, the findings advocate for a pragmatic hybrid model of curriculum guidance. Such a model would consist of a concise, CAPS-aligned roadmap that clearly articulates learning outcomes, assessment expectations, and content standards, while simultaneously granting teachers professional space to adapt indigenous games in response to contextual realities.

From an SCT perspective, this hybrid model represents a dynamic form of scaffolding that balances structure with flexibility. It allows teachers to act as mediators of knowledge, adapting instructional strategies to learners' needs while maintaining alignment with curriculum goals. In this way, teachers function as active agents within the learning process, facilitating knowledge construction through culturally relevant tools such as indigenous games.

In this way, guidelines become dynamic pedagogical scaffolds that support innovation rather than constrain it, reinforcing the transformative potential of indigenous game-based pedagogy within formal Economics education (Ali & Tangkur, 2023).

In support, Matsekoleng et al. (2022) argue that professional development should be both context-responsive and subject-specific to affect teaching effectively. Similarly, Matafwali and Mpofu (2023, p. 76) stipulate that when teachers are trained within their own cultural contexts, they are more likely to accommodate embedded contemporary pedagogies if formation is offered through modelling, mentorship, and opportunities to observe effective practice rather than through theoretical guidance alone. Moloi (2020) further adds that sustained pedagogical innovation is produced through cooperative learning climates that include peer involvement, classroom experimentation, and reflective thinking. These studies complement the findings by demonstrating that teachers who are not afforded structured, subject-specific professional support continue to practise in innovative yet uneven ways. In contrast, empirical evidence from Maimela et al. (2024) shows that when professional development explicitly integrates Indigenous Knowledge Systems with subject content, teachers build confidence, strengthen pedagogical competence, and skilfully guide learners through their zone of proximal development, as discussed by Van Hover and Hicks (2017).

The findings highlight the importance of guidelines and professional development, which can be understood through Lev Vygotsky. Structured guidelines function as scaffolding tools that support both teachers and learners in navigating complex economic concepts within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Similarly, professional development initiatives act as a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), equipping teachers with the pedagogical knowledge required to facilitate meaningful learning through indigenous games.

6.0 Conclusion

This study set out to explore intervention strategies necessary for the effective integration of indigenous games in teaching market structures in secondary school Economics classrooms. Grounded in an interpretivist qualitative case study design, the study generated insights from teachers' lived experiences regarding the pedagogical use of games such as Morabaraba, Kgati, and Diketo. The findings confirmed that indigenous games are culturally relevant and pedagogically valuable tools that enhance learner engagement and conceptual understanding of abstract market structure concepts through experiential learning. However, their integration remains informal and inconsistent due to the absence of curriculum-aligned teaching guidelines, instructional models, and assessment frameworks. In addition, limited professional development restricts teachers' capacity to translate gameplay into structured Economics instruction. These systemic and professional support gaps therefore underscore the need for targeted intervention strategies to institutionalise indigenous game-based pedagogy within secondary school Economics classrooms.

6.1 Recommendations

The study recommends the development of structured, curriculum-aligned teaching guidelines to support the formal integration of indigenous games into the Economics curriculum. Such frameworks should provide lesson exemplars, instructional models, and assessment tools that link specific games to market structure concepts. It further recommends policy-level recognition of Indigenous Knowledge Systems through their inclusion in CAPS documentation to legitimise and institutionalise culturally responsive pedagogy. In addition, the study calls for targeted professional development programmes, including workshops, in-service training, and mentorship initiatives, to strengthen teachers' capacity to translate indigenous gameplay into structured economic learning experiences.

Declarations

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Competing Interests

The authors declare that there are no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced the writing of this article. The authors has no competing interests to declare.

Ethical Approval

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC), University of Limpopo (Approval No. TREC/1567/2024:PG). Permission to conduct the study was also obtained from relevant educational authorities and participating school principals. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation. Participation was voluntary, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured using participant codes (SAT1–SCT6), and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards and principles governing qualitative research.

Author's Contribution

Habasisa Molise¹: Conceptualization (H.M), Software (N.M), Data curation (H.M), Formal analysis (H.M), Investigation (H.M), Visualization (M.M), Methodology (N.M), Writing – original draft (H.M), Writing – review & editing (M.M)

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