

**EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF ISLAM AMONG THE ABAWANGA OF
KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA; 1880-2010**

**REUBEN PASA LUCHU
C50/KER/CE/28606/2015**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF LAW, ARTS AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (HISTORY) OF KENYATTA
UNIVERSITY**

SEPTEMBER 2025

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university for consideration of any certification.

Signature _____ Date: _____

Reuben Pasa Luchu

C50/KER/CE/28606/2015

SUPERVISORS

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

Signature _____ Date: _____

Dr. Susan Waiyego Mwangi

Department of History, Archaeology & Political Studies

Kenyatta University

Signature _____ Date: _____

Dr. Julius Simiyu Nabende

Department of History, Archaeology & Political Studies

Kenyatta University

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Muslim *ummah* in Wangaland, who steadfastly uphold the *Deen* amidst social and cultural constraints, and who peaceably coexist with the non-Muslim populace of the region. Their resilience and harmony continue to inspire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study owes much to the guidance and input from many individuals and institutions, whose support was indispensable to its successful completion. However, it may not be feasible to mention all of them individually. Nevertheless, I wish to acknowledge a few whose contributions greatly facilitated the completion of this work. To begin with, I am thankful to the Department of History, Archaeology and political Studies of Kenyatta University for its academic guidance and institutional support during the course of this study. I am equally grateful to the assistance of the administrative and technical staff of the Department, as well as to the Graduate School, whose cooperation and efficiency contributed significantly to the smooth execution of this work.

I am particularly indebted to my supervisors, Dr. Susan Mwangi and Dr. Julius Nabende, for whom I do not have words sufficiently eloquent to express my gratitude. Their scholarly expertise, insightful guidance, constant supervision and constructive feedback were instrumental in shaping this work to its present form. My sincere gratitude also goes to Dr. Washington Ndiiri for offering his invaluable suggestions at the initial stage of the study.

I extend my gratitude to my research assistant, Abdulaziz Muchinyi, for the tireless efforts he devoted in facilitating the collection of the information I required. I am also thankful to the respondents who generously provided the data and insights necessary for this study. I would like to specifically acknowledge Nur Maranje, Athman Shikolyo, Abdallah Washiali, Issa Kasim, Haggai Makokha, Musa Bilal and Zaitun Faluma for their invaluable knowledge of Abawanga culture and Islam in Mumias, which greatly informed this research.

I further acknowledge the moral support of my friends specifically; Richard Nyabaro, William Ndiema, Okal Elias, Milton Basweti, Ezra Momanyi, Alex Muhandale and Isaiah Begi, whose encouragement sustained me throughout the demanding journey of this research. I am deeply grateful to my former teachers at Namalenge Primary School and Lubinu High School, and to my undergraduate lecturers at Maseno University, for equipping me with a robust academic grounding and inculcating in me the fervour to pursue education to this level.

Finally, I am sincerely thankful to my siblings and to my parents, Cleophas and Rose, for their unwavering encouragement and prayers. I equally extend my heartfelt thanks to my sons, Ryan and Roy, for their patience and forbearance during the periods when this study required my prolonged absence. Above all, I remain grateful to Almighty God for granting me good health and a sound mind to comprehend and interpret all I encountered during this enormous undertaking.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------------|
| DECLARATION | ii |
| DEDICATION | iii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | iv |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | v |
| LIST OF TABLES | ix |
| LIST OF FIGURES | x |
| ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS | xi |
| GLOSSARY OF ISLAMIC WORDS | xiii |
| GLOSSARY OF WANGA WORDS | xvi |
| OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS | xvii |
| ABSTRACT | xix |
| CHAPTER ONE | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.0 Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Background to the study | 1 |
| 1.2 Statement of the problem..... | 5 |
| 1.3 Objectives | 6 |
| 1.4 Research questions..... | 7 |
| 1.5 Research premises..... | 7 |
| 1.6 Justification and significance..... | 7 |
| 1.7 Scope and limitations of the study..... | 9 |
| 1.8 Literature Review | 11 |
| 1.8.1 Origins and development of Islam among the Abawanga | 12 |
| 1.8.2 Impact of colonialism and Christianity on the spread of Islam among the Abawanga..... | 17 |
| 1.8.3 Continuity-change in Islam among the Abawanga of Mumias in post-colonial era | 19 |
| 1.9 Theoretical framework..... | 23 |
| 1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 29 |
| 1.10.1 Research Design..... | 29 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1.10.2 Target population | 29 |
| 1.10.3 Sample size..... | 30 |
| 1.10.4 Sampling Technique..... | 30 |
| 1.10.5 Study area..... | 32 |
| 1.10.6 Research instruments | 36 |
| 1.10.7 Data collection | 37 |
| 1.10.8 Data analysis and interpretation | 39 |
| 1.10.9 Ethical considerations | 40 |
| 1.11 Summary | 41 |
| CHAPTER TWO..... | 42 |
| ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM AMONG THE ABAWANGA UP TO 1899 | 42 |
| 2.1 Introduction..... | 42 |
| 2.2.1 Migration and settlement of the Abawanga..... | 42 |
| 2.2.2 Traditional beliefs and practices of the Abawanga | 48 |
| 2.3 Establishment of Islam among the Abawanga..... | 56 |
| 2.3.1 Factors that facilitated the spread of Islam among the Abawanga..... | 56 |
| 2.3.1.1 Trading activities..... | 57 |
| 2.3.1.2 Pioneer Arab-Swahili Muslim clerics | 59 |
| 2.3.1.3 Intermarriages | 60 |
| 2.3.1.4 Nabongoship | 61 |
| 2.3.1.5 Religious and spiritual reasons..... | 65 |
| 2.3.1.6 The similarity and syncretism of Islam among the Abawanga | 67 |
| 2.3.1.7 Swahili language | 69 |
| 2.3.2. Early Islamic institutions of worship and learning | 70 |
| 2.3.2.1 The Mosque..... | 70 |
| 2.3.2.2 The <i>Maktab</i> | 72 |
| 2.3.2.3 The <i>Madrassa</i> | 73 |
| 2.3.2.4 Features of early Islamic education..... | 75 |
| 2.4 Obstacles to the spread of Islam among the Abawanga | 78 |
| 2.4.1 Lack of Islamic zeal | 78 |
| 2.4.2 Stringent Islamic practices | 79 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| 2.4.3 Deficient Manpower and Seclusion of Arab-Swahili Muslims from Abawanga..... | 81 |
| 2.4.4 Abawanga Customs..... | 82 |
| 2.5 Summary..... | 86 |
| CHAPTER THREE..... | 87 |
| ISLAM AMONG THE ABAWANGA DURING BRITISH COLONIALISM; 1900 – 1963 | 87 |
| 3.1 Introduction..... | 87 |
| 3.2 The British occupation of Mumias | 87 |
| 3.3The place of Islam in colonial administration in Mumias | 93 |
| 3.4 Colonial economy and the spread of Islam in Mumias | 100 |
| 3.5 Missionary Education and Islam among the Abawanga..... | 102 |
| 3.6 Muslim-Christian relations in Wangaland during colonialism..... | 108 |
| 3.7 Summary..... | 118 |
| CHAPTER FOUR | 119 |
| CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN ISLAM AMONG THE ABAWANGA; 1964 - 2010 | 119 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 119 |
| 4.2 Persistence of Islam among the Abawanga | 119 |
| 4.2.1 Muslim Organizations..... | 120 |
| 4.2.2 Islamic Instructional Institutions..... | 126 |
| 4.2.3 Mumias Sugar Company..... | 140 |
| 4.2.4 Da'wah activities..... | 141 |
| 4.2.5 Muslim festivities..... | 145 |
| 4.2.6 Africanisation of Islam..... | 146 |
| 4.2.7 The Constitution of Kenya (2010) | 150 |
| 4.3 Impact of Modernity on Islam among the Abawanga | 154 |
| 4.4 Christian-Muslim coexistence among the Abawanga | 164 |
| 4.5 Impact of Islam among the Abawanga | 172 |
| 4.6 Summary..... | 179 |
| CHAPTER FIVE..... | 181 |
| SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 181 |
| 5.1 Introduction..... | 181 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 5.2 Summary..... | 181 |
| 5.3 Conclusions..... | 188 |
| 5.4 Recommendations..... | 190 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 192 |
| References..... | 192 |
| List of respondents..... | 198 |
| Archival documents | 201 |
| APPENDICES..... | 202 |
| Appendix I: Interview Schedule | 202 |
| Appendix II: Research Approval..... | 205 |
| Appendix III: Research authorization | 206 |
| Appendix IV: Research permit..... | 207 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 1: Abawanga Muslim population from 1880 to 1898 | 65 |
| Table 2: Religious distribution in Kakamega County | 168 |
| Table 3: Number of mosques in Matungu, Mumias East and Mumias West Sub-Counties | 176 |
| Table 4: The Muslim population in Kakamega, Vihiga, Bungoma and Busia Counties | 179 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1.1 Map of Kenya showing the location of the study area..... | 32 |
| Figure 1.2: Map of Western Province | 33 |
| Figure 1.3: Map of Kakamega County showing study area | 34 |
| Figure 1.4: Map of Wangaland showing the location of the study area..... | 35 |

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| ACK | Anglican Church of Kenya |
| CAMNET | Christian and Muslim Network |
| CIDP | County Integrated Development Plan |
| CMS | Church Missionary Society |
| CPK | Church of the Province of Kenya |
| CRE | Christian Religious Education |
| DC | District Commissioner |
| EAMWS | East African Muslim Welfare Society |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| IBEA Co. | Imperial British East African Company |
| IPK | Islamic Party of Kenya |
| IRE | Islamic Religious Education |
| KANU | Kenya African National Union |
| KAR | Kings African Rifles |
| KNA | Kenya National Archives |
| KNBS | Kenya National Bureau of Statistics |
| KPHC | Kenya Population and Housing Census |
| MCK | Methodist Church in Kenya |
| MMC | Mumias Muslim Community |
| MUMCOP | Mumias Muslim Community Programme |
| NACOSTI | National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation |
| NAMLEF | National Muslim Leaders Forum |
| NCCK | National Council of Churches of Kenya |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| NUKEM | National Union of Kenya Muslims |
| OI | Oral interview |
| OIC | Organization of Islamic Conference |
| PBUH | Peace be upon him |
| PC | Provincial Commissioner |
| PCEA | Presbyterian Church of East Africa |
| PPI | Pastoral Programme Instruction |
| PROCMURA | Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa |
| REV | Reverend |
| SDA | Seventh Day Adventist |
| SUPKEM | Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims |
| TANU | Tanganyika African National Union |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |

GLOSSARY OF ISLAMIC WORDS

Adhan –The call to prayer.

Ayah – A verse in the Qur'an.

Bid'ah – Any newly invented matter that is without precedent and is in opposition to the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's way of life.

Buibui – Black flowing robe worn by Muslim women.

Da'wah – The act of calling or inviting people to embrace Islam.

Deen – Religion; the faith or belief system revealed by God, specifically Islam.

Fatwa – Legal ruling or decree on points of Islamic law.

Hadith – Record of the traditions or sayings of Prophet Muhammad.

Hajj – The pilgrimage to Mecca made by pious Muslims.

Hakim – Wise man or educated teacher.

Halal – Allowable, according to Muslim religious customs, to have or be done.

Halaqah – A religious gathering for the study of Islam and the Qur'an.

Haraam – Proscribed by Islamic law.

Idd-ul-fitr – Feast that marks the end of fasting month of Ramadhan.

Ijaza – A certificate that authorizes a student or scholar to teach, transmit, or narrate specific Islamic texts, knowledge or practices from a qualified teacher or authority.

Imam – Islamic leader of prayers in a mosque.

Iman – Devout adherence to the Islamic faith.

Isha – The night-time daily fifth prayer recited by practicing Muslims.

Jihad – A holy war undertaken by Muslims against non-believers.

Kanzu – White robe worn by male Muslims.

Khatib – A person who delivers the Friday sermon in mosque.

Khutba – Friday Sermon.

Madrassa – A formal institution of Muslim education with laid down curriculum and syllabus.

Mahr – Dowry.

Maktab (plural ***makatib***) – Qur’anic school.

Manhaj – Islamic curriculum.

Maulidi/mawlid – Celebration to mark the Prophet Muhammad’s birthday.

Mihadhara – Public debates.

Mihrab – A semicircular recess in the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction of prayer, the Kaaba in Mecca.

Mu'allim (plural ***mu'allimun***) – Teacher.

Mufti – Muslim scholar and interpreter of Islamic law, who can deliver a ruling, opinion or formal decree on Islamic judicial issues.

Mullah – Muslim teacher of religion and holy law.

Musabaqah – Competitions in recitation of the Qur’an.

Nikah – Islamic marriage ceremony.

Qasida – An Arabic monorhyme poem or song that may be satirical, elegiac, or laudatory.

Ramadan/Ramadhan – The holy 9th month of the Islamic calendar, during which Muslims fast between the break of dawn until sunset.

Salah (plural *salat*) – Prayer.

Saum – Fasting.

Sharia – Islamic law based on Qur’anic teachings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad.

Shawwal – The 10th month of the Islamic calendar and begins its first day with *Eid-al-Fitr*.

Shirk – Attributing divinity to anything or anyone else apart from God.

Sunnah – The way of life of Prophet Muhammad, as recorded in *Hadiths*.

Surah (plural *surat*) – Any of the 114 chapters of the Qur’an.

Tawhid – Unification or oneness of God.

Taharah – Personal bodily cleanliness.

Ulama (singular *alim*) – The guardians of legal and religious tradition in Islam; clerics.

Ummah – Muslim community.

Wudhu – Form of ritual washing of the forearms, head and feet, performed by Muslims before prayer.

Zakat – Obligatory offering given annually under Islamic law and used for charitable and religious purposes.

GLOSSARY OF WANGA WORDS

- Abasikoyo* – The Swahili.
- Akhasi* – A son to the sister to one's mother.
- Amakumba* – A ceremony which took place 40 days after burial to honour the deceased.
- Amalwa* – Alcohol.
- Busaa* – A local brew among the Abawanga made from fermented flour.
- Elyuba* – Sun.
- Emisambwa* – Spirits.
- Eshikalo* – A payment in form of cattle, made to the deceased's uncles before burial.
- Inanga* – Special string tied around the waist of a new born-baby to ward off evil eyes.
- Inono* (plural *tsinono*) – Clan.
- Irumbi* – A little house for isolation for newly initiated boys.
- Litungu* – A traditional stringed music instrument.
- Mulamwa* – Brother-in-law.
- Nyasaye* – God.
- Okhureka* – Trapping.
- Olucheri* – A ceremony done on the third day after burial to pray for the deceased.
- Olukho* – A game played with smooth pebbles on a board.
- Oluwanga* – The native language spoken by Abawanga people.
- Omushebi* – Circumciser.
- Omusumba* – A bachelor.
- Omwami* – Ruler.
- Shimbishira* – Head-dress meant for heroes.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Africanisation:** The process of adapting to and being shaped by African cultures, traditions and contexts.
- Customary law:** The long-established principles of community of a particular locale that the general law of a state considers as lawful practice.
- Indigenous:** Beliefs and practices whose roots go as far back before the coming of foreign religions, Western education and modern changes like technology.
- Interior:** Regions located beyond the Coast of Kenya.
- Islamization:** The process by which the Abawanga converted to Islam and thus verbally and by actions began professing the Islamic faith, as enjoined in the Qur'an.
- Modernity:** Contemporary period characterized by technological innovations, secularism and individual subjectivity.
- Nabongoship:** The dignity, rank or office of a king among the Abawanga.
- Proselytize:** To convert from one religion, belief, or opinion to another.
- Qur'an school:** An elementary formal institution of Muslim education offering various rudiments of literacy mainly in the Qur'an and Arabic language. It is commonly referred to as *Duksi*.
- Wangaland:** The region originally occupied by the Abawanga ethnic group of the Luhya community. This area is the present-day

Matungu, Mumias East and Mumias West Sub-Counties of Kakamega County.

**Western
education:**

The education which was introduced by Europeans through European colonialism and is basically aligned to Western culture and influence.

ABSTRACT

The study examined the growth of Islam among the Abawanga in Kakamega County from 1880 to 2010. The research was guided by the following objectives; to examine the origin and development of Islam among the Abawanga up to 1899, to assess the trends in the spread of Islam among the Abawanga during the colonial period from 1900 to 1963, and to assess continuity and change in Islam among the Abawanga in the post-colonial era from 1964 to 2010. This study is based on three fundamental premises that: First, the intermarriages between the Arab-Swahili men and women from among the Abawanga influenced the penetration of Islam in Wangaland; second, Western education and Christianity hindered the spread of Islam among the Abawanga of Mumias, Kakamega County during the colonial period; third, globalization and modernization impacted the spread and practice of Islam among the Abawanga in the post-colonial era. The permeation and persistent existence of Islam in Wangaland, a region that is majorly rural and is predominantly Christian posed an interesting problem for study. The study was guided by Acculturation theory and Social Exchange theory. The theories proved invaluable in identifying areas of convergence and divergence between Abawanga socio-cultural practices, Islam and modernity. The study adopted a historical research design to document the emergence and subsequent growth of Islam among the Abawanga. The historical methods of data collection were used. Oral interviews, archival material and library research were used in identifying, collecting and collation of data for this study. Muslim sages, Muslim religious leaders, Muslim youth and Muslim elders, and Christians, all from the Abawanga community were the respondents of this study. The data collected was analyzed qualitatively using historical techniques of narration, description, inference and logical explanation and distributed to the relevant chapters. The study findings were presented as a critical narrative of the permeation, spread and changes and continuity of Islam among the Abawanga from 1880 to 2010. The research established that the increased trade and contact between the Abawanga and Arab-Swahili traders in the late 19th century played a significant role in spread of Islam among the Abawanga. The study recommended that Muslim leaders engage constructively with other faith traditions to maximize the benefits of their shared coexistence. The study suggested the need for further inquiry into the prevalence of Islamophobia and negative stereotypes about Islam among the Abawanga, and how these have influenced community relations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The chapter discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, research premises, justification, significance of the study, scope, limitations of the study, theoretical framework, review of related literature and methodology.

1.1 Background to the study

Islam emerged in the early 7th century AD, nearly six centuries after the establishment of Christianity. Originating in Mecca, in the Arabian Peninsula, it was founded upon a revelation received by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in 610 AD. Within a few decades, Islam expanded beyond Arabia, influencing political, cultural, and religious developments across vast regions of Asia, Europe, Africa and hence Mumias.

Becker (2008), argues that despite the long-dominated importance of conquest in unraveling the emergence of Muslim-dominated areas, Islamization was a gradual, uneven, and largely peaceful process. If acts of violence did occur, the perpetrators were often local fanatics rather than foreign invaders, and their transformation into zealots was itself the result of the gradual process. Even in the historical context of the Islamic world, which was shaped by the Arab conquests of the Middle East and North Africa in the 7th and 8th centuries AD., it took a long time for Islamic teachings and practices to permeate a religiously and culturally diverse society.

Islam arrived in Africa soon after its establishment in the 7th century AD. and spread to East Africa through trade. East African coastal trade was dependent on the Indian Ocean monsoon season. From November to February, the winds allowed the ships to sail towards the Coast of East Africa. Muslim Arab traders were forced to remain in these trading cities for months, waiting for favourable winds to return home. The local communities finally accepted their Islamic way of life while they intermittently visited the Coast. Changes in wind patterns from April to May, and from August to September, enabled traders to sail northwards back home. Islam continued to be practiced only in the East African coastal cities of Lamu, Malindi, and Mombasa. Trimingham (1964:3), reported that Islam began to expand to the East African Coast after the Prophet Muhammad passed away in 632 A.D. This period was rocked by religious and political upheavals that stemmed from the caliphate problem. East Africa was meant to be the destination of the first immigrants looking for safety.

Local chronicles, according to Salim (1973), suggest that Islam arrived on the East African littoral as early as the 8th century. However, in the 7th century A.D., there were a few Muslims living in modern-day Ethiopia's Abyssinia. He added that based on archaeological evidence, there was a prosperous Muslim community on Manda Island in Kenya around the 10th century A.D.

According to Safari (1994), Muslim settlers in East Africa were mostly brought there in the 8th century by Muslim traders from Persia and Saudi Arabia. These interactions between Saudi Arabia and the East African Coast led to the establishment of a number of Muslim city states, whose initial populations were Shirazi (Persians), Africans, and

Arabs. Swahili, a name derived from the Arabic word *sawaahil*, which means "of the coast," began to be used to refer to these settlements. The extent of intermarriage between the Arab immigrants, traders, and native Kenyans in the coastal towns was confirmed by Abdulaziz (1984). This hybridisation produced an African Islamic culture that expressed itself through the Kiswahili language.

When Ibn Batuta of Morocco traveled to the Coast of East Africa in 1332, he discovered established rulers, Muslim communities, and a thriving Islamic civilization from Lamu to Mozambique. He spent a year working as Kadhi in the Maldiv Islands. After the 12th century, the Muslim presence in coastal Kenya increased mainly through the expansion of trade in the Indian Ocean. Muslim traders traveled to the East African Coast, which stretched from Somalia to Mozambique, from Iran, Oman, and Yemen and settled there. Centres of local and international trade developed in Mogadishu, Lamu, Malindi, Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Kilwa, and Comoro Islands (Khadija, 1998; Nabende, 2016).

The earliest known interactions between Arabs and people living along the East African Coast were recounted in the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea. Seven Muslim brothers from Persia, according to the Kilwa Chronicle, fled religious persecution in their home country and settled in Mombasa. The chronicle also covered Oman's invasion by Caliph Adul Malik and the Syrian Governor al-Hajjaj, as well as the eventual deportation of Oman's Muslim kings Saaid and Sulayman. Around 685 A.D., these two kings fled with their families and made their way to the Coast of East Africa. The establishment of Islam

on the Coast of East Africa was made possible by this settlement (Mwakimako, 2003:47).

Portuguese dominion was established on the East African Coast in the 16th century, but it was overthrown in the 17th century. During the rule of Seyyid Said (1806 – 1856), Arab authority was ultimately reinstated and a partial governmental structure was formed after a century of independent Arab settlement. Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese explorer, first set foot on the Eastern Coast of Africa in 1498, marking the beginning of the Portuguese presence there. The thriving trade in the coastal towns drew the attention of Vasco da Gama (Sperling, 1988).

Returning to Portugal, he reported to the king about the prosperity of trade along the East African Coast. The king agreed to send soldiers with orders to force obedience and payment of tribute to the rulers of the coastal city-states. The gravest assault occurred under Francisco d'Almeida, who attacked, seized, and destroyed Mombasa, turning once-bustling city into rubble. The streets were littered with the bodies of over 1,500 victims. Accustomed to peaceful coexistence with Arab merchants, the local communities along the Coast were alarmed by the Portuguese experience. They later embraced Islamic political organization as a means of securing protection and fostering economic prosperity. The Sultanate's authority in Oman contributed to the spread of Islam as locals viewed Muslims as friendly, in contrast to the Portuguese (Sperling, 1988).

Islam had previously been confined to the coastal regions and a few isolated areas in interior, such as the Northeastern and Western Kenya, where caravans of traders had

first penetrated through long-distance trade routes in the early 19th century. As conversions were carried out through personal contacts, the expansion of Islam during the colonial era was urban based, haphazardly conducted, and localized (Said, 1995).

How then did a rural population experience and embrace Islam before colonialism when contact between Africans and the outside world was limited? How did colonialism affect and impact on this conversion? To what extent did the interaction between African religions, Christianity and Islam progress? These and other dynamics were examined in this work with the aim of filling a gap that exists in knowledge on Islam in Kenya. By use of the Social Exchange theory and the Acculturation theory, this study explored the origins and development of Islam in inland Kenya during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence periods using the Abawanga case study of Kakamega County in the period 1880 – 2010.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Islam, a faith that has been practiced for centuries, spread to the African continent many centuries ago. Among the key factors that facilitated its growth was the presence of communities that were open and ready to convert to Islam. In Kenya, areas that received Islam include, but are not limited to, the Coast, Ukambani, Central, Nyanza, Western, the Rift Valley and Northeastern Kenya. The Northeastern region experienced the highest number of converts, likely due to its proximity to Somalia, whose population was predominantly Muslim.

No doubt, areas in the interior of Kenya did not experience large converts to Islam, perhaps due to logistical challenges and limited number of preachers. In Western Kenya,

Islam gradually took root through the efforts of Arab-Swahili itinerant preachers and traders, whose mobility and pursuit of livelihood opportunities facilitated the religion's diffusion across the region. In their activities, they moved into regions including Bungoma, Vihiga, Busia, Kakamega, Mumias and Malaba. In these areas, they discreetly interacted with local men and women introducing them to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad and the core tenets of Islamic faith. It was not easy to gain converts, since many locals adhered to their indigenous religions whose teachings differed significantly.

Over time, some locals began to embrace Islam and convert, albeit gradually and in small numbers. This study examines the nature, extent and dynamics of Islam among the Abawanga of Kakamega County. The study interrogates how and why there exists a relatively high population of Muslims among the Abawanga of Kakamega, despite the region being a predominantly Christian rural County; it also explores the nature and extent of conversion during the colonial period, as well as the changes experienced by Abawanga converts from colonial times to 2010. The study seeks to address a gap in the exiting literature on Islam in Kenya, with a specific focus on the Abawanga community.

1.3 Objectives

The study sought to:

1. Trace the origin and development of Islam among the Abawanga up to 1899.
2. Examine the spread of Islam among the Abawanga during British colonialism from 1900 to 1963.

3. Interrogate continuity and change in Islam among the Abawanga in the post-colonial era from 1964 to 2010.

1.4 Research questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How did Islam develop among the Abawanga of Kakamega County up to 1899?
2. How did Christianity and British colonial rule influence the spread of Islam among the Abawanga from 1900 to 1963?
3. How did Islam change in the post-colonial era among the Abawanga of Kakamega County between 1964 and 2010?

1.5 Research premises

This study was premised on three fundamental assumptions. That:

1. Muslim traders from the Coast and the intermarriages between the Arab-Swahili men and women from among the Abawanga influenced the penetration of Islam in Wangaland.
2. Western education and Christianity hindered the spread of Islam among the Abawanga of Mumias region, Kakamega County during the colonial period.
3. There was continuity and change in Islam among the Abawanga in the post-colonial era.

1.6 Justification and significance

While Muslims in hinterland regions such as Mumias have a long-established presence, scholarly attention has predominantly been directed towards the coastal and

Northeastern parts of Kenya. In spite of its historical significance, Islam among the Abawanga remains relatively underexplored in scholarly discourse. Existing studies on Islam in Western Kenya, such as those by Osogo (1966), Were (1967), De Wolf (1977), and Nasambu (1999), fall short of offering an in-depth analysis of Islam among the Abawanga. We can only speculate about the factors that facilitated the spread of Islam, the barriers that hindered its penetration, and the impact of colonialism on its expansion among the Abawanga. In addition, none of the previously cited scholars examined in detail how westernization and modernity influenced the practice of Islam among the Abawanga. Against this background, this study seeks to provide insights to fill this gap. Moreover, this research sought to elucidate not only the historical roots of Islam in Wangaland but also its underlying worldview and religious orientations.

The study's findings were intended to be of particular interest to historians. First, they would broaden their knowledge and perspectives in African cultural studies. Second, scholars could use the results of this study as a basis for further research on the economic impact of Islamic practices, such as *Zakat* (charity) and Islamic banking, within the Abawanga community. The findings targeted to provide policy makers with precise empirical data to formulate policies to improve access to education for Muslim children in the Mumias region and other areas where Islam is the predominant religion in Kenya. For example, policy makers could get information on how to integrate the *madrassa* system into the modern national education system in order to expand the educational base of the nation. This would help keep Muslims at the centre of national development. This study also aimed to contribute to the literature on Muslims in Kenya.

1.7 Scope and limitations of the study

The geographical scope of this study covers three Sub-counties in Kakamega County – Mumias East, Mumias West and Matungu – where the Abawanga community is predominantly found. Other areas within the Western region are referred to only insofar as they relate to the study locale. Compared to other counties in the Western Kenya inhabited by the Abaluhya community, Kakamega County records the highest Muslim population estimated at 88,412, the majority of whom are Abawanga (KNBS, 2019).

The choice of the Mumias region of Kakamega County as the study area, as opposed to other parts of Western Kenya, was influenced by the relatively large Muslim population in the area. The research was confined to this region because Islam has had a profound socio-cultural impact in Kenya's interior, yet little research has been conducted on its penetration and influence on the culture of local communities, notably in Kakamega County.

The temporal scope of the study extended from 1880 to 2010. The starting point was 1880, since it was around this time that contact between the Abawanga and Arab-Swahili traders increased, significantly influencing Islamization of the Abawanga. It was also during this period that Nabongo Mumia, a pivotal figure in the Abawanga kingdom, was active and had interactions with the Arab-Swahili, which influenced the spread of Islam among the Abawanga. The year 2010 was chosen as the endpoint of the study because it adequately captured the extent to which the influence of westernization on the spread and practice of Islam among the Abawanga had become clearly evident. The year 2010 also marked the coming into force of Kenya's 2010 Constitution

following its promulgation on 27th August 2010. Besides introducing a new system of governance, the 2010 Constitution of Kenya had far-reaching implications on the socio-cultural fabric of communities across the country. This research, therefore, endeavored to assess the impact of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya on the practice of Islam among the Abawanga.

The years 1880 to 2010 are also sufficiently long to allow for an investigation for a deeper understanding of the complex historical and cultural factors that shaped the Abawanga people's relationship with Islam. However, this timeframe was not rigid, as the researcher examined the pre-1880 and post-2010 periods to provide additional insights that bolstered the study's central argument.

The choice of the research topic, "Emergence and Growth of Islam Among the Abawanga of Kakamega County, 1880-2010," was influenced by the region's rural context and its predominantly Christian population. As a result, the impetus to explore the subject was prompted by the longstanding presence of Islam in the region.

One of the study's limitations was the difficulty in obtaining primary data for the pre-colonial era because the majority of the earlier converts had already passed away. This challenge was addressed through the incorporation of secondary sources in the study. Certain challenges arose due to the researcher's Christian background, which occasionally influenced interactions with Muslim respondents in mosques. Owing to the strict Islamic norms governing conduct within mosques, the mosque leadership was reluctant to allow a non-Muslim to address them on religious matters. Some individuals found it difficult to understand why a Christian would be interested in studying Islam.

In several instances, some informants required an initial in-person meeting with the researcher before consenting to an interview with the research assistant. Given that the researcher was a non-Muslim conducting a study among Muslims, some respondents believed that the researcher's withdrawal was driven by ulterior motives.

Additionally, several interviewees were hesitant to provide the researcher with information, particularly regarding matters of Islamism. Some informants declined to be questioned without explaining their decision, while others were unable to divulge information they believed to be personal, such as their marital status and highest level of schooling. Moreover, some informants failed to return the questionnaires provided to them while others – particularly the elderly – returned them without responding to the questions. Some individuals questioned the personal benefits they would derive from participating in study. The researcher had to explain the significance of the study to them. Most of these hurdles were addressed through the involvement of a Muslim assistant researcher from the study community.

1.8 Literature Review

A thematic review of the literature was conducted. It concentrated on studies examining the spread and practice of Islam in Africa, Kenya, and Western region of the country. Given the broad breadth of the study in terms of individuals and systems, numerous generalizations at various levels were justifiable. With regard to the Abawanga's Islamization, this review aimed to test such generalizations. The study's literature review was structured around three main categories: first, the history of Islam among the Abawanga of the Mumias region in Kakamega County; second, the spread of Islam

among the Abawanga during the British colonialism; and third, continuity-change in Islam among the Abawanga of Kakamega County in post-colonial era. Since the Abawanga constitute the majority of the population practicing Islam in Kakamega County, literature concerning them was also included in the review.

1.8.1 Origins and development of Islam among the Abawanga

Studies have provided evidence that is useful in understanding the Abawanga's migration to and settlement in the Mumias region, as well as their interactions with the region's earliest visitors. These include, investigations into the Abaluhya's past by Osogo (1966) and Were (1967). Dealing (1974) and Sakwa (1971) both looked at the political history of the Abawanga. The migrations and settlement of the Abaluhya in their current home are traced throughout history by Osogo and Were. In a chapter on the Abawanga in Were (1966), the author traces their emigrations from Tiriki to Wangaland. Although each provides a general outline of the Abaluhya's interactions with the early outsiders, particularly the Arab-Swahili, this was not their primary focus. Their primary focus appears to have been on past migration patterns and the Abaluhya people's subsequent political response to colonialism.

Arnold (1888), documented the spread of Islam from Arabia westward into Christian Europe and eastward to Persia, Central Asia, India, and beyond. He also sheds light on Muslim immigration to Africa and the Balkans. Arnold distinguishes between the methods used in missionary work in Christianity and Islam, following German Orientalist Max Mullar's classification of both Islam and Christianity as "missionary" religions. He attributes the effectiveness of Muslim preachers to Islam's lack of a

priesthood and ecclesiastical institution. Generally speaking, the work of Arnold gives a detailed description of how Islam has spread into areas that were formerly occupied by Christians, pivoting away from the conventional claim that Muslims persecuted Christians to take into account things like trade, politics, and tolerance. This work was pertinent to the current study since it examined the elements that aided in the Islamization of African societies as well as the genesis and history of Islam. Arnold's work does not, however, fully address how Islam changed during the colonial and post-colonial periods, a gap that the current study seeks to remedy.

Trimingham (1968), discussed the effects of Islam as a religious tradition on Africans. His work opens with an example of the spread and assimilation of Islam in Africa, showing the many stages of its integration. It provides an overview of how Islam changed African culture, how it affected many facets of African life, and the means through which those impacts were felt. The concept that Islam thrives in an urban setting with trading relations also lends credence to its significance. This is only a broad overview and not a comprehensive study of Islam in Africa.

Lewis (1966), examined the diverse mechanisms through which Islam was disseminated throughout Africa and the key agents responsible for its propagation. Lewis discusses historical viewpoints, the beginnings and development of Islamic influence, the forces that propelled, as well as the elements that either facilitated or hindered the spread of Islam across tropical areas. He discusses distinctive features of African Islam and the institutions that have shaped its development. Certain regional trends are highlighted, with Nigeria and Sudan cited as examples of African countries where Islam has exerted

an internal effect. In his study of the region, (Lewis, 1966) devoted considerable attention to Islam in Tanzania and along the East African Coast, but gave little focus to the religion in Kenya and the interior parts of the East African.

Abdalla's (1971) work was relevant to the current investigation. The work examined the Islamic and coastal influences in the Mumias region. It primarily concentrated on who the earliest settlers in Mumias were, the types of influences they brought, and the extent to which the Abawanga accepted or rejected these influences. However, the scope of Abdalla's study is confined to the early 20th century. The goal of the current study was to understand the transformation of Islam during the post-independence era.

Sperling (1988:44), argued that during the 19th century, the southern Kenyan Coast had been gradually included into the Busaidi Arabs of Zanzibar's East African economic empire. The East African economy was expanding at the same time under intense international pressure and external economic forces led to a significant increase in demand for copal, ivory, grain, and gum along the Kenyan Coast. The quantity of these commodities reaching the towns was insufficient to meet both local and global demand. As a result, Muslims increased trade and agricultural output, thereby extending their economic reach to the mainland. Sperling, however, falls short of fully explaining how the villages in the interior adopted Islam. He also limits his studies to the Kenyan Coast. This study set out to address this gap.

Bunger (1972), described the process of Islamization among the Pokomo. Bunger discusses how the Pokomo became increasingly Islamic under the influence of the Bajunis, Arabs and Swahilis. He also explains how a number of factors, including

poverty and a dearth of Muslim experts, contributed to the collapse of Islam among the Pokomo. The role that Muslim agents played in the Islamization of the Pokomo people is of relevance to this study.

Trimingham's *"Islam in East Africa"* (1964) is the most thorough study of the religion in East Africa, though it presents a broad history rather than a detailed analysis. The book's thematic examination of various facets of Islam is important for comprehending both the fundamentals of the Islamic faith and how Islam had affected the coastal populations of East Africa. Some of the topics he addresses include the early Muslim settlement along the Coast, what he terms contemporary Muslim communities, and Swahili. He gives a brief history of how Islam was introduced to the interior. This study sought to fill the gap by thoroughly examining the spread of Islam into the interior, particularly among the Abawanga of Kakamega County.

Several studies highlighted the role of Arab-Swahili commerce in promoting the expansion of Islam into inland areas. According to Johnson (1902:218) and Gimode (1993:115), the Arab-Swahili traders arrived in Buluhyia in the 1850s. They proved that Arab-Swahili slave traders visited the Wanga kingdom, which accounts for the Abawanga's higher prevalence of Islam than other Luhya ethnic groupings. Trimingham (1964), agreed with them when he stated that Muslim traders played a major role in the spread of Islam into East Africa's interior. These researchers did not, however, specifically express how contacts between Arab traders and the local populace influenced the growth of Islam.

According to Were (1969), it was during the reign of Nabongo Shiundu, who ruled from 1841 to 1882, that the Wanga Kingdom was first exposed to Islam. Although the exact date is unknown, Were (1969) verifies that it was during Nabongo Shiundu's reign that Muslims first arrived in the Mumias region, and by 1878 Islam had become ingrained among the locals. The Muslim traders from the Coast, who eventually converted the Abawanga to Islam, were enthusiastically welcomed by Nabongo Shiundu. This aspect appears to be particularly relevant to the present study regarding the role played by Nabongo Shiundu in the Islamization of the Abawanga.

Nabongo Mumia was born in or around 1849 and assumed the reign of kingship around 1882. His life and times were explored by Osogo (1967) and Kenyanchui (1992). Significantly, as the Abawanga king, Nabongo Mumia had intimate ties with the Arab-Swahili and converted to Islam. Incidentally, the present study focuses on the period beginning in 1880. Therefore, the development of Islam among the Abawanga and Nabongo Mumia's political influence are closely intertwined, and the study will draw extensively on their biographies to inform this analysis.

According to Kariuki (1995), the Agikuyu were exposed to Islam due to the increased demand for food during the Nyeri famine, labour, and working conditions. According to Nzibo (1995), contact with Muslim traders from the Coast led to the conversion of the interior population to Islam. Most converts emerged in the former Western and Nyanza Provinces. These studies offered crucial information that shaped the present investigation into the forces driving Islamization.

Nasambu (1999), investigated the extent of Islam's spread among the Babukusu. Her research sheds light on how Mumias, the location of the present study, acted as the primary hub for the spread of Islam in Bukusuland, rendering it particularly pertinent to the current investigation. Nasambu's primary concern was the Islamization of the Babukusu, hence she did not go further into the development of Islam among the Abawanga during colonial and postwar times. The current study was designed to fill this identified gap in the literature.

1.8.2 Impact of colonialism and Christianity on the spread of Islam among the Abawanga

According to Nzibo's (1994) work, colonialism served as the impetus for the spread of Islam into the interior regions. He contends that, before then, coastal Muslims in Kenya were largely uninterested in spreading Islam beyond the coastal cities. Thus, the study is relevant to the present research, which aims to investigate the impact of British colonization on the Abawanga's adoption of Islam.

Nabongo Mumia's response to the Arab-Swahili and Europeans was examined by Aseka (1989). In his significant study of the Abaluhya, he analyzed the issue from a political economy perspective. He traced the onset of social segregation in Luhyaland to Mumia's invitation of the Arab-Swahili, and later the British. He came to the conclusion that colonialism, despite its oppression, was an important factor in the social differentiation among the Abaluhya. Given its scope and objectives, the study failed to consider Mumias' unique context.

Quraishy (1981), in "*Text Book of Islam Book I*"—a book prepared for the curriculum of Islamic Religious Education in secondary schools—provided the historical backdrop of Islam as well as an account of how the British unintentionally facilitated the spread of Islam to Kenya's interior. The book's target audience of secondary school students studying Islamic religion explains the lack of a detailed examination of Islam's expansion throughout Kenya.

According to Mathews (2013), the epistemic prestige of Muslim culture, Arabic literacy, and Kadhi courts diminished in Kenya with the inception of British colonial control. He further notes that coastal inhabitants increasingly sought favourable court decisions outside the Kadhi Courts, which had lost independent jurisdiction, and that many pursued employment and education within a British colonial system that offered limited support for Islamic studies. However, Mathews (2013), was unable to demonstrate how colonialism influenced the growth of Islam in the interior.

Hamid's (1980) report, focused on the expansion of secondary education in the coastal region of Kenya. Hamid noted that the Qur'anic schools had no prescribed curriculum, but he also noted that the higher Islamic educational institutions followed a particular type of curriculum. Few students, he observed, followed conventional higher study under the *ulama's* supervision. He noted that Islamic educational institutes taught Arabic language, the Qur'an, logic, and Islamic Jurisprudence as courses. The study is relevant to the present research that aims to comprehend the characteristics of Islamic education during the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods.

Kabiri (1990), outlined the colonial factor's role in the spread of Islam to Nairobi. He demonstrated that the rise of Islam was partially and unintentionally influenced by colonialism. It was partially colonialism's fault because it only helped Muslims and potential converts to go to Nairobi. According to Kabiri (1990), it had little bearing on whether or not these prospective converts in the upcountry adopted Islam. Even in its distribution function, Kabiri (1990) notes that, it was not a contribution that was intended. It is clear that Kabiri's primary focus is the Islamization of Nairobi. His presentation is less focused on how Islam spread throughout Kenya's interior, including Kakamega County, the study's focus location.

1.8.3 Continuity-change in Islam among the Abawanga of Mumias in post-colonial era

Palmer (2001), examined how Islamic individuals fit into today's secular culture and noted that it relies on how resourceful they are. According to Haddad (1991), Esposito (1992), and Lebor (1997), there is evidence of a "tentative ascent" into Western civilization in the contemporary analysis of Islam in the diaspora. According to Kepel and Roy's (2003) description of a transitional Islam, Muslim immigrants and their descendants who reside in non-Muslim nations frequently have a sense of a "growing universalistic Islam identity." According to the two academics, the idea of a single Islam practiced worldwide in a same manner and an Islam that transcends national and ethnic custom becomes significant as world cultures become more integrated as a result of improved communications, media, migration, and travel. These works are relevant to the current study, which aims to shed light on how the Abawanga's practice of Islam has been impacted by westernization.

Kausar (1976), delves into the life of Muslim women. He addresses the effects of modernity on Muslim society, including women and family planning, women and modern fashions, and provides a detailed examination of the difficulties faced by Muslim women in the age of modernity. This sheds light on the struggles that a person or a Muslim society could have while upholding the Islamic faith in the contemporary era. In this setting, modernization is viewed in a Western perspective. This book illustrates how societal outlook can be impacted by change in any manner, leading to conflict within the individual and ultimately within society. The goal of the current study, which was conducted in light of the "Social Exchange theory," was to determine how Islam and modernity interact and how they might coexist peacefully.

Fisher (1975), El-Helou (1990), and Sifuna (1990), discussed how modern education and Islamic religious instruction might coexist. The viability of combining *madrassa* with secular education has been examined using these thinkers' views on integration. This is an aspect of Islam that has changed among the Abawanga and the rest of the Muslim *ummah* in Kenya. The current study endeavored to assess the extent of integration of Islamic education into secular education.

According to Bujra (1970), Islamic communities only exist in an ideological sense since people are more likely to be loyal to their ethnic groups than to their religions. This hypothesis turned out to be intriguing and crucial to the investigation as it attempted to determine the extent to which the Abawanga people in the study region tended to view themselves as members of the Islamic community rather than their ethnic community.

According to Levtizion and Fisher (1987), rural Islam had a stronger bond to the pre-Islamic culture and social structure of the region. According to them, the *Sharia* law did not make much progress at the expense of customary law. The issue of the cultural clash that emerges from being a Muslim and abiding by customary law is brought to light in their work. In this regard, the current study aimed to investigate the extent to which Abawanga abandoned their customary laws and principles in favour of Islamic law and to determine whether any Islamic customs had undergone Africanisation.

According to Edward (2003), by a weird twist of global consumerism, Arabs were exchanging their oil in the open world marketplace for a foreign and antagonistic Western culture. He noted that Western values were taking over the Arab and Islamic cultures. Edward (2003), did not, however, go into detail about the specific features of Islamic culture that were evolving at the expense of Western society. This research was relevant to our effort to analyze how westernization affected the Abawanga's adoption of Islam throughout the post-colonial period.

Samiullah (1983), examined problems faced by Muslims in Kenya and made an effort to suggest solutions. The Christian church, according to him, has always seen Islam as a threat to its basic existence. As a result, it has continuously shown hostility towards Islam and Muslims. He claims that the National Council of Churches of Kenya's (NCCCK) anti-Islam campaign illustrates this point. The goal of this study was to learn more about how Muslims and Christians coexisted in Mumias.

Kahumbi (2009), examined the elements that shaped Christian-Muslim interactions between the 15th and 21st centuries. According to him, these relationships and exchanges

have been greatly influenced by the Portuguese element, the missionary-colonial factor, the Islamic threat factor, the Kiswahili factor, and the Muslim opposition factor. With a few exceptions, he claims that these relations have generally been chilly. Kahumbi's work is relevant to the present investigation, which aimed to examine Mumias' Muslim-Christian interactions.

Ayoub (2004), recommended primarily theological objectives for discourse, such as acknowledging the divine inspiration of each religion, being spiritual companions on a path towards the divine, and considering each faith to be salvific, in order to promote healthy Muslim-Christian coexistence. This work is relevant to the current study which sought to establish the cause of the strife between Muslims and Christians and measures to be considered to foster Muslim-Christian coexistence.

Abd al-Ati (1975), concentrated on the persistence of Islam in the community under Islamization. He asserts that Islam's faith is in no way a formality or a matter of face value. He claims that the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* outline the essential values and provide the benchmarks for a meaningful faith. This is because Islam permeates every element of life profoundly and productively. In addition, he makes the case that Islam is a lost cause if religion is not accompanied by deeds and practice. Practice is the only way to give faith life and enable it to fulfill its purpose. The act of practicing itself gives faith power, sustenance, and survival. In response, faith empowers people to practice their beliefs steadfastly and consistently. This is due to how closely practice and faith are related to one another and how obvious it is that they are interdependent. Our study

looked into the implications of such a finding in light of the Abawanga people's continued practice of Islam.

It is clear from the foregoing discussions that a wide range of research have focused on the development of Islam among African populations, including Abawanga but no available academic addresses the eventual modifications made to Islam after its founding. Moreover, most scholars take a broad perspective of how colonialism influenced the Islamization of African societies in general and Kenyan communities in particular. Limited and generalized research has been conducted on the Abawanga community of Kakamega County. This study provides an in-depth assessment of the trends in the Islamization of the Abawanga during the colonial period. Finally, there is limited understanding of how Islam evolved across African communities during the post-colonial era. This study aims to address this evident lacuna.

1.9 Theoretical framework

Theories are essentially illustrative tools employed to explain a phenomenon. Islamization as a process involves the blending of at least two cultures. Therefore, a theoretical framework that examines their interaction is required. In order to construct an eclectic framework for understanding the growth of Islam among the Abawanga, this study examines two theories: Social Exchange theory and Acculturation theory.

Social Exchange theory is a sociological framework that was developed by George Homans (1910 – 1989), who explained human behaviour in terms of exchanges between individuals and groups. The theory posits that social changes are based on reciprocity, where individuals or groups exchange resources, services or support. For instance, when

one person provides something of value to another, it creates an obligation for the recipient to reciprocate, fostering a sense of fairness and balance in the relationship. In the context of the present study, Abawanga reciprocated Arab-Swahili traders' hospitality and generosity by embracing Islam.

According to Homans, individuals engage in social exchanges to maximize their benefits and minimize costs, as social relationships are formed and maintained through a process of cost-benefit analysis. Individuals weigh the reward and cost associated with a relationship, and their satisfaction and continuation depend on whether the perceived benefits outweigh the perceived costs. People are likely to end relationships where the costs become too high or the rewards too low (Homans, 1961).

Applying Social Exchange theory in the assessment of the permeation and growth of Islam among the Abawanga provided insights into the motivations and dynamics of the process. The social exchanges between Abawanga and Muslim traders from the East African Coast significantly impacted on the individual and communal socio-cultural practices of the Abawanga. For instance, trade and economic opportunities with Muslim merchants encouraged the Abawanga to join Islam. The conversion was strategically geared towards benefiting from the lucrative trade with the Arab-Swahili as well as acquiring new products such as sugar, jewellery and guns.

Converting to Islam conferred social status, prestige, and influence within the community. The Abawanga also exchanged cultural practices and traditions with Muslim communities, leading to adoption of Islamic practices such as dressing in *kanzu* and *buibui*, and partaking the five daily prayers. The Abawanga cultural interactions

with Muslim traders were likely facilitated by the community's strategic location along the long-distance trade routes, which contributed to their adoption of Islam.

Social Exchange theory was further developed by Peter Blau (1918 – 2002), who highlighted the importance of economic power dynamics and interdependence between individual groups. Blau employs primarily economic terms and grounds his theory in emerging social structures evident in patterns of social exchange within small groups. He contributed to the idea of distinguishing between social and economic exchanges and exchange and power (Blau, 1964). The current study endeavored to assess the economic factors that contributed to the Islamization of the Abawanga. The research also aimed to examine the role of Nabongo Mumia, the king of the Abawanga, in the spread of Islam among his subjects.

Richard Marc Emerson (1925 – 1982), was inspired by Homans and Blau's ideas of Social Exchange theory. Emerson focused on the interaction and relationship between individuals and parties. His view of Social Exchange theory emphasizes the resource availability, power, and dependence as primary dynamics. According to him, socio-economic and political power, and need to acquire resources influences cultural exchange and acquisition of new norms (Emerson, 1978). This study sought to assess the impact of the Christian missionaries' whereabouts from the colonial government on spread of Islam among the Abawanga.

In sum, applying Social Exchange theory offers a deeper understanding of the complex socio-economic factors that contributed to the introduction, spread, growth, and

persistence of Islam among the Abawanga during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods.

Acculturation theory was also employed in this study to assess the introduction and growth of Islam among the Abawanga. The term “acculturation” was coined in 1880 by American geologist John Wesley Powell. He initially defined it as the psychological changes induced in individuals through cross-cultural imitation (Powell, 1880). Later, in 1936, Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits provided a more formal definition of acculturation as the phenomena resulting from the continuous first-hand contact between groups with different cultures. They noted that this contact could lead to changes in the cultural patterns of either or both groups (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936).

Douglas (1994), defined acculturation as the process of adapting to a new culture, involving a shift in an individual’s patterns of thinking and feeling. According to Douglas (1994), as culture is an integral part of a human being, the process of acculturation takes a deeper turn when the issue of language is brought on the scene.

The main proponent of Acculturation theory is John Schumann, who developed it in 1978 mainly to describe the process of acquiring a second language. (Schumann, 1978), based his acculturation model on two sets of factors: social and psychological. However, beyond language acquisition, Acculturation theory can also be applied to other socio-cultural phenomena, such as the adoption of new religious practices like Islam, as demonstrated in this study.

Acculturation theory explores the psychological and social changes that occur when individuals from different cultures come into contact. It examines how individuals and groups adapt to new cultural environments, including the adoption of new cultural elements and the potential loss of their original cultural identity. This process can involve both positive and negative consequences, such as increased cultural understanding and potential for conflict. According to John W. Berry, acculturation is not a static state but a dynamic process of change that can unfold over time. It encompasses both cultural shifts – such as changes in language, customs and values – and psychological adjustments. Individuals and groups can adopt different strategies for navigating acculturation (Berry, 1997).

John Berry's model of acculturation identifies four main strategies through which individuals or communities respond to cultural contact and change. Integration involves maintaining of one's original culture while also interacting positively with the new culture; assimilation refers to adopting the new culture and largely abandoning the original culture; separation entails maintaining the original culture and avoiding interaction with the new culture; and marginalisation occurs when individuals lose contact with both their original and the new culture (Berry, 1997).

In the context of the Islamization of the Abawanga, these strategies provide a useful framework for understanding how different members of the community responded to Islamic influence. Some Abawanga integrated Islamic practices with traditional beliefs and customs, reflecting an integration strategy. Others fully embraced Islam and abandoned their indigenous practices, showing assimilation. A section of the

population, however, resisted Islamic teachings and maintained traditional Wanga customs, thus exhibiting separation. Cases of marginalization were also evident among those who, caught between the two systems, lost a sense of belonging to either cultural framework.

According to Berry (1997), acculturation can be a stressful process, particularly when individuals encounter difficulties adapting to a new culture or face discrimination. In the context of the present study, seclusion of the Arab-Swahili Muslims from Abawanga in Mumias, along with their failure to settle among the Abawanga people in the rural areas outside Mumias town, slackened the process of Islamization process in the community. Acculturation experiences vary significantly between individuals and groups, depending on factors such as age, personality, social support and the specific cultural context.

Acculturation theory denotes a range of factors that influence the process of acculturation. The first of these is cultural similarity. In the context of the current study, the similarity between Abawanga culture and Islamic practices influenced the ease of acculturation. The second factor is socio-economic, which played a major role in influencing how the Abawanga community responded to the spread of Islam. The last factor is leadership and authority, which profoundly facilitated acculturation among the Abawanga. For instance, the Nabongoship, specifically during the reigns of Nabongo Shiundu and Nabongo Mumia, played an important role in promoting Islam among the Abawanga.

In sum, application of Acculturation theory helped in analyzing the complex dynamics of cultural exchange between Abawanga and the Arab-Swahili and adoption of Islamic practices. The theory also provided a framework for understanding the historical context in which Islam spread among the Abawanga. Acculturation theory was also relevant to the study as it highlighted the diversity of cultural experiences and the complexities of identity formation among the Abawanga.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.10.1 Research Design

This study employed the historical research design to document the emergence and subsequent growth of Islam among the Abawanga of Kakamega County in a chronological manner. It linked current circumstances with past events, highlighting changes and continuities, and analyzing their impact on the existing religions notably, Christianity and African indigenous religions. This method was chosen because it allowed data to be collected from a sample drawn from a predetermined demographic, enabling the researcher to capture the opinions of a broad group of individuals aged 18 to 88. The study design was pivotal for effectively covering a large study area.

1.10.2 Target population

The Abawanga community's Muslim male and female residents of various ages made up the study's target population. However, since the study sought to establish the impact of Islam and its relationship with Christianity, some Abawanga Christians were also targeted. A few individuals in the study area who were not Abawanga were also

interviewed. These were Muslims of the Arab-Swahili and Nubian descent. Elders, Islamic experts, Muslim and Christian religious leaders, teachers in Islamic educational institutions, and representatives of Muslim organisations were among the informants. The respondents' age and gender distribution were taken into account.

1.10.3 Sample size

The study involved various types of informants, including Muslim youth, Muslim elders, *imams*, Arab-Swahili and Christians. 15 *imams*, 25 Muslim elders, 15 Muslim youth, 5 Arab-Swahilis, 4 Islamic Religious Education teachers, 12 Christians, 1 Wanga council of elders and 1 Muslim council of elders made up the study's sample. This yielded a total sample size of 78. The respondents were distributed evenly from the three Sub-counties of the research locale.

1.10.4 Sampling Technique

To accurately extrapolate the study's findings back to the community from which the selected sample was produced, sampling process involved selecting units, such as individuals or organizations, from the population of interest. Since this study required collection of extensive and varied knowledge of the history of Islam and the expansion of Islam among the Abawanga during the colonial and post-colonial periods from an array of sub-groups, stratified sampling approach was used. Application of stratified sampling to study the Islamization of Abawanga intended to provide valuable insights into the experiences of different strata within the community. The strata included age groups such as youth, adults and elders, social classes such as secular-educated and *madrassa*-educated Abawanga Muslims, religious groups such as Islam and

Christianity, tribal groups such as Abawanga, Arab-Swahili and Nubians, and groups based on geographic locations such as urban and rural areas. Due to the restricted number of informants available for this historical study, the research used a snowballing technique in which certain informants connected the researcher with other experts on the spread and practice of Islam among the Abawanga.

In addition to this, purposive and convenient sampling was conducted to ensure that a lot of pertinent information was collected and corroborated with secondary data. Convenient views were collected from academia and locals who had not been originally included in the sample. This made collating of data easier as the researcher was able to snowball to suggested informants.

1.10.5 Study area

MAP OF KENYA



Figure 1.1 Map of Kenya showing the location of the study area

Figure source: Atlas of Kenya, 2015

MAP OF WESTERN PROVINCE

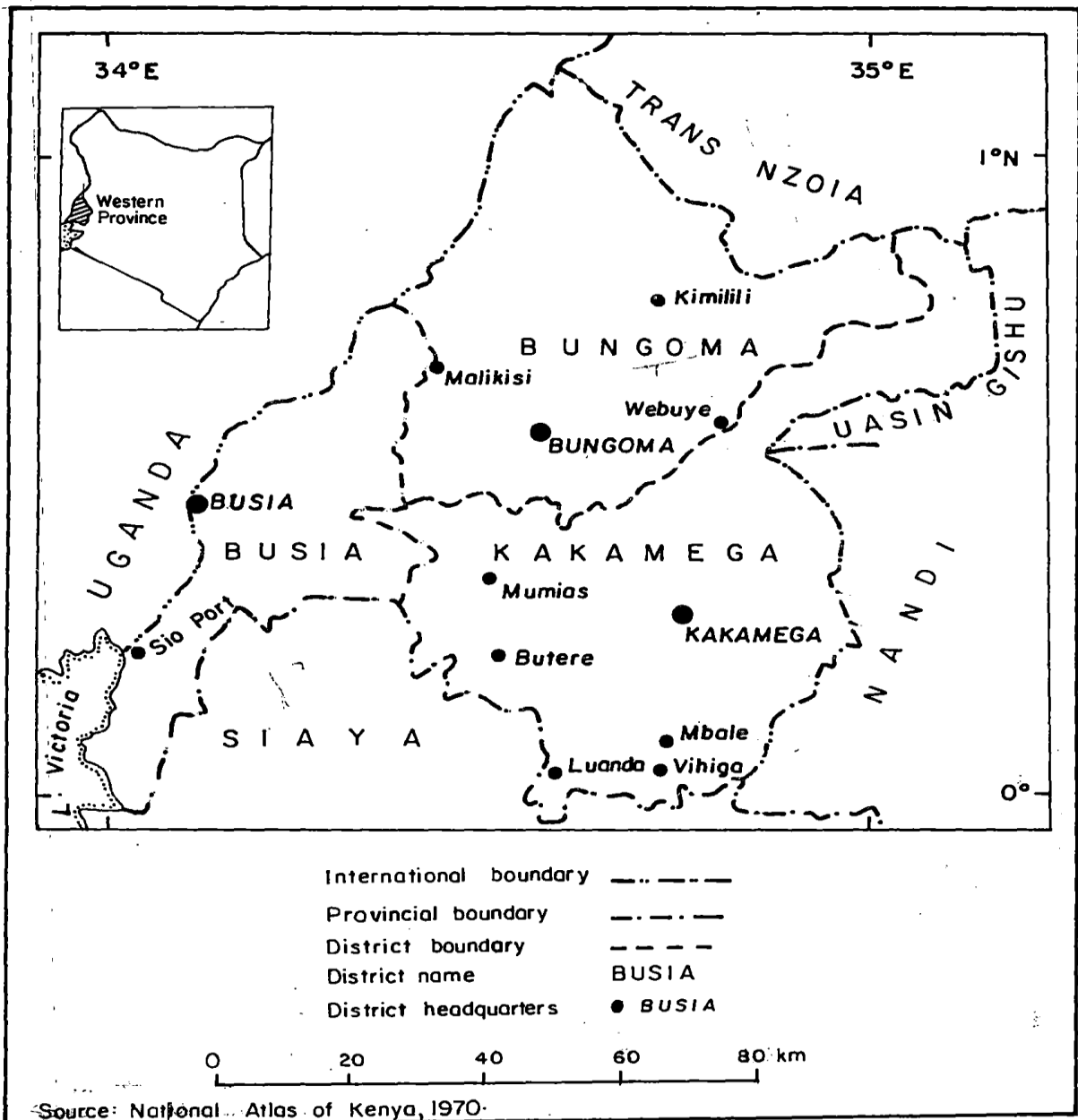


Figure 1.2: Map of Western Province

Source: Atlas of Kenya 1970

MAP OF KAKAMEGA COUNTY

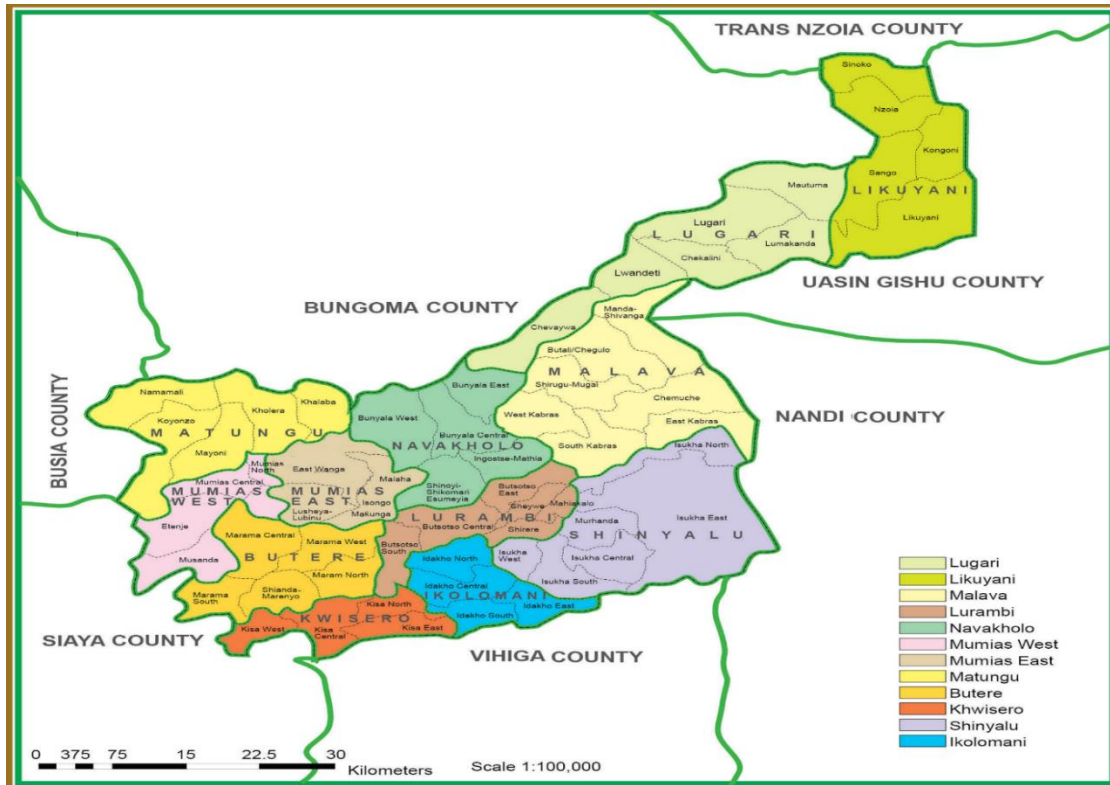


Figure 1.3: Map of Kakamega County showing study area
 Source: Atlas of Kenya 2015

MAP OF WANGALAND

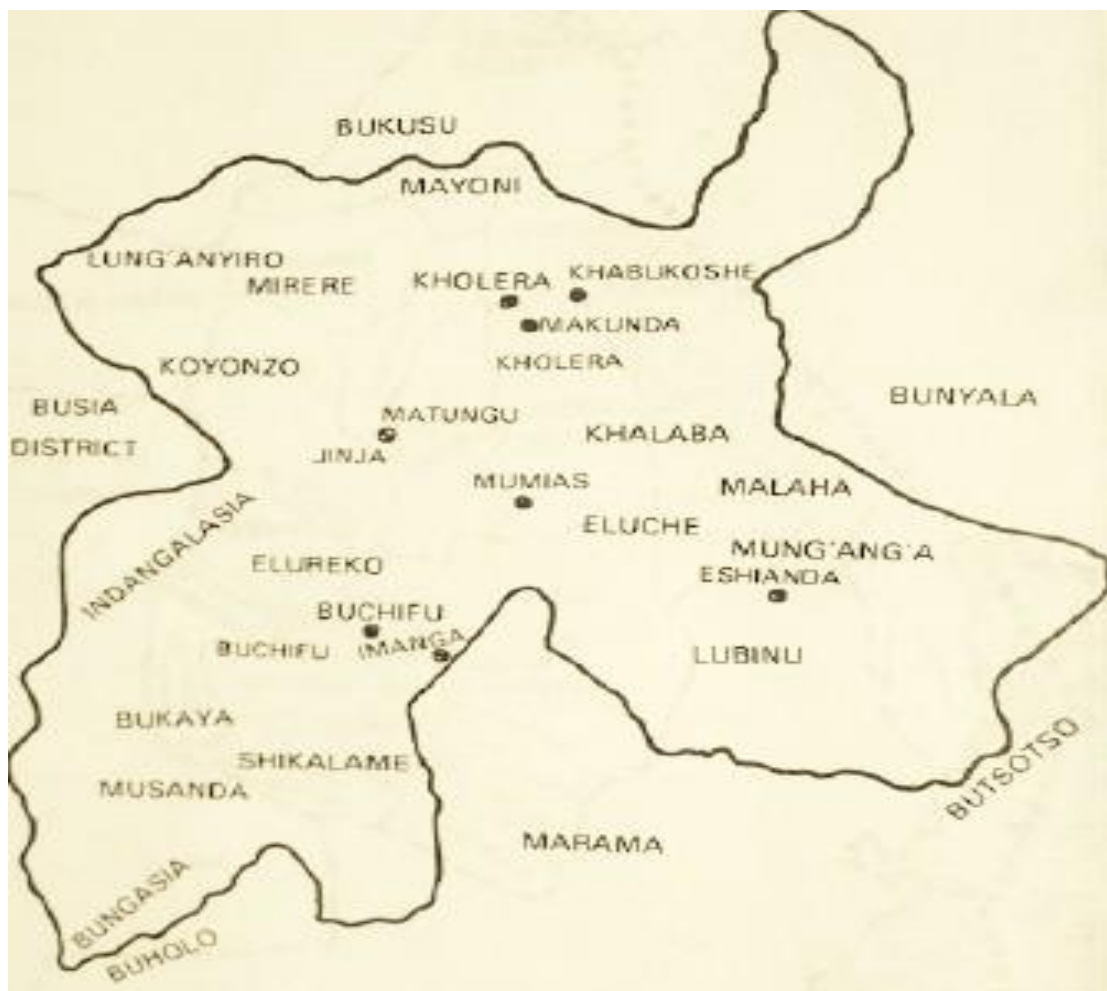


Figure 1.4: Map of Wangaland showing the location of the study area

Kakamega County is found in what used to be Kenya's Western Province. It borders Vihiga County to the South, Siaya County to the West, Bungoma and Trans-Nzoia Counties to the North, and Nandi and Uasin Gishu Counties to the East. The County covers an area of 3,051.3 square kilometers. It has 12 Sub-counties, namely; Butere, Mumias East, Mumias West, Matungu, Navakholo, Khwisero, Shinyalu, Lugari, Malava, Likuyani, Lurambi, and Ikolomani (Kakamega County CIDP, 2018). The study

was carried out in Kakamega County's Matungu, Mumias East and Mumias West sub-counties. According to Barclay (1977:4), Mumias town is positioned about at 0° 20' north latitude and 30° 30' east longitude. Located on the major route to Bungoma, Mumias town is roughly 32 kilometers from Kakamega town.

Multicultural influences from a mixture of Europeans, Arabs, Nubians, Swahilis, and native African tribes can be seen in Mumias East, Mumias West, and Matungu Sub-counties. The Abawanga community, one of the sub-tribes of the larger Luhya tribe, dominates it. Muslims make up 40% of the people that live there. Third after the coastal and northeastern regions, Mumias region is the epicenter of Islamic expansion in Western Kenya (KNBS, 2019).

1.10.6 Research instruments

Oral interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were employed in the research with selected group of individuals to gather data. Abdulaziz Muchinyi, the research assistant, assisted the researcher in locating competent informants within the Abawanga community from the research region, who then established Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and were interviewed by the researcher. Selected informants were gathered together and interrogated.

The FGDs met on various days in each of the three Sub-counties that made up the research locale. Three FGD talks were held for the study: the first on 22nd October 2019, in Namalenge, Matungu Sub-County, the second on 30th October 2019, in Makunga, Mumias East Sub-County and the third on 20th November 2019, in Shibale, Mumias West Sub-County. Questionnaires were administered to respondents who were unable

to participate in the interviews due to time constraints. Oral interview guide sheets were favored. Open-ended questions were also preferred since they were specifically created to achieve the study's goals.

1.10.7 Data collection

An array of research techniques and sources of information were used to gather data. These included field research, library research and research in archives. The Kenya National Archives (KNA), located in Nairobi, provided the historical information used in this study. Newspapers, District Annual Reports, Provincial Annual Reports, and Legislative Council Debates were among the sources from which the data was gathered. These sources offered details on the cultural beliefs of the Abawanga people as well as the penetration and development of Islam among them.

Libraries of Kenyatta University, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, and Kibabii University were utilized for library research. Journals, textbooks, periodicals, local dailies, dissertations, and theses, among other items, were read and analyzed from these libraries. Data on the Acculturation and Social Exchange theories was acquired through library research. Additionally, library research provided essential literature that served as the cornerstone for the formulation of the central concern of the study. Through library research, information on the transmission of Islam from Arabia through East Africa and ultimately to Mumias region was discovered. Some literature on Abawanga traditional beliefs was also acquired through library research.

Primary data gathered through field study was added to secondary data acquired through archival and library research. Oral interviews, use of questionnaires, and observational methods were employed to gather primary data. The interviews were conducted using a structured interview guide. Kiswahili, *Oluwanga*, and English were used to conduct interviews where necessary. Since some informants were illiterate, the oral interview method was chosen. In addition to taking notes, interview sessions were occasionally tape-recorded to prevent frequent interruptions. With the exception of a few instances where the research assistant was needed, interviews were generally conducted one-on-one during sessions.

It was necessary to rephrase the questions to promote open dialogue. Oral interviews offered the chance to cross-check responses to ensure that the data being collected was understood and, therefore, had validity. This prevented potential misinterpretations. Through probing, the researcher was able to understand and record the respondents' point of view.

The method of non-participant observation was used. In order to determine the level of Islam's influence among the Abawanga, the researcher attended Islamic and Abawanga Muslim cultural events such marriages, funerals, and *Eid* festivals. This was a thorough and in-depth account of the changes that Islam had brought forth. The necessary data was gathered using an observation guide. The researcher employed the questionnaire method in addition to the interview method.

1.10.8 Data analysis and interpretation

Since Kiswahili and *Oluwanga* were also utilized in addition to English, some information collected through oral interviews and tape recording was transcribed and translated into English. The data collected by questionnaires and oral interviews was contrasted with data from secondary sources to determine its originality and applicability. The information was laid down in a textual fashion as chapters of the study. Based on the objectives, the data was then categorized, processed, and projected into themes. Thereafter, the data was analyzed using a qualitative methodology that included the use of contrasts, logical justifications, descriptions, inferences, and critical examination of the data. The information was then interpreted in light of the Social Exchange and Acculturation theories. Conclusions from the data were reached at different stages through analytical discussion using description, comparison, and interpretation.

Historical methods of external and internal criticism were utilized to analyze the data to achieve reliability and validity. The external review of this work focused on confirming the authenticity of the documents used. To determine their suitability as reporters of the events in question, it necessitated a detailed examination of the author's traits and credentials.

The accuracy of the information in the documents was checked using internal criticism. This was done by assessing the reporters' professionalism, their objectivity in reporting the facts of the events, and the degree to which their accounts generally concurred with other information on the same subject that was available from other witnesses to the

same occurrences. Internal review determined the accuracy of the documents' data and evaluated the researcher's bias and potential distortionary intentions.

Internal criticism assessed the accuracy of the data, whereas external criticism assessed the document's veracity. External review of the oral interview data included confirming the informant's credentials on both a professional and academic level. Muslims who had understanding of Islam's history, development and culture served as the informants. Internal critique entailed evaluating the informant's oral information according to criteria established by previously published works on Islamic culture.

1.10.9 Ethical considerations

Although knowledge gained via study has a great value, human dignity cannot be compromised in the pursuit of knowledge (Osoo & Onen, 2009). The participants' dignity was protected throughout this investigation by adhering to the rules of ethics. The research's purpose and the criteria used to choose the informants for participation were explained to them in advance. Interviews and surveys were only carried out with the respondent's consent. The respondents were able to organize their time for interviews and group discussions as appointments were made on time. The researcher kept private and only used sensitive data, such as marital status and amount of wealth, for the duration of the study.

Participants' anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy were all assured. Respondents who objected to having their names and other identifying information added to the interview guidelines were respected by the researcher. Any spontaneous information provided by respondents was recorded during data cleaning and subsequently deleted, not being

coded or recorded for analysis. The respondents were always treated as equal participants in the study rather than as objects by the researcher. Prior to conducting research and having access to respondents, the researcher secured approval from the Graduate School at Kenyatta University and The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

1.11 Summary

The goal of this chapter was to provide the foundation for the study. The study's backdrop, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the research objectives, and the research premises are a few of the important topics covered. The chapter then concentrated on the study's scope, justification, and significance, as well as its limitations, theoretical underpinnings, and assessment of related research. The chapter went on to further explain the research methodology that would be used to carry out the investigation. The origin and growth of Islam among the Abawanga up to 1899 is covered in the following chapter. Early Islamic institutions and obstacles that hindered the spread of Islam among the Abawanga are also covered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM AMONG THE ABAWANGA UP TO 1899

2.1 Introduction

This chapter traces the migration of Abawanga to Mumias region, their settlement there, and the founding and growth of the Wanga kingdom. It also examines the evolution of the Abawanga people's traditional beliefs and ways of life. The chapter goes into more detail about the causes of Islam's spread and adoption among the Abawanga. The Arab-Swahili ventures into the interior of East Africa for trading activities and the consequent interactions with the Abawanga is one of the cardinal causes of the initial Islamization of the community. Also mentioned are early Islamic institutions among the Abawanga. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the obstacles that hindered the Islamization of the Abawanga. In discussing the above issues, the study made use of Acculturation theory and Social Exchange theory.

2.2.1 Migration and settlement of the Abawanga

The Abawanga are comprised of 22 clans called *tsinono* (singular *inono*). The following are *tsinono* (clans) of Abawanga with reference to female given in brackets: Abashitsetse (Bwibo), Abamulembwa (Namulembwa), Abang'ayo (Nang'ayo), Ababule (Nabule), Abalibo (Namwasi), Abakolwe (Nabakolwe), Abaleka (Nabaleka), Abachero (Nanjero), Abashikawa (Nashikawa), Abatsoye (Nabatsoye), Abamurono (Oronda), Abanashieni (Shieni), Abamwima (Namwima), Abamuniafu (Ngakhwa), Abambatsa (Luleti), Abashibe (Nashibe), Ababere (Nabere), Abamwende (Luchimbo),

Abakhami (Nakhami), Abakulubi (Akwanyi), Abang'ale (Namang'ale) and Ababonwe (Nabonwe) (Nur Maranje, O.I. 22/10/19).

Abawanga are one of the 17 sub-ethnic groups of the Abaluhya in Western Kenya (Esese, 1990:71). Mostly, they live in Kakamega County. They traveled from Uganda to Western Kenya, passing by Lake Turkana. Between A.D. 1598 and A.D. 1733, all Abaluhya sub-ethnic groups settled in their present abode. The Abawanga, however, stood out among them due to their political power and civilization in the Abaluhya area (Were, 1969).

The ancestors of the Abawanga people were part of the migration that settled in the Kampala region and created the Buganda kingdom. A Baganda prince by the name of Kaminyi, a son of Mawanda of Buganda, fled to Lela near Maseno with his sons Shikawa, Walienda, Lule, and Mwangi. Wamoyi, Wekhoba, Sakwa, Khabiakala, Mutende and Wangi were among Mwangi's sons. The Luo people who identify as Sakwa are descendants of Sakwa, whereas the Abakuria trace their ancestry to Mutende. Mwangi passed away at Lela, where he was subsequently buried. One of Mwangi's sons, Wangi, migrated to the Tiriki region in what is now Kakamega County (Were, 1969).

The community's eponym, Wangi, is the origin of the name "Abawanga". According to Were (1969), after a conflict with his brothers, Wangi, a monarch of his people (the Abashitsetse), moved to Imanga (a region between Mumias and Musanda) from Tiriki with his *akhasi* (the son to the sister to Wangi's mother), Mukolwe. At Imanga, there lived Abamuima and Abamulembwa. Wangi used to take baths in the River Nzoia at

Bumia, while residing in a modest home in Imanga. According to Nur Maranje (O.I. 22/10/19), Wanga hid his *omukasa* (a copper bracelet that was an essential royal insignia and a signal of great status) and pretended to be a peasant herdsboy because it was improper for a royal member to labour as a commoner. He served as a herdsman and village cleaner for Muima, the local chief of the Abamuima and related tribes in Imanga. Muima's wife later discovered that Wanga was, in fact, a monarch in disguise.

Wanga's people traveled from Tiriki to Muima's court to pick up their Nabongo Wanga when his royal position was uncovered. Wanga's wrongdoing was atoned for in a traditional ceremony before he was taken away. A family dispute erupted once more at Kaimosi. It forced Wanga, his family, and his followers to relocate to Imanga in the middle of the 16th century, where they made a permanent settlement. Khabiakala and Wamoyi II stayed in Kaimosi while Mutende moved to South Nyanza. Other Wanga's step-brothers went to Nandi. Nabongo Muima, who was reigning over Abamuima clan, allowed Wanga and his people to settle in uninhabited areas such as Eshikulu, Ebuchirinya, Tingolo, Ebutende and Indangalasia (Osogo, 1966).

Later, Wanga moved to Kimatuni before proceeding to Mt. Elgon. He, later withdrew and made his way to Matungu, where he founded the Wanga kingdom, after first settling at Elureko, a location that is now Mumias. Before passing away, Wanga had proclaimed himself the sole ruler (Nabongo), with his capital at Matungu. Muroko, Wabala, Muniafu, Ambatsa and Wamakwa were among Wanga's sons. More often than not, the eldest son of the reigning Nabongo succeeded his father as kingship was hereditary. Wanga's eldest son, Muroko, showed no leadership abilities. Wabala was therefore

Wanga's choice to succeed to the throne. Muroko killed Wabala out of envy (Nur Maranje, O.I. 22/10/19).

After having a daughter named Muswi, Wabala had a son named Chibwire. Chibwire had a son by the name of Musindalo. Musindalo had a son by the name of Chitech, who in turn had a son named Netia. A ruthless trickster, Netia took pleasure in killing others, especially his Maasai mercenaries. Netia's betrayal was a calculated move aimed at consolidating his authority while simultaneously eliminating the Maasai mercenaries, who had emerged as a rival source of power within his court. During his reign, Netia had depended heavily on the Maasai warriors for military support, but their growing influence soon became a threat to his leadership. In a bid to curb their power, he turned against them, hoping to restore his supremacy. The move, however, rebounded on him. The Maasai mercenaries retaliated, overthrowing and later assassinating Netia. Following his assassination, his son, Osundwa, succeeded him as ruler (Michael Shitawa, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Following Nabongo Osundwa's rule, the Nabongo dynasty experienced internal strife as his sons competed for succession. This intense rivalry weakened the central authority and created divisions within the kingdom, ultimately contributing to the decline of the empire between 1814 and 1840. For instance, Osundwa's younger son, Wamukoya, tricked the elder son, Kweyu, for the kingship. Kweyu broke away in protest and established Wanga Mukulu (Upper Wanga). Wanga Elureko (Lower Wanga) was controlled by Wamukoya (Were, 1969).

Although the two states coexisted, Wanga Elureko was more popular. The succession disputes not only destabilized the political structure but also undermined the dynasty's ability to maintain control over its territories and manage external threats effectively. During this time, the Maasai determined, and to some extent, controlled political development in the region (Were, 1969).

Wamukoya's son and heir, Shiundu, established a respected and successful reign, under which the Wanga kingdom reached its greatest territorial and political extent. 18 sons and 13 daughters were born to Nabongo Shiundu. Mumia was his third-born son. Michael Shitawa (O.I. 13/06/2025), a grandson of Nabongo Mumia, states that the Iteso people living in the Mirere area of Matungu Sub-county are descendants of Teso mercenaries who once served the Wanga Kingdom. The Abawanga affectionately referred to the Iteso as *Abamia*.

Shiundu's offspring, particularly those he had with Wamanya, experienced a lot of infant mortality. Mumia was so abandoned after his birth, as it was believed that he, too, would die in infancy. One of the *Abamia* (Iteso) mercenaries picked Mumia and brought him back to his parents. He was named "Makokha Mumia" at that point. The name "Makokha", which roughly translates to "rubbish" in *Oluwanga*, was traditionally given to a child born to parents who had lost several previous children.

Mumia ascended to the throne as a result of circumstances rather than in accordance with Wanga customs. Although the customs of the Wanga kingdom stipulated that the eldest son automatically became the heir, this was not always the case, as mothers and elders occasionally orchestrated palace takeovers. The eldest son, Mulama, who was

traditionally expected to succeed his father, passed away when he was a young boy. Luta was the rightful heir, but Wamanya, one of Nabongo Shiundu's wives, desired that her only child succeed him as king. She was also aware of Shiundu's disapproval of Mumia's personality. She consequently employed cunning and persuasion to secure Mumia's ascension to the position of Nabongo. She convinced Luta that his father, who was ill and hardly ventured outside, would not mind if he wore *shimbishira* (head-dress meant for heroes and kings) on his head (Osogo, 1967).

That implied Luta intended to overthrow his father and seize the kingdom, a move unprecedented. Consequently, Shiundu acted swiftly. He deprived Luta of both his throne and his inheritance. He even threatened to crown one of his daughters. His advisors, who had been courted by Wamanya, proposed that Mumia should succeed to the Nabongoship. Shiundu did not name a successor until the night before he passed away around 1882 when he reluctantly accepted Mumia (Osogo, 1967). Mumia was given the title of Nabongo and royal attire. He naturally assumed the role of guardian of Wanga customs and traditions when he was crowned the 17th Nabongo of the Wanga kingdom.

Men from different Luhya sub-tribes that were friendly to Abawanga were enlisted at the King's courtyard to perform various jobs since members of the royal family, Abashitsetse, were not permitted to work as labourers at Nabongo's court. Such males would afterwards marry into the community and live among the Abawanga after acquiring land. This explains why there are isolated populations of various Luhya sub-

tribes in Wangaland, such as the Abanyala and the Abamarama (Shaban Wefwira, O.I. 20/04/2022).

2.2.2 Traditional beliefs and practices of the Abawanga

The development of traditional beliefs and practices among the Abawanga was deeply rooted in their history and culture. In the patriarchal society of Abawanga, only male children were permitted to inherit property. The females belonged to a different bloodline because they were expected to get married elsewhere. Due to this, the Abawanga desired that their property be passed down through the clan. Despite never having been codified in written form, customary law was widely recognized and upheld as the guiding standard of conduct within the community (Magesa, 1998).

In order to acquire land, men cleared shrubs from the area. According to gender roles, men were expected to clear bushes and prepare the fields while women were primarily responsible for planting, cultivation and managing the crops. Unlike married women, unmarried daughters, single or divorced women were given lesser parcels of land to farm or would rely on their mothers' parcels of land until they were married or remarried. Married women had access to land through their husbands. Men could only inherit property after getting circumcised and married (Athman Shikolyo, O.I. 22/10/2019).

The institution of marriage was highly esteemed among the Abawanga. They saw it as the foundation of existence and a sacred ceremony since the entire family was fully involved and it preserved the family, which served as the cornerstone of religious practices and beliefs. Every Wanga child was granted a legitimate position in society

through marriage, which was based on parenthood in the social sense (Nyakwaka, 2013).

When children appeared ready for marriage, their parents searched for potential spouses. One's characteristics and the social standing of the family were important factors to take into account when searching for a spouse. As a result, marriage was seen as a responsibility, a social need and a natural element of life in which everyone was expected to take part. Otherwise, an individual who abstained from it was a blight on the neighborhood, a renegade against the law, and an "underman" in addition to being perceived abnormal. Under normal circumstances, not getting married meant that the individual had rejected society and society was expected to reject the individual in return (Mbiti, 1969:133).

Nyakwaka (2013), echoes that a man who did not marry was known as *omusumba* (a bachelor) and was despised and segregated by the community as it was considered a peculiarity. If anything, he was not allowed to lead cultural activities as it was believed he would bring a bad omen to the community. All women of marriageable age were supposed to get married. To ensure that no woman missed a man to marry, polygamy was encouraged. In most cases, the first wife was always consulted when her husband wanted to marry another wife.

It was prestigious for a man to have many wives as it was a symbol of wealth and power. A man received more respect depending on how many wives he had. This is due to the fact that dowry was required and that only a very wealthy man could afford to pay it for multiple wives. Dowry, which was paid after negotiations, came in form of goats, sheep

or cattle. Should divorce occur, dowry was supposed to be repaid. Exogamous marriage was the norm, and it was forbidden to marry someone from the same clan (Nyakwaka, 2013; Ali Ashikomere, O.I. 05/11/2019; Clement Mukoya, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Sex was strictly prohibited before marriage. This was to encourage siring of only legitimate children in marriage. Women and men who could bear children before marriage would often be ridiculed and forced to marry the person with whom they sired the child. Barrenness was considered one of the greatest misfortunes in a marriage. This would lower the status and respect accorded to a married woman (Nyakwaka, 2013).

Only boys were subjected to circumcision as a form of initiation during puberty. Boys considered circumcision to be a momentous stage since it signified the end of childhood and the start of adulthood (Gumo, 2018). The Abawanga circumcision – which was a consensual exercise – took place every even year in August. When a boy felt ready for the cut, he let his father know, who would then prepare the necessary requirements for the ceremony. The *omushebi* (circumciser), a bull, *busaa* (traditional booze) and a small house for isolation were among them. After circumcision, a group of initiates were sequestered in *irumbi* (a little house for isolation for newly initiated boys) for three months. When the period of isolation was over, the initiates would bathe in a river and receive instructions on how to behave as men. As men, they were then permitted to construct a separate hut in their father's compound, have their own land, cattle and marry their first wife.

Both natural and supernatural explanations were put forth as causes of death. Following the death, there was a time of wailing during which the dead person's body could be

seen. No cooking was allowed until the following day in the event of a death in the evening. Animals were slaughtered both during and following the funeral. During the funeral season, the grieving family did not prepare any meals. Family members made a variety of foods and brought them to the funeral. Funeral observances were expensive, extended over several days and nights and frequently included dance and drumming. After the passing away of their spouses, widows were subject to a number of restrictions and were ritually unclean for a certain amount of time. The widow occasionally donned her late husband's clothes until her *mulamwa* (brother-in-law) inherited her (Musa Bilal, O.I. 20/04/2022).

The Abawanga buried their dead with their heads facing eastwards, the community's place of origin. One of the Wanga clans, Abashibe, buried its deceased while seated. During the funeral time, a fire was ignited outside the deceased's residence. This was reportedly done to frighten off animals that might steal the buried body because burials were done in shallow graves. Typically, the deceased were interred in their own homes (Athman Shikolyo, O.I. 22/10/2019).

Close relatives shaved their hair clean three days after the funeral. During this event known as *olucheri* (a ceremony performed the third day following burial), a cow was slaughtered. Shaving heads was a method to pay respect to the deceased and cut ties with their spirits. Shaving one's head after losing a loved one represented the end of grief and the start of a new chapter for the widowed. New hair was a symbol of moving on. After the shaving exercise was over, the bereaved family members would gather in

the deceased's house for a meal, specifically *ugali* served with chicken (Abdallah Musah, O.I. 05/11/2019; Raziah Masakhwe, O.I. 27/12/2019).

Too much mourning was abhorred since it was believed to cause the spirits of the deceased to haunt the bereaved, especially at night, preventing them from sleeping peacefully. When someone died by suicide, they were not given any honours during the funeral. They were forgotten forever after being hastily interred and their graves flattened. This was perceived as a strategy to minimize the likelihood of other family members dying in a similar manner. Such individuals were also to be buried at night and far away from the house, outside the compound (Nur Maranje, O.I. 22/10/2019).

Following *olucheri* was *amakumba*, a ceremony that was held forty days after burial. The purpose of the *amakumba* ceremony was to honour the deceased. In remembrance of the deceased, a cow was butchered and libations poured. During this occasion, a lot of *amalawa* (alcohol), primarily *busaa*, was brewed and consumed while *amakumba* music played (Athman Shikolyo, O.I. 22/10/2019).

Traditional Wanga education was created to prepare individuals to be valuable contributors to society. It helped everyone get ready for their role in society. The ancient Wanga method of educating their children was through oral instruction, as was the case in many illiterate societies where the art of writing and reading had not yet developed. Children and other members of society memorized what they were taught, and they did the same for the following generation. There was no established starting age for education and no instructional institution that was only intended for teaching and learning (Gumo, 2018).

There were various ways that learning could occur. The art of storytelling was fundamental for educating children. Children and adults alike learned via it what was wrong within society, such as stealing, lying, and greed. Through praise songs and dances, one would learn the virtues that were inculcated in the society. Girls and young women learned cooking and child care from their mothers, while boys and young men learned fighting, hunting, trapping fish and pursuing livestock raiders by spending evenings with older men around a fire (Avoseh, 2008; Athman Shikolyo, O.I. 22/10/2019).

Opuku (1985), echoes that the elder members of the family, starting with the parents played a paramount role in the informal instruction. They would teach how to acquire basic virtues such as honesty, tolerance, truthfulness, humility, integrity, honour, self-control, empathy, harmony, generosity, mutual helpfulness among others and shun undesirable behaviour such as laziness, cruelty, theft and deceitfulness.

Apprenticeship was an important aspect of Abawanga traditional education. It was through observation, participation and execution of acquired skills. Apprenticeship was done by both men and women depending on the gender of the apprentice (Gumo, 2018). Ceremonies were also another avenue for teaching. Through rites, feasts, festivals and music such as folk songs, children learned values passed on from one generation to another within kinship groups. At such rituals and ceremonies, special lessons would be given to the youth about marriage, culture and history (Gumo, 2018).

Both boys and girls learned about social taboos, customary law and religious beliefs and practices. Conformity was essential to society's ability to maintain stability and

continuity. Therefore, a conscious effort was made to teach the young how to maintain cultural legacy while also ensuring that future generations would benefit from it. The Wanga society advanced along predetermined paths. Traditional education's subject matter was frequently influenced by the local environment. The deciding considerations were the community's primary industries such as hunting, herding, and crop cultivation (Avoseh, 2008). Because of the holistic nature of the Abawanga traditional society, it was impossible to separate education from life and vice versa. Thus, lifelong values were inseparable from life.

Africans are in agreement that there is only one God and that He is the Creator (Mugesu, 1998). This is to mean that there was no place for atheists in the African concept of God. If anything, knowing God was instinctive knowledge gifted to a child at birth (Mbiti, 1969). The Abawanga acknowledged *Nyasaye* (God) as the maker of all things and everyone. The name “*Nyasaye*” was borrowed from their neighbours, the Luo. *Nyasaye* was all-powerful and omnipresent.

Since the Abawanga believed that God lived in the sky, they identified him with *elyuba* (the sun). This explains why the Abawanga held the sun with great regard. People would, for instance, spit at it in the morning as they prayed for a successful day free of any misfortune like disease occurring in the homestead and asked it to rise well for them. An elderly person passing away during the day, when the sun was out, was likewise regarded as unlucky. They were expected to pass away overnight or very early the next morning.

The Abawanga offered sacrifices at shrines devoted to various spirits (*emisambwa*) as a form of adoration. At the communal level, sacrifice was performed as a way to express gratitude to the *Nyasaye* and ancestors for whatever good fortune had been experienced in society. They were also offered by the society so that they may implore the ancestors to speak with *Nyasaye* on their behalf in situations involving natural disasters like drought, starvation, and illness as well as man-made ones like war. Sacrifices were made at the individual level in order to have a child in cases of infertility and to avoid a difficult birth (Gumo, 2018; Asman Lubale, O.I. 25/11/2019).

Ancestors were persons who had lived in the society and had passed away; their spirits were thought to remain present, and as a result, they were regarded as integral members of the society. According to Brislen (2013), one effect of African ties to ancestors is the hallowed nature of the land because their ancestors were interred there. Among the Abawanga, the dead and *Nyasaye* were connected through the ancestors. Additionally, the ancestors had the power to bring about good or maintain bad in the community. It was necessary to uphold taboos and maintain customary laws as established by the deceased forefathers to avoid upsetting them (Zaituna Mutimba, O.I. 22/10/2019).

The priests and mediums who served as the gods' spokesmen lived a devout life among the Abawanga. In addition to this, there were the medicine men. In contrast to mediums and priests, the medicine men did not have a relationship with the gods. They were yet seen as belonging to the religious class. This group was more significant than even the priests and the mediums because they were of essence to all social classes. It was respected and feared in equal measure (Mustaneerah Munialo, O.I. 30/10/2019).

2.3 Establishment of Islam among the Abawanga

There is a considerable number of Muslims among the local communities residing in the interior regions of Kenya, particularly in Western Kenya. For instance, in Mumias, the Muslim population residing in urban areas exceeds 1,000 individuals. Although there is no unique physical way of identifying them, women majorly cover their heads with a unique clothing locally called *hijab* and dress in long robes while most men use *kanzu* whenever they visit the mosque. Majority of the Muslims, however, do not portray any unique physical features and are not easily identifiable by the way they appear. Nonetheless, their observance of the five pillars of Islam is primarily reflected in performing the five daily prayers. Fasting during the holy month of *Ramadhan* is also common, and Muslims are easily identifiable during this period, particularly during evening prayers when the majority gather outside mosques.

Numerous factors helped Islam become initially entrenched among the Abawanga. In this section, we go over the elements that contributed to the growth of Islam among the Abawanga of Kakamega County. We also examine early Islamic places of learning and devotion in Wangaland.

2.3.1 Factors that facilitated the spread of Islam among the Abawanga

Islam arrived in Kenya long before Christianity. Arab communities had already been formed and were being supported by thriving trade by the seventh century. Islam later spread into the interior when Arabs hunted inland for ivory and slaves starting in the eighteenth century. Islam became more popular among the Abawanga in Mumias due

to a variety of circumstances. These factors are theorized by the Social Exchange and Acculturation theories.

2.3.1.1 Trading activities

The introduction of Islam to interior areas like Mumias was made possible by trading activities on the Kenyan Coast. The Swahili traders served as a bridge between Eastern and Central Africa and the outside world for a number of years. They played an essential role in the ivory and slave trade, which peaked in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Trade routes crossed Kenya and extended into Uganda, along which products were transported to the Coast and sold to Portuguese, Indian, and Arab traders. Muslim traders, primarily of Arab heritage, utilized locals as guides, and some were influenced by Islam and subsequently converted. As a result, commercial hubs started to grow and spread along the trade routes into the interior as the number of Muslim traders rose. Some Africans in the interior, like the Abawanga, gradually converted to Islam as a result of this extended contact between Muslim traders and non-Muslims (Abdalla, 1971).

The Arab-Swahili explorers introduced Islam to modern-day Mumias. According to Abdalla (1971), the introduction of Islam to Mumias took place in the second half of the 19th century, a time when the region was frequently visited by caravans of Arab traders. The majority of the traders who were Islamized made up the first caravan from the Coast. The caravans were led by several traders who had gone into the region in search of trade goods. They brought a wide variety of trade commodities, including ornaments, sugar, textiles and salt in exchange for hides and ivory. The majority of

these early traders traveled from the Mrima coast, which is opposite Zanzibar, through the Chagga region and ended up on the shores of Lake Victoria.

The merchants generally used raiding tactics among the neighbours of Abawanga, including Abanyala, Abatsotso and Babukusu, in their search for various trade goods, including slaves. Elureko, afterwards renamed Mumias, served as the starting point for this plundering operation. The Abawanga's hostility towards their neighbours was increased by the slave trafficking activities. Due to their friendship with the Nabongo, the Kisa and Abamarama were protected from pillage (Dealing, 1974:253; Aseka, 1989:176).

The only indigenous group that benefited from the Arab-Swahili traders' travels in the Mumias region were the Abawanga, who gained new goods, forms of wealth, and sources of power and prestige, including firearms. The ruling clique in the Wanga kingdom held sway over its possession. According to Aseka (1989: 110), it was the Muslim traders' conformance to a particular Islamic lifestyle rather than their theoretical convictions that attracted converts in these circumstances.

According to Watt (1972), non-Muslim traders were enthralled by the Muslim businessmen's honesty. Muslim businessmen also engaged extensively with local authorities, who, in exchange for converting, gained benefits such as acceptance within the Islamic community and access to the broader economic and political spheres. Similarly, the Abawanga were encouraged to convert to Islam by the advantages of trade with the Arab-Swahili.

According to Nzibo (1995), Swahili caravan traders and their converts played a vital role in creating and preserving a distinct Muslim community in Mumias during the 19th century. The Muslim community identity in Mumias was founded by these Muslim traders and their converts, who wore *kanzus*, *fezes*, *buibuis* and *hijabs*. Nzibo (1995), claimed that Muslim holidays like *Idd*, *Ramadhan* and *Maulid* attracted sizeable crowds. During this time, Muslim traders and their converts introduced Muslim culture to the Abawanga. Many locals in the Wanga kingdom also converted to Islam as a result of the Muslims' "perfect way of life," which included living as a single family and practicing monotheism (Mumias Muslim Committee, 1994).

2.3.1.2 Pioneer Arab-Swahili Muslim clerics

The spread of Islam among the Abawanga was aided by a variety of Muslim leaders. Both Arab-Swahili and African Muslims who converted to Islam made up the first generation of Muslim leaders in Mumias. According to Abdalla (1971), apart from the initial caravan of Islamized Arab-Swahili who arrived at Mumias, primarily to trade with the local population, there were successive caravans that came with more than one goal of trading in Western Kenya. Additionally, they came to convert the indigenous populations to Islam.

In the early 1880s, a second caravan landed at Mumias. Among them were Salim al-Mawli, Sef bin Kibwana, Idi Rajab and Sayyid Abubakar. Juma Ananga, Mwinyi Kombo Wazongo, Sheikh Abdul Samaad bin Najba, Mwalimu Nasibu, Sheriff Hassan Abdallah Al-Mahdally, Mwinyi Amanji and Abdallah Al-Mafazy formed the third caravan. Sheriff Omar bin Abdallah Al-Mahdally succeeded his brother Sheriff Hassan

Abdallah Al-Mahdally, who later became the Islamic leader of Mumias province. The two were commonly called Sheriff Hassan and Sheriff Omar. They became the first chieftains to actively participate in preaching Islam to the Abawanga of Mumias (Abdalla, 1971).

2.3.1.3 Intermarriages

Intermarriage created a conversion pattern that primarily involved Muslim males and Abawanga women. Most Muslim and Swahili traders from the East African Coast, according to Kabiri (1990) and Kariuki (1995), were not accompanied by their wives to the interior if they were already married. This group was the first to have relationships with Abawanga women, who converted to Islam after marriage. The women acquired new types of clothing (*buibuis* and *hijabs*) and ornaments, and their families benefited from gifts such as blankets, sugar and rice. In some cases, the woman's family would send some of the children to the newlyweds. These children were taught the Islamic way of life and many converted to Islam.

Mumia organized for Abawanga women to live with the Arab-Swahili after realizing that they had traveled great distances without their wives. Some Arab-Swahili were consequently compelled into procreative unions. For instance, Mumia's sister was married to an Arab-Swahili named Khamisi, and the couple had children. Children from such unions becoming Muslims nearly became a given. What's more, these unions helped to forge closer ties between the Wanga royal family and the Arab-Swahili. Moreover, these marriages formed an indispensable core around which Arab-Swahili

ideals and customs, such as clothing code and eating habits, were learned and imitated by the Abawanga (Murunga, 1998).

Kenyanchui (1992), corroborates that the in-laws were drawn to the Islamic style of life and clothing when they visited their daughters, sisters, or aunts who had been married to Arab-Swahili. For instance, it was due to their sister's marriage to an Arab-Swahili that Murunga and Mulama, Nabongo Mumia's brothers, converted to Islam. While the latter continued to practice Islam, Mulama later came under the influence of the Butere Church Missionary Society (CMS) and converted to Christianity. Additionally, it was because of these marriages that Mumias adopted Kiswahili as its primary language.

Numerous homesteads came into touch with Muslims and underwent Islamization as a result of the extensive kinship relationships that were associated with marriage among the Abawanga. However, not all Abashitsetse were converted to Islam despite the Wanga royal family's involvement in this network. In any case, there is proof that they made up the majority of converts (KNA, DC/NN 3/2/1).

2.3.1.4 Nabongoship

During the reigns of Nabongo Shiundu and Nabongo Mumia, the Nabongo institution played a key role in facilitating the spread of Islam among the Abawanga. Were (1969), asserts that the Wanga Kingdom's first exposure to Islam happened during the kingship of Nabongo Shiundu. In spite of lack of certainty about the exact date, Were (1969) confirms that it was around this period that Muslims from the East African Coast first arrived in Mumias, and by 1878 Islam had significantly spread. Nabongo Shiundu gladly welcomed the Muslim traders from the Coast who later on converted the

Abawanga to Islam. Nabongo Shiundu passed on in 1882 and was succeeded by his son Nabongo Mumia, who played a significant role in Islamization of the Abawanga.

The expansion of Islam in Wangaland was facilitated by Nabongo Mumia, both in his personal capacity and as a ruler. Nabongo Mumia's nephew, Fwaya, was the first Wanga man to convert to Islam. Fwaya was partly raised by his aunt (Nabongo Mumia's sister), Mwanaidi, an Islamized Wanga woman who had been married to an Arab-Swahili. Thus, Fwaya's aunt had an impact on how he became more Islamic. He adopted the name "Suleiman" after becoming Muslim. Suleiman Fwaya thereafter played a central role in the spread of Islam in Mumias by persuading individuals close to him to convert (Musa Bilal, O.I. 20/04/2022).

Nabongo Mumia was among the first Muslim converts in Wanga kingdom. Mumia converted to Islam unintentionally. Musa Bilal (O.I. 20/04/2022), an Arab-Swahili elder from Mjini Estate in Mumias town, claimed that Suleiman Fwaya had visited Nabongo Mumia while clothed in Muslim attire. The monarch was positioned outside the *ltookho* (Nabongo's official house), surrounded by his troops and only wearing a leopard hide to cover his nakedness. Mumia failed to recognize Fwaya upon his arrival at the court because of the distinctive garb he wore, which was associated with Arabs and Swahilis. He was perplexed to realize that it was his nephew, Fwaya. He asked Fwaya whether he intended to usurp his power, as he dressed in a royal regalia. Fwaya denied this and told Mumia that the *Abasikoyo* (the Swahili) had “poured water on him” (Islamized him). This explained his new attire. Appealed by the elegant Islamic garb, Mumia asked Fwaya to take him to the Arab-Swahili so that he could be introduced to Islam. Nasambu

(1999), documented that Milare, a Swahili from Zanzibar, Islamized Mumia around 1890. "Mohammed" became Mumia's Islamic name. Mumia's conversion to Islam encouraged his subjects to embrace the faith.

According to Wagner (1988), Nabongo Mumia and the Muslims grew close ties after the Arab-Swahili Muslims helped the Abawanga drive livestock rustlers from Siaya during raids. The Muslims received wives from among the Abawanga women when links with Nabongo Mumia improved in recognition of their hard labour, generosity and honesty. One way the locals converted to Islam was through this. Wagner (1988), corroborates that Nabongo Mumia influenced his cabinet to convert to Islam upon assuming kingship.

As a result of his interactions with Arab-Swahili tradesmen from the Coast, Nabongo Mumia acquired a liking for ornate clothing (*kanzu* and *feze*), which astonished people who encountered him, as modern clothing was still new. It was believed appropriate to earn the privilege to wear the garment by converting to Islam in a "cloth hungry" society where specific forms of clothing were the preserve of certain groups of people (Nasambu, 1999). As a result, many Abawanga adopted Islamic dress code, and consequently embraced Islam.

Nabongo Mumia's conversion to Islam influenced the conversion of some of the first Abawanga Muslim preachers, such as Hamis Okumu and Sheikh Mdomo. The two played a key role in the preaching and promoting Islam in Wangaland. They established their headquarters in the Mumias Jamia Mosque, whose construction was made possible by Nabongo Mumia, who donated land for it in 1898. Many native people held the two

in high regard since they preached Islam in the villages using their own local *Oluwanga* language. Additionally, they significantly increased the stability of Mumias Jamia Mosque, which experienced major growth (Musa Bilal, O.I. 20/04/2022).

The brothers of Nabongo Mumia who converted to Islam were Omar Mulama, Suleiman Murunga and Mohammed Kadima. Both played a significant role in facilitating the growth of Islam in Mumias and beyond. Nabongo Mumia would then designate Suleiman Murunga as chief over North Bukusu in order to protect all Muslims in the region and uphold law and order. In this regard, Murunga played a critical role in the Islamization of the Bukusu in Malakisi and Kimilili. On the other hand, Mohammed Kadima made it possible for a mosque to be built at Lukoye, a village close to Mumias. Later, Kadima was dispatched to Port Victoria, where he built a mosque and tried to convert the locals to Islam (Nur Maranje, O.I. 22/10/2019).

Given that the Abashitsetse clan was both the most populous and the ruling clan among the Abawanga, early Muslim converts from this clan found it relatively easy to encourage the wider community to adopt Islam. Nonetheless, Nabongo Mumia's partial adherence to Islam somewhat discouraged some members of the Abawanga community from embracing the faith. Like the majority of Wanga people, Mumia adopted some tenets of Islam while rejecting others. For instance, Mumia seldom used his Muslim name in public. Furthermore, he did not observe Islamic prayer practices consistently, since he dedicated Fridays to overseeing his markets. Aside from this, Mumia maintained the use of some traditional Abawanga prayer techniques alongside his partial adherence to Islam. As a result, he fell short of totally converting his people to Islam.

Nevertheless, despite these limitations, Nabongo Mumia’s contribution to Islamization of the Abawanga was significant. By 1898, approximately 1,800 members of the Abawanga community had embraced to Islam.

Table 1: Abawanga Muslim population from 1880 to 1898

| year | Abawanga Muslim converts |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 1880 | 20 |
| 1888 | 200 |
| 1894 | 800 |
| 1898 | 1800 |

Source: Mumias Muslim Committee (1994)

2.3.1.5 Religious and spiritual reasons

The most underappreciated theories for the proselytization and expansion of Islam among African communities appear to be those involving religious and spiritual elements. It is clear that it would not be conceivable for people to abandon their current faith in favour of a new one out of self-interest and then raise their children with piety. In fact, if early converts had not at some point formed favorable spiritual perceptions of Islam, it is unlikely that the religion would have expanded to encompass such a large following.

Given Muslims' sense of a purpose and the manner in which they carried out proselytization, religious factors also played a role in conversions. Their definition of "mission" (or "*da'wah*") included emulating the Prophet Muhammad's *Sunnah* and

exhibiting kindness, compassion, and good manners towards both Muslims and non-Muslims in order to demonstrate the clarity, superiority, and reasoned nature of the fundamental Islamic theological doctrines and moral principles. When Muslim converts in Mumias encountered people of other faiths, they made it clear to them that Islam was a welcoming religion.

Islam is not only a religion but a comprehensive way of life. Many Abawanga were drawn to Islam due to its emphasis on being not merely a religion, but a comprehensive way of life. Islam codifies matters of business, law, family relationships, dress code, hygiene and eating customs to establish order for individuals, society, and governments. Similarly, the society, or the *ummah* of believers, is integrated far beyond communal and national goals by its conscious acknowledgement of the *Allah's* oneness and its mission on earth.

In Islam, there is no intermediary human hierarchy separating believers from God. The sense of fraternity results from the belief that all individuals are equal. God is the cornerstone of the Islamic faith and the Qur'an is the religion's sacred book containing the Arabic translation of Allah's message as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Early Abawanga Muslim converts in Mumias region experienced the Qur'an's enlightening and insightful message, which shaped their society and daily lives and inspired them with its guiding principles. The Qur'an also anchored them to a distinctive system of justice. Abawanga seem to have been fascinated by these aspects of Islam, hence encouraging them to convert.

2.3.1.6 The similarity and syncretism of Islam among the Abawanga

Some Abawanga were drawn to Islam by its religious practices, which resembled those of the Abawanga. Abawanga could readily identify points of agreement between Islam and Abawanga cultural practices. Islam portrayed a remarkable capacity for cultural appropriation as it permitted potential converts to bring a lot of their cultural ideas and practices with them. For instance, the Abawanga's acceptance of Islam was not a difficult process because circumcision existed in both Wanga and Muslim cultures (Banker, 1950:27).

Both Islam and Abawanga society accepted polygamy. In accordance with Islamic law, a husband may marry up to four wives as long as he can support them equally in all facets of life. Islam demands that husbands treat their wives fairly in terms of financial support, company, consideration and other manageable aspects of family life. Thus, in Islam, equity is an imperative prerequisite for polygamy (Surah 4:3). Wagner (1949), opines that at times some men felt they had a lot of wealth and sharing it amongst many wives was the best way of utilizing it.

Abawanga were attracted to Islam in part because certain Islamic burial practices closely resembled their own traditional funeral customs. For instance, the dead were buried with their heads facing the East in both Abawanga and Islamic customs. While Islam views the East as the direction to Mecca, which is thought to be the religion's holiest site, the Abawanga view it as the direction from which the community originated. Additionally, both the Abawanga indigenous religion and Islam share the belief in life after death (Nur Maranje, O.I. 22/10/2019).

The Wanga community is traditionally patriarchal. Women were restricted to domestic duties and land cultivation, while men were expected to hold positions of political and religious leadership. At shrines, women were not permitted to oversee the offering of sacrifices. Like Islam, leadership in the society was reserved exclusively for men, reflecting the patriarchal nature of the religion. Women knowledgeable about the Qur'an and Islam could only teach other women about Islamic matters, as they were not permitted to preach in front of men. Some Abawanga, particularly men, were won over to Islam because of the similarities between its patriarchal structure and that of Abawanga traditions (Ramadhan Shikhaya, O.I. 27/12/2019).

The shared belief in a single Supreme God between Islam and the Abawanga people reduced friction between the two faith groups. Among the Abawanga, *Nyasaye* was believed to be the creator of the universe and humanity. Similar to the Muslim conception of *Allah*, *Nyasaye* was regarded as the creator and was believed to possess attributes such as omnipresence and omnipotence. The oneness of God according to Islam was akin to the Abawanga notion of the Supreme Being. Islam upholds strict monotheism. Since *Allah* is the only God, He alone should be worshipped. In essence, whatever occurs in this universe is determined by His will. The fundamental Islamic belief is that *Allah*, the Most Powerful, created the entire cosmos. Conflict between Islam and the traditional religion of the Abawanga was thus resolved by the similarities between the conceptions of *Nyasaye* and *Allah*. This won over some Abawanga to Islam (Omar Kulundu, O.I. 11/11/2019; Mustaneerah Munialo, O.I. 30/10/2019).

As long as traditional beliefs could be modified so that they fit into an Islamic world view in which the completeness of *Allah* remained uncontested, these friendly interactions between the Islamic faith and the Abawanga indigenous traditions enhanced the presence of Islam in Mumias. Islam, in any case, did not force its new followers to abandon faith in all of their cultural traditions.

2.3.1.7 Swahili language

The Swahili language emerged through the blending of Bantu, Arabic, Persian, Portuguese and other linguistic influences. Swahili derives its name from the Arabic term '*sawahil*', meaning 'of the coast'. Although it contains some Arabic words, the language is predominantly Bantu. It is written in the Arabic alphabet. Arab Muslims were not primarily in East Africa's interior and Coast to promote Islam, but rather for trade. Swahili was the language of trade for those Africans who traveled to the interior to deal with the Arabs; some of them later converted to Islam (Salim, 1973). Commerce in the inland groups, including the Abawanga, was possible only when a common language existed between the traders and the locals.

For many years, the inhabitants of the East African Coast spoke Swahili as their primary language. The Swahili language was introduced to far-off locations like Mumias through repeated interactions between traders from the Coast and African middlemen. The language spread into the interior at the same time as Islam (Salim, 1973). Therefore, the Abawanga people's acquisition of the Swahili language through their connections with Arab-Swahili merchants also entailed the acquisition of Islamic culture.

2.3.2. Early Islamic institutions of worship and learning

In this section, we examine early Muslim religious and educational institutions in Mumias namely; the mosque, the *maktab* (plural: *makatib*), the *halaqah* and the *Madrassa*. We also look at characteristics of early Islamic education.

2.3.2.1 The Mosque

In Mumias, the mosque served as a tangible manifestation of Islam. Islam was established in Mumias region by Arab-Swahili who built and oversaw improvised mosques. The first mosque in Mumias was built in 1898, resulting from the *da'wah* efforts of Muslim traders (Mwakimako, 2007:82). Initially, the Answar Mosque was built as a semi-permanent structure, with labour and materials mobilized by Elureko's senior Muslim converts. Prior to the establishment of the Answar Mosque, converts held their prayers under tree shelters. It was not until 1948 that the first permanent mosque was built in Mumias. It was later renamed the Mumias Jamia Mosque. The Abawanga Muslim converts would travel several miles from their homes to Mumias for the Friday sermons. To reach Mumias on Friday morning for *jum'ah* prayers, they would depart from their homes a day prior.

Muslims gathered at the mosque, which became an opportunity for discussion and fostering cooperation, focus, and collective action. In addition to the informal teaching by elders to children and young adults, the mosque also served as a centre for instruction. The mosque served as the primary gathering place for religious, judicial and educational aspects of Muslim society. The mosque also functioned as a venue for both

the proclamation of policy and the administration of justice (Tibawi, 1972). These events significantly improved the Abawanga Muslims' spiritual uplift in Mumias.

The Friday sermon (*khutba*) was a salient religious and educational tool. There were two portions to the sermon that came before the prayer. Every section began with the Prophet's benediction. In order to exhort and admonish, Qur'anic texts were recited and interpreted. The *imam* presided over the *khutba*, just as he did during the prayer, and he would talk about community issues in either or both of the sermon's halves. The topics covered were typically selected from a variety of issues that were relevant to the community at the time (Kahumbi, 1992:44).

Islamic religious leaders have historically been individuals who play major roles in their community as members of the clergy or mosque (Pipes, 1983). Islam lacked a strong religious structure, nevertheless. Although there were many individuals playing this role, they were not hierarchically ordered and had inadequate institutionalization. This was further illustrated by the various names given to religious authorities, including *Ulama*, *Imam*, *Sheikh*, *Mullah*, *Mufti* and *Khatib*. The majority of the early Islamic religious leaders in Mumias were of Swahili or Arab ancestry.

In contrast to the religious authorities of the other Abrahamic faiths, the clergy of Islam resembled *rabbis* (Jewish scholars or teachers of Jewish law) more than priests. As opposed to Catholic priests, they served as role models, teachers, judges and community leaders, providing religious rules to the pious on even the most trivial and private matters. They did not have the ordination process, or perform sacramental functions or serve as intermediaries between mankind and God (Brown, 2014). Islamic religious

leaders played a variety of responsibilities in Mumias, which contributed to the survival of Islam in the area.

2.3.2.2 The *Maktab*

The early years of Islamic history saw the emergence of a class of private teachers who taught Arabic and the Islamic religion. A teaching service was established as a result of the essential need for teachers (Tibawi, 1972). As a result, distinct spaces within the mosque were designated for instruction. These classrooms utilized for instruction eventually came to be known as *makatib*. *Maktab* was frequently referred to as *Duksi, chuo* (plural: *vyuo*), or Qur'anic school.

According to Hitti (1970) and Tibawi (1974), the *maktab* was an elementary school that could be held in a home, a shop, or as a wing of a mosque. It was presided over by a *mu'allim* (plural *mu'allimun*: teacher). These rooms were solely accessible to the *alim* and their students. The *Maktab* taught the children the fundamentals of Islam as well as reading skills. The Qur'an served as the primary focus of the curriculum. Other topics included Arabic, *Hadith* and fundamentals of elementary arithmetic (Nasr, 1968; Hitti, 1970; Tibawi, 1974). The *makatib*, or hidden chambers inside mosques, inspired the Muslim community to pursue Islamic knowledge.

The *Maktab* was the first place a youngster started the pursuit of Islamic education since there were no formal institutes of formal study of Islam. The set entry age for the child was six years. There was, however, no upper age limit because a child would enter at age fifteen as long as they chose to pursue school. The teacher's predisposition and the learners' interest in the subject, in which the teacher had expertise, determined

enrollment. There were no records to show the students' progress. Therefore, the only pupils who could recount what happened during the process of learning were those who had received Qur'anic instruction. The establishment and growth of the African Muslim community's identity in Mumias was centered on Islamic education and personal interactions with Swahili traders and Abawanga, perception, mosques and *makatib* (Tibawi, 1974).

Basic religious education was the primary goal of Mumias' Qur'anic schools. This was due to the requirement that Muslims learn how to pray in Arabic, including when to do so and what to say. The recitals were initially only memorized, with most students not understanding the meaning of what they were saying beyond the fact that it was holy and a proper response to a particular presentation (Nur Maranje, O.I. 22/10/19).

2.3.2.3 The *Madrassa*

According to the Islamic faith, obtaining education was equivalent to seeking sanctity. According to Nasr (1968:64), as Islam's teachings are by their very nature sacred, all types of knowledge in the religion take on a hallowed quality. The first chapter of the Prophet Muhammad's revelation serves as the cornerstone of Islamic education and knowledge. The Qu'ran also emphasizes the need for Muslim believers to become knowledgeable: "Read: In the Name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clot. Read: And your Lord is the Most Generous. He who taught by the pen. Taught man what he never knew" (Surah, 96:1–5). The Qur'an makes great mention of education and knowledge. Surah (68:1-3), espouses the value to uphold the worth and dignity of

knowledge: “Noon. By the pen and the writing that is done. By your Lord's grace, you are not insane. You will actually receive a prize that never expires”.

The Qur'an exhorts Muslims to seek knowledge because those who lack it are regarded as being in a lower class than those who do: "Is he who worships ardently in the night watches, prostrating himself and rising, mindful of the Hereafter, and putting his hope in the mercy of his Lord? Say, Are those who know and those who do not know equal? Only those with intelligence will recall" (Surah, 39:9).

The Prophet believed that gaining knowledge was an essential component of having faith since it increased a person's devotion to God. “Learn; one who learns in the way of *Allah* performs an act of piety; one who speaks of it praises the Lord; one who seeks it adores God; one who imparts knowledge in it bestows alms; one who imparts it to the deserving persons performs an act of devotion" (Kahumbi, 1992:44).

The Arabic alphabet and Qur'an recitation were part of the *madrassas' manhaj* (curriculum). The curriculum followed by Muslims in Mumias region and other *madrassas* in pre-colonial Kenya was the same as that followed by Kilwa, Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar and the Comoros Islands. The reference book of the syllabus, known as *Qaida al-baghdadiya*, contained reading assignments for the Qur'an's final chapter and the Arabic alphabets. Children first learned to read Arabic before memorizing and reciting the Qur'an. Arabic instruction was structured using an analytical and progressive technique that started with the letter, moved on to the word, then the phrase, and ended with the meaning of the sentence. Additionally, children were taught religious rites like *Maulidi*. *Barzanji* was the name of the text recited in this ceremony in praise

of the Prophet Muhammad recounting his birth, character, miracles, and mission (Nabende, 2016). The *madrassa* curriculum was introduced using basic concepts from the topic matter. As one progressed through the *madrassa's* educational levels, this topic became increasingly complex (Kahumbi, 1995:331-332).

Madrassas preceded the prayers. As part of the *madrassa's* teaching style, a pupil was required to read a text before the teacher would explain its meaning. The students listened to the teacher; *Sheikh* or *Hakim* (wise man or educated teacher), while seated in a circle (*halaqah*). *Halaqah* was a forum where diverse religious and philosophical sciences were discussed. It was attended by prominent scholars and anyone else could benefit regardless of age or academic standard (Hitti, 1970; Tibawi, 1972; Badawi, 1979). The *halaqah* could take place inside the mosque's confines.

As training grounds for early *imams* in the area, Mumias' mosques and *madrassas* contributed to the spread of Islam. The construction of a *madrassa* at the Answar mosque was encouraged by early Muslim converts' strong desire to establish an Islamic institution that would be useful in enlightening the neighborhood about Islam.

2.3.2.4 Features of early Islamic education

Islamic education in the past or in the traditional form did not place emphasis on examination. No certificates or degrees were awarded. Without using any kind of force, a student advanced to the level of education to which he aimed. A student received an *ijaza* (plural: *ijazat*) after finishing a certain course with a specific teacher. This sort of permit allowed the holder to instruct students in the area of expertise. The status and

reputation of the teacher who issued the *ijaza* determined its worth (Hitti, 1970; Badawi, 1979:108).

Islamic education was not restricted by time or place. Muslim intellectuals were typically mobile. They looked far and wide throughout the Islamic world for the teachers of their choosing. These inquisitive individuals joined the educated men's communities in far-off places (Badawi, 1979; Rahman, 1975; Imamuddin, 1985). By doing this, these scholars were following the Prophet's advice to seek knowledge far and wide. Ibn Khaldun, a Muslim scholar from Tunisia who lived from 1332 to 1406 A.D., stressed the value of travelling to learn new things. According to what he stated in 1967, "A scholar's education is greatly enhanced by travelling in pursuit of knowledge. Habits acquired through contact with a teacher are more strongly rooted than those acquired through other studies and lectures".

Early schooling was provided without charge. Al-Ghazzali, a notable Muslim philosopher and theologian who lived from 1058 to 1111 A.D., opined that "no fees should be accepted by the teacher" (Badawi, 1979:108). Direct payments from students to teachers, however, were only permitted in the early years of instruction. Those who accepted rewards or charged fees contrary to the norm justified their actions by citing a *Hadith* of the Prophet which says: "*Of all the reward for which you may receive a material reward of the book of God is the most deserving*" (Sahih Bukhari, 11:53, cited in Tibawi, 1957:83). Teaching was typically seen as a religious obligation. So, it was expected of teachers to be able to teach freely.

The values of the society were taught through a variety of approaches in traditional Islamic education. Dictation, oral recitation, oral exposition and rote learning were among these techniques. At all levels, there was a focus on rote learning. A text with commentary or dictation could be used as a teaching resource. A teacher constantly said, "*And God knows best*" at the end of his lessons (Tibawi, 1972:48).

Co-curricular activities including sporting events, music competitions and theatre were excluded from traditional Islamic education because it was believed that the majority of them went against Islamic beliefs. Learning was limited to the Arabic language and the Islamic Religious Education. Due to the dearth of pedagogical resources on Islam, learning Arabic and Islam in general was a long process. The primary sources were the Qur'an and *Hadith*, both of which could only be read in printed form.

The last characteristic of early Islamic education was its limited reliance on particular organizational, instructional and administrative patterns for its operation (Bray, Clarke, & Stephens, 1986:80). One could continue to be a student their entire life because education was regarded as a lifelong process. Students of diverse ages and abilities sat in the same classroom, engaging in different learning activities. This arrangement allowed the more capable students to support their slower-learning peers. Students who demonstrated ability and diligence were permitted to advance according to their individual pace of learning. Consequently, the learning environment did not adhere to a fixed or standardized curriculum (Badawi, 1979:106).

2.4 Obstacles to the spread of Islam among the Abawanga

While explaining the applicability of the Acculturation theory, Berry (1997), asserts that the process of acculturation can be stressful, particularly when individuals encounter difficulties in adapting to a new culture or experience discrimination. In the context of to the present study, the initial introduction and spread of Islam among the Abawanga in Kakamega County was hindered by several circumstances. These factors led potential converts within the community either to reject Islam entirely or to embrace it selectively, adopting only those Islamic practices that did not conflict with Abawanga customs. Such obstacles included the limited enthusiasm of early Muslim converts to propagate Islam, inadequate manpower and the influence of Abawanga customs.

2.4.1 Lack of Islamic zeal

The majority of the early Muslims in Western Kenya were traders rather than missionaries (Nasambu, 1999). As a result, rather than converting the local communities to Islam, they placed more of an emphasis on commercial activities. Some converts among the Abawanga continued to hold parts of their cultural traditions and beliefs, while majority of those who upheld Islamic faith did not see it as their obligation to spread Islam in Wangaland. Few people engaged in Islam's propagation and preaching. Furthermore, early converts to Islam propagated the faith on an individual basis, hence there was no organized propagation of Islam. As a result, several initial converts rejected Islam in favour of other faiths as they were not closely monitored. Lack of a structured scheduling for Islamic practices further impeded pace of conversion to Islam among the Abawanga.

2.4.2 Stringent Islamic practices

Islamic customs that appeared to be too rigid to follow and conflicted with daily life hindered the spread of Islam among African populations (Nasambu, 1999). For example, observing the five daily prayers turned away many potential Abawanga Muslims. Since the majority of them were farmers, they believed that praying five times each day would take away from their ability to earn a living by working on the farm or taking care of their livestock. They believed that praying in the morning and at night was sufficient. Similar to this, others were turned off by *wudhu* (ablution) before prayer and the difficulty of bending, standing and kneeling during prayer, in addition to frequency.

They asserted that ablution was optional since *Allah* does not judge people based on their appearance. Therefore, in their view, as long as a person had a pure heart, God would accept their plea. However, it is important to remember that one of the defining characteristics of Islam is cleanliness. For instance, the Qur'an in Surah 5:6, states: "*O you who believe! When you rise to pray, wash your faces and your hands and arms to the elbows, and wipe your heads, and your feet to the ankles. If you had intercourse, then purify yourselves. If you are ill, or travelling, or one of you returns from the toilet, or you had contact with women, and could not find water, then use some clean sand and wipe your faces and hands with it. Allah does not intend to burden you, but He intends to purify you, and to complete His blessing upon you, that you may be thankful*". This is also in line with the *Hadith* which states that "*Allah is beautiful and likes beauty*".

Therefore, one was supposed be clean and modest while in the presence of God and while in prayer. In addition to providing spiritual nourishment, prayers also taught Muslims who attended them to be punctual and time-conscious (Sofia Chiteyi, O.I. 16/12/2019; Hassan Iswa, O.I. 15/11/2019; Fatuma Salim, O.I. 19/12/2019). However, the requirement to adhere to *wudhu* before prayers kept off potential Muslims among the Abawanga.

Many Abawanga were turned off by fasting throughout the holy month of *Ramadhan*. Due to *saum* (fasting), which seemed to them to be an absurd price to pay, the majority of them were hesitant to convert to Islam. According to Ibrahim Odhiambo (O.I. 07/11/2019), for a Muslim, fasting during *Ramadhan* has many advantages. By rejecting the legitimate gratification of one's desires in obedience to the divine, it improves one's spiritual and moral character. It gives someone the ability to restrain their bodily desires, leading to self-discipline. *Saum* also teaches a person to abstain from bad and wicked behaviour. One abstains from temptations like backbiting, quarreling, and lying in addition to refraining from food, drink, and sexual activity. *Hadith (Sahih Al-Bukhari)*, states: “*When any of you keeps a fast, he should not speak indecent or filthy word or engage in a noisy sin and were anyone to quarrel with him and call him bad names, he should simply say “am keeping fast, therefore I cannot pay you back in the same coin”.*” It appears some Abawanga shunned Islam by then due to lack of understanding of these advantages of *Saum* to the individual and society at large.

Muslim men and women are allowed to consume meat that has been strictly slaughtered in accordance with Islamic custom. Islam forbids the consumption of meat from a

number of animals (Surat 2:173, 5:3–5, 6:121, 138). The Qur'an states: "*Prohibited for you are carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and animals dedicated to other than Allah; also the flesh of animals strangled, killed violently, killed by a fall, gored to death, mangled by wild animal – except what you rescue and animals sacrificed on altars; and the practice of drawing lots. For it is immoral*" (Surah, 5:3). The ban on eating meat that had not been killed in accordance with Islamic law was analogous to the ban on eating any meat that had been obtained through hunting, which was a popular way that Abawanga supplemented their diet. As a result of this restriction, a Muslim could only consume meat from an animal that had been slaughtered by another Muslim. This turned away many would-be Muslims.

Along with the prohibition of drinking wine, eating pork was also forbidden. Since they were denied the freedom to socialize with their peers, especially during alcohol-related occasions and other celebrations that featured animal slaughter and alcohol consumption, these prohibitions hampered the socio-cultural interactions of Abawanga (particularly men). Due to this, the majority of potential Muslims among the Abawanga believed they could not compromise their cultural way of life for Islam. As a result, some of them distanced themselves from Islam (Mohammed Mumia, O.I. 31/12/2019).

2.4.3 Deficient Manpower and Seclusion of Arab-Swahili Muslims from Abawanga

According to Trimingham (1964:72), the difficulty in spreading the Islamic faith among African populations, and more crucially, in fostering its adoption and integration, stems from the character of those who ought to have been its primary promoters. Trimingham notes that Muslims on the Coast had shaped their religion into a protective cultural wall

that separated them from Muslim converts in the interior. They did not establish themselves among them in the countryside or dispatch Islamic educators. This slowed down the conversion of more interior African communities, such as Abawanga, to Islam.

Some Arab-Swahili Muslim groups that traveled into the interior regions, such as Mumias, primarily for trade, often remained socially distinct, practicing Islam in their own mosques and maintaining limited interaction with fully assimilated African converts. This separation not only slowed down the spread of Islam among the locals but also shaped patterns of religious practice and identity among early Muslim communities in the region.

The Abawanga converts' proselytization to Islam was only superficially diffused across the populace due to a lack of trained instructors. There were limited native Muslim converts in Wangaland who were well-versed in Islam to impart their knowledge to other converts. This significantly hampered the Abawanga people's efforts to convert to Islam.

2.4.4 Abawanga Customs

In spite of adoption of Islam by a significant number of Abawanga, the community still held dear to some of their cultural practices, a situation that deterred them from fully adhering to Islam according to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Unwritten social norms formed from community values, beliefs, and traditions gave rise to customary law.

Customary regulations tacitly restricted women's access to land and resources derived from it. These regulations strengthened patriarchal ideologies that marginalized women and gave them a lower status in society (WLSA, 2001; Walker, 2001). Among the Abawanga, access to land was governed by customary laws. Most Abawanga men were discouraged from converting to Islam by a conflict between Islamic regulations of succession and property inheritance and Abawanga cultural practices.

Under the African traditional system of tenure, marriage was the main route of obtaining access to land. Daughters or unmarried women were not permitted to inherit property, hence they had limited access to land. Women who were married had easier access to their husbands' land. In many instances, their authority was restricted to only access rather than ownership. Given the patrilineal and exogamous customs, women could not inherit property or land. The sons of the deceased father received equal distributions of land and other possessions (WLSA, 2001).

With the advent of Islam, the Islamic law of inheritance was to permit both sexes the complete right to inherit, in contrast to Wanga inheritance norms. Islam holds that while people are regarded as trustees of the riches and property inside the universe, *Allah* is the absolute owner of the universe and all in it. Thus, it is essential that each person distribute the wealth and property held in trust in line with *Allah's* will (Abd al-Ati, 1975, 1977).

The Qur'an lays out the fundamentals of Islamic inheritance law in *surah* (2:180–240; 4:7–12; 19, 33, 176). The Qur'an explains property and shares for each heir, and both males and females are obliged to abide by the law. Consequently, the family members

connected to the deceased by marriage and kinship inherit both the man's and woman's possessions. The Abawanga's conversion to Islam slowed down because individuals who were strongly inclined towards customary law of inheritance were unwilling to do so due to these apparent discrepancies in inheritance practices between Islam and Wanga customs.

Widow inheritance, which Islamic dictates were against, was highly practiced among the Abawanga. According to Wanga traditions, a lady did not lose her status as a man's wife simply because her husband died, especially if dowry was paid. As a result, even after her husband's physical demise, the wife still had obligations to her marital family. Abawanga regarded her as being married to the deceased. She was therefore expected to stay in that clan and be taken in leviratic union by a member of the husband's clan whom she called *mulamwa* (brother-in-law), but a cleansing goat was to be slaughtered as a sign of her ownership transfer within the clan (Robert Wesonga, O.I. 13/06/2025; Briton Karani, O.I. 13/06/2025).

However, in Islam, a widow was not bound by the clan she had married into. Instead, she could choose to marry a Muslim man from a different clan. Jamillah Nanda (O.I. 20/11/19) reaffirmed that under Islamic law, a widowed woman was free to remarry anywhere else. Qur'anic teachings against widow inheritance put off potential Islamic converts among the Abawanga.

Abawanga regarded strongly some of their burial customs. Before burial, the deceased's uncles received a payment known as *eshikalo*, which was typically made in the form of cattle, in accordance with Abawanga customs. In addition, women who had sired

children were not to be buried in their fathers' estates in the event that they passed away before becoming married. Despite the Islamization of Abawanga, these customs persisted among the Abawanga Muslims. Furthermore, despite their acceptance of Islam, the Abawanga from the Abashibe clan continued to bury their deceased while seated rather than in accordance with Islamic edicts. Abawanga adherence to their burial customs slowed down their Islamization (Nur Muranje, O.I. 22/10/2019; Asman Malala, O.I. 15/11/2019).

Asman Malala (O.I. 15/11/2019) attested that Islam recommended interment in cemeteries with regard to the place of burial. However, this goes against Abawanga burial practices, which demanded that burials take place in homesteads. Even among the Islamized Abawanga people, the tradition of burying the deceased in homesteads withstood the test of time. However, a small number of Abawanga, who lived in Mumias town and lacked rural homesteads, interred their loved ones in the Muslim-run Mumias cemetery. Nonetheless, the existence of a cemetery, specifically for Muslims, in Mumias town indicated the extent of the permeation of Islam in the region.

The problem of inconsistencies between faith and practice of Islam among the Abawanga was mainly caused by the deeply-rooted Abawanga customs, and partly by influence of Christianity. This resulted in less commitment of the Abawanga to Islamic customs. This further led to the Abawanga moving from Islam to other religions such as Christianity, and at times back to the Abawanga traditional religion, to seek religious satisfaction.

2.5 Summary

This chapter looked at how Islam came to be and the conditions that made it popular among the Abawanga of Kakamega County. The chapter has detailed how the Arab-Swahili worked to promote Islam among the Abawanga. It is also abundantly obvious how Nabongoship contributed to Abawanga's Islamization. The "Social Exchange theory" and the "Acculturation theory" appear to support the arguments made on the elements that made it easier for Islam to spread among the Abawanga. For instance, Acculturation theory provided a nuanced understanding of the cultural dynamics involved in the Islamization of the Abawanga. The theory also helped to analyze the Islamization process of the Abawanga within the specific cultural and historical context of the community.

The emergence and institutionalisation of early Islamic religious and educational institutions among the Abawanga was also assessed in this chapter. The chapter also explained the barriers that hindered the spread of Islam among the Abawanga. In spite of the conversion of a significant portion of Abawanga to Islam, there remained a number of obstacles to its widespread adoption. Strict Islamic practices, such as offering the five daily prayers, conducting *wudhu*, and fasting throughout *Ramadhan*, served as an example of these factors. The Muslim-Christian relations and the Islamization of the Abawanga during the colonial era are examined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

ISLAM AMONG THE ABAWANGA DURING BRITISH COLONIALISM;

1900 – 1963

3.1 Introduction

The significance of Christian missionary activities and European colonial actions on the spread of Islam in Kenya generally and among the Abawanga in particular is covered in this chapter. With the application of “Social Exchange theory” and “Acculturation theory”, this chapter aims to provide light on how colonial operations and policies affected the Abawanga's conversion to Islam in Matungu and Mumias Sub-Counties. The first topic covered in the chapter is European occupation of Mumias region. Second, the chapter explores how Islamization among the Abawanga in Mumias was impacted by the rules and policies implemented by the British colonial administration. Third, the chapter assesses Christian-Muslim relations among the Abawanga and the ensuing friction that accompanied their efforts to win converts during the colonial period.

3.2 The British occupation of Mumias

European interest in Africa significantly increased before the end of the 19th century, spurred on by political, economic and social developments in Europe. The major European nations, including France, Italy, Belgium, Portugal, Germany and Britain, were vying for colonies in Africa. These titans of industry did this to strengthen their global political, social, and economic positions. After holding the Berlin Conference in 1884–1885, they divided Africa among themselves. Otto von Bismarck, the German Chancellor, convened the Berlin Conference to prevent his country from being involved

in disputes with other countries over African possessions. Thus, he desired a peaceful division of Africa (Uzoigwe, 1985).

According to Uzoigwe (1985), the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 established the basis for the division of Africa in order to avert further confrontations over colonial claims. The conflict in East Africa between the Germans and the British was not entirely settled by the conference, though. It is important to remember that the desire of the British to end slave trade was what first sparked their interest in East Africa. However, later in the 19th century, German rivalry would pique their interest in East Africa. Colonial conquest of East Africa took place in the framework of the imperial conflict between Germany and Britain over control of the source of River Nile. The operations of Carl Peters, a German colonial administrator and Sir Henry Hamilton Johnston, a British explorer and colonial administrator, in the Kilimanjaro region nearly resulted in war. In an effort to legitimize their arbitrary pronouncement of their zones of control, they made contracts with regional leaders. In addition to overcoming each other's opposition, the two powers had to deal with the Sultan of Zanzibar, whose coastline dominions had been endangered. The Anglo-German Agreement of 1886 was signed as the first step towards the division of East Africa. The pact improved the amicable resolution of German and British claims to East Africa. The Heligoland Treaty, which was signed in 1890, was yet another treaty, as the conflict between the two powers had not entirely been resolved by the 1886 accord. In 1890, Carl Peters and Kabaka Mwanga agreed to a pact. The Kabaka rejected Frederick Jackson's request for a similar treaty. The struggle over the division of East Africa came to a conclusion with the Heligoland Treaty in 1890. With this power came the responsibility for managing Britain's and

Germany's areas of influence. According to Maxon (2002), the British administration established the East Africa Protectorate in 1895 after seizing control of the interior and claiming territory as far west as Lake Naivasha. The border was extended to Uganda in 1902.

When the British arrived in Western Kenya, the Wanga Kingdom was the only organized kingdom in the region with a centralized hereditary monarchy. In actuality, a large portion of the Nabongo administrative structure served as a stepping stone for British territorial and political expansionism. The name 'Mumias, is derived from Mumia, the king of the Abawanga (Hobley, 1970:81). Mumias' colonial occupation began with the arrival of early explorers, traders, and Christian missionaries. Joseph Thompson was the first European to land in Wangaland. He arrived in Mumias on 3rd December 1883 with Arab-Swahili businessmen who the Abawanga were already familiar with. Bishop James Hannington, the first Bishop of the Eastern Equatorial Africa Diocese came after him not long after, and shortly after that came the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Mill Hill Fathers.

Later, the British government dispatched representatives to do a feasibility study on Kenya as a British protectorate. During this time, as was already noted above, the British and Germans were in a standoff over control of the source of the River Nile. This explains why Uganda's prominence was a bigger focus in the struggle over the area. As a result, the colonization of Buluhya was influenced by Uganda's strategic importance (Mazrui, 1968). The vast area between Mombasa and Mumias was underdeveloped and of negligible value at the time, therefore the British had little or no interest in Kenya.

According to Esese (1990:191) and Dealing (1974:308), the British declared a protectorate over Uganda on 10th of June 1894. In the same year, Colonel H. Colville, the Ugandan Commissioner, dispatched Mr. Valet Frederick Spire, a representative of the Imperial British East African Company (IBEACo.) to establish an operational base at Mumias. During that period, Mumias was administratively and physically part of Uganda, specifically within its Eastern Province. The IBEACo. was to use Mumias as a supply route for caravans passing through at the time since it was more interested in Uganda. As Mumias continued to be a stopover for storage and lodging when travelling to Buganda, the IBEACo. was less concerned about creating economic ties inside the Luhyia region.

Mumias was still primarily used as a transmission station for small-scale and regional trading. The administration of Mumias by the IBEACo. appeared ineffectual. For instance, the station once had a single Swahili administrator working there. Frederick Spire also struggled to get the community involved in business activities like station upkeep. In reality, the station was only kept running for Nabongo Mumia's friendship and interests. The only individuals stationed there were the Sub-Commissioner and a few tax collectors, most of whom were Swahilis. Along the caravan route, a few soldiers were also stationed at a few locations, with Mumias being the most notable (Bode, 1978:55). In general, the company's initial efforts to assert its dominance in the area were unsuccessful.

Mumias provided a channel for supplies to reach Uganda between 1885 and 1900, which gave the centre significant importance to the British during their early colonial

administration of East Africa. Hobley (1970:89), corroborates this fact when he espouses that all the essential goods upon which Uganda was dependent for existence had to be forwarded on from Mumias to Port Victoria on the Lake by the native staff at the station. This implies that it was inevitable to bring Mumias under the control of the colonial government for the purpose of effectively controlling Uganda.

C.W. Hobley, the first Sub-commissioner of Uganda's Eastern Province, was dispatched to Mumias in 1895 to replace Spire and set up a permanent post (Osogo, 1966:129). Hobley shared Spire's interest in the necessity for efficient and prompt delivery of commodities and letters from the Coast to Uganda, the collecting of food by caravans, and the enhancement of the Western Kenyan communication infrastructure (Aseka, 1989:160).

These objectives, however, could not be achieved without direct supervision over those who felt no obligation to a failing foreign corporation. In fact, until they realized Nabongo Mumia had a friendship with the Arab-Swahili trade merchants, the Abawanga looked to vehemently oppose Company's overtures in Wangaland (Esese, 1990:192). Hobley arrived in Mumias in this situation with instructions to impose British rule in the area. Mumias evolved into the starting point for expeditions intended to exert colonial domination in the area (Lonsdale, 1964:114; Mutoro, 1976).

Due to Nabongo Mumia's distinct governing style, in comparison to that of his forebears, his subjects regarded him as a great king. He was a very efficient and responsible ruler, even listening to the common people, something that had never been done before. He came across as friendly, kind, and fair in the majority of his interactions.

Due to his leadership during the British colonial transition that led to British colonization in Kenya in the 20th century, Mumia is regarded as the greatest monarch of the Wanga Kingdom. The Abawanga were the most politically developed sub-tribe of the Luhya at the time British colonial control was established in Kenya. They were the only group with a well-established chieftainship with hereditary chiefs (Sifuna, 1990).

Nabongo Mumia had a very good motive for wanting to welcome foreign armies to Wangaland. As already mentioned in this study, Mumia's rise to power was a hotly contested issue from the start because his father, Nabongo Shiundu, had looked down upon him for being weak and feminine. He was derided as an heir because he was seen as timid and uncourageous. By the time he became king, largely because of his mother Wamanya's tenacious diplomacy, he had to contend with the challenge of establishing his eligibility for the title of Nabongo. This enthusiasm motivated his welcoming attitude and cooperation with the earliest European explorers in Wangaland (Osogo, 1967; Kenyanchui, 1992:16).

In the context of colonial incursion in Mumias, Mumia is depicted as a traitor and Mumias is portrayed as an enclave of conscious participation with colonial interests (Boahen, 1987). However, it is not often appreciated that Mumia was more interested in autonomy and self-preservation by joining forces with the British. Mumia's idea of sovereignty towards the British was comparable to what he practiced towards the Maasai and Arab-Swahili. Murunga (1998), supports the idea that Mumia's partnership with the British was misconstrued by colonial and nationalist historiography as collaboration. Fazan (K.N.A, DC/NN 3/1), operating within this kind of perception

documented about Mumia that “*this notable man realized from the onset that the Europeans would take in the country and his policy was therefore always one of loyalty to the colonial administration*” (K.NA, DC/NN 3/1).

3.3The place of Islam in colonial administration in Mumias

The Imperial British East Africa Company's invasion of the interior that would later become known as Mumias, the imposition of colonial control and the subsequent rise of administrative and commercial hubs gave the expansion of Islam additional momentum. A number of legislations, which were to be implemented by the courts, were passed during the British colonial era in Kenya.

In 1915, the British colonial authority adopted a marriage regulation. It represented a significant departure from *Sharia* law. According to the order, a Muslim woman could legally marry a non-Muslim man as long as she was more than 21 years old, regardless of how her guardians or parents felt about it. According to Islamic law, it was forbidden to marry a Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man (Hashim, 1998:231). This was an instance of the colonial government imposing novel notions of marriage's legitimacy that went against accepted Islamic doctrine. Many Muslim girls who were previously forbidden from marrying non-Muslim men gained the freedom to marry the men of their choice, regardless of their religious affiliations.

Sheriff Omar had been appointed to serve as the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registrar in 1912 in Mumias (KNA, PC/NZA, 3/18/29). Additionally, he was acknowledged as the District's Kadhi who could handle all Islamic religious conflicts and concerns. Nonetheless, the Abawanga Muslims objected to Sheriff Omar being

appointed Muslim Chief Kadhi of Nyanza Province because of his Arab identity (KNA, PC/NZA, 3/18/29).

Consequently, Sheriff Omar's position in Mumias was already under attack in 1938 because of his racial background. Athuman Seiff Wangara, a local Muslim, asserted that as an African from the Nyanza province, he had been chosen to be the leader of the African Muslims in the province. He sought for the registrar's book which he had not received since he was appointed in 1934. He wanted to impart knowledge on mosque and school construction to Muslims. Chief Murunga and the locals at Mumias, both Wanga and non-Wanga, unanimously backed Wangara's claim. The locals questioned why a foreigner was appointed Chief Kadhi while locals who cared about the future of the nation were not taken into account (Murunga, 1998).

In order to obtain protection from his nearby adversaries, the Bukusu and the Luo of Gem, Nabongo Mumia worked with the British colonial authorities. The agreement would see him appointed North Kavirondo's paramount chief in 1909. Mumia was given legitimacy as a monarch of the Wanga and paramount chief in 1913 by his gazettelement as such. As a result of the collaboration, there were no conquest attacks on the Abawanga, as it occurred on the Bukusu during the Lumboka and Chetambe punitive expeditions, which created a favourable atmosphere for the settlement of the Arab-Swahili. Through the building of mosques and intermarriage with Abawanga, the Arab-Swahili would later have an impact on the Islamization of Abawanga (Kenyanhui, 1992).

Nabongo Mumia converted many of his subjects to Islam through his influence. Mumia, as the paramount chief, selected his family members and close associates to be chiefs in various areas. Mumia's allies, Mulimi and Kivini of Kakamega, were promoted to chief positions, while Mumia's brother Mulama was taken to Marama. According to De Wolf (cited in Nasambu, 1999), Suleiman Murunga, another Mumia's brother, was named chief over North Bukusu at the beginning of 1900 in order to ensure the safety of all Muslims in the region, uphold law and order and ensure the collection of taxes. Murunga was essential in establishing mosques in Malakisi and Kimilili and in advancing Islam there. Given that Islam was more prevalent among the Abawanga than Christianity at the onset of colonialism, Mumia Nabongo recommended a couple of Muslim leaders for incorporation into the colonial government. This served as motivation for the continued propagation of Islam in the areas under their control.

Musa Bilal (O.I. 20/04/2022), an Arab-Swahili elder, stated that Namachanja and subsequently his son, Chief Sudi, ruled over the southern portion of Bukusu. Sudi resided close to the Nzoia River, where the Nzoia Sugar Factory would eventually be built. He converted to Islam under Chief Mumia's influence, and several of his associates followed suit. Omar Watoya and Muganda were two other notable sons of Namachanja. Her daughter Nekesa, who got engaged to an Arab-Swahili man named Jumbe Akida from Tanganyika, was the one who converted Watoya, after whom Watoya market near Bulimbo was named, to Islam. Mwanza, a Wanga chief who converted to Islam, spread Islam to Kabras and Tachoni. However, the majority of these chiefs lacked any customary power over the communities they presided over. Some carried the sub-imperialism of Nabongo wherever they went. The British policy of

indirect rule was flawed from the start because it imposed powerful chiefs who had little control over the communities they ruled (Mamdani, 1996).

The British temporarily solidified Nabongo Mumia's position in Buluhya by using Africans who were close to him as their agents in the region. Such an event appeared to confirm Mumia's delusion that he had defeated his adversaries once and for all. By implication, Mumias also reaffirmed its status as the region's political and administrative hub. Mumias station was no longer just useful as a supply centre once the British East Africa Protectorate took control of Uganda's Eastern Province. The supply demands it had met in the final quarter of the 19th century were eventually eclipsed by its administrative importance.

Being the reigning clan among the Abawanga allowed the Abashitsetse to conquer neighbouring communities like the Babukusu and Luo during the expansion of the Wanga Kingdom, which allowed them to amass sizeable landholdings. The colonial government accelerated the conquest when the British authorities assisted the Wanga kingdom in subduing populations that were reluctant to cooperate with the colonial government. This explains why the majority of the earliest mosques were built on territories that had once belonged to Abashitsetse. Abashitsetse distributed land for the building of mosques for two reasons. First, as was already alluded to, enormous swaths of land were easily accessible. Second, since the Nabongo dynasty had adopted Islam, Abashitsetse perceived it as the clan's religion (Humphrey Mulama, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Mumias' deteriorating state after 1920 was attributed to colonial administrative practices at the time the North Kavirondo District's administrative headquarters was moved to

Kakamega. Mumias' importance was diminished as more attention was paid to other nearby towns. The royal Wanga family's inability to convert their influence over the British into economic might became a major problem. The remaining Wanga traders continued to be small-time merchants.

The less well-connected local traders with limited entrepreneurial skills were quickly eliminated from competition by Indians. As a result, the Abawanga's economic ambitions and the local dynamic of Mumias' urban development were undercut. As a result, Islam's growth dwindled because many Arab-Swahili traders moved to Kakamega after realizing Mumias would likely experience economic downturn (Murunga, 1998).

The majority of the early Muslim soldiers had arrived as single men from places that were far away from Mumias. Most of them first converted local women then married them because they reportedly did not consider it necessary to travel back home to marry. Naturally, they raised their children as Muslims. Thus, marriage played a significant role in the growth of the Muslim population during the colonial era (Maingi, 1987).

Additionally, the majority of the first Kings African Rifles (KAR) forces were drawn from the traditionally Muslim populations of Somali, Nubian and Swahili. Later, people of other ethnic groups including the Luhya, Luo, and Nandi joined the army. Here, the colonial military forces played a role in the propagation of Islam as these individuals, who had been recruited into the predominately Muslim force, converted to Islam.

Colonel Wilkinson acknowledged in 1933 that "We take in a great number of Akamba, Nandi, and Kavirondo, when they come to us, the biggest proportion are pagans, but it is the fashion, I think, to take on a religion and the tendency is... in the K.A.R, to embrace the Mohammedan religion, We do not have any Christians except in the 4th Battalion in Uganda" (Maingi, 1987).

Another way that colonialism contributed to the development of Islam was the requirement to recruit soldiers from among the locals in order to have a composition of native soldiers in the Kings African Rifles. Many Wanga men joined the armed forces. As the days passed, many of the fresh recruits converted to Islam. A number of the new recruits were admirers of the new religion, but many were only conditionally converted because the senior soldiers regarded them with contempt, especially those who had not yet converted to Islam.

As part of the process of establishing colonial power, generally in Kenya generally and Mumias in particular, the British used Swahili Muslims as porters, guides, chefs, housekeepers, supervisors, scribes, craftsmen, interpreters, tax-collectors and court and administrative clerks. They first preferred to hire Muslims because of their literacy and familiarity with the interior. In addition, the British viewed Muslims as civilized people in contrast to "pagan raw natives". Thus, early colonial officials tried to portray the Swahili as an example of civilized natives that the peoples of the interior could imitate. Consequently, colonialism played a significant role in the growth of Islam in the interior, which in turn helped foster more interaction between Muslims and the local communities who were not Muslims (Odero, 2002).

Without the active assistance of the Nubian people who arrived in Mumias alongside Europeans, the subjugation of the resisting communities in Luhyaland would not have been successful. The Nubians originally came from the Nuba Mountains located near what is now Sudan. These people were Bantu and engaged in trade with the Arabs, bringing in metal tools, weapons, wine, and wheat while exporting ivory, rhino horn, tortoise shell and palm oil. According to Trimingham (1964), when the Arabs conquered Sudan, they discovered a population of mixed Caucasian Hamitic Negroid extraction and soon Islamized them through intermarriage and religious practices. The Sudanese were essentially united into one nation with one religion, presumably Islam, when the Arabs in Sudan were successful in imposing their language and religious culture on the entire population.

During the Boers war in South Africa, the British government hired Sudanese (Nubian) soldiers to help them in fighting against the Boers. The Nubian soldiers went to South Africa through Kenya, passing via Nandi and Bukusuland. While passing through Malakisi in Bukusuland, Chief Murunga – Nabongo Mumia’s brother who was then ruling North Bukusu – was impressed when they displayed the use of gun to the people of Malakisi. Chief Murunga befriended them and persuaded some of them to go and meet Nabongo Mumia at Elureko. Nabongo Mumia welcomed them and invited them to stay at his court. The soldiers became friendly to the people of Elureko, and with the power of the guns, they kept away the enemies of Mumia (Trimingham 1964).

While residing in Mumias, the Nubians steadfastly upheld Sunni Islam. Since they practiced Islam, Nubians helped Islam spread throughout the area. According to Ismael

Chiriswa (O.I. 25/11/2019), Abawanga would travel distances to worship with the Nubians at a mosque in Mumias, during which they were given sugar to taste and carry some home. As a result, the Abawanga gradually converted to Islam through their regular attendance at the mosque.

3.4 Colonial economy and the spread of Islam in Mumias

Elureko was the previous name for the location presently known as Mumias. Nabongo Mumia is credited with coining the name "Elureko". Mumia connected entrepreneurship in Mumias to the act of trapping (*okhureka*) in the conventional meaning. Mumia believed that the Abawanga went to this specific location to trap money and other goods from the visitors. The permanent market where the Abawanga went to trap money consequently became known as "Elureko" (Murunga, 1998).

Islam's expansion into the interior, particularly in Kisumu and Mumias, was aided by the British colonial government's construction of the Uganda Railway. The construction of the Uganda Railway was done between 1896 and 1901. George Whitehouse served as the project engineer throughout the construction. The building of the railway not only helped Islam spread into the interior, but also had a tremendous impact on colonial Kenya's governance and economic growth. Since the locals were unable to provide skilled labour, about 32,000 Indian labourers – referred to in colonial records as coolies – along with 5,000 clerks and craftsmen, were hired to perform the majority of the work (Murunga, 1998).

In 1901, the railway line reached Kisumu, and in 1930, it reached Butere. Most of the Indian workers remained in Kenya when construction was finished. They built *dukas* (shops) along the railway line in trading centres close to the railway terminus. A few Indians, some of whom were Muslims, were attracted to Mumias, which was near the railway terminus in Butere. They interacted with the locals in Mumias, which helped Islam take root there (KNA, PC/NZA, 3/18/29). The railway also made it easier for the Arab-Swahili traders and *Sheikhs* to access Mumias mainly for trade, eventually converting some of the Abawanga they encountered with.

The impact of colonialism was evident among the Abawanga by 1900, when the first hut taxes were collected from Buluhya (Mwenesi, 1972). The colonial administration mainly used the Swahili as tax collectors, and later African chiefs assumed this task, owing to the reported dishonesty of the Swahili in 1904 (K.NA, DC/NN 3/1). For instance, Mumias had 12 store owners of Indian heritage by 1906. According to reports, the Public Works Department finished building the tax collector's house and two clerks' homes, but a third clerk and accountant's house was still under construction (KNA, DC/NN 3/2/4). The British administrators anticipated demolishing these mud-walled and grass-thatched houses as soon as suitable ones were built. The term "*boma*" evolved to refer to the designated region of occupation for Europeans and the administration

The Nubians established themselves near the River Nzoia, at a location that was then known as Manyatta (KNA, DC/NN 3/2/19). Over time, settlements of certain types of people underwent changes. For instance, Nubians and Somalis coexisted afterwards at Elumino. The majority of the Nubian population of Manyatta practiced Islam. They

evolved into a group that had strong ties to the Somali and Arab-Swahili communities. They prayed together in Mumias' communal mosque. Said Effendi served as their leader at Manyatta and afterwards at Elumino (KNA, DC/NN3/1). Given that they (the Nubians) practiced Islam, the establishment of the Nubian community in Mumias acted as a catalyst for the growth of Islam in the area.

On the other side, the Arab-Swahili community in Mumias also grew in a unique way. *Mjini* became the name given to this settlement. The majority of the population of *Mjini* was Muslim and Arab-Swahili. When Wanga locals converted to Islam, they joined the *Mjini* community. The Muslim Arabs' concentration in *Mjini* in Mumias town rather than in Wangaland's villages reduced their engagement with the Abawanga, slowing down the area's Islamization (Athman Shikolyo, O.I. 22/10/2019).

3.5 Missionary Education and Islam among the Abawanga

German missionary John Ludwig Krapf of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) founded the first mission school in Kenya in 1846 at Rabai near Mombasa. The school was created to instruct learners in reading the bible, writing and simple arithmetic. Missionary education did not become widespread in upcountry Kenya until the arrival of colonial government in 1895 and the construction of the Uganda Railway (1895–1901). In the interior, a large number of mission stations were built and utilized to spread Christianity, Western education, as well as anti-Islamic propaganda.

The sons of chiefs were targeted by mission schools once Western education was introduced as the provincial government insisted on having educated Africans. Schools were primarily intended to instruct the sons of chiefs in the main currents of colonial

ideology and political power. Even though some children were attending the Mumias Mill Hill Mission Schools by 1910, local leaders were hesitant to send their children to receive Western education. The chiefs urged their subjects to willingly send their children to school as way of experimenting with the new system, rather than sending their own children to the mission schools (Shilaro, 1991).

Due to the lackluster reaction, Wanga chiefs and agents picked up children and forced them to attend school while punishing those who violated the order. Chiefs mandated the attendance of missionary schools for perennial thieves, juveniles, and children from impoverished families and those from broken or separated marriages. Failure was often meted by punishment. Shilaro (1991), claimed that Mumia of Wanga resisted attempts by missionaries to convert his children to Christianity. He also objected to sending his sons to school to acquire Western education. However, he gave in around 1902 by gathering and entrusting orphans to them.

Mumia declined a British proposal to travel to England in 1902, to attend King Edward VIII's crowning. On this expedition, he and his people would have in return had access to educational opportunities amid other benefits. Khachina, Mumia's most dependable and powerful member of his cabinet, and Mumia's Arab-Swahili advisors had misled him into believing that if he traveled to Britain, he would never return. Khachina's discouragement coupled with Mumia's suspicion about Western education and Christianity compelled him to abort the voyage to England; an excursion that would have allowed him, his cabinet and the majority of his subjects to receive Western education, as was the case with the Buganda kingdom (Musa Bilal, O.I. 20/04/2022).

The goal of missionaries was to persuade Africans to adhere to Christian values. They aimed to accomplish this through control over the educational system. The Western educational system opened doors to colonial administrative occupations like those of clerks, cashiers, masons, nurses, teachers, drivers, police officers and soldiers, opening up new avenues for wealth accumulation. Africans received training in formal political association organization and use as well social consequently, education became the major cause of social stratification during colonialism (De Wolf, 1977: 68–79).

Churches originally served as schools for the Western education. The missionaries from the Church Missionary Society (CMS) taught people how to read the Bible and write in their mother tongue. They started a school at Maseno in 1906 and eventually established sector schools in many places where the congregations were strong. In Wangaland, schools were started at Butere, Mumias, Musanda, Namasoli, Lubinu, and Namulungu.

In Mumias, Abawanga Muslims were urged to forego Qur'anic schools and *madrassas* in favour of the Western education provided by missionary schools such as St. Peter's Roman Catholic School, which was founded by the Mill Hill Fathers Missionaries in 1929, in order to gain the credentials they needed (Murunga, 1998). This was at the detriment of Islam because Muslims did not provide converts with this level of training and benefits.

The primary goal of school sponsors was to draw children to the church in exchange for a Western education. English, the language of the colonial masters and missionaries, was used for instruction. Additionally, English language was taught as a subject and tested on students. The incorporation of Christianity into the colonial education

curriculum rendered the Bible a central instructional text, while Christian religious Education (CRE) emerged as one of the core examinable subjects (Abdallah Musah, O.I. 05/11/2019).

Despite the formal provision for freedom of worship and the allowance for students to practice their faiths, the implementation of school regulations in most government institution contradicted these ideals, as Muslim students were often denied the opportunity to worship in accordance with their religious beliefs. For instance, fundamental Muslim values, including *saum* and the observance of the five daily prayers, were systematically disregarded within the mission schools. Muslim students in these institutions were forced to follow the rules by sacrificing their religious beliefs. They therefore remained nominal Muslims as long as they were in school. Some Muslim pupils were reportedly converted to Christianity while attending these school (Rahema Mariachi, O.I. 05/11/2019; Halima Shikhaya, O.I. 27/12/2019).

Africans' adoption of Western education resulted in the emergence of a group of academics with a focus on Christian theology. Consequently, more Africans were converted to Christianity. On the other hand, Africans who focused on learning the Qur'an and Arabic only ended up becoming *imams* because Islamic education was not as advanced as Western education. This resulted in the Abawanga Muslims having little access to Islamic literature for both learning about Islam and developing spiritually (Zubeir Murunga, O.I. 30/12/2019).

According to Painter (1966:102), missionary education in Southern Buluhya acted as a neutralizing agent over time, rendering Islam ineffectual. Painter claimed that Muslims

ignored the inescapable societal shift. Due to a lack of access to Western education, the majority of Muslims in South Buluhya were not employed by the government. For instance, in the case of the Abawanga, the *ummah* at Mumias redirected the money to construct a mosque when the Local Native Council gave a grant of one thousand shillings for the establishment of a Qur'anic school (KNA-DC/NN/1/10). This was detrimental to the area's rapid expansion of Islam.

Muslims placed supreme importance on their faith, regarding it as the guiding principle in all aspects of life. Consequently, the majority of them initially shunned the mission schools as they were afraid of their children being converted to Christianity (Kahumbi, 1992). This accounts for the fact that most Muslim families in Mumias during the colonial era were slow to embrace or acquire formal education.

Murunga (1998), asserts that there were no functional Muslim-sponsored educational institution in Mumias' municipal by 1940. Muslims had to rely on the St. Peter's Roman Catholic School in Mumias to educate their children. The first Qur'anic School, which was held in Bakari Kangu's home in the Mjini, was the only facility available. This was gradually converted into a school in the 1940s. As alluded to in the previous chapter of this study, *madrassa* classes and Qur'anic schooling was held in a home, a shop, or a wing of a mosque during the pre-colonial period. A similar situation prevailed during the colonial era prior to the construction of *madrassa* classrooms. The construction of permanent mosques and schools was not advocated by Muslims in Mumias until after 1940 (KNA, PC/NZA 3/18/29; DC/KMG 2/8/13).

The intention to construct a Muslim school in the township half a mile from the Catholic mission revealed the hostility between Catholics and Muslims in the region. When Muslims were offered a block of land to build a school on in 1944, they hesitated, expressing concern that it would be close to a mission school. They looked for an alternative site which they did not develop for long. As the Catholics predominated, this further slowed the development of Islamic civilization in Mumias (Murunga, 1998).

Muslims were in a difficult situation because Western education was designed to educate learners for a new economic order. Perhaps they would acquire Western education and participate in economic development or they would reject it outright and be marginalized. The inadequacies of the Islamic educational system, which were previously overlooked, became fairly evident for a new economic order (Khadija Makokha, O.I. 29/10/2019).

The great desire for white collar professions in the government and other private institutions forced Muslims to forego Qur'anic schooling in favour of the formal education that was widely provided in the missionary schools, making it abundantly clear that Western education was inevitable for Muslims. Muslim parents entrusted their children to schools that provided secular education and were rich in the teaching of Christianity in order to obtain the necessary certificates. As a result, a lot of Muslim children ended up becoming Christians.

According to Salim Malala (O.I. 05/11/2019), an *imam* from Makunga, introduction and spread of Western education in Mumias was a blessing in disguise with regards to Islamization of the Abawanga. Western education facilitated literacy, not only among

Christian faithful, but also to the Muslim converts. Ismael Chiriswa (O.I. 25/11/2019) and Hassan Iswa (O.I. 15/11/2019) corroborate that Western education facilitated the growth of *madrassa* schools, as it imparted literacy skills which were salient for reading and comprehending Qur'anic teachings. In addition, the fact that the Islamic faith values knowledge-seeking, many Abawanga Muslims were motivated to seek education outside Muslim-sponsored schools. As long as they adhered to their Islamic beliefs, receiving a Western education didn't matter much to them.

3.6 Muslim-Christian relations in Wangaland during colonialism

Christianity was initially brought to East Africa during the 16th and 17th centuries while Portugal was in power. Francis Xavier I, a pioneering Portuguese missionary, stopped along the Coast in 1542 while travelling to India. He had discussions with Malindi's Muslim leaders. In 1564, the Portuguese viceroy of India directed that the Gospel be preached in and around Mombasa (Barret et al., 1973). In 1844, a German Lutheran preacher Dr. John Ludwig Krapf came to Mombasa and was later joined by Rev. Johann Rebmann in 1846. The two preached Christianity in Mombasa and Frere Town where they baptized their first converts – freed slaves – in 1851 (Oliver, 1964).

Following the establishment of colonial administration in Kenya, the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway enhanced the expansion of Christian missionary work into the interior region of the country. By 1895, the Mill Hill Fathers had already established their presence in Mumias. This was several years after Islam had already taken root in the area. They approached Nabongo Mumia and requested permission to set up a Catholic church in the area. Mumia welcomed them and granted their request. They

established a Catholic Church Mission and began evangelizing the locals to Christianity (Barker, 1950:27; Haggai Makokha, O.I. 13/06/2025).

The Mumias Diocese of the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) dates back to the 19th century, during the reign of Nabongo Mumia. In 1884, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) created an Anglican Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa which was to cover Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika, with its headquarters in Uganda. Rev. James Hannington was consecrated, enthroned and appointed the first Bishop of the new Diocese in June 1884. On 23rd July 1885, Bishop Hannington left Mombasa for his mission in Uganda. While passing through Elureko, Nabongo Mumia welcomed him and invited him to rest for a while before proceeding to Uganda. The Church Missionary Society (CMS), under Bishop Hannington, developed a cordial relationship with Mumia, who gave the church 42 acres of land in Mumias (Oliver, 1964).

Bishop Hannington left for Uganda on 12th October 1885. Mumia advised him against entering Buganda from the East because people there considered visitors from that direction as wicked, who would bring their kingdom to ruin. He disregarded Mumia's warning as he hoped that the colonial government would defend him from attacks by hostile groups of people. When Bishop Hannington arrived in Busoga, he and the 50 porters Mumia had provided him were taken into custody. The arrest had been mandated by Kabaka Mwangi II of the Buganda Kingdom. The Buganda ruler had grown leery of Hannington's intentions as a result of the earlier unexpected arrival of German imperialists from the Coast. The conquistador of Buganda, according to an oracle,

would be from the East. Hannington's porters were executed on Kabaka Mwanga II's command after eight days in captivity (Oliver, 1964).

Bishop Hannington was speared to death on 29th of October 1885. Otsialo Ingutia, one of his caravan members, managed to flee and spend three years hiding in a Busoga woman's house. After learning of his death, Mumia arranged for the bishop's body to be transported and buried in Mumias. However, Mwanga II was hostile towards his messengers, and the plot failed. Later, during Otsialo's three years in the country, starvation struck Buganda. Elders became anxious and sought answers from fortune tellers, who informed them that the hunger was brought on by the bones of a white man (Haggai Makokha, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Despite not knowing Bishop Hannington's origins, they made the decision to take the bones back. Otsialo was sought for, and he was given the missionary's remains to return to the place the missionary had come. The bones were interred at Nabongo Shiundu's bunker in Mumias. Bishop James Hannington was succeeded by Bishop Alfred Tucker in 1890. Bishop Tucker arranged for the remains of Bishop Hannington to be exhumed and be sent to his home in Sussex, England for final interment (Thomas, 1940).

As the Archdeacon of Kavirondo – a region encompassing what would later be Western Province, Nyanza Province and Kericho District – Chadwick approached Nabongo Mumia asking him to be allowed to establish an Anglican Church in Wangaland. Mumia told him that his friends, the Catholics were already there and referred him to Chief Mulama, Nabongo Mumia's brother who ruled Marama, kisa and Bunyore. Chadwick went to Chief Mulama who lived at Enyenyisi in Marama. Chief Mulama accepted

Chadwick's request and he promptly started his missionary work at Butere where, with the help of Chief Mulama, he established an Anglican Mission station (Haggai Makokha, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Chief Mulama was converted to Christianity in 1901, dismissing his other wives, choosing to remain with only one. He denounced Islam and gave up his Muslim name, Omar, and was baptized in the Anglican Church as George Joseph Mulama. In fact, during the early days of missionary activity among the Abawanga, the Anglican Church was known as the church of Mulama because of Mulama's influence in its establishment in the region (Oliver, 1964; Haggai Makokha, O.I. 13/06/2025).

It is worth noting that communal leadership played a key role in influencing the Abawanga's acculturation into either Islam or Christianity. However, the inability of Abawanga leaders such as Chief Mulama and Nabongo Mumia to adhere consistently to one religion created ambivalence among the Abawanga regarding which foreign faith to follow. As a result, some Abawanga chose not to convert to either Islam or Christianity, instead maintaining their traditional Wanga religious practices.

According to Karanja (1999), mainstream protestant churches in Kenya were built as a result of European missions influence during the early years of British colonial expansion in the area. These churches were considered as "well-established" institutions. Some of them included the most well-known ones; the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), and the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK).

The missionaries who represented these churches under colonialism frequently had close ties to the colonial authority. The Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK), which would later be the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), was described by Karanja (1999) as the "quasi-official" church of the colonial government. Additionally, these churches were usually connected to early Kenyan political figures during the colonial era. This led to a greater religious inclination towards these Christian missions, to the detriment of Islam.

The spread of the Anglican Church in an area that had already been permeated by the Catholics caused friction between the two denominations. The outstanding evangelist among the Catholic in Mumias was Joseph Tunguta, son of Mumia. He used his father's authority to arrest Anglican Christians and send them to the District Commissioner (D.C), Mr. Edward Vincent Hermant, in Mumias. At the time, Mumias served as the first District Headquarters of North Kavirondo (Abdalla, 1971). Paul Ochieng, the outstanding Anglican evangelist went to see Archdeacon Owen who came to the rescue of the Anglican Christians. Matters were discussed before Nabongo Mumia and the D.C. Mumia rebuked his son Tunguta and ruled that both the Catholic and the Anglican Churches were free to evangelise in the area. This conflict between the two Christian denominations scared away potential converts who instead were enticed to Islam while some opted to remain in their traditional religion.

Mumia's own desire to convert to Christianity was stifled by the way the missionaries disparaged one another's ideas. He came to the conclusion that the rivalry between missionaries would intensify if he joined either Protestantism or Catholicism. He also

understood that adopting a single denomination would divide his subjects, making it unwise for a king to do so. Nabongo Mumia never saw Islam and Christianity as anything other than potential weapons of governance or ways to forge political alliances. He also had no sincere desire to convert to Islam. Early in his reign, Arab-Swahili slave dealers had come to visit him, and Mumia had been impressed by their cunning and business acumen. He was hesitant to enable the Abawanga to convert to Islam, nevertheless, and only did so in order to create a political buffer against the British (Abdalla, 1971).

African converts helped missionaries in their efforts to preach Christianity. Converts were able to overcome the linguistic barrier by being able to teach in their mother tongue, *Oluwanga*. Islam, on the other hand, was solely propagated in Arabic and to a lesser extent, in Swahili and *Oluwanga*. The Qur'an was not translated into other local languages for ease of comprehension, a situation that might have been motivated by the fact that Muslims consider Arabic to be the most precious, original and first language that God ever created. Muslims hold that the Qur'anic scriptures were descended from the heavens in Arabic language. Islam's spread among the Abawanga was hampered by the lack of local language translations of the Qur'an.

In contrast to Islam, which was only concerned with the spiritual aspect of life which required conversion to Islam, learning Arabic and putting into practice the teachings in the Qur'an and *Hadith*, Christian missionaries engaged in a variety of activities that won the Abawanga into the faith. The activities included provision of health services, formal education, and the suppression of slave trade (Musa Bilal, O.I. 20/04/2022).

Missionaries constructed hospitals and dispensaries especially in big mission stations such as Namasoli, Butere, Mumias and Namulungu, in order to treat patients for illnesses that had previously claimed many lives. They also provided training for medical professionals like nurses, pharmacists and clinical officers. The most outstanding missionary in this field was Miss Pethbridge. Due to the requirement that residents of medical centres convert to Christianity, these stations had a significant impact on the growth of Christianity. The St. Mary's Mission Hospital Mumias, which was established in 1908 by the Catholic Missionaries, is an example of these medical centres (Haggai Makokha, O.I. 13/06/2025). Patients were preached to by Christian missionaries as they awaited medication during their visits to the mission hospitals.

The Abawanga who accepted Christianity and later pursued Western education perceived Islam as a "backward" religion that tolerated archaic African traditions and beliefs, and had nothing valuable to offer (Abdulrazaq Khamis, O.I. 30/10/2019; Madinah Masinde, O.I. 15/11/2019; Hamis Shaban, O.I. 12/12/2019).

The colonial administration provided security to Christian missionaries against hostile communities and hostility of any kind from individuals or groups of people from other faiths who were opposed to Christianity. This was in contrast to the Arab-Swahili clerics who never enjoyed any protection from the colonial administration in their religious activities in Wangaland (Iddi Keya, O.I. 29/12/2019). As Christian missionaries were actively engaged in building churches, the colonial administration ensured that no foreign Muslim organizations or individuals from Arab nations were allowed to support the construction of mosques or participate in other *da'wah* activities in the interior.

Due to the significant presence of Islam in Mumias, Christian missionaries found it challenging to carry out their conversion efforts. The Christian missionaries were tasked with the inevitable task of converting the locals to Christianity in order to downplay the importance of Islam. It was difficult to convert to Christianity a person that was already a Muslim. Mumias was an important area of this contest because as Barker noted, “*The Moslem religion is strong among the Wanga, where Swahili influence was felt from very early*” (Barker, 1950:27).

As advised by British colonial administrators, Christian missionaries had to take great caution not to evangelize the Swahili and Arabs due to the powerful Arab-Swahili presence and their influence of Islam in Mumias. However, Arabs continued to be skeptical of the mission's overall goal of establishing Christianity in Mumias. In general, the European-Christian worldview was strongly entrenched in prejudices towards Islam and Muslims. According to Hallet (1976:482), they scorned Muhammad as a fraud, a sensualist, an intriguer and a bloodlust.

According to missionary documents in 1909, there was a noticeable effort of proselytization on the part of Muslims to the detriment of Christianity. One of them reads; “*Muhammedism is making tremendous strides. Every Mohammadan appears to be a Teacher and Missionary*” (KNA - EAYMF 67/80, 1909 Annual Report). As a result, the protestant missionaries in Western Kenya united with the rest of the protectorate that same year to form a federation with the primary objective of combating Islam and Catholicism (Ibid., Joint Protestant Societies Report, 19/3/1914).

The tension between Muslims and Christian missionaries, which was stoked by missionaries' evangelization disparaging Muslims, occasionally rose to the point of almost physical conflict. However, the British governmental apparatus supported Christian missionaries. Relations between the two religious movements were based on dubious principles. The Muslims, on the other hand, made several vicious attempts to impede and deter the spread of Christianity among them (Hallet, 1976).

Adverse tension generally developed between the Abawanga when two people of different religions, specifically Christianity and Islam, got married. The marriage discussions would then encounter a few hurdles when the subject of religion would come up. These included, readiness to convert, approval of the marriage by either the bride's family or the groom's family and typically biases held by one religious community against another. Nonetheless, these variances were not typically a problem. The background of the bride and groom, as well as their desire (often the bride's) to convert to the other's religion, was typically the deciding factor.

Missionary records attest to the institutionalization of Islam among African societies through the evident fear missionaries expressed towards its expansion (Nasambu, 1999). For example, Willis, an early Anglican missionary in Western Kenya and Uganda, chose to preach Christianity to natives who had not yet encountered Islamic influence, rather than those familiar with it (cited in Lonsdale, 1964:144). Painter (1966:11), acknowledged the influence of Islam by claiming that only those Africans who had not been exposed to Islam had success with Christianity.

Among the inhabitants of Kenya's interior, Islam and Christianity vied for conversion. This was evident in 1909, when colonial administration officials warned their fellow administrators that the spread of Islam posed a severe threat to that of Christianity (KNA - DC/KBU/3/4). According to historical records, Islam was more popular among upcountry peoples like the Abawanga than Christianity since it did not require a person to renounce the majority of his cultural traditions and beliefs (KNA - PC/coast/1/1/20). Nasambu (1999), echoes that Islam appeared to be a simpler religion to adhere to or convert to than Christianity on a comparative basis as Islam was more accommodative to African customs than Christianity. In this regard, the local people opposed some of the missionaries' teachings because they interfered with native customs. Such teachings included the prohibition of polygamy, widow inheritance and consumption of alcohol.

When some Abawanga were converted to Christianity, unless both husband and wife accepted Christianity, there emerged differences among couples. This often led to separations and even divorces in some homes. Other converts isolated themselves from other Christians causing misunderstanding in some families and churches. However, this was not common among Muslim converts, as there was tolerance between spouses in cases where one partner had not embraced Islam.

Islam initially appealed to the Abawanga more than Christianity because of the apparent cultural similarity. Despite the wherewithal employed by Christian missionaries in their efforts to establish Christianity in Mumias, a considerable number of Abawanga adopted Islam due the flexibility of the religion and its compatibility with the indigenous Wanga faith. Nasambu (1999), observes that although colonialism did not explicitly

proscribe Islam, it created viable conditions for Christianity to thrive. Nevertheless, Islam managed to withstand some of these restrictive circumstances.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the influence of Christian missionary activities and European colonial actions on the growth of Islam among the Abawanga of Kakamega County, both favourably and negatively. By use of the Social Exchange theory and Acculturation theory, the chapter explained the effects of colonial actions and policies, Christian missionary activities, and Western education on the Abawanga's conversion to Islam. The next chapter investigates continuity and change in Islamization among the Abawanga of Kakamega County in the post-colonial era.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN ISLAM AMONG THE ABAWANGA; 1964 -

2010

4.1 Introduction

This chapter, with the application of “Acculturation theory” and “Social Exchange theory”, elucidates transformations Islam underwent among the Abawanga during the post-colonial period. The chapter first discusses factors that facilitated persistent practice of Islam among the Abawanga after its inception. The chapter also looks at the constraints posed by westernisation to the spread and practice of Islam among the Abawanga. Furthermore, the chapter explores Muslim-Christian coexistence among the Abawanga. Finally, effects of Islam's spread among the Abawanga are assessed.

4.2 Persistence of Islam among the Abawanga

This section analyzes the key factors that contributed to the development and sustenance of Islam among the Abawanga in the post-colonial era. Following Kenya’s independence, Islam in Mumias and its environs experienced renewed growth and institutional consolidation, influenced by both local initiatives and external support. Central to this development were the formation of Muslim organizations, the establishment of Islamic educational institutions, innovations in Islam to accommodate modernity and Abawanga culture, and conduct of *da’wah* activities and seminars. Collectively, these factors played a pivotal role in strengthening Islamic identity, enhancing religious awareness, and ensuring the continuity of Islamic practice among the Abawanga community.

4.2.1 Muslim Organizations

The post-colonial era saw the emergence of many Muslim organizations that articulated matters concerning Muslims, which helped the faith to flourish and endure, particularly among the Muslim communities in the country's interior. One of the first Muslim groups was the East African Muslim Welfare Society (EAMWS). It was founded by the Aga Khan in Mombasa in 1945 with the intention of advancing Islam and raising the standard of living for Muslims in East Africa. Aga Khan advised all Muslims to view EAMWS as an organization with a pan-Islamic stance despite the organization being dominated and funded by Asian Shiites and Ismailis (Rajab, 2006).

The National Union of Kenya Muslims (NUKEM) was established in 1968 in response to the need of the Islamic community to protect the rights of its members. NUKEM was tasked with preventing any attempts by other religions to interfere with Islam. For instance, Amin al Hinawi, the chairman of NUKEM in the Coastal Province, vehemently attacked a speech made by the Catholic Archbishop Maurice Otunga cautioning against the spread of Islam in Africa in January 1993. Additionally, NUKEM served as a conduit between the Muslim community in Kenya and the Arab Muslim world. The group had ties to Saudi Arabia, which provided funding for the construction of several mosques in Kenya's Muslim community. Thus, during the post-independence era, Islam continued to flourish across the nation as a result of NUKEM's initiatives (Oded, 2000).

The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) was established in 1973 with the purpose of advancing Muslim interests inside the government. Muslims were at that

time recovering from the scars of mistrust that they had experienced both before and after independence, when they desired secession or autonomy. SUPKEM leaders pleaded with the Muslim community to support the government during their conferences. Instead of adhering to the Islamic concept of submission to authority, some leaders used this as an opportunity to maintain their influence and positions within the government. They were able to hold major positions in the administration and have a say in policy, even though it may have been an egotistical strategy for gaining or retaining power (Oded, 2000).

According to Oded (2000), SUPKEM represented the interests of Muslims by securing scholarships from Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya, Kuwait, and Sudan, as well as Islamic organizations like the Islamic Development Bank, the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), by playing their cards right with the government. SUPKEM was also engaged in the area of education of Muslims by hiring teachers from Arab nations to teach Islamic education. Additionally, they coordinated fundraising efforts for *madrassa* development.

Muslim leaders, including those in SUPKEM, joined the criticism of the government during the multiparty era on issues impacting the Muslim community, such as ongoing conflicts and a lack of security in the North Eastern Province. However, SUPKEM received criticism from people who believed the group should have been neutral because of their ties to the then-ruling party Kenya African National Union (KANU).

There were internal problems within SUPKEM as well, with many members believing that the leadership was more inclined to follow the dictates of the government than to

represent their constituents. They believed that they needed to create a political party in order to advocate for their political rights, taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the establishment and acceptance of numerous political parties. In response to this, the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) was founded in 1992 (Oded, 2000).

The Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK) was established in 1997. CIPK was a faith-based, non-profit organization that brought together notable Islamic scholars, *imams*, and Muslim preachers from across Kenya. It was founded with three main intentions: fostering unity of Islamic religious leaders and professionals to address and safeguard the rights of Muslims and the Muslim *ummah* at large, encouraging peace-building initiatives and dialogue, and upholding Islamic principles advocating for the application of Islamic law in matters affecting Muslims. The CIPK had a chairman and a committee in every Sub-County. The CIPK chairman of a Sub-County was elected by the *imams* of the Sub-County during a meeting convened by the CIPK Chairman of the respective county. The Sub-County CIPK chairmen assigned *imams* to mosques that lacked them within their sub-counties (Abdallah Washiali, O.I. 13/06/2025).

All leaders of Muslim organizations met under the national umbrella of the National Muslim Leaders Forum (NAMLEF). Its main objective was to portray Kenya as a just, peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous nation based on good governance, constitutionalism, the rule of law, pro-poor policies, enhanced democratic space and where Kenyans actively participated in determining their own fate as well as the improvement of the status and welfare of Muslims in Kenya. Muslim organizations

created NAMLEF in December 2003 to address the unique challenges Muslims in Kenya were then experiencing.

From then, NAMLEF has progressively expanded its affiliate membership, reaching 53 organizations at the time of the research. The initiative to form NAMLEF was motivated by the notion that only a concerted effort led by a broadly based national body could successfully address the obviously pitiful social situations Muslims in Kenya had been experiencing both before and after independence.

The Christian and Muslim Network-Western Kenya (CAMNET) was established in 2018 with an effort to ease the sporadic hostility between Christians and Muslims in Mumias. Its launching was graced by a team from the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). The CAMNET planned numerous events that brought members of the two religions closer together, including interfaith workshops, community service projects in Mumias, communal meals and courtesy visits between clerics from both faiths (Issa Kasim, O.I. 15/11/2022).

The Mumias Muslim Community (MMC), a group based in Mumias, has its headquarters there. The development of Islam among the Abawanga was greatly enhanced by the establishment of the Mumias Muslim Community (MMC). The MMC, which served as the hub for all Muslim activities in the Mumias region, was governed by the Grand *Imam*, as well as eight executive members and twenty-five committee members who were representatives of the estates that surrounded the Mumias Jamia Mosque. Every three years, the Committee elected a new chairperson (Hassan Sayyid, O.I. 30/10/2022).

Through its affiliate institutions, the MMC's initiatives made a pivotal contribution to the Abawanga's continued practice of Islam. MMC founded five institutions, all of which were professionally managed, to help with its operations: The first is the Mumias Jamia Mosque, originally constructed in 1898 and later rebuilt into a permanent structure in 1948 with the help of H.H. Aga Khan. The mosque, which could accommodate 3,000 people, served as a major hub for issuing *fatwas* and hosting other Islamic celebrations (Abdallah Washiali, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Mosques within Mumias that were affiliated with the Mumias Jamia Mosque paid a monthly fee of two hundred (200) shillings to the Mumias Jamia Mosque. The Jamia Mosque prioritized the affiliated mosques when distributing donations received from Muslim individuals and groups, both within the country and from well-wisher in the Arab nations. More often than not, *da'wah*-related donations to Mumias region were channeled through the Mumias Jamia Mosque (Bakari Muhammed, O.I. 24/04/2025).

The second facility is the Mumias Jamia Health Centre. It was established in 2005 with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The issue of women seeking medical attention from male doctors is complex and sensitive, particularly to conservative Muslims as Islam emphasizes the importance of modesty and privacy, especially for women. The establishment of the Mumias Jamia Health Centre was a significant relief for Muslim women in Mumias, who felt uncomfortable receiving medical care from male officers, as the facility recognized the need for female patients to be attended exclusively by female medical personnel. However, in the absence of

female medical specialists, female Muslim patients occasionally sought medical services from male personnel (Salim Abdulaziz, O.I. 13/06/2025).

The Answar *Madrassa* was another organization run by the MMC. There could fit 220 pupils in the *Madrassa*. It also served as the central reference point for all other 20 estate *madrassas* in terms of the syllabus and library. The MMC sponsored five Muslim public schools in the region, demonstrating its commitment to promoting Islamic education and supporting the academic development of Muslim learners. These schools include; Mumias Muslim Boys Secondary School, Mumias Muslim Girls Secondary School, Mumias Muslim Primary School, Ichinga Muslim Primary School and Nyakwaka Muslim Primary School. The sponsorship was also used as a tool to persuade learners to convert and adhere to Islam.

The Mumias Muslim Community Programme (MUMCOP), a Non-governmental Organisation was founded in Mumias by MMC. It was created with the aim of strengthening the Muslim *ummah's* capability in areas including leadership and governance updates, education for self-reliance and health education. The Busombi Muslim Youth Community and the Matungu Muslim Brothers and Sisters are two other Muslim organizations in the Mumias region that preserved the spirit of Islamization and the practice of Islam, particularly among young people. These organizations organized activities aimed at strengthening the Muslim *ummah* and promoting the Islamic faith (Issa Kasim, O.I. 15/11/2022).

A range of foreign Muslim organisations engaged in *da'wah* activities in Mumias region. These groups included the Zakat Foundation from the United States of America,

Muslim Global Relief, Muslim Aid USA, Islamic Aid, and the Sukuyus and Basibuyuk Foundations, both from Turkey. These groups sponsored establishment of mosques and *madrassas* within Wangaland, hence facilitating Islamization in the region. Due to the generosity of these foreign Muslim organizations, Muslims in the Mumias region were fortunate to receive water projects. Both Muslims and non-Muslims benefited from these water projects, which also helped to endear non-Muslim Abawanga to Islam (Issa Kasim, O.I. 15/11/2022).

4.2.2 Islamic Instructional Institutions

In the post-colonial era, Islamic instructional institutions – notably *madrassas* and Muslim-sponsored formal schools – were instrumental in facilitating the Islamization of the Abawanga by spreading Islamic teachings and fostering religious consciousness among the converts.

The post-colonial educational policies promoted growth and practice of Islam generally in Kenya and Mumias in particular. After 1963, many educational initiatives were acquired from the pilgrimage period for diverse races and religions, including Muslim traditional institutions of adaptation, such as *Madrassa* and *Duksi*. The existence of numerous educational programs posed a challenge to the young state that aimed to strengthen the arrangement of teaching among various administrative divisions (ADEA, 2012:15).

The Ominde Commission (1964) recommended an end to racial segregation in schools. As a result, former European schools were given native names. Additionally, it promoted a curriculum that was "Kenyan" and free universal primary education. In

order to reflect this fact, changes were duly made to the History and Geography subjects. Kiswahili was also made a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools. The Report also suggested a directive to enhance national cohesion and the creation of human capital for national development (Mackatiani et al., 2016).

The Report also advocated for teaching religion as an academic subject without trying to proselytize learners. Religious groups were expected to support education and provide pastoral care. The sponsorship function was relegated to missionaries and religious organizations in general. This provided Muslims the opportunity to attend public schools supported by Christian denominations without worrying that they would be forced to convert to Christianity, as had been the case during the colonial era (Mackatiani et al., 2016).

The Education Act was passed by the government in 1968 with the intention of promoting various Kenyan societies. This gave room for the incorporation of religious precepts within the formal education's instructional modules. A Presidential Working Party was established in 1981 with Prof. Colin B. Mackay serving as its chairman. Its report was released the same year. The report, also known as the Mackay Report, recommended that the education framework be rebuilt from the 7:4:2:3 framework that had previously been introduced by the Ominde Commission (1964) to the 8:4:4 framework, which allowed for the incorporation of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) into the Kenyan curriculum at all levels of education (Murua, 2016).

The addition of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) to the Kenyan curriculum served as a catalyst for the Islamization in Kenya in general and Kakamega in particular because

it allowed Muslim learners to study and practice Islam in formal education institutions. Besides Islamic Religious Education, Arabic language was also integrated in the secondary school and university curricula. Muslims believe that the word of *Allah* contained in the Muslims' Holy book, the *Qur'an*, was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in the Arabic language. Muslims also believe that Arabic is the most sacred, original and first language to be created by God. This explains why Arabic language was highly revered as the ideal language of learning and practicing Islam. Inclusion of Arabic language in Western education endeared many Abawanga to Islam (Hajji Nanjira, O.I. 20/04/2022).

Public Muslim-sponsored schools were established after independence to provide formal education to both Muslim and non-Muslim children. In the course of providing secular education in accordance with the government curriculum, these schools aimed at imparting learners with Muslim culture. These schools in Mumias include Makunda Muslim Primary School, Makunda Muslim Secondary School, Mumias Muslim Primary School, Mumias Muslim Secondary School, Eshibanze Muslim Primary School, Eshibanze Muslim Secondary School, Namulungu Muslim Primary School, Namulungu Muslim Secondary School, Emurabe Muslim Primary School, Koyonzo Muslim Integrated Primary School, Ahamadiyya Muslim Primary School, Eshing'oto Muslim Secondary School, Emanani Muslim Primary School, Emanani Muslim Secondary School and Busombi Muslim Secondary School.

The schools provided a conducive environment for learners to study and also practice Islam. Non-Muslim learners who attended Muslim-sponsored schools were not

compelled by their respective school administrations to observe Islamic requirements like dressing in *hijab* and *buibui*. However, due to their frequent interaction with Muslim learners and teachers at school, many of them were drawn to Islam. Consequently, they approached a Muslim teacher to request conversion, after which the teacher would inform their parents about their intention (Zaitun Faluma, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Pastoral Programme Instruction (PPI), a faith-based program in public primary schools that provided instruction on different religious traditions, played a key role in reinforcing Islamic commitment and identity among Muslim students in Muslim-sponsored schools. Held every Friday morning and attended by both Muslim and non-Muslim students, the program fostered an environment that encouraged conversions and adherence to Islam among learners (Zaitun Faluma, O.I. 13/06/2025).

While the government provided the teaching staff to teach the national 8.4.4 syllabus, Muslims in Kenya oversaw local schools and supplied the requisite Islamic equipment and infrastructure. Additionally, several teachers of Islamic Religious Education around the nation had their wages funded by Muslims. This was aimed at ensuring that Muslim children in all secular schools received an Islamic education (Kilonzo, 2001).

The post-colonial administration created an enabling environment that led to growth of private schools that provided both Islamic and secular education, in contrast to the colonial era when the government forbade African Muslims from setting up and running their own schools to provide Islamic instruction. The leadership of the mosques where these institutions were housed oversaw the private schools, sometimes known as

"integrated schools." The Bulimbo Muslim Education Centre, situated in Matungu Sub-County's Harambee market, is an example of these institutions (Shaban Wefwira, O.I. 20/04/2022).

Muslim-affiliated financial institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank facilitated Islamization in Mumias region through funding constructions in schools. For instance, the bank funded the construction of four laboratories at Mumias Muslim Girls Secondary School. With the coordination by the respective school managements, school fees for students from low-income families were paid by the financial institution (Shaban Osundwa, O.I. 13/06/2025).

In most Muslim-sponsored schools in Mumias, a mosque was built within the school compound to provide a place for Muslim students to congregate for *Dhuhr* (noon prayers), and *Asr* (afternoon prayers). The prayers lasted for approximately ten minutes. However, unlike most Christian-sponsored secondary schools, which had chaplains, Muslim-sponsored schools did not have a chaplain to guide students on spiritual matters (Shaban Osundwa, O.I. 13/06/2025).

The *madrassas* in Mumias and Matungu Sub-Counties offered instruction in a wider range of subjects than what was offered during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. These subjects included: *Akhlaq* (moral values), *Khatt* (writing), *Nahw* (Arabic grammar), and *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *Al-tajwid* (recitation of the Qur'an), *Tafsir al-Qur'an* (commentary of the Qur'an), *Hadith* (sayings of the Prophet Muhammed), *Sarf* (syntax), *Al-Lugha al-arabiyya* (Arabic language), *tasawwuf* (mysticism or Sufi teachings), *Tawhid* (Theology), *Sira*, *Da'wah*, *Tarbia* (character building and moral

development), *Adab* (etiquette and good manners) and *Adhkaar* (moral rights). This was a subject-centered curriculum. However, there appeared some variance on the number of subjects offered among the *madrassa* schools (Murua, 2016).

Tawhid referred to the indivisible oneness of monotheism in Islam. Its subject matter included lectures on the idea that there is only one God (*Allah*). It placed a strong emphasis on monotheism and forbade the adoration of any deity other than *Allah*. *Tawhid* was the central and most vital idea in Islam, upon which a Muslim's entire faith was based. It was categorically stated that God was one (*Al-A ad*) and single (*Al-Wa id*). The most important component of the Muslim declaration of faith is *tawhid*. The assertion of the oneness of God was made in the first clause of the Islamic statement of faith (*shahada*). According to the Qur'an, attributing divinity to anything or anyone else is *shirk*, which is an unforgivable sin if repentance is not sought for. Muslims held that *Tawhid* served as the foundation for all of Islamic doctrine (Kahumbi, 1995).

Arabic language instruction required the reciting of verses from the Qur'an. Muslims consider Arabic to be the most precious, original, and first language that God created. Muslims hold the view that the Arabic-language verses of the Qur'an are a direct descendant from *Allah*. Anyone who completes the entire Qur'an will not experience any animal attacks after they pass away until the Day of Judgment. Furthermore, memorizing the Qur'an was a guarantee of *Allah's* blessings and forgiveness of sin.

Sira was another important subject meant to edify the Muslim converts about the biography of *Allah's* prophets such as Suleiman, Musa and Issah. Having their finger on the pulse of the prophets' lifestyles increased their faith in *Allah*. Through the study

of *fiqh*, Muslims were meant to gain knowledge of the correct ways to worship *Allah* and perform other religious procedures. Muslims were taught the proper way to pray. There were a number of prayers offered, depending on the time of day and the circumstance. Muslims were also instructed on how to provide sacrifices, for instance at celebrations like *Eid ul-Hajj*. Muslims were also instructed on how to complete the *hijji* (journey to Mecca) (Kahumbi, 1995).

Whereas pre-colonial and colonial Islamic education in *madrassas* was provided gratuitously, the post-colonial period saw the introduction of a school fee of 350 shillings per student per month at primary level. The modest school fees was intended to promote enrollment and retain students in school. The *imams* and *ulama* who taught in the *madrassas* were paid from these school fees. This explains why *madrassa* teachers were poorly paid, which in turn demotivated them in their work (Hajji Nanjira, O.I. 20/04/2022).

The curriculum at the secondary level of *madrassa* education covered a significantly wider range of Islamic literacy, theology, and legal topics. Literature made up the bulk of the curriculum; it was largely derived on Qur'anic teaching. Forms 1 through 4 made up the four classes at the secondary level. The majority of secondary level *madrassa* graduates went on to higher education institutions in countries like Sudan, India, and Iran, while a small number attended the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) (Murua, 2016). The Islamic University of Kenya (IUK) and Umma University, both located in Kajiado County, are two of Kenya's Islamic higher education institutions.

With the Islamic knowledge they acquired, the graduates from *madrassa* schools on their return could work as *Ulama, Imam, Sheikh, Mullah, Mufti* or *Khatib*. In addition to leading prayers in mosques, *Imams* oversaw *nikah* (marriage) and funerals for Muslims in the Abawanga community. This strengthened the religion's persistence by giving it new vigor (Abdallah Washiali, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Contrary to the pre-colonial and colonial periods when anyone with Islamic knowledge would qualify to be an *imam*, post-independence period required certain academic qualifications for those aspiring to become *imams*. For instance, one was required to have completed formal education up to at least Form 4 level. One was also expected to have studied Islamic Religious Education and Arabic at school. Finally, an individual was required to have acquired foundational Islamic knowledge through the *madrassa* system, followed by advanced training in a recognized Islamic institution that provided preparation for imamship (Muhammed Rajab; O.I. 30/08/2025).

However, there were no strict qualifications for individuals aspiring to be *imams* in small and emerging mosques in rural areas. Muslims who had completed *madrassa* education up to Grade 6 were qualified to lead such mosques. The qualifications for *imams* and their deployment were determined by the Council of Imams and preachers of Kenya (CIPK) (Abdallah Washiali, O.I. 13/06/2025; Salim Abdulaziz, O.I. 13/06/2025).

The majority of the Islamic religious authorities in the area during the institutionalization of Islam among the Abawanga were of Swahili and Arab ancestry. The post-independence era brought about a change in this situation, as Abawanga

Muslims who had completed their Islamic education at *madrassas* and Qur'anic schools began to hold leadership positions in Islamic instructional institutions (Wambunya Hamis, O.I. 29/12/2019).

Madrassa classrooms were built at each mosque with assistance primarily from foreign groups from Arab nations. Through the leadership of neighbourhood mosques in Mumias and Matungu, Abawanga Muslims also organized *harambees* (fundraisers) to support the construction of mosques and *madrassas*, and equip them with public address systems and stationery. The presence of *madrassa* at the mosques contributed to the expansion and survival of Islam in Wangaland (Hajji Nanjira, O.I. 20/04/2022).

Several *madrassas* and mosques in Mumias possessed libraries with a variety of reading materials on Islam, including journals, newspapers, magazines, *Hadith*, and the Qur'an. *The New Dawn* and *The Friday Bulletin* were two popular journals that were readily available in the libraries. The libraries played a cardinal role in advancing *da'wah* and Islamic education among the youth in Mumias. By providing access to religious and educational materials, these libraries enabled young learners to acquire knowledge that deepened their understanding of the *Deen* and strengthened their sense of responsibility as Muslims. Consequently, they became instrumental in nurturing an informed and religiously conscious generation within the *ummah* (Nyota Nashim, O.I. 15/11/2019; Salim Abdulaziz, O.I. 13/06/2025).

The Qur'an was made available in a variety of languages, including Arabic, Kiswahili, English, and *Oluwanga*, which made it easier for people who could not easily read the Arabic version to comprehend *Allah's* message in the Qur'an (Abdallah Washiali, O.I,

13/06/2025). Students at the *madrassa* were instructed in Arabic and Kiswahili. In several cases, *Oluwanga* was employed to provide more detail. The *imam* or *alim* was in charge of teaching in the *madrassa*. *Madrassa* classes were held when schools were out of session. However, when formal schools were in session, *madrassa* classes were held on weekends. Some *madrassas* also held classes in the afternoons, from Monday to Wednesday, after secular lessons (Hajji Nanjira, O.I. 20/04/2022). In addition to offering education, Kahumbi (1995) noted that these institutions served as training grounds for *imams*, who were salient in leading, counseling and directing their congregations.

In spite of the pivotal role played by Islamic institutions in promoting the propagation of Islam sustaining its persistence generally in Kenya and among the Abawanga in particular, the secularized Islamic education had some drawbacks. For instance, in spite of Arabic being essential in learning and practicing Islam, most Muslim-sponsored schools did not offer the language as a subject. The study established that only four secondary schools in Matungu and Mumias West Sub-counties offered Arabic. These were Makunda Muslim Secondary School, Namulungu Muslim Secondary School, Mumias Muslim Girls Secondary School and Mumias Muslim Boys Secondary School. Teaching Arabic in secondary schools was challenged by limited basic knowledge in Arabic among students since the subject was not taught at primary school level (Saleh Wanga, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Only a few primary schools, predominantly Muslim-sponsored public institutions, offered Islamic Religious Education (IRE) owing to the shortage of adequately trained

teachers to handle the subject. The absence of Islamic Religious Education in most primary schools contributed to the declining interest of Muslim students in the subject at the secondary school level. As a result, some of the learners opted to take Christian Religious Education (CRE) upon joining secondary school. Interestingly, a greater number of learners in Muslim-sponsored secondary schools preferred CRE to IRE, citing the perception that CRE was easier (Saleh Wanga, O.I. 13/06/2025; Farjalla Murenga, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Some Muslim-sponsored public schools were compelled to offer CRE in place of IRE due to a scarcity of teachers of IRE. Although Arabic language and *Hadith* are two elements that make up the foundation of Islam, some Islamic educators were illiterate in Arabic and therefore unable to teach these subjects effectively. This had a critical impact on *madrassa* schools because some had to be run by untrained *alim* (Issa Kasim, O.I. 15/11/2022).

More so, there was a small variety of Islamic Religious Education text books approved for use in primary and secondary schools. This situation arose from the limited market available to publishers, as the number of learners pursuing Islamic Religious Education nationwide was significantly lower than those taking Christian Religious Education. The available text books were; *Foundation Islamic Religious Education* Form 1 - 4 by Murenga Farjalla, *Crescent Islamic Religious Education* Form 1 - 4 by Idriss Matsukhu and *Islamic Religious Education* Form 1 - 4 by Kenya Institute of Education (Farjalla Murenga, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Islamic education in Wangaland was also constrained by the lack of adequate *madrassa* facilities. However, this challenge was mitigated by conducting *madrassa* classes within mosques, which were temporarily converted into learning spaces to serve both as places of worship and centres of instruction. This adaptive approach reflected the resilience and commitment of the Mumias Muslim community to preserve and transmit religious knowledge despite instructional limitations, while also reinforcing the central role of the mosque as a hub for both spiritual and intellectual development.

The study established that there were only two secondary-level *madrassas* in the research locale – Madrasatul Al-Hidaya Al-Islamiya located at Ogalo market, and Umma Institute of Professional Studies at Panyako, both situated in Matungu Sub-County. As a result, students who had the aptitude and desire to pursue their study of Islam beyond the primary school level were compelled to transfer to secondary schools in other parts of the country, primarily Mombasa. The scarcity of *madrassa* secondary schools explained the paucity of students and instructors with a *deen*-specific focus, specifically in Matungu and Mumias Sub-counties and generally in Kenya (Salim Abdulaziz, O.I. 13/06/2025).

There was also limited time for learners to attend *madrassa* classes as they were equally required to participate in secular schooling, which often conflicted with scheduling and consistency of religious instruction. Consequently, this dual commitment limited the depth of Islamic learning and reduced the number of students who advanced to higher levels of *madrassa* education, thereby constraining the overall impact of Islamic educational institutions in the region (Abdul Wanga, O.I. 16/06/2025).

The study also established that the *madrassa* non-formal curriculum (co-curricular activities) in Mumias was narrow. *Madrassa* learners were not motivated to participate in organized and competitive games and sports, clubs and societies, and field trips and tours. The only organized and competitive extra-curricular activities were the annual Qur'an recitation competitions and *Maulid* celebrations. This limited learners' potential in games and sports. This was an aspect in Islamic education that never changed since the pre-colonial period.

There were inadequate *alims* to teach in *madrassas*. The small number of *alim* was due to the secular system of education and the subsequent job market, which offered limited employment opportunities for Muslim scholars. Poor remuneration of *alims* also impacted negatively on growth of Islam in Mumias as it discouraged potential *alims* from undergoing training to teach Islamic Religious Education and Arabic (Hassan Sayyid, O.I. 30/10/2022; Ali Ashikomere, O.I. 05/11/2019).

Qur'anic education was not designed to align with available employment opportunities or with the dynamic demands of modern life. To continue playing this role even better, there was need for the *madrassa* curriculum to borrow from the formal school system to make its education more relevant. There was need for it to teach secular subjects geared towards producing engineers, clerks, doctors, architects and economists, as the Muslim community was not only in need of *imams*, *kadhis* and *madrassa* teachers (Murua, 2016).

However, in Matungu Sub-County, the Panyako's Umma Institute of professional studies *Madrassa*, which was affiliated to the Western Kenya Muslim Centre Jamia

Mosque was distinct, as it offered technical and vocational training in Information Communication Tehnology (ICT), welding, masonry, Dressmaking, beauty therapy, dressmaking, and carpentry, alongside Islamic education. Madrassa classes for Islamic education were conducted from 8:00 a.m to noon, while the afternoons were designated for vocational training. Likewise, the Simba Wanyika Mosque at Panyako expressed intentions to establish a *madrassa* modeled on the same approach, integrating vocational training with Islamic religious instruction to support both spiritual development and practical skill acquisition (Muhammed Rajab, O.I. 30/08/2025).

Some Muslims were compelled to enroll their children in Christian-sponsored schools as a result of inadequate Muslim-sponsored schools. This occasionally resulted in conflict between the school administrations and the Muslim pupils and parents in Christian-sponsored schools. Islamic leaders charged the Christian schools with discriminating against their students on the basis of their religion and culture. For instance, Muslim students were not permitted to attend the *Jum'ah* in Christian institutions. *Jum'ah*, the congregational Friday *salah*, was regarded as a significant prayer in Islam since it differed from a daily prayer because Muslim believe that *Allah* made it precious to them. Missing of the congregational prayer by Muslim school going children never augured well with Muslim parents and clerics (Zaitun Faluma, O.I. 13/06/2025).

In spite of the challenges experienced in the provision of Islamic education among the Abawanga in Kakamega County, Islamic instructional institutions played an

instrumental role in the development of the Muslim community education and identity in the region.

4.2.3 Mumias Sugar Company

Following independence, Kenya saw the establishment of numerous private and public industries. The industries had a fundamental socio-economic impact on the local populations. Mumias Sugar Company was established in 1972. When it was founded, numerous Abawanga families were displaced in order to create room for the mill and to provide land for the company's sugarcane nucleus. A total of 4,494 hectares of land were carved away from the Abawanga community in the area. Being at the epicenter of Western Kenya's Islamization, it is clear that the majority of the displaced Abawanga had already converted to Islam. As a result of their eviction, Islam was introduced to the areas where they later settled, especially within Mumias region (Jamillah Nanda, O.I. 20/11/19).

For instance, in 1972, Abdallah Shirikhaya – an Islamized Wanga – was displaced from the site earmarked for the Mumias Sugar Company nucleus. Subsequently, he relocated to Namalenge village in Matungu Sub-County. Owing to Shirikhaya's Muslim background, as well as that of his family members – notably his sons Wanga, Shikuta, Murunga and Muchinyi – the settlement of the family in Namalenge village led to the growth of a substantial Muslim community in the area (Joseph Kulundu, O.I. 22/08/25).

As a result, a mosque was built near Kope Market in Namalenge hamlet in 2008 to accommodate the area's ever-expanding Muslim community. The bulk of the devout who frequented the Namalenge Jamia Mosque were Abawanga. On the other hand,

some Abawanga Muslims who were relocated from Mumias eventually abandoned Islam because they settled in areas without Muslim residents or mosques to maintain their connection to the faith (Abdulaziz Muchinyi, O.I. 22/10/19).

In accordance with its commitment to corporate social responsibility, Mumias Sugar Company financed the construction of classrooms in Muslim-sponsored schools including; Mumias Muslim Boys Secondary School, Makunda Muslim Primary School and Makunda Muslim Secondary School. Muslim parents who were either sugarcane farmers or the Sugar Company employees used their revenue to pay for their children's education at *madrassa* and formal schools. Some parents managed to take their children to *madrassa* secondary schools in Mombasa (Issa Kasim, O.I. 15/11/2022; Asman Malala, O.I. 15/11/2019).

Following the decline of Mumias Sugar Company from 2012, Islamization of the Abawanga was slightly hampered as there was no more funding from the factory for the construction of mosques and *madrassas*. The collapse of the Sugar mill, however, paved way for the emergence of other sugar industries in the region. Among these, the Busia Sugar industry proved particularly instrumental in supporting Islamic activities across the area (Salim Abdulaziz, O.I. 13/06/2025).

4.2.4 Da'wah activities

The concept of missionary activity in Islam is colligated under the Arabic word “*da'wah*”, which basically means ‘to invite’, or ‘to summon’. *Da'wah* thus becomes an invitation or a call and in specialised usage, “missionary activity” (Poston, 1992). Surah 16:125, states that “*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and*

debate with them in the most dignified manner. Your Lord is aware of those who stray from His path, and He is aware of those who are guided". Islam is thus portrayed as a missionary religion. Contrary to the pre-colonial and colonial times when *da'wah* activities were mainly carried out by Muslim missionaries from the Arab nations, post-colonial *da'wah* activities among the Abawanga were mainly organized and carried out by local Muslims.

Da'wah among the Abawanga underwent various innovations. First, Muslims moved from place to place inviting people to Islam. Typically, this took the form of medical caravans, which were occasionally carried out in rural areas. During these caravans, the Abawanga Muslims supplied free medical care and counseled patients on how to live after preaching Islam to everyone who sought treatment. This helped the Abawanga Muslims to get more converts hence facilitating persistence of the religion in the area. This group spoke to Christians about Islam while quoting both the Bible and the Qur'an. They explained the text and then encouraged questions, which were adequately addressed by *alim* and other Muslim clerics. They then extended invitations to join Islam, which was a move that was fruitful (Shaban Rajab, O.I. 11/11/2019).

Da'wah among the Abawanga also took the form of crusades that Muslims held in public spaces such as markets. Both Muslims and non-Muslims were invited to these crusades, during which Muslim clerics delivered sermons to the attendees. They prayed for and reminded one another of their beliefs and the obligations that came with being Muslims. During these crusades, a significant number of non-Muslims embraced Islam as a result the clerics' preaching (Omar Kulundu, O.I. 11/11/2019).

Muslims also visited one another in their homes to encourage continued practice of Islam and to remind each other of their shared faith. These helped them to remain steadfast in their religion. Meetings were also convened by *imams* to deliberate on matters that affected the Muslim community (Ibrahim Wanga, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Local Muslim youth organisations also engaged in *da'wah* by bringing together young Muslims from various mosques to organise meetings where they discussed religious matters and reminded one another of their religious obligations. They periodically welcomed members of various Muslim denominations to attend public talks, notably on Fridays following the *Jum'ah* prayers. This helped the Muslim youth to understand their religion much better and hence adhere to it (Issa Juma, O.I. 30/12/2019).

Muslim wedding and funeral rituals served as platform for Islamic preaching. During these events, Muslim clerics preached Islam to the congregations that comprised of both Muslims and non-Muslims. The clergy urged non-Muslims to embrace Islam by extolling the virtues of the Islamic faith. Muslims were also urged to continue practicing their beliefs.

Da'wah was also promoted through exchange programs and seminars organized between *imams* from Mumias and their counterparts from other regions such as Kisumu. During these interactions, Muslims were enlightened on a wide range of religious, social and developmental issues, which not only strengthened inter-regional religious networks but also deepened the understanding and practice of Islam among the faithful of Wangaland (Hajji Nanjira, O.I. 20/04/2022).

Occasionally, the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Kenya organized seminars in Mumias town that brought together *imams* from Mumias West, Mumias East and Matungu sub-counties. These fora, which focused on theological training and contemporary Islamic discourse, reflected the growing influence of foreign-sponsored *da'wah* in the region. By promoting reformist interpretations of Islam and enhancing the leadership capacity of local *imams*, such initiatives played a significant role in shaping religious practice and contributing to the continued growth and diversification of Islam in Mumias.

Da'wah activities significantly contributed to both the spread and denominational diversification of Islam in Mumias. Initially, Sufi-oriented *da'wah* influenced by coastal traditions dominated the area, promoting spiritual devotion and cultural adaptation. However, the later introduction of reformist movements, particularly Salafi *da'wah* through *madrassa* programs and local preachers, challenged traditional Sufi practices and encouraged new interpretations of Islam. Limited Shi'a outreach through welfare and educational initiatives also added to this diversity. Consequently, *da'wah* activities in Mumias enhanced awareness while simultaneously fostering the growth of distinct Islamic denominations within the community (Mustaneerah Munialo, O.I. 30/10/2019).

Da'wah activities among the Abawanga were however hampered by a number of factors. For instance, there existed leadership wrangles among *imams* in mosques, as well as conflicts over who was entitled to preside over Muslim ceremonies such as burials and *nikah*, which discouraged Muslims from organising *da'wah* activities. Inadequate financial resources also hindered *da'wah* activities. Furthermore, some Muslims, especially adults with families, claimed to lack adequate time to participate in

the activities. This explains why these events were mostly attended by the youth (Ibrahim Wanga, O.I. 13/06/2025). In spite of these constraints, the aforementioned advancements in *da'wah* techniques assisted Abawanga Muslims in maintaining their commitment to Islam while also gaining more adherents.

4.2.5 Muslim festivities

The "Five pillars of Islam" are the religion's five main feasts. They include: *Eid al-Fitr*, *Eid al-Adha*, *Mawlid al-Nabi*, *Ramadhan* and *Laylat al-Qadr*. *Eid al-Fitr* takes place at the end of *Ramadhan*, a month of prayer and fasting. The name "*Eid al-Fitr*" translates as "the festival of the breaking of the fast". Like the beginning of *Ramadan*, *Eid al-Fitr* begins with the first glimpse of the new moon. The Islamic calendar's third month, *Rabi' al-awwal*, is when Muslims celebrate the anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad's birth, known as *Mawlid al-Nabi*. Muslims commemorate the event because of Muhammad's significance in Islam. The night that God first revealed the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel is remembered during *Laylat al-Qadr*. The Qur'anic story of Prophet Ibrahim's readiness to sacrifice Ismail as an act of loyalty to God is remembered every *Eid al-Adha*. God provided a ram as an offering before Ibrahim could perform the sacrifice (Edgar, 2002).

Families that could afford to sacrifice a ritually appropriate animal (a sheep, a goat, a camel or a cow) during these festivals did so, dividing the flesh among themselves, the underprivileged as well as relatives and neighbours. Contrary to the initial period of institutionalisation of Islam in Mumias, the modern practice of Islam involved invitation of non-Muslims, mainly of Christian faith, to Muslim festivities like *Eid-ul-fitr*, *Eid-ul-*

Adha and *Mawlid* where they had meals together. This was also a time for visiting friends and families and for exchanging gifts.

The *Eid* festivals were replete with Muslim gatherings, food-sharing, prayer services, sporting events, Islamic educational events, *qasida* (Arabic monorhyme poem or song) and *Musabaqah* (competitions in recitation of the Qur'an). Sporting events, Qur'an recitation competitions and *qasida* ended with award ceremonies. Such innovative activities attracted large crowds comprising of both Muslims and non-Muslims. Abdulaziz Muchinyi (O.I. 22/10/19), corroborated that an increase in awards during Islamic-related activities such as *Musabaqah* encouraged Muslim youth to stick to Islam. Apart from serving as avenues for celebrating and practicing Islamic culture, the festivals provided opportunities for attracting new converts.

4.2.6 Africanisation of Islam

The post-colonial era was characterised by the Africanisation of Islam. In the context of this study, Africanisation of Islam refers to the process by which Islam adapts to and is shaped by African cultures, traditions and contexts. Modification of Islam within the context of African cultural practices reduced the friction between Islamic customs and African traditions among the potential converts, hence facilitating adoption of Islam. Social Exchange theory denotes that individuals or groups shun their norms for new ones depending on the perceived benefits associated with the novel culture.

Abawanga Muslims expressed their faith in ways that blended Islamic practices with local customs and traditions. Abawanga Muslims developed their own interpretations of Islamic teachings, incorporating local perspectives and values. Consequently, Islam

became an integral part of Abawanga culture, influencing daily life, social norms and community practices.

Muslim burial rites were shaped into African context. *Olucheri*, a ceremony performed the third day following burial, was a part of the Abawanga culture's burial rituals. During this event, close family members had their heads completely shaved and a cow was slaughtered. Following Islamization, *olucheri* was performed by Abawanga Muslims under the term "*fatiha*". Similarly, *fatiha* involved prayers for the deceased at the graveyard three days after burial. The prayers were intended to comfort the grieving as well as implore *Allah* to forgive the sins of the deceased. Within the context of 'Social Exchange theory', Abawanga Muslims Africanized *fatiha* by including both Qur'anic recitation and slaughtering of a cow during the ceremony. However, it appeared that the practice of the deceased's close relatives shaving their heads clean was dwindling (Halima Shikhaya, O.I. 27/12/2019).

Khitma is the recitation of the Qur'an for the deceased. Even though some Muslim groups criticized the practice, it was frequently practiced by Muslims. The practice has Arabic-Egyptian origins. Traditionally, Abawanga could gather at the deceased's home forty days after burial for prayers and sacrifices. This rite among the Abawanga was referred to as *amakumba*. In the post-colonial era, Abawanga Muslims still practiced *amakumba* but in form of *khitma*. Instead of pouring libations and offering sacrifices in honour of the deceased, Qur'anic recitations were done (Jafari Ochung'a, O.I. 23/11/2019).

During *khitma* among the Abawanga Muslims, *amalwa* (local brew) was prepared and consumed in spite of alcohol being abhorred in Islam. For instance, *amakumba* ceremony of Nabongo Mumia was held annually at Nabongo Cultural Centre (commonly referred to as *Eshiembekho*) in Matungu. During the event – which was normally attended by both Muslims and non-Muslims mainly from the Wanga community – animals were slaughtered and local alcohol (*busaa*) brewed and consumed.

The Abawanga who converted to Islam experienced changes in their naming and birth rituals. Many Muslims would speak the words of the *adhan* (the call to prayer) into the baby's ear to ensure that the call to serve *Allah* was present from the moment of the child's birth. The father cleaned the infant and then murmured the "call to prayer" into his or her right ear, followed by the "invitation to rise and worship" into the left (Nasambu, 1999). Thus, the first words the baby heard were the call to worship *Allah*. Cultural practices were however carried on among the Abawanga in the post-independence era, such as tying a special string (*inanga*) around the waist of a new born-baby. This was believed to ward off evil eyes from the child (Salim Malala, O.I, 05/11/2019).

Aqiqah (name giving ceremony) took place on the seventh day of the baby's birth. At the *aqiqah* ceremony, the parents gave thanks to *Allah* for the gift of the baby. The baby's head was shaved to represent the cleaning of the child from "impurities" and the beginning of its existence again in *Allah's* sight. In order to express appreciation to *Allah* for the newborn child, olive oil was then applied to the head and money was given

to the underprivileged. According to Islamic tradition, two goats or sheep – one for a girl and one for a boy – were slaughtered, with the relatives eating two-thirds of the flesh and the impoverished receiving the remaining third. This took the place of giving gifts such as millet, meat, and milk as well as the Abawanga shaving of the infant after three days for a boy and two days for a girl (Habiba Atenge, O.I. 24/10/2019).

During this occasion, the father named the child after reading *ayahs* (verses) from the Qur'an. The baby received one of Prophet Muhammad's names or one of his family's names with prefix "Abd" added. "Abd" meant "servant" or "slave", and it was used as a prefix to indicate servitude to *Allah*. Names of this convention included Abdullah (servant of Allah), Abdul Rahman (Servant of the Merciful), Abdul Malik (Servant of the King), and Abdul Qadir (Servant of the Powerful) (Whiting, 1983:197).

In the case of Abawanga Muslims, most of them gave Wanga names in addition to the Islamic name. For example, Abdullah Makokha, Yasmin Nanjira, and Asman Were. This depended on the place, season or circumstances under which one was born. For instance, *Makokha, Nanjira and Were*, were names given to Abawanga children whose parents had lost several prior children, born on the roadside, and perceived as a gift from God, respectively (Christabell Wayumbu, O.I. 13/06/2025; Job Olukwo, O.I. 13/06/2025; Clement Mukoya, O.I. 13/06/2025). The use of Abawanga names alongside Arabic names among the Abawanga thawed the friction between Islam and Wanga traditional religion, hence easing adoption of Islam by Abawanga.

Music was an important component of Abawanga marriage ceremony. *Eshiriri, limuka*, flute, *litungu*, and jingles were among the traditional instruments played. On the other

hand, Islam was against music accompanied by musical instruments. *Qasida* was the music recommended in Islam. *Qasida* was an Arabic poem or song that could be humorous, elegiac or laudatory. It was typically written in monorhyme and had no musical accompaniment. Despite converting to Islam, Abawanga staunchly maintained their traditional music and dance, which included musical instruments being played on special occasions like Islamic weddings (Issa Kasim, O.I. 15/11/2022).

The Africanisation of Islam among the Abawanga in the post-colonial era led to a unique blend of Islamic and local practices, shaping the community's identity and cultural heritage. A distinct form of Islam that reflected Abawanga's history and identity was created.

4.2.7 The Constitution of Kenya (2010)

On 4th August 2010, Kenyans participated in a constitutional referendum, whose question was "Do you approve the proposed new constitution?" With a turnout of 72.18% of the registered voters, 68.55% voted "Yes", while 31.45% voted "No". The New Constitution came into force following its promulgation on 27th August 2010. The 2010 Kenyan constitutional referendum was a pivotal moment in the country's history, marking a momentous shift towards democratic governance. Besides introducing a new government structure, the Kenya Constitution 2010 had pivotal implications on the socio-cultural fabric of communities in the country such as religion.

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) brought significant changes affecting Muslims and Islamic practices in Kenya in general and Mumias in particular. The constitution guaranteed freedom of worship among all religions, allowing particularly Muslims to

practice their faith more openly. The Constitution prohibited discrimination based on religion. This provided a framework for Muslims to assert their rights. According to the Constitution “Every person has the right, either individually or in community with others, in public or in private, to manifest any religion or belief through worship, practice, teaching or observance, including observance of a day of worship” (The Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 32). This study established that a significant number of the existing mosques in the study area were constructed after the year 2010. This might have been prompted by the expanded 2010 Constitution’s provisions on freedom of worship.

The new Kenyan constitution's Article 170 establishes Kadhi's courts. "There shall be a Chief Kadhi and such number of other Kadhis, being not less than three, as may be prescribed under an Act of Parliament" (The Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 170). The Kadhis’ jurisdiction was restricted to deciding issues of Islamic law (*sharia*) pertaining to personal status, marriage, divorce, and inheritance in cases where all parties professed to be Muslims and submitted to the Kadhi's courts for resolution. It could also include civil or criminal actions covered under the 2001 Children's Act in specific circumstances. The Kadhi’s Court played a key role among Muslims in hearing cases related to custody of children in cases where there was no big argument between the parties.

There were only seven kadhis in Kenya prior to the 2010 constitution, with three of them based in Mombasa. However, the new constitution called for the establishment of Kadhi's Courts, and the parliament passed a statute to that effect. As a result, Kadhi's

courts were established throughout Kenya, with multiple Kadhis located in counties with a predominance of Muslims. This meant that Muslims would now access the courts from anywhere in Kenya. In this regard, according to Hassan Sayyid (O.I. 30/10/2022) from the Lukoye's Sheikh Akida Mosque, the Constitution of Kenya (2010) encouraged the development and survival of Islam, especially among the minority Muslim populations like Abawanga, by establishing and recognizing Kadhi's courts, as it helped preserve Muslim cultural and religious identity.

The Kakamega Kadhi's Court provided *sharia* law judicial services to the Abawanga Muslims. However, Muslims in Matungu and Mumias Sub-counties could also schedule appointments with the Kadhi from Kakamega to travel to Mumias and preside over cases from there. Consequently, Muslims in Wangaland could receive timely legal services at a much lower cost. As a result, many Muslims among the Abawanga continued to practice their faith (Musa Mukamo, O.I. 20/04/2022).

Kadhi's Court was able to provide *sharia*-compliant legal guidance on matters affecting Muslims by cooperating with other judicial tribunals and the government. Kadhi's courts provided a culturally relevant forum for resolving disputes within the Muslim *ummah*. Consequently, cohesion among the Muslim *ummah* was promoted (Musa Mukamo, O.I. 20/04/2022).

The Kadhi's Court created the rules of procedure to be used in the Kadhi's Court after consulting with the Chief Justice. This increased the Muslims' confidence in their ability to seek justice through Kadhi's Court. Muslims participate in *Eid al-Fitr* celebrations after the conclusion of *Ramadan*. The government often declared the first day after

seeing the *Shawwal* crescent a public holiday after consulting with the Chief Kadhi. Recognition of Muslim festivals by government encouraged Muslims in Mumias and the rest of the country to adhere to Islam (Musa Mukamo, O.I. 20/04/2022).

The implementation of the 2010 Constitution, with its emphasis on gender equity and political inclusivity, coupled with the growing influence of Islamic education that promotes awareness of women's rights within the framework of the *Deen*, further reinforced this transformation, enabling Muslim women among the Abawanga and other communities in Kenya to take on leadership roles with greater confidence and legitimacy (Zaina Ramadhan, O.I. 05/11/2019).

In spite of the tremendous expansions in the freedom of worship that saw the growth of Islam generally in Kenya and particularly among the Abawanga, there were shortcomings that hindered the growth of the *Deen*. For instance, existence of varied interpretations of Islamic law led to tensions among Muslims. Hassan Sayyid (O.I. 30/10/2022), noted that Kadhi Courts were likely to be biased towards certain interpretations of Islamic law. Hence there was need for transparency and accountability within Kadhi Courts.

Kadhi Courts faced challenges integrating with mainstream justice system. Some Abawanga Muslims preferred seeking for legal service through the secular judicial system of the government as opposed to the *sharia* law. This was occasioned by the fact that Kadhi Courts had limited jurisdiction, only handling Muslim personal law matters. Islamic law was also perceived to be stringent in its application. More so, some Muslims

opined that Islamic law was supposed to be modernized to address contemporary issues and challenges (Salim Abdulaziz, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Hassan Sayyid (O.I. 30/10/2022), was concerned about the potential impact of Kadhi Courts on women's rights, particularly in matters of marriage and divorce. He also argued that Kadhi Courts undermined Kenya's secular nature as Christianity had not been given any special consideration on the constitution as it was for Islam. However, in spite of the challenges regarding the application of *Sharia* law, the entrenchment of the Kadhi's Court in the constitution of Kenya 2010 proved pertinent in the facilitation of Islamization in country in general and Mumias in particular.

4.3 Impact of Modernity on Islam among the Abawanga

The rapid spread of culture at the international level was aided by the advent of modern science and technology, and free flow of information. Lewis (1990), argued that Muslims were envious of the West because of their superior technology and economy, and that led to cultural clashes between the West and the Muslim East. According to Qutb (1990), Muslim culture was influenced negatively during its contact with the Western world. He identified the effects of western technology and communication as the drivers of immoral sins in the Muslim world. The western culture permeated all scopes of the Muslim life, in terms of language, mode of dressing, food and family way of life.

Some of the notable areas that were affected by westernisation among the Abawanga Muslims are the mode of dressing, language, and marriage customs. The *Sharia* and

Sunnah established Muslim dress standards. In theorizing this issue, the Acculturation theory examined how Muslims negotiated meaning and social status through clothing. In Islam, men are not allowed to wear clothing that is made of pure silk, gold, or silver. Silk, gold, and silver are not prohibited items, but they do express luxury, ease, and ostentatious consumption – all of which are unfit for a sincere Muslim man who is expected to work and donate his extra earnings to causes that benefit society as a whole, particularly charitable endeavors (Denny, 2011).

However, as befits their status, women are permitted to wear garments made of silk, gold, or silver. Women are expected to wear *buibuis*, while men are required to wear *kanzus*. Neither men nor women are permitted to dress in a provocative or improper manner for their sexes (Surah, 33:59). This was however not the case in Mumias as Muslim's dressing style was often dictated by fashion and one's preference.

Denny (2011:281), claimed that wearing wigs and hairpieces was considered *bid'ah* since it was "forgery" and therefore violated the Islamic law. However, wearing perfumes was allowed. The need for pleasant smells, which serve as a reminder of paradise, is one of the key aspects of Muslim aesthetics in daily life. This is based on the prophetic tradition. The Prophet is said to have had a high propensity for three things: being with ladies, praying and wearing perfume. However, the majority of Abawanga Muslims did not dress according to Islamic tradition, and they attributed this to the effect of modernity.

Zaitun Faluma (O.I. 13/06/2025), posited that modernity affected the Islamic mode of dressing among women particularly the wearing of miniskirts, short dresses and tight

trousers. This, consequently, violated the Islamic commandment of modesty, which calls for a woman to cover herself completely (with a *buibui* and a *hijab*) except when with her spouse or a member of her immediate family.

During this research, only a few Muslims were spotted donning the recommended Islamic attire, save for Mumias town where Islam is highly entrenched, and on Fridays during the *Jum'ah* prayers, and during Muslim festivities such as *Maulid* and *Eid al-Fitr*, and Muslim burials and weddings. Some young Abawanga Muslims avoided dressing in traditional Islamic garb in public out of concern that their peers would mock them for being "backward." This portrayed the significant influence of westernisation on dress code among Muslims.

Prophet Muhammad is claimed to have worn a beard, which is how beards became associated with Islam. The wearing of beards by Muslim men was considered a recommendation taken from *Hadith* of Muhammad al-Bukhari: "*Cut the moustaches short and leave the beard*". Modernity, however, impacted negatively the Muslim culture as Muslim males were no longer required to maintain long beards. The etiquette in the public service required men to shave their beards. Muslim men were thus compelled to conform to this code of conduct to gain formal employment (Abdulaziz Muchinyi, O.I. 22/10/2019; Shaban Wefwira, O.I. 20/04/2022).

Both Muslim men and women considered *wudhu* to be a necessary pre-requisite for praying because one needed to be clean before praying. Muslim women were required to wash their faces, rinse their mouths and noses, wash their arms once up to the elbows, wipe their entire heads, including their ears and then wash their feet once up to the

ankles. However, they succumbed to contemporary grooming and hairstyles at the price of Islamic modesty. The desire to braid hair and wear makeup deterred Muslim women from fully performing *wudhu* before prayer (Issa Kasim, O.I. 15/11/2022).

Abdallah Musah (O.I. 05/11/2019) echoed that the requirements of ablution, along with the demands of white-collar jobs, prevented some Muslim women from fully performing the five daily prayers of Islam which include: *Fajr* (sunrise prayer), *Dhuhr* (noon prayer), *Asr* (afternoon prayer), *Maghrib* (sunset prayer) and *Isha* (night prayer).

Murua (2016), noted that Muslims were encouraged to marry and have children as early as possible. However, marriage among the Abawanga Muslims seems to have relatively changed as a result of westernisation. The majority of Muslim youth in Wangaland married in their mid-20s. The desire to initially seek Western education, at least up to collegiate level, was the key factor in the delay in getting married.

Islamic marriages were usually arranged by parents of the bride and often of the groom. However, the post-colonial generations of Abawanga Muslims appear to have shunned this tradition of spouse selection by parents. Due to westernisation, potential spouses independently chose one another. This was against Islamic laws governing marriage selection. “Come-we-stay” marriage arrangements were also prevalent among Abawanga Muslims as they seemed flexible and less costly since one was not compelled to pay dowry before marrying (Wambunya Hamis, O.I. 29/12/2019; Ali Wangula, O.I. 27/12/2019).

Qutb (1990), averred that the social settings of the Muslim world was negatively affected by globalization with individualism and nuclear family settings being favoured as opposed to the Muslim culture of communalism, polygamy and extended families. The Abawanga Muslims no longer had proclivity for polygamy, likely as a result of modernity and constraints of life, including the scarcity of resources like land. Even *Mahr*, which was previously defined by Islam as an affair between prospective couples, had undergone significant change in form and value. According to Islamic law, a marriage agreement is void if the bride prize is not paid. The amount to be paid as bride prize was pegged on prophetic advice. The Prophet advised that *Mahr* should be lavish (Denny, 2011:272).

The secular culture permeated the Muslim way of life in terms of language since the English language had been globally officialised. Even though the westernisation process had succeeded in making the Arabic language to become one of the most popularly used languages at the global level, it had been disadvantaged in many aspects. For instance, English language was used as the tool of instruction not only in Christian-sponsored schools but in Muslim schools as well.

Islamic Religious Education, which was part of the curriculum in all Muslim-sponsored schools in Wangaland, was taught in English. Only a few areas that required citation from the Qur'an were taught in Arabic but with translations in English (Zaitun Faluma, O.I. 13/06/2025). Arabic, having been the language of revelation of *Allah* to Prophet Muhammad, and consequently the language of the Qur'an, law and prayer, Muslims considered it as the most appropriate language through which Islamic knowledge was

supposed to be disseminated. In reference to the Acculturation theory, teaching Muslim learners in English derogated the significance of Arabic language, which was believed to be a sacred symbol in Islam.

Secular education, which was characterised by co-education, that allowed boys and girls to go to the same schools, went against the Islamic idea of gender seclusion. The Qur'anic dictates were violated by the amusement videos and movies that were screened in schools. Some co-curricular activities such as music festivals and drama involved close interaction of learners of both sexes. Such activities distracted the students from *Allah's* path (Nasambu, 1999).

The majority of Muslim students who attended Christian schools looked up to their teachers as role models. Since the majority of teachers were Christians, they often influenced students to turn away from Islam and towards Christian principles. Some of the Christian ideas adopted by these pupils were unwelcome by Muslims. These included donning miniskirt, applying makeup and wearing one's hair uncovered. As a result, various activities associated with secular education diminished the Abawanga's devotion to Islam. While in school, some Muslim students were influenced to convert to Christianity (Zaitun Faluma, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Muslim burial customs among the Abawanga were affected by modernity. In Islam, the average time between death and burial is 24 hours. This is because embalming, which involves using chemicals to preserve the body, is not accepted among Muslims since it is regarded as a kind of desecration. According to Islam, the body should naturally decompose in the ground. Because of this reason, there should be no viewing, wake or

visitation. The majority of Abawanga Muslims had succumbed to modernity, nevertheless, as burials were no longer typically performed on the same day a person passed away. Some Muslims also had bodies of their loved ones who passed away embalmed (Bakari Muhammed, O.I. 24/04/2025; Zaina Ramadhan, O.I. 05/11/2019).

Sharia law dictates that during the funeral service, the body and all attendees are all turned to face Mecca, which is the holy centre of Islam. However, due to the sizeable audiences during funerals that included both Muslims and non-Muslims, this no longer happened during Muslim burial rituals among the Abawanga. In Islam, only men are permitted to accompany the deceased to the grave as part of Islamic tradition. However, this was not strictly adhered to as women and children attended the burial at the graveyard.

Photographing or otherwise recording any aspect of the funeral prayer ceremony is not acceptable according to traditional Muslim funeral etiquette. On the other hand, this has been replaced by modernity due to advancements in telecommunication devices like mobile phones, which mourners used to record and take pictures of funeral rites (Jamal Abdallah, O.I. 31/12/2019).

According to Issa Kasim (O.I. 15/11/2022), modern-day burial ceremonies among some Abawanga Muslims involved discos where secular Music was played. The discos which were held under the guise of modernity interfered with the Islamic way of life. Islam forbids listening to secular music as it is deemed to contain immoral information. This, according to Islam, turns away the believer's mind from the path of *Allah*.

The Qur'an criticizes the excessive love of wealth and greed, exhibited by the pagan Quraish in Mecca during the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), warning that these traits will lead to punishment in hell (*Surah*, 89). The Qur'an in *Surah* 102 warns against rivalry and competition in wealth, emphasizing that it distracts from the true purpose of life and will ultimately lead to regret. These criticisms serve as a guidance for Muslims to prioritize charity, honesty and compassion over material wealth.

In Islam, the pilgrimage to Mecca, known as *Hajj* is a sacred obligation for Muslims who are physically and financially capable. Those that could afford to travel to Mecca in Saudi Arabia did so, whereas some Muslims received sponsorship for the pilgrimage. While greed was not directly associated with the act of going to Mecca, some individuals prioritized material wealth over spiritual growth. In some cases, some greedy Muslims exploited the pilgrimage for personal gain. Muslim organizations and wealthy Muslim individuals - both local and from the Arab nations - sponsored pious Muslims who could not afford to travel to Mecca on their own. There were some concerns about the commercialization of *Hajj*, whereby those entrusted with collecting resources to support pilgrims to Mecca ended up defalcating the funds (Ismail Wanga, O.I. 11/11/2019).

Conflicts within Islam in Mumias region was often linked to the desire for power and control over resources, particularly in mosques that had independent revenue sources, such as residential houses rented to tenants. Certain mosques and Muslims with connections to wealthy donors received financial contributions for *Eid* festivals, *da'wah* programs, and projects such as drilling and providing drinking water for Muslim

ummah. Furthermore, Well-wishers from the Arab world occasionally contributed resources for construction of mosques in Wangaland. Some of those responsible for receiving and allocating the donations to relevant projects ended up embezzling them. This often resulted in conflicts within the Muslim *ummah* (Salim Abdulaziz, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Some Abawanga temporarily embraced Islam for material benefits. This was common during the *da'wah* activities, where non-Muslims who agreed to embrace Islam received material rewards, primarily in form of money. After a few days, such individuals reverted to their original religions. Muslim organisations, mosques and wealthy Muslim individuals provided financial assistance to Muslim students in secondary schools and colleges. The financial assistance was sometimes extended to non-Muslim students, ostensibly to win the favour of both the students and their parents to Islam. Most individuals who converted on these grounds were likely to revert to their original religions after receiving the financial benefits (Zaitun Faluma, O.I. 13/06/2025).

In spite of the challenges impacted on Islam by westernisation, the Muslim world made vital progress during modernity, in terms of advancing their culture, particularly with modern communication systems where Islamic teachings reached all parts of the world, including among the Abawanga in Kakamega County. Due to lack of communication technologies like televisions, cell phones, and computers during the pre-colonial and colonial periods, the dissemination of Islamic knowledge throughout the Muslim *ummah* was severely constrained. Muslims primarily drew their knowledge of Islam from the textual *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. Nevertheless, this has altered in the post-colonial

era as a result of technological developments in media platforms. Information Communication Technology (ICT) helped provide a space where Islamic resources could be converted into digital format and easily circulated around the world.

Islamic literature and its teaching, which were previously unavailable in some places like Mumias, could easily be accessed thanks to information technology. Literature during the pre-colonial and colonial periods was scarce. Most of the material available then was produced by local academics or writers. However, the internet made it very simple for people to get books on Islam, Islamic culture and Islamic literature throughout the post-colonial era that were authored by numerous well-known scholars from around the world (Noor, Jusoh & Jusoff, 2009).

The introduction of modern technologies profoundly altered the methods of teaching and learning in the field of Islamic education. In the comfort of their homes, Muslims in Matungu and Mumias sub-counties and other parts of Kenya could learn anything they wanted to know about their *Deen*. The advent of new technology made it possible for Muslims who could not afford to go outside Kenya to attend lessons taught by eminent Islamic scholars to do so virtually (Rosenberg, 2004). For instance, the availability of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* in digital formats for laptops and mobile phones was made possible by information technology. Through mobile phone applications, Muslims had the option of reading the *Qur'an* in their preferred language, such as Arabic and English.

Islam was also promoted through the mainstream media. Some radio and television stations broadcast Islamic programming that appealed to Muslims. The accessibility of

Islamic teachings through radio and television programs helped to demystify false notions and views about Islam held by non-Muslims. *Mahaasin TV* and *Al Hilal TV* were the two channels that aired Islamic programmes the most frequently. Islamization of the populace in Mumias was facilitated by Islamic publications like *The New Dawn* and *The Friday Bulletin* (Issa Kasim, O.I. 15/11/2022). Public address systems were also used to call people to prayer and address the congregations during *khutba*. This helped to reach many Abawanga Muslims. Similarly, potential converts from among the Abawanga were attracted to Islam.

In conclusion, modernity was a blessing in disguise to persistent Islamization of the Abawanga as some of the long-held Abawanga cultural practices that initially hindered spread of Islam in the community were shunned. Some of these customs include widow inheritance, traditional circumcision, and property inheritance customs that were patriarchal in nature.

4.4 Christian-Muslim coexistence among the Abawanga

Relations between Christians and Muslims in Kenya during the post-colonial era were harmed by a number of factors. For instance, unlike during colonialism, when Muslim activities were restricted by the colonial authority, a lot of resources from oil-rich Arab and Muslim nations found their way into Kenya during the post-independence period. Consequently, Islam was able to compete economically with Christianity in missionary activities.

Islamophobia, which refers to the irrational fear, prejudice or hostility directed towards Islam and Muslims, significantly undermined Muslim-Christian relationship, fostering

mistrust, social division, and discrimination. In Matungu and Mumias sub-counties, non-Muslims expressed fear and mistrust towards Islam due to the misconstrued beliefs about the *Deen* (Abel Wangulo, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Rivalry between Christians and Muslims was also demonstrated by efforts from Christian leaders to step up evangelizing in order to slow the tide of Islam's expansion. It was believed that these exhortations to evangelize were in response to the increase in Muslim *da'wah*. Some Christian clerics visited Muslim homes in an attempt to proselytize them into Christianity, but such visits were often rebuffed strongly (Haggai Makokha, O.I. 13/06/2025).

During the *mihadhara* (public discussions) organized by Muslims in Mumias, Muslim clerics often denigrated Christianity while trying to exhort the non-Muslims of the Christian faith to convert to Islam. It was taught that the Bible and the Qur'an should be read side by side in order to either support or refute certain Christian doctrines. For instance, a Muslim speaker, always a man, would inquire as to the deity of Jesus. Then, he would demonstrate through biblical texts that Muslims preached the "oneness of God," rejecting ideas of Jesus' deity. It was also shown through the Qur'an that Jesus was merely a representative of God. Attendees of such crusades who were Christians never took well to such preaching (Haggai Makokha, O.I. 13/06/2025).

According to Wandera (2015), religious leaders whose claims to authority were based on in-depth knowledge of the bible rather than conventional Islamic learning had developed as a result of the public prominence of Islamic free preachers. These preachers, as opposed to traditional *ulama* of colonial and pre-colonial times,

specialized in persuading non-Muslims to convert to Islam. They argued that Islam was a more logical religion than Christianity. They invited Christians to engage in discussion with them, primarily based on biblical passages. They saw their actions as a sort of *da'wah* in which preachers engaged in verbal combat to promote the reality of Islam against the Christian heritage. These conversations typically had an essentialist tone and reshaped the boundaries between Muslims and Christians. The environment at these events was inherently antagonistic, and any Christians who spoke up were typically reprimanded.

Competition for converts between Muslims and Christians was evident when some churches were strategically built near mosques, with the intention of attracting Muslims. Despite land being available elsewhere, some Christians chose to locate their churches adjacent to mosques. Such churches used public address systems that disrupted the *Jum'ah* prayers in mosques. This further exacerbated tensions in Muslim-Christian relations in the region (Ibrahim Wanga, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Most Muslims who strictly adhered to Islamic burial rites ensured that the deceased were buried within the prescribed 24-hour period. In Mumias, Christian-Muslim tensions were evident during burial ceremonies for Muslim that had both Christian and Muslim relatives. Conflicts often ensued when Christian relatives demanded an extended mourning period for their departed kin. More often than not, burial of a Muslim married woman who was born in a Christian family, and whose dowry had not been paid at the time of her demise, was delayed to allow for dowry settlement negotiations (Nicholas Onyango, O.I. 01/09/2025).

To assuage tensions between Muslims and Christians in Mumias the Christian and Muslim Network-Western Kenya (CAMNET) was established. Its formation was attended by a team from the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). The CAMNET organised several events that brought Muslim and Christian adherents together, including interfaith workshops, town cleanup in Mumias and courtesy calls from religious leaders on both sides.

Muslim and Christian leaders also collaborated in mediating conflicts between individuals from the two religions. For instance, when the *imam* at Eshibanze Muslim Primary School attempted to make it mandatory for all learners to convert, Christian parents were rankled and strongly opposed the proposal. Muslim and Christian leaders intervened to resolve the conflict by allowing the non-Muslim learners to continue practicing their faith while attending the school (Humphrey Mulama, O.I. 13/06/2025; Bakari Muhammed, O.I. 24/04/2025).

Interfaith seminars were also organized in churches, mosques and conference halls by Muslim and Christian leaders to enhance religious integration and tolerance, a development that had not occurred during pre-colonial and colonial periods. Initially, conservative Muslims regarded sharing meal or discussing matters of faith with non-Muslims as *haram*. However, such fundamentalist attitudes were gradually softened by frequent interfaith events in Mumias, which promoted coexistence between the followers of the two religions (Salim Abdulaziz, O.I. 13/06/2025).

The rapid growth of both Islam and Christianity in Kakamega County, as shown in the table below, underscores the need for coexistence among the faithful of the two religions.

Table 2: Religious distribution in Kakamega County

| Religion | Population |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Catholicism | 306,477 |
| Protestant | 598,611 |
| Evangelical Churches | 566,271 |
| African Instituted Churches | 216,915 |
| Islam | 88,412 |
| Other Christian | 46,594 |
| Other | 17,491 |
| No Religion | 8,575 |
| Orthodox | 6,837 |
| Traditionalists | 3,002 |
| Don't know | 1,277 |
| Hindu | 578 |
| Not stated | 292 |

Source: KNBS, 2019

Due to Mumias' significant Muslim and Christian populations, Abawanga from the two faith groups frequently interacted during cultural celebrations like child-naming, wedding, circumcision and funeral (Humphrey Mulama, O.I. 13/06/2025). Intriguingly, many non-Muslim women who were born into Muslim families but later on converted to Christianity after marrying Christian men would still wear Muslim garb when attending cultural celebrations among their Muslim relatives.

At early stages of the institutionalization of Islam in Mumias, marriages between Abawanga Muslim men and non-Muslim women were highly disregarded. However,

this study established that the number of Muslim-Christian intermarriages had increased significantly. Some Abawanga Muslim men no longer considered religiosity of potential spouse as a virtue. As advised by Prophet Muhammad, “A lady might be hitched for four reasons; for her property, her rank, her magnificence and her religion; so, get the person who is religious and thrive” (Al-Baghawi, 1966:658).

The attributes of spouse once considered in the past were no longer strictly observed in the post-colonial era. However, among the Abawanga, Christian girls were more easily paired with Muslim men than Muslim girls were with non-Muslim men. This was attributed to the fact that Muslim girls were consistently encouraged and guided by their parents and imams to marry within the faith. Moreover, instances of Muslim men of Nubian, Arab-Swahili, or Somali descent marrying non-Muslim women in Mumias were virtually non-existent (Michael Shitawa, O.I. 13/06/2025; Haggai Makokha, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Some women also converted to Islam primarily to secure marriage, but after two or three years within the union, they often reverted to Christianity. This frequently resulted in disputes concerning the religion in which the children should be raised. On the flip side, there were also instances where some Muslim girls secretly converted to Christianity, without the consent of their parents, in order to elope with Christian men. However, upon visiting home, many of them would either revert to Islam or outwardly conform to Islamic practices by donning Muslim attire (Haggai Makokha, O.I. 13/06/2025). This phenomenon underscores the complex intersection of faith, personal choice, and societal expectations, illustrating how religious identity among the Abawanga Muslims

was often negotiated under the pressure of cultural norms, family honour and interfaith relationships.

In a few instances some Muslim men embraced Christianity in order to win the affection of Christian women, especially those from affluent families, for purposes of marriage. More so, some Muslim girls went to the extent of persuading non-Muslim men to convert to Islam in order to formalize their marriages, reflecting the complex dynamics of faith and interreligious relationships in the region (Zaitun Faluma, O.I. 13/06/2025; Haggai Makokha, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Christian-Muslim coexistence was further enhanced by Abawanga Muslims and Christians sharing social amenities established by either by Christian organisations or the Muslim *ummah*. These amenities included water projects, schools and health centres. Christian and Muslim learners integrated in public schools sponsored by either faith group. Zubeir Murunga (O.I. 30/12/2019), espoused that most Christian-sponsored schools accommodated certain Islamic practices, such as wearing of *hijab* and fasting during the month of *Ramadan*, which was never the case during the colonial period. Similarly, Muslim-sponsored schools exempted non-Muslim learners from donning the Islamic attire in school. This gesture strengthened the cooperative relationship between Christians and Muslims in the region.

Faith-based medical institutions such as St. Mary's Mission Hospital Mumias and Mumias Jamia Health Center in Mumias West Sub-County, and Shibanze Dispensary in Matungu Sub-County, provided health services to residents of the region regardless of their religious affiliations. Regardless of religious affiliation, these medical and

educational institutions employed staff from both faiths, further promoting religious integration (Joan Onyango, O.I. 13/06/2025; Zumeiya Idris, O.I. 20/06/2025; Christabell Wayumbu, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Water projects intended to benefit Muslims were established in Wangaland through the *da'wah* activities of Muslim organizations primarily from the Arab nations, such as the Zakat Foundation, Muslim Global Relief, Islamic Aid and the Sukuyus Foundation. Both Muslims and Christians benefited from the water projects, a factor that facilitated Christian-Muslim coexistence (Issa Kasim, O.I. 15/11/2022).

The similarity in the belief systems of Islam and Christianity – particularly their shared emphasis on monotheism, moral conduct and communal harmony – played a significant role in fostering peaceful coexistence and reducing interfaith friction among their adherents in Mumias. This convergence of core values facilitated mutual respect and social integration, thereby strengthening the area's interreligious relations (Nyota Nashim, O.I. 15/11/2019; Saidah Omar, O.I. 07/11/2019).

According to the statistics from the Kenya Population and Housing Census 2019, the difference in Abawanga Muslim and Christian was relatively small. Abawanga Muslims and Christians were about 40% and 55% of the total Abawanga population respectively. Job Olukwo (O.I. 13/06/2025), notes that the existence of an almost equal number of Abawanga Muslim and Christian devotees facilitated interfaith tolerance and coexistence.

Murua (2016), opined that to enhance understanding and mutual coexistence between Muslims and Christians in Wangaland, there was need for sustained linkages between *madrassas* and the Church and its institutions such as schools. The two groups could engage in joint extra-curricular activities such as games, debates and visits. Additionally, it was necessary to make *madrassa* curriculum content comprehensive enough to include content on other religions and faiths, including Christianity.

4.5 Impact of Islam among the Abawanga

In this section, we look at the changes that Islamization brought about in the Abawanga. "Social Exchange theory" and "Acculturation theory" were both used to assess the socio-cultural effects of Islam on the Abawanga. With its holistic demands on its adherents, Islam was challenged by the persistence and resilience of Abawanga's primal religion as well as by their enduring traditional ritual and spiritual practices. The Abawanga's cultural impact on Islam can be seen in part in the way that Muslims greet one another, dress, and speak.

Boys were traditionally circumcised as part of their initiation at puberty. Boys regarded this as a significant stage, as it marked transition from childhood to maturity. Among the Abawanga, circumcision was customarily performed in August of every even year. With the advent of Islam, the Abawanga, especially in the post-colonial era, began circumcising boys between the ages of four and ten. Circumcision was carried out by medical practitioners in hospitals, with minimal accompanying celebration compared to traditional practices (Athman Shikolyo, O.I. 22/11/2019).

Islam supplanted several indigenous religious rituals of the Abawanga. The sacrifices that were once an essential part of Abawanga religion were no longer offered. In the traditional religion of the Abawanga, ancestors occupied an extremely important position, as they were considered to be a vital part of the society. They were individuals who had passed away, yet their spirits were believed to continue existing among the living, influencing various aspects of community life. The ancestors also acted as intermediaries between the living and *Nyasaye*. The importance of ancestors was significantly diminished in the majority of Abawanga Muslim families since they were no longer serving as intermediaries between the living and God. Mosques replaced places of worship and sacrifices made to ancestors and *Nyasaye*.

Muslims from Abawanga could now study about *Allah* from *imams* and *alim* at mosques and *madrassas*. The Abawanga Muslims placed little value on keeping taboos and abiding by the communal norms established by the deceased forefathers. A new form of worship was necessary for the new religion of Islam. It introduced fresh perspectives on ethics, manners and the difference between men and women's dress codes in *kanzus* and *buibuis*.

Islamic religious practices among the Abawanga were evidenced by the five daily prayers that Muslims partook. Out of the five daily prayers, Muslims in Mumias, especially men could be seen going to mosques to carry out the three daytime prayers namely; *Dhuhr* (noon prayer), *Asr* (afternoon prayer), and *Maghrib* (sunset prayer). Fasting during the month of *Ramadan* and adherence to *halal* and *haram* were also

evident Islamic religious practices among the Abawanga Muslim, which signified the permeation and impact of Islam in the region (Shaban Rajab, O.I. 11/11/2019).

Informal education that was initially offered by the elderly to the young people was replaced with *madrassa* and Islamic education. Western education was also offered in government and private educational institutions. The language of instruction during informal learning was *oluwanga*. In Islamic schools and *madrassas*, the languages of instruction were mainly Arabic and Kiswahili (Shaban Wefwira, O.I. 20/04/2022).

The new modification in Mumias also included the chewing of miraa, also known as Mairungi. Miraa (*khat*) was first introduced it to the residents of Mumias by Muslim traders. The majority of people argued that chewing miraa helped one focus acutely and become more productive. It was chewed while people were relaxing or participating in sports like football, wrestling or *olukho* (game played with smooth pebbles on a board).

Miraa seems to be the only intoxicant allowed as drinking alcohol is unacceptable behaviour for a Muslim from a religious and social point of view. Jamal Abdallah, (O.I. 31/12/2019), argues that *miraa* helped in keeping alcohol out of Muslim society and it came to be viewed as an alternative stimulant for Muslims. Nevertheless, Jamal echoes that overindulgence in chewing of *miraa* ruined most young men's lives in Mumias as most of them chewed the drug all day long failing to engage in constructive activities. Jamal Abdallah says that his delay to marry and have a family was mainly occasioned by his dire addiction to *miraa*.

Arabic is the official language of Islam and Muslims and its use in *madrassas* and mosques confirms that the evolution of Islamic education is linked to the evolution and expansion of Islamic civilization and culture. It is believed that through competence and performance of Arabic, a Muslim is able to understand Islamic texts such as the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. Knowledge and mastery of Arabic is a sure way of knowing Islam better (Musa Mukamo, O.I. 20/04/2022). Abawanga Muslims in Mumias related and interacted using *Oluwanga*, Swahili and Arabic languages.

The research established that Arabic, followed by Swahili, was the primary language of communication in mosques and *madrassas*. However, the majority of Abawanga Muslims found it challenging to speak Arabic. They were at ease speaking Swahili. Swahili and Arabic were evidently mixed inside and outside mosques and *madrassas*. Most Muslims in Mumias and Matungu sub-counties, when they met each other, conversed using phrases such as “*Assalam alaikum*”, “*Wa alaikum Assalaam wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*”, “*Inshallah*”, “*Barak Allah Fik*”, “*Mashallah*”, and “*Shukran Jazilan*”. Whenever these phrases appeared in conversations, it was easy to identify the parties involved as Muslims. These then suggests that these phrases which were mostly taught in *madrassas* had become part of Muslim community identity (Murua, 2016).

A *masjid* (mosque) was a place for Muslims to gather for *salat*. The mosque was designed so that it could hold sizeable audiences for *jum'ah* prayers. The primary purpose of mosques was to nurture spiritual progress, but a mosque in Mumias region represented something more. It was the mark of Islamic identity and history of Islam in

the region. With the inception of Islam in Mumias region and the subsequent establishment of the first three mosques (the Answar Mosque, the Lukoye’s Sheikh Akida Mosque and the Ekeru Jamia Mosque) at the heart of Mumias before independence, many more mosques have since been built in the region. The independent Kenya government welcomed the financial support to Muslims in establishment of Mosques, a development that saw both local and international well-wishers freely take part in the construction of mosques in Mumias. For instance, Sheikh Khalifa Mosque at Lukoye near Mumias town was constructed in 1991 with Kuwaiti assistance (Issa Kasim, O.I. 15/11/2022).

Mosques have historically served as both places of worship and centres of religious instruction for Muslims. In the Mumias region, there prevalence is notable, with at least one mosque present in nearly every four villages, reflecting the deep-rooted presence of Islam and its centrality to community’s life. For instance, according to statistics provided by Abdallah Washiali, the *imam* of Mumias Jamia Mosque during the period of this study, there were approximately seventy-four (74) mosques in the entire Matungu Sub-County at the time of the investigation. Refer to table 3 below.

Table 3: Number of mosques in Matungu, Mumias East and Mumias West Sub-Counties

| Sub-County | Year | No. of mosques |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Matungu | 1898 | - |
| | 1963 | 12 |
| | 2022 | 74 |

| | | |
|-------------|------|----|
| Mumias West | 1898 | 01 |
| | 1963 | 15 |
| | 2022 | 56 |
| Mumias East | 1898 | - |
| | 1963 | 07 |
| | 2022 | 34 |

Source: Abdallah Washiali (O.I. 13/06/2025)

Matungu Sub-County recorded the highest number of mosques at the time of the present study. Nevertheless, Mumias East and Mumias West sub-Counties had a greater number of mosques than Matungu during pre-colonial and colonial periods. It is worth noting that the parcels of land on which the mosques were established were, in most cases, freely donated by members of Muslim community who had been deeply inspired by the teachings of Islam (Salim Abdulaziz, O.I. 13/06/2025; Swaleh Sungule, O.I. 13/06/2025).

This act of generosity reflected not only their personal devotion but also the strong sense of communal solidarity that underpinned the spread of Islam in the region. Such contributions illustrate how the localization of Islam among the Abawanga was sustained through collective effort and voluntary support for the establishment of religious institutions. This proliferation of mosques illustrates the steady expansion and institutional consolidation of Islam in the area, underscoring the faith's growing influence on the religious, educational and social life of the Muslim community in Mumias and its environs.

The mosques, however, grew not only in number but also in size and architectural design. The typical mosque was rectangular and had a protruding *Mihrab*. Mosques which were constructed during the post-colonial period were bigger in size to accommodate the ever-increasing number of Muslim converts. The study also established that whenever a mosque was constructed, a borehole was drilled, as water was an essential requirement for ablution. A *madrassa* and a residence for the *imam* were also constructed adjacent to the mosque, a practice that was not during the pre-colonial and colonial periods (Salim Abdulaziz, O.I. 13/06/2025).

Various figures relating to Muslim population statistics in Kenya were bandied about frequently without explanation of how the particular figure was arrived at. These numbers occasionally turned into political concerns particularly because the Muslim minority frequently claimed to be politically underrepresented. Muslim *ummah*, a sizeable minority in Kenya, was the main opponent of population figures. Yahya and Bakari (1995) asserted that the Muslim population's numbers were kept low, resulting in a lack of resources for development in Muslim-dominated areas.

Even though it is more challenging to quantify, Muslims tend to predominate among various ethnic groups in Kenya, hence religious difference implies ethnic difference. For instance, the Abawanga community was more firmly rooted in Islam in the greater Luhya people of Western Kenya. According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census (KPHC), there were 1,861,332 people living in Kakamega County. From this population, 88,412 were Muslims, most of whom were Abawanga. Refer to table 4 below.

Table 4: The Muslim population in Kakamega, Vihiga, Bungoma, and Busia counties.

| County | Muslim Population |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| Kakamega | 88,412 |
| Vihiga | 5,796 |
| Bungoma | 21,687 |
| Busia | 16,909 |

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019

Out of a population of 94,190 people that made up the Abawanga community, 40% were Muslims and 55% were Christians (KNBS, 2019). The increasing number of Muslim devotees in the area thus serves as evidence of the influence of Islam in Kenya generally, and in Mumias in particular.

4.6 Summary

The chapter has assessed the factors that sustained the practice of Islam among the Abawanga. This chapter has demonstrated that the Abawanga underwent a considerable process of Islamization following independence. This came about as a result of the repeal of strict regulations that had restricted religious freedom throughout the colonial era. Due to the right to freedom of worship, well-wishers from other Arab countries arrived to fund the building of mosques in Mumias. Modernity is a multidimensional phenomenon rather than a unified and coherent one. Due to westernisation, most Muslims of Wanga, Arab-Swahili, Indian and Nubian origin found in Mumias no longer practiced many of the earlier forms of rituals. Despite the negative effects of modernity

on Islamization among the Abawanga, some African traditions in the community that had previously prevented Islamization were weakened by modernity, opening the door for greater Islamization of Mumias.

Developments in communication technology also facilitated the spread of Islam among the Abawanga. Social Exchange theory and Acculturation theory demonstrated how interactions between Abawanga Muslims and modernity impacted on the nature and practice of Islam in Mumias. The impact of the spread of Islam among the Abawanga was also discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study's results are outlined in this chapter along with pertinent recommendations for the development of Islam among the Abawanga community in Kakamega County. The chapter also addresses the extent to which the study's premises have been proven.

5.2 Summary

In this study, we set out to look at how Islam developed and became institutionalized among the Abawanga of Kakamega County between 1880 and 2010. One of the study's objectives was to examine the beginnings and evolution of Islam among the Abawanga. The study also looked at how British colonialism influenced the Abawanga's conversion to Islam. The study further shed light on the Abawanga's post-independence Islam, highlighting both its continuity and change.

An introduction to the study was given in chapter one. This chapter used the funnel strategy to discuss the study's background. The research was initially broadened to look at studies on the spread of Islam in Africa, Kenya, and lastly Western Kenya, notably those on spread of Islam among the Abawanga. A number of studies on Islam from outside of Africa, were cited. The statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, literature evaluation, justification and significance of the study and lastly the research technique, were among the important topics covered in this chapter.

The investigation was conducted from 1880 to 2010. The starting point was 1880 since it was around this time that there was increased contact between the Abawanga and Arab-Swahili traders, who significantly played role in Islamization of the Abawanga. The year 2010 was picked as the year to mark the end of the study since it fully captured the extent to which westernisation and modernity had impacted the spread of Islam among the Abawanga. 2010 also marked the year when the New Constitution of Kenya, which had profound implications on the socio-cultural fabric of communities in the country, had come into force. The research therefore sought to find out its impact on the practice of Islam among the Abawanga.

Although numerous studies have been conducted on the origin and establishment of Islam in African societies, including Abawanga, the related literature analyzed in this study revealed that no scholar has discussed the eventual changes that occurred to Islam after its formation. Furthermore, while the majority of studies focused on Kenyan communities in general and the Abawanga community in particular, they all employed a generalized perspective on the impact of colonialism on the spread of Islam in Africa, thereby overlooking localized dynamics and community-specific experiences. Additionally, little is known about how Islam transformed within African communities during the post-colonial era, particularly in relation to changes in religious practices, education and social organization. This study intended to fill this gap.

An eclectic approach was adopted for problematizing the analysis, combining the "Acculturation Theory" with the "Social Exchange theory." It has been clarified for the "Social Exchange theory" that change is a result of contact with other cultures. People

from various cultures have interacted in numerous societies that have gone through pivotal change. Values, particularly those grouped into broad ideologies, have a significant impact on both individual and group behaviour and, as a result, on social processes. It was natural for the Abawanga to adopt Islam given their contact with the Arabs and Swahili from the Coast. Acculturation theory outlines an array of factors enhancing cultural change. These include; cultural similarity, socio-economic factors, and authority and leadership.

The study's findings are discussed in chapter two, three and four. The growth of Islam among the Abawanga was the subject of the second Chapter's analysis. It has been proven that among the elements that caused the earliest converts to accept a new religion, there was undoubtedly nothing to do with active proselytizing, but rather contact between Muslims and non-Muslims and the latter's respect for the Muslims' way of life. Due to the strong business relationships that developed between the Abawanga and the Arab-Swahili, many locals chose to willingly convert to Islam in an effort to gain favour with the Muslim traders from the Coast.

The straightforward manner in which Islam was presented to the Abawanga help to explain how the community came to embrace Islam. This study's conclusions also established that due to some similarities between Islam's culture and the indigenous culture, some Abawanga households found the new faith attractive and adopted it. For instance, both societies practiced polygamous marriage and circumcision. In addition to these parallels, several characteristics of Islam, such as Muslim feasts and *ummah* life, made the religion both alluring and deserving of locals' efforts to adopt and spread it.

The results of the study also showed that the locals' desire for material gain encouraged the growth of Islam in Mumias. The locals in Wanga kingdom sought work from the Muslims because they were drawn to the Muslims' way of life, including their clothes, eating habits and worship practices. As a result, many of them converted to Islam.

The study has also demonstrated that Islamization in Mumias was largely carried out by Africans themselves because they shared a same life, a common language, and a common cultural environment. The study comes to the conclusion that the Arab-Swahili Muslims preferred to live in towns and were primarily focused on trade, which prevented the spread of Islam into the interior. The study also discovered that Islamic practices that were too rigid to be followed, such as *wudhu*' since they conflicted with daily activities hindered the spread of Islam among African populations.

The third chapter looked at how British colonialism influenced the Abawanga's conversion to Islam. The study established that despite colonialism's important contribution to the settlement of Muslims in the interior, it did not act intentionally. Mumias, in particular, was one of the areas Muslims relocated to in the interior of Kenya as a result of the colonial administration, railway construction and even the colonial army. A mixture of Asians, Nubians, and Swahilis from the Coast made up the Muslims who settled in the interior. The Arabs came to Western Kenya and eventually settled in Mumias due to trade rather than the necessity to actively preach about Islam.

The mission schools ultimately gave the Abawanga Muslims the idea to build their own schools in order to prevent their children from receiving both a Western education and Christian values, despite the fact that there were some conflicts between Christians and

Muslims in Mumias. The employment market of the day demanded Western education, which could only be acquired from these schools, hence it was inevitable that Muslims would utterly abandon mission schools.

The study established that even though a substantial segment of the Abawanga adopted Islam during colonialism, there were a number of barriers preventing its widespread adoption by the populace. Christianity, which introduced Western education and saw many Abawanga flock to it because of the privileges it offered its members, serves as an example of these reasons. Islam's expansion was limited because Muslims did not receive the requisite knowledge to meet the demands of the time because Christianity followed right after Islam.

The Phelps Stoke Commission of 1924 and The Beecher report of 1948 both had colonial educational policies that were crucial in damaging Islamic education. The colonial government forced Muslim students to attend these secular schools by introducing them on purpose. Since these restrictions were detrimental to the Muslim religious welfare, they tended to prevent Muslims from enrolling in mission schools.

Chapter four addressed change and continuity among the Abawanga in the post-colonial era in Mumias. The chapter discussed the factors that influenced the growth and persistence of Islam in the region. According to the chapter, Muslims could openly practice Islam because of the expansion in the freedom of religion. Furthermore, it has been confirmed that well-wishers from both the local and international communities freely contributed to the building of mosques in Mumias.

The chapter also looked at how modernity affected the Abawanga's practice of Islam. According to the study, modern technology, like mobile phones and televisions, made it easier to learn about Islam. However, westernisation also affected negatively the practice of Islam. Muslims were influenced by Western culture in terms of mode of dress, secular education, English language and marriage customs. Islamic marriage was not strictly observed as prescribed by the Qur'an. The research found out that the Muslim men eloped with women into marriage without following the due process of *nikah* and paying *mahr*.

According to the research, traditional activities among the Abawanga were more frequently creatively adapted to take on Islamic forms during the process of Islamization. In some instances, the larger socio-economic shifts removed the cultural bond where some versions of primeval religion thrived more suddenly. In the latter instance, Islam was frequently a winner but infrequently the only factor. Of course, not every component of belief and practice discovered in the Abawanga indigenous religion was rejected by Islam as being incorrect. As a result, it was able to adapt to the many of the traditions present in the Abawanga culture. In addition, Islam acknowledged as lawful a number of other key old traditions with restrictions and modifications. This form of Africanisation of Islam sustained the growth and practice of Islam among the Abawanga.

This study has demonstrated how Islamic instructional institutions, such as *madrassas* and Muslim-sponsored formal schools, acted as key channels through which the Islamic teachings reached the Abawanga community. For instance, the *madrassas* provided

Qur'anic education and introduced learners to Islamic law and moral values, whereas the Muslim-sponsored formal schools combined secular education with Islamic religious instruction, making Islam more appealing to the younger generation. Through these institutions, Islamic literacy, Arabic language and religious awareness spread among the Abawanga, reinforcing conversion and the adoption of Islamic lifestyles.

The Mumias Muslim Community also expanded as a result of the push to create more formal Muslim schools and *madrassas*. However, the study discovered that Islamic education within the region remained limited, with only two *madrassa* schools offering instruction at the secondary level and no established institution of higher Islamic learning. Findings indicated that *imams* and Muslim groups' leaders and members, especially those in prominent positions, were Form Four dropouts. As a result, many found it quite challenging to articulate some topics, particularly those that required extensive reading and analytical skills.

Due to westernization and Islamization, the Abawanga underwent numerous changes. The fundamental components of the community and culture have, however, been preserved. As shown by the rites performed, for instance, many traditional inheritance beliefs and practices of the Abawanga are still practiced. Some Wanga norms and values, including circumcision, polygamy, birth and naming practices and burial rites, have only undergone slight modification.

Several Wanga cultural activities continue because the Wanga people still find them to be important and highly valued, despite Islam's condemnation of several Wanga beliefs and rituals that were deemed to be repugnant and superstitious. The older generation, as

well as certain members of the younger generation, have not seen any need to abandon their customary beliefs and behaviour. This is due to the fact that their culture displays their way of life and spirituality and provides them with useful solutions to their issues.

Finally, the legacy of Islam in study's locale by 2010 is reflected in the existence of many Mosques and *madrassa* schools. The research area also has an enormous population of Abawanga Muslims. The legacy is further evidenced by the institutionalization of the Friday prayer, observing *Ramadhan*, and generally striving to combine faith and practice in all aspects of life.

5.3 Conclusions

In relation to the development of Islam among the Abawanga in Kenya during the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods, this study set out to address a variety of objectives. The time period covered by the study was from 1880 to 2010. The study area was Kakamega County, with an emphasis on Wangaland, which includes the Sub-counties of Mumias East, Mumias West and Matungu.

The research began with the following three premises: Islam first entered Wangaland due to Muslim traders from the Coast and intermarriages between Arab-Swahili men and women from the Abawanga community. The study established that the Abawanga were captivated by the Muslim traders' Islamic culture, particularly their clothing code, throughout their mutual interactions, which led to their conversion to Islam.

In addition, the research was predicated on the idea that throughout the colonial era, Christianity and Western education hindered the spread of Islam among the Abawanga.

Through discussion on colonial education, which was promoted by Christian missionaries, as well as their efforts to have formal education delivered on a religious and denominational basis during the colonial period, the study has established the veracity of this concept.

Finally, the research was premised on the assumption that integration of Islamic Religious Education with Western education as well as shunning Islamic attire by some Muslims are some of the changes in the practice of Islam among the Abawanga in the post-colonial era. The study also found out that the post-colonial government gave more room for growth of Islam in Kenya and Mumias in particular. This was evidenced through establishment of more mosques, Muslim organizations and *madrassas*. However, a perusal of the *madrassa* formal curriculum at the Answar Mosque in Mumias town indicated that the Islamic education curriculum lacked the essential elements namely; clear curriculum objectives, learning activities and student assessment. This lapse cast doubt on the quality and relevance of the education provided by the *madrassas* in Mumias.

The study also concludes that Muslims were faced with many challenges under westernisation. These challenges do not refer to the notion that westernisation is entirely evil and that it has no benefit at all in Islam and the Muslim *ummah*. Indeed, the study has succeeded in establishing the fact that westernization has benefited Muslims such as in the economic, technological and educational aspects. However, despite the benefits accrued to the Muslim *ummah* under westernisation, there are negative consequences or challenges that threaten the progress of the Muslim *ummah* as discussed.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, a number of key recommendations emerged. First, there was need to revise the *madrassa* curriculum to make Islamic education more relevant to the current labour market by incorporating secular and vocational subjects aimed at preparing students for formal employment, as the existing curriculum had been designed primarily to produce Islamic religious leaders and to educate the Muslim *ummah* about Islam.

Second, the National government and Muslim organisations should support Islamic education in Muslim-dominated areas, such as Mumias, by constructing *madrassa* schools, providing bursaries and food programs to *madrassa* learners, and paying the salaries of some *madrassa* teachers. Such support would enhance both religious and economic empowerment of Muslims who prioritize Islamic education over secular education.

Third, the judiciary should satisfactorily integrate Kadhi's Courts into the national legal system and be given their own proper structure and hierarchy. A distinction should also be made between the judicial role of the Chief Kadhi and his role as a spiritual leader.

This study identified the following areas for further research; first, is the economic impact of Islamic practices, such as *Zakat* (charity) and Islamic banking on the Abawanga community. Second, an investigation is required on the impact of globalization on Christian-Muslim relations among the Abawanga. This would help foster interfaith relations in the community. The impact of Islam on practice of Christianity among the Abawanga also ought to be investigated since most studies about

Islam in the region delved on the implications of Christianity on Islam. Lastly, Islamophobia and negative stereotypes about Islam among the Abawanga and how they affect the community is also area worth research. This would help Muslims adopt an intellectual approach to contentious issues that have resulted to Islamophobia, such as *Sharia*, terrorism, *jihad*, and fundamentalism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

References

- Abdalla, M. (1971). *Some Aspects of Coastal and Islamic Influences in Mumias From the Late 19th Century to Early 20th Century*. B.A Dissertation: University of Nairobi.
- Abdulaziz, L. (1984). *The Status of the Arabic in East Africa*. In: *Orientalia Suecana Vols. 33-35*. Uppsala : Uppsala University.
- Ahmad, A. (1981). Impact of the West on Muslim Education. In *Islamic Studies vol 20, No 1* (pp. 1 - 21). Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute.
- al-Ati, A. (1975). *Islam in Focus*. Riyadh: American Trust Publication.
- Ansorge, W. (1981). *Under the African Sun*. London: William Heinemann.
- Arnold, W. (1961). *The Preaching of Islam; A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*. SH-Mohammaed Ashraf: Kashmiri Baza- Lahore.
- Ati, a. A. (1975). *Islam in Focus*. Riyadh: American trust publications.
- Avoseh, B. (2008). *Values and Informal Education: From Indigenous Africa to 21st Century Vermillion, Adult Education Research Conference*. University of South Dakota: New Prairie Press.
- Bagha, M. (1974). *A History of Secondary Education in Coast Province of Kenya: The nature of its growth and development*. M.A Thesis: University of Nairobi.
- Banker, E. (1950). *A Short History of Nyanza*. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- Barret, B. (1973). *Kenya Churches Handbook. The Development of Kenyan Christianity*. Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House.
- Becker, F. (2008). *Becoming Muslim in Mainland Tanzania (1890-2000)*. Oxford: O.U.P.
- Berlin, I. (1963). *Karl marx: His Life and Environment*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Bernard, L. (1995). *Part III: The Dawn and Noon of Islam -Origins*. New York: Scribner.
- Berry, J. (1997). *Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation: Applied Psychology*. Blackwell Publishing Limited.

- Bujra, J. (1970). *Ethnicity and Religion: A Case-study from Pumwani, Nairobi*. Nairobi: Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi.
- Bunger, R. (1972). *Islamization Among the Upper Pokomo of Kenya*. Illinois: Yale University.
- Denny, F. (2011). *An Introduction to Islam, 4th Ed.* New York: Pearson.
- Douglas, B. (1994). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Esese, D. (1990). *Agriculture and Socio-Economic Change Among the Wanga of Mumias Division, 1860 - 1945*. M.A Thesis: Kenyatta University.
- Esposito, J. (1992). *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Faruqi, I. (1982). *Islamization of Knowledge*. Herdon: IIT.
- Fitzgerald, J. (1931). *Muhammadan Law. an Abridgement According to Various Schools*. London: Hamphrey Millford.
- Gakuru, N. (1979). *Pre-school Education and Access to Educational Opportunities in Nairobi*. M.A Thesis: University of Nairobi.
- Gimode, E. (1993). *Culture and History: The Religious Experience of the AVALOGOLI, 1850-1945 AD*. MA Thesis, Kenyatta University. Nairobi.
- Githige, R. (1980). African Traditional Religion Today. Its Prospects for the Future: A review of Scholarly Opinions" in Utamaduni. *A Journal of African Studies in Religion*. Vol.1, Kenyatta University.
- Haddad, Y. (1991). *The Muslims of America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hallet, R. (1976). Changing European Attitudes to Africa. In J. Flint, *Cambridge History of Africa Vol 5 from 1790 to 1870* (pp. 458 - 496). London: Cambridge University Press.
- Hamdun, S. (1962). The Teaching of Arabic. *Kenya Educational Journal*, 29-30.
- Hamid, H. (2004). "Colonial Land Law and Muslim Societies in Coastal Kenya, 1895-1930" in *Jurnal Usuluddin, Bil 19*.
- Hitti, P. (1970). *Islam, a Way of Life*. Minneapolis: University of Minnissota Press.

- Hobley, W. (1970). *Kenya From Chartered Company to Crown Colony*. London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd.
- Kabiri, N. (1990). *Islam and Colonialism in Kenya: A Case Study of the Kenya African Muslims in Nairobi*. M.A Thesis. Kenyatta University: Nairobi.
- Kahumbi, N. (1992). *Muslim Education in Kenya with Special Reference to Madarassa System in Nairobi*. Nairobi: kenyatta University.
- Kahumbi, N. (2008). *The Historical Roots of Conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Kenya*. Nairobi: The Catholic University of Eastern Africa.
- Karanja, J. (1999). *The Founding of African Faith: Kikuyu Anglican Christianity 1900-1945*. Nairobi: uzima Press.
- Kariuki, I. (1995). *Some Aspects of Islamic Conversion Among the Agikuyu of Nyeri*. In: Bakari and Yahya (Eds): *Islam in Kenya: Proceedings of the National Seminar on Contemporary Islam in Kenya*. Mombasa: Mewa Publications.
- Kausar, N. (1976). *Modern Challenges to Muslim Families*. Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf.
- Kenyanchui, S. (1992). *Nabongo Mumia*. Nairobi: Heinemann.
- Kepel, G. (2003). *Bad Moon Rising: A Chronical of the Middle East*. London: Saqi.
- Khadija, H. (1998). *Educating Muslim Girls*. Shifting discourses: Open University:.
- Khaldun, I. (1969). *The Muqaddinah: An Introduction History vol. 3*. London: Routledge.
- Koenig, S. (1970). *Sociology: An Introduction to the Science of Society*. Baarnes & Noble.
- Lebor, A. (1997). *A Heart Turned East: Among the Muslims of Europe and America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Lewis, B. (1990). *The Root of Muslim Rage: Why so Many Muslims Resent the West, and Why their Bitterness will not be Easily Mollified*. The Atlantic.
- Lewis, M. (1966). *Islam in Africa*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Mackatiani, C. (2016). Development of education in Kenya. *Journal of education and Practice*, 7(11), 55-60.

- Magesa, L. (1998). *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.
- Mathews, N. (2013). "Imagining Arab Communities: Colonialism, Islamic Reforms and Arab Identity in Mombasa Kenya 1897-1933" In: *Islamic Africa* vol. 4 no. 2. 2013.
- Maxon, R. (2002). Colonial Conquest and Administration. *Historical Studies and Social Change in Western Kenya*, 93 - 109.
- Mazrui, A. A. (1986). *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*. London: BBC Publications.
- Mbiti, S. (1969). *African Religion and Philosophy*. London : Heinemann.
- Memon, P. (1976). Some Geographical Aspects of the History of Urban Development in Kenya. In B. Ogot, *Hadith 5: Economic and Social History of East Africa*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Mugambi, J. (1989). *African Heritage and Contemporary Christianity*. Nairobi: Longman Kenya Ltd.
- Mungeam, M. (1966). *British Rule in Kenya, 1895 - 1921*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Murunga, G. (1997). *Urban Development and Socio-Cultural Heritage: The Case of Mumias Town in Western Kenya, Paper Presented during the 1997 Cultural Week Seminar. 12th - 16th May 1997: Kenyatta University.*
- Murunga, G. (1998). *The Evolution of Mumias Town into an Urban Centre to Circa 1940*. M.A Thesis: Kenyatta University .
- Mutei, J. (2007). *The Bible: Classical and Contemporary Muslim Attitudes and Exegesis. Evangelical Review of Theology 31, no. 3.*
- N. Levtzion & J. Fisher. (1987). *Rural and Urban Islam in West Africa*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- N. Levtzion & J. Spaulding. (2003). *Medieval West Africa: Views from Arab Scholars and Merchants*. New York : Princeton.
- Nabende, J. (2016). *Changes in Traditional Islamic Higher Education at the Kenyan Coast from 1850-1978*. Ph. D Thesis : Kenyatta University.

- Nasambu, J. (1999). *The Penetration of Islam among the Babukusu (1904 - 1998)*. Kenyatta University: M.A Thesis.
- Nyakwaka, D. (2013). *Gender and Political Transformation in Kenya: A Case Study of Women in Luoland, 1895-2002*. Ph.D Dissertation: Egerton University.
- Nzibo, Y. (1995). *Islamization in the Interior of Kenya. A General Overview*. In: Bakari and Yahya (Eds): *Islam in Kenya: Proceedings of the National Seminar on Contemporary Islam in Kenya*. Mombasa: Mewa Publications.
- Oliver, R. (1964). *The Missionary Work in East Africa*. London: Longman.
- Opuku, K. (1985). *Moral Values and Development*. In *Education, Culture and Development in Africa- Proceeding of Professors of World Peace Academy*. New York: The Professors of World Peace Academy.
- Osogo, J. (1966). *Life in Kenya in The Olden Days: The Baluyia*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Osogo, J. N. (1966). *A History of Baluhyia*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Powell, W. (1880). *Introduction to the Study of Indian Languages*. Washington DC.
- Qutb, S. (1990). *Milestones*. Cairo: Pyramid Publishers.
- Redfield R., Linton R, Herskovits M. (1936). *Memorandum for Acculturation*. American Anthropologist.
- Rodney, W. (1985). The Colonial Economy. In A. B. (ed), *UNESCO General History Vol. VII: Africa Under Colonial Domination*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Roy, O. (2006, 01 11). *The Islamization of Radicalism*. Retrieved from Mada Masr: www.madamasr.com
- Safari, J. (1994). *The Making of Islam in East Africa*. . Pewanicho, Tanzania: Benedictine Publications.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Sakwa, L. (1971). *A History of political Organization of Wang'a, C. 1880-1926*. B.A: University of Nairobi.

- Salim, A. (1973). *Swahili Speaking Peoples of Kenya Coast*. Nairobi: E.A.P.H.
- Samiullah, M. (1983). Muslim in Kenya: Problems and Possible Solutions. *Al- Islam: The Quarterly Journal of Islamic Foundation*.
- Schacht, J. (1964). *An Introduction to Islamic Law*. Oxford: Oxford University press.
- Schumann, J. (1978). *The Pidginization Process. A Model for 2nd Language Acquisition*. Rowley: Newbury House Publishers.
- Shilaro, P. (1991). *Kabras Culture Under Colonial Rule: A Study of the Impact of Christianity and Western Education*. M.A Thesis: Kenyatta University.
- Sifuna, N. (1990). *Development of Education in Africa: The Kenyan Experience*. Nairobi: Initiative Publishers.
- Sperling, D. (1988). *The Growth of Islam Among the Mijikenda of the Kenya coast (1826-1933)*. London.
- Strayer, R. (1971). "The CMS in Eastern and Central Kenya, 1875-1935: A mission community in a colonial society". Ph. D. Thesis: The University of Wisconsin.
- Sumner, W. (1927). *The Science of Society, with Albert G. Keller, Vol. 1*. London: H. Milford, Oxford University press.
- Temu, A. (1972). *British Protestant Missions*. Michigan: Longman.
- Tibawi, L. (1957). *The Philosophy of Muslim Education*. In: *The World Year Book of Education 1957. Education and Philosophy*, Bereday, G.Z.F & Lauwery's J.A. (eds)1957 . London: Evan Brothers.
- Tibawi, L. (1972). *Islamic Education. Its Traditions and Development into Arab National Systems*. London: Luzac & Company.
- Tibawi, L. (1974). *Arabic and Islamic Themes*. London : Luzac & Company.
- Trimingham, J. (1964). *Islam in East Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Uzoigwe, G. (2018). *Britain and the Conquest of Africa: The Age of Sulisbury*. Michigan : The University of Michigan Press.

- Walker, C. (2001). *Agrarian Change, Gender and Land Reform: A South African Case Study*. Geneva: UNRISD.
- Wandera, J. (2008). *Christian-Muslim Coexistence in the Light of Sacred Texts and Present Contexts*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications.
- Wandera, J. (2015). *The Use of Sacred texts by Islamic Public Preachers in Mumias, Western Kenya*. Indiana University press.
- Watt, W. (1972). *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Were, S. (1967). *A History of the Abaluhya of Western Kenya C. 1500 - 1930*. Nairobi: E.A.P.H.
- Weston, M. (2008). *Prophets and Princes: Saudi Arabia from Muhammed to the Present*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- WLSA. (2001). *A Critical Analysis of Women's Access to Land in the WLSA Countries: Women and Law in South Africa*. Harare: Research and Educational Trust.
- Wolf, J. (1977). *Differentiation and Integration in Western Kenya: A Study of Religious Innovation and Social Change Among the Bukusu*. The Hague: Meuton.

List of respondents

| | NAME | SEX | AGE | PLACE OF INTERVIEW | DATE |
|----|--------------------|-----|-----|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Abdulaziz Muchinyi | M | 31 | Namalenge | 22/10/2019 |
| 2 | Nur Maranje | M | 70 | Ebwayi | 22/10/2019 |
| 3 | Musa Bilal | M | 82 | Mumias | 20/04/2022 |
| 4 | Abdallah Washiali | M | 46 | Mumias | 13/06/2025 |
| 5 | Athman Shikolyo | M | 60 | Ichinga | 22/11/2019 |
| 6 | Musa Wanga | M | 50 | Namalenge | 22/10/2019 |
| 7 | Haggai Makokha | M | 48 | Itookho | 13/06/2025 |
| 8 | Hassan Sayyid | M | 70 | Lukoye | 30/10/2022 |
| 9 | Mohammed Mumia | M | 88 | Mumias | 31/12/2019 |
| 10 | Habiba Atenge | F | 30 | Namalenge | 24/10/2019 |

| | NAME | SEX | AGE | PLACE OF INTERVIEW | DATE |
|----|---------------------|-----|-----|--------------------|------------|
| 11 | Jamillah Omar | F | 40 | Shibale | 25/10/2019 |
| 12 | Khadija Makokha | F | 50 | Shibale | 29/10/2019 |
| 13 | Shamim Wechuru | F | 48 | Makunga | 30/10/2019 |
| 14 | Mustaneerah Munialo | F | 33 | Shibale | 30/10/2019 |
| 15 | Abdulrazaq Khamis | M | 49 | Harambee | 30/10/2019 |
| 16 | Abdallah Musah | M | 33 | Makunga | 05/11/2019 |
| 17 | Ali Ashikomere | M | 62 | Makunga | 05/11/2019 |
| 18 | Zaina Ramadhan | F | 60 | Makunga | 05/11/2019 |
| 19 | Rahema Mariachi | F | 63 | Makunga | 05/11/2019 |
| 20 | Salim Malala | M | 25 | Makunga | 05/11/2019 |
| 21 | Ibrahim Odhiambo | M | 49 | Lusheya | 07/11/2019 |
| 22 | Saidah Omar | F | 24 | Ekeru | 07/11/2019 |
| 23 | Ibrahim Wanga | M | 20 | Emanani | 13/06/2025 |
| 24 | Shaban Osundwa | M | 45 | Mumias | 13/06/2025 |
| 25 | Shaban Rajab | M | 43 | Shibale | 11/11/2019 |
| 26 | Clement Mukoya | M | 37 | Harambee | 13/06/2025 |
| 27 | Ismail Wanga | M | 53 | Namalenge | 11/11/2019 |
| 28 | Omar Kulundu | M | 73 | Khabukoshe | 11/11/2019 |
| 30 | Hassan Iswa | M | 27 | Khalaba | 15/11/2019 |
| 32 | Madinah Masinde | F | 18 | Harambee | 15/11/2019 |
| 33 | Asman Malala | M | 68 | Khalaba | 15/11/2019 |
| 34 | Nyota Nashim | F | 18 | Shibale | 15/11/2019 |
| 35 | Abel Wangulo | M | 52 | Buchifi | 13/06/2025 |
| 36 | Jamillah Nanda | F | 19 | Harambee | 20/11/2019 |
| 37 | Wambunya Hamisi | M | 26 | Khalaba | 29/12/2019 |
| 38 | Saleh Wanga | M | 27 | Ebwayi | 13/06/2025 |
| 39 | Jafari Ochung'a | M | 27 | Khalaba | 23/11/2019 |
| 40 | Asman Lubale | M | 55 | Makunga | 25/11/2019 |

| | NAME | SEX | AGE | PLACE OF INTERVIEW | DATE |
|----|---------------------|-----|-----|--------------------|------------|
| 41 | Muhammed Rajab | M | 40 | Panyako | 30/08/2025 |
| 42 | Michael Shitawa | M | 62 | Itookho | 13/06/2025 |
| 43 | Ismael Chiriswa | M | 61 | Makunga | 25/11/2019 |
| 44 | Robert Wesonga | M | 38 | Bulimbo | 13/06/2025 |
| 45 | Said Mukoya | M | 32 | Shibale | 12/12/2019 |
| 46 | Sheila Yusuf | F | 42 | Shibale | 12/12/2019 |
| 47 | Hamis Shaban | M | 60 | Shibale | 12/12/2019 |
| 48 | Abdalla Wanze | M | 80 | Shibale | 12/12/2019 |
| 49 | Asman Omodo | M | 38 | Shibale | 12/12/2019 |
| 50 | Job Olukwo | M | 30 | Eshibanze | 13/06/2025 |
| 51 | Swaleh Sungule | M | 42 | Lukoye | 13/06/2025 |
| 52 | Sofia Chiteyi | F | 51 | Khalaba | 16/12/2019 |
| 53 | Fatuma Salim | F | 30 | Shibale | 19/12/2019 |
| 54 | Ali Wangula | M | 28 | Makunga | 27/12/2019 |
| 55 | Ramadhan Shikhaya | M | 60 | Makunga | 27/12/2019 |
| 56 | Briton Karani | M | 35 | Bulimbo | 13/06/2025 |
| 57 | Christabell Wayumbu | F | 26 | Eshibanze | 13/06/2025 |
| 58 | Halima Shikhaya | F | 49 | Makunga | 27/12/2019 |
| 59 | Raziah Masakhwe | F | 32 | Makunga | 27/12/2019 |
| 60 | Iddi Keya | M | 44 | Shibale | 29/12/2019 |
| 61 | Abdul Wanga | M | 62 | Lukoye | 16/06/2025 |
| 62 | Zumeiya Idris | F | 30 | Matungu | 20/06/2025 |
| 63 | Joseph Kulundu | M | 40 | Namalenge | 22/08/2025 |
| 64 | Joan Onyango | F | 22 | Harambee | 13/06/2025 |
| 65 | Hajji Nanjira | M | 23 | Harambee | 20/04/2022 |
| 66 | Zubeir Murunga | F | 25 | Mumias | 30/12/2019 |
| 67 | Issa Juma | M | 34 | Harambee | 30/12/2019 |
| 68 | Musa Mukamo | M | 43 | Namasanda | 20/04/2022 |

| | NAME | SEX | AGE | PLACE OF INTERVIEW | DATE |
|----|------------------|-----|-----|--------------------|------------|
| 69 | Bakari Muhammed | M | 44 | Mumias | 24/04/2025 |
| 70 | Issa Kasim | M | 35 | Khalaba | 15/11/2022 |
| 71 | Nicholas Onyango | M | 42 | Kholera | 01/09/2025 |
| 72 | Jamal Abdallah | M | 61 | Mumias | 31/12/2019 |
| 73 | Zaituna Mutimba | F | 57 | Namalenge | 22/10/2022 |
| 74 | Shaban Wefwira | M | 36 | Harambee | 20/04/2022 |
| 75 | Humphrey Mulama | M | 40 | Namalenge | 13/06/2025 |
| 76 | Salim Abdulaziz | M | 40 | Ogalo | 13/06/2025 |
| 77 | Farjalla Murenga | M | 56 | Mumias | 13/06/2025 |
| 78 | Zaitun Faluma | F | 40 | Mumias | 13/06/2025 |

Archival documents

KNA - DC/KBU/3/, Dagoretti Political Record Book, 1908-1912

KNA, DC/NN 3/4/2, Kakamega Township

KNA, DC/NN 3/2/19, South Wanga, 1934-1935

KNA, DC/NN3/1, Political Record Book, North Kavirondo

KNA, DC/NN 3/2/4, Marama Locations, 1916-1917

KNA, DC/KMG, 2/8/13, Nyanza Province, Annual Report 1912

KNA, DC/NN/1/10 - Annual Report, 1929.

KNA, DMSN – Volumes I- IX/1964

KNA - EAYMF 67/80, Annual Report, 1909.

KNA, PC/NZA, 3/18/29, Nyanza Province, Annual Report 1911

KNA - PC/Coast/1/1/20 - Uganda Railway 1895-1897 Chief Engineer Uganda Railway to C.H. Cranford Esq. Ag. Commissioner and Secretary General. East African Protectorate. Mombasa, 21-12-1896.

KNA, PC/NZA, 3/7/2/3, Nyanza Province Annual Report 1914

KNA, PC/NZA 3/18/29, Nyanza province Annual Report 1918

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Schedule

Background information

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Religion:

Clan:

Place of birth:

Residence:

A. Sample Questions for Abawanga Muslims

1. Describe the origin, migration and settlement of the Abawanga in Mumias. What were the cultural practices of the Abawanga before Islam and colonialism?
2. When was the first contact between the Abawanga and Islam?
3. In which place did the Islamic religion first get planted in Wangaland?
4. What facilitated the penetration of Islam in Mumias?
5. Did indigenous beliefs and practices play a role in the Islamization of Abawanga? If yes, how?
6. How did the Africans in Mumias react towards the introduction of Islam in the region?
7. What role did European colonialism play towards the spread of Islam among the Abawanga?
8. Was colonialism an impediment to Islamization among the Abawanga in any way? How?
9. How did the attainment of independence in Kenya affect the spread and practice of Islam among the Abawanga?

10. Explain the innovations in Islam as practiced by the Abawanga.
11. Explain continuity in Abawanga traditional customs in light of Islam and modernity.
12. Describe the expansion and distribution of mosques, madrassas and Muslim-sponsored formal schools in Mumias.
13. How did the post-colonial government policies and legislation impact on Islam?
14. Discuss the impact of Islam among the Abawanga of Mumias.

B) Sample Questions for Abawanga Christians

1. Briefly state the origin and settlement of the Abawanga in Mumias.
2. List the Abawanga traditional leisure activities.
3. What role did traditional music and dance play in Abawanga culture?
4. Describe the Abawanga Inheritance beliefs and practices.
5. What are the Abawanga religious beliefs and practices?
6. Describe the Abawanga traditional eating habits.
7. Describe the Abawanga traditional marriage customs.
8. What do you know about Nabongo Mumia and his significance to the Abawanga?
9. How do you balance traditional practices with modern life?
10. How are Abawanga traditional beliefs and practices being preserved today?
11. State the obstacles against the preservation of Abawanga culture.
12. Were you born in a Muslim family? If yes, at what point did you or/and your family convert to Christianity?
13. How would you describe the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Wangaland?
14. How has Islam affected the spread and practice of Christianity in Wangaland?
15. Have there been any conflicts between Christians and Muslims in your area in recent years? If yes, briefly describe the nature of the conflicts.

16. Are there cultural ceremonies among the Abawanga where both Christians and Muslims participate together? If yes, please give examples.
17. How is marriage between Christians and Muslims viewed among the Abawanga Community?
18. Would you personally support or oppose Muslim-Christian marriage in your family? Why?
19. Identify joint community initiatives (e.g., schools, health programs) run by both Christians and Muslims (If possible, give their names and where they are located).
20. Mention Muslim-established projects that benefit both Abawanga Muslim and Christian community (If possible, give their names and where they are located).
21. How do Muslim and Christian religious leaders among the Abawanga collaborate in conflict resolution or community development?
22. Do you think cultural identity among the Abawanga is stronger than religious identity? Why?

Appendix II: Research Approval



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100

NAIROBI, KENYA

Tel. 020-8704150

Website: www.ku.ac.ke

Internal Memo

FROM: Dean, Graduate School

DATE: 10th September, 2019

TO: Mr. Reuben Pasa Luchu
C/o Department of History, Archaeology
& Political Studies

REF: C50/KER/CE/28606/2015

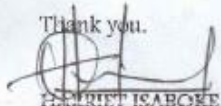
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

=====
This is to inform you that Graduate School Board, at its meeting on 4th September, 2019, approved your Research Proposal for the M.A. Degree entitled, "The Growth of Islam among the Abawanga of Mumias, Kakamega County, 1850-2018."

You may now proceed with your Data collection, subject to clearance with the Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed Supervision Tracking Forms per semester. The form has been developed to replace the Progress Report Forms. The Supervision Tracking Forms are available at the University's Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

Thank you.


HENRIETTE ISABOKE
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

CC. Chairman, History, Archaeology & Political Studies Department

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Susan Mwangi Owino
C/o History, Archaeology & Political Studies Dept.
Kenyatta University
2. Dr. Julius Simiyu Nabende
C/o History, Archaeology & Political Studies Dept.
Kenyatta University

Appendix III: Research authorization



**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL**

E-mail: dean_graduate@ku.ac.ke

Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 020-8704150

Our Ref: C50/KER/CE/28606/2015

DATE: 10th September, 2019

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology
and Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

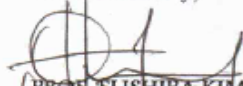
**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR MR. REUBEN PASA LUCHU REG. NO.
C50/KER/CE/28606/2015**

I write to introduce Mr. Reuben Pasa Luchu who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. He is registered for M.A. degree programme in the Department of History, Archaeology & Political Studies.

Mr. Luchu intends to conduct research for a M.A. thesis Proposal entitled, "The Growth of Islam among the Abawanga of Mumias, Kakamega County, 1850-2018."

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


**PROF. ELISHIBA KIMANI
DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL**

Appendix IV: Research permit

| | |
|---|---|
|  REPUBLIC OF KENYA |  NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION |
| RefNo: 250076 | Date of Issue: 16/October/2019 |
| RESEARCH LICENSE | |
|  | |
| <p>This is to Certify that Mr.. Luchu Reuben of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research in Kakamega on the topic: THE GROWTH OF ISLAM AMONG THE ABAWANGA OF MUMIAS, KAKAMEGA COUNTY, 1850-2018 for the period ending : 16/October/2020.</p> | |
| License No: NACOSTI/P/19/2169 | |
| 250076 Applicant Identification Number |  Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION |
| | Verification QR Code  |
| <p>NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.</p> | |