

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the ontologies of intangible cultural heritage that facilitate the transfer of symbolic tacit indigenous knowledge of a bull (STIKaB) among the Isukha community of Kakamega East Sub-County, Kenya. The following research objectives were addressed: establish ontologies of ICH symbolic tacit indigenous knowledge of a bull in Isukha, determine factors affecting these ontologies and propose amelioration strategies to safeguard ontologies of ICH symbolic tacit indigenous knowledge of a bull in Isukha. Drawing on focused ethnography, a purposively selected sample of 60 bull raisers and indigenous knowledge custodians took part through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations between January 2025 and January 2026. Data were analysed thematically using NVivo, with photographic and audio material used for triangulation in addition to the use of the knowledge transfer process and indigenous knowledge transfer models. Findings show that symbolic tacit indigenous knowledge of a bull (STIKaB) is distributed across interconnected domains of cultural life, including oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, and traditional craftsmanship. However, most of these ontologies of ICH are undocumented, making the transfer of tacit indigenous knowledge of a bull difficult. The study contributes to ICH scholarship by expounding how symbolic tacit knowledge operates beyond textual description, and to indigenous knowledge debates by positioning STIKaB as a dynamic, practice-based ontology sustained through lived cultural engagement, demonstrating that symbolic tacit indigenous knowledge is constituted through relational rather than classificatory logic. The study concludes that STIKaB constitutes a relationally sustained ontology rather than a fixed classificatory structure, with meaning continuously generated through lived cultural practice.