THE ROLE OF LITUNGU PLAYER IN THE BUKUSU COMMUNITY OF WESTERN KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my own original work and has not been presented in any other University.

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To my parents who denied themselves everything for the sake of my education. Their choral musicianship inspired me to great love of music.
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ICH          Intangible Cultural Heritage

UNESCO      United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

For purposes of the current study, the following terms were used in the context defined below.

**Apprenticeship**
The process of learning from a skilled person through observation and imitation.

**Babukusu**
A sub-ethnic division of the Luhyia ethnic community, predominantly found in Bungoma district of Western Province of Kenya.

**Cultural arbiter**
Refers to the Litungu player in his capacity of gathering/collection information and sharing it with the community.

**Eurocentric**
With influence and appeal of the European culture.

**Intangible Cultural Heritage**
Knowledge and skills possessed by an individual that a community recognise as part of their indigenous knowledge systems.

**Litungu**
A seven stringed lyre of the Bukusu community of Western Kenya.

**Master Musician**
A specialist in traditional music who trains and is emulated by others.

**Omukhupetungu**
Bukusu terminology for a Litungu player (plural – Bakhupetungu).

**Omukhupi**
Bukusu terminology for a musician.

**Resource Person**
One endowed with special abilities, talents and influences that can benefit the society.

**Thum**
Eight stringed Lyre of the Luo People of Kenya.
ABSTRACT

Musicians in many African traditional communities have been regarded as important resource persons because of the role they play in entertaining their communities. Seemingly times are changing, and the role of the musician, the Litungu player (Omukhupetungu) in this case, is gradually losing value. The study therefore sought to carry out an ethnographic study on the Omukhupetungu with a focus on ascertaining the significance of his role in the Bukusu community. A study on the role of the Omukhupetungu therefore, would be a step towards advocating for his rightful place in society. The study adopted the theory on functionalism advanced by Durkheim (1938) and Parson (1951) to mirror the concern of the study. Functionalism here focuses on the structure and workings of society where functionalists see society as made up of inter-dependent sections which work together to fulfill the functions necessary for the survival of society as a whole. People are socialized into roles and behaviours which fulfill the needs, and if not filled, the society will be lacking in a way. The study was based on a descriptive research design. The location of the study was in Kanduyi Division where the sample was drawn from the accessible population of litungu players and their audience. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to identify litungu players and their audience. Primary data consisted of responses, which were obtained by use of interview and listening schedules while secondary data was drawn from published sources. Collected data was systematised, qualitatively analysed and presented in descriptive format, to answer the research questions outlined in this study. Findings of the study showed that the Litungu player assumed musical, social, educational and entrepreneurial roles in the Bukusu community. He sang songs that addressed different themes that related to historical events, story telling, leadership and politics, good and bad deeds, and current issues in the Bukusu community. The study established that the Litungu player in the Bukusu community was a highly regarded person and therefore he was invited to ceremonies and functions of the community, to perform which in return earned him economic gains in form of gifts. The study recommends that the Litungu player should constitute part of regional music performance industry as opposed to using music that is borrowed and not necessarily relevant to indigenous people of Africa. The study further recommends that the Litungu player be invited to institutions of learning to educate young musicians on how to play the Litungu and compose its music, for consumption by both traditional and contemporary Kenyan societies.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

Most human societies have persons endowed with special abilities, talents and influences that often make them be elevated to unique positions in their communities. They are regarded as resource persons on account of the ways in which they contribute to day to day activities and functions of the community. These community resource persons in many traditions are key to the survival and sustenance of their culture to the extent that without them, the customs, cultural beliefs and educational processes would lack meaning. Further, continuity of life would have no consistency, innovation and creativity.

In traditional African societies, special value was always attached to the activities and the role played by different resource persons. Mariano (1998), for instance, cites traditional healers who hold esteemed and powerful positions in the Southern African societies. Such persons with the ability to diagnose the illness of a patient and provide therapy for the same would thus be revered because of the services they render to the community.

Similarly, in the contemporary setting, persons such as doctors, religious leaders, law makers, educators and musicians would be highly regarded for the invaluable services they render to the larger community. It is in view of the special abilities, talents and influences possessed by the aforementioned professionals, that this study argued that they would equally be regarded as important resource persons.
The resourcefulness of the traditional musician is brought to light by Bebey’s (1975) view of the African musician as an artist who dedicates himself to the service of the community at large with a special attribute of being a living archive of his people’s tradition. Merriam (1964) on the other hand points out the fact that it seems clear too that in all societies, there are individuals whose skill in making music are usually recognised in some way as being superior to that of others. Bebey (ibid) views the musician in terms of giving to the community, whereas Merriam (ibid) indicates that the community gives back to the musician.

In discussing the role of a musician, Akuno (2005) points out how the traditional musician spent time moving from one place to another to entertain guests or perform at social, cultural or ritual functions. In Akuno’s (ibid) context, the musician is clearly acknowledged as a person who sacrifices his time for the sake of the community. It can therefore, be argued that the communal functions at which he or she (the musician) participates would probably not carry the desired value, if the musicians’ services were absent.

Apart from playing particular roles in their areas of specialisation, resource persons can complement other disciplines. As far as formal education is concerned, both Risk (1958) and Snyder (1965) underscore the importance of resource persons such as traditional musicians, as one that heightens learning experience. That is, apart from teachers in
schools, there are people who are endowed with talents and knowledge that can enhance learning processes. Resource persons therefore, are essential in enriching the learning processes and hence both Risk (ibid) and Snyder (ibid) advocate for their incorporation in the education system, alongside the teachers who handle regular school curriculum. It is believed that this approach would ultimately make the learning processes achieve more interest for the learners.

Among the Babukusu of Western province of Kenya (appendix VII APPENDIX VIII) resource persons would include; Omukimba (the rainmaker), Omung’osi (the prophet), Omukhebi (the circumciser), Omwinoli (the midwife), Omufumu (traditional doctor), Osena kumuse (the reconciler), and 1Omukhupi (the musician). Omukhupi is a musician whose general inclination is toward singing and playing a specialized instrument for either entertainment or ritualistic functions. Omukhupi in the Bukusu context is an instrumentalist who is said to possess 2kumusambwa, the power to influence people through his musical performance. One such instrumentalist with special repute to influence people is the 3Omukhupetungu, the litungu (lyre) player in the Bukusu community.

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1 Omukhupi – A musician inclined towards singing and playing a specialised instrument.
2 Kumusambwa – May also refer to bad spirits in the Bukusu community.
3 Omukhupetungu – Litungu player.
1.2 The Babukusu, their music systems and performance practise

The Babukusu are a Bantu speaking ethnic group predominantly found in Bungoma district of Western province of Kenya. According to Lumbasi (1997), they are said to have migrated to the present district from the North West in the late 15th or early 16th century. The Bukusu believe that the first man, *Mwambu* was made from mud by *Wele Khakaba* (God the giver) at a place called *Mumbo* (West), after which God created a wife for *Mwambu*, called *Sella*. *Mwambu* and his descendants moved out of *Mumbo* and settled on the foothills of Mount Elgon, known as *Masaba* from where their descendants grew to form the current Bukusu population. Lumbasi (ibid) observed that traditionally the Babukusu lived in separate homesteads enclosed by hedges and stockades. Their local community is mainly a patrilineal lineage of husband, wives and their children. Economically, the Babukusu are agriculturalists who also keep livestock. Both men and women participate in economic activities of the community.

Music is an important part of the social life of the Babukusu. Music making combines instrumentation, song, and dance. The local names for instruments are called *bukhana*, songs *kimienya*, and dance *bukhino*.

1.2.1 Songs of the Babukusu

Songs of the Babukusu, are categorised according to the occasion or ceremony in which they are performed. These are;
- Children songs (*kimienya kie babana*), which are performed by children are they play mostly in the evenings before they go to sleep. Children play during the day is limited since they are in the company of their elders learning how to perform different duties in the homesteads. These songs are meant for enjoyment of the children.

- Wedding songs (*kimienya kie siselelo*) are sung to mark the different parts of the traditional wedding ceremony. The songs also praise the bride, advising her on how to co-exist in the new family.

- War songs (*kimienya kie liiye*) were also sung in the Bukusu community, as the warriors went out to fight to give them courage. They also recounted battles during the war and alluded to victory whenever the warriors conquered.

- Circumcision songs (*kimienya kie sikhebo*) were meant to encourage the initiate to courageously face the knife. Since circumcision was a rite of passage, the songs also advised the initiates on responsible adulthood.

- Funeral songs (*kimienya kie kamasika*) mostly sung by individuals as they mourned, were meant to eulogise the deceased. However collective singing was also evident, where the mourners comforted the bereaved family. Whenever elderly people died, ceremonies for the dead were held several years later, in commemoration of the elders, where songs were also sung. The ceremonies are; *lung’anyo*, which was done forty days after burial, *khumala silindwa* (cementing the grave), *khulotia* (bringing back home) and *khufua* (giving back).
 Whenever people were at work they also sung work songs to encourage each other to work more energetically over a long period of time. Work songs are called *kimienya kie kimilimo*.

Lullabies (*kimienya kie khuolelesia babana*) were also evident among the Babukusu, where the songs were to comfort babies to sleep.

### 1.2.2 Dances

The main dance among Babukusu is *kamabeka* (shaking shoulders). However, within the kamabeka three other dances were evident that were dependent on the style of playing *Litungu*. One is *kumukongo* where the back is emphasized but still shaking the shoulders. Two is *bitenga*, where the dance stands still and only the shoulders shake vigorously. And three *kumuchenje*, which is rather on higher speed and therefore the dance, shakes the head.

Another dance among the Babukusu is *bukhwana*, which was performed whenever a mother gave birth to twins. The dance was meant to celebrate the twins, as it was pride for one to get two babies at a go. The dance was, however, done in secrecy since it was sexually explicit, as the dancers emphasized the waist and lower parts of the body. The dance was mainly accompanied by the drum (*eng’oma*), which played a special power beat hence were referred to as *eng’oma ye bukhwana* (drum for twins).
The other dance among the Babukusu is *singorio* (jumping up with glare). This was a dance that was accompanied by songs that had rhythms similar to those of the Kalenjins. Hence, the dance was primarily jumping and making wide strides with a lot of grace and glare. The dance was specifically done by a specific age sets called *basawa* and *bakolongolo*, who were circumcised in the 1880s up to early 1900s.

### 1.2.3 Instruments

The main instrument of the Babukusu is the *Litungu*, a seven stringed lyre, which is played in almost all the ceremonies and functions of the community. The *Litungu* is usually accompanied by *luengele*, a wooden block struck by two sticks. In some instances, the *Litungu* is also accompanied by *siilili*, a two stringed fiddle, with one string playing the melody and the other making the drone. Another instrument is the *eng’oma* (drum) that is placed on the ground as it is played. A special drum that is goblet in shape is called *efumbo*, which has a string that is swung around the shoulder when it is played. It is unique in the sense that there are specific people who are talented in playing this drum, as it has a definite rhythm and style of playing.

Children usually play three instruments; one is called *chindulienge*, which are reeds that are slit on the side and when blown produce different sounds. The children make them in different sizes so that they produce varied sounds. The second one is *walubende*, a ground bow that is made of a tin, string tied on a peg. The third one is *sifwototo*, which
can be made by putting both hands together to form a resonator and when blown through it produces sound. It can also be made from fruit shells like guavas (*kamaperera*).

The last instrument of the Babukusu is *chisasi* (shakers) made from two gourds. This instrument is played specifically by traditional healers. When played as they sing, the healers can detect the ailment with the patient and play the same to heal them. The instrument is therefore a secluded one.

Among all the songs, dances and instruments of the Babukusu, a dominant feature is the *Litungu*, which plays to accompany most of the songs, determines the style in majority of the dances and is accompanied by nearly all the other instruments. The person, who plays the *Litungu*, therefore stands out and has a major task to perform in the Bukusu community.

1.3 **Statement of the problem**

The musician was a highly regarded person in view of the role he played in traditional African society. Sachs (1921) confirms the foregoing statement by observing that, instrumental soloists of any reputation especially performers in the *awja* and *ekwe* are treated with great respect, their services are in demand and the reward is liberal. Concurring with Sachs (ibid), Meriam (1964) reinforces for fact that the musician is a reputable specialist whether paid regularly, given gifts or simply acknowledged as a musician, for his labour differs from that of others in society.
On the contrary, the contemporary society seems not to appreciate the role played by the traditional musicians. In confirming this fear, Masasabi (2002) gives an account on how in the name of modernity the important role of the Litungu player as a custodian of the community’s poetry is gradually disappearing, as mass media prefers to market Eurocentric music in place of traditional cultural music. Lack of regard for the role of the traditional musician is further observed to affect even teaching of music in learning institutions. This is confirmed by Akuno (2005) who indicates that teaching music today in Kenyan institutions is affected by Kenyan’s perception of the role and status of the musician as a professional. The study supposes that the Omukhupetungu similarly shares in Akuno’s (ibid) concern of negative perception on the role and status of the musician in the Bukusu community.

The concern of this study was therefore that; in some instances the traditional musician was highly esteemed for the role he or she played in the society. Seemingly with influence of social change, the role of the musician, the Omukhupetungu in this case, is gradually losing value. The study therefore, sought to carry out an ethnographic study on the Omukhupetungu with an emphasis on ascertaining the significance of his role in the Bukusu community. To address this concern, the study endeavoured to answer the following concerns.
1.4 Research questions

i. What roles does the Omukhupetungu play in the Bukusu community?

ii. What does the Omukhupetungu sing about?

iii. How is the Omukhupetungu regarded in the Bukusu community?

iv. What determines the popularity of the Omukhupetungu?

1.5 Research objectives

The objectives of the study were to;

i. Ascertain roles played by the Omukhupetungu in the Bukusu community.

ii. Establish what the Omukhupetungu sings about.

iii. Find out in what ways the Omukhupetungu is regarded in the Bukusu community.

iv. Establish what determines the popularity of the Omukhupetungu.

1.6 Rationale and significance

This study came at a time when the Kenyan music curriculum needed revitalisation of its cultural content for the sake of conserving the invaluable Intangible Cultural Heritage. Mushira (2000) confirms the foregoing statement in findings that show that African music is under taught in secondary schools and therefore, the need to revitalise cultural content in the music curriculum. It is hoped that the study will contribute to scholarship as a source of information on community resource persons especially the Omukhupetungu. Further to this, the study will provide policy makers with a framework
for utilising resource persons for purposes of enriching traditional music of Kenya, and actively involving them in music education. Literature on the litungu is notably limited, since most information is unwritten and only exists orally. The study will, therefore, be a source of literature on the Omukhupetungu and the litungu as well.

1.7 Scope and limitation

The study was carried out in Kanduyi Division of Bungoma district (appendix IX), where the Babukusu are predominantly found. The reason for using Kanduyi division was based on the fact that the Babukusu occupy the whole of Bungoma District of Western Kenya, which is a vast area that the researcher would not have been able to cover within the given time frame, considering the financial resources available. This study was further constrained by the scarcity of documentation on the Litungu, hence limited itself on reviewing related literature on;

- The litungu and other related instruments,
- Place of the musician in the traditional African society,
- Significance of music resource persons in education,
- Traditional music resource persons and preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and
- The role and place of apprenticeship in traditional African societies
1.8 Delimitation

The Bakhupetungu from outside the division were not considered, since the researcher did not have sufficient time and finance to include them in the study.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

It is evident that literature on Kenyan traditional instruments especially the *litungu* is limited. However, this chapter aims to review a number of literature sources which are pertinent to this study. The areas under review will be subdivided into the following sub-headings:

a) Place of the musician in the traditional African society

b) The role and place of apprenticeship in traditional African societies

c) The *litungu* and other related instruments

d) Significance of music resource persons in education

e) Traditional music resource persons and preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

2.2 Place of the musician in the traditional African society

This study was guided by Bebey’s (1975) assertion that, the position of a musician in the society is key to the continuity of his or her contribution to the community’s activities. In other words, if a musician is positively regarded and his or her position respected by the community, he or she will equally contribute positively to the society’s activities. Over time, musicians in African communities have significantly influenced cultural trends, since music making is part and parcel of the cultural process. Bebey (1975) further observes that in African communities where art is a living and popular birthright, the
artist usually occupies an enviable position in the society. This study views the *Omukhupetungu* as one of the potential artists considered responsible for the living and popular African art as observed by Bebey (ibid). On the basis of this general observation on African artists, this study sought to establish whether the generalisation applies to the *Omukhupetungu* as well. The study further sought to find out what attributes are responsible for his (*Omukhupetungu*) enviable position in the society.

Reflecting on the role of a musician in Kenyan society, Akuno (2005) argues that a musician was a very useful person in the traditional society despite the fact that he entirely depended on handouts from his patrons for upkeep and survival. Nevertheless, Akuno’s observation informs this study, that the musician was positively viewed as a useful person in the traditional society. As a follow up of the views expressed by the two scholars, the current study was interested in establishing how the Bukusu community would view the *Omukhupetungu* and whether or not the musician may also be as useful in the contemporary society.

In a parallel study, Omondi (1980) portrays the *thum* player as an artist, who is not only respected for entertaining the community, but also plays other social functions and has a special place in the community. Accordingly, the *thum* player is considered as an artist with the capability to entertain the community as well as playing other social functions. The *thum* player is thus portrayed as being endowed with diverse skills. Because *thum* is a lyre similar to the *Litungu*, the study conjectures that maybe the *Omukhupetungu* plays
diverse roles like the *thum* player. The study further proposed to find out roles the *Omukhupetungu* plays and whether the roles have some relationship with his place in society.

### 2.3 The role and place of apprenticeship in traditional African societies

Research shows that over the years, African communities have been characterised by apprenticeship system of education, where the child was educated within the confines of cultural experiences. Elliot (1995) for instance explains apprenticeship as the most ancient model of education, which embeds the learning of skills and knowledge in the social and functional context. Music was learned as part of the process of growing up and becoming a member of the society, in an informal way but most importantly through practical experiences (Senoga-Zake, 1986). The social setting within which one is trained through the apprenticeship model would therefore, significantly contribute to the total learning process. The aspect of initiation of the learner into the cultural practice of the traditions of the community he or she learns from is thus inevitable. Training of the *Omukhupetungu* would thus be as a result of cultural initiation. This is because of the fact that *Litungu* playing has been with the culture of the Bukusu community for as long as the community has existed. The study thus sought to establish, how else apart from apprenticeship one learns how to play *litungu*. 
Nketia (1970) on the other hand reveals that individual members of an African society learn experimentally by making use of their eyes, ears and memory. In Nketia’s perspective, first hand experience is really what entails apprenticeship. The learner therefore, depends entirely on what he or she can see, hear from the master then memorises the same. As a result of the ideas memorised through imitation, one is able to practise what has been learnt and ultimately achieve mastery of the same with time. This study supposes that litungu playing may be as a result of observation and memorisation.

Furthermore, Hoover (1972) points out the fact that, the further away one moves from direct experience, the higher the chances are for misconception of ideas being learnt to occur. This thought brings into light the issue of theoretical learning as unviable, since the learner is far off from first hand experience. The author (ibid) therefore, indirectly advocates for the model of apprenticeship as the most effective system of learning since it entails experiencing issues in the way they are practised. Learning to play litungu would equally be as a result of the apprenticeship process. This study however sought to establish how else litungu playing could be learnt.

2.4 The Litungu and other related instruments

In reviewing related literature on the Omukhupetungu, this study finds it necessary to articulate issues on the Litungu and related instruments. The study argues that the litungu being a lyre would have features that are related to other lyres within and without Kenya.
In terms of terminology, the *Litungu* is closely related to the *iritungu* of the Kuria people of Nyanza province (Odwar, 2006). This study therefore, focuses on the *Litungu* of the Bukusu people and not the *iritungu* of the Kuria people. However, review of literature on other related instrument was crucial in shaping discussions of the origin of the *Litungu*.

Organologically, the *litungu* has seven strings, whereas the *iritungu* of the Kuria has eight strings. The *iritungu* is tuned to the following solfa notes; r m f l l, t, r m, whereas the *litungu* is tuned to the following solfa notes; d r m f s l d’ (Senoga-Zake 1986). The Author (ibid) further observes that the *iritungu* is played while placed on the ground or at times on the shoulder, whereas the *litungu* is placed across the lap or facing away from the player if in standing position. In as much as the two lyres share similarities, certain aspects are different as observed above.

To distinguish the word *Litungu* whose meaning varies in parts of the African continent it is important to highlight the differences. *Litungu* also refers to a finished hut that is used by *4 luvale* females during a puberty ritual, in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia (www.jstor.org). This study thus focused on *litungu* as an instrument but not *litungu* a hut of the luvale people. *Litungu* similarly refers to an entertainment dance in Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe; the dancers move their head back and fourth as they jump (www. music-crossroads.net).

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4 *Luvale* – Bantu speaking people of Northern Zambia
2.5 Significance of music resource persons in education

Inspite of the fact that formal education system is well provided for in terms of training personnel, it is possible that teachers can be trained in many aspects of music, but may be inadequately prepared in some music skills. It is, therefore, likely that one may be a music teacher, trained to teach theory of music and yet not able to play a musical instrument. Wanjala (2004) decries one profile of music teachers in Kenya that is knowledgeable in music theory but lacking in practical competence and involvement in music. People who are talented in such areas as playing instruments and yet are not necessarily teachers would thus be essential resource persons, particularly in teaching of instrumental skills. This study supports the need to acknowledge and recognise resource persons in the society, with a view to utilising them for the purpose of enriching traditional music of Kenya, and actively involving them in music education.

In as far as the necessity for resource persons is concerned, Senoga-Zake (1986) suggests that each school should have at least a few musical instruments from its environs and a local musician be invited to visit the schools every now and then, to encourage the children not only to listen but also to learn to play and possibly make their own instrument. The author (ibid) clearly recognises the potential in the local musicians which can contribute to the education system. This could possibly be achieved if such resource persons as the Omukhupetungu are incorporated in the teaching programs. In support of appropriate knowledge transfer, Senoga-Zake (ibid) does not support the idea of teachers going to learn from the musician and then coming back to teach the pupils or
students. Ideally, it is preferable that the traditional musician should physically come to school in order to teach the learners about the instrument.

In view of Senoga-Zake’s (ibid) contribution, this study argues that utilising musicians in music teaching is a form of influence the musician would have on the larger community away from the Bukusu community. The artistic potential in the traditional musicians that Senoga-Zake (ibid) alluded to greatly inspired this study, in seeking to establish what the traditional musician in this case the Omukhupetungu, can contribute to formal education system. Further to this, Senoga-Zake is keen on the children not only being able to play the instruments, but also developing the ability to make their own instruments. This view corresponds well with the issue of apprenticeship and entrepreneurship, as justifiable elements/qualities worth studying. A study on the Omukhupetungu would thus bring into light his capabilities that would play a significant role in influencing learners in a broader perspective than just playing the instrument.

Further afield in the international scene, Lehman (1994) underscores the fact that music education can benefit greatly from utilizing the professional musicians and the musical institutions of the local community to enhance and strengthen the school music curriculum. The contributions by these musicians would serve to complement but not to substitute for a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential music program in school, taught by qualified music educators. On the basis of Lehman’s (ibid) sentiments, it is imperative that resource persons such as the Omukhupetungu are acknowledged as people
who can contribute to various strategies in learning processes, and should, therefore, be actively incorporated in music education, as a means of complementing this process. Essentially, this study endeavoured to find out whether the Omukhupetungu can equally influence the community as a resource person through the school music curriculum.

In a study on assessment of teaching resources, Digolo (1998) points out the fact that most schools do not seem to realize the importance of using resource persons such as traditional musicians within the school community, to assist the students in skill areas where the teachers are less competent. This study follows in the trend of Digolo’s (ibid) view that, the Omukhupetungu is a potential musician who should be utilised to assist students in skill areas where teachers lack expertise. An outgrowth of the study was to find out in what ways the Omukhupetungu can be utilised as a resource person.

2.6 Traditional music resource persons and preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

Community resource persons in many traditions are key to the survival and sustenance of their culture to the extent that without them, the customs, cultural beliefs and educational processes would lack meaning. The presence of resource persons is thus essential for the cultural posterity of a community. On the issue of the musician being a community resource, Bebey (1975) argues that, as things exist today; traditional music is threatened with eventual extinction and will gradually disappear unless immediate steps are taken to assure the future of its most essential ingredient –the musician. Bebey (ibid) further
laments that failure to recognise this important person would lead to the gradual extinction of music itself. The *Omukhupetungu* being one of the musicians in the Bukusu community would suffer similar decline or ultimate cultural demise, and hence, the need for this study as a means of safeguarding this invaluable Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

Bebey (Ibid) also points out that recording, preservation, and diffusion of traditional African music only would not be enough, it should be accompanied by a parallel effort to preserve and emancipate the men who make this music (the musicians). This study subscribes to the view that some of the ways of preserving the wealth of knowledge of these musicians is through such scholarly writings and documentation. It is also important to incorporate their expertise in music education, or by involving them as active contributors to the music curriculum, besides being emulated by young upcoming musicians.

Observation of social trends in community’s activities shows that *Bakhupetungu* are gradually being isolated from the traditional ceremonies in preference for music that is remixed and quite often Western oriented. Concurring with this observation, Masasabi (2002) gives an account on how in the name of modernity, the important role of the *Omukhupetungu* as the custodian of the community’s oral tradition/indigenous knowledge is gradually disappearing, as the mass media prefers to market Eurocentric music in place of the traditional cultural music. Since the *Omukhupetungu* seemingly is...
not given preference in the performance arena, one way out to conserve the invaluable information of the traditional musicians, is through such scholarly fora. Whereas Masasabi (ibid) focused on using Litungu songs to come up with creative musical arrangements using Western harmonisation and compositional techniques, this study endeavoured on establishing the role of the Litungu player in the Bukusu community.

In an attempt to help conserve culture, UNESCO (2006, 2007) conventions define Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) as expressions, knowledge, skills, as well as instruments, and cultural spaces associated therewith, that communities recognise as part of their cultural heritage. Intangible in this case refers to that which is not physical yet possessed by a people. The UNESCO conventions’ main objective was to conserve ICH which is at risk of extinction in the event of death or incapacitation of its practitioners. This study views the Omukhupetungu as one endowed with ICH that is more or less at the risk expressed by the UNESCO conventions.

2.7 Theoretical framework

This study adopted the theory of functionalism as advanced by Durkheim (1938) and Parsons (1951) to explain the role of Omukhupetungu in the Bukusu community. Parsons (1951:21) states that;

All social system shares certain functional prerequisites which must be met if the system is to survive and operate efficiently. One such prerequisite is role allocation and performance. This means that all roles must be filled.
Functionalism here focuses on the structure and workings of society where functionalists see society as made up of inter-dependent sections which work together to fulfill the functions necessary for the survival of society as a whole. People are socialized into roles and behaviours which fulfill the needs, and if not filled, the society will be lacking in a way. In citing Durkheim (1938), Digolo (2003) observes that a society is to be viewed as a system of linked working parts or subsystems of which music comprises one such subsystem. In the current study, the application of the theory posits that the Omukhupetungu, being one of the musicians in the Bukusu community, is part of the music which functions a subsystem of the community, in view of the role that he plays.

The study further argues that, for any member of the community to be recognised and appreciated, he or she must have contributed positively to the functioning of the community. In the same vein, for the Omukhupetungu to be one of the respected and popular members of the Bukusu community, he must have also contributed positively to the functioning of the community. The Omukhupetungu is thus viewed to be part of a functioning community without whom the community will not function effectively. In as much as the Omukhupetungu contributes to the community as a functioning part, the community in turn plays a role in supporting/complementing the efforts of the Omukhupetungu.

That is why Blacking (1973:43) observes that;

The value of music in the society, and its differential effects on people may be essential factors in the growth or atrophy of musical abilities.
Blacking’s (ibid) concern was in the way in which people regard music in the society is responsible for either the growth of the musical art or its degeneration. It is worth noting, therefore, that if the music is appreciated, so is the musician who makes it. If music is not appreciated, the musician is unlikely to play any significant role in the society, hence affecting its proper functioning. This implies that, if the role of the Omukhupetungu is enhanced in the society, it is likely to influence the growth of litungu music positively. In the context of this study, the value of litungu music can only be recognised if the Omukhupetungu is engaged more in music making avenues.

In light of this theory, the study contends that if the resourcefulness of the Omukhupetungu could be tapped into, his musical contribution would be sustained, alongside cultural posterity and preservation of this invaluable intangible cultural heritage. The study utilised this theory to assess the reciprocal relationship between the Omukhupetungu and the community, aspects of creative manifestation of the framework as it relates to both the community and the Omukhupetungu.
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This study adopted the descriptive research design, which involves collecting of information by interviewing and or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho 2003). The research design was appropriate because the bulk of information collected was qualitative in nature. Interview and listening schedules, therefore, were used to collect data which was then systematised, analysed and presented in a descriptive format.

3.2 Location

The study was carried out in Kanduyi Division, situated in the south-western part of Bungoma district of Western Province of Kenya (appendix IX). Kanduyi being the largest division in the District, the researcher presupposed that the division would comprise a more representative sample of Bakhupetungu, compared to the other divisions. For the sake of ethical considerations, the researcher sought for permission from the District Officer (Office of the President) Kanduyi Division, to carry out research within the Division. The researcher presented letter from the District Officer to all the respondents he researched on, as proof that permission had been granted to carry out the study within the area. Furthermore, that in carrying out the field study the researcher did not have any other motive apart from scholarship.
3.3 Target population

The target population consisted of the *Bakhupetungu* within Kanduyi Division. A total of eighteen *Bakhupetungu*, who were the accessible population were involved in the study. The sample was further drawn from members of the *Litungu* audience within the Division, where sixteen respondents were interviewed. The above samples were achieved using purposive and snowball sampling techniques discussed in section 3.4 below. The researcher, therefore, purposively identified one *Omukhupetungu* who guided him to reach the others. Through snowball, the sample grew until the same names (of *Bakhupetungu*) already researched on were being mentioned. This was an indicator that no more *Bakhupetungu* were available hence a total of eighteen were arrived at.

During the field research with the *Bakhupetungu* that was conducted mostly under tree, became interesting at the way passers by were interested in what the researcher was doing. They, therefore, joined the research process hence constituted the *Litungu* audience, where sixteen people were researched on. The sixteen members of the audience were the accessible population. The study considered all members of the community that included all ages and gender. This was important to establish whether *Litungu* playing was an activity that involved all members of the community or is confined to one gender, and or all ages.
3.4 Sampling

Two sampling techniques were used in this study to identify the *Bakhupetungu*. The first technique was purposive sampling where a researcher purposely targeted a group of people believed to be reliable for the study (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The second technique was snowball sampling which involved beginning with a few people and then gradually increasing the sample size as new contacts are mentioned by the people you started with (Kombo and Tromp, Ibid). These sampling methods were preferred because of the fact that the *Bakhupetungu* are few and may mostly be known to their fellow players. The researcher, thus, purposively sampled one *Omukhupetungu* who eventually introduced the other players. A challenging aspect of the study was to identify who the *Litungu* audience were. Whenever the researcher engaged the *Bakhupetungu*, other people passing by were attracted to the sound of the instrument and the dialogue between the researcher and the *Bakhupetungu* ensued. It was observed that the people joined and also contributed to the dialogue and hence the researcher engaged them, hence constituting the *Litungu* audience.

3.5 Data collection

The data collected was categorised as primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected during the field study, while secondary data was obtained from archival sources.
3.5.1 Primary data

Primary data consisted of responses from the Bakhupetungu and the selected members of the Litungu audience. Interview schedules and recording equipment were used to collect primary data. The data was collected during the field study that was conducted in Kanduyi Division.

3.5.2 Research instruments

3.5.2.1 Interview schedule

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the Bakhupetungu and their audience as informants. This was guided by the interview schedules shown in appendix I respectively. Although the interview schedules were used, any data collected in the course of the interview process that was not included in the interview schedule but within the research area, was incorporated in the research findings. This was necessary since some of the questions in the interview schedule were open-ended and therefore, revealed other concerns which were still essential for the study.

3.5.2.2 Listening schedule

This study made use of a listening schedule, in appendix II as a tool for transcribing the song texts. Out of the twenty four songs that were collected from the field, a total of ten were transcribed for analysis. The ten were considered as they contained information that efficiently helped to answer the research questions that formed concerns of this study.
3.5.3 Research equipment

The study made use of a Sony DVX12 audio tape recorder and a digital CAMX2 camera to record data in the field. The recorded data was reviewed, analysed, synthesized and organised according to different thematic contents as evident in the research objectives. With permission from the respondents, the photographs taken were incorporated in the data presentation, as visual representations of some of the field activity. The photographs were also used to support the findings during presentation of data, by aiding in data analysis.

3.5.4 Secondary data

Apart from data collected from the field, this study further solicited information from published sources which included books, journals, periodicals, magazines, newspapers and the internet. Some of the published sources were obtained from the Kenyatta University, and University of Nairobi Libraries. Additional secondary data was obtained from the Kenya National Archives and Institute of African Studies.

3.5.5 Data analysis

Both primary and secondary data collected was systematised then analysed after the field study. Qualitative method of data analysis was used in analysing the data collected. Song texts were transcribed, interpreted and analysed in order to examine the textual content of the songs. Findings from the song text analysis were crucial in determining
the significance of the messages the *Omukhupetungu* communicated to the public. The findings were then presented in descriptive format, and in accordance with the objectives as stipulated in chapter one.

### 3.6 Ethical considerations

For the sake of ethical considerations, the researcher sought for permission from the District Officer (Office of the President) Kanduyi Division, to carry out research within the Division. The researcher presented letter from the District Officer to all the respondents he researched on, as proof that permission had been granted to carry out the study within the area. Furthermore, the research sought for permission from the respondents, to have their names and pictures appear in the thesis, as visual representations of some of the field activity. The photographs were also used to support the findings during presentation of data, by aiding in data analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data that was collected from the field study through interview, listening schedules, transcription of songs, and visual images that were taken during the field study. Although not prescribed in the methodology, the study also made use of observation schedules and participant group discussions, hence forming some of the data presented in this chapter. This was necessitated by the fact that, the study was carried out in the open (mostly under trees). Passers-by were, therefore, attracted into the ongoing discussions and the music making process hence participant group discussions ensued. The chapter will be divided into;

- Transcription and notation of the collected songs
- Data analysis in view of research questions that formed concerns of this study.

Through the use of purposive and snowball sampling, a total of eighteen Bakhupetungu and sixteen members of the audience were interviewed. The researcher visited homes of the Bakhupetungu where the interviews, participant group discussions and observations were carried out. Table 4.0 below shows a list of Bakhupetungu who were interviewed indicating their age bracket and the date the interview was conducted.
### Table 4.0 List of Bakhupetungu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Bracket</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Anicet Wafula</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>18/11/2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Elijah Muliro</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>07/12/2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Luka Wapang’ana</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>10/12/2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Tevin Wafula</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>18/12/2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Joshua Matofari</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Below 10 years</td>
<td>18/11/2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Eugene Wanyama</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Below 10 years</td>
<td>14/11/2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.0 shows that all the respondents interviewed were male. No female *Omukhupetungu* was found within the study area. According to the respondents, in the past (*khaale*) females never played the *Litungu*, though lately (*leelo*) *Litungu* playing is also observed among female members of the community. The researcher however, did not identify any female member of the community who played the *Litungu*, during the field study.

The age of the *Bakhupetungu* was significant to this study, to establish whether *Litungu* playing is an activity that affects people across all ages or it was confined to a few age sets. Age was also noteworthy in determining the continuity of *Litungu* playing skills, hence the need for such a study to be carried out. It is notable that most respondents were drawn from the age bracket of 11-20 years with four respondents, with both below 10 years and 80-90 years with three respondents. There were no respondents within the age bracket of 50-60 years, who were interviewed. The researcher did not come across respondents within the said age bracket. From the table, it can be deduced that *Litungu* playing was evident in most of the age groups/categories. This is an indication that there is continuity in *Litungu* playing skills within the Bukusu community.

Table 4.0 which shows the *Bakhupetungu* that were interviewed was converted to a bar Graph 4.0 below, to give a pictorial view of the number of *Bakhupetungu* against their ages.
4.2 Transcription and notation of songs

This section presents a transcription of songs that were collected during the field study. This was necessary to ascertain the rhythmic, melodic and textual aspects of the songs, and how this determined the role of the Omukhupetungu in the Bukusu community. The researcher transcribed nine songs out of the twenty four songs that were collected during the field study. This was in view of the fact that the songs that were transcribed contained information that was most relevant in addressing the concerns of the study. Another consideration during the transcription was that the songs were repetitive hence not the entire song was transcribed. A section of the song that formed basis of all the repeated parts was transcribed.
Excerpt 4.1: *Siuma*

---

*SIUMA*

---

5 *Siuma* – Recorded on 18th November 2009 as was played by Anicet Wafula at Ndengelwa Village
ba-ke-ni ba-li 'engo  ba-ke-ni ba-li 'engo
Siu-ma  Siu-ma wa  Maa-yi 'ewe  Siu-ma

chao'-ba-bo-le-le  chao'-ba-bo-le-le
Si-mbi  Si-mbi wa  Maa-yi 'ewe  Si-mbi

oli ka-lo-bi-le  oli ka-lo-bi-le
Si-mbi  Si-mbi wa  Maa-yi 'ewe  Si-mbi
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Bukusu song text</th>
<th>Literal English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bakeni bali engo Siuma</td>
<td>Visitors are at home Siuma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakeni bali engo Siuma</td>
<td>Visitors are at home Siuma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siuma wa maayi ewe siuma</td>
<td>Siuma of my mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakeni sina Simbi</td>
<td>Which visitors Simbi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simbi wa maayi we</td>
<td>Simbi of my mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiminani Siuma</td>
<td>The ogres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siuma Kiminani Siuma wa maayi ewe</td>
<td>The ogres Siuma of my mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cha obabilele Simbi</td>
<td>Go tell them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cha obabilele Simbi wa maayi we</td>
<td>Go tell them Simbi of my mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oli kalobile Simbi</td>
<td>That she has refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oli kalobile Simbi wa maayi ewe</td>
<td>That she has refused Simbi of my mother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the respondents, the song is about *Siuma* who was a sister to the founding mother of the Bukusu community called *Sella*. The ogres who lived at the time admired *Siuma* since she was hard working, as she owned a big banana plantation. The song continues to recount how the ogres used to come to *Siuma’s* home, and then send the younger sister *Simbi*, to go and call *Siuma* from the banana plantation to come and attend to them. *Siuma* however, declined to go home. It was learnt that the intention of the ogres was to marry *Siuma*, who on the other hand feared that they would eat her up.

The song starts with an instrumental prelude, which is the same melody that is sung by the *Omukhupetungu*. The song is based on alternating triple and quadruple compound meter (12/16 and 9/16 time signatures). Structurally, the song makes use of call-response that is interchanged between *Siuma* and *Simbi* to form dialogue. The study learnt that the people who respond are called *babaakaanila*, in most cases the player of *luengele* (*we luengele/we chisala*), and some members of the audience. The song is accompanied by a rattle (*luengele*).
Excerpt 4. 2: "Lwe wa Chonge"

LWE WA CHONGE

"Lwe wa Chonge – Recorded on 28th November 2009 as was played by Thomas Wekesa at Tobolia Village"
চোঞ্জে বাসিলিও নাক্ষণ্য নামেলা সেন্যালা

মুখামুবিলা

লিলী চোঞ্জে বালুয়া বা চোঞ্জে বালুয়া বালুয়া
Original Bukusu song text | Literal English translation
---|---
Bali wa Chonge baluyaba | At Chonge’s homestead, warriors are still struggling
Wa Chonge baluyaba | A Chonge’s still struggling
Bali wa Chonge baluyaba | A Chonge’s homestead, warriors are still struggling
Wa Chonge basilio soleli basilio | A Chonge’s, they are still there, warriors are there
Nakhanywa namela | However drunk I can get
Senywa mu khamubila | I cannot drink water from river khamubila
Bali wa Chonge baluyaba | At Chonge’s place, our warriors are still struggling

The song *lwe wa Chonge* is a war song that gives an account of a battle between Babukusu and Barwa. Interviews with the Bakhupetungu revealed that all the Babukusu warriors were killed and thrown in river *khamubila*. As they recounted the war in the song *lwe wa chonge*, the Bakhupetungu indicated that, on the day of the war, river *khamubila* flowed with blood instead of water. In the song, the Bakhupetungu swore that
however drunk they got, they would never drink water from river khamubila, due to the fact that the blood of their warriors flowed in the same river. The respondents further indicated that in as much as their warriors were killed, they still had hope that some of their warriors would still be fighting at Chonge’s homestead and one day they would come back victorious.

The song starts with an instrumental prelude that is followed by singing from the Omukhupetungu. Structurally, the song is entirely solo, where the Omukhupetungu sings as he alternates with instrumental interludes. The Litungu, however, responds to the solo of the Omukhupetungu, and so in a way could from a solo-response structure. In terms of meter, the song makes use of alternating compound triple and quadruple time. Rhythmically, the song starts on unacrusic, followed by syncopated rhythmic motifs. The range of the song is a major seventh (M7). The song is accompanied by luengele that is played on monotone.
Excerpt 4.3: \textit{Kukhasi kukeenda}

\textbf{KUKHASI KUKEENDA}

\begin{align*}
2 = 112
\end{align*}

\textit{Litungu}

\textit{Omukhupetungu}

\textit{Luengele}

\textit{Ndia' - li-la wa-nda-yea'-li-le enga-bo}

\textit{Ku - kha-si ku-kee-nda ku-we'-mba-ko}

\textit{Ku - kha-si ku-kee-nda ku-we'-mba-ko ku - li-me ma-pwo-ni mu si-tu-ti}

\textit{Kukhasi kukenda} – Recorded on 26\textsuperscript{th} November 2009 as was played by Masinde Cheseni at Ndengelwa Village
Original Bukusu song text

Ndi alila wandaye
Alila engabo
Ndi alila wandaye
Alila engabo
Kukhasi kukenda
Kuwe embako
Kulime esaka musirundu
Kukhasi kukenda
Kuwe embako
Kulime mapwoni musituti
Lusambu lwa paapa luululu
Kenda murebekho bakasa

Literal English translation

She seeks the brothers
She seeks for a shield
She seeks the brothers
She seeks a shield
A woman who roams about
Give her a hoe
She goes to weed vegetables in the farm
A woman who roams about
Give her a hoe
She goes to weed potatoes in the farm
My father’s farm is barren
Please go and consult the elders
The title of the song “kukhasi kukeenda” means the woman who roams about. This song rebuked a lazy woman who had the habit of wandering about aimlessly. The song narrated that anyone who saw the lazy woman should give her a hoe so that she goes to cultivate and weed plants on the farm. But when the lazy woman went to the farm, she instead complained that the father’s farm was barren, and that is why the plants were not flourishing. She always sought for the brothers to protect her whenever anyone complained about her negative character. Excuse to cover laziness is an aspect the Omukhupetungu condemns in the song.

The song starts unacrusically with an instrumental prelude. The melody played by the Litungu is the same as what the Omukhupetungu sang. In some instances, whenever the Omukhupetungu sings, the Litungu in response imitates the same melodic motif. Syncopated rhythmic patterns are typical of the song, with accents on the off beats. Structurally, it is a solo song where instrumental interludes alternate with the Omukhupetungu’s singing. The song is founded on compound quadruple meter (12/16). It is accompanied by luengele which maintains a similar rhythmic motif, on monotone all through.
Excerpt 4.4: Ngwekwe

NGWEKWE

Ngwekwe – Recorded on 14th November 2009 as was played by Menecha Kundukubi at Nalutiri Village.
Original Bukusu song text

Ngwekwe mukhula si
Bakuka ngwekwe mukhula si
Ngwekwe mukhula kho!
Ngwekwe khukhula si

Literal English translation

Ngwekwe, why do you uproot?
Grandfathers ngwekwe why do you uproot?
Ngwekwe attempt not to uproot
Ngwekwe why do you uproot?
The title “ngwekwe” is a name of a weed. In the song, it is being asked why ngwekwe should be uprooted, as was lamented by Elijah Masinde, who was a political and religious leader of the Babukusu. Elijah Masinde (ibid), decried the order by the white settlers to have the weed uprooted from the farms. The study established that the words in song excerpt 4.4 above were the same words used by Elijah Masinde (ibid) in his speech to condemn the directive (ngwekwe mukhula si?). In the song, the Omukhupetungu similarly wondered why ngwekwe should be uprooted. Menecha Kundukubi (ibid) narrated how the Bakhupetungu walked through the villages playing the song, as a form of a campaign against the white settlers’ directive. Babukusu in turn declined to uproot the weed, due to the influence of the Bakhupetungu, who supported their leader through the song.

The instrumental prelude of the song starts on an upbeat. The Litungu then plays solo part as the Omukhupetungu completes the phrase but not responding as such. The Omukhupetungu and the Litungu sing the same melody all through the song. In terms of meter, the song is typically in compound quadruple time (12/16). Syncopations are also evident in the song with recurrent rhythmic accents always on the upbeat. The range of the song is a major seventh (M7).
Excerpt 4.5: ⁹*Lulumbe

LULUMBE

⁹ Lulumbe – Recorded on ⁹th December 2009, as was played by Masika Mukubwa at Misanga Village.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Bukusu song text</th>
<th>Literal English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oluno lulumbe lwe sibelwa</td>
<td>This is a disease of pity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oluno lulumbe lwe sibelwa</td>
<td>This is a disease of pity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaaya khwalila kakwa</td>
<td>My dear we cried tears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balala bali silimu</td>
<td>Some say it is called slim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandi bali muniafu</td>
<td>Others say it is called skinny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaaya khwakwa khwabuyukha</td>
<td>My dear cried until we fell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaaya mukhoya mwechunga</td>
<td>My dear take care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekhane nende barembo</td>
<td>Leave alone the beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulinde bana benywe</td>
<td>Take care of your children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oluno lulumbe lwe sibelwa</td>
<td>This is a disease of pity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oluno lulumbe lwe sibelwa</td>
<td>This is a disease of pity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The song addresses the HIV AIDS pandemic, where it describes the different names that people have been calling the disease over time. In the song the *Omukhupetungu* cautions people against behaviour that would lead them to contracting the disease. It starts on an upbeat with the highest notes of the song. The song is in compound triple time, with syncopated rhythmic patterns. The *Omukhupetungu* sing the same melody as the one played by the *Litungu*. The range of the song is a major seventh (M7).
Song excerpt 4.6: 10 Bamali Baabi

BAMALI BAABI

10 Bamali baabi – Recorded on 18th November as was played by Anicet Wafula at Ndengelwa Village.
19. khu'la-nga o - li wa-ta-mba wa-se ba-khu-la-nga a-kha

23. paa - pa khu-fwa ne-

27. - la-lii-la, maa - yi khu-fwa ne - la na-ta-mba paa - pa khu-fwa ne-

31. - la-lii-la, maa - yi khu-fwa ne - la na-ta-mba
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Bukusu song text</th>
<th>Literal English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bamali baabi</td>
<td>Black people are bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balimo emonyo</td>
<td>Are full of backbiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamali baabi</td>
<td>Black people are bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balimo emonyo</td>
<td>Are full of backbiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olia nenabo yaaya</td>
<td>You eat with them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ne eyi bakhukuta</td>
<td>They back bite you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olia sisioo</td>
<td>You eat yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakhulanga oku</td>
<td>They call you big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oli watamba</td>
<td>When you do not have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakhulanga akha</td>
<td>They call you small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paapa khufwa</td>
<td>Dad died</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neela naalila</td>
<td>I mourned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maayi khufwa</td>
<td>Mum died</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neela natamba</td>
<td>I became a pauper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The title of the song “bamali baabi” means black people are bad. The song advises people to be cautious in the way they relate with others, since not everyone is trustworthy. The song also talks about the way people never say the truth about others, that is, in ones presence they always praise you, but in absence they talk ill of you. The song also recounts the importance of mothers in the community as providers for the family.

The instrumental prelude of the song commences on an upbeat, where the Litungu plays the same melody that the Omukhupetungu subsequently sings. In terms of structure, the song assumes a solo design all through. It is further based on a compound triple meter (9/16), with syncopated rhythmic motifs. The song has a range of a major seventh (M7), and is accompanied by luengele, which is played on monotone.
Song excerpt 4.7: \textit{Embalu}

**EMBALU**

\textit{Litungu} - Recorded on 14\textsuperscript{th} December 2009 as was played by Muyundo Mang’oli of Mabanga Village.

\textit{Embalu} – Recorded on 14\textsuperscript{th} December 2009 as was played by Muyundo Mang’oli of Mabanga Village.
nywe mu-re-be mwe-si mu-
li-a-no ya-
nja erie-na mu-ba-
bu-ku-su yaa-

ba ya be-be yo-si a-
ki-re yaa-
ma mwi-
la wa Ma-
go

de-mu e-
yo ya be-
be ya-
ma mwi-
la wa Ma-
go

58
Original Bukusu Text | English Literal Translation
--- | ---
Embalu yefwe mubabukusu | Our circumcision among the Babukusu
Yanja eriena mubabukusu | How did it start among the Babukusu
Embalu yefwe mubabukusu | Our circumcision among the Babukusu
Yama mwiala wa Mango | It came from Mwiala of Mango
Mango keera endemu | Mango killed a snake
Eyo yaba endemu ya bebe | It was an enormous python
Yama mwiala wa Mango | It came from Mwiala of Mango

In the song *Embalu*, it was narrated that Mango stayed among his maternal uncles, Barwa (one of the Kalenjin sub-ethnic groups), who were circumcised while he was not. He was the only one who looked after cows since he was uncircumcised. One day he shocked the whole community when he killed the biggest ever known python that swallowed cattle and human beings. His bravery was rewarded by being allowed to be circumcised and therefore, the entire Babukusu were allowed to participate in the act of circumcision too.
Song Excerpt 4.8: Sella

SELLA

[Song notation and lyrics]

12 Sella – Recorded on 7th December 2009, as was played by Elijah Muliro at Tobolia Village
Se-lla mu-ke-ni mu-ya ka-u-nya mu-no Se-lla mu-ke-ni mu-ya ka-u-nya mu-

yaa-ya nge-be ewe oka-na khu-ndia yaa-ya nge-be ewe oka-na khu-

yaa-ya nge-be ewe oka-na khu-ndia yaa-ya nge-be ewe oka-na khu-

61
yaa-ya

-ndia

na-nu wa- lia o-we-we yaa-ya na-nu wa- lia o-we-we

yaa-ya

na-nu wa- lia o-we-we yaa-ya na-nu wa- lia o-we-we

yaa-ya
Original Bukusu song text

O  Sella mukeni muya kaunya muno
    Sella mukeni muya kaunya muno

S  Yaaya ngeba ewe okana khundia
    Yaaya ngeba ewe okana khundia
    Yaaya nanu walia owewe
    Yaaya nanu walia owewe

Literal English translation

Sella a visitor smells in this house
    Sella a visitor smells in this house

My dear maybe you want to eat me up
    My dear maybe you want to eat me up
    My dear, who has ever eaten up his own
    My dear who has ever eaten up his own
The above song explains how the founding parents of the Bukusu community led their life amidst ogres. *Sella* was married to an ogre, and left *Mwambu* at the risk of being eaten by the ogres in his house. *Mwambu* used to visit *Sella* to avoid the ogres who used to hunt during the day. On visiting *Sella* one day the ogre came back home early before *Mwambu* left for his house. *Sella*, therefore, hid *Mwambu* in a stack of firewood. The ogre, however, smelled a visitor in the house, and therefore, took the *Litungu* and played this song, where he was asking *Sella* whether a visitor smelled in the house. *Sella* on her part took *luengele*, which she played accompanying the husband ogre, as she responded in song that no visitor smelled in the house.

The song starts on an upbeat with an instrumental prelude. The *Litungu* plays the same melody as that sung by the *Omukhupetungu*. In the melody of the song, there is no distinction between the chorus and the stanza, since the response is exactly the same as the solo. Structurally, the song assumes a solo-response design, which forms a dialogue between *Sella* and the ogre, musically represented by *Omukhupetungu* and *Babaakanila* respectively. During the field study, it was observed that the *luengele* player sung the part for *Sella*. The song is founded on a compound triple meter that exhibits syncopated rhythms, with accents mostly on the upbeat, whereas strong beats are unaccented. The range of the song is a major seventh (M7).
Song excerpt 4.9: **Khulia Silulu**

**KHULIA SILULU**

_Culled from_ 13 Khulia Silulu

—Recorded on 9th December as was played by Masika Mukubwa at Misanga Village.
Original Bukusu song text | Literal English translation

*Mwalia silulu nyanga si?* | When did you eat the bitter thing?
*Engo wa Kombo* | At Kombo’s home
*Enywe mwalia silulu nyanga si?* | You, when did you eat the bitter thing
*Engo wa Kombo* | At Kombo’s home
*Yaba nyanga sina ng’ali* | which day was it, truely?
*Engo wa Kombo* | at Kombo’s home
*Ne mulisia silulu mungo* | you fed on a bitter
*Engo wa Kombo* | at Kombo’s home
*Mwalia silulu nyanga si?* | When did you eat the bitter thing?
*Engo wa Kombo* | At Kombo’s home
The title *khulia silulu* means eating a bitter thing. The respondents (both *Bakhupetungu* and their audience), indicated that *khulia silulu* was a figurative term to mean committing an election offence. They argued that they used such terminologies with hidden meaning on sensitive matters (as this, on election offence); so that outsiders (non-Bukusu) do not immediately tell what they are talking about. In the song, *Omukhupetungu* came to the defence of one of their leader (Kombo), claiming that there was no proof that indeed he committed the election offence.

The song begins on unacrusic with the highest notes of the song, being articulated in the instrumental prelude. The *Omukhupetungu* then comes in singing the same melody as the one played on the *Litungu*, which is the chorus of the song. At some points however, the *Litungu* plays a counter melody that is more of an ostinato as the *Omukhupetungu* takes on a totally new melody. The second melody sung by the *Omukhupetungu* uses two notes only, then towards the end, takes up a part of the previous (first) melody. The melodies are sung alternately with instrumental interludes.

In terms of meter, the song is based on compound quadruple time. It further exhibits syncopated rhythms with accents in different positions. Structurally, the song is in solo-response format, where the *Omukhupetungu* sings the solo part as the *luengele* player responds. The song has a range of a major seventh (M7), and is accompanied by *luengele* that is played on monotone.
4.3 Data analysis

This section focuses on presenting data to answer research questions that formed concerns for this study.

4.3.1 What roles does the Omukhupetungu play in the Bukusu Community?

The first objective of the study was to find out what roles the Omukhupetungu plays in the Bukusu community. Data relating to this research question was collected through interview schedules, for both the Bakhupetungu and members of their audience. More data was derived from songs that were recorded during the field study. According to members of the Litungu audience, the Omukhupetungu was observed to be an instrumentalist (omukhupi) by virtue of being a player of a musical instrument, in this case the Litungu.

The study established that the Omukhupetungu played a musical role through the entertainment he offered during different occasions like beer parties, marriage ceremonies, wrestling matches and general public gatherings. It was also further learnt that, entertainment for the community did not necessarily entail playing of the instrument only. It also involved singing songs, where the song texts addressed different themes that were highlighted by the Omukhupetungu, thus, making him essentially a musician and social and topical issues crusader. The choice of the themes depended on the occasion in which he was playing the instrument.
According to the Bakhupetungu who were interviewed, singing was done in a number of ways;

a) Where the Litungu “spoke” (played a phrase) then the player echoed the same tune.

b) Where the Litungu played as the player sung along the same tune being played on the Litungu.

c) Where the Litungu played a different tune from what the player sung.

With regard to singing, the study also established that for the Omukhupetungu to be captivating, he had to be stylistic (khukobia chilomo) in his presentation of text as he played. The respondents indicated that being stylistic meant use of indirect language that prompted the listener to ponder over, in order to ascertain the meaning of the phrases sung. It further meant use of proverbs (chisimo), riddles (kiminayi), and comic language (chingacho), as devices that embellished the message that the Omukhupetungu wanted to put across. Arguably, the stylistic approach helped the Omukhupetungu to capture the attention of the audience, alongside sustaining the interest of the listener.

Public performance usually called for involvement of the audience. It was learnt from observation that the Omukhupetungu played the litungu as he chanted names of individuals within the audience, mentioned their clan and the good deeds the individuals had done in the community. Members of the audience usually appreciated this and regarded it to be a great honour when the Omukhupetungu identified with them, by
calling their names and praising them. In addition, whenever one was mentioned by the *Omukhupetungu*, he or she came into the arena and danced with joy, and in turn appreciated the *Omukhupetungu* with a token of money, or food stuffs. The mentioning of members of the audience was either done in form of song, or the *Omukhupetungu* continued to play the *litungu* as he chanted in narration about the person. Thomas Wekesa (personal interview, 28th November 2009 at Tobolia village), indicated that the art of calling on members of the audience into the arena was referred to as *Khulaa*.

It was established that another musical role of the *Omukhupetungu* was to compose songs (*khubumba kimienya*). The respondents (*Bakhupetungu*) contacted pointed out that, composition referred to the art of putting together words, to a suitable tune, to suit the audience. Table 4.1 below shows a list of *Bakhupetungu* that confirmed having composed their own songs and those that played existing ones.

**Table 4.1 Composers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age Bracket</th>
<th>Composed Songs</th>
<th>Played Existing Songs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thomas Wekesa</td>
<td>80-90</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Menecha Kundukubi</td>
<td>80-90</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bonventure Pepela</td>
<td>80-90</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Masinde Cheseni</td>
<td>70-80</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Anicet Wafula</td>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1 shows that out of the eighteen *Bakhupetungu* who were interviewed, only seven did not compose their own songs, and hence played existing folk songs. The rest of the respondents composed their own songs, and also played existing folk songs. In summary, the study deduced from tabulated information eleven *Bakhupetungu* representing 61% of the respondents were composers of their own songs, whereas seven representing 39% did not compose their own songs. The data here then shows that most of the *Bakhupetungu* were composers of the songs they played on the *Litungu*. They explained that, they

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Composed Own Songs</th>
<th>Played Existing Songs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Muyundo Mang’oli</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Masika Mukubwa</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Elijah Muliro</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Luka Wapang’ana</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Musa Wekesa</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Naboth Timbiti</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Tevin Wafula</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Masinde Wekesa</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Timothy Simiyu</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Sikuku Nyongesa</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Justus Muliro</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Joshua Matofari</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Eugene Wanyama</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
learned how to compose on their own, by borrowing ideas from the existing folksongs. The study established that they learned style of arranging lyrics and combining with a suitable tune.

Graph 4.1 below shows a pie chart of the Bakhupetungu who composed and those who did not compose for the Litungu. The pictorial representation was derived from data in table 4.1 above.

**Graph 4.1 Composers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composers</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non composers</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graph 4.1 above shows that a bigger percentage of the *Bakhupetungu* composed their own songs, as deduced from table 4.1. The study was concerned at what could be the factors that determined *Bakhupetungu*’s inability to compose their own songs.

Table 4.1 reveals that the relatively younger *Bakhupetungu* of the age of twenty (20) years and below did not compose their own songs, and therefore, played existing folk songs. This study infers that composing ability has a direct relationship to age and experience of the individual *Omukhupetungu*, and therefore, the age of 20 years and below could be a learning period. Respondents below the age of 20 years indicated that they had not composed songs but looked forward to composing at one point in their career as *Bakhupetungu*.

That notwithstanding, the *Bakhupetungu* that were interviewed admitted that composition was one of the most challenging tasks for them. Composition was perceived to be a difficult task since it called for an understanding of the culture, history, virtues, values, vices, occasions and ceremonies of the Babukusu. The respondents added that a clear understanding of the above attributes was most appreciated by the listeners since the song was not only pleasant to listen and dance to, but also informative in the sense that it highlighted pertinent issues of the Bukusu community. The ability of the *Omukhupetungu* in reflecting/narrating the history of the Bukusu community was a measure of proficiency in *Litungu* playing. The *Omukhupetungu* who did not show a clear understanding of the
Bukusu culture was, therefore, assumed not to be in touch with the people, and quite often did not appeal much to the listeners.

The Bakhupetungu indicated that they spent substantial amount of time with elderly people, and this is how they learnt much about their cultural expressions. The information received from the elders was used as material for their compositions. According to Thomas Wekesa (ibid), the ability to obtain information (cultural arbiter) from others was referred to as Nabwebwe or Omuyoti or Nalulingo. The study, therefore, found out that for one to be Omukhupetungu, he needed to be a cultural arbiter in a unique sort of way, gathering information reflective of the Bukusu community as well as information that constantly validate the norms and customs of their culture.

Responses from the members of the audience revealed that in the instance where two Bakhupetungu were available in the same function, the one who was most articulate in composition played last to give the audience an entertaining finish. Responses from members of the Litungu audience further indicated that the most articulate composer was the one who depicted a clear understanding of the Bukusu culture in his songs. It was no surprise, therefore, that articulate composers were invited more to play in ceremonies, because of their ability to appeal to many people.

Apart from the musical roles, the Bakhupetungu were also observed to inform the people (khubolela babandu), on different social issues. According to the respondents drawn from
the Litungu players, through song the Omukhupetungu informed the people on history and past events of the Bukusu community, some of which could be well forgotten by the people. Among the fundamental historical events that the respondents outlined included the mythology and geneology of the community, which narrates/document how the community originated and the life of the founding people of the community. An example of a song that narrated the history of the Bukusu community as was Siuma presented as excerpt 4, Section A of this chapter. Through the song, members of the Litungu audience acknowledged that the Omukhupetungu helped them to know about the life of the founding parents of the community, which they had not known before listening to the Omukhupetungu.

The study also learnt that the Babukusu fought wars with neighbouring communities (Teso, Barwa, and Saboat). The Bakhupetungu that were interviewed indicated that the wars were historical events that they also sung about. The respondents in particular recounted two wars that the Bakhupetungu sung about, arguably, because they were the most difficult to conquer. The two wars included;

a)  Liiye lie wa Chonge (the war of Chonge) and

b)  Liiye lia wa Chetambe (the war of Chetambe).

The respondents (both Bakhupetungu and their audience) indicated that, the Liiye lie wa Chonge was a war between the Bukusu and Barwa communities. The Barwa, one of the Kalenjin sub-ethnic communities, were known to be cattle rustlers who stole cattle from
the Babukusu, who in turn waged war in retaliation. It was explained that the Babukusu warriors failed to follow the prophet’s (called Mutonyi wa Bukelembe) advice on how to invade the Barwa. The Barwa, therefore, got a secret message of the Babukusu invasion in advance, hence camouflaged themselves and attacked the Babukusu warriors, killing all of them. This historical event was manifested in the song Lwe wa Chonge, that was presented in excerpt 4.2, in Section A of this chapter.

In another instance, Thomas Wekesa (ibid) pointed out that the Omukhupetungu played the role of speaking about good and bad deeds (virtues and vices) in the community through song. He also argued that by virtue of the Omukhupetungu being able to point out what was right and wrong, he played the role of a custodian (omulindi) of the community’s value system (kimiima). For instance in the song kukhasi kukenda (a woman who roams about), laziness was regarded as a vice and therefore discouraged among the people. The song was presented in excerpt 4.3, in the preceding section of this chapter.

One outstanding characteristic of the Omukhupetungu was that of being observant. This attribute enabled the player to identify a range of behavioural trends among the people and to sing about them. Given their observant nature, the Bakhupetungu, were feared yet respected by their audience. Members of the community were always cautious about any negative aspects portrayed by them, since the Bakhupetungu would sing about them.
The study also established that the *Omukhupetungu* played songs that addressed political and religious themes. It was apparent that the *Bakhupetungu* listened keenly to what religious and political leaders said and intended to do, before they composed songs. The *Bakhupetungu* informed the community more on the political and religious needs of the Bukusu community hence helped the religious and political leaders to push forth their agenda of upholding morals. For instance, the *Bakhupetungu* cited Elijah Masinde, a legendary religious and political leader in a number of songs, in support of his political and religious agenda for the Bukusu community. Menecha Kundukubi (personal interview, 14\(^{th}\) November 2009 at Nalutiri village) narrated how in 1930 Elijah Masinde (ibid) opposed the white settlers who ordered the Bukusu people to uproot a weed called *ngwekwe* on their farms. In support of Elijah Masinde, *Bakhupetungu* composed a song protesting against this trend. This eventually led to a revolt by the *Babukusu* people against the white settlers’ directive, as it was narrated in the song *Ngwekwe* presented as excerpt 4.4.

Similarly, the study found out that the *Omukhupetungu* was also a role model who influenced the community mostly in the positive ways. In an interview with Bonventure Pepela (personal interview, 30\(^{th}\) November 2009 at Muyayi village), he observed that the *Omukhupetungu’s* character was always supposed to be outstanding. Any negative behaviour from the *Omukhupetungu* meant he would not play again in any other public forum. The *Bakhupetungu*, therefore, strove to depict positive values in the community, which eventually influenced the other people too. In another rejoinder, Muyundo
Mang’oli (personal interview, 14th December 2009 at Mabanga village) underscored the fact that the songs he played made the people reflect on their life and personality and that in most cases changed their behavioural tendencies. That is why Muyundo Mang’oli (ibid) emphasized the fact that in as much as litungu playing was a source of livelihood, its commercial aspect should not compromise the communicational value that was essential in influencing and nurturing the community values, norms social tendencies.

Another interesting factor that the study found out was that playing skills of the litungu were as a result of influence from other Bakhupetungu. The Bakhupetungu had a duty of ensuring the successive generations developed positive and skilful playing techniques of the instrument. In an interview with Anicet Wafula (personal interview, 18th November 2009 at Ndengelwa village), he observed that he admired his grandfather who was an articulate and disciplined player, who did not drink any beer until he finished entertaining his audience. After entertaining the audience, he could only drink a little beer and get back home. In such scenario, the grandfather of this Omukhupetungu not only influenced him to play the instrument, but also influenced him on responsible behaviour and shunning drunkenness to control his life. The study, therefore, learnt that Litungu playing in this case was a positive control mechanism.

The Omukhupetungu was also perceived to be a teacher (omuekia) of the young prospective Litungu players. On interviewing the Bakhupetungu, the study established that all the respondents learnt how to play the instrument from other players, in most
cases, their relatives (father, uncle or grandfather) who were Litungu players. The process of teaching entailed the learner observing their elder relatives play the Litungu after which they also tried playing it. During the field study, the researcher encountered young boys observing their grand father tune and play the Litungu as can be seen in plate appendix IV. The picture was taken by the researcher during the field study.

One of the fundamental discoveries during the study was that, in most cases, grandfathers were more receptive in teaching their grandchildren than fathers to their children. Jackson Masinde (personal interview, 26th November 2009 at Ndengelwa village), for instance, disclosed that his father was very harsh such that he (Jackson Masinde) never touched the Litungu in the presence of his father. However, his father’s harshness created interest that provoked him to know more about Litungu. Curiosity in this case worked to instil the desire to understand the instrument and hence contributed to the learning process of the Litungu for the young Masinde. In the case of those who learnt from the grandfathers, they freely received instructional ideas. Anicet Wafula (ibid) confirmed that his grandfather taught him the first song made up of only three notes, but he later expanded his repertoire. The Bakhupetungu respondents, however, emphasized that pro-activeness (Khukhwebuchabucha) of the learner was responsible for fast learning of the instrument.

Another interesting revelation from the Bakhupetungu was that competition was equally said to be responsible for the learning process of the litungu. One of the respondents
Thomas Wekesa (ibid) reported that he was not a proficient player, until his brother came out to display prowess on the _Litungu_. The respondent (ibid) eventually took time to learn how to play the instrument better than his own brother.

Interviews with respondents from the _Litungu_ audience confirmed that the song texts expressed by the _Omukhupetungu_ served to educate (khukhweikia) the community, on different issues. Masika Mukubwa (personal interview, 9th December 2009 at Misanga village), for instance, had composed several songs on HIV and AIDS pandemic. The player (ibid) indicated that he had been invited frequently by health workers, to help teach the local people about HIV and AIDS related themes through _Litungu_ playing. In the songs, he educated the people on the need for responsible sexual behaviour as was evident in excerpt 4.5.

In the same role of educating people, the study recorded another song played by the _Bakhupetungu_ called _bamali baabi_ (the black people are bad). The _Bakhupetungu_ encouraged their people to take care whenever they were in company of many people. The respondents argued that not all the people had positive thoughts and intentions about others. There was, therefore, a need for people to take precaution in any activities they engaged in, especially in the company of other folks (see song excerpt 4.6, in the prior section of this chapter)
This study established that the *Omukhupetungu* was also a cultural arbiter (*Omuyoti*) in his own right. Members of the *Litungu* audience confirmed that the *Omukhupetungu* knew most of what happened in the Bukusu community more than any other person. This was achieved by him moving all over the community familiarizing himself on what was happening. Eventually, the community learned of what happened amongst them from the *Bakhupetungu*’s topical songs. It was also underscored that the *Omukhupetungu* who lied about an issue, risked being rejected by the public. Therefore, sharing accurate and honest information earned the *Omukhupetungu* a positive image in the community and he was appreciated for being a reliable cultural arbiter. The study concluded that, the *Omukhupetungu* exercised an educational role of a cultural arbiter by going out to find information, which was proven to be correct and informed the people on the same.

A further remarkable revelation of the study was that the *Omukhupetungu* was an archive/repository (*sisiaki*) of the Babukusu’s history. This was demonstrated in the songs that the *Omukhupetungu* played that recounted history of the Bukusu community. In playing these songs, the *Omukhupetungu* educated and brought to life the people on their own history, which they would otherwise forget with time. In the song *embalu* for instance, the respondents recounted how the Bukusu community adopted the act of circumcision, as an important rite of passage to adulthood.

On a rather contentious aspect, the study established that the *Bakhupetungu* went out to play the *Litungu* with their wives. Bonventure Pepela (ibid) indicated that the role of the
wife was to collect and carry home all the gifts the Omukhupetungu was given, which in most cases included money, foodstuffs, poultry, and livestock. It was also learned that the Omukhupetungu did not only play the Litungu to entertain and feel emotionally satisfied, but also for economic gain, and as a source of livelihood. Masika Mukubwa (ibid) for instance indicated that he played the Litungu in a night club, where he attracted a beer drinking crowd.

The respondent (ibid) had a deal with the management of the night club that he earned Ksh.2.00 on every bottle of beer that was bought by the people in the club. Mukubwa (ibid) therefore worked hard to be as entertaining as possible so as to attract as many people as possible. The more the people he attracted, the more earning he received from the art of playing the Litungu. On the question of making the Litungu, the study further found out that the Bakhupetungu did it themselves. Out of the eighteen Bakhupetungu interviewed, ten of them (representing 56% of the Bakhupetungu who were interviewed), made their own instruments and made for other willing players too (see table 4.2)
Table 4.2 Makers of the *Litungu*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Made The Litungu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thomas Wekesa</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Menecha Kundukubi</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bonventure Pepela</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Masinde Cheseni</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Anicet Wafula</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Muyundo Mang’oli</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Masika Mukubwa</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Elijah Muliro</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Luka Wapang’ana</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Musa Wekesa</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Naboth Timbiti</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Tevin Wafula</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Masinde Wekesa</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Timothy Simiyu</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Sikuku Nyongesa</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Justus Muliro</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Joshua Matofari</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Eugene Wanyama</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The study established that the person who made the Litungu was referred to as Omubechi. Muyundo Man’goli (ibid) indicated that he made several instruments which he sold at between Ksh. 700 and Ksh. 1,400. The respondent (ibid) further revealed that apart from individual players, he sold the instruments to schools that used them mainly for music festivals. Appendix V shows a picture of Masika Mukubwa (ibid), putting finishing touches on a Litungu. The picture shows the Omukhupetungu putting tuning knobs on the Litungu. He indicated that he made the Litungu for sale, since he had already two instruments of his own. He too sold the Litungu to individual players, and schools. Appendix VI shows a finished and functional Litungu ready for use. The Litungu had been made by Masika Mukubwa (ibid).

As part of focused group discussions and to explore how much the respondents knew about the Litungu, the researcher engaged them in naming the parts of the instrument. Diagram 4.0 on the next page shows the Litungu and the names of the different parts as was described by the respondents during the field study.
Diagram 4.0 Names of the *Litungu* parts

The researcher fashioned the diagram 4.0 above based on the *Litungu* on APPENDIX VI, to show the different parts, as was described in the focused group discussion. The diagram was considered because the picture of the *Litungu* on appendix VI could not be labelled, with the available computer software. The diagram shows that structurally, the
Litungu is made of two wooden arms, a crossbar, a wooden resonator covered with an animal skin membrane, nylon strings, tuning knobs and a wooden bridge.

According to the respondents (Bakhupetungu and their audience), the Litungu made by the Omukhupetungu produced authentically rich sound (libuula bulayi), that listeners could identify with based on cultural expectations. Arguably, the Omukhupetungu understood structural considerations that made the instrument sound better, in contrast with non players. The respondents also explained that a person who did not play the Litungu was unlikely to make an instrument that sounds culturally appropriate. The researcher argues that the Omukhupetungu made the instrument, tried playing it and if he found out that it was not sounding well, he would immediately adjust the thickness of the resonator, and the length of the arms to the level of where the sound was desirably rich, and culturally depictive.

It was quite interesting to note how the tuning of various sizes of the Litungu was considered. Based on years of experience of the Bakhupetungu, pitching of the Litungu was determined by the size of the resonator, thickness of the strings and the length of the arms. That is, the smaller the resonator, the higher the pitch whereas the bigger the resonator the lower the pitch. Short arms (with resultant short strings) on the other hand were responsible for high pitch, and the pitch grew lower with lengthening of the arms. Thick strings produced low sound whereas thin ones produced high pitches. The Omukhupetungu, therefore, made the instrument to the specification of his own vocal
range. The maker of the instrument worked within these basic acoustical parameters to make the *Litungu* that was culturally acceptable, appropriate and well suited for the desired vocal range of the *Omukhupetungu*.

The study found out that *Omukhupetungu* played an entrepreneurial role. This was evident where the *Bakhupetungu* formed bands to increase their performance opportunities. In the band, the *Bakhupetungu* involved other people who were not necessarily players of the *Litungu*. They included percussionists, dancers, and promoters of the bands. Two of the Bands the researcher encountered were; *Eselukho yie Bachuma* (the age set of *Bachuma*) that was led by Masika Mukubwa, and *Mualie* (give him to eat) traditional group that was led by Muyundo Mang’oli.

The band leaders indicated that in the event that the band made economic gains, the proceeds were for the entire band and not the *Omukhupetungu* alone. Many of the respondents argued that the bands had turned out to be a source of revenue for the people who would otherwise be unemployed, and therefore, had no source of livelihood. However, the researcher did not have opportunity to see such composition of bands performing. Band leaders indicated that they only met the members when they had an event planned. Without the engagement of paid performances, the band leader did not find it practical to constitute a band. To do so would mean the researcher paying the members and based on financial limitations, this arrangement was not feasible.
4.3.2 What does the Omukhupetungu sing about?

The second objective of the study was to find out what issues the Omukhupetungu sang about. Data that addressed this question revealed that the Omukhupetungu sang about several social/topical issues such as marriage, famine, war, peace and acts of bravery. The picture appearing as appendix VII shows one of the respondents playing the Litungu as he sang a historical song Lwe wa Chonge.

4.3.2.1 Historical events of the Bukusu community

Data showed that the Omukhupetungu sang about historical events in the Bukusu community. The Bakhupetungu went out to find information (omuyoti) on past and present events which shaped the history of the community from which they composed songs about them. In the songs, it was learnt that the Bakhupetungu mostly focused on the points that helped the people remember the event, even though it did not carry all the details of the particular event. In the song Lwe wa Chonge for instance, the Omukhupetungu recalled the most fierce invasion by the Babukusu where they lost all their warriors. However, in the song, the Omukhupetungu encourages the community that the warriors were not dead, but rather they were still struggling (baluyaba).

4.3.2.2 Myths of the Bukusu community and story telling

It was further established that the Omukhupetungu sung about the myths and legendary stories of the Babukusu. Elijah Muliro (personal interview on 7th December 2009 at
Tobolia village) narrated that Sella and Mwambu, the founding parents of the Bukusu community lived at a time when only ogres occupied the whole earth. Sella got married to an ogre, and left Mwambu at the risk of being eaten up by the ogres. Sella used to wait for the ogres to go hunting then she would call Mwambu to come and eat. One day the ogres came back from the hunting spree before Mwambu left Sella’s house. Sella hid Mwambu in the firewood stack in fear of the ogres. However, the ogres sensed something new in the house, but could not ask Sella, instead played it on the Litungu, as they asked through song. Sella used to play the rattle (Luengele) for her husband Ogre who played the Litungu. As the ogre continued playing asking the question, Sella was responding by singing that there was no visitor in the house. This was presented in the song excerpt 4.8 in the previous section of this chapter.

4.3.2.3 Leadership and politics

The Bakhupetungu that were interviewed also indicated that they derived their song texts from what their leaders talked about the politics in the Bukusu community. Apart from being respected, the respondents also observed that leaders were feared because they influenced and determined many decisions in the community. Speaking ill of the leaders therefore, was difficult for any member of the community, for fear of the repercussions. The Bakhupetungu, however, enjoyed the space and liberty to speak about whatever they thought about a without fear of contradiction or victimisation from the leader concerned.
The *Bakhupetungu* thus derived their themes from leadership and politics of the day, and used the information to advise and caution the leaders. They defended, praised and pushed forth the leaders’ agenda, or scorned some for wrong doing. In the song *Khulia Silulu* for instance, the *Omukhupetungu* contested the fact that one of leaders from the Bukusu community had been accused of committing an election offence (*khulia silulu*). This was presented in excerpt 9 in the preceding section of this chapter.

**4.3.2.4 Virtues and vices in the Bukusu community**

On the question of behavioural tendencies, the study found out that the *Omukhupetungu* sang about virtues and vices in the Bukusu community. Respondents from the *Litungu* audience indicated that the *Bakhupetungu* were very observant people that took note of most of the happenings in the community. Through their observation, the *Bakhupetungu* found out the virtues and vices among members of the community, from which they derived the material for their songs. Apart from being respected, it was learned that the *Omukhupetungu* was treated cautiously especially whenever he walked around the community. This was because of the fear that the *Omukhupetungu* would gather information from one’s actions and words, and would use that against the concerned. If the *Omukhupetungu* observed anything wrong, he would sing about it. In the event that he observed a positive attribute, he sung about it too. Members of the community, therefore, strove to paint a positive image of themselves especially before the *Omukhupetungu*. 
4.3.2.5 Current and topical issues

The study found out that the Bakhupetungu were dynamic people who derived their themes from current and topical issues that were pertinent to the community. Any issues that affected the community positively or negatively informed the Omukhupetungu’s song themes. For instance, HIV and AIDS, was and is a pandemic that poses serious challenges to the society. It was claimed by Bakhupetungu that they composed songs to help fight against HIV and AIDS scourge. The songs encouraged abstinence as the only safe way to avoid the pandemic. In the song Lulumbe (excerpt 4.5) the Omukhupetungu wondered where the deadly disease came from, and the effects of the disease.

4.3.3 What is the social status of Omukhupetungu in the Bukusu community?

The study established that the Omukhupetungu was respected (bamua liria) at the same time feared (bamuria) in the Bukusu community. The respondents observed that the institution of Bakhupetungu was respected in view of what the Bukusu community expected out of them. The individual Omukhupetungu, however, made extra effort to maintain the respect for himself. They argued that if an individual Omukhupetungu flawed his position, he was disregarded as an individual but the regard for the institution was still upheld since there were others who maintained the dignity of Litungu playing. The study answered this research question from two perspectives;

a) Indicators that the Omukhupetungu is cherished in the Bukusu community

b) Why the Omukhupetungu was highly regarded
4.3.3.1 Indicators that the *Omukhupetungu* is cherished in the Bukusu Community

On interviewing members of the Litungu audience, the study established several issues that indicated that the *Omukhupetungu* was highly regarded in the Bukusu community;

First, it was observed that the *Omukhupetungu* was always an important invited guest to most of the ceremonies and functions of the community. It emerged that one could be invited to more than one function to the extent that at times he was unable to manage his performance schedule. It was further argued that, whenever the *Omukhupetungu* was invited, he added value to the occasion, and therefore, earned himself more invitations. In view of the foregoing observation, the study argued that the *Omukhupetungu* was always invited to functions because he was positively regarded by the people.

Apart from being invited to ceremonies and other public functions, it was learnt that whenever the *Omukhupetungu* passed by people’s homesteads he was invited to the home. The people invited the *Omukhupetungu* because they knew that he would tell them about what was happening around the community. It followed that if there was any ceremony or function anywhere within the locality, people would know through their conversation with the *Omukhupetungu*. In order to encourage him, the people offered the *Omukhupetungu* presents in form of foodstuffs, poultry, and livestock.

On a rather positive note, research revealed that, whenever the *Omukhupetungu* played the *litungu* in any function, he hardly went home empty handed. The respondents
indicated that because of the entertainment value that the *Omukhupetungu* added to the functions he was appreciated by being offered presents. The study contended that, for a person to be appreciated by being offered presents, he must be highly regarded. This form of appreciation was an indicator that the Babukusu highly regarded, respected and appreciated the *Omukhupetungu*.

Respondents from the *Litungu* audience observed that, with or without the *litungu*, the *Omukhupetungu* reserved a special sitting place in any public forum, and could be treated like one of the guests of honour. Respondents argued that the *litungu* as an instrument was not what determined the place of the *Omukhupetungu* in the Bukusu community. Whatever the *Omukhupetungu* contributed to the community in form of wisdom, knowledge and crucial information on topical issues, was responsible for his special position in the Bukusu community. From the foregoing submission, it can be argued that since the *Omukhupetungu* had a special sitting place, then it meant that there was a positive aspect he contributed to the community, hence the reasons for him being highly valued by Babukusu.

The study further found that Babukusu were sensitive on standards of performance by the different *Bakhupetungu*. Members of the *Litungu* audience revealed that the most articulate player was invited to many places and functions. The *Bakhupetungu*, therefore, strove to be the best so as to earn themselves many performance opportunities. It was further underscored that, in the event of more than one *Omukhupetungu* in a function, the
most articulate one played last. All Bakhupetungu strove to be the last to play in any function. The study argued that, for an activity to provoke competitive performances as it was the case for Litungu playing, the custodians of the same must be respected for what they do. If the custodians of an activity have no place in the society, the activity would not be prone to any form of standards. Further to this was the fact that the most articulate Omukhupetungu was invited to play for King Sudi at the palace. At this point the study argued that for a person to be given a place in a King’s palace would mean that he is in high esteem by the community.

In a different instance, respondents observed that in cases of misconduct by a member of the Bukusu community, the Omukhupetungu was secretly approached by wrong doers, to explain or otherwise defend their case. This was in fear of the fact that the Omukhupetungu would publicly sing about the wrong doing committed by the person. To avoid public embarrassment, the wrong doer secretly talked to the Omukhupetungu and would occasionally convince him not to sing about his or her misconduct, since this would likely paint their family negatively. In some instances, the family of the wrong doer would then offer inducement to the Omukhupetungu in form of livestock, so that the Omukhupetungu does not sing about it.

The study further established that the inducement was not treated as a bribe, but a form of payment for behavioural change. The resultant effect of this inducement was that, one would hardly repeat such wrong doing in the social systems of the Babukusu. The
researcher argued that, one can only be approached for an issue if he was really valued by the person approaching him or her. If the Omukhupetungu was of no value, he would not be approached by the people in such instances. The Omukhupetungu therefore, was highly regarded in the Bukusu community since he influenced behavioural change as discussed above.

The study also learnt that, whenever a member of the Bukusu community had an issue that he thought needed to be addressed one of the people to be approached was the Omukhupetungu. The Omukhupetungu was believed to speak on an issue without fear of contradiction or criticism. It was observed that whenever the Omukhupetungu spoke about an issue, the audience nodded in agreement with him. This gave opportunity for the community to address the issue brought about by the Omukhupetungu more proactively. This study argued that one can only be approached on matters concerning the community, if he was respected, and has a special place in the society. Being a consultant on social issues indicated that the Omukhupetungu was a highly esteemed member of the Bukusu community.

4.3.3.2 Why the Omukhupetungu was highly regarded

It was established that the Omukhupetungu was greatly revered because he was a source of entertainment for the community. In an interview with Elijah Muliro (ibid), he indicated that in a gathering, no one could abuse the Omukhupetungu, since he would leave in protest and deny people the much needed entertainment. The Bakhupetungu were
observed to be sensitive and therefore, no one dared to abuse them. That is why the Babukusu came up with the saying “wikungunia orie oli manya omupeni?” (Why do you feel so sweet like a musician)? Despite the Bakhupetungu being emotionally sensitive, the study found out that they were quite respected for the invaluable entertainment that they offered to the community.

It was further learned that the Omukhupetungu was also esteemed for the way he sacrificed his own time for the sake of the community events. The respondents confirmed that although not every member of the community attended all the gatherings, ceremonies and functions of the community, the Omukhupetungu did, since he knew he had a duty to play for the community. Sacrificing time for the sake of the community activities was observed to be an attribute that made people endear themselves to the Omukhupetungu.

The study also established that the Omukhupetungu was also known to be the cultural arbiter (Omuyoti or nabwebwe or nalulingo) who went out to search for information and channel it to the community. Respondents noted that, not everyone had the time and dedication to move around soliciting for information, apart from the Omukhupetungu. It was also noted that whatever information the Omukhupetungu gathered, he let it out voluntarily. As a cultural arbiter and social commentator of the community, the Omukhupetungu enjoyed special privileges from his people.
The study further established that the *Omukhupetungu* was valued for the way he spoke out on issues objectively, without fear of contradiction or criticism. Lukas Wapang’ana (personal interview on 10th December 2009 at Chemche village) observed that the *Omukhupetungu* had the space of speaking about an issue in the community through his music without the fear of being accused of any wrong doing. Lukas Wapang’ana (ibid) reiterated that boldness and objectivity was considered to be a virtue in the Bukusu community. The *Omukhupetungu* was hence respected by almost the entire community for possessing these virtues.

### 4.3.4 What determined the popularity of the *Omukhupetungu*?

The fourth objective of the study was to find out what determined the popularity of the *Omukhupetungu*. To answer the above question, the researcher carried out interviews with members of the *Litungu* audience. The researcher considered interviewing them because of what could be regarded as an independent view, on what determined the popularity of the *Omukhupetungu*. In as much as the *Bakhupetungu* could be in a position to explain what determined their popularity, the study argued that such responses would be subjective rather than objective.

Through the interviews, the respondents indicated that the mention of the *Omukhupetungu* meant one who played the *Litungu* well. A well played *Litungu* was referred to as *Litungu lilomaloma* (the *Litungu* that “talks”). The respondents further
indicated that, how well the Omukhupetungu made the Litungu to “talk”, was responsible for his popularity amongst the audience.

To further explain how the Litungu could be made to “talk” the cultural language of Babukusu, the respondents indicated that the Litungu had seven strings, where the first three strings from the left side were called chisia chikhasi (female strings), and the remaining four were called chisia chiseecha (male strings). According to the respondents the chisia chiseecha (male strings) usually called the song, whereas the chisia chikhasi (female strings) answered the song and so referred to as khubuula kumwenya (producing the song). The respondents indicated that the first three strings were called female strings, because they were on the left hand side, and the left hand was called kumukhono kumukhasi. The remaining four strings were referred to as male strings because they were on the right and side, and the right hand was called kumukhono kumuseecha. The study, therefore, learned that the names of the strings were derived from the different arms.

The study established that playing of a song on the Litungu was as a result of the interplay between the thumb (Lulwala lukhumwa) and index finger (Lulwala lwe chinyenyi) of the left hand which played the chisia chikhasi (female strings), and the thumb and index finger of the right hand which played chisia chiseecha (male strings). This interplay was referred to as khunonosiana (dialoguing). The study on further interrogation established that, the Omukhupetungu achieved popularity from his ability to articulately execute the interplay of strings between the two hands hence making the
Litungu to “talk”. Diagram 4.1 below shows the placement of the strings on the Litungu, as was described by the respondents.

Diagram 4.1 Placement of Litungu strings
The researcher established that tuning of the Litungu was referred to as khuyinga Litungu. Tuning of the instrument was found out to depict the following intervals between the strings, starting from the first string on the left.

- From first to second string – Major second (M2)
- From second to third string – Major second (M2)
- From third to fourth string – Minor second (m2)
- From fourth to fifth string – Major second (M2)
- From fifth to sixth string – Major second (M2)
- From sixth to seventh – Minor third (m3)

In terms of solfa sounds the tuning of the Litungu would constitute the following pitches; doh, re, mi, fa, soh, la, doh’. The setting of the tonality was found to be differing in terms of the register as was determined by one Omukhupetungu to another.

Respondents further explained that the Bakhupetungu achieved different levels of playing techniques. Some Bakhupetungu tended to articulate the chisia chiseecha more during their play. Such Bakhupetungu were said to play lusia luseecha (played the male string). Other Bakhupetungu were observed to emphasize the female strings more in their playing and therefore, were regarded as ones who played lusia lukhasi (played the female string). Respondents drawn from the Litungu audience indicated that an articulate player was the one who balanced the female and male strings, to make the Litungu “talk”. Through the balanced playing of the two hands, the Omukhupetungu was capable of playing the song.
more convincingly. Following the ensuing discussion, the study argued that the ability to make the *Litungu* “talk” was a measure of popularity for the *Bakhupetungu*.

The study also found that, the art of talking as one played the instrument (in most cases praising one’s audience), was a measure of musical virtuosity among the *Bakhupetungu*. The respondents explained that during *Litungu* playing, the *Omukhupetungu* played the instrument as he talked to the audience. In the event that the *Omukhupetungu* talked and lost rhythm, or tempo in the course of playing the *Litungu*, then the audience regarded that as not being articulate. The *Omukhupetungu* that maintained steady playing of the *Litungu* as he spoke to the audience in monologue or soliloquy was regarded an articulate player. In most songs that were gathered, the study established that the *Bakhupetungu* talk to identify with and praise people in the audience (*Khulaa*). The respondents therefore, indicated that the *Omukhupetungu* who articulately praised his audience (*Khulaa*) was considered popular by the audience.

In explaining how they achieved *khulaa* since it was a measure of their popularity, the *Bakhupetungu* that were interviewed explained that they took time ahead of the playing session to research on the people within the audience. The *Bakhupetungu*, however, ensured that no one in the audience knew that anyone was being researched on. The respondents indicated that the *Omukhupetungu*, in most cases, was interested in the names of the people, their clans (both maternal and paternal), their positions in the community, and their good deeds. The respondents further explained that during *Litungu*
playing, they called on one’s name, the maternal and paternal clan and his or her good deeds in the society. Respondents explained that khulaa was treated as a form of appreciation (khusiima) extended by the Omukhupetungu to members of the audience. The audience in turn appreciated the Omukhupetungu by offering him gifts in form of poultry, money, and food stuffs.

The respondents further indicated that they did not know how the Omukhupetungu got knowledge about them. They were amazed at how the Omukhupetungu secretly gathered details about them. The audience further confirmed that the discrete way by which the Omukhupetungu knew about the details of the different people, and extensively sung about them during khulaa, similarly contributed to the Omukhupetungu’s popularity. The audience maintained that the Omukhupetungu had to be proactive and a fast learner (Omwebuchabuchi) to capture his audience through khulaa, besides employing artistic approach to music flow and attention of the audience. The respondents claimed that without khulaa during Litungu playing, the Omukhupetungu denied the audience an important ingredient to the music and this in the long run would undermine his popularity among the audience.

In addition, the respondents indicated that the Bukusu community was sensitive to moral values and social ethics among its people. Any member of the community who did not uphold the values and social ethics as demanded by the community lost favour of the Bukusu community. This assertion was made by Bonventure Pepela (ibid). The
respondent (ibid) similarly noted that the *Omukhupetungu*, who upheld virtues and values as one of the members of the Bukusu community, achieved popularity in the Bukusu community. This was in view of the fact that the *Omukhupetungu* was perceived to be a role model for the entire community, since he was the one who spoke about and condemned wrong doing, alongside encouraging positive values and virtues.

The study found out that if the *Omukhupetungu* pointed out what was wrong and right in the community but did not practice the same, he lost his popularity. Members of the *Litungu* audience indicated that the *Omukhupetungu we kufwabi* (one without morals), was not easily allowed to play before people. The study learnt that popularity in *Litungu* playing was in essence determined by an extra effort to be a custodian of good behaviour, moral uprightness, among other virtues. The study, therefore, argued that *Litungu* playing was a sign of responsible moral behaviour, which not only benefited the *Omukhupetungu*, but positively influenced members of the Bukusu community.

Respondents indicated that the *Omukhupetungu* was regarded by the Babukusu people to be a source of vital information in the community; that is, the history, culture, ceremonies and practises of the community. Respondents further indicated that to acquire such knowledge, the *Bakhupetungu* consulted with the elders regularly for community wisdom. More so, they noted that the *Omukhupetungu* who was vastly endowed with such knowledge achieved popularity among his fans. Conversely, the *Omukhupetungu* less knowledgeable about the community lacked popularity. The study noted that the
knowledge base of the *Omukhupetungu* was a measure of popularity. This attribute was as a result of the *Omukhupetungu’s* extra effort to go out and gather or search for knowledge that not only benefited him, but the entire community.

The study established that, *Litungu* playing was accompanied by singing, where the *Omukhupetungu* chose on a particular theme to sing about. The choice and design of language used in the singing was important since it determined how well the *Omukhupetungu* communicated in his song. The study further found out that the *Bakhupetungu* used certain stylistic devices in the text of the song, which were appealing for them to effectively, communicate alongside sustaining the attention of the audience. These included use of riddles (*kiminayi*), proverbs (*chisimo*), and comic language (*chingacho*). These stylistic devices embellished the message in the song, which made it more appealing to listen to and communicate effectively.

The study also found that use of such figurative speech, was a measure of musical virtuosity among the *Bakhupetungu*. The respondents explained that such stylistic endowment was achieved through experience where one learned and practiced how to use certain words and phrases. It was further observed that the poetry in singing was a special talent that was hereditary. Therefore, the *Omukhupetungu* who came from a family of people with such talent was bound to be equally poetic in his approach of singing as he played the *Litungu*. The study thus argued that whether inherited or achieved through experience, stylistic endowment was essential in *Litungu* playing, as it
added aesthetic value to the message the *Omukhupetungu* intended to communicate to the audience, hence, contributing to his popularity.

### 4.4 Summary

The study found that the *Omukhupetungu* played several roles. These include the following:

#### 4.4.1 Musical role

It was established that the *Omukhupetungu* played a musical role of entertaining the Bukusu community. To achieve the *Omukhupetungu* assumed the following specific responsibilities. He;

- Played the *Litungu*,
- Composed songs for the *Litungu*,
- Sang accompanying songs
- Tuned the *Litungu*

#### 4.4.2 Social role

The study established that the *Omukhupetungu* played social roles that included:

- Informing the people on history, tales, and myths of the Bukusu community.
- Outlining virtues and vices in the Bukusu community.
- Supporting political and religious agenda.
4.4.3 Educational role

The study established that the *Omukhupetungu* played an educational role of:

- Teaching young prospective *Litungu* players, on how to play the instrument.
- Teaching the people on topical matters such as HIV and AIDS through song.
- “Researching” on information that benefits himself and the community at large.

4.4.4 Entrepreneurial role

The study established that the *Omukhupetungu* played an entrepreneurial role of:

- Making the *Litungu* for sale as a form of entrepreneurial activity.
- Playing the *Litungu* and earning from the activity, through monetary incentives or gifts.

Apart from fulfilling the above roles the *Omukhupetungu* addressed a number of thematic issues through his songs. These included:

- Historical events of the Bukusu community
- Story telling and myths of the Bukusu community
- Leadership and politics
- Good and bad deeds in the community
- Current topical issues
On the question of the status of the *Omukhupetungu* several issues came into play as enumerated below:

- By being invited to ceremonies and functions mounted by the community and or specific individuals.
- The *Omukhupetungu* being offered gifts whenever he played the *Litungu* for the community.

Popularity of the *Omukhupetungu* depended on a number of issues:

- How well the *Omukhupetungu* was able to make the *Litungu* to “talk”, through the interplay of the left and right hand index and thumb fingers.
- The ability for the *Omukhupetungu* to achieve *khulaa* alongside playing the *Litungu* without compromising the rhythm and steady tempo of the *Litungu*.
- The ability of the *Omukhupetungu* to portray extensive knowledge of his particular members of the audience.
- The *Omukhupetungu’s* character in the society; where a well behaved *Omukhupetungu* was popular amongst the people.
- The *Omukhupetungu* who was vast endowment with knowledge systems of the Bukusu community (history, culture, ceremonies, behaviour, language).
- The *Omukhupetungu’s* ability to effectively use figurative speech such as metaphors, rhymes, proverbs.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with discussion of findings presented and analysed in the previous chapter. The findings will be discussed in the same order as presented in chapter four, in light of research questions.

Findings in chapter four indicated that no female respondents were interviewed, although the respondents indicated that lately female members of the community play the *Litungu*. Interviews with the *Bakhupetungu* revealed that *Litungu* playing was traditionally regarded as a male activity. The study therefore, argued that female members of the community would possibly fear for a social stigma if they took up *Litungu* playing career that is male dominated. It is further observable that in as much as affirmative action is a topical agenda in the current society, not many African societies have embraced gender equity. That is perhaps why female players of the *Litungu* are not in the limelight as such.

From the songs that were transcribed, it was evident that two scenario of *Litungu* ensemble occurred;

- A combination of the *Litungu*, the *Omukhupetungu*, and *luengele*. In such a situation the songs that were played exhibited solo design only, where the *Omukhupetungu* played the *Litungu* and sung, whereas the *luengele* offered percussive accompaniment, alongside sustaining rhythm of the song. Out of the
nine songs that were transcribed, five of them were solo in structure (Lwe wa chonge, Kukhasi kukeenda, Ngwekwe, Lulumbe, and Bamali baabi). An interesting revelation of the solo songs played on such ensemble, was that they were recounting a sad encounter, cautioning people over an issue or campaigning against an issue.

For instance in the song *Lwe wa chonge* (excerpt 2), that was narrating the lost battle between Babukusu and Barwa. *Bamali baabi* (excerpt 6) on its part was cautioning people about how to associate with the larger public. In the case of *Ngwekwe* (excerpt 4), it was campaigning against a white settlers’ directive. In excerpt 5, *Lulumbe* was cautioning as well as teaching people about HIV and AIDS pandemic. And for the sake of guarding against vices like laziness, *Kukhasi kukeenda* (excerpt 3) exposes and cautions against the vice.

This study argued that, the solo aspect of these songs was meant to draw maximum attention from the audience, so that the important message is passed across to them. On the contrary, if the audience involved any form of participation, then they would miss out some issues being communicated by the *Omukhupetungu*. However, the *Omukhupetungu* always met with the audience at a point of *khulaa*, where he would interact with the audience, until he went back to playing the focus points of the song.
The second circumstance is where the Litungu combined with the Omukhupetungu, luengele, and babaakaanila. Such ensemble was evident in songs that had a solo-response structure. The Omukhupetungu always played the solo, as we luengele (luengele player), and some voluntary members of the audience responded (babaakaanila). Out of the nine songs that were transcribed, four exhibited the solo-response structure (Siuma, embalu, Sella and khulia silulu).

A fundamental revelation of these songs is that they were story telling and mythological songs, which were also cheerful, or were activist in character. For instance, Siuma (excerpt 1) and Sella (excerpt 8) comprised story telling songs. If one tells stories to children, it is clear that their attention is usually limited hence the need to be provoked. This study argued that the response part of the song is a section that sought for participation of the audience, to keep them attentive to the story line. On the part of Khulia silulu, the Omukhupetungu was contesting the fact that one of their leaders indeed committed an election offence. This study is of the opinion that one voice of the Omukhupetungu was not enough to contest against the fact that one of their own committed the offence. The response/chorus part of the song thus helped to draw participation of the audience, hence more voices speaking against the ruling that one of there own was a victim of election offence.
Considering the foregoing discussion on the two ensemble scenarios of Litungu playing, the study observes that structure of the songs defined their shape, as well as characterizing the kind of message that is communicated in the song, and how the theme is addressed. Furthermore, that Litungu playing is an interactive process that is not confined to the Omukhupetungu alone, but also involves we luengele and the audience. Involvement of the audience was also possible whether the structure of the song was solo or solo response. This further alludes to the fact that the Babukusu lead a communal and social life, and that is why collective participation is evident in Litungu playing.

Transcription of the songs further revealed that all the songs were in compound time. Three songs were in compound quadruple time (12/16), four were in compound triple time (9/16) and two were combining compound quadruple and triple times (12/16 and 9/16). Within the compound meter, the songs started on unacruscic and exhibited syncopated rhythms, with most accents on off beats. Considering this submission, this study is of the view that an idiomatic characteristic of the Litungu and maybe Bukusu music at large is the use of compound meters (mostly 12/16 and 9/16) and syncopated rhythms.

5.2 Roles played by the Omukhupetungu in the Bukusu community

Merriam (1964) observes that a musician plays a specific role and may hold specific status within his society, and his role and status are determined by the consensus of the society as to what should be proper behaviour for the musicians. Interviews with
respondents drawn from the Litungu audience attested to this fact when they revealed that the Omukhupetungu’s central role is playing to entertain the community. It was further learnt that in the process of entertaining, the community expected certain other roles to be manifested, most of which were embodied in the song text that Bakhupetungu sang. The Bakhupetungu on their part indicated that they were more than entertainers and therefore, played several other roles. The study established the following as roles played by the Omukhupetungu in the Bukusu community.

5.2.1 Musical role

Interviews carried out with the Bakhupetungu and members of their audience revealed that, the Omukhupetungu’s musician role was manifested in his ability to entertain the community. The entertainment was offered during occasions like beer parties, marriage ceremonies, wrestling matches and public gatherings, which attracted many people for the Omukhupetungu to entertain. More so, for one to achieve convincing entertainment value, certain aspects of the Litungu playing needed to be put in place. Partly, it called for singing that should depict a clear understanding of the community and their culture. Where, understanding one’s culture calls for a person who has been socialised within the confines of the culture, such that he is able to internalize the dynamics of the community extensively.

The respondents submitted that a clear understanding of the Bukusu culture when manifested in ones playing of the Litungu, attracted better entertainment besides being a
measure of virtuosity. The Omukhupetungu’s ability to narrate the history of the Bukusu community justifies the need to go out and search for information from as many sources as possible, to ascertain the true picture of the community. Such knowledge then clearly helps the Omukhupetungu to reach out to the people more easily, hence achieving the desired entertainment value. This study infers that, Litungu entertainment is an integrated undertaking that combines playing of the instrument, singing accompanying songs that depict understanding of the Bukusu culture and the ability to use narrative sections in the course of playing. It is further imperative that the ear of a Bukusu listener is sensitive to the sonic, thematic and artistic aspects of Litungu music.

Wanyama (2005) observes that the structure of most African songs entails various forms of short solo response phrases. More often the language is proverbial. A proverb has hidden meaning, which has to be interpreted by the targeted listeners. In agreement with Wanyama’s (ibid) observation, findings in this study showed that poetic endowment was also found to be necessary for the Omukhupetungu, as part of performance practise for fulfilling entertainment need.

By being poetic, it meant use of language that motivates so that the listener is left to ponder over the message being communicated. To achieve this, the Omukhupetungu used stylistic devices like metaphors (Lukaato), riddles (Kiminayi), rhymes (Bikanakani), imagery (Lukaano), symbolism (Khufwananisia), proverbs (Chisimo) and comic language (Chingacho), as material for embellishing the message that was intended for the
audience. This in essence alludes to the fact that Litungu playing is a form of an art that is not abstract, but structured. Where, structure of the art largely makes use of varied aspects of Bukusu language, as a medium communication, creating variation and sustaining interest of listeners, to eventually achieve entertainment. To this end, the study gathered that, Litungu playing required an in depth understanding of the Bukusu language, if one had to achieve high level of Litungu performance. From music compositional approach then, use of language in this manner contributed to thematic development, without which the song would sound desolate.

It was further learnt that entertainment value of the Litungu performance called for the Omukhupetungu’s effort to play the Litungu with the audience in mind. Masasabi (2002) views “good” Litungu music as that which incorporates sections of narration. The narrative sections were used to introduce the performer to his audience, acknowledge the important guests and to briefly explain the story line in the song, which is about to be sang. This study is of the view that involving the audience in one’s playing of the Litungu, was a way of attracting interest of the audience. Furthermore, narrating in the course of playing the Litungu can be seen as a technique of enriching the musical texture. Where, use of textural variation resulted in building of a climax in the music, which helped to achieve more entertainment value. The study thus argued there is need for one to create a balance between the singing and narrative sections during Litungu playing, as a means of creating symmetry in the work hence the artistic endowment being achieved. Given that Litungu playing involves the Omukhupetungu, we luengele and the audience
(Babaakanila), this study infers that it is an interactive process, that brings together many members of the community.

It was further noted that composition among the Bakhupetungu referred to putting together words of a certain theme, to a suitable tune. Thematic relevance was, therefore, essential in meeting the audience’s needs, without which the composed song would be dismissed as lacking sense. An appealing composition comprised of such aspects as; a well stated melodic line that runs through the entire song; a balance between thematic and musical material; varied texture in the song; and a point of musical achievement or climax. In view of Litungu playing, such aspects of composition are inevitable since they enhance the entertainment value of the songs. There was no doubt in the observed performances that the Omukhupetungu took time to research and put together words and tunes that befit a convincing entertainment.

5.2.2 Social role

Wanyama (2005) observes that music is a human phenomenon produced by the people for the people existing and functioning in a social situation. The author’s (ibid) view of music helped in understanding the role of the Omukhupetungu in terms of whether or not the music he played was influential in a social situation. The view was indeed corroborated by responses from members of the Litungu audience that the Omukhupetungu served a crucial social role in a number of ways.
The Omukhupetungu was a custodian of the history of the Bukusu community and so he was relied upon for transmitting the community’s indigenous knowledge systems. This was realised when the Omukhupetungu played songs that recounted the historical events of the community. Observation showed that in the past elderly people told and narrated stories to young people as a form of education in their own culture. Regrettably, this is not the case in contemporary. The current societies do not seem to have sufficient time in the informal education since they consider it as having been by-passed by formal education. This study is of the view that music making avenues by Bakhupetungu for example public gatherings, wedding ceremonies, school music festivals and concerts have, however, offered invaluable opportunities for informal education. By singing about the history of the Babukusu, the Omukhupetungu offers a rare opportunity for the people to learn about the history of this community, where he assumes the role of a cultural ambassador of the community.

Further on the social role, the Omukhupetungu was observed to be a custodian of the community’s value systems. As a custodian of these value systems, the player spoke out on how the people should behave. Litungu playing then turned out to be a check on what is right and what is wrong in the community. For the Omukhupetungu to achieve such a role, meant him setting an example of a model for the same value systems. If on the contrary the player did not uphold the values he spoke about, then the people consequently did not respond to his call to uphold good value systems. The study
therefore, asserts that Litungu playing is a sign of responsible moral standing in the Bukusu community.

It was also discovered that the Bakhupetungu played the role of supporting political and religious agendas. In the community, it was noted that Bakhupetungu listened keenly to what religious and political leaders did and said, and this in many instances informed what they composed. By so doing, they informed the community on the political and religious matters they (members of the community) needed to know. The study infers that Bakhupetungu had a liberal poetic licence space to comment about various issues. It also follows that the Omukhupetungu is an advocate of the people on proper leadership as well as criticizing leaders, on behalf of the people.

Accounts narrated through the interviews showed that the Omukhupetungu was a role model who influenced the community mostly in the positive direction. Negative behaviour from the Omukhupetungu, therefore, impacted negatively on his career. The Bakhupetungu then strove to depict positive values in the community, which eventually influenced other people too. In as much as the Omukhupetungu would use his talent for economic gain alongside other roles, extra effort was necessary to maintain positive values, within himself and the community at large. Care was taken not to compromise the communicative value that was essential in influencing and nurturing the community values. It can, therefore, be deduced that Litungu playing is an act and a sign of good
moral standing in the Bukusu community. That is why many outstanding Litungu players have positively influenced Babukusu through there upright moral standing over time.

In addition, the study found that playing skills of the Litungu were as a result of the influence from older Bakhupetungu. This has been captured in chapter four, where discussions indicated that young children showed interest in the playing of the Litungu (APPENDIX IV). The older generation of Bakhupetungu therefore, had a duty of ensuring that the successive generations developed positive attitudes and skilful playing of the instrument. Apart from the skill of playing the Litungu, it was necessary that the Bakhupetungu inculcate positive values in terms of moral characteristics to help nurture the institution of Litungu playing. It was noted that the skills of playing Litungu were transmitted alongside the process of instilling in the young artists other aspects of life. This approach made to function effectively since the societal needs were considered as crucial as the musical needs. The study in essence, confirmed that the Omukhupetungu assumed a pivotal role of enhancing Litungu playing skills for the posterity, besides imparting desirable societal values in the young Litungu artists.

5.2.3 Educational role

Through observation, the Omukhupetungu was noted to be a teacher of the young prospective Litungu players. Evidence was deduced from the way young children watched their grand father, playing and tuning the Litungu (APPENDIX IV). It was, therefore, established that, the learning process was predominantly through
apprenticeship. Although the learning process of Litungu playing was observed to be mostly through apprenticeship, there was evidence of progressive and logical approach. The learner started with grasping of two or three notes after which he advanced to more complex melodic and rhythmic patterns. The study, therefore, inferred that despite apprenticeship approach, the Omukhupetungu also offered a systematic methodology for learning how to play the Litungu. This, therefore, implies that although Litungu is a traditional Bukusu instrument, whose learning process would largely be viewed as a product of apprenticeship, it is possible for a logical methodology to be developed to teach the instrument. In essence, therefore, the Omukhupetungu plays a significant educational role of teaching the younger generation how to play the Litungu.

In addition, it was also established that, listeners to Litungu music did not only took keen interest in the sound of the instrument, but the textual message as well. The Omukhupetungu sang and communicated important messages that were carefully selected to impact the listener. Song texts expressed by the player were thus found to educate the community, on different issues. This study infers that, through Litungu music, one is able to offer an educative forum on pertinent issues in the Bukusu community. Such mediums of educating the people involves dissemination of knowledge to the public, for whoever deemed it necessary to take it up for his or her own benefit. This can be likened to form of civic education.
Furthermore, the study ascertained that the Bakhupetungu were currently, educating people on HIV and AIDS through their songs. It was notable through observation that education on the pandemic was mostly in print and electronic media, with fewer instances of interactive forums that would be used to create awareness. This study infers that the Omukhupetungu offers an alternative live and interactive approach to informing the people on the HIV and AIDS scourge, hence exercising an educational role therewith.

Besides teaching history, the Omukhupetungu was observed to be a cultural arbiter (Omuyoti), as well. He travelled a lot around the community, to gather information that he sang about. This information was responsible for the Omukhupetungu’s continued career, depending how true and valuable it was to the community. Although the Omukhupetungu sustained informant skills through researching, the community benefited with regard to other issues that he provided them through this information. The study is of the opinion that, the Omukhupetungu exercised an educational paradigm of searching and gathering for knowledge, in as much as he did not observe formal structured methodology.

5.2.4 Entrepreneurial role

Through interviews with Bakhupetungu, it was revealed that the instrumentalists played the Litungu not just for entertainment but also for economic gain. It was observed that the he earned from playing the Litungu, by members of the community appreciating the services of the Omukhupetungu, who in turn offered him gifts in form of money, poultry,
foodstuffs and livestock. The hand-outs appeared to serve as a mere subsistence to the Omukhupetungu, and not professional royalty. This study, however observed that since a significant population of the community are unemployed in a society where farming is the main economic source, the farmers activity therefore, determined what they offered the player. The study argued that, payment should not necessarily be monetary, but anything that is a store of value and acts to motivate the player. In essence, by earning a living from Litungu playing, the Omukhupetungu exercised an entrepreneurial role.

Apart from playing the Litungu to earn a living, it was found out that the Omukhupetungu was also the maker of the instrument. Some of the Bakhupetungu made the instrument for their own use, while others made it for sale. The Omukhupetungu was observed to be a better maker of the instrument since he could distinguish a well sounding Litungu from a bad one. As a matter of fact, a Litungu made by the Omukhupetungu sold faster than one made by a non player. Consequently, this study views Litungu making as an occupational activity that if not taken up would leave some of the Bakhupetungu idle. More so, apart from being a musician, the study gathers that the Omukhupetungu is a craftsman, by virtue of being the maker of the Litungu. Most important is that making and selling of the Litungu is a source of livelihood for the Omukhupetungu. With regard to the foregoing discussion, the study conjectures that the Omukhupetungu plays a significant entrepreneurial role in the Bukusu community.
As was reported in chapter four, the *Bakhupetungu* formed bands that they played with. In the bands, the *Bakhupetungu* involved other people who were not necessarily players of the *litungu*. They included percussionists, dancers, and promoters (sponsors) of the bands. The bands were observed to be making money whenever they played in different occasions. This turned out to be a source of revenue for the people who would otherwise be unemployed, and without a source of livelihood. The playing of the *Litungu*, therefore, attracted non players, who earned from the due process. This further contributes to the *Omukhupetungu’s* entrepreneurial ability that he exercises among Babukusu.

### 5.3 Themes inherent in the *Omukhupetungu’s* songs

On interviewing the respondents, the researcher found that apart from the sound produced by the *Litungu*, songs that accompanied the instrument were of interest to the people who listened to the *Omukhupetungu*. The *Omukhupetungu* derived the song themes from several sources. These included historical events that unfolded in the community. Some of the historical events included wars fought by the Bukusu community, for example *Liiye lie wa Chonge* (war of Chonge), and *Liiye lia Chetambe* (war of Chetambe). In the historical songs, *Omukhupetungu*, emphasized on issues that were worth remembering by the community. The study views the *Omukhupetungu* as a living archive of the Babukusu’s history, who is ever in touch with the events and happenings in the community.
In addition the *Omukhupetungu* sang about the myths of the Bukusu community and other legendary stories. Several myths about the existence of the Bukusu community were used by the *Bakhupetungu* to formulate song texts. Through the song texts, the community was informed about their historical and cultural origin. The *Omukhupetungu* then assumes a role of the community’s archive of cultural knowledge. This role was manifested in the way the *Omukhupetungu* reminded the people about the myths of the community, thus bringing to life a sense of belonging for people, since he made them understand where they came from.

It was also observed that the *Omukhupetungu* sang about issues of leadership and politics, where leaders were praised, criticised and challenged their leaders. Members of the community hardly spoke against the leaders for fear of being victimised. The *Bakhupetungu* however, had the space and liberty to speak about whatever they thought about a leader without fear of contradiction or victimisation from the concerned authority. The *Bakhupetungu*, therefore, derived their themes from leadership and politics where they challenged, pushed forth the leaders’ agenda, defended, praised, or scorned them. This study, therefore, views the *Omukhupetungu* as an agent of communication who speaks on behalf of the people on pertinent issues.

It was also observed that the *Omukhupetungu* appreciated through his songs those who upheld virtues and desirable moral standards in the Bukusu community. Similarly, the *Omukhupetungu* scorned and rebuked people responsible for vices and bad moral
standing in the community. Apart from being respected, the Omukhupetungu was treated with caution especially whenever he walked around the community, for fear of what he could sing about. Members of the community, therefore, strove to paint own positive image especially in presence of the Omukhupetungu, aso as to earn a positive appraisal.

Bakhupetungu were similarly seen as dynamic social commentators of topical current issues. Any issues that affected the community whether positively or negatively were subject to the Omukhupetungu’s thematic repertoire. Currently, for instance, HIV and AIDS is a pandemic that bothers many people in the society. The Omukhupetungu has not been left out in the fight against HIV and AIDS scourge. He composes songs to encourage abstinence as the only safe way to avoid the pandemic. This is an indicator that the Omukhupetungu is dynamic, who addresses even current issues. The study, therefore, views him as a person who can benefit the current society of his services are effectively tapped into.

5.4 Community perception of the Omukhupetungu

Respondents from the Litungu audience revealed that the institution of the Omukhupetungu occupied a special place in the Bukusu community. The individual Omukhupetungu however, made an extra effort to maintain the respect and high regard for this institution of Bakhupetungu. If one Omukhupetungu flawed his position, he was disregarded as an individual but the dignity of the institution was upheld since there were
others who maintained the dignity of litungu playing. The study deduces that the Bukusu community had certain expectations of different institutions. Their expectations however, went in hand with respect for the same traditions. Respondents drawn from the Litungu audience further outlined several issues that pointed out that the Omukhupetungu was a respected member of the Bukusu community.

The Omukhupetungu was among other things a special invited guest to most of the ceremonies and functions of the community, where he not only attended like any other person, but had a duty to perform. The exceptional invitation is by virtue of being able to add value or perform a role in a function, which not other members attending would render. Without the Omukhupetungu’s services, functions were observed not to have the desired value. In view of the foregoing observation, this study argues that the Omukhupetungu was always invited to functions because he was regarded by the people for the value he added to the functions. Without respect for his services, he would not receive such invitations.

The Omukhupetungu was similarly highly regarded for being an agent of communication for the Bukusu community. It was reported that due to his communicational role, people sought for him to update them about issues affecting the community. It was also observed in the study that, whenever the Omukhupetungu played the litungu in any function, he never went home empty handed. The player was appreciated by way of presents due to the educational and social roles he played. This study asserts that, for a
person to be appreciated by being offered presents, he must be well regarded for something positive he offered the people. This form of appreciation was an indicator that the Bukusu people regarded, respected and appreciated the Omukhupetungu. If the Omukhupetungu was not regarded, he would not be offered any presents in turn for his performances.

During the field study, the researcher observed that Babukusu were sensitive to standards of performance by the different Bakhupetungu. The most articulate player enjoyed frequent invitations to many places and functions. Such a player got hired as the king’s (king Sudi) official Omukhupetungu to play in his palace. The study further argues that, Bakhupetungu strove to be the best so that they could achieve such social status in the community.

The Omukhupetungu was highly regarded because he was a source of entertainment for the community, without whom, the community would lack an important component. The Omukhupetungu was also regarded for the way he sacrificed his own time for the sake of the community. Sacrificing time for the sake of the community earned the player such immense respect among his peers and the community at large.

5.5 What determines popularity of the Omukhupetungu

The study sought to find out what determined the popularity of the Omukhupetungu through interviews with the Litungu audience. They indicated that in as much as the
Omukhupetungu’s institution was respected, an individual player may be popular, yet not the other. They gave the following factors that determined the popularity of one Omukhupetungu to another:

How well the Omukhupetungu made the Litungu to “talk” the Bukusu cultural language, determined his popularity amongst his audience. A well played Litungu was achieved by a balanced interplay between the thumb and index finger of the left hand which played the chisia chikhasi, and the thumb and index finger of the right hand which play chisia chisecha. An articulate player was, therefore, the one who balanced the female and male strings, to make the Litungu sound culturally depictive. Through the balanced playing using the two hands the two hands, the Omukhupetungu was found capable of playing and narrating story lines, a technique that helped in achieving a convincing performance. This study asserts that the Litungu audience achieve high levels of listening, in order for them to ascertain the intricacies of how one articulates the strings. It also follows that, although the listeners are not players of the instrument, they have a sense of appreciation, standards and understanding of what the Litungu should sound like. This is as a result of experience of listening to the instrument, and the cultural expectations.

The study also found that the art of reciting (chanting) texts as one played the instrument (in most cases praising one’s audience), was a measure of musical virtuosity among the Bakhupetungu, which in essence contributed to their popularity. The recitation (chant) session was perceived to be part of the music and therefore, should not interfere with the
flow of playing of the Litungu. The *Omukhupetungu* thus achieved popularity, through his articulate way to praise the audience, by chanting (reciting) textual ideas yet maintaining a steady rendition, devoid of rhythmic distortion. This can be viewed as ability to multitask by the *Omukhupetungu*. That is, maintaining a steady rhythm and tempo, against talking, that is not metered. This study asserts that such was a high level performance skill (virtuosity), depicted by the *Litungu* players.

Good moral standards are observed to be highly valued by the *Babukusu* people. *Omukhupetungu* being one of the members of the community was similarly expected to uphold virtues and values that formed cultural systems of the Bukusu community. If the *Omukhupetungu* on the contrary, played this important role of being an agent of the value system for the community yet did not practice the same, then he lost his popularity. In situations where the *Omukhupetungu* lacked good morals, then he lost place in the community. The resultant effect of this was that he was not allowed to play the *Litungu* in public. The practice of *Litungu* playing went hand in hand with an extra effort to be a custodian of good behaviour, moral uprightness. The study, therefore, asserts that *Litungu* playing is a sign of responsible moral behaviour, which not only benefits the *Omukhupetungu*, but positively influences members of the Bukusu community. The *Omukhupetungu*’s popularity therefore, does not stop at him, but spills over to other people as a result of his positive moral ability.
The *Omukhupetungu* was regarded by the Babukusu as a source of important information concerning the community; that is, the history of the community, cultural expressions and the value systems. The *Omukhupetungu* who was vastly endowed with such knowledge therefore, achieved immense popularity among his contemporaries and the community at large. On the contrary, a less knowledgeable *Omukhupetungu* experienced low esteem and lack of popularity. This shows that, indeed, the knowledge and cultural systems of Babukusu depended a lot on the *Omukhupetungu* as its custodian, in as much as it was a measure for individual *Bakhupetungu*’s popularity.

It was also noted that the choice and design of language used in the singing was important since it determined how well one communicated during *Litungu* performances. Communication by the *Bakhupetungum* too, determined their popularity. The communication aspect was achieved by use of poetic stylistic devices that embellished the message to be communicated. The ability for the *Omukhupetungu* to extensively and effectively use such poetic stylistic devices dictated his popularity as well. The study also found out that use of poetic stylistic devises, was a measure of musical virtuosity among the *Bakhupetungu*. Such poetic endowment was achieved through experience where one learned and practiced how to use certain words and phrases. It was further observed that the poetry in singing was a special talent that was hereditary. The study asserts that *Litungu* playing goes beyond music making and it is a composite art that music combines with other arts such as poetry.
The study, therefore, concludes that poetic endowment adds aesthetic value to the message the *Omukhupetungu* intends to communicate to the audience, and moves the art of *Litungu* playing to a higher level. It is essential, therefore, for the *Bakhupetungu* to sweeten their song language by use of poetic stylistic devices in their performance. How best the *Omukhupetungu* uses such stylistic devices to achieve a convincing, entertaining and a well communicated performance was thus necessary for his a popularity in *Litungu* playing.

### 5.6 Summary

The study established that, apart from playing a musical role, there were several important roles that the *Omukhupetungu* executed in the Bukusu community. These roles can be summarised in four main categories, namely:

i. Musical role,

ii. Social role,

iii. Educational role, and

iv. Entrepreneurial role.

The above roles could be summarised in a logical arrangement as shown in Diagram 5.1 on the next page;
Diagram 5.0 The role of the Omukhupetungu

The diagram 5.0 shows that the Omukhupetungu takes on more roles than just playing the Litungu. He is regarded as Omukhupetungu by virtue of being a player of the Litungu. In
the process of playing the Litungu the Omukhupetungu reaches out to the community in many other ways hence taking on other roles therewith. The other roles by the Omukhupetungu are thus as a result of spill over effect, which can be likened to a ripple effect. In advancing the concept of ripple effect, Kounin (1970) indicates that the effects of a reprimand in a group affect even members who are not the intended target. The un-intended group therefore, share in the reprimand as a result of spill over effect. The spill over effect of the ripple therefore, greatly assists in casting the multidimensional disposition of the Omukhupetungu, where he or she is seen as musically oriented yet spills over to portray other roles that are pertinent to the functioning of the community. The musical role is, therefore, seen as the target of the Omukhupetungu but then spills over to play other roles that are not the target of the player.

It was also learnt that the Omukhupetungu sang about several issues including; historical events, story telling and myths, leadership and politics, good and bad deeds and current issues in the Bukusu community. The Omukhupetungu was therefore, a highly regarded person. This was observed in the way he was invited to ceremonies and functions of the community and to individual people’s homes. The Omukhupetungu was also offered gifts as a reciprocal or appreciation whenever he played the Litungu for them. This, therefore, immensely enhanced the popularity of the Omukhupetungu.
CHAPTER SIX

6.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

For many years Bakhupetungu have traversed regions in Kanduyi Division to perform Litungu music. Beyond their performance virtuosity, satire, use of metaphors and community education, Litungu players have often demonstrated other overt and hidden talents deeply valued by the Bukusu community.

Findings of the study indicated that the Omukhupetungu played several roles; a musical role of entertaining the Bukusu community. Within the musical role the Omukhupetungu played other roles therewith. That is; playing, composing songs, singing accompanying songs, and tuning the Litungu.

Apart from the musical role, the study established that the Omukhupetungu also played social roles that included; informing the people on history, tales, and myths, outlining virtues and vices and supporting political and religious agenda in the Bukusu community.

It was also learnt that the Omukhupetungu played an educational role of; teaching young prospective Litungu players on how to play the instrument, informing people on topical matters such as HIV and AIDS through song.
Besides the educational role, the Omukhupetungu was found to play an entrepreneurial role of making the Litungu for sale and playing the Litungu, hence earning from the activity.

Apart from playing the above roles, the research findings revealed that the Omukhupetungu accompanied Litungu playing with songs, which addressed a number of social issues including; historical events, story telling and myths, leadership and politics, social misconduct and current issues in the community.

On the question of regard for the Omukhupetungu several issues were established that indicated that he was highly esteemed. He graced many ceremonies and functions around the community and in individual homes. Besides, people offered Omukhupetungu gifts whenever he played the Litungu to them.

Popularity of the Omukhupetungu depended on a number of issues;

- How well the Omukhupetungu was able to make the Litungu to speak the cultural language through the interplay between the left and right hand index and thumb fingers.
- The ability for the Omukhupetungu to chant (recite-khulaa), without compromising the rhythm and steady tempo of the Litungu.
- The ability of the Omukhupetungu to portray extensive knowledge of his audience.
The Omukhupetungu’s character in the society; where a well behaved Omukhupetungu was popular amongst the people.

The Omukhupetungu who was vastly endowed with knowledge about the Bukusu community (history, culture, ceremonies, behaviour, language) achieved popularity among his people.

The Omukhupetungu who effectively used such stylistic devices such as metaphors, rhymes, proverbs achieved most popularity among listeners.

6.2 Conclusions

The study concludes that the Omukhupetungu is a multifaceted resource person who plays several roles in the Bukusu community including, but not limited to the following;

- **Musical role** - achieved through composing of songs and entertaining the people in the community through Litungu performance.

- **Social role** - which is realised in the way the Omukhupetungu narrates the history of the community as the custodian of community’s the value system.

- **Educational role** –Omukhupetungu is the teacher to the younger generation of Litungu players, besides educating the community on pertinent issues through songs.

- **Entrepreneurial role** –Omukhupetungu played the Litungu as a source of livelihood; and made Litungu instruments which he sold to earn a living.
Regarding the messages embodied in the song text, the study noted the following as the main thematic ideas:

- The history of the community, where he explains how the community originated from and the historical events that have happened over time.
- Myths of the community and songs for story telling.
- Politics and leadership.
- Virtues and vices in the community.
- Current issues like insecurity and diseases.

Concerning factors that determined why the *Omukhupetungu* was highly valued in the Bukusu community, the following were evident:

- The *Omukhupetungu* was the agent of communication in the Bukusu community.
- He sacrificed his time for the sake of serving the community.
- He was a role model that the people looked up to for standards of values and morals.
- The *Omukhupetungu* was a cultural arbiter who went out to look for information to share with the community.
- The *Omukhupetungu* spoke out on issues about the community objectively, and this helped to correct wrong doing and uphold virtues.
Besides, there were factors that contributed to his fame. These included the following;

- How well he plays the Litungu and what he sang about, were essential ingredients for the Omukhupetungu’s popularity.
- The poetic endowment of the Omukhupetungu in the way he sang his songs.
- The Omukhupetung’s knowledge base about the community is also equally responsible for his popularity. In the Bukusu community, whatever the Omukhupetungu sang about was taken seriously by his audience.
- The moral ability of the Omukhupetungu similarly determined whether or not he will be popular.
- The ability of the Omukhupetungu to praise his audience as he played the instrument was another factor for or against his popularity.

Based on the study findings, the researcher recommends that;

a) The Bakhpotungu be more involved in performances, beyond Bukusu appreciation for the purposes of more exposure.

b) Numerous recordings of Litungu music be done, for the sake of archiving the music since it is changing as time moves.

c) Such resource persons as the Omukhupetungu be invited to institutions of learning to educate learners on how to play the Litungu and compose its music

d) The Ministry of Culture to help in organising festivals specifically for traditional musicians, with a view of showcasing traditional musicianship, alongside prompting for improvement of their standards.
For the sake of subsequent research, this study further recommends that;

a) A study on designing a methodology for teaching Litungu playing be done.  
   The methodology would help in teaching of the Litungu in institutions of learning.

b) A study on how Litungu can be used in an ensemble of other African instruments to be carried out.

c) A study on the trends of Litungu Music over time, to ascertain aspects of change and continuity should be carried out.

d) A study on compositional techniques for Litungu music to be carried, out with an aim of establishing how such techniques can be enhanced and or used in other genres such as choral music.

e) A study on documentation and analysis of Litungu music to be done, to ensure that emerging themes, shared information, cultural wisdom and knowledge are preserved.
REFERENCES


LIST OF FOOTNOTES

1 Omukhupi – a musician inclined towards singing playing a specialised instrument.
2 Kumusambwa – May also refer to one being infested with bad spirits in the Bukusu community.
3 Omukhupetungu – Litungu player.
4 Luvale – Bantu speaking people of Northern Zambia
5 Siuma – Song recorded on 18th November 2009 as was played by Anicet Wafula at Ndengelwa village.
6 Lwe wa Chonge – Song recorded on 28th November 2009 as was played by Thomas Wekesa at Tobolia village.
7 Kukhasi kukenda – Song recorded on 26th November 2009 as was played by Masinde Cheseni at Ndengelwa village.
8 Siuma – Song recorded on 18th November 2009 as was played by Anicet Wafula at Ndengelwa village.
9 Lwe wa Chonge – Song recorded on 28th November 2009 as was played by Thomas Wekesa at Tobolia village.
10 Kukhasi kukenda – Song recorded on 26th November 2009 as was played by Masinde Cheseni at Ndengelwa village.
11 Lulumbe – Song recorded on 9th December 2009, as was played by Masika Mukubwa at Misanga village.
12 Bamali baabi – Song recorded on 18th November as was played by Anicet Wafula at Ndengelwa village.
13 Embalu – Song recorded on 14th December 2009 as was played by Muyundo Mang’oli of Mabanga village.
14 Sella – Song recorded on 7th December 2009, as was played by Elijah Muliro at Tobolia village.
15 Khulia silulu – Song recorded on 9th December as was played by Masika Mukubwa at Misanga village.
APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LITUNGU PLAYERS

Date of Interview……………………………………………………………

Serial Number……………………………………………………………

1. How long have you played the Litungu?

2. Describe how you learned to play Litungu

3. When and where do you usually perform?

4. What are some of the issues you sing about?

5. Are you the composer of the songs you sing?

6. If yes in 5 above, what inspires you into composing the songs?

7. Who made the Litungu you play?

8. If you are the maker of the instrument, how did you learn the craft of making it?

9. What materials are used to make the Litungu?

10. What process is involved in making the Litungu?

11. What roles do you play in the community?
APPENDIX II

LISTENING SCHEDULE

1. The title of the song

2. The theme of the song

3. What are the most repeated words in the song?

4. What is the literal meaning of the song?

5. What is the hidden meaning of the song?

6. Are there any poetic devices used in the song?

7. What are the teachings in the song?
APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE LITUNGU AUDIENCE

1. How does one become a Litungu player?

2. What does the Litungu player sing about?

3. What is the role of a Litungu player in the community?

4. How is the Litungu player regarded in the society?

5. Who makes the Litungu?

6. How is the Litungu made?

7. What are the Names of the Litungu parts
APPENDIX IV

Children Observing their grandfather as he tunes the *Litungu*

Grandfather: Anicet Wafula
Grandchildren: Tevin Wapang’ana and Joshua Muliro
Picture taken by the researcher on 18th November 2009
At Ndengelwa Village.
APPENDIX V
Masika Mukubwa Putting Finishing Touches on the Litungu

Picture taken by the researcher on 9th Dec 2009
at Misanga Village.
APPENDIX VI

A Functional Litungu

A Functional *Litungu* Made by Masika Mukubwa
Picture taken by the researcher on 9th Dec 2009
at Misanga village.
APPENDIX VII

Playing the Litungu

Thomas Wekesa playing the Litungu
Picture taken by the researcher on 28th November 2009
at Tobolia Village.
APPENDIX VIII

MAP OF KENYA SHOWING WESTERN PROVINCE

KEY

Western Province

Source: Kenyatta University, Department of Geography
APPENDIX IX

MAP OF BUNGOMA DISTRICT

Source: Bungoma District Development office
APPENDIX X

PERMISSION FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE KANDUYI DIVISION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
KANDUYI DIVISION,
P.O. BOX 550,
BUNGOMA.
KDY/EDU/4/1/VOL.IV/25.
10-8-2009.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

The bearer of this note, Mukasa Situma Wafula, is a Master of Arts student at Kenyatta University. He is doing research in Music on Litungu — a Bukusu musical instrument in Kanduyi Division.

Please accord him any necessary help and co-operation.

WILBRODA ASAYA,
FOR DISTRICT OFFICER,
KANDUYI DIVISION.

DISTRICT OFFICER
KANDUYI DIVISION
BUNGOMA SOUTH.

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