

**PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY MUSICAL ENGAGEMENTS AND
LEARNING OF *ADUNGU* MUSIC IN AWACH, GULU**

DISTRICT, UGANDA

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTORATE OF
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DECLARATION

I, Adong Santa Sarah declare that this research work entitled “Participation in community musical engagements and learning of *adungu* music in Awach, Gulu District, Uganda” is my own original work and has not been presented to any University or institution of higher learning for any academic award.

Sign.....

Date.....

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research entitled that “Participation in community musical engagements and learning of *adungu* music in Awach, Gulu District, Uganda” has been done under our supervision and is now ready for submission.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved children: Norbert Elvis Acaye, Esther Mackline Agenorwot, Bridget Wendy Aber, and Rebecca Peace Lamunu who have been a source of motivation in my quest for success. May this work inspire you in achieving greater heights.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BC:	Before Christ
GDLG:	Gulu District Local Government
IDI:	In-depth Interview
IRI:	Industrial Research Institute
KII:	Key Informant Interview
MO:	Music Organization
SEL:	Social-Emotional Learning
UBOS:	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US:	United States

ABSTRACT

Community participation has for long been documented as one of the major ways through which musical practices and knowledge are transferred from one generation to another by supporting effective learning of a practice that members of a society deem meaningful. The purpose of the study was to find out the role that community participation plays in promoting learning of the *adungu* music among the Acholi people in Awach, Gulu District of Northern Uganda. The study was guided by social constructivist theory and an Africanist Ubuntu philosophy. The researcher used an ethnographic research design to gather data from the community of Awach through observation, focused group discussion, and in-depth key informant interviews and the use of photo and videos to during those interactions. Participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques and data was analyzed by using thematic analysis of texts that led to emergence themes. Key research findings revealed that community members learn by engaging in *adungu* music at varying levels through playing, singing and through observation. Members' attitude towards the culture played a key role in determining one's rate of learning and aspect of the *adungu* culture that they learned. *Adungu* offered opportunities for self-expression and this was found to be crucial in the transmission and learning of this music. The study concluded that participation in community musical engagement is multidimensional and that participation has a profound effect on community's ability to learn this music. The study recommended the need to create various opportunities for the culture to be performed so that members of the community can participate in those contexts, and cultivate positive attitude towards their culture as members of the community actively participate in those musical engagements, which will subsequently increase their ability to learn *adungu* music

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Community participation is of great importance in the transfer of musical practices from one generation to another. Active participation supports effective learning of practices that members of a society deem meaningful. This study focused on the role of community participation in promoting learning of the *adungu* music among the Acholi people in Awach, Gulu District, and Northern Uganda. This chapter presents the background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and the conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the Study

The background of the study is presented under the following sub-headings: historical background, conceptual frame, theoretical background, and contextual background.

1.1.1 Historical background

Harp music has been played throughout the globe in various national, racial, historical, and geographic contexts. It is reported that there were three-string harps performed in Egypt around 3000 B.C. The British Museum currently houses the only surviving example of an ancient Egyptian arched harp. Archaeological evidence indicates that harp-like instruments may have been used as early as 3000 BC by ancient societies in Africa and the Middle East. The European troubadours and minstrels, toured the continent of Europe during the

middle ages, and performed a variety of harps, including the bow harp, later in the 13th century (Nettl, 2005). This indicates that the instrument was present as early as 13th century. Some musicologists have argued that the bow harp likely originated in Africa and spread throughout the globe via trade and migration (Nettl, 2005). Usually, the instrument is made up of a neck, a resonator, and a single string that is spread between the three. In many cultures, the harp is associated with spiritual or religious practices. For example, in West Africa, bow harp, is often used by traditional storytellers and musicians in oral traditions and religious ceremonies (Diallo, 2007). Similarly, the berimbau, a Brazilian harp, is used in the Afro-Brazilian religion of Candomble (Reily, 2013). In addition, the 16th century witnessed the Spanish conquistadors bringing the harp to the Americas, where it was adopted by various indigenous cultures and evolved into new styles, such as the Paraguayan harp (Nettl, 2005). This is a case that presents the spread in terms of the usage of the harp musical instrument across the globe.

In the 19th century the Kora, a type of bow harp from West Africa, became widely recognized as a symbol of traditional African music and culture and was incorporated into various genres of world music (Diallo, 2007). The instrument took different forms in the different geographical perspectives. As such, the 20th century marked the harp instrument being used in traditional and folk music around the world, as well as in modern genres such as blues, rock, and jazz (Oliver, 2017). This explains the modern-day genre among the different global adaptation to the instrument.

The *adungu* is reported to have been brought into Uganda by the Nilotic as they migrated southwards following the Nile. The word *adungu* is used to refer to

harps of various societies of Uganda, for example, the seven or more string-open-harp of the Alur, a Saharan Nilo-speaking people. The history of the *adungu* in Uganda dates back to the times of Gipir the legendary leader of the Luo-Arur people of West Nile. It is argued that Gipir used the *adungu* to accompany songs that energized his people as they walked during their migration (McLeod, 2011). The seven-or-more-string *adungu* spread from West Nile to various parts of the country through the school music festivals mainly during the 1960s (Bourguine, 1992; Cooke, 200b; Stone, 2000). One of the most well-known accounts of the history of the *adungu* is found in the book “Acholi Music” by Peter Cooke, a British ethnomusicologist who spent several years studying the musical traditions of the Acholi people. According to Cooke, the *adungu* was introduced to the Acholi people by a mythical hero named Okedi, who brought the instrument from the neighboring Lango people (Cooke, 1994). This account does not focus on the three-string *adungu*, which means that the music culture that this study focused on has not received scholarly attention.

1.1.2 Theoretical background

This study was informed by the Ubuntu ethos, a worldview or a way of living that espoused the idea that people are interconnected and interdependent, and that a person’s well-being is correlated with that of the society. Although Ubuntu has its origins in African cultures, it has recently grown in popularity and influence all over the globe. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, one of the most well-known advocates of Ubuntu, called the concept “the essence of being human.” Tutu has written widely about the significance of Ubuntu in society, contending that it can serve as a foundation for peace and social change (Tutu, 1999). Steve Biko a South African scholar was another key player in the evolution of Ubuntu. Biko

suggest that using Ubuntu as a powerful expression of African identity (Biko, 1978). Ubuntu has been used in a variety of academic and research areas, including politics, education, ethics, and philosophy (Praeg & Leibhammer, 2020).

The fundamental ideas of Ubuntu are that: all people are interconnected and that our deeds have an impact on those around us (Jansen & Prinsloo, 2015). Ubuntu places a strong emphasis on each community member's shared accountability for the health of the group as a whole (Gade, 2016). Respect for human dignity. Ubuntu is known for its sense of compassion and empathy for others as well as its dedication to mutual understanding and support (Mbigi & Maree, 2019). The fundamental ideas of Ubuntu encourage learning, and community involvement, shared accountability, mutual respect, and goodwill.

The study was also informed by the social constructivism theory, a learning theory that emphasizes value of social interaction and active involvement in the learning process (Brunner, 1990). According to this theory, students build their own knowledge of the world around them through personal experiences and social interactions. Social Constructivism holds that learning is a dynamic, interactive process that entails the student actively interacting with their surroundings and creating new knowledge and understanding. Social Constructivism places a strong emphasis on enhancing students' previous knowledge and experiences while incorporating new ideas and information into pre-existing mental models. Learners are encouraged to come up with their own theories and hypotheses, and revise their knowledge in light of fresh information. The theory also stresses the value of social interaction, with students actively creating meaning. This can be done through cooperative problem-solving,

conversations, and debates where students share views and collaborate to create new knowledge and understanding.

Social Constructivist teaching have emerged as a result of constructivism's profound influence on education. In addition to emphasizing the value of active learning, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Social constructivist teaching stresses the importance of developing a learner-centered environment that fosters creativity, exploration, and discovery. Constructivism places a strong emphasis on learning as a process of creating information rather than just passively absorbing it (Driver et al, 1994). The theory stresses social interaction as being crucial to the learning process, with students actively creating meaning through conversation with others (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory also emphasizes the significance of taking into account numerous viewpoints and interpretations during the learning process, with students actively participating in discussion and debate to create their own understanding (Bruner, 1990).

Overall, the theory encourages involvement and learning by placing a strong focus on participant social interaction, dialogue, and the acceptance of different points of view to create space for self-expression and learning.

1.1.3 Conceptual background

Participation in music can be in various ways by different scholars, often reflecting their unique perspectives and areas of expertise. According to Small (1998) participation in music is not limited to the act of performing or listening but encompasses the entire social and cultural process of making and experiencing music. He emphasizes the communal and participatory nature of music-making. In addition, John Sloboda, a renowned psychologist of music,

defines participation in music as a multifaceted engagement with music that can encompass both active and passive involvement (Sloboda, 2012).

Participation in music refers to the active involvement of people in the music-making process. Participation is described as an experience where people actively engage in music through singing, playing instruments, composing, and improvising. In this perspective, participation is seen as a crucial aspect of music education, fostering musical skills and creativity (Suzanne, 2002). These conceptual definitions highlight the diverse ways in which scholars conceptualize participation in music, ranging from a holistic social experience to various forms of active and passive engagement.

Learning of *adungu*, like any musical instrument, involves various aspects, and scholars have offered different perspectives on the process. Sylvia Woods, a well-known harpist and author, provides a practical perspective on learning the harp and suggest that learning is the gradual process of acquiring the necessary skills, techniques, and musical knowledge to play the harp effectively (Wood, 1987). Her approach focuses on the technical and musical aspects of harp playing, emphasizing the importance of structured instruction. Comprehensively, the learning of bow harp includes acquiring proper harp technique, understanding music theory, and developing a deep connection to the instrument (Ortiz, 2005). The author's perspective underscores the importance of a well-rounded musical learning for harpists.

Rayan (2001) views harp learning as an ongoing process that involves not only technical proficiency but also an exploration of the harp's historical and cultural significance. She emphasizes the importance of fostering a deep appreciation for

the harp's rich tradition and cultural heritage alongside technical skill development in tuning, making and repair of the instrument.

1.1.4 Contextual background

The Council of Europe stresses that communities' involvement in any form of artistic expression that can advance their own well-being or the well-being of others constitutes cultural participation in Europe (Stanley, 2006). The majority of other aspects of formal education in Scotland are interestingly distinct from learning an instrument. Compared to the passive version, it contains the majority of the active form's components. Here, involvement must have a practical component and be accompanied by participants' enthusiasm, confidence, and interest (Cope, 2010). The Hong Kong Government established the Music Office (MO) in 1977, the purpose of fostering musical literacy and offering musical training, especially instrumental training (Chung, 2011). A total of 4,500 students between the ages of 6 and 23 join the MO's more than 800 training classes per year in more than 30 Chinese and Western musical instruments. String students increased from 1,460 in 2003-04 to 1,874 in 2005-06, then slightly decreased to 1,738 in 2008-09; wind and percussion students increased from 1,129 in 2003-04 to 1,205 in 2005-06, then slightly decreased to 1,114 in 2008-09. The MO not only offers regular instrumental programs but also plans the youth music Interflows, Hong Kong Youth Music Camp, and other foreign music exchange events. These initiatives offer high quality, interdisciplinary, and adaptable music education programs while assisting in raising achievement standards.

John Mbiti, a renowned Kenyan philosopher and theologian, is often cited for his exploration of African philosophy, particularly in the context of community, identity, and spirituality (Mbiti, 1969). While he did not directly coin the term

Ubuntu a Southern African concept often translated as “I am because we are” or “humanity towards others” his writings on African philosophy provide important insights that intersect with the Ubuntu worldview. Communal aspects of African life and his emphasis on the interconnection of individuals within their cultural contexts resonate with the fundamental principles of *Ubuntu* (Mbiti, 1969). In his seminal work, *African Religions and Philosophy*, Mbiti highlights the importance of community and interconnectedness in African cultures. He argues that in African societies, individuals are not viewed as isolated beings but as part of a larger, interconnected community. Mbiti asserts that “I am because we are,” emphasizing that personal identity and existence are fundamentally tied.

In a cultural context, Mbiti's interpretation of *Ubuntu* stresses the importance of community, respect for elders, and the sharing of knowledge. In African traditional settings, these principles influence various aspects of life, including music, education, and conflict resolution. For example, in many African communities, *Ubuntu* plays a central role in communal rituals, such as music and dance, where individuals are not performing for personal glory, but to maintain social harmony and celebrate collective identity (Mbiti, 1969). This can be seen in the context of traditional instruments, like the *adungu* in Gulu District or other indigenous instruments across Africa, where music serves both a social and spiritual function within the community.

Mbiti's perspective on *Ubuntu* challenges that is individualism found in Western societies and that the colonial education and engenders. (Isabirye 2021). It calls for a return to a more relational, cooperative existence where the well-being of the community is prioritized, and individuals are viewed as part of a larger whole. This cultural framework offers an alternative to the competitive, market-driven

values of modernity and highlights the importance of social cohesion, mutual respect, and communal care (Mbiti, 1969).

Similar to official education settings, learning musical instruments in Africa has been handed down from generation to generation with little effort made to formalize the training of communities in this mechanism of learning (Sausan, 2016).

In some African communities, such as the Annang in Nigeria, certain families are assigned to perform certain instruments at certain times, depending on the situation. In these circumstances, only individuals from the chosen family or families are permitted to perform the instrument (s). Additionally, in dances involving masking, specific masks are reserved for a particular family or a group of households (Udofia, 2010). The San, Zulu, and Yoruba peoples, among others, use the bow as a significant component of their musical practices (Arom, 2010). In Africa, students acquire the bow instrument from a master musician through observation and imitation using the traditional apprenticeship paradigm (Mukuna, 2015). The use of harp instruments has undergone significant innovation and modification in Africa. Over time, it has changed and adapted, incorporating new musical genres and technological advancements while clinging to its traditional origins (Akpabot, 2011).

In East Africa, learning to play the bow instrument and performing it are frequently communal activities where artists jam together and impart their knowledge and skills to one another (Isabirye, 2019a, 2019b). Drums, trumpets, and the bow instrument are among the musical instruments with a significant cultural and historical legacy in Uganda (Isabirye, 2022; Kagimu, 2013). In Uganda, students acquire the bow instrument from a master musician through

observation and imitation using the traditional apprenticeship paradigm (Kyobe, 2017).

1.2 Statement of the problem

The interest of the community in learning musical instruments has remained low despite various initiatives such as the formation of various groups within communities, training of community groups, and holding competitions within community, with an aim to promote learning of *adungu* instrument (Okello, 2018). If the low level of musical instrument learning is not addressed, it will lead to a loss of heritage (Kisiangani, 2020). The advantages that would have been gained from *adungu* music such as the development and maintenance of solid social networks, the transfer and retention of talent will all be negatively impacted (Kwesiga & Mbabazi, 2017). While significant community cultural involvement is crucial for promoting youths' acquisition of a culture learning a practice necessitates participation in the community. Although there are studies about participation as a meaning of learning, there is barely any literature that examines the role that community cultural participation can play in learning of oral cultures such as *adungu*. Therefore, this research will look into how community cultural involvement may help Awach communities in the Gulu District learn about *adungu* music, and generate insights for school educators on how to transmit a culture.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out the role of community cultural participation in supporting the learning of *adungu* instrument in Awach community of Gulu District.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study include:

1. To find out the dimensions of cultural participation that support learning of the *adungu* instrument in Awach, Gulu District.
2. To examine how community participation has impacted on the learning of the *adungu* instrument in Awach, Gulu District.
3. To establish what might be learnt from cultural participation as a means of supporting learning of the *adungu* instrument in Awach, Gulu District.

1.5 Research Questions

The study research questions comprised of the following;

1. What are the dimensions of cultural participation that support learning of the *adungu* instrument in Awach community of Gulu District?
2. How has community participation impacted on learning of the *adungu* instrument in Awach, Gulu District?
3. What might be learnt from cultural participation as a means of supporting learning of the *adungu* instrument in Awach, Gulu District?

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was presented under the following sub-heading: content scope, time scope and geographical scope an elaborated below.

1.6.1 Content Scope

The content scope of the study took into consideration community cultural participation particularly passive participation, active participation and time investment in cultural activities. The content scope also included community

interest in learning specifically passion for learning, confidence in learning and self-expression.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The study was carried out in the Awach district (**Fig. 1**), which is presently the administrative center of the rural Gulu district. The area is bounded by latitude 02°-04° North and longitude 30°-32° East. To the west, southwest, northwest, east, and south, it is surrounded by the districts of Amuru, Nwoya, Lamwo, Pader, and Omoro, respectively (Gulu District Local Government [GDLG], 2021). Awach has a population of 25,431 and is expanding at a rate of 2.9% yearly. The majority of the populace is made up of Acholi people, the dominant ethnic group in the region. (UBOS, 2021). In Awach, farming is the main source of income, and the majority of people engage in it as a means of survival. The area's main crops include cassava, maize, groundnuts, beans, and sweet potatoes. There is also some livestock in the region, primarily sheep, goats, and calves. The sub-county also has a small network of roads, the majority of which are murrum and in poor shape during the rainy season. The sub-county also only has spotty access to power and water that is piped, with the majority of homes getting their water from boreholes. There are a few elementary and secondary schools in Awach, with the majority receiving government funding. But many kids drop out of school because of poverty and other socioeconomic factors, and education is usually of poor quality.



Fig. 1: Awach district (Map by John Calvin Esagu)

Overall, Awach is a rural sub-county with limited access to basic services such as water, electricity, healthcare, and education. The area is mainly agrarian, and most people rely on subsistence farming for their livelihoods.

1.6.3 Time Scope

With reference to the time scope, the study focused on the period between 2012 and 2022. This period is chosen because the learning of harp musical instruments was increasing in schools during this period. However, these years have witnessed declining interest in learning of *adungu* and other indigenous musical expressions among the Acholi communities. Therefore, the researcher wanted to find out how the social community participation might influence learning of *adungu* music culture in order to find ways of contributing to school education.

1.7 Significance of the study

Significant contributions to the academic field by expanding the understanding of how cultural participation supports the learning of traditional music, specifically the *adungu* instrument, within rural Ugandan communities. One key contribution is the identification and exploration of the multifaceted dimensions of cultural participation such as intergenerational knowledge transfer, community-based learning, and collective cultural events that directly influence the learning and preservation of the *adungu*. By focusing on Awach, Gulu District, the study provides new insights into the role of communal and informal learning structures in transmitting indigenous musical knowledge, which has often been overlooked in favor of more formal educational models.

Moreover, the study adds to the literature on cultural sustainability by illustrating the vital connection between community engagement and the continuity of traditional music practices. The findings highlight how cultural participation not only supports the acquisition of musical skills but also reinforces cultural identity and heritage, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between music, culture, and social cohesion. In particular, the study reveals that the *adungu*, as a symbol of cultural heritage, thrives in environments where community members actively participate in both learning and teaching, ensuring the instrument's transmission across generations.

Another significant contribution is the identification of key factors that may contribute to the revitalization of traditional instruments in the face of modernization and global cultural influences. The study demonstrates how community driven initiatives can counteract the erosion of traditional knowledge

and offer practical solutions for integrating indigenous music into contemporary educational frameworks. Finally, by offering recommendations for future research, including the integration of digital tools and the examination of similar musical traditions across other regions, this study opens new avenues for the academic exploration of traditional music and its role in cultural preservation.

To the Acholi cultural leadership, the study promotes cultural preservation. The study can provide insights into how community musical engagements help preserve and promote Acholi cultural heritage, ensuring that traditions like playing the *adungu* are passed down to future generations. Additionally, it contributes to strengthening the cultural identity among the Acholi people, promoting pride and continuity in cultural practices.

To the Ministry of Education, the findings can inform the development of curricula that include traditional music education, ensuring that students learn about their cultural heritage alongside modern subjects. Furthermore, the study can lead to the creation of specific educational programs or initiatives that support traditional music and arts education within schools.

The music teachers can benefit from the study's insights and data, which can be used to develop teaching materials and methods for instructing students in playing the *adungu* and understanding Acholi music. The study can highlight the importance of traditional music education, potentially leading to professional development opportunities for music teachers to learn and teach these skills.

To Policy Makers, the study provides empirical evidence that can be used to advocate for policies supporting cultural and arts education, highlighting the broader social and educational benefits. Insights from the study can help policy

makers allocate resources effectively, ensuring that cultural and musical programs receive adequate funding and support. Additionally, the findings can inform the creation of cultural policies aimed at preserving and promoting traditional music, recognizing its importance in maintaining cultural heritage and community wellbeing.

The conceptual framework (**Fig. 2**) shows concepts of cultural participation which is the independent variable. These include: Self-expression (talking to one another), listening to one another, demonstrating for one another, asking one another and watching *adungu* performances. On the other hand, learning of *adungu* music which is the dependent variable include: playing instrument, making instrument, dancing to music, tuning instrument and singing proficiently

Using the conceptual definition from (UNESCO, 2012), cultural participation can be defined as involvement in any activity that, for individuals, represents a way to develop their own cultural and informational capital, which contributes to the definition of their identity, and/or permits for

1.8 Conceptual Framework

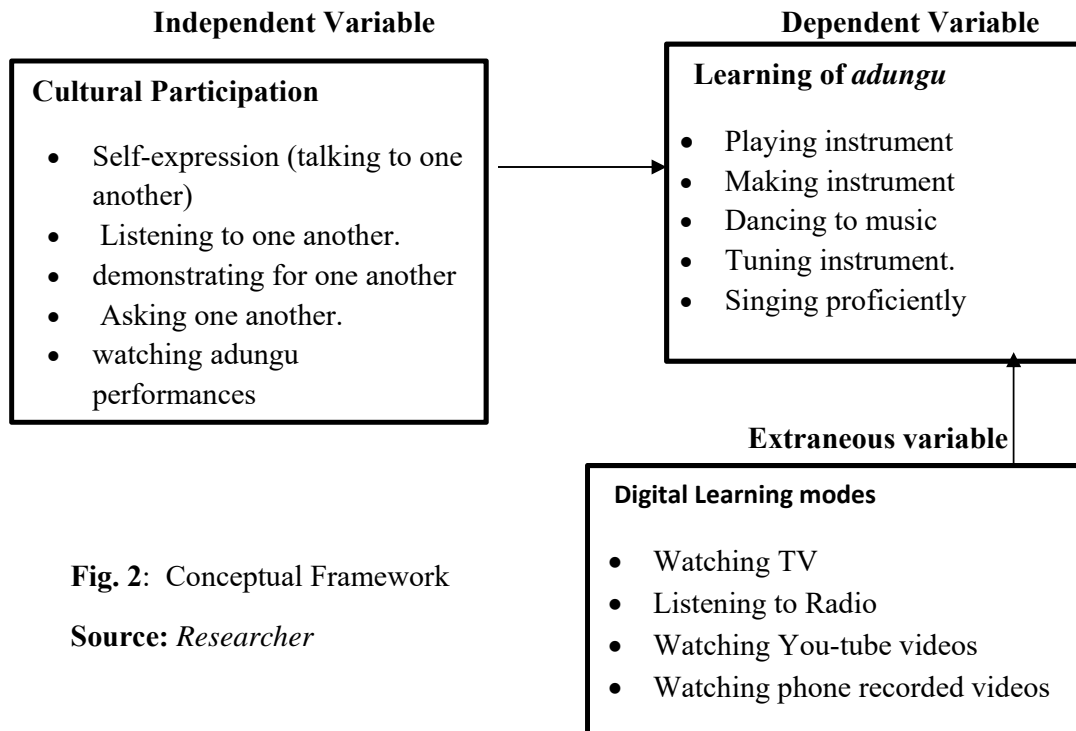


Fig. 2: Conceptual Framework

Source: *Researcher*

Individual expression. Such activities can occur through a variety of formal or informal channels, including the internet, and can be both active like making art or even volunteering for a cultural organization and passive like viewing a movie. Artistic expression and creation, which are fundamental components of cultural life, are mainly referred to as active cultural participation (Shaheed, 2013). As such, artistic expression and creativity contribute to both the development of vibrant cultures and, by allowing for the expression of and exposure to multiple, often provocative viewpoints, the functioning of democratic societies. Community cultural participation is the social process of taking part (voluntarily) in formal or informal activities, programs and/or discussions to bring about a planned change or improvement in community life, services and/or resources. Community cultural participation is also described as a social process in which

groups with shared needs living in a “certain geographical area” actively identify needs, make decisions, and set up mechanisms to achieve solutions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents review of related literature on what has been studied as far as community cultural participation and learning of the *adungu* music is concerned. The review is presented according to the study objectives under the following headings: dimensions of cultural participation that support learning of the *adungu* music and what might be learnt from cultural participation as a means of supporting learning of harp music.

2.1 Dimensions of cultural participation that support learning of a music culture

Any artistic expression or creation, which are an essential component of cultural life, has been referred to as cultural involvement. Because they permit the expression of and exposure to a variety of, frequently provocative viewpoints, creative expression and creativity support the growth of vibrant cultures as well as the operation of democratic societies (Kononykhina, 2016). The social process of participating in formal or informal activities, programs, and conversations to bring about a planned change or improvement in community life, services, and/or resources has been referred to as community cultural involvement.

In the US, there were 81 million adults who participated in the arts from 1992 to 2002, a rise that coincided with the country's population growth. Researchers have concentrated on analyzing the experiences and interest of adults in taking part in cultural activities as they live longer and benefit from leisure activities (Coffman, 2009). Research has concentrated on adults' views and experiences in

community bands and learning of musical activities and instruments equally with regard to adult learners' experiences of instrumental music (Dabback, 2008; Jutras, 2011; Kruse, 2009). According to research, participation in music is thought to enhance quality of life by fostering connections and opportunities for sharing, connecting life events, enhancing wellbeing, having therapeutic benefits, practicing spirituality, and organizing daily activities. This gives people in the community opportunities to develop their skills through education and other types of involvement (Mukuna, 2015). Additional research shows that adults who participate in community music events report benefits to their social, cognitive, emotional, and physical well-being. The research reports also examine different facets of older adults' musical experiences. Other researchers have looked at particular learning contexts, including studio and community contexts, while these studies focused on the role of music (listening, creating, and performing). For instance, discovered that students learned most effectively in settings where the teacher and the learner were on equal footing (Sausa, 2015). A process along a continuum that allows communities to maximize their potential and advance from individual action to collective social and political change may be thought of as community participation. In conclusion, involving community members can aid in the pre-testing of new program for viability and acceptance, provide access to local resources, expertise, volunteers, and leaders, incorporate local values and attitudes into program plans, encourage coordination and lessen conflict among local organizations, build community capacity and competence, and ensure local ownership and maintenance of programs (Granner, 2004).

While skill-related benefits were rated as important, participants also placed high value on personal and social benefits. Coffman (2009) examines adults'

experiences playing in community bands in the US and Canada, asking respondents to rate both the existence and value of 42 potential benefits of their participation in bands. There is still much to learn, even though current study sheds light on the advantages that adults gain from playing music and adults' perspectives on learning. The current research adds to the body of work on music learning across the life span, from childhood to older adulthood, and responds to demands for more focus on adult music learners. (Ernst, 2001; Myers, 2008).

2.1.1 Self- expression as a form of participation

Self-expression is a potent tool for encouraging active learning because it enables people to interact with knowledge in a meaningful manner and to relate new information to their own experiences and viewpoints. According to a study by, self-expression enhances people's wellbeing by allowing them to process and make meaning of traumatic experiences. Hwang and Hughes (2015) address the value of artistic expression in fostering social-emotional learning (SEL) in the classroom in their review. They contend that participating in artistic pursuits like painting, drawing, and music can foster favorable attitudes toward learning as well as the development of students' self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills.

Self-expression is a fundamental aspect of human experience, allowing individuals to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences to others. Research has shown that self-expression can have numerous benefits for individuals, including improved psychological well-being, increased social connectedness, and greater emotional regulation (Gross & John, 2003; Pennebaker & Graybeal, 2001; Rimé, 2009). One way that individuals express themselves is through creative activities such as art, music, and writing. Research

has shown that engaging in creative activities can facilitate self-expression and promote well-being (Kaimal, Ray, & Muniz, 2016; Längle, Orgler, & Krenn, 2011; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). For example, a study by Kaimal and colleagues (2016) found that engaging in a creative activity for just 45 minutes was associated with a significant increase in positive affect and decreased levels of anxiety. Therefore, self-expression is an important aspect of human experience that can have numerous benefits for individuals. Creative activities, interpersonal communication, and technology are all avenues for self-expression that can facilitate social connectedness and promote well-being and learning.

2.1.2 Listening as a form of participation

As it enables individuals to take in and process information as well as interact with the views and ideas of others, listening is a crucial form of involvement in learning. Additionally, listening has been used in group discussions, especially in a study by Galanes, Adams and Brillhart (2003) in which participants discussed a contentious issue in a group setting. According to the findings, those who actively listened to others' contributions and clarified their comprehension by asking questions said they felt more engaged in the conversation overall. According to the research, active listening can foster greater comprehension and fruitful group interactions.

Furthermore, the perspective of metacognition has been used to examine hearing. Participants in this study who used metacognitive monitoring of their listening reflecting on their comprehension and making necessary adjustments to their listening techniques performed better on the recall test (Deanna & Thiede, 2011). The study goes on to say that listening while being conscious of one's own cognition can encourage learning that is more efficient. According to Kim and

coworkers (2020), hearing from various perspectives fosters greater comprehension and more fruitful learning. Additionally, hearing with purpose and reflecting on what you hear can help you learn more efficiently (Berg, 2021). Therefore, listening is crucial for fostering learning from all of its various viewpoints, including those of groups, metacognition, and reflection.

2.1.3 Demonstration and observation as a form of participation

As they enable people to observe and draw lessons from other people's actions and behaviors, demonstration and watching are significant forms of participation in learning. Demonstration has been used in science education, and according to a study by BouJaoude (2021) students who watched a demonstration before conducting their own experiment demonstrated a greater grasp of the scientific concept and outperformed their peers on tests involving that concept. The research goes on to say that demonstrations can help students' practical skills and conceptual understanding. Additionally, it is possible to demonstrate wealth of experiences, especially in community context of Ugandan communities (Isabirye, 2019b). Similar to this, it has been discovered that participating in online learning by viewing video lectures boosts students' performance and course satisfaction (Roehling, 2021). It also implies that actively choosing to view video lectures online can facilitate more efficient learning. Additionally, involvement through observation of role models boosts students' self-confidence and competence (Blue, 2022). As a result, watching good role models can encourage more efficient skill acquisition and transfer when it comes to learning.

In music education, the concept of demonstration and observation remains relevant. Recent research continues to explore how demonstration by educators and peer observation can enhance musical learning. For instance, studies have

examined the impact of demonstration videos and online tutorials in music education (Wanye, 2020). Ethnomusicologists continue to investigate how musical traditions are passed down through observation, demonstration and participation (Schechter, 2020). In performance studies, there is ongoing interest in the dynamics of audience participation through watching live music performances. Recent research may delve into the use of technology, such as smartphones, in shaping the audience experience and the ways in which audiences engage with live music events as a form of demonstration to promote learning.

2.2 Learning of Bow harp music

The traits and temperaments of learners may increase their dedication to practice (Belliveau, 2008). Without any coercion or unfavorable influences, students should develop an independent interest in music that is founded on their own passion, commitment, and desire (Sichivitsa, 2007). The various participant groups will benefit from this's promotion of positive learning. According to Denny (2007), musical involvement does not correlate with pressure but does favorably correlate with future aspirations for learning and successful outcomes. Therefore, those who plan to keep participating in music are those who will appreciate it the most and get the most out of it. Additionally, fostering is a part of learning, and this is true for both instruments and students (Isabirye, 2019a).

Other studies, demonstrate that performance or learning is closely related to degree of effort Roscigno (2009). Furthermore, studies on the differences between choral festival participants and non-participants found that active participants displayed better performance as a result of their level of involvement

(Hedden, 2007). Additional research demonstrates that learners' views toward participating in music have a profound impact on their capacity to learn. Thus, one's attitude toward the material to be learned influences how much one participates in musical events of all kinds (Sichivitsa, 2007). These studies don't demonstrate the various degrees of involvement in *adungu* musical experiences or how one's attitude toward this culture affects the degree of involvement. Therefore, the researcher will find out the different levels of participation in *Adungu* music, and how attitude of the members towards the *Adungu* culture influences their level of engage in it.

Additionally, numerous studies have discovered that when a learner has little enthusiasm in learning, the frequency of involvement declines (Pardini, 2004). To increase the likelihood that students will acquire musical instruments, it may be necessary to maintain and pique their interest. This can be done again by actively participating in musical activities. According to Cope (2010), learning an instrument differs intriguingly from the majority of other aspects of formal schooling. Compared to the passive version, it contains the majority of the active form's components. Here, involvement must have a practical component and be accompanied by participants' enthusiasm, self-assurance, and interest.

2.2.1 Playing and singing proficiently

Two crucial tests of harp instrument acquisition are playing and learning proficiency. In a study titled *Assessing Musical Proficiency in Beginning Harp Students* by Correia et al. (2020), the authors compared the musical proficiency of beginning harp students using three different assessment methods: self-assessment, teacher assessment, and performance assessment, and discovered

that the latter was the most accurate. Similar to how individualized teaching raises motivation and improves harp playing skills (Hwang et al., 2019).

Studying the connection between musical proficiency and performance anxiety in advanced harp pupils found that performance anxiety had a detrimental effect on musical proficiency (Park et al. 2018). In a different setting, deliberate exercise helps people become proficient at playing the harp (Roscigno & Geisler, 2021). Similar to this, a study by Southwell et al., (2020) published in the journal *Psychology of Music* with the title investigating the link between deliberate practice and harp performance in professional harpists looked into this topic. The research discovered that skillful harp performance was positively correlated with deliberate practice.

2.2.2 Making and tuning of instrument as a form of participation

Making and adjusting a musical instrument are crucial steps in the learning process. Building a harp helped students' better grasp acoustics and engineering principles, according to Narayan and MacLeod (2020) the value of building and adjusting a harp is a key component of the learning process. Additionally, a study on the harp builder's craft published in the journal *Early Music* offers insights into the skill and attention to detail needed to construct and tune high-quality harps Eason (2019). Rios and Benitez (2020) also emphasized the significance of soundboard tuning and design in creating high-quality harps. In this instance, the study will highlight participant skills in making and tuning the harp from the viewpoint of the learning of the instrument.

2.3 Importance of Participation as a mean of learning a culture

Adungu is a traditional musical instrument from Uganda, made from wood and cowhide strings. The skills required to make an *adungu* may vary depending on the specific techniques and materials used (Anguria, 2018). According to Oduro (1995) making of *adungu* requires woodworking skill. This is supported by the fact that the body of the *adungu* is typically made from a hollowed-out piece of wood, which requires woodworking skills such as carving and shaping. Furthermore, the process of making *adungu* requires string-making skills (Kisakye, 2017). As such the cowhide strings used in the *adungu* need to be prepared and treated before being used. This may include stretching, drying, and smoothing the hide to create a strong and flexible string.

Stringing skills is very important as far as the process of making *adungu* is concerned (Anguria, 2018). The strings need to be attached to the body of the *adungu* and tuned to the correct pitch which requires knowledge of the instrument and the ability to adjust the strings accordingly. In addition, design and decoration skills are paramount. Some *adungus* may be decorated with traditional patterns or designs, which requires skill in drawing and painting (Anguria, 2018).

Participation as a means of learning a culture continues to be a relevant and evolving area of study. Hille and Scupp (2015) explores how participation in everyday musical activity affects one's skills. The study emphasizes the significance of everyday participation in constructing and reinforcing individual skills. Tenaille (2016) further explored the importance of active participation in the transmission of African culture. The study underscores how participation plays an integral role in the preservation and understanding of cultural heritage.

These recent works reflect the continued importance of participation as a means of cultural learning and understanding. They demonstrate the diverse ways in which participation plays a pivotal role in shaping cultural identities and promotes learning

A summary of the literature gaps based on review of related studies to community cultural participation and learning of harp musical instrument is presented as below: There is limited research and literature on the effect of community cultural participation on the learning of bow-harp instrument, particularly in the context of developing countries. Although some studies have examined community cultural participation, very few studies have focused on its effect on learning of bow-harp musical instrument. While several studies have highlighted the importance of community cultural participation, few studies have examined the dimensions of participation that can enhance the learning of bow-harp instrument. There is limited information on the harp musical instrument in Uganda: The literature on the harp musical instrument in Uganda may be limited, which could result in a gap in the understanding of how it is used and learned in the context of Gulu.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Research methodology is the procedure used to gather facts and figures so that choices can be made with confidence. The methodology could include both current and historical data, as well as published study, interviews, surveys, and other research techniques (Industrial Research Institute, 2010). The research design, study population, sample size and selection, sampling method, data gathering techniques, instruments, reliability and validity, data analysis, and variable measurement are all covered in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

The research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari, 2004). The study used an ethnographic research design. Ethnography allowed the researcher to immerse themselves in the community being studied, facilitating an in-depth understanding of the cultural, social, and historical context in which the *adungu* is played and learned. This approach enables the researcher to observe and participate in the community's practices, rituals, and performances firsthand, allowing them to capture nuanced insights that might not be revealed through other research methods like surveys or interviews alone. By observing the learning processes, the social settings in which the *adungu* is played, and the relationships between community members, ethnography helps uncover the cultural significance of the instrument and its role in shaping community identity. The research adopted a qualitative research

design since exploring the lived experience requires qualitative design to gather in-depth and detailed information.

3.2 Study Population

Kothari (2004) defined the study population as a well-defined set of individuals, objects, or events that the researcher wishes to investigate and draw conclusions. The study population consisted of the members Awach community in Gulu District. Awach has a total population of 25,432 people that constituted the study population (UBOS, 2021). The population included the *adungu* musicians and members of their community who attend their musical experiences during the performances. This is why the entire population of Awach is referred to as the population of the study. The selection of the Awach community in Gulu District for this study is based on the community's cultural richness, the central role of the *adungu* in local traditions, and the potential to explore evolving gender roles within the context of cultural participation.

3.3 Sampling Procedures

Kothari and Garg (2014) define sampling as the process of selecting representative elements from a given population that will form the sample. The study utilized purposive and snow ball sampling in which the selection of members of Awach community were selected for the study.

3.3.1 Purposive sampling

According to Creswell (2012) purposive sampling means investigators use personal judgment, based on people and place of central phenomenon. Purposive sampling was used to select participants from Awach community who in the

researcher's judgment have the right information to provide information on cultural participation and learning of the *adungu* instrument.

The sample size was determined through a combination of purposeful sampling, practical constraints, and a focus on reaching data saturation. Ethnography, with its focus on in-depth, context-rich data, provides a flexible approach for understanding the dynamics of cultural transmission, community engagement, and the role of gender in traditional practices like the *adungu*.

3.3.2 Snow ball sampling

This is a type of sampling where a researcher asks participant to recommend other person to be sampled (Amin, 2005). Snowball sampling was used in this study of the *adungu* instrument in the Awach community of Gulu District to facilitate access to specialized, hard-to-reach participants, build trust within the community, understand social networks of cultural transmission, ensure diversity within the sample, and maximize the study's validity. By beginning with a small group of key informants and using their networks to identify other relevant participants, the researcher could gain a more comprehensive and authentic understanding of how the *adungu* is learned, performed, and culturally embedded in the community. This method is particularly valuable in ethnographic research where participant accessibility, community trust, and network connections play a crucial role in the depth and quality of the data collected.

3.4 Data Collection Method

The researcher used interview method, observation, focus group discussion to collect primary data for the study. Specifically, a structured interview method was utilized to administer the interview. Interview was conducted with the

different members in Awach community on the learning of *adungu* and participation in community musical engagements. Focused group discussion was also conducted with the different musical groups and members within Awach community covering the role of participation in community musical engagement in enhancing the learning of *adungu*.

3.4.1 Interview

Interview involves asking questions from the research and getting answers from participants in a study (Amin, 2005). In this case, the researcher used face to face communication to collect information on the opinion and experience of participants on cultural participation and learning of *Adungu* instrument. The interview was administered by the researcher covering different sections of participation and learning of *Adungu* music. The interview lasted between thirty to forty minutes per session and participants were met face to face from their community.

3.4.2 Observation

Observation is a method of data collection that involves watching and recording what people do and say in natural settings or in settings that have been created for research purposes (Bernard, 2017). With this approach, information is gathered by carefully observing and recording actions, occurrences, and interactions between people or organizations. Using this method, the researcher used observation to collect data from the participants as they participate in the watching, listening and playing of the harp instrument.

3.4.3 Focus group discussion

Focus group discussion (FGD) is a group of interviews, directed by a moderator that is used to gather information on a particular topic or area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The discussion is facilitated by a moderator who asks open-ended questions and encourages group members to share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences. In this case, the researcher acted as a moderator who guided the discussion on the cultural participation and learning of *adungu* instrument with cultural groups of 6 to 10 members per group.

3.5 Procedures for Data Collection

The procedure for data collection involved two phases; the preparatory phase and data collection phase. The preparatory phase mainly involved preparatory activities. These activities included, seeking permission from the local authorities and pretesting and reviewing of data collection tools. The preparatory phase also involved the selection and training of research assistants. The training also involved reading the survey instrument, question by question and instructions on how to fill out the tool given. In addition, the meaning and purpose for each question was explained and its translation into the local language agreed upon to ensure consistence of the interviews during actual data collection. The trained research assistants were involved in the pretesting of the tools to boost their familiarization with the tool.

3.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the process of identifying patterns, themes, and categories from qualitative data, such as interviews, observations, or documents,

and making sense of the meaning and significance of those patterns and themes (Kothari, 2014). The qualitative data analysis process involved transcription, editing and analyzing data using content analysis. Content analysis involved transcription of the qualitative data in which patterns were analyzed and these patterns were grouped in to themes in line with the objectives of the study. The qualitative data was then analyzed and reported verbatim.

The qualitative data collection methods were chosen for this study because they are best suited to uncover the depth, complexity, and contextual nuances of cultural practices like learning the *adungu* in the Awach community. These methods enable the researcher to explore the lived experiences, gender dynamics, and social relationships that underpin the practice of the *adungu*, as well as to capture the emic perspectives of community members involved in its learning and performance. By using qualitative methods such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups, the researcher is able to provide a rich, detailed understanding of how the *adungu* is taught, learned, and performed within its cultural and social context.

3.7. Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration is the application of moral principles and professional codes of conduct to the planning, conducting, and reporting of research, ensuring the integrity of the research process and the protection of participants' rights and well-being (Creswell, 2014). The researcher observed ethical concerns in the following ways:

The researcher sought for permission from respondents before conducting the study. Additionally, the purpose of the study was clearly explained to the

respondents and a verbal consent sought from them before administering the questionnaires and conducting the interviews. Therefore, no respondent was forced to give information against his or her will.

The researcher observed confidentiality whereby, care was taken to ensure that there was no physical or emotional harm caused to the respondents who took part in the study. To ensure this, anonymity of the respondents was taken care of during the study to avoid victimization. Initials of respondents were used to conceal their identities (Burkholder & Kimberly, 2019). Covid 19 still looms and therefore mitigation measures were undertaken to prevent or minimize the spread if any. This involved use of face mask, hand sanitizer and maintaining social distance during the process of data collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to address the three original research questions, and provides a discussion of findings that offer insights into the study aim: to investigate the role of community cultural participation in supporting the learning of *adungu* music in Awach community of Gulu District. Additionally, it sought to investigate the dimensions of community participation on the learning of *adungu* music and to identify lessons that can be learned from cultural participation as a means of supporting *adungu* music learning in the Awach community.

4.1 Dimensions of community musical engagements that support learning of the *adungu* music in Awach.

The first objective of the study was to find out the dimensions of community musical engagements that support learning of the *adungu* music. Therefore, the dimensions of musical engagements are presented under the following sub headings comprising of: Self-expression, demonstration, watching and storytelling as described below:



Fig. 3: Adungu (Herb) and Awal (Calabash) (Photo by Lakony Ronnie)

4.1.1 Self expression

Self-expression is a fundamental human need and a critical aspect of personal and communal identity. It allows individuals to convey their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives, thereby fostering a sense of connection and understanding among community members. In the context of community musical engagement, self-expression transcends verbal communication, encompassing a wide range of non-verbal mediums, including music. Music, as an art form, offers a powerful avenue for self-expression, enabling individuals to share their unique experiences and emotions through melodies, rhythms, and lyrics. This expressive capability is

particularly evident in the use and creation of musical instruments within the community setting.

The analysis of qualitative data from interview guides and focus group discussions has highlighted self-expression as a pivotal dimension of community musical engagement. The findings illustrate that self-expression in music involves more than just playing an instrument; it is deeply intertwined with cultural identity and communal participation. Through the construction and use of musical instruments, individuals can project their personal interpretations and emotional states, thereby contributing to the collective musical heritage.

One of the respondents eloquently encapsulated this sentiment by stating, “for me, it's about holistic participation. I feel connected when I play and sing *adungu* music; it's my way of being an active part of our culture” (IDI, 4th Aug, 2023). This statement highlights the intrinsic connection between musical participation and cultural identity. Playing and singing *adungu* music is not merely an act of musical performance but a profound expression of cultural belonging and personal identity.

Another respondent, reflecting on her journey of engaging with *adungu* music, shared, “I mostly watch and listen during performances. I'm not a player, but I appreciate the beauty and history of *adungu* music which has driven me into learning and playing the instrument” (KI, 7th Aug, 2023). This perspective highlights the influential role of observation and appreciation in the process of self-expression. Even for those who may not initially engage as active performers, the allure and historical significance of the music can inspire a deep personal connection and a desire to participate.

The concept of self-expression through music is well-documented in the literature. According to Frith (1996) music is a powerful medium for expressing identity, as it allows individuals to communicate aspects of their personal and social identities that might be difficult to articulate through words alone. This is particularly pertinent in communal settings where music can serve as a collective expression of cultural heritage and shared values. Emphasizes that musical engagement facilitates emotional expression, providing an outlet for individuals to convey feelings such as joy, sorrow, and anger. This emotional release is essential for mental well-being and social cohesion, as it fosters empathy and understanding within the community (Hallam, 2010).

Musical instruments hold significant cultural value, often serving as symbols of communal identity and tradition. As noted by Nettl (2005) the construction and use of musical instruments are deeply embedded in the cultural practices of many societies. Instruments like the *adungu*, a traditional stringed instrument, are not only tools for musical performance but also vessels of cultural transmission and preservation. The *adungu*, for example, is intricately linked to the cultural heritage of certain communities in Uganda. As described by Cooke (2000a) the instrument's construction, playing techniques, and associated repertoires reflect the community's history, beliefs, and social structures. Engaging with such an instrument allows individuals to connect with their cultural roots and express their personal and communal identities through music.

The qualitative data collected from interviews and focus group discussions provide empirical support for these theoretical insights. The respondents' experiences illustrate the multidimensional nature of self-expression through musical engagement. For instance, the first respondent's comment about holistic

participation highlights the integrative role of music in fostering a sense of belonging and cultural continuity. This aligns with concept of participatory music, where the act of making music collectively reinforces social bonds and cultural identity (Turino, 2008). Similarly, the second respondent's narrative demonstrates the importance of passive engagement and appreciation in the journey towards active participation. This process of gradual involvement reflects Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, where individuals initially learn through observation and interaction with more experienced practitioners before becoming proficient themselves. Therefore, musical traditions wield significant power in shaping individual and collective identities. As the qualitative data reveals, the respondents' engagement with *adungu* music is not merely about musical proficiency but also about embracing and perpetuating cultural traditions. This engagement confirmed that musical traditions are dynamic, evolving entities that influence and are influenced by the individuals who participate in them.

Self-expression through community musical engagement is a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses emotional, cultural, and social dimensions. The qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions reveal the profound impact of musical traditions like *adungu* music on individual and communal identity. These findings are supported by literature that highlights the role of music in self-expression, the cultural significance of musical instruments, and the dynamic nature of musical traditions. The respondents' narratives provide compelling evidence of how musical engagement fosters a sense of belonging and cultural continuity. Whether through active participation or appreciative observation, individuals find meaningful ways to express themselves and connect

with their cultural heritage. This process of self-expression is not only vital for personal fulfillment but also for the preservation and evolution of communal musical traditions.

4.1.2 Demonstration and Watching

Demonstration and watching are fundamental pedagogical strategies in traditional music learning, particularly in the context of *Adungu* music within the Awach community. These methods are deeply rooted in the community's approach to cultural transmission, where skills, techniques, and cultural knowledge are passed down through generations by direct observation and emulation.

In the context of *Adungu* music, experienced musicians often took on the role of mentors, demonstrating specific techniques, playing styles, and the intricate craftsmanship involved in making and tuning *Adungu* instruments. Novices, on the other hand, learnt by watching these demonstrations closely, absorbing the nuances of the performance and replicating the actions of their mentors. This hands-on approach not only facilitates skill acquisition but also ensures the preservation and continuity of the musical tradition.

The study's findings revealed that in the Awach community, demonstration and watching are critical to the learning process of *adungu* music. Experienced musicians, who are often elders or recognized cultural bearers, play a pivotal role in teaching novices. For instance, a seasoned *adungu* player demonstrated the correct hand positioning and strumming techniques, while the novices watched attentively and attempt to mimic these actions. In the Awach community, individuals such as the culture bearer or elder musicians demonstrated the playing

techniques and craftsmanship of *adungu*. They showed how to tune the instrument, maintain its structural integrity, and produce the desired musical notes.

The learners, often younger members of the community or those new to *adungu* music, observed these demonstrations. They watch the precise movements of the musicians' hands, listen to the sounds produced, and try to replicate these techniques in their practice sessions. One respondent explained, “I learned to play the *adungu* by watching my uncle. He would play for hours, and I would sit beside him, observing every movement. Eventually, I started mimicking his actions and practicing on my own” (IDI, 4th Aug, 2023).

Active participation in performances, instrument-making, and storytelling are primary dimensions supporting *adungu* music learning in the Awach community. These activities are integral to the learning process, as they provide practical experience and cultural context to the learners. Engaging in musical performances allowed learners to immerse themselves in the music, learning its rhythms, melodies, and cultural significance. During community events, novices often performed alongside experienced musicians, gaining firsthand experience in playing *adungu* in a real-world setting. This exposure helped learners internalize the music and develop their skills through practical application. The craftsmanship involved in making *adungu* instruments is another crucial aspect of cultural participation. Experienced artisans demonstrated the process of selecting materials, shaping the instrument, and tuning it to produce the correct sound. Novices learn by watching these demonstrations and participating in the instrument making process, which deepened their understanding of the instrument's construction and its role in the music. Furthermore, storytelling is a

vital cultural practice that accompanies *adungu* music. Culture bearers often paused during musical sessions to share stories related to the music, its history, and its significance. These narratives provided context and meaning to the musical practice, enriching the learners' understanding of their cultural heritage.

The pedagogical strategies of demonstration and watching have been extensively studied in the field of ethnomusicology. According to Green (2002), these methods are foundational to informal music learning environments, where learners acquire skills through observation and imitation rather than formal instruction. This approach is particularly effective in traditional music settings, where the transmission of knowledge is embedded in social and cultural practices. The role of mentors in demonstrating musical techniques is crucial. In relation, mentorship in traditional music involves not only the transmission of technical skills but also the imparting of cultural values and historical knowledge (Nettl, 2005). Mentors serve as cultural custodians, ensuring that the music retains its authenticity and cultural significance. Storytelling, as an accompaniment to musical practice, provides a rich cultural context that enhances the learning experience. Narratives associated with music serve to contextualize the practice, linking it to historical events, social customs, and communal values (Black, 1973). This contextualization is essential for learners to appreciate the depth and significance of their musical heritage.

The qualitative data collected from the Awach community highlights the effectiveness of demonstration and watching as learning strategies. The respondents' experiences highlight the important nature of musical learning in this context, where practical engagement and cultural immersion are intertwined. One respondent shared, "I mostly watch and listen during performances. I

appreciate the beauty and history of *adungu* music, which has driven me into learning and playing the instrument’’ (KI, 7thAug, 2023). This illustrates how passive observation can inspire active participation and a deeper connection to the music.

Another respondent recounted how a culture bearer shared stories about learning *adungu* music from her mother and its use in praising husbands. This storytelling session (**Fig. 4**) captivated the listeners, highlighting the value they placed on the cultural knowledge being transmitted.



Fig. 4: Listening to Cultural bearer’s story (Photo by Lakony Ronnie)



Fig. 5: Playing adungu instrument as a team (Photo by Ojok Ben)

Demonstration and watching are essential components of *adungu* music learning in the Awach community. These methods facilitated the transmission of technical skills, cultural values, and historical knowledge, ensuring the preservation and continuity of the musical tradition. The study's findings, supported by literature, emphasize the importance of active participation and cultural immersion in the learning process. Through performances, instrument-making, and storytelling, learners gain a holistic understanding of *adungu* music, fostering a deep connection to their cultural heritage.

Traditionally, playing the *adungu* has been a male dominated activity, with men taking the lead in performances and public cultural events. Women, while crucial to the broader cultural context of *adungu* performances, have often been relegated

to supporting roles such as singing and dancing. However, changing societal norms and greater access to education and instruments are contributing to a shift in these gender roles. Today, more women are becoming involved in playing the *adungu*, helping to challenge traditional gender boundaries and promoting a more inclusive cultural practice. This shift in gender dynamics represents a broader trend toward gender equality and the revitalization of traditional music as a means of strengthening cultural identity. Demonstration of how *adungu* instrument is played.



Fig. 6: Spokes (ciliki) and Awal (Calabash) (Photo by Lakony Ronnie)



Fig. 7: Flute Instrument (Olure) (Photo by Lakony Ronnie)

4.1.3 Oral Tradition and Storytelling

Oral tradition and storytelling have long been the cornerstones of cultural transmission in many societies, including those that practice *adungu* music. These practices involve the sharing of knowledge, history, and cultural values through spoken word rather than written text. In the context of *adungu* music, oral tradition and storytelling are vital for preserving the instrument's heritage and teaching its significance to younger generations. The oral tradition in the Awach community encompasses the transmission of knowledge about the *adungu* instrument, its music, and its cultural context. Elders and experienced musicians played a crucial role in this process by sharing stories and teachings related to the *adungu*. This method of cultural transmission ensures that the knowledge is personalized, contextualized, and infused with the wisdom of those who have lived and practiced the traditions.

Elders and experienced musicians shared detailed stories about the origins of the *adungu*, the craftsmanship involved in making the instrument, and the techniques required to play it. Through storytelling, younger generations learn about the cultural narratives, traditions, and historical significance of *adungu* music. This contextual knowledge is crucial for understanding the deeper meanings embedded in the music. Storytelling fostered a personal connection between the storyteller and the listeners, making the learning experience more engaging and memorable. The qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions in the Awach community provide rich insights into the role of oral tradition and storytelling in *adungu* music learning.

One respondent highlighted the importance of elders in the learning process: “we have learned a lot from elders, especially when it comes to playing the *adungu* instruments and listening to stories and songs from the elders who had knowledge of the *adungu*” (FGD, 10th August 2023). This statement demonstrates the role of elders as both custodians of cultural knowledge and active participants in the teaching process. Another respondent explained during a Focus Group Discussion: “Learning has been taking place from generation to generation, and that is why the tradition and practice of *adungu* playing have existed for a long period of time, and we need to continue maintaining the tradition” (IDI, 4th August 2023). This perspective emphasizes the continuity of cultural practices through oral tradition and the responsibility of each generation to preserve and pass on this heritage.

Oral tradition is a critical component of music learning in many cultures, oral tradition involves the transmission of cultural knowledge through spoken word, encompassing stories, songs, and teachings that are passed down from one

generation to the next (Finnegan, 1970). This method of transmission is particularly effective in preserving the musical traditions that might be lost in written form. Additionally, storytelling serves as a powerful pedagogical tool in traditional music learning. Storytelling not only conveys factual information but also embeds the knowledge within a cultural and emotional context (Barber, 2003). This contextualization helps learners understand the significance of the music and its role within the broader cultural framework.

Elders play a pivotal role in the transmission of cultural knowledge through oral tradition, elders are often seen as the custodians of cultural heritage, possessing a wealth of knowledge and experience that they share with younger generations. Their teachings are respected and valued, ensuring that the cultural practices are preserved and perpetuated. The findings from the Awach community elaborate the practical implications of oral tradition and storytelling in *adungu* music learning. By engaging with elders and experienced musicians, novices gain a comprehensive understanding of both the technical and cultural aspects of the music (Nettl, 2005). This holistic approach to learning ensures that the tradition is not only preserved but also enriched by each successive generation.

Oral tradition and storytelling are indispensable components of *adungu* music learning in the Awach community. Through the guidance of elders and experienced musicians, younger generations gain both the technical skills and the cultural knowledge necessary to master the *adungu*. The personal connection fostered by storytelling makes the learning process more engaging and meaningful, ensuring the preservation and continuity of this rich musical tradition.



Fig. 8: Demonstration and watching how they play *adungu* (Photo by Ojok Ben)

The data from the Awach community highlights the effectiveness of these methods, supported by literature that emphasizes the importance of oral tradition, storytelling, and the role of elders in cultural transmission. By continuing to value and practice these traditions, the community can ensure that the heritage of *adungu* music remains vibrant and relevant for future generations.

4.1.4 Demonstration for one another

“*Pwonye ki bot langec*”, literally meaning informal apprenticeship systems, where novice musicians learned from experienced practitioners within their families or communities has been identified as an important dimension that facilitated the learning of *adungu*. This hands-on approach allowed for the transfer of practical skills and tacit knowledge. One of the respondents remarked: “Our neighbor was so much experienced and had love for music and was really very good in playing *adungu* instrument and I must say that I learnt from him” (IDI, 4th August, 2023)

Informal apprenticeship systems therefore played a crucial role in preserving cultural traditions within communities. These traditions encompassed not only music but also dance, storytelling, craft-making, and more. By learning from experienced practitioners within their families or communities, novices gain access to knowledge and skills that might not be readily available through formal education or written resources. Furthermore, the informal apprenticeships facilitated the transfer of knowledge and skills from one generation to the next. This intergenerational aspect is vital for the continuity of cultural practices such as the *adungu* music culture (Isabirye, 2024, 2021a, 2021b).



Fig. 9: Demonstration and watching the playing of *adungu* (Photo by Lakony Ronnie)

4.1.5 Watching *adungu* performances

“*Neno tuku adungu*”, literally meaning watching *adungu* performances, was implicated as a dimension of participation that aided the learning of *adungu*. Cultural participation often took the form of group activities. Participants engaged in collective practices, such as building and repairing *adungu* instruments, which fostered a sense of community and belonging. The findings regarding watching *adungu* performances and its impact on cultural participation and learning are rich and highlight several key dimensions of community engagement and cultural preservation including: Observational Learning, in which observing skilled performers allowed novices to learn through observation and imitation. One respondent during focused group discussion remarked that, “through watching *adungu* being played every time, I have developed interest and I can now play *adungu* very well” (FDG, 10th Aug, 2023).

The above result revealed the key role of watching *adungu* performances as one of the key dimensions as its role can never be under emphasized. Besides, observation played important role as a passive form of learning. The act of watching *adungu* performances is embedded in a social context, where knowledge is shared among community members. The transfer of knowledge occurs organically, with experienced practitioners demonstrating their skills to a receptive audience. The study's findings underscore the role of demonstration and watching in *adungu* music learning. Experienced musicians play a pivotal role in passing down the tradition by demonstrating techniques to novices. This hands-on approach allows learners to closely observe and replicate the intricate playing style, tuning methods, and craftsmanship required for *Adungu* instruments. The process of learning through observation and emulation is a dynamic form of

cultural transmission, fostering a sense of continuity and preserving the authenticity of *adungu* music.

The respondents' comments highlight the importance of self-expression and active engagement in *adungu* music. One participant mentioned that playing and singing *adungu* music provide a means of actively participating in their culture. This indicates that *adungu* music is not merely a passive observation but a form of cultural expression. It allows individuals to connect with their cultural heritage and express their identity and emotions through music. Furthermore, the participant who primarily watches and listens during performances emphasizes that even as a spectator; there is a deep appreciation for the cultural significance of *adungu* music. This demonstrates that *adungu* music acts as a bridge between generations, where those who may not be musicians themselves can still appreciate and engage with their cultural heritage.

In summary, the study reveals that *adungu* music learning is a multifaceted process deeply embedded in the cultural life of the Awach community. It involves active participation, self-expression, observation, and hands-on learning through various dimensions of cultural engagement. This holistic approach ensures the preservation and continued vitality of *adungu* music within the community. The qualitative findings from interviews and focus group discussions in the Awach community of Gulu District shed light on the dimensions of cultural participation that support the learning of *adungu* music. This rich cultural tradition involves not only the music itself but also encompasses various activities and forms of engagement.

4.2 Effect of community participation on the learning of *adungu* music

The second objective of the study was to find out how community participation has impacted on the learning of *adungu* music. The nature of participation was determined by factors such as attitude, identity, and self-expression. The analysis of data and presentation of results are explained under the following sub-headings: Attitude, identity and self-expression and enhanced craftsmanship, as explained below:

4.2.1 Attitude

The result indicates that attitude played a major role on whether a person would learn or not playing the *adungu* instrument. Attitude played a critical role in determining one's level of participation in *adungu* music. Those with a positive attitude, who appreciate the music and its cultural significance, were more likely to actively engage and learn. They expressed themselves by learning and performing, listen attentively to experienced musicians, and demonstrated a strong desire to be part of the *adungu* culture. More findings indicated that community members who watched and emulated experienced instrument makers were more likely to develop expertise in crafting and tuning *adungu* instruments. This aspect of cultural participation contributes to the preservation of the craftsmanship associated with *adungu* music. Responses from both in-depth interviews and focused group discussion revealed attitude as a key factor responsible for learning or not as some were quoted saying, “I love *adungu* music; it's in my blood. That passion drives me to learn, practice, and perform. I want to keep our traditions alive” (FGD, 10th Aug, 2023). Another respondent observed that, “Honestly, I never really got into it. *Adungu* music does not

resonate with me, so I stay on the sidelines during cultural events’’ (IDI, 4th Aug, 2023).

Attitude emerges as a central factor influencing whether individuals in the community choose to learn and engage with *adungu* music. Those who have a positive attitude, a deep passion for the music, and a strong connection to their cultural heritage are more likely to actively participate in learning and performing *adungu* music. Conversely, those with a less favorable attitude may remain passive observers or sideline participants. Attitude reflects the emotional and cultural connection that individuals have with *adungu* music. It determines their motivation and willingness to invest time and effort in learning and performing. Positive attitudes act as driving forces for cultural preservation and active engagement.

4.2.2 Identity in *adungu* music

The accumulated experience of a person embeds the total character or quality of one’s identity. *Adungu* musicians had various identities as players of *olure* (flute), *awal* (calabash), *adungu* (bow harp) audiences, and singers. These identities affected what and how individuals conducted themselves during the experiences and after performances in the community. Identity is the way an individual or a group of people are able to express who they are basing on the system of values that sustain their character. The identity is conceptual, and it is constructed and changes as people encounter different experiences. Therefore, identity was shaped by what different people did, and it kept on changing as individuals changed and grew in their roles. Furthermore, first timers needed time to transform into experiences members, and as these changes took place, members’

identities got negotiated, transformed, and re-transformed (Isabirye, 2019a, 2021a, 2021c).

One member of Anyim Lac said that “I am now a full member of Anyim Lac. I was not a musician before, but now everyone knows that I belong to this group. My personality in community has changed” (FGD 10th Aug, 2023). It is these changes from being unknown to becoming known musicians that constituted the learning of *adungu* music among different members. Group members invested time to participate in different *adungu* activities and by doing this, they learned the music and became *adungu* musicians, thereby transforming their identities. The changing identities were affected by age, sex, conditions of life, and various factors affect identity formation (Isabirye, 2019a, 2019b)

4.2.3 Self-expression in *adungu* music contexts

Findings reveal that listening from one another within the community strengthened cultural identity and promoted social cohesion. Participants reported a sense of pride and belonging as they contributed to the preservation of their cultural heritage and social cohesion. This finding is backed up by quotation that: “I have been able to learn from my colleagues how to play *adungu* and after the learning, we have always been together as a group and now we identify ourselves as one” (KI, Aug, 2023). This finding indicates the role played by peer learning especially by listening to one another in promoting learning and enhancing social cohesion and bonding among the different learners in Awach community. Community participation therefore provided a supportive environment for peer learning. Novice musicians received encouragement and feedback from their peers, which enhanced their skills and confidence.

Self-expression was found to be crucial in *gwoko ki kopo ngec me adungu*, meaning preserving and transmitting *adungu* music knowledge across generations. It ensured that the music and its cultural significance continued to thrive in the Awach community. One of the respondents was quoted saying that, “I was able to learning by expressing my-self every time I get opportunities to sing, dance, play instrument and ask questions where I didn’t understand” (FGD, 10th Aug. 2023). The above finding therefore revealed the crucial role of self-expression in promoting learning and ensuring preservation of cultural heritage in Awach Community. The findings also communicate that participants often mentioned that involvement in *adungu* music fostered a sense of happiness and emotional well-being. The music served as a form of therapy and stress relief, promoting mental health within the community. To strengthen this, a respondent noted that, ‘every time I am stressed, I would play *adungu* and as a result, I get a bit of relief’ (IDI, 4th Aug, 2023). *Adungu* musical experiences enable members to share experiences and heal from the pains of the Kony war. The Acholi people suffered devastating war for about two decades, and many people lost their loved ones (Isabirye, 2024, 2020)

The finding thus indicates the significant effect that involvement in *adungu* music has in promoting a happy and stress free environment. This is considered crucial in promoting well-being in the community at large. The analysis of the effect of community participation on the learning of *adungu* music in the Awach community of Gulu District reveals several significant findings. These findings shed light on how various factors, such as attitude, self-expression, peer learning, cultural identity, and emotional well-being, influence the process of learning and preserving *adungu* music within the community:

4.2.4 Enhancement of Craftsmanship

The findings highlight the significance of learning craftsmanship associated with *adungu* instrument making. Community members who watch and emulate experienced instrument makers contribute to the preservation of this traditional skill. This hands-on dimension of cultural participation ensures that the craftsmanship required for *adungu* instruments continues to thrive. Instrument making is a tangible aspect of cultural heritage that contributes to the authenticity of *adungu* music. It demonstrates the importance of preserving not only musical traditions but also the craftsmanship involved in creating the instruments themselves.

The enhancement of craftsmanship in the context of *adungu* music is a profound testament to the community's dedication to preserving and perpetuating their cultural heritage. Craftsmanship, particularly the skills involved in making *adungu* instruments, is not merely a mechanical process but a deeply cultural act that ties the community to their traditions and ancestors. This hands-on dimension of cultural participation ensures that the knowledge and skills required to create *adungu* instruments are passed down through generations, maintaining the authenticity and integrity of the music. Community participation played a crucial role in enhancing craftsmanship. In the Awach community, the making of *adungu* instruments is a communal activity that involves both experienced artisans and novices. The process is characterized by direct transmission of skills through observation, imitation, and practice. This method of learning ensures that the intricate techniques and cultural nuances involved in *adungu* craftsmanship are accurately conveyed and preserved.

The study's findings from the Awach community highlight the critical role of craftsmanship in the cultural transmission of *adungu* music. Community members who watch and emulate experienced instrument makers contribute to the preservation of this traditional skill. This hands-on dimension of cultural participation ensures that the craftsmanship required for *adungu* instruments continues to thrive. One respondent explained, "watching the elders make the *Adungu* and trying to replicate their techniques is how we learn. It's not just about making the instrument; it's about understanding its place in our culture" (FGD, 7 Sept 2023). This statement highlights the importance of both practical skills and cultural knowledge in the learning process. Another respondent noted, "the skills needed to craft an *adungu* are complex and require patience and precision. By working alongside experienced craftsmen, we not only learn how to make the instrument but also appreciate its significance in our music and traditions" (ICK, 20th Sept. 2023). This highlights the nature of the craftsmanship and the value placed on preserving this traditional skill.

Craftsmanship is a vital aspect of cultural heritage, encompassing the skills, techniques, and traditional knowledge required to create culturally significant artifacts. According to Sennett (2008) craftsmanship is not only about manual skill but also about a deep connection to the materials and cultural practices involved in the creation process. This connection ensures that the artifacts produced are imbued with cultural significance and authenticity. Hands-on learning, where individuals learn by doing, is particularly effective in transmitting craftsmanship. As noted by Lave and Wenger (1991), situated learning, which occurs through active participation in a community of practice, is crucial for the transmission of complex skills. In the context of *adungu* instrument making, this

involves novices working alongside experienced craftsmen, observing their techniques, and gradually acquiring the skills through practice.

The findings from the Awach community demonstrate the practical implications of enhancing craftsmanship through community participation. By engaging in the hands-on process of making *adungu* instruments, community members ensure that the traditional skills are preserved and perpetuated. In the Awach community, the process of making *adungu* instruments is a communal activity that involves multiple generations. Elders and experienced craftsmen lead the process, demonstrating each step and explaining the cultural significance of the techniques used.

One participant shared, “I learned to make the *adungu* by working with my grandfather. He showed me how to choose the right wood, how to carve it, and how to tune the strings. Each step was accompanied by stories about our ancestors and the history of the *adungu*” (FGD, 20th Sept 2023). This illustrates how the transmission of craftsmanship is intertwined with cultural education. Another participant noted, “the process of making an *adungu* is meticulous. It requires patience and precision. By watching and practicing alongside experienced craftsmen, I’ve developed a deep appreciation for the skill and cultural heritage involved in this craft” (ICK, Sept. 2023). This highlights the technical complexity of the craftsmanship and the cultural depth it embodies.

Craftsmanship is a key component of cultural heritage, as it encompasses the traditional skills and knowledge required to create culturally significant artifacts. According to UNESCO (2003) the preservation of traditional craftsmanship is essential for maintaining cultural diversity and heritage. In the context of *adungu*

music, craftsmanship ensures that the instruments used are authentic and culturally resonant. The enhancement of craftsmanship through community participation is essential for the preservation and perpetuation of *adungu* music in the Awach community. By engaging in the hands-on process of making *adungu* instruments, community members ensure that the traditional skills and cultural knowledge are passed down through generations. This communal approach to learning fosters a deep connection to the cultural heritage and ensures the authenticity and integrity of *adungu* music.

4.3 Cultural participation in *adungu* music contexts

The third objective of the study was to establish what might be learnt from cultural participation as a means of supporting learning of *adungu*. The analysis of data revealed findings under the following sub-headings: cultural conservation, and teamwork.

4.3.1 Cultural conservation

Initial findings indicate that various aspects of learning, including self-expression, active listening, demonstrating techniques, asking questions, watching performances, and emulating experienced musicians, all contribute to cultural participation in the learning of *adungu* instruments. Individuals who engage in these dimensions of learning are more deeply immersed in the culture and contribute to its preservation. Therefore, people learn how to conserve culture through participation as a mean of supporting learning of *adungu*. Respondents repeatedly explained that when they perform *adungu* music they are communicating values, ideal and knowledge that they have acquired over a long period of time from their ancestors. *Adungu* is an opportunity to connect with the

important ways of being in their community. “When I play, I am telling our stories, expressing our identity. It is a way to connect with our ancestors and share our heritage and keep it growing” (FGD, 10th August, 2023). Another respondent said that, I find it liberating *adungu* music lets me express myself in a way that words can’t. It’s like a conversation with our culture and has helped us preserve our culture by singing while playing the instruments” (IDI, 4 August, 2023). Furthermore, cultural participation serves as a conduit for the transfer of knowledge from older generations to younger ones. This process should be valued and continued to ensure the preservation of *adungu* music.

4.3.2 Teamwork

Teamwork, referred to as “*Tic ka Cel*” in the local context, is a significant effect of community participation in learning and performing *adungu* music. Members of the *adungu* community engaged with one spirit whenever they met to perform the music. They manifested a high sense of collective working and the team spirit was visible whenever they met. The communal activities surrounding *adungu* music experiences, included such activities as singing, dancing, instrument-making, and playing, foster a sense of collaboration and mutual support among community members. This collaborative environment not only enhanced musical skills but also strengthens social bonds and promotes a sense of unity and togetherness within the community.

Community participation in *adungu* music provides numerous opportunities for individuals to develop and refine their teamwork skills. Engaging in musical activities requires coordination, communication, and mutual support, all of which are essential components of effective teamwork. As members come together to learn and perform, they cultivate a collective identity and a shared sense of

purpose. The study's findings demonstrate the importance of teamwork in the context of *adungu* music. One of the key revelations was that community members are able to learn and develop “*Tic ka Cel*,” or teamwork, through participation in various musical activities. This collaborative approach to music learning not only enhances individual skills but also strengthens group cohesion. One respondent remarked, “When we play music in a group, we develop love for one another and we always support each other because of the togetherness through participating in playing the *adungu* instrument” (FGD, 20th Aug. 2023). This statement highlights the deep emotional bonds and mutual support that emerge from collective musical activities.

Another finding indicated that teamwork can be learned and developed as a result of participating in the learning of *adungu*. When community members gather to learn or play the instrument and sing together, a sense of bonding and affection develops. This bonding promotes individual and group support, resulting in a strengthened sense of togetherness. Teamwork is a critical component of many cultural activities, including music. According to Forsyth (2009) teamwork involves coordinated efforts by individuals to achieve a common goal. In the context of music, this goal is the creation of harmonious and cohesive performances. Teamwork in musical settings fosters communication, cooperation, and collective problem-solving skills, which are essential for successful group performances.

Engaging in musical activities as a team provides significant social and emotional benefits. As noted by Koelsch (2010) making music together enhances social bonding and emotional connectivity among participants. The shared experience of creating and performing music fosters a sense of belonging and reduces

feelings of isolation. This is particularly important in communal settings, where social cohesion and support are crucial. In the Awach community, the practice of *adungu* music involves various forms of teamwork. Community members gather regularly for group practice sessions, where they learn to play the instrument, sing, and dance together. These sessions are characterized by mutual support and cooperation, as experienced musicians guide novices and all members work together to achieve a harmonious performance. One participant shared, “our group practice sessions are very important. We learn from each other and support each other. This helps us to improve our skills and also to feel connected as a community” (FGD, 20th Aug. 2023). This illustrates how teamwork is integral to both the learning process and the social cohesion of the community.

Another participant noted, when we prepare for performances, everyone has a role to play. Some make the instruments; others practice the songs and dances. This teamwork makes our performances successful and enjoyable (IDI, 4th Aug. 2023). This highlights the collaborative nature of *adungu* music and the importance of teamwork in achieving collective success. Teamwork, or *tic ka Cel* is a vital benefit of community participation in the learning and performance of *adungu* music in the Awach community. The collaborative activities surrounding *adungu* music, such as singing, dancing, instrument-making, and playing, foster a sense of coordination, communication, and mutual support among community members. This teamwork not only enhances musical skills but also strengthens social bonds and promotes a sense of unity and togetherness within the community

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary and discussion of the study findings on the role of community cultural participation in supporting the *adungu* music in Awach community of Gulu District. Findings are presented in line with what previous scholars and researchers have studied about community cultural participation and human learning. The chapter further presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

5.1 Discussion of findings

This qualitative study investigated participation in *adungu* cultural music experiences within the Awach community of Gulu District to find out how those human engagements contribute to transmission of that culture. The study explored how community members engage with this musical tradition, and how that engagement influences their attitudes, self-awareness and expression, listening, and watching, and how all these forms of participation contribute to learning of this culture.

Findings of the study indicate that various aspects of learning, including self-expression, active listening, demonstration, inquiry, watching performances, and emulating experienced musicians, all highlight the nature of cultural participation in the *adungu* instruments experiences. Individuals who engage in these experiences' manifest various dimensions of learning, and they get deeply immersed in the culture. In that way they gain knowledge and skills, and

contribute to the transmission and preservation of this culture. Therefore, people learn *adungu* music culture through participation, which becomes a mean of disseminating, and preserving this music. When they *adungu* music, they are telling community stories of love, life experiences, and expressing their identity/ies. It is a way of connecting with their ancestors and heritage, which they cherish as the essence of their being.

5.1.1 Dimensions of participation

The study revealed that there were various levels and dimensions of participation in the *adungu* music experiences. Awach community's involvement with *adungu* music spans a spectrum of participation where some members actively participate by playing instruments, singing, and doing the craftsmanship of the *adungu* instrument, while others remain observing participants who watch and listen during performances. Through these various forms of participation, members identify with the *adungu* culture. Nurturing of identity is a major determinant of learning in any human experience (Isabirye, 2019a). Humans identify with a culture that they value, and in that way they learn it. Also, as they participate together they become a community, characterizes as *communitas*, where social engagement in cultural practices fosters a sense of shared identity, belonging and community (Holochwost, 2017).

The multifaceted levels dimensions of participation in *adungu* music within the Awach community of Gulu District reflect a complex and dynamic cultural tapestry. These varying degrees of engagement resonate with the concept of “*communitas*” as explained by (Holochwost 2017) in their publication music education, academic achievement and executive functions. *Communitas* denotes a deep sense of community and shared identity that emerges when individuals

collectively participate in cultural practices. In the context of *adungu* music, some community members actively immerse themselves by playing, singing, and crafting instruments, while others assume a more passive role, primarily observing and listening during performances. These disparate levels of participation are emblematic of the richness and diversity inherent in culture within the Awach community. Cultural practices serves as a powerful mechanism for forging a collective identity (Hille & Schupp, 2015). Within the Awach community, *adungu* music epitomizes this concept by not only preserving cultural heritage but also reinforcing a profound sense of belonging and shared history among participants. Those who actively engage in playing, singing, or crafting instruments are not only custodians of *Adungu* music but also experience a deeper connection with their cultural roots, exemplifying the transformative potential of cultural participation.

5.1.2 Influence of attitude

The overwhelmingly positive attitudes expressed by respondents toward *adungu* music provide valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of cultural participation within the Awach community. Skitka and Tetlock (1993), luminaries in the field of cultural studies, underscored the profound impact of ideology and cultural values on individuals' perceptions and attitudes toward their own culture. The respondents' deep affinity for *adungu* music highlights the intricate interplay between cultural practices and personal identities. These positive attitudes are indicative of a prevailing cultural ideology that venerates *adungu* music as an embodiment of their heritage. Skitka and Tetlock's insights into ideology and culture emphasize that the positive attitudes toward *adungu* music are not isolated individual sentiments; rather, they are deeply rooted in the

broader cultural context of the Awach community (Skitka & Tetlock, 1993). *Adungu* music serves as a cultural keystone, encapsulating the essence of their identity and heritage. The respondents' positive attitudes serve as a testament to their unwavering commitment to preserving and celebrating their cultural legacy.

Members/participants in *adungu* experiences generally exhibited positive attitudes toward this music culture, underscoring its cultural significance. Humans tend to manifest positive attitudes when the culture at stake is deeply rooted in the community's cultural values and worldview (Skitka & Tetlock, 1993). *Adungu* music culture is one of those Acholi expressions that acts as a cornerstone of their identity, and their positive attitudes reflect their commitment to preserving this heritage.

5.1.3 Self-expression in *adungu* music

Within the context of *adungu* music, self-expression serves as a powerful means of communication. Bond's perspective on music as a medium for conveying emotions and cultural narratives aligns with respondents' accounts. For the Awach community, *adungu* music transcends mere melodies; it becomes a vehicle for storytelling, heritage preservation, and individual and collective expression (Valk, 2021).

Listening as Knowledge Transmission: The role of listening in *adungu* music learning resonates with ethnomusicologist Downey's insights. Active listening to performances and guidance from experienced musicians enables learners to absorb intricate rhythms and melodies, facilitating the transmission of tacit knowledge from one generation to the next (Downey, 2022). Listening is not passive but an active conduit for cultural preservation. Demonstration and

watching as learning tools: Learning *adungu* music often involves observation and emulation of experienced musicians, akin to Charles Keil's concept of "participatory discrepancies". Novice learners observe and mimic experts, acquiring techniques and craftsmanship skills associated with *adungu* instruments (Keil, 1995). Watching and emulating experienced musicians play a crucial role in the transfer of cultural knowledge.

Status of learning varies: *adungu* instrument learning within the Awach community is diverse. Kingston's theory of cultural capital helps elucidate this diversity, as individuals accumulate varying levels of knowledge and skills related to *adungu* music (Kingston et al., 2003). Some have reached high levels of proficiency, while others are in the early stages of their learning journey. This diversity enriches the cultural landscape and ensures the tradition remains vibrant.

Multifaceted cultural participation: Cultural participation in *adungu* music encompasses various dimensions, including self-expression, active listening, and demonstration, asking questions, watching performances, and emulating experienced musicians. Andrén's concept of "thick description" aligns with this multifaceted engagement, emphasizing the need for in-depth analysis to grasp cultural practices comprehensively (Andrén, 2023). The Awach community's participation in *adungu* music encompasses a rich tapestry of cultural interactions.

The Awach community's connection with *adungu* music is a vibrant and multifaceted phenomenon. The findings underscore the community's commitment to preserving their cultural heritage through diverse levels of

participation, positive attitudes, self-expression, attentive listening, observation, and active cultural engagement. *Adungu* music serves not only as a musical tradition but also as a powerful medium for cultural expression, identity, and the transmission of heritage. These findings shed light on the dynamic and intricate relationship between culture, music, and community identity within the Awach community of Gulu District.

5.1.4 Effect of participation on learning of *adungu* music

Within the realm of *adungu* music, self-expression emerges as a cornerstone of learning and cultural participation (Heejung & Deborah, 2007). Heejung, a prominent ethnomusicologist, contended that music serves as a medium through which individuals communicate their emotions, identity, and cultural narratives. The respondents' descriptions of *adungu* music as a form of self-expression align perfectly with Heejung's perspective. For the community members, *adungu* music transcends the realm of mere notes and rhythms; it becomes a conduit through which they can narrate stories, connect with their heritage, and express their identity. In another development, Valk's insights into the communicative power of music underscore how *adungu* music enables the Awach community to articulate their cultural narratives (Valk, 2021). When community members engage with *adungu* music by playing, singing, or immersing themselves in its melodies, they embark on a profound journey of self-expression that transcends the limitations of language. This expressive dimension of *adungu* music plays a pivotal role in fostering a profound connection between individuals and their cultural heritage (Isabirye, 2024; 2021b).

Listening, as a central method of learning and knowledge transmission within *adungu* music, aligns harmoniously with the observations of ethnomusicologist

(Downey, 2010). Downey emphasized the pivotal role of oral and aural traditions in the preservation of traditional music. The role of listening in *adungu* music learning underscores the oral transmission of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. As elucidated by respondents, attentive listening to performances and the guidance of experienced musicians is indispensable for acquiring the intricate nuances of rhythm, melody, and cultural context in *adungu* music.

Downey's insights underscore the significance of active listening in the sustenance and continuity of traditional music cultures (Downey, 2022). In the case of *adungu* music, it becomes palpable that the community holds the oral tradition in high regard as a means of safeguarding their musical heritage. Listening goes beyond mere auditory perception; it transforms into a conduit for bequeathing tacit knowledge that is vital for the vibrancy of *adungu* music.

The act of observing and emulating experienced musicians, as highlighted in the findings, resonates strongly with the concept of participatory discrepancies (Ekadu 2019). This concept posits that learners frequently observe and mimic expert musicians to bridge the chasm between novice and mastery. In the context of *adungu* music learning, this ideology manifests as individuals watching skilled musicians demonstrate techniques and craftsmanship, which provides novice learners with invaluable insights into the art of playing and instrument-making.

Furthermore Charles's perspective provides illumination on the dynamic nature of learning within *adungu* music (Keil, 1995). It revealed the pivotal role of active participation through observation and emulation in conserving and transmitting the cultural knowledge associated with the tradition. The act of watching, as a

form of learning, functions as a bridge that connects generations, enabling the enduring legacy of *adungu* music.

5.1.5 Nature of participation in *adungu* music using *adungu* instrument

The status of *adungu* music learning within the Awach community reveals a spectrum of expertise and proficiency. Kingston, a renowned sociologist known for his theory of cultural capital, offers a valuable framework for comprehending the varying levels of proficiency. Kingston's theory posits that individuals accumulate knowledge and skills related to their cultural practices, thereby contributing to their cultural capital (Kingston, 2003). The status of *adungu* instrument learning among community members can be discerned through this theoretical lens, where individuals invest to different degrees in their cultural capital. Kingston's theory provides an illuminating lens for appreciating the diversity of skills and knowledge present within the Awach community concerning *adungu* music Kingston (2001). Individuals who have achieved high levels of proficiency may be likened to holders of cultural capital, actively contributing to the preservation and evolution of the tradition. Conversely, those who are in the initial stages of learning are in the process of accumulating cultural capital, ensuring that the culture remains dynamic and adaptable.

The concept of cultural participation and emulating one another within the context of *adungu* music learning encompasses a multifaceted engagement with various dimensions, including self-expression, active listening, demonstrating techniques, asking questions, watching performances, and emulating experienced musicians (Bond, 2017). Vanessa Bond, a luminary in cultural anthropology, introduced the concept of “thick description,” underscoring the importance of meticulous analysis to comprehend cultural practices. The multifaceted

dimensions of cultural participation in *adungu* music align seamlessly with Andrén's call for rich, context-specific interpretations of cultural phenomena. Andrén's emphasis on the depth and complexity of cultural practices resonates powerfully with the findings regarding cultural participation in *adungu* music Andrén (2023). It affirmed that cultural engagement is not a monolithic endeavor; rather, it is a rich tapestry woven from a plethora.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has revealed the significant role that cultural participation plays in supporting the learning of the *adungu* instrument in Awach, Gulu District. The dimensions of cultural participation, including intergenerational knowledge transfer, community events, and hands-on practice, have been shown to facilitate both the acquisition and preservation of this traditional musical skill.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of community-based learning as a means of fostering a deep, contextual understanding of the *adungu*, making the learning experience both meaningful and sustainable (Isabirye, 2019b). This qualitative study explored the role of community participation on *adungu* music learning and identified lessons that can be learned from cultural participation to support the preservation and growth of this musical tradition. This qualitative study offers a profound understanding of the dimensions of cultural participation in *adungu* music within the Awach community of Gulu District. This musical tradition, deeply embedded in the community's cultural fabric, serves as a lens through which we can explore the intricate dynamics of cultural engagement, preservation, and self-expression.

The active involvement of the community in learning and teaching the *adungu* has positively impacted its transmission, enhancing both the skill levels of learners and their sense of cultural identity. One of the central issues is the multifaceted nature of cultural participation within the Awach community. The community members engage with *adungu* music at varying levels, from active participation through playing, singing, and instrument crafting to passive engagement via watching and listening during performances. This spectrum of involvement is emblematic of the rich diversity inherent in the community's cultural landscape.

The overwhelmingly positive attitudes expressed by respondents toward *adungu* music illuminate the profound connection between cultural practices and personal identity. These attitudes are deeply rooted in the cultural values and ideology of the Awach community. *Adungu* music is not merely a musical tradition but a cultural touchstone that embodies their heritage, reinforcing a sense of belonging and shared history. Within the realm of *adungu* music, self-expression emerges as a powerful means of communicating emotions, identity, and cultural narratives. Music becomes a conduit through which community members tell stories, connect with their heritage, and express their individual and collective identities. This expressive dimension of *adungu* music underscores its role as a living cultural narrative.

The role of listening in *adungu* music learning is pivotal. Active listening to performances and guidance from experienced musicians facilitates the transmission of tacit knowledge from one generation to the next. Listening is not a passive act but a dynamic process through which cultural preservation occurs. Learning *adungu* music involves observation and emulation of experienced

musicians. Novice learners watch and mimic experts, gaining insights into techniques and craftsmanship skills. This method aligns with the concept of participatory discrepancies, highlighting the role of active engagement in cultural preservation.

Adungu instrument learning within the Awach community is diverse, reflecting Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. Individuals accumulate varying levels of knowledge and skills related to *adungu* music, enriching the cultural landscape. Some have achieved high levels of proficiency, while others are in the early stages of their learning journey, ensuring the tradition remains dynamic. The concept of cultural participation within *adungu* music encompasses various dimensions; including self-expression, active listening, and demonstration, asking questions, watching performances, and emulating experienced musicians.

In essence, the study underscores the profound significance of *adungu* music within the Awach community. It is not merely a musical tradition but a vibrant cultural tapestry interwoven with personal and collective identities, stories, and heritage. *Adungu* music transcends entertainment; it is a powerful means of cultural expression, knowledge transmission, and community cohesion. The research illuminates the dynamic relationship between culture, music, and identity, highlighting the importance of preserving and celebrating such traditions as *adungu* music within diverse cultural landscapes. The Awach community's commitment to their heritage through *adungu* music serves as a testament to the enduring power of cultural traditions in shaping and preserving the essence of a community.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of study on the role of community cultural participation in supporting the learning of *adungu* music within the Awach community of Gulu District, several recommendations emerge. These recommendations aim to support and enrich the cultural preservation, appreciation, and transmission of *adungu* music within the community. The community's positive attitudes toward *adungu* music should be harnessed to develop cultural education programs. These programs can be integrated into schools and community centers to ensure that the younger generation has opportunities to learn about and engage with this important cultural tradition.

The study recommended that efforts to promote the learning of the *adungu* instrument be strengthened through the formal integration of cultural participation in educational curricula, particularly in rural settings like Awach.

Additionally, fostering partnerships with local cultural leaders and elders to ensure the continuity of traditional practices, alongside the incorporation of community-based music festivals and workshops, would further enhance the learning environment.

Given the significance of *adungu* music as a cultural narrative, it is recommended to initiate projects that document the oral history and stories associated with the music. These records can be archived and shared with future generations, contributing to the preservation of the community's cultural heritage. Encourage inter-generational learning and mentorship within the community. Experienced musicians should actively engage with younger generations, passing down not only the technical skills but also the cultural and historical significance of *adungu*

music. Organize community workshops and performances to provide opportunities for active participation and skill development. These events can serve as platforms for community members to showcase their talents and foster a sense of collective identity, and seek partnerships with cultural organizations and institutions to provide resources, training, and support for *adungu* music initiatives. These collaborations can help secure funding for instrument-making workshops, music festivals, and educational programs. Invest in training programs for instrument making and maintenance. Ensuring the availability of well-crafted *adungu* instruments is essential for the sustainability of the tradition, and explore opportunities for cultural exchange programs with neighboring communities or regions that have similar musical traditions. These programs can foster cross-cultural appreciation and collaboration, and ensure that the community remains at the forefront of decision-making and initiatives related to *adungu* music. Community ownership and active involvement are key to the long-term success of any preservation efforts.

Finally, there is a need to document and preserve the cultural knowledge associated with the *adungu* through digital platforms or local archives, ensuring that future generations can continue to benefit from the rich heritage of their community. Consider working with relevant authorities to recognize *adungu* music as intangible cultural heritage, which can provide protection and support for its preservation, and collaborate with local schools to incorporate *adungu* music into their curricula, exposing a broader range of young learners to the tradition and ensuring its continuity. Also, incorporating these recommendations into the community's efforts to preserve and promote *adungu* music can help

ensure that this cultural treasure continues to thrive, enriching the lives of current and future generations within the Awach community and beyond.

5.4 Recommendations for further study

The study focused on participation as a means of transferring a culture. However, there could be other ways that learning of a music culture can happen. Therefore, the study recommends the following areas of further research to establish their impact of the learning of *adungu* music. Research could be done to find out:

For further study, recommended that, research to be conducted to explore the broader impact of cultural participation on the preservation of other indigenous musical instruments in Uganda, particularly in rural communities.

The study recommend for a comparative study between different regions and cultural contexts could provide valuable insights into how cultural practices across various ethnic groups contribute to the learning and sustainability of traditional music.

Additionally, longitudinal research to be undertaken to track the long-term effects of community driven music education on the development of both the individuals involved and the community as a whole.

Further studies should be conducted to investigate the role of modern technology in enhancing or hindering the transmission of traditional instruments, exploring how digital tools, social media, or online platforms can be leveraged to support the learning of the *adungu* and similar instruments.

Lastly, it would be beneficial to examine the potential of integrating the *adungu* and other traditional instruments into formal education systems, assessing the

challenges and opportunities this integration might present in both urban and rural educational settings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you please explain to me the different levels of participation in *Adungu* music?
2. How does your attitude towards *Adungu* music influence your level of participation in this culture?
3. How does self-expression influence the learning of *Adungu* music?
4. Can you please explain to me the role that listening as a form of cultural participation played in the learning of *Adungu* music?
5. Can you please explain to me the role of demonstration and watching in the learning of *Adungu* music among the Awach community?
6. Can you please explain to me the status of learning of *Adungu* instrument among the Awach community?
7. How do you rate the status of leaning of *Adungu* music in terms of playing and singing proficiency?
8. How do you rate the status of learning of *Adungu* music in terms of making and tuning of the instruments?
9. Can you please explain to me aspects of learning influence cultural participation in learning of *Adungu* instrument?

Thank you for your valuable time.

APPENDIX II: FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Can you please explain to me the different levels of participation in *Adungu* music?
2. How does your attitude towards *Adungu* music influence your level of participation in this culture?
3. How does self-expression influence the learning of *Adungu* music?
4. Can you please explain to me the role that listening as a form of cultural participation played in the learning of *Adungu* music?
5. Can you please explain to me the role of demonstration and watching in the learning of *Adungu* music among the Awach community?
6. Can you please explain to me the status of learning of *Adungu* instrument among the Awach community?
7. How do you rate the status of leaning of *Adungu* music in terms of playing and singing proficiency?
8. How do you rate the status of learning of *Adungu* music in terms of making and tuning of the instruments?
9. Can you please explain to the aspects of learning that influence cultural participation in learning of *Adungu* instrument?

Thank you for your valuable time.

APPENDIX III: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Make an observation of participants and fill in the table below based on the listed parameters (checklists) provided.

S/N	Key Observable features	Yes	No	Comment
	<i>Part I – Cultural Participation</i>			
1	Demonstration of self-expression e.g. talking to one another			
2	Listening to one another			
3	Demonstration to one another			
4	Asking one another			
5	Watching <i>Adungu</i> performances			
	<i>Part II – Learning of Adungu</i>			
1	Playing instruments			
2	Making Instruments			
3	Dancing to the instrument			
4	Tuning the instrument			
5	Singing proficiency			

