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Visual Storytelling and Comic Adaptation: A Review of the Bakiga Folktale of Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera

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Abstract

This article explores the comic adaptation of the Kiga folktales (Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera), emphasizing the power of visual storytelling to revive indigenous stories while reiterating moral teachings and cultural values. Stemming from Afro-comic aesthetics, the article synthesizes existing literature on folklore, visual narrative, and resilience, while incorporating elements of visual ethnography and narrative analysis to inform character design, panel composition, and culturally grounded settings. Thus the article seeks to understand how comics serve as a multimodal medium that helps to preserve oral traditions, fosters intergenerational interaction, and improves moral and emotional understanding. Through situating the folktale within both its traditional oral context and contemporary visual culture, the article demonstrates the potential of comics as tools for cultural preservation, education, and creative reinterpretation. In addition to providing a conceptual foundation for upcoming Afro-comic interpretations of indigenous stories, the analysis advances research on African folklore, visual culture, and narrative adaptation.

Keywords: Afro-comic, Cultural preservation, Indigenous narratives, Kiga folktale, Visual storytelling.

Introduction

Folklore serves as a lasting vessel of collective wisdom, embodying cultural values, moral codes, and social teachings that shape community identities through generations. Within African societies, oral traditions such as myths, legends, and folktales have long performed as pedagogic and social instruments, promoting moral intellectual, compassion, and resilience (Anuo, 2024). As cultural archives, folktales convey not only entertainment but also ethical reflection and communal team spirit, educating communities on honesty, kindness, courage, and endurance. The Kiga folktales of southwestern Uganda, like those of many Bantu-speaking communities, encapsulate deeply rooted social beliefs that sustain cultural continuity. Thus, these oral traditions, which place a strong emphasis on moral education and collective responsibility, are an essential component of the Kiga people's intangible legacy.

Visual media and digital technology are changing the way that stories are shared and told in the modern era. Scholars such as Ratri et al. (2021) & Behzadi (2023) emphasize the growing shift toward visual storytelling and digital adaptation of traditional narratives. Comics and graphic narratives, in particular, have emerged as powerful vehicles for

transmitting complex cultural ideas in accessible and engaging forms (Al Faruque, 2023; Shukla, 2024). They promote emotional and cognitive engagement by combining text and visuals to bridge oral traditions with digital media cultures. As Battisti (2024) claims, comics are not merely entertainment but essential cultural artefacts that can express collective struggles, crises, and recovery through hybrid storytelling.

Visual storytelling is increasingly recognized for its psychosocial importance. A study by Ramamurthy et al. (2024) underscores that storytelling interventions can strengthen children's resilience by fostering meaning-making, emotional understanding, and problem-solving capacities. Similarly, Amo-Agyemang (2023) posits that indigenous narratives play a vital role in shaping community-specific concepts of resilience, offering alternative ways of imagining recovery and adaptability in precarious contexts. The narrative process of reconstructing adversity through cultural storytelling allows both individual and collective transformation, making folklore a therapeutic and pedagogical resource. This connection between narrative and resilience is particularly relevant in African settings, where storytelling remains a foundational mode of knowledge exchange and identity formation.

In addition to their psychosocial benefits, visual adaptations of folklore contribute significantly to cultural preservation and creative revitalization. Scholars such as Edward et al. (2024) and Angkawijaya et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of translating indigenous narratives into visual formats that retain authenticity while appealing to new generations. Such works demonstrate that adapting folklore into comics or digital illustrations can safeguard intangible heritage, promote intercultural dialogue, and stimulate creative economies. Similarly, Naqvi et al. (2025) highlight how visual accuracy and cultural fidelity strengthen community identity and empower indigenous artists in global creative industries.

Accordingly, this article focuses on the visualization of the Kiga folktale Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera through the medium of comics as a form of cultural storytelling and expression of resilience. The project translates the oral narrative rooted in moral consequence, transformation, and endurance into a visual narrative that speaks to contemporary audiences. Through this adaptation, the article explores how comic art can serve as a vessel for indigenous knowledge, preserving the ethical and philosophical essence of the tale while reimagining it in a modern visual form. By fusing Kiga oral aesthetics with the language of sequential art, the comic seeks to demonstrate how visual storytelling revitalizes traditional wisdom, fosters cultural continuity, and cultivates resilience among readers, particularly within younger and cross-cultural audiences.

Accordingly, this article focuses on the visualization of the Bakiga folktale Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera through the medium of comics as a form of cultural storytelling and expression of resilience. The folktale is an indigenous oral narrative of the Bakiga people of southwestern Uganda, particularly documented from community elders in Kabale District, where it has been transmitted across generations as part of a rich tradition of moral instruction and social reflection. Rooted in themes of moral consequence, transformation, and endurance, the narrative forms part of a broader corpus of Kiga oral literature that functions as a vehicle for ethical guidance and communal values. This article translates the orally transmitted narrative into a visual format, reinterpreting its structure and meaning through sequential art to engage contemporary audiences. Through this adaptation, the article explores how comic art can serve as a vessel for indigenous knowledge, preserving the ethical and philosophical essence of the tale while reimagining it within a modern visual context. The integration of Kiga oral aesthetics with the visual language of comics demonstrates how storytelling can be revitalized to foster cultural continuity and resilience, particularly among younger and cross-cultural audiences. Ultimately, the article contributes to scholarly discussions in African visual culture, folklore adaptation, and art-based resilience, offering both a creative reinterpretation and a critical reflection on the transformative potential of indigenous narratives in visual media. Contributes to ongoing dialogues in African visual culture, folklore adaptation, and art-based resilience, offering both a creative reinterpretation and a critical reflection on the transformative power of indigenous narratives in visual media.

Problem Statement

Despite the rich moral, educational, and cultural value embedded in Kiga folktales such as Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera, these narratives are increasingly in danger of extinction due to the erosion of oral storytelling traditions, changing modes of communication, and a lack of engagement among younger generations. While folklore is still an important medium for transmitting indigenous knowledge and cultural identity, its reliance on oral forms has limited its accessibility and sustainability in modern visual and digital cultures. Existing research has primarily focused on the documentation and textual analysis of African folktales, with little investigation into their adaptation into visual narrative forms such as comics. This article addresses the need to investigate comic adaptation as a viable strategy for revitalizing Kiga folktales and increasing their relevance in contemporary society.

Objective of the article

To examine how the Kiga folktale Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera can be adapted into a comic so as to preserve cultural values and enhance contemporary relevance.

Significance of the article

This article contributes to the preservation and revitalization of Kiga cultural heritage by demonstrating how comic adaptation can be a useful tool for preserving indigenous folktales. The article provides an alternative approach to protecting oral traditions, which are increasingly threatened by cultural change and declining storytelling practices through transforming Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera into a visual story. The article is also significant in advancing scholarship in African folklore and visual culture by bridging the gap between traditional oral narratives and contemporary multimodal forms. It offers a practical and conceptual framework for incorporating Afro-comic aesthetics into reinterpretations of indigenous stories, broadening the scope of narrative adaptation research.

In addition, the article emphasizes comics' educational value as tools for improving moral understanding, cultural awareness, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. This makes it relevant for educators, designers, and cultural practitioners looking for new ways to engage young people with indigenous knowledge. Finally, the article contributes to ongoing discussions about cultural sustainability through demonstrating how creative reinterpretation can ensure the continued relevance of traditional narratives in contemporary contexts. It thus positions comics not only as artistic expressions, but also as strategic tools for cultural preservation and identity development.

Literature Review

Folklore remains a central medium for expressing a community's worldview, ethics, and moral expectations. It embodies cultural memory and values such as honesty, kindness, and perseverance, while also functioning as a moral compass for younger generations (Ratri et al., 2021). Scholars have shown that folktales are pedagogical in nature, tools for both entertainment and moral formation. Ratri et al. (2021), in their work on Indonesian folklore picture books, demonstrate that visual narratives can modernize folklore adaptation while maintaining the moral integrity of traditional tales. Through refining visual design, simplifying plots, and moderating violent imagery, folklore can remain relevant, instructive, and child-friendly in contemporary contexts.

Recent studies underscore storytelling's role as a mechanism for building psychological and social resilience, particularly among children. Ramamurthy et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review revealing that storytelling interventions enhance children's coping mechanisms, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy. By allowing children to narrate or reinterpret experiences through story, resilience emerges as both a personal and communal process. Storytelling enables individuals to make sense of hardship, reconstruct positive meaning, and develop adaptive coping strategies. Amo Agyemang (2023) expands this concept to cultural narratology, arguing that resilience should be understood within culturally specific ontologies. His study on Frafra and Akan narratives reveals that indigenous storytelling is itself a form of resilience practice, an epistemological framework for navigating precarious futures. This resonates deeply with African oral traditions, where storytelling operates as a collective act of renewal and identity reaffirmation.

Other scholars have linked folklore-based education to social and environmental resilience. Rahiem and Rahim (2020) highlight how folklore can serve as a pedagogical resource in early childhood disaster education, teaching children adaptive lessons through familiar mythic forms. Similarly, Holmes and McEwen (2020) found that digital storytelling in flood-affected UK communities facilitated peer-to-peer learning, strengthening communal resilience through shared narrative exchange.

In the contemporary era, visual storytelling, including comics, picture books, and digital art, has become an increasingly vital method for cultural preservation and identity negotiation. Naqvi et al. (2025) emphasize that culturally accurate visual storytelling deepens connection and familiarity between storytellers and audiences. Thus, through embedding local aesthetics and mythological references, visual media can function as a form of cultural reclamation and economic empowerment.

Similarly, Gülüm (2023) introduces the concept of folkloric memory, highlighting how visual and oral narratives operate as vessels for collective memory, continually renewed across generations and media. This concept is particularly relevant to African contexts where folklore's transmission depends on both oral performance and visual symbolism. In Angkawijaya et al. (2024), digital comics are positioned as tools to preserve traditional arts threatened by modernization. Their work illustrates how visual narratives not only capture but also revitalize endangered traditions through contemporary media. Such approaches mirror the Pakistani and Indonesian studies in showing how visual

adaptation can bridge generational gaps while sustaining authenticity. The field of comic's studies has evolved significantly, recognizing comics as powerful multimodal texts that combine visual and verbal codes to create unique narrative experiences (Al Faruque, 2023; Shukla, 2024). Comics' capacity to communicate across linguistic and cultural boundaries positions them as ideal tools for social commentary, education, and resilience building.

Battisti (2024) notes that the formal features of comics, such as the interplay of text and image, spatial design, and reader participation, make them particularly suited for representing crises and fostering empathy. Similarly, Bralias (2021) and MacGeorge (2024) demonstrate how digital comic making can enable participatory, therapeutic, and future-oriented storytelling, giving individuals a voice and collective agency in shaping social narratives. These insights resonate with the social genres of comics (Della Puppa & Moretti, 2025), which emphasize the intersection between graphic narratives and socio-political realities. Comics not only entertain but also function as spaces of reflection, activism, and healing mediums where marginalized voices and suppressed histories can be visually re-inscribed.

Digital storytelling extends the reach of traditional narrative practices into new participatory spaces. Studies like Kendrick et al. (2022) reveal how digital storytelling empowers marginalized youth, especially refugees, to reclaim identity and develop language and digital literacies through self-authored narratives. Similarly, Bakhtiary and Behzadi (2023) describe digital storytelling as a revolutionized form of communication that reshapes how stories are shared in the digital age. These developments align with Papparousis (2020), who argues that Indigenous comics embody "visual sovereignty," allowing communities to resist colonial misrepresentation and reclaim control over cultural imagery. The act of transforming oral traditions into visual forms becomes both an artistic and political gesture affirming identity, correcting historical erasures, and fostering community resilience through visual media.

In the East African context, folktales such as those of the Kiga, Ateso, and other Bantu-speaking groups function as repositories of communal wisdom, cultural identity, and behavioral norms. Anuo (2024) shows that Ateso folktales rely heavily on imagery to communicate moral values like honesty and bravery, signifying that visual and metaphorical richness is inherent to African oral storytelling traditions. Similarly, Edward et al. (2024) emphasize that indigenous visual narratives, such as the depiction of Batwa material culture, offer powerful avenues for cultural continuity and intergenerational learning through imagery, artifacts, and artistic expression. Other endeavors regarding documentation and visualization of cultural aspects such as Runyankore and Rukiga proverbs have been done by Cisternino & Missionaries, (1987) as well as Twinomusinguzi, (2019), who, in his book titled "*Ntebeza Eby'aba Kare*" attempted to visualize and compile selected Kikiga folktales, proverbs and rhymes. These studies, therefore, underscore the enduring pedagogical and mnemonic power of folklore as a vessel for moral and cultural resilience.

Integrating folklore into visual storytelling, particularly in comic form, extends its reach to younger audiences while sustaining cultural continuity. The visual adaptation of African folktales grounded in indigenous symbolism and aesthetics thus becomes an act of cultural preservation and re-imagining, bridging oral heritage and contemporary media ecologies. Despite growing interest in visual storytelling, resilience theory, and folklore adaptation, several gaps persist: Most visual storytelling studies originate from Southeast or South Asia, Europe, or North America (Ratri et al., 2021; Naqvi et al., 2025; Battisti, 2024). There is limited scholarship focusing on African or Ugandan contexts, especially on Kiga folklore in visual or comic adaptation forms. While studies like Ramamurthy et al. (2024) and Amo Agyemang (2023) examine storytelling and resilience separately, few explore how the visual adaptation of indigenous folktales can explicitly cultivate cultural and psychological resilience. Although comics have been recognized as pedagogical tools (Al Faruque, 2023; Shukla, 2024), empirical research on how African folktales can be reimagined through comics to transmit resilience narratives remains scarce. The challenge of maintaining cultural specificity and visual authenticity while adapting oral folklore to global visual media remains underexplored in African creative scholarship.

The reviewed literature converges on the idea that storytelling, especially when visualized serves as a powerful conduit for resilience, education, and cultural preservation. Yet, the visual adaptation of African indigenous folklore, such as the Kiga tale of Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera, remains largely absent from global discussions on narrative resilience and visual culture. This article therefore, addresses this gap by conceptualizing and creating a comic adaptation of a Kiga folktale, demonstrating how visual storytelling can act as a tool for resilience, cultural continuity, and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Methodology

This article employed a qualitative, practice-based research design integrating narrative inquiry, visual ethnography, and art-based methods to adapt the Kiga folktale Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera into a comic. The approach combined creative production and interpretive analysis, positioning the comic as a storytelling medium and a cultural preservation tool (Ratri et al., 2021; Shukla, 2024). Data was gathered through oral documentation of the folktale from Kiga elders in

Kabale district located in southwestern Uganda, followed by transcription. A visual ethnographic process was conducted to capture traditional Kiga cultural elements such as attire, setting, and symbolism. These insights informed storyboarding and visual scripting, guided by narrative theories of sequential art. The analysis involved narrative and visual discourse analysis to interpret how visual adaptation reshapes the folktale's moral and emotional texture (Amo-Agyemang, 2023; Gülüm, 2023). A participatory validation phase engaged community members, educators, and artists to ensure cultural authenticity and educational relevance. Ethical considerations emphasized informed consent, cultural ownership, and respect for indigenous intellectual property. Overall, the methodology integrated creative practice with community collaboration to transform oral tradition into a visually resilient narrative, demonstrating how comics can sustain indigenous storytelling and promote psychosocial resilience through visual culture.

Results

The Rukiga version of the Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera folktale

Nkuganire nkuganire? Tebere.

Omu biro bya kare na kare hakaba hariho omushaija yaatasya omukazi, baazara abaana babiri, boona bari abaishiki. Omwe bakamweta Nyabwangu, ondiiho baamweta Nyabucureera. Nyabucureera akaba aratwaza gye, atebeekaine kwonka Nyabwangu akaba arajabiirira.

Eizooba rimwe nyina waabo akabatuma ngu baze kusheenya; ku baabaire bakyagyenda batakahikireyo, baabugana omukaikuru owabaire arikuhingisa eihwa. Nyabwangu yashaba omukaikuru ati, "Mukaaka, reka nkuhingireho!" Omukaikuru yaashemererwa ngu yaabona ow'okumuruuura. Ahabw'obwira bwingi, Nyabwangu yaahenda eihwa ry'omukaikuru. Omukaikuru yaayetombwoitwa ati, "Hoona shi eihwa ryangye ku niryoya naaba ndahingisa, hati naagira nta? Murateekwa kuntwara owaanyu, abazaire baanyu baampe eihwa ryangye!" Abaana baaza aho, byabashobera.

Nyabucureera yaasharamu ngu bamutware omuuka owaabo. Baamutwara omuuka, omukaikuru yaateekyerereza abazaire ekyabaho. Abazaire baahumuriza omukaikuru ngu baaza kureeba eky'okukora. Baabuuza Nyabucureera bati, "Iwe waaba orahe?" Nyabucureera nawe yaabateekyerereza ekyabaho.

Nyina waabo akaba aine akafuka k'akafuuni katwekyeire. Yaakaheereza omukaikuru. Omukaikuru mpaho asiima, agambira nyina w'abaana ngu ayegyese Nyabwangu obutajabiirira, obundi akooreka kuguma aramurihiirira. Tiinye naahera, haahera omugane.

English Translation of Nyabwangu and Nyabucureera folktale

Long time ago, there was a man. He married a woman and gave birth to two children.

Who were all girls? One was Nyabwangu (The Diligent/Pensive one), the other was Nyabucureera (The Hasty one).

One day, their mother sent them to collect firewood. On the way, they met a very old woman who was digging using a thorn. Nyabwangu hurriedly requested the old woman, "Grandmother, can I please help you dig?" The woman was very happy that someone was willing to help and she gave Nyabwangu the thorn.

Because Nyabwangu was rush, she never asked how to use the thorn but quickly started digging and she accidentally broke the old woman's thorn.

The old woman panicked immediately and said, "That was the only tool that I had to use to dig. What shall I do? You must take me to your home so that your parents return my thorn."

The two girls just stood there dumbfounded.

Nyabucureera finally decided that they'd take the old woman to their home and explain what had happened.

Parents assured the old woman that they would compensate her. They then asked Nyabucureera, "Where were you when this mess happened?" Nyabucureera also narrated what happened.

Their mother had a very small hoe which had been used for a long time and it was given to the old woman.

The old woman appreciated the girls' mother and advised her to teach Nyabwangu to avoid being impulsive so as to ensure that her mother wouldn't have to keep paying for her mistakes.

This is the end of the story.

Comic script for Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera

Page 1: Introduction

Panel 1: A small traditional homestead. Narration box: "Long ago, a man and his wife had two daughters..."

Panel 2: The two girls are introduced, Nyabwangu running around impatiently, Nyabucureera seated calmly. Caption: "Nyabwangu: the one who rushes. Nyabucureera: the calm one."

Page 2: The Task

Panel 1: Their mother calling them: "My daughters, go and collect firewood."

Panel 2: The girls walking down a village path.

Panel 3: They notice an old woman digging with a thorn. Nyabwangu (excited): "Grandmother, let me help you!" Nyabucureera watches silently.

Page 3: The Mistake

Panel 1: Nyabwangu grabs the thorn without asking how to use it.

Panel 2: Close-up of the thorn SNAPPING in her hands.

Panel 3: The old woman panics: "Oh no! That was my only tool! You must take me to your parents."

Panel 4: The sisters stand shocked and speechless.

Page 4: Facing the Parents

Panel 1: The girls arrive home together with the old woman.

Panel 2: Parents listening as Nyabucureera calmly explains what happened.

Panel 3: Mother gives her old small hoe to the woman: "Please accept this in place of the thorn."

Panel 4: The old woman, smiling in relief.

Page 5: Lesson Learned

Panel 1: The old woman advises: "Teach Nyabwangu to avoid rushing. Then she won't cause more trouble."

Panel 2: Parents nod. Nyabwangu looks guilty while Nyabucureera pats her shoulder.

Panel 3: Narration box: "From that day, Nyabwangu learned that rushing brings mistakes, while patience brings peace."

Final panel: A wide shot of the sisters walking together, calmer, smiling; this comes after Nyabucureera consoles Nyabwangu.

Developing sketches

This stage involved generating sketches for each panel within a page. The sketches were developed following the comic strip script. Attached below are the polished sketches for the Nyabwangu and Nyabucureera comic

Figure 1: Sketches for Page 1 of the Nyabwangu and Nyabucureera comic



Figure 2: Sketch for Page 2 of the Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera comic.

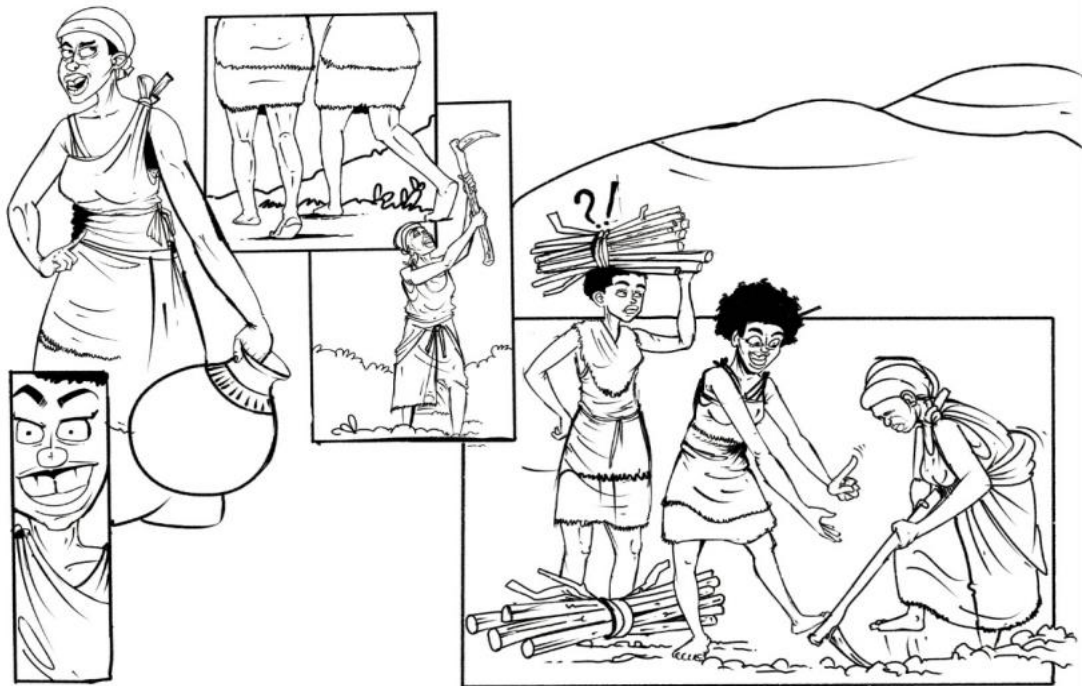


Figure 3: Sketch for Page 3 of the Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera comic

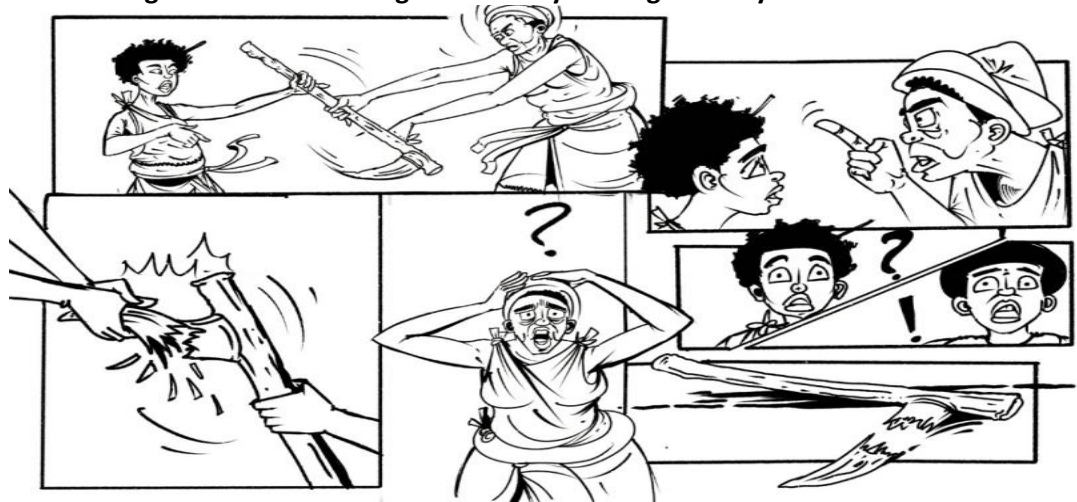


Figure 4: Sketch for Page 4 of the Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera comic



Figure 5: Sketch for the last page of the Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera comic



Final comic for Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera

This stage involved refining the sketches, color application, adding speech bubbles into the comic as well as the folktale. Attached below are the final pages for the comic story for Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera.

Figure 6: Final page 1 for the Nyabwangu- Nyabucurera comic

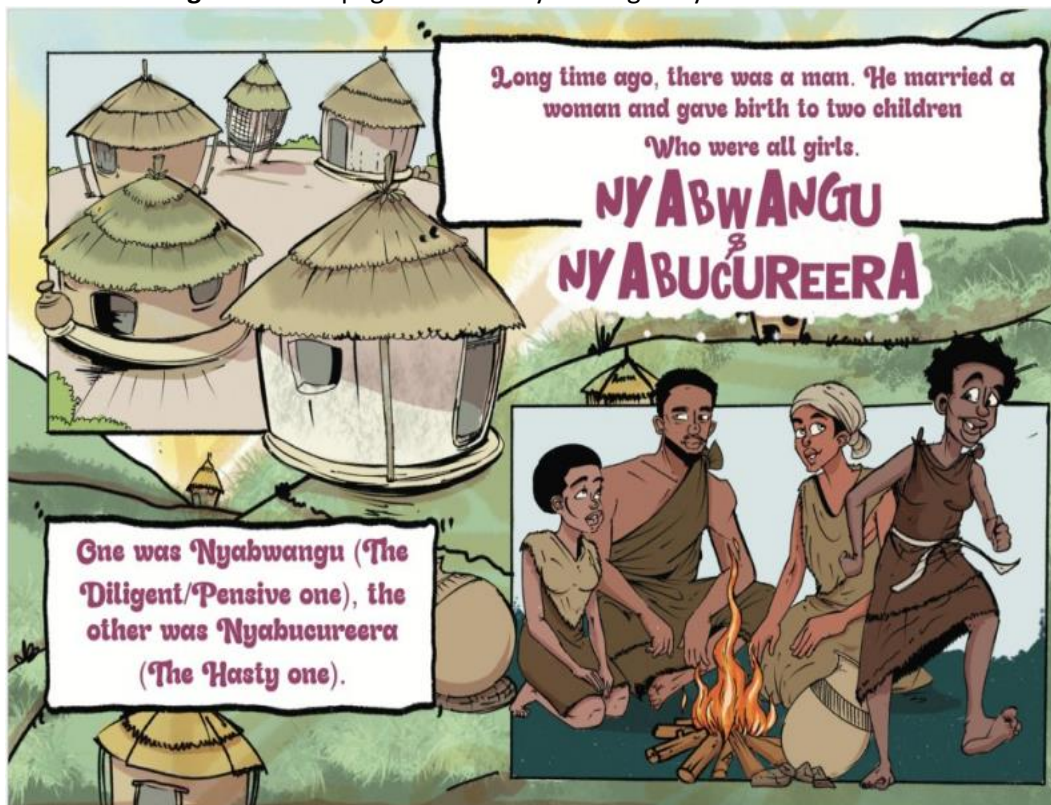


Figure 7: Final page 2 for the Nyabwangu - Nyabucurera comic



Figure 8: Final page 3 for the Nyabwangu - Nyabucurera comic



Figure 9: Final page 4 for the Nyabwangu - Nyabucurera comic



Figure 10: Final page 5 for the Nyabwangu - Nyabucurera comic



Discussion

The comic strip version of the Kiga folktales Nyabwangu and Nyabucureera showed how powerful Afro-comic aesthetics are in reviving oral traditions while upholding their moral and cultural qualities. The project demonstrated how daring visual techniques, symbolic intricacy, and culturally based aesthetics might turn traditional narrative into an interesting contemporary medium, drawing inspiration from Afro-comic style. Afro-comic influences were evident in the stylistic choices of character design. Nyabwangu was depicted with a shabby hairstyle to emphasize his rash nature, while Nyabucureera's neat and well-kept hair conveyed her calm composure. These contrasting visual identities echoed Afro-comic traditions, which often emphasize individuality, identity, and symbolism through bold character features (Toppo

& Ahamed, 2024). Such creative guidance made sure that the folktale's moral themes were reinforced through visual semiotics in addition to being conveyed orally.

The choice of colour further reflected the Afro-comic style, which often employs chromatic brilliance to emphasize tension, evoke emotion, and proclaim ethnic identity. While the comic's characters were depicted with real African skin tones, placing the narrative in its cultural context, the background colour schemes used in the different panels changed to reflect particular emotional shifts such as harmony and conflict. According to Liew et al (2022), color improves visual storytelling's emotional resonance and cognitive engagement.

The intentional use of panelling and speech bubbles, as well as the emotional portrayal of body and face motions, were equally important. Speech bubbles were used within the comic to emphasize emotional intensity while expressive postures and facial expressions brought the characters' interactions to life. Direct speech panels emphasized emotional intensity, and the characters' interactions were brought to life by expressive expressions and postures. This strategy aligned with studies that found bubble design and panel size to be crucial instruments for regulating tempo, enhancing affective resonance, and distinguishing character voices (Manouach & Foka, 2025). Thus, in addition to using text, the comic also used well-crafted graphic rhythms to convey the story.

Additionally, the decision to open the comic in a traditional Kiga household with parents and kids gathered around the evening fire gave it more power by placing the folktale in its genuine oral context. This design choice further emphasized the traditional function of storytelling as a social and generational activity. According to Zagkotas (2025), storytelling locations like the fireplace maintain the moral relevance of folktales and offer cultural continuity. Thus through incorporating this cultural frame, the comic not only reimagined the story for a modern audience but also retained its connection to indigenous practices. More broadly, the project displayed the value of comics as tools of cultural preservation and education. The adaptation confirmed that comics could serve as heritage media, safeguarding indigenous knowledge systems while allowing creative reinterpretation in visual formats (Manouach & Foka, 2025).

Recommendations

Educational institutions and cultural organizations should incorporate indigenous folktales, such as Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera, into art and literature curricula through visual storytelling projects. Doing so would not only strengthen cultural literacy but also enhance learners' creative and emotional intelligence. Future adaptations of African folklore should adopt participatory frameworks involving local storytellers, artists, and youth. Collaborative production ensures cultural authenticity, strengthens intergenerational learning, and empowers communities to take ownership of their narratives. The creation of open-access digital repositories and online comic platforms dedicated to African visual folklore would facilitate broader dissemination and scholarly engagement. Such archives could preserve indigenous aesthetics while offering intercultural exchange and creative inspiration across the continent. Policymakers and educators should recognize visual storytelling especially folklore-based comics as a tool for promoting psychosocial resilience among children and youth. Art-based storytelling interventions can foster emotional understanding, coping skills, and cultural pride in both formal and informal education settings.

Conclusion

This article set out to examine how the Kiga folktale Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera can be adapted into a comic to preserve cultural values and enhance its relevance within contemporary visual culture. To achieve this, the article adopted a qualitative, practice-based design that integrated narrative inquiry, visual ethnography, and art-based methods. The process involved the oral documentation and transcription of the folktale from Kiga elders in Kabale District, followed by visual ethnographic exploration of cultural elements such as attire, setting, and symbolism. These insights informed the development of the comic through storyboarding and visual scripting, while narrative and visual discourse analysis guided the interpretation of how meaning was reshaped through adaptation. A participatory validation phase further ensured cultural authenticity and educational relevance.

The findings demonstrate that comic adaptation provides a culturally responsive and accessible medium for translating oral narratives into contemporary visual forms without compromising their moral, ethical, and communal foundations. The integration of Afro-comic aesthetics, symbolic visual elements, and culturally grounded settings enabled the preservation of indigenous knowledge while enhancing audience engagement. The adaptation also reaffirmed storytelling as a collective and dialogic practice, reinforcing its role in moral reflection and intergenerational knowledge transmission. In this way, the article highlights the potential of comics as effective tools for sustaining intangible cultural heritage and fostering cultural resilience among younger audiences.

These insights contribute to growing scholarship that positions comics as multimodal pedagogical and heritage media, extending beyond entertainment to support cultural continuity and identity formation in increasingly globalized contexts (Manouach & Foka, 2025). The article further underscores the value of integrating creative practice with community collaboration in the preservation and reinterpretation of indigenous narratives.

Moving forward, there is a need to expand participatory and community-driven approaches to comic adaptation, particularly through deeper involvement of cultural custodians to strengthen authenticity and ownership. Additionally, leveraging digital platforms for dissemination could significantly enhance accessibility and engagement with indigenous stories. Future research may also explore audience reception and the educational impact of such adaptations across diverse cultural and institutional settings. In conclusion, the comic adaptation of Nyabwangu and Nyabucurera demonstrates that visual storytelling can serve as a powerful bridge between oral tradition and contemporary media. It affirms that culturally grounded comic narratives are not only creative outputs but also vital instruments for preserving, transmitting, and reimagining indigenous knowledge systems in ways that sustain cultural identity and resilience.

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Competing Interest

The authors declare that this research was conducted without any financial, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the findings or interpretations.

Author's Contribution

The authors solely conceptualized, designed, analysed, and wrote this article.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position of any affiliated institution or the publishing journal.

Ethical Consideration

This study adhered to the established ethical principles, including respect for persons, integrity, and cultural sensitivity in the use and adaptation of indigenous knowledge. Ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of Clarke International University. In addition, a research permit was secured from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) (Permit No. SS3803ES) in accordance with national research regulations. All data collection procedures complied with these guidelines, and due consideration was given to confidentiality, anonymity, and respectful representation of cultural narratives.