

**CULTURAL IDENTITY AND LEARNING OF *AMAKONDEERE***

**MUSIC AMONG THE BAGANDA IN KASSANDA**

**DISTRICT, CENTRAL UGANDA**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

I, Kibuuka Moreen, do hereby declare that this dissertation titled: Cultural Identity and learning of *Amakondeere* music among the Baganda people in Kassanda District, Central Uganda is my original work, and it has never been submitted to any institution for publication or award.

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**APPROVAL**

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## **DEDICATION**

To you, Ssaalongo Raphael Kibuuka Mukasa (late) and Nnalongo Kevina Nakimera Mukasa:

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated how cultural identity influences learning of *amakondeere* music, a traditional royal gourd trumpet of the Baganda people, within Kassanda District. It focused on understanding how a sense of belonging to the Baganda culture impacts individuals' interest in learning and performing *amakondeere* music and how this can inform music education in schools. Given that, the performance of *amakondeere* music is on a great decline, which possess a great threat of extinction to such rich cultural heritage, this study resurrects the significance of *amakondeere* music, bringing to mind its contribution to music education in Uganda. In particular, this study aimed at establishing how participation in cultural practices enhances learning of *amakondeere* music, by paying close attention to the role of customs and traditions in the learning process. The study also explores how language and other cultural values contribute to the transmission of *amakondeere* music in Kassanda District, Central Uganda. A phenomenological research design was employed to capture participants' lived experiences. Data was collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and observations of *amakondeere* engagements, then transcribed, translated, and thematically analyzed. The analysis revealed that children and youths in Kassanda learn *amakondeere* music as part of their cultural identity, with learning being reserved for males of all ages and social statuses from the *Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige* clan. It is a holistic process, where learners must know how to craft, play, and maintain the instruments. *Amakondeere* learning engagements emphasizes *okukolera awamu* (working together), where experts mentor novices through hands-on learning and observation. The process is culturally meaningful, driven by a passion for improving both individual and community well-being. Luganda language, customs, beliefs, *obulombombo* (rituals), and *emizizo* (taboos) are integral to learning, as they embed a sense of identity and encourage participation. Based on the findings, the study recommends that music educators recognize the importance of cultural identity in motivating learning. Buganda kingdom officials, the National Curriculum Development Center (NCDC), and schools need to collaborate with the *amakondeere* music community in Kassanda to integrate *amakondeere* music and other similar cultural music forms in the curriculum, to expand career opportunities for aspiring musicians. Additionally, there is a need for royal authorities to collect and archive *amakondeere* music for future reference.

## CHAPTER ON E

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Overview

In this chapter I discuss the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions or hypothesis, the scope, and the significance of the study.

#### 1.1 Background

This study investigated how cultural identity influences the learning of *Amakondeere* music, a royal gourd trumpet tradition of the Baganda people, in Kassanda District. This research focused on understanding how a sense of belonging to the Baganda culture impacts individuals' interest in learning and performing *Amakondeere* music. It emphasized the significance of cultural music as a reflection of people's identity, its learning processes, and the communal aspect of learning through participation in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). The study explored insights the aforementioned elements of learning might provide for contemporary music education in schools. It examined the expression of *amakondeere* music of the Baganda people of East and Central Africa, to illustrate how music is learned in community life contexts. The objective was to understand how belonging to the Baganda culture affects interest in learning and performing *amakondeere* music. This qualitative analysis explored learning and teaching processes in community environments to see how cultural identity might inform practices in formal school settings, encompassing both music education in particular and the general education system at large.

To provide context, the study clarified the concepts of culture, identity, and *amakondeere*. According to Merriam-Webster, culture involves the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a group, reflecting their identity. Bennett (2009) describes culture as shared characteristics and learned patterns passed down through generations and adapted over time through social interactions, like music. Identity involves unique characteristics that distinguish individuals or groups. Hall (1996) views identity as a process of becoming, a vivid experiential process akin to music, emphasizing the sense of belonging and connection to a particular culture.

*Amakondeere* are royal guard trumpets, side-blown instruments played in ensembles by two or more musicians. These instruments are made from fruits called *Emiboga* (singular: *Omuboga*), which belong to the gourd family and include both food and ornamental species. *Amakondeere* is a royal guard music tradition of the Baganda people, exclusively performed by male members of the *Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige* (bird) clan as a hereditary practice. According to Tefferu (2020) *amakondeere* instruments are the trumpets of Africa and are entrenched in various African ethnic cultures and played in ensembles similar to western trumpets. According to the Baganda, *amakondeere* refers to both the instruments and the music played.

Cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging to a particular culture or group. It encompasses the shared characteristics, values, traditions, and practices that define a group and distinguish it from others. Stuart Hall (1996) describes cultural identity as a process of becoming, emphasizing that it is a continuous and dynamic process shaped by historical, social, and cultural contexts. Hall highlights that cultural

identity involves both similarity and difference, where individuals feel a sense of connection to a collective history and culture while also recognizing their unique personal experiences and identities. Bennett (2009) defines cultural identity as the shared characteristics and learned behaviors, values, beliefs, and attitudes of a group, which are passed down through generations and adapted over time. This transmission and adaptation occur through social interactions and cultural expressions, such as music, language, and rituals, which help individuals connect with their culture and express their identity. Cultural identity is thus a complex and multifaceted concept, rooted in the traditions and practices of a community and continuously evolving through individual and collective experiences.

Cultural identity and music cultures are rooted in the traditions and practices of indigenous communities, each with unique aspects that define their identity. This cultural distinctiveness is reflected in the peoples' musical expressions like *amakondeere*, which embody their norms, beliefs, and practices, serving as a representation of their well-being. The status and significance of these music cultures reveal parts of their traditions and thinking (Margaret, 1990). Turino (2008) explains that musical expressions are vital symbols of culture, connecting individuals to their communities and environments. Cultural heritage, like *amakondeere* music, plays a crucial role in shaping expressive cultural traditions, fostering social unity essential for community survival. Turino (2008) adds that music plays a crucial role in significant social events and experiences globally, helping people express their emotions and maintain friendships and communities. This concept resonates with expressions like *amakondeere*, which are integral to a community's cultural identity, reminding people of their shared history, values, and beliefs, and fostering a sense of pride and belonging. Through these elements,

*amakondeere* and similar musical traditions worldwide serve as powerful means of creating and sustaining emotional and social bonds, enriching the lives of individuals and communities.

To fully appreciate the context, it is important to understand that the Baganda society is organized according to clans known as *Ebika*. Every Muganda (singular of Baganda) belongs to *ekika*, (singular of *ebika*) through which they trace their ancestry. These clans are the foundation of social identity, each with a specific hereditary duty in service to the Kabaka in his palace (Kafumbe, 2018). Each clan is led by a head, referred to as *Omutaka w'Akasolya* who is responsible for identifying and training clan members from childhood to serve the Kabaka. The selected clan members are intended to succeed the elders and continue performing these hereditary duties. These duties, which were carefully assigned to specific clans, ranged from political responsibilities to social services including music. The palace had designated sections for royal musicians and the royal ensembles included *Entenga* (drums played with long, curved, lightweight wooden sticks known as *enga*), *Ennanga* (harps), *Entamiivu* (drums also played with sticks), *Endere* (notched flutes), *Akadinda* (xylophones), and *Amakondeere* (gourd trumpets) (Kafumbe, 2018; Isabirye, 2022). Consequently, members of *Nnyonyi Nnakinsige* clan were specifically identified as royal *amakondeere* musicians known as *Abakondeere*.

### **1.1.1 Trumpets**

Trumpets are brass wind instruments characterized by a cylindrical tube, primarily conical in shape, with a flared bell at one end and a mouthpiece at the other. They produce sound when the musician vibrates their lips against the mouthpiece,

creating a buzzing sound that resonates through the tube (Oxford University Press, June 6, 2024). They are wind or blown-long-tube-like musical instruments usually used in an orchestra or Western classical-jazz ensembles (Koehler, 2014). According to Elisa (2014) trumpets have existed for centuries, originating from the discovery of resonant sounds produced by blowing into hollow objects such as animal horns and conch shells. Various ethnic groups have been using trumpets worldwide for centuries in ceremonial rituals and cultural expressions such as those related to the royal courts or others that are religious and non-religious. For example, in Mexico the Aztec civilization used gourd trumpets in religious ceremonies and rituals that marked key stages of an individual's life and other celebrations (Fajinmi, Olarewaju, Authur, Coopoosamy & Naidoo, 2022).

Initially, trumpets were not designed as musical instruments; instead, they served as symbols of authority and royalty (Wallace, 2011). Over time, craftsmen began fashioning trumpets from diverse materials such as wood, metal, ceramics, and other natural substances. In ancient times, trumpets were used effectively for hunting purposes. As the late Middle Ages approached, modifications in trumpet construction transformed it into a musical instrument. Throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, trumpets started being employed for musical performances, eventually leading to the development of the 'natural' or 'Baroque' trumpet (Wallace, 2011). This refined musical instrument featured prominently in compositions by renowned composers like Bach, Handel, Mozart, and many others. This evolution opened new avenues for trumpet performance, elevating the instrument to a prominent role in numerous exceptional compositions, such as Haydn's famous Trumpet Concerto in E-flat Major.

The biblical Book of Numbers extensively details various uses for trumpets, including summoning people, signaling the start of journeys (such as the Israelites' departure from Egypt), sounding alarms during warfare, and participating in religious ceremonies (Numbers, 10:1-10). Trumpets also hold significant symbolic importance in Christianity, particularly in the concept of the Last Judgment, where they emerge as potent symbols of the judgment day (Revelation, 11:15; Thessalonians, 4:16). The 20th century saw further advancements in trumpet design, leading to the modern trumpet as we know it today, with valves and a standardized shape and size.

In Africa, trumpets are depicted in Egyptian military processions and also in non-military ceremonies and sacred rituals. These instruments were among the treasures discovered in the tomb of Tutankhamun, an ancient Egyptian pharaoh of the 18th dynasty, and were used in worship of Osiris, the god of the afterlife, highlighting their significance on the African continent. Teffera (2020) explains that across various African regions, trumpets originally served as signaling devices and carried significant symbolic importance in many African kingdoms, symbolizing authority and royalty. Over time, they evolved from symbols of power into musical instruments played primarily in ensembles at the courts of nobles and chiefs.

For instance, Teffera (2020) notes that trumpets were present in the royal courts of Nigeria among the Hausa and Fulani people, as well as in Zaire, Congo, Sudan, and other regions. These instruments were particularly esteemed in countries like Egypt, where they served as military instruments and also used in civilian activities. Teffera also notes that in some ethnic groups, trumpet music is

performed during ceremonial rituals and for communication purposes. For example, among the Haya and Sukuma people of Tanzania, horn and bamboo trumpets are used at royal courts, funerals, weddings, and to announce victorious warriors' return. Additionally, the Berta people of Sudan and Ethiopia, historically use trumpets in a combination with other instruments for communal songs, dance events, initiation ceremonies, and wrestling matches, among other functions.

In different African communities, trumpets are known by various names. Teffera (2020) provides an extensive list of these names across several African countries. In the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia, for example, trumpets are called *Waza* among the Berta people. In Ghana, they are known as *Ntamera* and are performed by the Akan people. In Mali, they are referred to as *Malinke* where they are commonly used by the Malinke people. In Nigeria, they are called *Kakaki* by the Hausa and Fulani people who predominantly play them. In Rwanda and Tanzania, trumpets are referred to as *Makondera* and are used in public events and court ceremonies to entertain the King. In Uganda, trumpets have different names among various ethnic groups, each with its unique cultural significance, which will be explored in the following sub-sections.

### **1.1.2 Trumpet cultures of Uganda**

Trumpet music holds profound cultural significance in numerous kingdoms and chiefdoms across Uganda. It has been integral to these societies for an extensive period, primarily within the courts of chiefs among diverse ethnic groups. Mbabi-Katana (1982), who extensively documented trumpet music in Uganda, posits that trumpets were introduced by the *Abachwezi* people originating from Egypt, who settled and formed the lacustrine kingdoms. He offers an ethnographic perspective

on the *amakondere* (written with single *e* on the syllable *nde*) culture of the Banyoro people, highlighting that when the Chwezi Empire fragmented into smaller dynasties, the *amakondere* instruments persisted within the subsequent dynasties of Buganda, Bunyoro, and Toro, known as the Inter-lacustrine regions.

Mbabi-Katana further explains that *amakondere* music has strong ties to the *Abahuma* and *Abachwezi* peoples, traditionally considered as herdsmen and semi-divine beings, and were integral to the regalia of the Kitara Empire. According to Mbabi-Katana (1982), among the Banyoro people, *amakondere* music was predominantly performed during religious ceremonies and rituals associated with royal ascensions and anniversaries. He notes that during the reign of Emperor *Ndahura*, founder of the Kitara Empire, the royal trumpets played significant roles in welcoming important figures like his father *Isimbwa*, with musical styles known as *Irambi* and *Empango* still performed today on *amakondere* among the Banyoro people. These two musical styles are collectively referred to as *Irambi-Empango* music.

Furthermore, Mbabi-Katana emphasizes that *amakondere* traditions are of immense cultural importance to various Ugandan communities including Buganda, Busoga, Toro, Ankole, Acholi, Lango, Alur, and others. These traditions underscore the enduring cultural legacy and significance of trumpet music across Uganda's diverse ethnic landscape. He observed that trumpet music traditions in Uganda continue to exist, although in cultures such as Buganda, Acholi, and Lango among others, the tradition faces the threat of extinction.

More to that, Isabirye (2019a, 2019b, 2021a, 2021b) participated in projects to revive traditional Ugandan music, including the *entenga* (Buganda royal drums),

*ekimasa* (Busoga royal bow harp), *amakondeere* (Buganda royal gourd trumpets), *naizungwe* (Busoga royal drums), and *bigwala* (Busoga gourd trumpets). He notes that while *amakondeere* music is still practiced in areas like Alur, Bunyoro, Toro, and Busoga, it is rarely performed in Buganda. This tradition fell silent for several years when Idi Amin, under the command of Prime Minister Milton Obote, attacked the Buganda kingdom in 1966, bombing its main administration building and palace. This forced the ruling Kabaka (king), Sir Edward Mutesa II, into exile in Britain. Subsequently, Obote abolished traditional monarchies in the country, silencing the rich musical heritage of Buganda for a time. It wasn't until 1993, when the current president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, reinstated traditional kingship that efforts to revive this musical heritage began (Lwanga, 2020; Kafumbe, 2018).

As I have noted, the trumpet traditions in Uganda have various names basing on a particular ethnic community. Each instrument is named basing on its pitch and role, with names differing across ethnic groups. Mbabi-Katana (1982) explains that some trumpet names are derived from animal and bird sounds, while others are named according to their roles in a set. He provides detailed descriptions of these names across Bantu and Luo dialects, highlighting a common origin for trumpet traditions. This shared heritage explains the similar naming trends among several royal trumpets in Uganda. It is also attributed to the Kitara Empire, established by *Omuchwezi* King *Ndahura*, who is believed to have spread the use of royal trumpets beyond its borders. The similarity in composition, make, and musical style of trumpet sets across Ugandan communities supports this shared heritage.

Mbabi-Katana (1982) and Isabirye (2021c) identify locations such as Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole, Busoga, Ba-Congo, the Acholi royal clan of *Payira*, and Buganda

where trumpets are predominantly used. They note that the Alur have sets called *agwara*, while in Bunyoro and Toro, they are known as *amakondere*. In Acholi, they are called *arupepe*; in Kigezi, *ikondere*; in Busoga, *bigwala*; and among the Madi and Kakwa people of West Nile, they are known as *limba* and *yuge*, respectively. In Buganda, trumpets are called *amakondeere* and are considered one of the most significant musical expressive objects.

A set of trumpets from various ethnic groups in Uganda consists of five instruments, with names and roles that are nearly identical across these groups. For instance, Mbabi-Katana (1982) notes that the trumpet which acts as the mixer is called *entabya* in Bunyoro and Ankole, *entabi* in Toro, *enjawuzi* in Buganda, *endumirizi* in Busoga, and *abute* in Acholi. The starter instrument is known as *eteru* in Bunyoro, *muteru* in Toro, *emyongo* in Ankole, *endeesi* in Buganda, *endes* in Busoga, and *teno* in Acholi. Another trumpet is named *orangi* in Bunyoro, *murangi* in Toro, *omurangi* in Ankole, *ensaasi* in Buganda, *endhasasi* in Busoga, and *lacak* in Acholi. Another trumpet in the set is called *kikara* in Bunyoro, *nkara* in Toro, *enkanga* in Ankole, *enkwale* in Buganda, *empala* in Busoga, and *aweno* in Acholi. The final example is the trumpet called *rudyangi* in Bunyoro, *dyangi* in Toro, *ekigunda* in Ankole, *enzigalizi* in Buganda, *enhana* in Busoga, and *dyang* in Acholi. These names, which vary widely depending on an ethnic group, are based on the role that each trumpet performs in the trumpet group.

It should be noted that Teferra (2020) wrote about the Baganda people's *amakondeere*, referring to them collectively as *amakondere*. In describing the individual names of instruments within the set, Teferra listed them as *enjauzi*, *endese*, *ensasi*, *enkoli*, and *enzigalizi*. However, as a Muganda who has extensively

researched this topic, I found that Teferra's spellings were incorrect, and the name *enkoli* is not part of the Baganda people's *amakondeere* set. The correct spellings for the instruments in the *amakondeere* set are *enjawuzi*, *endeesi*, *ensaasi*, *enkwale*, and *enzigalizi*.

These names indicate that the individual trumpets' names across various Ugandan cultures are often interchanged or similar, carrying nearly identical meanings. Isabirye (2019b) confirms that the names of *bigwala* instruments among the Basoga reflect their connection of pitch to real beings, such as animals, and the roles of different instruments. In chapter four, the names of *amakondeere* of the Baganda people in a set will be discussed in detail. Teffera (2020) notes the diversity in construction, decoration style, and material preferences for trumpets among Ugandan communities, which use natural materials like animal horns, bamboo, reeds, wood, metal, and calabashes or gourds.

In Buganda, *amakondeere* royal music is a highly regarded form of expression, also known as the music of the palace. These trumpets are considered royal instruments, reflecting their great esteem and embodiment of power. The power of the royal *amakondeere* is comparable to that of *enḡoma* (the drum), which is also regarded as a symbol of power. *Enḡoma* is considered a source of power for the royals and this is why expressions such as *Abaana b'enḡoma* (children of the drum) or *omwana w'enḡoma* (child of the drum) are common in Buganda. The successor to the king is called *omulangira alindiridde okulya enḡoma* (the prince who is waiting to eat the drum - one to be enthroned), and after being enthroned, the Baganda refer to him as *alidde enḡoma* (the one who has eaten the drum – the enthroned one).

Royal music is performed by royal bands including the *Abatenga* (*Entenga* drummers), the *Abalere* (flutists), the *Abadongo* (bow-lyre group of players), and the *Abakondeere* (trumpeters) (Isabirye, 2021b, Kafumbe, 2018)). This music represents the identity of the Baganda people. Cooke (2001) notes that historically, the *Abakondeere*, *abagoma b'ennyoma z'emibala* (praise drummers) and other royal band musicians, lived inside the palace. Later, however, the *Abakondeere* musicians relocated to a hut near *Wankaaki*, the main entrance gate of the palace. It is noted that the *Abakondeere* could not live far away because they had a duty to play music whenever the Kabaka left or returned to the palace (Isabirye, 2021b; Teffera, (2020).

Additionally, *amakondeere* music entertained the Kabaka (King) and his guests, but its primary role was to “wake up the palace” (Isabirye, 2021b). Unlike other royal musicians who lived within the palace, the *Abakondeere* resided outside and gathered at *Wankaaki* (the palace’s main entrance) at 5:00 am to wake the servants and palace members, signaling the start of the day’s activities. By 10:00 am, they would leave, singing “*Omwenge gwa Abagalagala, wampa ssebo – ebibbo!*” (Alcohol is for the servants, you gave me, sir—the baskets). In Baganda culture, *okuba mu bibbo* is an idiom meaning “to eat food,” and this phrase was an indirect request for food, reflecting the cultural norm against directly asking for provisions from subordinates. For instance, children in Buganda would traditionally avoid asking their father directly for anything; instead, they would make their request through their mother (Kirwana-Sozi, 2012). Similarly, the *Abakondeere* would use the term *ebibbo* (baskets) as an indirect way to request for food. According to Kafumbe (2018), royal musicians served voluntarily and were compensated with food and alcohol rather than a salary.

As earlier explained, each clan (*ekika*) had a specific musical duty to perform and their role in the royal music scene was significant. Several clans provided young boys and girls to serve in the royal *palace (Lubiri)* as part of their official duties. These young servants dedicated to royal service were submitted by their families and clans to serve the Kabaka for life and were referred to as *abasiige ba Kabaka* (Kafumbe, 2018). They underwent training in the palace, guided by responsible men of their clans, learning the responsibilities they will perform. Parents handed them over to live in the palace and learn their clan duties. For example, *amakondeere* heritage is exclusively performed by men and boys of the *Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige* (the bird called *Nnakinsige*) clan, who serve as permanent court musicians of *amakondeere* music. The *entenga* drums were reserved for the *Lugave* (pangolin) clan, *endere* flutes for the *Mmamba* (lungfish) clan, and *akadinda* (*xylophones*) for the *Njovu* (Elephant) clan (Kafumbe, 2018; Isabirye, 2022). Being a court musician among the Baganda is considered an honor as it encourages musicians to show allegiance to the Kabaka. I will provide a detailed explanation of the role of *abasiige* in the palace in chapter four.

*Amakondeere* music serves to express cultural identity, reinforce social cohesion, and preserve ancestral traditions. Kafumbe (2018) explains that *amakondeere* instruments are side-blown trumpets played alongside praise drums (*Enḡoma z'emibala* – drum beats based on verbal texts typically praising the Kabaka). He adds that *amakondeere* music was performed for the Kabaka daily, along with *Enḡoma z'emibala* to entertain and praise the Kabaka. Teffera (2020) notes that *amakondeere* music is a prestigious court form among the Baganda people, usually accompanied by royal drums and *ensaasi* (shakers). She adds that in Buganda, this music culture was not performed during social gatherings but exclusively during

royal functions. The *Abakondeere* musicians, (Kabaka's trumpeters), were highly respected officials, selected from specific Baganda clans, and dedicated to serving the Kabaka only in his presence. Teffera (2020) further emphasizes that *amakondeere* instruments are considered the trumpets of Uganda and Africa. Historically, *Abakondeere* carried their trumpets in a pouch wherever they went and were immune from punishment for any misdeeds. *Amakondeere* music announced the Kabaka's presence both in the palace and at royal functions, signaling to *Obuganda* (the people of Buganda) that he was present.

### **1.1.3 Learning Trumpet music**

Trumpet music has traditionally been passed down through oral traditions and live performances. In Europe, communities formed groups of skilled musicians who were responsible for spreading and preserving the trumpet music culture. For example, among the Aztec communities, professional court musicians transmitted trumpet music through community practices. Different groups within these communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) would gather to perform and teach children and youth. For instance, groups of noble warriors would assemble in a place called the "house of song" (*cuicacalli*) to practice and train commoner youths in playing the shell trumpet (Both, 2010).

In Africa, trumpet music is transmitted through various traditional practices involving oral traditions, live performances, community gatherings, and mentorship. Teffera (2020) notes that in Congo, trumpets are performed in an ensemble known as *masikulu*, consisting of four to seven players accompanied by drum sets. Both children and adults participate in these ensembles, learning through direct engagement in performances and community practices. Training sessions often take place in communal settings where experienced players mentor

novices. Additionally, training and performances occur in royal courts to mark special occasions such as significant life events and coronation anniversaries of kings. These activities serve as platforms of transmission of oral traditions to all court musicians. After all, the courts have historically been recognized as custodians of cultural heritage.

According to Kaminski (2012), the *ntahera* trumpets of the Asante people in Ghana are primarily transmitted through oral traditions and live performances within the community. The process involves experienced musicians teaching apprentices through demonstration and practice, particularly during ritualistic and ceremonial events. This ensures that the knowledge and skills required to play these trumpets are passed down from generation to generation, maintaining the cultural heritage associated with the *ntahera* trumpets. Teffera (2020) too explains that the Asante people of Ghana use *ntahera* trumpets during state ceremonies and funerals, and pass on knowledge of playing these trumpets orally to the young generations. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, trumpet music is part of larger ensembles that include drums and other instruments. The learning process is communal, with younger musicians observing and practicing alongside skilled performers during festivals, religious ceremonies, and communal gatherings.

The *Waza* Ensemble, which serves as a communal entertainment for the Berta people of western Ethiopia and southeastern Sudan, is similarly transmitted through oral practice. Teffera (2020) explains that this music is performed for communal recreation and religious occasions during various feasts at specific times of the year. The *Waza* trumpets are taught and played in communal settings where all community members participate. Teffera also notes that the Berta society is organized into clans, with clan leaders responsible for transmitting the *Waza*

trumpet culture. These trumpets are preserved in the house of a village elder, who is either the clan leader or a religious leader. The *Waza* ensemble reflects the everyday social life of the Berta people in both Ethiopia and Sudan.

In East Africa, trumpets are transmitted through communal channels as well. Teffera (2020) explains that the Luo people of Kenya use a trumpet called the *orutu* during cultural festivities and rituals. This knowledge is handed down within family and community settings, where older musicians mentor younger generations through performances and teaching the instrument's intricacies. Similarly, in many Ugandan communities, people learn music and play instruments by listening to others. Through oral traditions and storytelling, knowledge, wisdom, and cultural values are passed down, and children learn to sing joyfully, often as part of everyday life. The community provides a supportive and nurturing environment, and children learn through participation, observation, and guided practice (Rogoff, 1994). ). By observing elders perform music over time, learners gain knowledge through participation (Wenger, 1998). Experts and elders create learning contexts where children begin as peripheral participants, moving from illegitimate to legitimate participants (Rogoff et al., 2024; Wenger, 1998). Elders are responsible for transmitting knowledge and practical skills to the younger members of society. This indigenous teaching method demonstrates that everyone in the community is musical, regardless of status, fostering a sense of belonging, cultural identity, and interconnectedness. It equips individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for their roles as responsible members of society.

For example, Isabirye (2021a) describes how the *Bigwala* music and dance of the Basoga people is learned. He uses the expression of *joy-filled passion* to characterize a theory that views learning as a strong sense of agency. He explains

that the process involves social interactions across generations, where community members share thoughts and understandings, play music, and dance together, fostering a deep appreciation and ownership of the musical tradition. Among the Banyoro, trumpets known as *amakondere* are learned through community gatherings, with experienced elders, often royal musicians, mentoring youths and children in the performance of *Irambi-Empango* music (Mbabi-Katana, 1982). This oral tradition underscores the communal nature of musical transmission, ensuring the continuity and vitality of cultural practices over time.

The musical tradition of *amakondeere* among the Baganda people is transmitted orally through community-based training. According to Kafumbe (2018), learning and training musicians are deeply integrated within the Baganda culture. Clan officials or elders, revered for their wisdom, select musicians to uphold the honor of their clans. Traditionally, men and boys serve as royal musicians, while women and girls participate as dancers rather than instrumentalists. Learning involves listening, observing, imitating, and actively engaging in musical activities. Given the absence of written records, practical and experiential learning is emphasized, particularly for children, making this education relevant to daily life and significantly contributing to the community's wellbeing. Elders and experts willingly pass on their knowledge through direct interaction, ensuring the continuity of traditions and communal identity. This participatory approach as illustrated by Carver (2012), embeds cultural ethos and enriches the significance of *amakondeere* music, fostering joyful learning moments and facilitating discovery and understanding within their ethnic society.

Children, youth, and adults learn collaboratively in a musical community through listening, observing, and hands-on practice. This apprenticeship-style education

(Isabirye, 2019a) enables individuals of all ages to share experiences, guide one another, and build a collective musical understanding. Rogoff (1990) describes this as guided participation, where members reinforce cultural identity by transmitting norms, values, and musical practices, thus preserving their heritage. Through active participation, young learners contribute to safeguarding their culture, while adults emphasize the importance of passing on *amakondeere* heritage to foster respect for diversity and peace (Bennet et al., 2014). This oral, community-centered mentorship ensures the preservation of musical skills and cultural heritage across generations.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

In this study, I aimed to explore the importance of cultural identity in learning *amakondeere* music and how this can inform contemporary education and music education practices and theories. This research is grounded in the Social Constructivism Theory of learning, which posits that knowledge is socially constructed and shaped by an individual's historical and cultural experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). Accordingly, learning is a social and a collaborative process where individuals actively construct knowledge through interactions with others and their environment. It emphasizes the role of social context, culture, and shared experiences in shaping an individual's understanding of concepts. This theory, which has for long been the cornerstone of precolonial African indigenous knowledge systems has been intellectually shaped by works of various educational psychologists and philosophers including, Piaget (1948), Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1996), Wenger (1998), Rogoff (1990) and Wiggins (2015). Constructivists stress that learning is not just about acquiring information but it is also active engagement of learners in meaning-making and understanding concepts in a social context

(Bruner, 1996; Piaget, 1948; Vygotsky, 1978). Wiggins (2015) describes constructivist learning as a way of being rather than just an approach, highlighting the significant role of learners' ideas in teaching and learning experiences.

Constructivists argue that learning is interactive and most effective when people share ideas and seek support from peers or more experienced individuals (Vygotsky, 1978). This aligns with my observations in this study, as cultural identity is often shared and shaped through these interactions. Learners engage in dialogue, share activities, and compare new concepts to familiar ones, building a deeper understanding through connections (Bruner, 1996). Constructivism views learning as a process of meaning-making through experiences, interactions, and cultural context, where learners actively question, connect to prior knowledge, and discover concepts rather than simply being told (Shively, 2015).

In this study, I investigated how cultural identity supports the teaching and learning of *amakondeere* music in community settings, allowing learners to find personal meaning. Musical expressions like *amakondeere* help learners create new understandings through engagement with musical concepts, reflecting the social constructivist view that knowledge emerges socially and within cultural context of learning. Supportive learning environments encourage, motivate, and equip learners with the necessary resources to achieve their goals. Children and adults' scaffold (Bruner, 1966) each other as they play and work together in teams and within their communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Through shared activities, they negotiate and share ideas and seek assistance to develop independence in understanding and performance. This guided participation (Rogoff, 1990) nurtures

collaborative learning and independent thinking, with the support of culturally relevant practices and experienced community members.

### **1.2.1 Social Constructivist ideas on how people learn**

This study is grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) epistemology of subjectivity, adopting a social constructivist worldview that values multiplicity and views knowledge as socially constructed, contextually understood, and influenced by individuals' historical and cultural experiences. As a music educator, I have employed various teaching and learning methodologies and have found that people learn most effectively when they are accepted as they are. When learners feel safe, secure, protected, and free to think, speak, and act without harming others, they are more likely to derive meaning from their life experiences. Learning occurs when they can extract meaning from these experiences. Social constructivists describe this as constructing one's own meaning from previous experiences (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Bruner, 1996; Wenger, 1998; Brooks and Brooks, 2001; Wiggins, 2015).

Engaging in joint musical activities allows creation and co-creation of knowledge, enhancing effective learning and joint problem-solving (Bandura, 2006). These activities also facilitate the sharing of societal norms and values, which significantly shape our understanding and interpretation of concepts. Dewey (1998) describes this as experiential learning and learning by doing. Bruner (1996) also notes that people learn when they construct their own knowledge from real-life experiences. As social beings, our ability to experience life and the world as meaningful is enhanced through social practices and mutual engagements, as

Wenger (1998) explains, allowing us to envision the continuity and posterity of our cultures.

Constructivists view learning as the process of creating meaning or reality. From such a perspective, Wiggins (2015) emphasizes how learning involves constructing a conceptual understanding based on an individual's life experiences. Rogoff (1990) argues that cultural practices are influential in setting the problems that need solving, providing tools for their solutions, and channeling problem-solving efforts in ways that are valued by local standards. Through life experiences, people develop a sense of interpreting events they encounter, the very basis from which they derive their meanings. Such personal interpretations help them understand and make sense of their experiences, forming concepts based on what they go through, which in turn help them comprehend new experiences they encounter.

Constructivists argue that since learning is fundamentally an individual's initiative, it is also a deeply social process. Scholars such as Lave and Wenger (1991), Wenger (1998), Rogoff (1990), Dewey (1998), and Wiggins (2015) all describe learning as a social endeavor. According to Wenger (1998) our being social beings is essential to how we learn, suggesting that knowledge involves developing competence in valued activities, and knowing is about engaging with these activities. . He defines meaning as the capacity to view the world and our interactions within it as significant, both individually and collectively. His social theory of learning rests on four key premises: meaning, practice, community, and identity, where learning is seen as an evolving ability to experience life and the world meaningfully. Wenger highlights that practice encompasses the shared historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives that enable collaborative action.

Wenger (1998) further develops this idea with his concept of communities of practice, framing learning as a fundamentally social activity. In this model, members actively engage in the practices of their communities, shaping and reshaping their identities through these shared interactions. Wenger asserts that communities of practice are ubiquitous and play a central role in shaping our lives. Although often informal, these communities are highly influential, emphasizing the active participation of both individual members and the community as a whole. Communities of practice have significant implications for understanding and supporting learning, as individuals both contribute to and refine their community's practices over time.

This understanding aligns with Khapoya's (2013) view that learning, particularly in music, arises from diverse perspectives and is shaped by varying social and cultural contexts. Often, children rely on culturally transmitted knowledge to build their own understanding, underscoring the individual's responsibility to engage in meaningful experiences. Learning *amakondeere* music expression, for example, is rooted in cultural institutions or community practices, where knowledge and skills are acquired through social participation. This process involves interacting with music experts and knowledgeable individuals, fostering a sense of connectedness among people of various ages, genders, and social positions. Through these interactions, individuals gradually acquire musical knowledge and expand their cultural experience, integrating knowledge as they engage in musical activities and become part of the community's practice.

Nketia (1974) complements this view by noting that music learning occurs through social experiences, where individuals progressively acquire musical understanding and deepen their appreciation of cultural music within social groups and activities.

This process illustrates how social contexts, including interactions with experienced community members, help learners develop a practical knowledge of music that enables them to function effectively as musicians (Wiggins, 2015). According to social constructivism, learning music is thus a deeply traditional process embedded within cultural and community practices, where knowledge and skills are shared, developed, and sustained through social participation.

### **1.3 Conceptual Background**

In this section, the researcher explores the concepts of cultural identity and the learning of a music culture, using the example of *amakondeere* royal guard music. Wiggins (2015) argues from a constructivist perspective that learning involves constructing a conceptual understanding based on a person's life experiences, enabling individuals to interpret new experiences through this conceptual lens. As previously mentioned, Wenger (1998) views learning as a fundamentally social process grounded in four key concepts: meaning, practice, community, and identity. Wenger explains that identity involves the way learning reshapes who we are and influences our personal histories within our communities. In this sense, cultural identity encompasses language, participation in cultural expressions, customs, traditions, and shared values that people hold with respect, passion, love, and joy (Isabirye, 2021b). It is a deeply rooted feeling that is constructed and maintained through collective responsibility and knowledge of cultural elements, including shared values, heritage, language, beliefs, and customs (Berry, 1988).

Learning, thus, is a process of seeking understanding, often occurring through active participation and interaction with others within a social environment. Jeanne (2015) describes learning as becoming, explaining that it transforms people, allowing them to construct knowledge, skills, and attitudes by integrating new

information into their existing frameworks based on social contexts. Through this process, individuals begin interacting differently with others, exchanging ideas, thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Learning is thus seen as constructing meaning or reality, as described by Lave and Wenger (1991), Wenger (1998), Rogoff (1990), Dewey (1998), and Wiggins (2015). According to Brooks and Brooks (2001), learning is the construction of new understandings of relationships and phenomena, where every experience is filtered through past experiences. In line with this, Tuohey (2012) notes that music learning is most effective within a community. This study, therefore, focuses on the centrality of cultural music, examining how it is learned and practiced communally in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

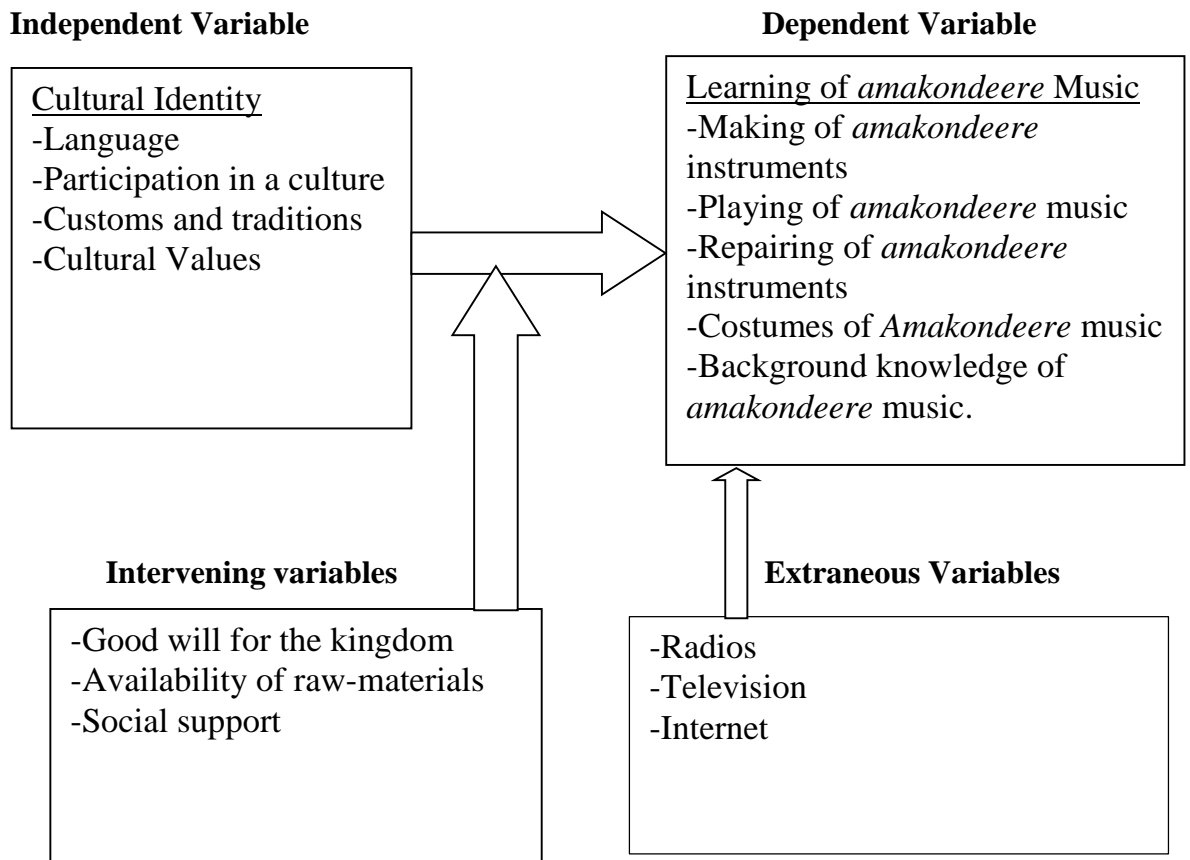
Learning a music culture is a social experience that promotes critical and creative thinking, skill development, and enhanced performance (Wenger, 1998). It takes place within specific contexts, through active participation and social interactions that involve hands-on problem-solving experiences. This engagement with music encompasses various dimensions, including understanding instrument craftsmanship, playing techniques, repairs, costumes, and the music's historical context. Both children and adults learn through observation, active participation, and practical application of knowledge (Isabirye, 2021b). Guided participation (Rogoff, 1990) and discovery allow them to share ideas, opinions, expectations, and standards essential to cultural transmission. Learning is thus inclusive and addresses the needs of both learners and their communities, significantly contributing to the well-being of the community (Isabirye, 2021b).

Participation in musical expressions like *amakondeere* offers a meaningful context for skill acquisition, providing opportunities for social learning through

interactions with more skilled and knowledgeable individuals. Through observation, imitation, and direct instruction, individuals learn from experienced community members as they engage in real-life problem-solving. This expert support aligns with Bruner's (1966) concept of scaffolding, Rogoff's (1990) idea of guided participation, and Vygotsky's (1978) notion of mediation, reflecting core principles of social constructivism. Additionally, Turino (2008) highlights that customs and traditions are symbolic representations of a culture's values, beliefs, and history in social participation contexts, providing tangible expressions of cultural identity and reinforcing a shared heritage within the community. Thus, this study operates on the premise that cultural identity forms a foundational framework for learning and transmitting a music culture, shaping individuals' motivations, perspectives, and commitment to preserving and passing on musical traditions.

The conceptual framework (**Figure 1**) of cultural identity and the learning of *amakondeere* music illustrates the interaction between individual identity and the music learning process. It explores how cultural identity influences the learning and transmission of *amakondeere* music, emphasizing how language can deepen understanding of its meaning. Language serves as a medium for expressing and communicating cultural values, beliefs, and norms within a community. As Isabirye (2021b) notes, knowledge and skills are shared orally and aurally among community members, fostering collaborative knowledge generation and skill enhancement through social practices (Wenger, 1998). Turino (2008) too, elucidates that customs and traditions symbolically represent a culture's values, beliefs, and historical narratives, reinforcing shared cultural identity among community members.

## The conceptual Framework



**Figure 1:** The Conceptual Frame work (Figure by the researcher)

The conceptual framework illustrates that cultural identity—encompassing language, customs, traditions, values, and social practices—forms the foundation through which individuals engage with and learn *amakondeere* music. This identity shapes their perspectives, motivations, and approaches to learning this musical tradition.

In learning *amakondeere* music, individuals rely on cultural identity to interpret musical expressions, techniques, and historical significance. This process involves active participation in cultural practices, interaction with knowledgeable

community members, and immersion in the music's cultural context. Through these social engagements, learners craft, play, and maintain *amakondeere*, with cultural identity serving as both catalyst and framework. This rich tapestry of meanings and connections deepens engagement and enriches the learning experience.

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

The education system that Uganda inherited from colonialists prioritizes Western learning approaches and sidelines cultural practices of learners (Ssekamwa, 1997). This exclusion is a serious threat to the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices that are integral to community identity. Learners are introduced to new ideas without grounding them in their own experiences, which constitutes their identity (Bandura, 2023). Despite the importance of cultural identity in motivating and engaging learners, schools seldom recognize its value. Moreover, there is barely any literature in music education that foregrounds the role of cultural identity in learning and the acquisition of musical skills. Therefore, there is a significant gap in understanding how cultural identity can inform contemporary music education. In light of this gap, this study sought to find out how cultural identity influences the transmission of *amakondeere* music and how these insights can inform school music education theory and practice.

#### **1.5 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of cultural identity in the learning and skill acquisition process of *amakondeere* music among the Baganda people in Kassanda District, Central Uganda.

## **1.6 Objectives of the study**

This study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish how participation in cultural practices enhance learning of *amakondeere* music in Kassanda District, Central Uganda.
2. To find out how customs and traditions contribute to learning of *amakondeere* music in Kassanda District, Central Uganda.
3. To investigate the role of language and values in the transmission of *amakondeere* music in Kassanda District, Central Uganda.

## **1.7 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. How can participation in cultural practices enhance learning of *amakondeere* music in Kassanda District, Central Uganda?
2. How do customs and traditions contribute to learning of *amakondeere* music, in Kassanda District, Central Uganda?
3. What is the role of language and values in the transmission of *amakondeere* music in Kassanda District, Central Uganda?

## **1.8 Scope of the Study**

Kumar (2011) explains that the scope of the study offers a succinct summary of critical factors such as the community's size, social demographics, and relevant issues connected to the study's core theme. It provides a brief description of essential elements including geographical, content, and time scope, as outlined below.

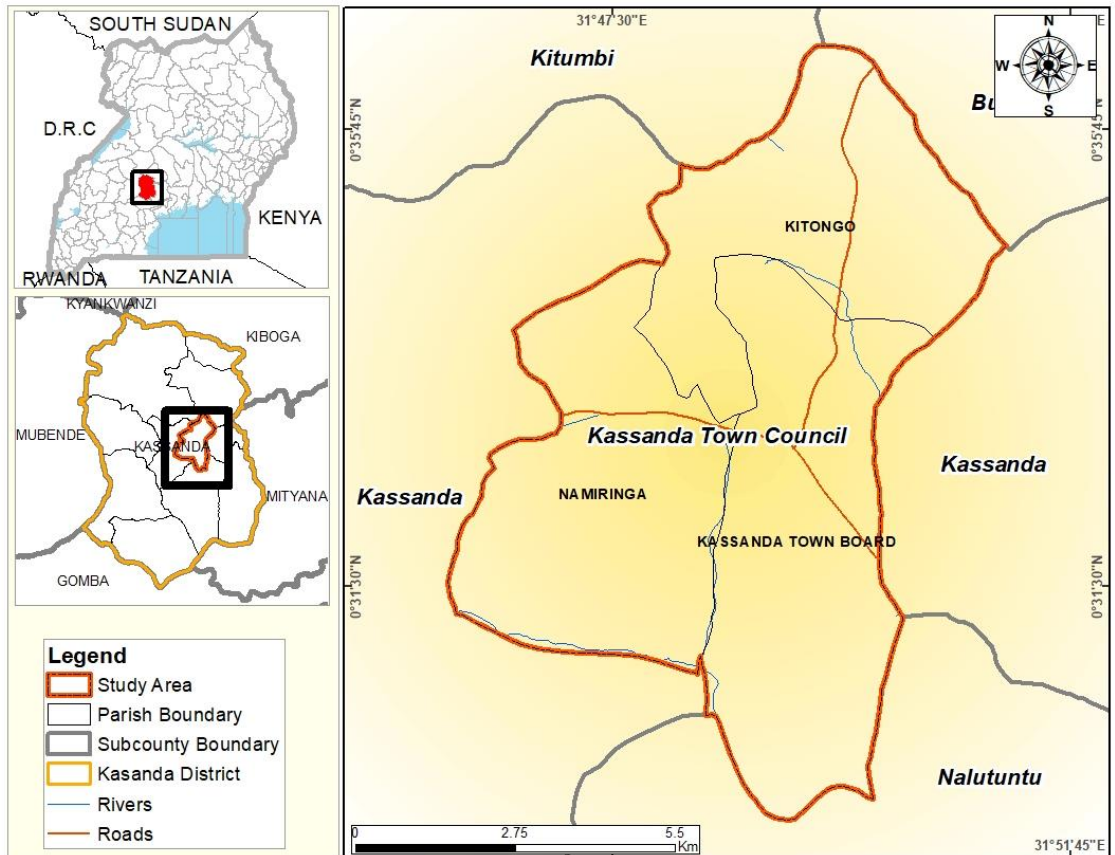
### 1.8.1 Geographical Scope

This inquiry was conducted in Kassanda District (Figure 2), situated in the Central region of Uganda. Kassanda District is part of Ssingu County, one of the eighteen counties within the Buganda Kingdom. The Buganda region is one of Uganda's four regions, located centrally within the country. Kassanda District was established from Mubende District Local Government in 2017 and became operational in the fiscal year 2018/19. It is bordered by Mubende, Mityana, Kiboga and Gomba districts and located 120km from Kampala. It consists of twelve sub-counties and three town councils. According to the National Population and Housing Census of 2004, Kassanda District has a total population of 265,429, comprising 135,193 males and 130,236 females. The population of school-age children at the primary level is 45,145, while those attending secondary and higher education institutions, including universities, amount to 8,054 as of the 2019-2020 statistics. Approximately 6% of those attending school complete senior four, and 74.2% of the population is literate (know how to read and write).

The primary economic activities in Kassanda District include both subsistence and commercial farming, as well as trade. Approximately 90% of the population engages in subsistence farming. Kassanda was chosen as the study area due to its unique cultural significance as one of the few locations where *amakondeere* music is traditionally performed in Buganda. This distinctive form of music, featuring unique instruments and rhythms, offered an opportunity to explore the practices and cultural importance of *amakondeere* music. Young people in Kassanda are learning to play *amakondeere* and actively participate in royal performances during coronation anniversaries and other royal events of the Buganda Kingdom, which highlights the area's cultural importance. Focusing on Kassanda allowed this study

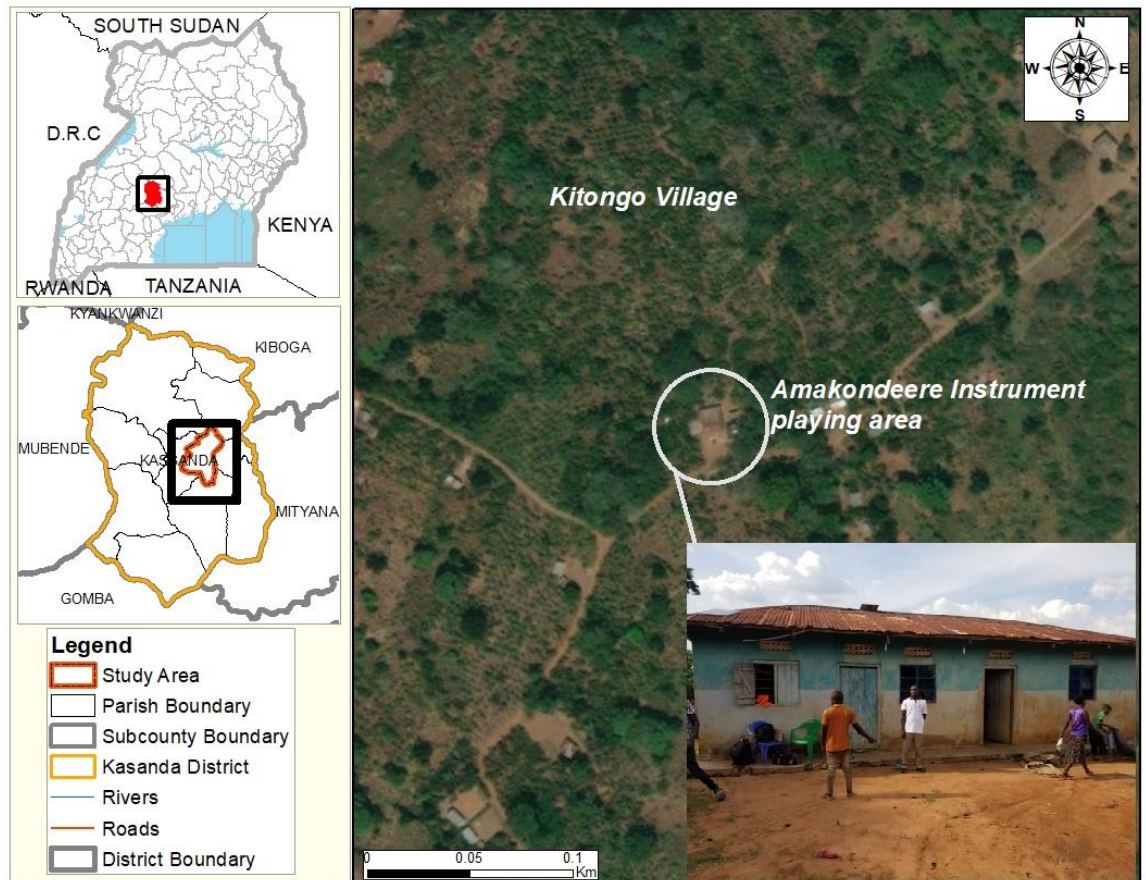
to capture authentic practices and community perspectives that may not be present elsewhere in the Buganda kingdom.

### Map of Kassanda District



*Figure 2:* Map of Kassanda District (Map by John Calvin Esagu)

### Map showing *amakondeere* instrument playing area



**Figure 3:** Map showing *amakondeere* playing area (Map by John Calvin Esagu)

The map above, created using Geographic Information System (GIS) and coordinates, identifies the exact location of the home where *amakondeere* music has been performed for generations, even before the abolition of kingdoms in Uganda in 1966. This land was granted to the Abakondeere by *Ssekabaka* Daudi Chwa as a token of appreciation for their service. While people from other clans also reside in Kitongo Village, the *mailo* land was specifically designated for the *Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige* clan. The elder cultural bearers of *amakondeere* music lived in the house shown on the map, and many were buried there. The map accurately represents *Ekiggwa ky'amakondeere*, supporting the rationale for conducting this study in Kassanda District.

### **1.8.2 Content Scope**

The study focused on exploring the role of cultural identity in music education, emphasizing the significance of cultural music with a specific focus on *amakondeere* music and its acquisition within a community of practice. It examined how cultural identity enables music learners to engage with their heritage, how to express themselves authentically, and how to appreciate the diversity of musical traditions. Additionally, the study aimed to investigate how cultural identity could support the preservation and promotion of traditional music practices in Uganda, and in so doing, how this could contribute to a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

### **1.8.3 Time Scope**

This study explored the impact of cultural identity on the learning and acquisition of skills in *amakondeere* music, focusing on the period from 2010 to 2023. During this time, there was a notable increasing number of young people enthusiastically engaging in learning and performing *amakondeere* music, despite indigenous music expressions facing extinction and constant decline in importance, particularly among the "elites" and youths of Buganda. This timeframe is significant to the study because it coincides with efforts initiated by the Buganda Kingdom to revive and sustain royal music practices and expressions (Isabirye, 2021b).

It is important to highlight that the time frame mentioned reflects that Kassanda District was not officially established until the 2017/18 financial year. However, Kassanda had long been renowned for *amakondeere* music, which is one of the reasons why even the 2017 coronation anniversary was celebrated in this region.

### **1.9 Significance of the study**

The main significance of this study is to provide music teachers, educators, students and researchers, leaders of cultural institutions, policy makers, and officials in the central government cultural bodies with a base of knowledge on the benefits of constructivist learning.

It is also hoped that this study will offer constructive insights for curriculum developers in Uganda, to recognize and acknowledge the importance of cultural identity in fostering and enhancing learning and skills acquisition among learners. Music educators would be able to draw upon the relationship between cultural identity and learning, as templates of fostering an interactive process of transmitting music knowledge

The study sought to encourage teachers to acknowledge the role of cultural identity in learning and to recognize that effective learning occurs in environments where individuals have the freedom to participate, engage openly, and interact with peers.

More to that, the study aimed at supporting and assist music educators in adapting, integrating, and incorporating appropriate indigenous learning approaches into their formal music curricula to nurture the development of essential skills such as leadership, ownership, agency, and identity, all through participatory experiences that are meaningful to learners.

Cultural identity and learning of *amakondeere* music have received minimal scholarly attention in Uganda. As such, this study contributes to the growing literature on the revivalist techniques of learning indigenous music to the advantage of heritage scholars as well as music educators. It will also inspire further research in the field.

Furthermore, the research findings seek to support the advocacy of cultural institutions towards the protection and nurturing of cultural music. Institutions can utilize this research to underscore the importance of preserving intangible cultural heritage and to advocate for funding and legal safeguards against endangering cultural heritage.

### **1. 10 Limitations**

The researcher encountered various obstacles in eliciting honest perspectives from certain respondents. In almost all instances, respondents expected monetary compensation, using the term *okukansira* as a prerequisite for their participation. This not only posed a challenge to obtaining reliable data but also made it difficult for the researcher to sustain the study due to insufficient funding. Additionally, conveying the significance of the study to respondents was challenging.

To overcome this, a small stipend was provided to Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants, and the researcher emphasized the study's cultural importance to the Buganda Kingdom and Uganda as a whole. This helped establish the study's legitimacy and relevance to participants' cultural identity. Notably, three cultural bearers, who had been involved in the revival of Buganda's indigenous music, understood the study's significance and recognized its cultural importance.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Musical heritage practices have been examined among various communities worldwide. The significance of these practices within a society often relates to their cultural importance. Barrett and Stauffer (2009) propose that traditional music and dance are deeply embedded in the national consciousness and cultural identity, both within schools and local communities. This study specifically investigated the *amakondeere* music heritage of the Baganda people in Uganda.

In this section therefore, the researcher reviews literature related to cultural identity and learning of *amakondeere* music of the Baganda people. The review is organized under sub-headings derived from the research objectives, which include: establishing how participation in cultural practices enhances the learning of *amakondeere* music; exploring how customs and traditions contribute to the learning of *amakondeere* music; and investigating the role of language and values in the transmission of *amakondeere* music in Kassanda District, Central Uganda. This section aims to contextualize the study within the existing literature and by so doing, to identify the gaps it seeks to address.

#### **2.1 Participation and learning of a music tradition**

Participation is defined as taking part in an activity or in the creation or performance of music. Wenger (1998) describes it as both involvement in action and the relationships that emerge from it. He explains that action refers to what one does, while connection refers to the relationships formed with others involved. Wenger suggests that full participation in a practice develops through cultural

engagement, which aligns with Rogoff's (1990) concept of guided participation. Guided participation is a collaborative process where learners bridge their current understanding with new skills, reinforcing the idea that meaningful engagement fosters identity development. Nketia (1978) further emphasizes that participation aligns individuals with societal goals, highlighting the interconnectedness of personal growth, social relationships, and cultural alignment.

The study of participation in cultural practices and the learning of music traditions has been conducted in various communities around the world. Scholars such as Bruner (1996), Dewey (1938), Lave and Wenger (1991), Wiggins (2015), and Rogoff (1990) agree that engagement in community activities fosters the construction of one's understanding within a social context. Barrett and Stauffer (2009) note that music is deeply ingrained in the national psyche and cultural identity, evident in both educational settings and local communities. Participation in musical expressions, such as *amakondeere* music, is typically linked to its cultural importance, highlighting the significance of preserving such traditions. This study focuses specifically on the trumpet music tradition, particularly the *amakondeere* royal gourd music of the Baganda people, which exemplifies the intersection of cultural participation and identity.

In many African kingdoms, trumpet music traditions largely belonged to courts of chiefs and the nobles though in some regions it served other purposes. For example, Teffera (2020) explains that ivory trumpets existed in royal courts of Zaire and were played in residents of nobilities and chieftains. Additionally, she notes that trumpet music culture is also observed among communities of the Berta people of Sudan and Western Ethiopia where trumpet ensembles are sometimes termed differently but the type of performance and the role of individual instruments

remain the same. Participation is for only men and boys who engage in shared practices, beliefs and behaviors of their cultures. Trumpeters memorize their parts by reciting them verbally and learn through listening, with kinesthetic learning, playing a crucial role throughout the process (Kaminski, 2012).

Participation fosters a sense of belonging and enables individuals to shape their identity within their cultural contexts (Turino, 2008). For instance, Teffera (2020) notes that African trumpet ensembles typically consist of various sizes of transverse trumpets. Kaminski (2012) describes how the lead trumpet of the Asante people of Ghana mimics speech intonation, illustrating how ensembles engage in hockets, where players combine single and dual tones. In these ensembles, the participation of accompanying instrumentalists is crucial for achieving the desired melodic and rhythmic textures. The hocket style, which provides a single note, requires maximum coordination and cooperation to achieve the common goal of a successful performance. This communal approach and the participatory nature of their regular music practices underscore musical expression as a cultural practice deeply intertwined with people's identity. Berry (1992) emphasizes that regardless of how other ethnic groups perceive a musical culture, it remains a vital reflection of community identity. This is particularly evident in Uganda, where various ethnic societies preserve trumpet traditions, with Mbabi-Katana (1982) highlighting their prevalence in kingdoms throughout the Great Lakes region.

Engaging in these musical traditions nurtures cultural identity by reflecting individuals' experiences, talents, skills, beliefs, values, and knowledge (UNESCO, 1985). It helps in developing personal identities and understanding cultural norms and values (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Active participation in musical activities such

as performing and creating promotes knowledge and appreciation (Wiggins, 2015) and transforms individuals, fostering a sense of relevance to both themselves and their community. By engaging deeply in community practices (Wenger, 1998), individuals gain a profound understanding of artistry (Elliot & Silverman, 2015).

Through observations and hands on approaches we learn the norms of our society; the dos and don'ts of our cultures, and not forgetting, learning how society works (Berrett, 2012; Khapoya, 2013). We also engage in the making of instruments, understanding the necessary raw materials, studying their history, comprehending their cultural significance, crafting costumes, and singing (Cooke, 2001). Isabirye (2021a) notes that participating in a culture and learning a music tradition like *amakondeere* is a holistic experience that encompasses farming, environmental awareness, craftsmanship, singing, playing instruments, dancing, and kingdom politics, including royalty, among other aspects. These activities, shared within a community, enhance the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to daily life, contributing to personal and social well-being (Brooks & Brooks, 2001). Such multidimensional learning experiences improve social interactions and overall well-being (Wenger, 1998; Wiggins, 2015).

As we live and engage in such activities together as a community, we share responsibilities and address our concerns and experiences, which enhances the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to our daily lives (Brooks & Brooks, 2001). This collaborative learning occurs in various ways and dimensions (Wenger, 1998), allowing individuals to contribute to their well-being, which in turn facilitates effective learning. Such multidimensional approaches expose us to different locations and experiences, helping us share new ideas and relate to others in society, thus improving our social well-being (Wenger, 1998; Wiggins, 2015).

By deeply participating in musical traditions, individuals not only gain a deeper understanding of their cultural context but also develop a profound appreciation for the artistry and values embedded in their practices (Elliot & Silverman, 2015).

According to Teffera (2020), social participation contributes to the preservation and evolution of our musical cultural heritage, ensuring continuity across generations. Active involvement in a music culture encourages skill development, creativity, and innovation, enriching both the individual and the community. Wenger (1998) describes participation as a means of learning, which is manifested in our changing identities and enables us to create personal histories of becoming new within our community contexts. Regular interaction within our communities deepens our knowledge and expertise as we share information and experiences, collectively experiencing life as meaningful (Wiggins, 2015).

Participation in a music expression like *amakondeere* provides meaningful contextual skill acquisition. It facilitates social learning through interaction with more skilled and knowledgeable individuals. Through observation, imitation, and direct instruction, individuals learn from the apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1990) of experienced community members, engaging in real-life problem-solving experiences. Turino (2008) highlights that customs and traditions symbolize a culture's values, beliefs, and historical expressions. They offer tangible expressions of cultural identity, reinforcing a shared heritage among community members. Thus, concepts of cultural identity form a foundational framework for learning and transmitting a music culture, influencing individuals' motivations, perspectives, and commitment to preserving and passing on musical traditions.

Although, participation is widely discussed in literature as a means of community involvement and skill development (Wenger, 1998; Rogoff, 1990), there is a significant gap in understanding how it fosters cultural identity in learners, especially in music traditions like *amakondeere*. Wenger and Rogoff describe participation as collaborative engagement, but they do not explicitly connect this engagement to the formation of cultural identity within specific music traditions. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining how participation in *amakondeere* learning enhances cultural belonging and identity among the Baganda people.

## **2.2 Role of customs and traditions in learning of a music tradition**

Customs and traditions are crucial elements in learning a music tradition. They provide cultural contexts that preserve authenticity and ensure the transmission of values essential for the community's survival (Khapoya, 2013). Greene (1995) states that building a community requires members to negotiate shared values that bring them together. In many African communities, elders create opportunities for younger generations to participate, as Khapoya (2013) explains. He notes that young people learn by doing and observing peers and elders, not just in work but also in behavior, thus, acquiring both skills and values necessary for the community's sustainability.

In the Baganda society, music-making involves both children and adults, emphasizing the shaping of behaviors toward cultural responsibility and positive societal contributions (Isabirye, 2021a; Ssekamwa, 1997). Among the Baganda, music traditions foster unity and togetherness, cultivating a sense of belonging (Higgins, 2012). As Ssekamwa (1997) explains, learning is deeply intertwined with daily life, integrated into all community activities. Through indigenous

pedagogies, lifelong learning processes are structured to transmit cultural values, skills, and heritage. Elders, with their expertise, guide this transmission, ensuring well-defined goals, content, and methods (Dewey, 1938). Customs and traditions serve as a foundation for understanding musical expressions, adding depth to the musical experience.

Learning takes place through dialogue with expert practitioners, following a pre-set, unwritten curriculum (Ekadu-Ereu, 2012). Guided participation (Rogoff, 1990) simplifies skill acquisition, creating contexts where individuals construct their own understanding (Ross, 2009). This dialogic approach enriches the learning process by fostering an environment where learners actively engage with and interpret musical practices, guided by the wisdom of experienced practitioners.

Customs and traditions build strong communities characterized by shared values, mutual understanding, and a cohesive belief system. Greene (1995) suggests that, while embracing plurality and difference, it is vital to create a community where individuals feel empowered and are encouraged to speak for themselves. This approach transforms a group into a community united by shared aspirations and beliefs, fostering a collective memory that upholds cultural values and social unity. Customs and beliefs convey clear, shared information, leading to a comprehensive understanding of norms and practices through collective negotiation. Despite being recognized as structural components of learning, the literature often overlooks how these customs actively shape and reinforce learners' cultural identities.

Learning *amakondeere* music is participatory, allowing individuals to deepen their understanding of the norms and values associated with the music while broadening their musical perspectives. Music-making, inherently cultural, involves structure,

instrumentation, context, and meaning that are learned within the community (Trehub et al., 2015). Through creation and co-creation, children and community members connect learning to real-life experiences, becoming skilled and knowledgeable over time (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The culturally grounded and responsive nature of music education makes it an integral part of their daily life (Isabirye, 2021b). This connection to everyday life makes learning accessible and meaningful through guided participation (Rogoff, 1990).

Customs and traditions are consistently highlighted as central to the music learning process (Mbabi-Katana, 1982; Teffera, 2020). They compel individuals to see music traditions as integral to life, viewing them as a source of well-being and a medium for communicating cultural beliefs, celebrating heritage, and connecting to roots (Greene, 1995). These customs bridge generations, fostering unity and providing purpose, guiding individuals in making positive decisions that reflect shared values and beliefs. By celebrating cultural uniqueness, communities experience joy and fulfillment while imparting moral lessons on respect, responsibility, honesty, humility, and trustworthiness. This research therefore addresses a critical gap by examining the cultural significance of customs in *amakondeere* music and how they function as a source of identity for learners.

### **2.3 Contribution of language and values to the learning of a music tradition**

This section reviews the role of language and values in enhancing cultural identity and the learning of a music tradition, as highlighted by various scholars. Language serves as a medium for expressing the values, narratives, and traditions of a culture, facilitating communication about musical concepts, history, and techniques essential to music transmission. Moreover, values embedded within both language

and music significantly shape how individuals perceive and engage with cultural music practices.

As Khapoya (2013) explains, older generations create opportunities for younger individuals to learn through observation and active engagement, emphasizing essential societal skills and values. This shared framework provides a means for interpreting musical expressions and adds depth to learning experiences within a cultural music tradition. Ekadu-Ereu (2012) further explains that knowledge and skills are transmitted systematically through structured guidance from experienced practitioners, with language as a core channel for transmitting stories, proverbs, riddles, fables and other cultural forms that articulate the principles of cultural identity.

Language facilitates the exchange of ideas, opinions, and experiences, thereby strengthening the social bonds foundational to cultural identity. Wenger (1998) describes this as a transformative learning process that integrates individuals into the community, reshaping behaviors and fostering community-based values. This experiential transformation is echoed by Jeanne (2015), who emphasizes that participating in social activities builds trust, strengthens relationships, and fosters connections within communities. Through active engagement, individuals assume shared responsibilities, participate in problem-solving experiences, and help preserve collective memory and social unity (Bruner, 1996; Isabirye, 2021b).

Language and values are essential in transmitting, understanding, and appreciating musical traditions. Butler-Kisber (2010) emphasizes that dialogical exchanges facilitated by language help individuals reach shared conclusions and foster empathy and reflexivity. Experienced musicians use language to instruct, correct,

and encourage learners, thereby supporting their skill development. Folklore, similarly, serves as a medium through which children learn language, morals, memory, leadership, and other societal attributes, shaping their ethical conduct. Cultural values guide the behavior of musicians, directing appropriate performance practices, social interactions, and overall conduct.

Values within music traditions help define a community's cultural identity, instilling a sense of belonging and pride in its heritage. These values motivate musicians, reinforcing the significance of preserving cultural traditions. Many traditions use songs, stories, and performances to impart moral lessons, promoting respect, honesty, and responsibility. Proverbs and poems also play an important role by encouraging positive character traits and rebuking undesirable behaviors, ultimately helping individuals cultivate a positive outlook.

Language and values instill respect, obedience, honesty, and other essential cultural principles within individuals, thereby preserving and promoting the culture. Folkloric tales educate the youth on managing life's challenges, preparing them to function meaningfully in society. Lessons embedded in idioms, sayings, and proverbs communicate a community's deeply rooted beliefs, teaching children responsibility and hard work. Ssekamwa (1997) explains that African traditions, often communicated orally, reinforced desirable behaviors, technical skills, customs, and knowledge across generations. This oral tradition provided a holistic education system where music learning was conducted through real-life experiences, and language and values created a cohesive learning environment.

Language and values form the foundation for learning a music culture, working to transmit knowledge, foster cultural identity, instill ethics, and motivate learners,

thus ensuring the preservation of musical traditions. This holistic learning environment emphasizes appropriate methods, musical elements, and aligns with the broader goals of music education and the social constructivism views of learning. By fostering unity and cooperation, language and values strengthen the community bonds essential for collective musical performance, reinforcing cultural values in participatory settings (Ssekamwa, 1997).

Although there is a rich body of literature on participation, traditions, and language in music education, few studies directly address the role of cultural identity in the learning process. Specifically, while scholars acknowledge the importance of community practices, customs, and linguistic values, there is limited exploration into how these elements contribute to forming and reinforcing learners' cultural identity—an essential aspect in the teaching and transmission of *amakondeere* music among the Baganda people.

More to that, the literature reviewed reveals a limited focus on the importance of cultural identity in learning, particularly in Uganda. Scholars have not given sufficient attention to the role of cultural identity in fostering learning, especially through cultural music expressions. To address this gap, this research study aimed at exploring how communities perceive *amakondeere* music heritage and its connection to their history, values and thus, learning. Additionally, the study examines how cultural identity can support the preservation and promotion of traditional musical practices in Uganda, contributing to more inclusive and equitable learning contexts.

By highlighting the significances of cultural identity, this study makes valuable contributions to the broader fields of ethnomusicology and organology, beyond

music education. While there is extensive literature on music education, there is barely no research that specifically addresses how a sense of belonging to a culture enhances both the learning of *amakondeere* music and similar cultural music expression; and the general music education in Ugandan schools. By filling this gap, the study not only advances the discourse on indigenous music traditions but also highlights the importance of integrating cultural identity into music education to foster deeper connections between learners and their heritage.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This study focuses on the notions of cultural identity and learning of *amakondeere* music among the Baganda people of Kassanda district in Uganda. This chapter outlines the methodological foundation of the study. As defined by Bogdan and Biklen (2007), methodology encompasses the general logic and theoretical perspective for research. In this section, the researcher provides a comprehensive overview of the study's methodology, detailing the approaches for participant selection, data collection, and analysis techniques. It covers the study population, research design, sampling techniques and procedures, data collection methods and instruments, quality control procedures for data collection, data quality assurance, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1 Research Design

According to Blaikie (2000), a research design is the plan, structure, and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain answers to the research questions and to control variance. It is the overall scheme or program of the research. Kumar (2011) describes a research design as a procedural plan adopted by the researcher to answer questions in a valid, objective, accurate, and economical manner. This study utilized qualitative data, as explained by Barone and Eisner (2012), allowing the researcher to understand the meanings people construct about their world and experiences, and how they make sense of those experiences (Merriam, 2002).

The researcher employed a phenomenological research design to capture participants' lived experiences, focusing on how *amakondeere* music heritage is

perceived and valued by the community. As Moran (2000) suggests, phenomenology explores how events and experiences appear to consciousness, while Van Manen (1990) emphasizes the study of lived experiences to understand their meaning. This approach allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of *amakondeere* music in the lives of participants and its cultural importance in Kassanda District. By examining the lived experiences of the Baganda community, the researcher could uncover the meaning they attach to this musical heritage.

### **3.2 Study Population**

The study population included the Baganda who live in Kassanda District and the practitioners of this heritage. Since it was impossible for everyone taking part in *amakondeere* music in the Buganda kingdom to participate in the study, the researcher used a representative sample. These were selected from a group of master musicians and participants in the *amakondeere* ensemble. The researcher selected a total of sixteen respondents including seven master musicians and nine youths. These respondents were able to provide valid and reliable inferences that provided sufficient data for the researcher to the intended objectives of the study.

### **3.3 Sampling**

Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2017) explain that sampling refers to the specific strategy used to choose units, such as people, groups, settings, and events, to be studied. This study employed both purposive and snowball sampling techniques.

#### **3.3.1 Purposeful Sampling**

This type of sampling was utilized when the researcher selected individuals and sites who purposefully provided insight into the research problem (Creswell,

2007). In this study, purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants with the necessary information were included. Consequently, only master musicians and youths with relevant knowledge were selected. The researcher accessed reports about *amakondeere* music, which included names of individuals recognized as masters of the practice. Respondents were chosen basing on their involvement in *amakondeere* heritage practice. After collecting data from the master musicians and youths, the researcher used snowball sampling to identify additional respondents, gathering more data and corroborating the information already collected.

### **3.3.2 Snowball Sampling**

Snowball sampling, as described by Kumar (2011), involves selecting a sample through networks, starting with a few individuals from a group or organization. Information is collected from these individuals, who are then asked to identify others in the group, continuing the process until the required number of participants or a saturation point is reached. The researcher considered using snowball sampling to gather additional data by seeking recommendations from initial respondents, while remaining cautious of potential bias, such as informants suggesting only their acquaintances. However, efforts to identify more participants through this method in Baamunaanika-Bulemeezi (Luweero District) and Gavu-Kyaggwe (Mukono District) were unsuccessful.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

According to O'Reilly (2012), data collection involves systematically documenting details from daily life, such as speech, habits, customs, magic formulae, and myths. This process includes making lists, drawing maps, constructing genealogies, and taking photographs and field notes. It also involves recording not only those

occurrences and details prescribed by tradition but also the actions observed as they occur. Amin (2005) adds that qualitative data collection methods include observation, interviews, and group discussions. The researcher employed various methods to collect data, and to triangulate different data sources. This included transcribing existing video recordings (from the Buganda Royal Music Revival, 2019), analyzing publications about cultural identity and *amakondeere* music, conducting individual interviews, and organizing focus group discussions. This approach allowed the researcher to acquire and analyze data from multiple perspectives, providing a more concrete and realistic description of the situation.

#### **3.4.1 Research Instruments**

A research instrument, also known as a data collection instrument, refers to the techniques used to gather information from respondents. Creswell (2007) defines research instruments as tools for assessing, monitoring, and recording data. In this study, the instruments used for data collection included interview guides, observation guides, focus group discussion guides, as well as audio and audio-visual recording devices.

#### **3.4.2 Interview Guides**

Creswell (2007) defines interview guides as structured sets of open-ended questions that assist researchers in guiding conversations to gather specific information from respondents. The researcher utilized interview guides to conduct both unstructured in-depth interviews and focus group interviews. In-depth interviewing involved repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants, with the aim of understanding their perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations, as expressed in their own words. The interview guides were used during these repeated interactions and extended periods spent with

informants. Additionally, focus group discussion guides were employed to explore the perceptions, experiences, and understanding of respondents who shared common experiences related to the study's focus (Kumar, 2011).

### **3.4.3 Researcher as an instrument**

The researcher was the main instrument for this study. As noted by Bogdan and Biklen (2007), qualitative research uses real-world settings as direct data sources, with the researcher acting as the key instrument. Merriam (2002) concurs, stating that in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary tool for both data collection and analysis. Maxwell (2005) also emphasizes that researchers have long recognized that in the field, the researcher serves as a research instrument, especially when aiming for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Merriam (2002) further elaborates that the human instrument, being responsive and adaptable, is ideal for collecting and analyzing data. In this study, the researcher utilized her senses—eyes for observation, ears for hearing information, hands for taking notes, and her mind for processing data and making decisions—thus playing a central role in the research process.

### **3.4.4 Focus Groups Discussions**

This is a qualitative research method which involves selecting a small group of participants to discuss a topic in-depth area (Creswell 2014b). They aim at engaging a small group of participants who have knowledge about the study. The researcher used focus group discussions to collect data through oral/verbal interactions with key informants using audio recording devices. Participants shared their opinions, experiences and attitudes about *amakondeere* music under the guidance of the researcher.

### **3.4.5 Observations**

These self-designed schedules or forms outline what a researcher aims to observe during the study, including details such as numbers, size, and conditions (Amin, 2005). These instruments are used to systematically observe and record behaviors, events, or phenomena related to the research topic (Sarantakos, 2005). The researcher employed observation to gain deeper insights into human behavior (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). A predesigned observation guide was followed to capture descriptive and reflective notes, including observations about informants, the physical setting, specific events, and reactions to these aspects.

### **3.4.6 Documentary Analysis**

Additional data was gathered through documentary analysis. The researcher extracted descriptive, historical, and narrative information from existing literature about this heritage (Kumar, 2011). Newspaper articles and other written resources were used to corroborate the data. The researcher considered the potential biases of the authors, particularly in sources like magazines, and verified the plausibility of the documentary information with data from other sources.

## **3.5 Data analysis**

Data analysis in this study involved iterative processes, starting with extracting data from existing audio recordings, field and research notes, and photographic sources. As Maxwell (2005) explains, listening to audio tapes prior to transcription is also an opportunity for analysis, as is the actual process of transcribing interviews or of rewriting and reorganizing your rough observation notes. This initial analytical stage included deciding which videos, video sections, photographs, and notes were relevant for the study. The process involved listening to audio materials, watching videos, examining photographs, and repeatedly

reading the notes. Accordingly, while observing videos and reading or listening to the data, one should write notes and memos on what is seen and heard, and develop tentative ideas about categories and relationships. The researcher continually read and reread transcripts and documents, keeping a copy of the theoretical framework, central research questions, and study goals as a guide to stay focused during the analysis (Saldaña, 2016).

### **3.6 Trustworthiness**

Qualitative inquiry literature emphasizes the necessity of ensuring a study's trustworthiness and provides various methods to achieve this. Butler-Kisber (2010) highlights the importance of trustworthiness in qualitative research, noting that it is based on the study's persuasiveness, authenticity, and plausibility. Researchers should demonstrate how they ensured a coherent and transparent research process, showing adherence to reflexivity and reflection, and clearly stating how they accounted for their assumptions and biases.

This study on cultural identity and learning of *amakondeere* music among the Baganda people involved numerous participants. This provided the researcher with an opportunity to engage with a sample that Wolcott (2010) describes as valid, emphasizing that sample validity depends less on the number of cases and more on the thorough specification of informants across numerous variables. His explanation, rooted in historical context where anthropologists describe societies with limited surviving members or from vanished cultures, guided my interaction with a diverse range of respondents. Wolcott suggests that in such cases, each individual or case serves as a unique example, organically representing their complete cultural experience which resonates deeply with the cultural identity and learning of *amakondeere* music that I investigated.

### 3.7 Research Procedure

Data for this study was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, which involved repeated face-to-face interactions with respondents. During these encounters, the researcher took notes on observed phenomena and, with the participants' permission, recorded their voices using a Samsung Galaxy Note 8 mobile phone. Since *amakondeere* music is traditionally performed at *ekiggwa ky'amakondeere*, all interviews, focus group discussions, and observations were conducted there. The phenomenological research design approach allowed the researcher to explore and document how participants personally experienced, valued, and engaged with this unique cultural tradition.

Data collection occurred in three phases. The first phase took place in February 2024, when the researcher met with respondents for the first time. After receiving directions to Kitongo village by phone, the researcher arrived at the site where the *Abakondeere* had gathered to share their testimonies. At this time, the *emiboga* plants were in the flowering stage. The researcher returned in April to observe the matured plants (as shown in **Figure 3**, Chapter 4) and the drying process, which lasted two weeks. In the third phase, the researcher returned to witness the making of the *amakondeere* instruments.

Throughout these phases, the researcher gathered data starting with interviews and focus group discussions, which were transcribed and integrated into the dataset. Observations and additional data collection were then conducted, all aligned with the study's objectives. The phenomenological design helped investigate both the technical aspects of the music and its deeper cultural, spiritual, and identity-shaping significance. The data collection and analysis followed an iterative

process, reflecting the nature of phenomenological inquiry. Once all data had been collected and analyzed, the research report was compiled.

### **3.8 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations in the practice of inquiry are fundamentally important and must be addressed. According to Bogdan & Biklen (2007), researchers should ensure that participants enter research projects voluntarily, fully understanding the nature of the study along with its risks and obligations, and ensuring they are not exposed to risks that outweigh the potential benefits. For this study, the researcher collected data by using photographs of participants, obtained with their consent.

Throughout the planning, data collection, and processing phases, the researcher adhered to various guidelines to uphold ethical standards. This included obtaining formal consent from relevant parties, engaging in clear and transparent interactions with all involved, and conducting thorough reflection to ensure the accuracy of the information. The researcher ensured fair treatment of all participants to maintain a coherent and transparent research process, as explained by Butler-Kisber (2010). To ensure ethical considerations, the identities of individual participants were protected and not disclosed in this study report. In some instances, pseudonyms were used for participants. The photographs included in this study were taken by the researcher with the participants' permission, and few of them were provided by respondents to the researcher.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This study focused on exploring the contribution of cultural identity to the learning process and acquisition of skills in *amakondeere* music of the Baganda people. The data of this study is presented, analyzed and discussed basing on the following headings: how participation in cultural practices enhances learning of *amakondeere* music, contribution of customs and beliefs to learning of *amakondeere* music and the role of language and values in transmission of *amakondeere* music.

#### 4.1 Role of participation in learning of *amakondeere*

Data revealed that the term *amakondeere* encompasses both the instruments and the music, as well as the combination of the two. Engaging in *amakondeere* involves both the creation of the instruments and the performance of the music. In the Baganda society, participation is a core value. Individuals gain recognition and a sense of belonging through their interactions with others, becoming aware of their identity as community members. Recognition by the community largely depends on an individual's participation and adherence to community values. Wenger (1998) describes participation as both active engagement in shared activities and the connections formed with others through these interactions. He explains participation involves tasks, interpersonal relationships, and the broader social experience of being part of a community. It is a holistic experience that combines actions, thoughts, emotions, and a sense of belonging, fully engaging a person's physical, mental, and social presence.

In Luganda, participation is referred to as *okwetabamu*, which is often shortened to *okwetaba* in conversations. In the context of amakondeere music, participation is expressed as *okwetaba mu nkola y'obuwangwa n'okuyiga okufuuwa amakondeere*, meaning participation in playing and learning *amakondeere* music. This section discusses *okwetaba* under the sub-headings of making, playing techniques, and maintenance and repair of the *amakondeere* instruments.

The Buganda society is defined by the ethos of *okwetaba* in community activities, a value that fosters individual responsiveness and moral order within the community. This ethos strengthens the bond within families, villages, and society at large, as responsible individuals are praised for their active participation in events like weddings, funerals, and communal works. *Okwetaba* embodies a cultural way of life, enriching cultural engagements and integrating them into the community's daily existence. This cultural framework extends to all forms of interaction, including those in *amakondeere* music, where participation plays a central role in maintaining social bonds and societal norms.

#### **4.1.1 The nature of participation in *amakondeere***

The Baganda's understanding of *okwetabamu* (participation) aligns with Rogoff's (1990) concept of guided participation, where learners engage in culturally significant activities through collaboration. *Okwetaba mu amakondeere* is a holistic experience involving making, maintaining, storing, and performing music. This process builds on children's existing knowledge, guiding them toward new skills and responsibilities over time. Active participation reflects discipline, responsibility, respect, and commitment to community well-being. This approach, emphasizing social engagement to achieve individual and communal goals, aligns

with the social constructivist view of learning, encouraging problem-solving through socially constructed experiences. Therefore, Ugandan education practitioners should promote active participation, context sensitivity, and equal opportunities, while emphasizing the positive aspects of education practice.

Participating in *amakondeere* music involves various engagements that extend beyond listening to or performing the music. It includes a variety of activities and interactions such as growing gourds, craftsmanship, and playing the *amakondeere*. This tradition is joyously embraced by participants, enriching the collective cultural heritage. Involvement in these activities facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills from elderly bearers to both schooling and non-schooling youths. It also enhances music learning within community contexts, where learners are equipped through participatory indigenous methods.

#### **4.1.2 Making of *amakondeere* as a form of participation**

The Baganda believe that participating in music cultures, including playing of *amakondeere*, is highly important for individuals and communities. They understand that it helps individuals connect with their cultural roots, preserving and passing on traditions, stories, and values across generations. It also fosters a sense of community and belonging by encouraging social interaction and collaboration, strengthening communal bonds, and creating shared experiences. They recognize that learning indigenous music occurs naturally through living and interacting within the community. This aligns with Dunbar-Hall's (2011) perspective that a child learns an instrument or dance by observing rehearsals or performances over time and then attempts to play or mimic the dance. This makes

*amakondeere* music inherently a social and collective process that forms part of the community's cultural identity.

Making *amakondeere* involves several steps, including growing *emiboga* (gourd fruits), drying them, and then crafting them into instruments. *Emiboga* are the materials used to make *amakondeere* for the Baganda people. *Emiboga* (singular: *omuboga*) are vining plants that grow by trailing on other plants, particularly short trees, and are often used for decorative purposes. These plants belong to the gourd family, which includes both food and ornamental species. The *emiboga* are planted, harvested when mature, and then dried to make *amakondeere* (**Figure 4**). *Amakondeere* come in various sizes depending on the size of the gourd used. The *Abakondeere* keep the seeds of the *emiboga* because they find them useful for future use.



**Figure 4:** *Emiboga* (gourds) used for making *amakondeere* instruments (Photo by the researcher)

Part of the process of making *amakondeere* involves harvesting *emiboga* (**Figure 5**) which is the material, drying them indoors (**Figure 6**) and thoroughly cleaning them. The tools and equipment needed during this process of making the instrument include a knife (*akambe* or *akaso* in Luganda), napier grass (*Ebisagazi* in Luganda) (**Figure 7**), and water. Once dry, a piece from the upper part of the *omuboga* (referred to as *Omutwe* or "the head" in the language of *abakondeere* is cut off using a knife to create an opening for hollowing. After creating the hollow space, the inner membrane is carefully removed using *ebisagazi* grass. *Ebisagazi* (plural) are chosen because the feathery bristles on the leaves effectively brush out the inner membrane. Once the inner membrane is properly removed, the shell is referred to as *ekiwaawo* - singular (*ebiwaawo* – plural). *Ekiwaawo* is the protective

outer layer covering the inner membrane of *omuboga* fruit. It is the seed coat which protects the inner part of a fruit.



**Figure 5:** Harvested *emiboga* (gourds) (Photo by the researcher)



**Figure 6:** Dried *emiboga* used for making *amakondeere* (Photo by the researcher)



**Figure 7:** Using *ebisagazi* (napier grass) and water to clean *ekiwaawo* (Photo by the researcher)

After hollowing, the *kiwaawo* is meticulously cleaned inside using *ebisagazi* and thoroughly washed to soften it. Next, a hollow mouthpiece called *omumwa* (the mouth) (**Figure 8**) is carved at the thin end using *akambe*. The mouth of the *ekkondeere* instrument, known as *omumwa gw'ekkondeere*, is a small round or oval opening made in the sides at the narrow end of the *omuboga*, which is used to produce sound.



**Figure 8:** Cutting *omumwa gw'ekkondeere* (mouthpiece) (Photo by the researcher)

The pitching process of *amakondeere* is carefully done to avoid loss of gourds. Learners observe one another and learn how to cut *emiboga* and bore *omumwa gw'ekkondeere*. The master player closely observes while guiding learners and offering appropriate support needed to render a holistic and authentic experience that is meaningful (Isabirye, 2021a). The master musician emphasized that great care must be taken when cutting the *omumwa gw'ekkondeere* (the mouthpiece) to avoid loss of gourds and ensure that it fits properly.

This process is done progressively, with the maker repeatedly placing their mouth on the instrument to determine the exact size needed for a proper fit. Pitching involves repeatedly blowing into the instrument through the mouthpiece to

determine the required pitch. This is done progressively until the desired pitch is obtained. The tip of *omuboga* is also cut off to make a small opening on the thin end which is alternatively covered and uncovered to produce different pitches. The researcher discovered that the pitching process continues until a complete set of *amakondeere* is obtained. The gourds are meticulously cleaned to ensure they produce the desired pitches accurately. The small opening at the tip of the trumpet is used to adjust the pitch during playing. The researcher also learned that the pitches can be modified by enlarging the opening at the head of the gourd. The larger the opening at the head of the gourd, the deeper the pitch.

After going through the above processes, the *amakondeere* set is obtained (**Figure 9**). The researcher learned that the five instruments that make a full set of *amakondeere* are named: *enjawuzi* (mixer), *endeesi* (one which brings), *ensaasi* (one which strikes), *enkwale* (partridge) and *enzigalizi* (one which comes at the close). The expert determines what type of *omuboga* (according to sizes) is suitable for making *enjawuzi*, *endeesi*, *ensaasi*, *enkwale* or *enzigalizi*. This depends on the size of *omuboga* and how it grew from the plant. The expert explained to the researcher that the melodic possibilities of *ekondeere* is influenced by its development. Since gourds are vining plants, some fruits grow from the ground and others may be trailed on other plants. Those that grow along the ground tend to be small, short and curved and those growing from trellis tend to appear bigger and tall in size. For example, *ensaasi* is normally made out of a short gourd because the shorter the gourd, the higher the pitch.



**Figure 9:** Different sizes of *amakondeere* in a set (gourd trumpets) (Photo by the researcher)

The activity of making *amakondeere* is a collaborative effort involving both adults and youths who work in teams within their communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Participants scaffold each other's efforts, share ideas, and are guided by experts (Bruner, 1966 & Rogoff, 1999). The process extends beyond simply listening to or performing the music; it includes growing and harvesting gourds (*emiboga*), drying them, crafting the instruments, and playing the music. This tradition, joyously embraced by its participants, enriches the collective cultural heritage. The involvement in these activities facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills from elder bearers to both schooling and non-schooling youths (Isabirye, 2021a) and enhances music learning within community contexts through participatory indigenous methods.

The entire process of making *amakondeere* instruments involves social interaction among people across generations. They share thoughts and understandings while

sharing responsibilities, raising awareness, inspiring movements, and addressing important community issues. Such engagements create environments where individuals enjoy their activities, feel inspired, value their musical traditions, and embrace them both personally and communally. These interactions reflect the Baganda people's communal values and identity, making it a form of indigenous education (Isabirye 2021a). They learn to make and play *amakondeere* through these community interactions, a process demonstrating the passion described by Ruiz-Alfonso, Vega, and Beltran (2018) as a strong inclination towards a self-defining activity that one loves, values, and dedicates significant time and energy to, signifying their identity.

#### **4.1.3 The notion of *okukolera awamu* in *amakondeere***

The concept of *okukolera awamu* (working together) is central to Buganda society, emphasizing conformity to collective community ideals. It involves collaborating with family and the broader community, participating in events, and sharing responsibilities. This principle prioritizes communal support over individual goals, strengthening social bonds, sharing resources and knowledge, and achieving common objectives. In the context of *amakondeere*, making the instruments is a collaborative effort where both adults and youths work together, sharing ideas and receiving guidance from experienced experts.

In Buganda, *okukolera awamu* is evident in daily activities such as preparing food, communal works (*bulungibwansi*), funeral rites (*okwabya olumbe*), and weddings. As mentioned in previous sections, each clan in Buganda has specific duties within the *Lubiri* (the palace) and within their communities, requiring *okukolera awamu* (collective participation). An example of such assignments is *Bulungibwansi*, a

compulsory communal activity where the *Gwangamujje* (nation/people come), drum rhythm is sounded to alert the community to engage in tasks like cleaning roads, digging wells, and maintaining markets. Participation is mandatory, with penalties for non-compliance. *Bulungibwansi* is also a platform where young boys and girls of Buganda receive informal education, while married couples receive guidance and counseling from experienced members in the community and serves as a venue where people discuss their problems and even devise means of solving them.

Making *amakondeere* is like *okwetaba mu Bulungibwansi* (participating in *Bulungibwansi*) because it provides an opportunity for collective participation, an endeavor which strengthens community spirit. These opportunities encourage discussion and problem-solving within the context of shared activities, where meaning and actions are collaboratively constructed and negotiated (Hatano, 1993). It is mandatory for *Omukondeere* to actively engage in all the learning processes of making *amakondeere* music. Adults and youths collaboratively engage in the creation, maintenance, repair, and storage of *amakondeere*. The *Bulungibwansi* of *amakondeere* fosters agentic learning (Isabirye, 2021a), empowering learners to use music as a tool for self-liberation. This approach helps them to become proactive learners, building confidence to find similarities between new and old problems, guided by previous experiences and instruction on problem interpretation and resolution (Gardner, 1995). Learning occurs through hands-on experience (Dewey, 1916), with the master musician providing scaffolding (Bruner, 1996). It involves mastering songs both orally and aurally in preparation for practical sessions.

Additionally, *amakondeere* music embodies *okukolera awamu* (working together), a notion that is reflected in the playing style of the instrument. *Amakondeere* are played in a hocket, where each musician contributes a single repeated note to the piece. Each player must execute their note precisely on the correct beat for the music to achieve its intended effect. The music heavily relies on synchronized participation and exceptional musical cooperation (Isabirye, 2019). This mirrors the concept of *okukolera awamu*. Throughout the entire process of crafting *amakondeere*, each member contributes to the success of the endeavor. Some handle the cutting of the *omutwe* (the head), others remove seeds, some clean *ebiwaawo* using *ebisagazi*, others wash them, some cut the mouthpiece, and others prepare the skins and arrange the stitches. All these activities embody *okukolera awamu*, a central communal ethos among the Baganda.

The master musician explained that the *Omukondeere* is responsible for creating contexts that offer opportunities to interact with the knowledge, enabling the application of concepts based on individual understanding during the *amakondeere*-making process. The master player oversees the learning sessions, while each participant chooses to play on the various roles of the instrument set. This oral pedagogy enhances engagement, critical thinking, listening, memorization, deeper understanding, and music performance skills (Idamoyibo, 2019). Additionally, it provides excellent opportunities for deeper learning, encouraging collaboration, confidence, and independence among learners, thus fostering a supportive environment for exploration and growth.

In one of the focus group discussions, participants emphasized value of *okukolera awamu* (working together), with one participant expressing a perspective that was echoed by others:

This collaborative involvement helps us build and sustain moral character and order within our community. It strengthens our social bonds, facilitates the sharing of resources and knowledge, and enable us achieve common goals more effectively. It fosters a strong sense of belonging and identity, thereby reinforcing connections within our community as we seek guidance from experienced experts. (Interview with SH, April 14<sup>th</sup> 2024)

The framework that defines the *amakondeere* making activity creates an environment conducive to fostering learner agency. Under the expert's guidance, *Abakondeere* were prompted to reflect upon their learning in relation to their previous experiences (**Figure 10**). Through this engagement, they developed personal understandings and actively negotiated the meanings of their assumptions with themselves and others. This scaffolding enabled them to engage in the activity at more advanced levels, yet within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). However, the contemporary Missionary education neglects these pedagogical experiences sidelining the learner's social life, instead focusing on a one-way channel of learning which forces learners to memorize information rather than understanding it as a result of their own participation in its making in the first place. Additionally, learners are barely encouraged to make observations, formulate definitions, or engage in intellectual activities. This individualistic approach to learning stands in stark contrast with the Baganda culture, which advocates for collective learning as an imperative of community survival and sustenance.



**Figure 10:** Master musician instructing learners. (Photo by the researcher)

#### **4.1.4 The playing techniques of *amakondeere***

Baganda musicians, like those from other ethnic groups in Uganda, learn to play instruments by listening to others and emulating them (Ekadu-Ereu, 2012). *Amakondeere* instruments are played in ensembles, often accompanied by the rhythmic support of royal drums. These instruments are cut at a slant and played transversely, with air blown through the *omumwa* (mouthpiece). Players accumulate air in their cheeks while breathing through their mouths. The instruments have a small opening at the tip, which the player alternatively cover and uncovers to produce different tones (Tefferu, 2023). The researcher learnt that mastering *amakondeere* requires learning all the songs first, necessitating good listening skills. During playing, one hand supports the *ekondeere* in position (**Figure 11**), while the other hand uses the index finger to cover and uncover the small opening at the tip to produce the desired pitches.



**Figure 11:** Youth and children learning how to play *amakondeere* (Photo by the researcher)

Each instrument in the *amakondeere* set has a specific role. The *endeesi* starts the songs, followed by *enjawuzi* (the mixer) which is used to blend the sounds of other instruments to achieve a balanced composition before the others join in. *Enjawuzi* has the lowest pitch, followed in size and pitch by *ensaasi*, *enkwale*, and finally *enzigalizi*, which is the smallest and highest in pitch. The master musician noted that the *endeesi* and *enjawuzi* are the leading trumpets, with the *ensaasi* joining in to complete the song. However, due to the political upheavals that characterized Uganda shortly after independence, a ban was imposed on all kingdoms and chiefdoms in 1967 (Isabirye, 2021b). As a result, some instruments were lost, and the experts who knew how to make them passed away. By the time the kingdoms were reinstated in Uganda in 1993, none of the young musicians knew how to make the *endeesi*, *enzigalizi*, or *enkwale*. The researcher found out that only the *ensaasi* and *enjawuzi* still exist and are the ones currently played.

The master musician highlighted the importance of good listening, as missing the correct entry can disrupt a song. In Luganda, listening is referred to as *okuwuliriza*. Good listening is seen as a sign of good behavior, such as politeness, obedience, honesty and reliability. Children who listened to their parents were considered responsible and cooperative. Among the Baganda, someone who listens—*awuliriza*—is also an effective learner. The researcher found that *omukondeere* (the trumpeter) who listens grasps concepts about *amakondeere* quickly. This aligns with Rogoff et al.'s (2004) idea that learning occurs through keen observation and listening, particularly in communities with informal learning involvement.

In music, *okuwuliriza* provides opportunities for analysis, accuracy, and good timing, as well as for improvisation and adaptation. It helps *omukondeere* (and even learners in formal schools) to understand the structure of a song or a music piece, allowing for a more accurate and expressive performance. The master musician, emphasized that *okuwuliriza* fosters better collaboration by enabling musicians to blend their sounds, balance their parts, and create harmonious rhythms. He further explained that when playing *amakondeere*, verbal communication is impossible because the mouth is occupied with blowing; only facial expressions can be used to communicate. He explained that this is where the Baganda derived the saying: *Abakondeere bakwanya mikka*, literally meaning that trumpeters are only friends through their breaths.

The deeper meaning of this saying is that people can collaborate effectively without being on good terms. In the context of *amakondeere*, it means that *Abakondeere* musicians can perform well together even without verbal communication, relying

on breath for coordination. The researcher noted that although the *amakondeere* set includes only two named instruments, two to three musicians play the *enjawuzi* and another two to three play the *endeesi*. This arrangement prevents interruptions if a player runs out of breath. Considering the limited number of trumpets in a set, each *kkondeere* is essential as they are the only ones available to complete the melodic line of a song. It should also be noted that most of the *amakondeere* heritage songs were completely lost. The researcher learnt that the new generation of *amakondeere* musicians lacks the skills to compose new songs, relying instead on the few songs learned from the surviving *Abakondeere* during the Buganda kingdom's revival process.

#### **4.1.5 The Concept of emulation**

The concept of emulation, or *okugeegeenya* in Luganda, plays a key role in the learning process of the Baganda people. It involves closely observing how something is done, critically thinking, and then attempting to replicate it based on one's understanding, potentially creating something similar or even improved. This approach, akin to how babies learn to speak, fosters skill development through observation and imitation. For example, children learn language by watching and listening to adults, starting with cooing and babbling before moving to gestures and words. As they grow, they mimic their elders in play, imitating actions like tying their waists and swinging their hands to dance in musical performances. These repeated efforts ultimately refine and perfect their skills (Isabirye, 2021a).

This is exactly how the process of learning *amakondeere* works. Youths and children start by observing the experts, then practice under the supervision of experienced musicians before developing their own understanding and autonomy

on the instrument (Shively, 2015). This method allows learners to make multiple attempts at replicating the task, ultimately leading to the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Many *Abakondeere* musicians have been inspired by their elders, such as fathers and uncles. Since this profession was traditionally passed down from grandfathers, becoming *omukondeere* musician often meant committing to this role for life. The youths noted that they memorized the songs before learning to play them on the *amakondeere*, which simplified the learning process. By memorizing the songs before playing them, learners found it much easier to play the tunes and learn additional songs, as the melodies were already ingrained in their memory. In these contexts, learning occurs through careful observation and listening, with the expectation of future participation. Children learn by watching and listening to adults and other children, especially in communities where they have opportunities to engage in informal community activities (Rogoff et al., 2004).

#### **4.1.6 Maintenance and repairing of the *amakondeere***

The Baganda people's concept of maintenance involves three key aspects. First, it includes the ability to look after something well to protect and safeguard it. Secondly, to ensure proper storage, and thirdly, repair it if it becomes damaged. The Baganda believe that wealth and good health depend on how well an individual takes care of themselves and their properties. The term "take care of" among the Baganda encompasses preservation, maintenance, protection, storage, and repair, all of which are encapsulated in the word *okulabirira*. This concept is evident in various activities and is integral to their way of life. For example, the Baganda have a culturally sensitive approach to healthcare by creating *emmumbwa* - a substance made from clay mixed with herbs, dried, and stored for future use. *Emmumbwa* is

believed to manage and treat ailments such as nausea, syphilis, headache, cough, and measles, as well as to expedite delivery and reduce birth pangs.

It was customary for the Baganda *okulabirira* their material culture including musical instruments. Kafumbe (2018) explains that all royal musical instruments were traditionally serviced, maintained, and repaired. He observes that royal musicians had a duty to maintain their instruments and guard them diligently to prevent damage. This careful stewardship is what made them holistic, as each musician was knowledgeable in both the use and maintenance of their instruments. In Luganda, maintenance is translated as *okulabirira*, protect as *okukuuma*, storage as *okutereka*, and repair as *okuddaabiriza*. To be considered an expert in *amakondeere* music, one must know how to *okulabirira* (maintain), *okukuuma* (protect/safeguard), *okutereka* (store), and *okuddaabiriza* (repair) *amakondeere* instruments which in the end results into a holistic process of learning or acquisition of knowledge and skills.

#### **4.1.7 Okulabirira amakondeere**

*Okulabirira* (repairing) *amakondeere* begins at the farming stage. This activity involves various tasks, including cleaning the garden, planting, weeding, pruning, and harvesting. *Emiboga* must mature on the vine because immature ones tend to rot. After harvesting, *emiboga* are brought home and spread on the floor in a well-ventilated room. Respondents explained that when *emiboga* are kept inside, they need to be turned regularly to prevent shriveling or developing soft spots. Surface drying takes about a week, during which the color sets and the outer skin hardens. The final drying stage takes two to three weeks, and during this period, *emiboga* must be handled gently to avoid bruising, denting, or breaking the skin.

*Emiboga* are dried indoors because sunlight accelerates the drying process, which can cause cracks and distort their shape. The researcher observed the careful cutting of *omutwe gw'ekkondeere* with a sharp knife to avoid breaking it. This process, performed by an expert, requires precision to prevent cracks that could affect sound production if the piece is shortened. The researcher also learned that if *omuboga* is damaged beyond repair, the pieces are saved for future use. These damaged parts of *ekkondeere* can be used to repair less-damaged *omuboga* by using the saved pieces to craft and join the instrument.

*Okulabirira amakondeere* is regularly performed, especially when the trumpet goes out of pitch and needs restoration. The researcher learned that *amakondeere* are maintained similarly to cars, serviced periodically. After being used for some time, *amakondeere* are carefully cleaned to ensure they are free from dirt, dust, or any contaminants that could cause damage or block sound production. This cleaning process is called *okuwawula amakondeere*. The term *okuwawula amakondeere* simply means cleaning *amakondeere*. *Abakondeere* explained to the researcher that when *amakondeere* are used regularly, they become dirty and need cleaning. *Okuwawula amakondeere* is done using *ebisagazi* (napier grass), which is pushed back and forth to remove all the dust. Subsequently, cow-ghee is melted using fire and applied inside each *kkondeere* with a clean piece of cloth. Cow ghee in Luganda is called *omuzigo omuganda*.

The Baganda often speak in short forms and sometimes mention only one word of a phrase without losing the meaning. For example, instead of saying applying *omuzigo omuganda*, they say applying *omuzigo*, (*okugasiiga omuzigo* - applying cow ghee) which is how I will refer to it in this study. *Omuzigo* cools and smoothens *amakondeere*, a process known as *okuweweeza amakondeere* (or

*okugaweweeza*). The next step is *okwota*, which means laying *amakondeere* in the sunshine to warm them. *Amakondeere okwota omusana* (laying *amakondeere* in the sunshine) helps the *omuzigo* to melt properly, ensuring it reaches every part inside. Teffera (2020) and Isabirye (2019) explain that the Berta people of Ethiopia and Sudan, as well as the *Basoga* people of Uganda, customarily rinse the interiors of trumpets with water to close any cracks in the walls of the instruments, ensuring they produce the expected pitches correctly. In contrast, the Baganda use *omuzigo* for the same purpose and also to keep *amakondeere* cool, smooth, and free from breaking or cracking. Proper maintenance is crucial for the reliability, efficiency, safety, and longevity of *amakondeere*.

#### **4.1.8 Okutereka amakondeere**

The Baganda have two words that mean to keep or store something: *okukuuma* and *okutereka*. It is customary for the Baganda to preserve their food, fruit and food seeds, properties, and other valuable items. They have an inherent duty and responsibility to keep seeds for future generations. They stored food in granaries, locally known as *ebyagi*, and also kept seeds for crops such as maize, pumpkins, Bambara nuts, groundnuts, cowpeas, bitter tomatoes, and bitter berries, among others. For example, the *Abakondeere* used to keep seeds of *emiboga*, but this tradition died out due to the political unrest in Uganda in 1966, which led to the discontinuation of royal music performances and the subsequent decline in the need for such materials in society (Isabirye, 2021b). However, the Buganda kingdom's royal music revival project restored the custom of keeping *emiboga* seeds, and by the time of this study, gardens had been observed.

The longevity of *amakondeere* depends on proper handling, particularly in terms of protection (*okukuuma*) and storage (*okutereka*). The Baganda use the expressions *okugakuuma obulungi* for protecting *amakondeere* and *okugatereka obulungi* for storing them properly. To avoid repetition, I use the phrase *okugakuuma n'okugatereka obulungi*. *Abakondeere* explained that *amakondeere* can easily break, so to protect and store them, they are sewn into *cowhide* (*eddibaly'ente*). This process involves purchasing the skin, scraping it to remove flesh or fat with a sharp knife, soaking it in water to soften, and then scraping it again with a dull knife. After cutting the skin to the required size, it is soaked a second time, removed, and sewn onto the *ekkondeere* to protect it from breaking. The second soaking softens the skin, making it easier to stitch. The Baganda use sisal thread for stitching, which not only protects the *ekkondeere* but also adds a decorative touch.

During interviews and FDGs, one of the participants gave a view that was repeatedly echoed by respondents:

Protecting *amakondeere* is crucial. The *eddiba* is carefully cut to fit the size of the trumpet, and a matching mouthpiece is bored into it. It is then securely stitched around the trumpet using sisal thread and left to dry thoroughly. Each *ekkondeere* is neatly sewn, with compact stitches ensuring it is well covered. Additionally, *ekkondeere* should not be placed on the ground, as this would make it dirty. (Interview with BJ, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2024).

The researcher learned that *ebisagazi* help to smoothen *amakondeere* by facilitating the removal of seeds. Additionally, the seeds are preserved for future farming. This process is done carefully to avoid breaking the gourd and involves peeling off the inner membrane, to avoid hindrance of proper sound production. The master player explained that *amakondeere* instruments cannot be kept dry;

*omuzigo* must always be applied to keep them soft and moisturized which is also a preventive measure against rotting. The researcher noted that each time the *ekkondeere* is to be blown, it is first smeared with *omuzigo* to ensure it produces sound.

*Amakondeere* instruments can last for a very long time if they are properly maintained and cared for. However, their longevity depends on how well they are handled in terms of *okugalabirira* (maintenance), *okugakuuma* (protection), *n'okugatereka obulungi* (store them properly). In an interview with the master musician, he revealed:

The *ekkondeere* I am playing belonged to my late father who also inherited it from his own father - my grandfather. My father told me that his father informed him that the instrument was made during the reign of Kabaka Daudi Chwa, who died in 1939, more than a hundred years ago! (Interview with SS, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024).

#### **4.1.9 Okuddaabiriza amakondeere**

*Okuddaabiriza* (repairing) is one of the core values of the Baganda. Like many African societies, they believe that if something is not severely damaged, it can be repaired to improve its functionality. For instance, they repair saucepans, shoes, clothes, tables, chairs and even houses among others (Kirwana-Sozi, 2012). The Baganda used this practice to maintain their material culture, including musical instruments. They were committed to preserving their possessions by not only restoring their physical condition but also maintaining their value and, in the case of musical instruments, preserving the rich melodies they produce. The *Abakondeere* also recognize the importance of *okuddaabiriza amakondeere* to extend their lifespan and enhance their playing experience.

The process of *okuddaibiriza amakondeere* is usually done by an expert and it requires a careful approach because they are delicate and can be easily damaged further. *Abakondeere* explained that, *amakondeere* cannot easily be broken or damaged easily because of their protective skin cover. However, if this happens, they can be repaired if the damage is not too severe. When *ekkondeere* is broken, the first step is to carefully inspect the broken part to understand the extent of the damage. The next step is to *okuwawula* (clean) that part gently to remove the broken pieces or debris so as to ensure a better bond. *Okuwawula* is also done on the piece which will replace the broken part and also measured to ensure that it is the right size of the broken part. Additionally, epoxy resin or adhesive depending on what is available is mixed and applied using a paintbrush or a toothbrush. Then the broken parts are carefully aligned and pressed together firmly and held in place for a few minutes to allow adhesive to attach the part tightly. Rubber bands are used to hold the pieces together while the adhesive cures completely. After that, an expert makes sure that the pressure is even to avoid any additional cracks.

The master musician explained that it is not common for *ekkondeere* to get broken instead, it is the skin that get spoilt. Sometimes, skins can be eaten by rats if *amakondeere* are not properly stored. In most cases any damage on the skin require replacement and this process involves buying a new skin, cutting it, and then getting a part sewn onto the *ekkondeere*. He said:

**Luganda:** *Omukondeere yenna kimukakatako / okuba ng'amanyi bulungi / okukola, / okulabirira, / okukuuma, / okutereka / n'okuddaibiriza / amakondeere. / Oyo y'aba / omukondeere atuukiride / era omukugu. / Kya buvunaanyizibwa / okukuuma obulungi amakondeere / kubanga / we bakuyitira wonna okugenda ogafuuwa / oba oghenda bugenzi.* (Interview with BY, May, 20<sup>th</sup> 2024)

**English translation:** Every trumpeter must / be skilled / in making / maintaining / protecting / storing / and repairing / trumpets. / He is then / a perfect

trumpeter / and an expert. / It is essential / to responsibly maintain trumpets / because / whenever you are called for a performance / you are always ready to go.

The social constructivism theory of learning posits that learning occurs in contexts where learners actively engage in real-life, relevant, problem-solving experiences, allowing them to construct and act on their own understanding. This approach emphasizes that learning experiences are contextual and holistic (Isabirye, 2021b; Shively, 2015; Wiggins, 2015). To be considered an expert (*omukugu*) in *amakondeere* music, one must engage in the comprehensive understanding of every detail of the music. The master musician described a skilled trumpeter as someone who directly interacts with music in real-life, holistic, and problem-solving situations (Wiggins, 2015). According to Isabirye (2021b), holistic learning involves learners having a vision or at least an understanding of the end-product of a learning experience from the beginning of the process up to the end.

As Wenger (1998) notes, a defining characteristic of participation is the possibility of developing an identity through relationships. He adds that participation in social communities shapes our experiences within these communities and extends beyond direct engagement in specific activities with specific people. Furthermore, it places the negotiation of meaning in the context of our membership in various communities and constituents of our identities. This is evident in *okwetaba mu amakondeere* engagements. For children and youths to learn *amakondeere*, they must participate in all aspects of the practice, including making the instruments, mastering the playing techniques, as well as maintaining and repairing them. Learning can barely occur without active involvement. *Okwetaba* (participation/engagement) fosters the ability to perform practically through formalized means and it offers a holistic approach to learning. By being directly

involved, learners are able to construct their own musical knowledge, which is directly in line with the social constructivism learning approach.

*Okwetaba mu amakondeere* (engagement with *amakondeere*) allows children and youths to establish a learning environment that is favorable for their experience with learning which involves a variety of tasks. They learn how to *okugakola* (making) *okugalabirira* (maintaining) *okugakuuma* (protecting) *okugafuuwa* (playing) *okugaddaabiriza* (repairing) and *okugatereka* (storing) in a professional way. Engaging in these processes enables a learner to gain expertise and proficiency through acquired knowledge and skills obtained from social participation, the outcome of which is usually the culmination a new identity within their community. The learner begins to be recognized as *omukondeere* after acquiring several skills through experience, a title which also comes with great respect within the confines of the kingdom. This status is highly valued among the Baganda people because becoming *omukondeere wa Kabaka* (the king's trumpeter) offers the chance to be close to him which is not the case with several commoners in the kingdom. In the Baganda society, the Kabaka is the most revered person, and it is an honor not only to serve him, but also to be near his presence.

Many people aspire to get close to the Kabaka, and whenever he appears in public, crowds gather along the roadsides just to catch a glimpse of him. Being a royal musician is considered an honor, amplifying the prestige of being entertained. This new identity also elevates the *omukondeere* to the status of a culturally informed individual—someone with a profound understanding of cultural values, beliefs, practices, customs, and social norms. This individual demonstrates respect and sensitivity towards cultural diversity and can effectively engage with people from different cultural backgrounds. *Omukondeere* is further considered a unique source

of knowledge and a consultant within and outside the community. They are approached by important figures such as researchers, tourists, kingdom subjects, and many others seeking cultural knowledge. This not only elevates their status in the community but also becomes a source of income.

The process of maintaining *amakondeere* represents a learning experience that fosters a collective identity.

According to Ratner (2006), this identity emerges from structures that integrate the strengths, knowledge, skills, and creativity of many individuals in a coordinated, socially, and conceptually coherent manner. Thus, learning is not driven solely by individual contributions within the learning context but is collectively built and thoroughly negotiated through mutual understanding within a social learning community. Wenger (1998) explains that similar to an experience of identity, learning involves both process and place. He adds that moving towards full participation in a practice which signifies an increasing sense of identity. Wenger credits communities of practice with providing exemplary learning experiences that strengthen the identity of their members. This way, the youth who learn how to play *amakondeere* symbolically reaffirm their cultural identity. This process is meaningful to them as it helps them to recognize and appreciate their heritage and who they are, fostering a continuous search for their identities.

During the learning processes of *amakondeere*, children and youths observed adults, and thereafter shared what they had learned. Upon witnessing experts, they described how, they critically analyzed their techniques, internalized them, and then devised their own methods of playing and sharing with peers. Those who made mistakes were corrected and guided appropriately. They conveyed the notion that indigenous learning processes aim at lifelong learning, incorporating social

participation with a holistic approach to content, learner-centeredness, and problem-solving. This closely aligns with the social constructivist principles which informs this study. Transferring this ethos to the school environment could provide significant opportunities for learners to construct their own meanings and understanding through a pedagogy of mutuality, thus fostering a community of mutual learners (Isabirye, 2021b).

The sense of belonging to Baganda society motivates individuals to engage with their world, as defined by Brooks and Brooks (2001). As they learn *amakondeere* music, they simultaneously understand how society functions and how individuals operate within a collective identity. Wenger (1998) attributes communities of practice to providing exemplary learning experiences which strengthen the identity of its members. He further suggests that because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, then it is an experience of our identity. The change brought about by learning can be multidimensional, taking various forms as it moves the learner into different roles within society. These roles represent identities that define the learning process and influence the learner's interactions with others.

Lave and Wenger (1991) propose that identities are evolving, enduring connections between individuals and their place and involvement within communities of practice. For instance, participating in *amakondeere* activities allowed master musicians and youths to cultivate their identities as preservers of the *amakondeere* musical heritage. Learners' engagement with *amakondeere* requires personal effort to construct identities through interactions with various individuals, including kingdom authorities and researchers, despite living and engaging in different societal roles. Learning involves both individual initiative in engaging with and interpreting experiences, and it is also inherently a social process. Individuals learn

by participating in social experiences that contribute to their development within society. In a similar way, through learning *amakondeere* music, children and youths come to understand their responsibility in managing cultural activities. They acquire community skills and practices by interacting with others who assist them in structuring the learning process and providing necessary guidance during collaborative activities (Rogoff, 2003).

#### **4.2 The role of customs and beliefs in learning of *amakondeere* music**

Customs and beliefs are two important ingredients of cultural identity. Among the Baganda people, customs refer to the traditional practices, rituals, and social norms that have been passed down through generations and are integral to their cultural identity. These customs encompass a wide range of activities and behavior, including: rituals and ceremonies, social values that include respecting elders, participating in cultural practices such as music, community roles and hierarchies among others. On the other hand, beliefs refer to a set of spiritual, religious, and philosophical ideas that shape their worldview and influence their daily lives. These beliefs are deeply rooted in their cultural heritage and encompass aspects such as spirituality, ancestors and ancestral spirits, moral and ethical values among others.

Among the Baganda people, customs and beliefs are deeply intertwined, shaping their cultural identity and social fabric. Customs are expressions of deeply held beliefs, with rituals, ceremonies, and traditional practices reflecting spiritual and philosophical values. For example, palace officials believed that not giving food to the *Abakondeere*, as suggested, was wrong, as the musicians had fulfilled their duties and deserved the "baskets." Neglecting this custom could lead to cultural

problems. Thus, customs and beliefs form a mutually reinforcing system that defines the Baganda way of life.

Both customs and beliefs contribute to identity and cohesion within the Baganda communities. Shared beliefs create a common understanding, while customs provide a consistent framework for behavior. Through participation in traditional ceremonies and daily practices, younger members internalize these beliefs. Customs, such as respect for elders and communal harmony, reinforce moral values. Customs and beliefs are interdependent, with beliefs informing rituals and practices, perpetuating the cultural system. Data from the study revealed that customs and beliefs play major roles in learning *amakondeere* music heritage, which includes sustainability of *amakondeere* heritage, rituals associated with *amakondeere*, and ceremonies involved in learning *amakondeere*. Each of these roles is discussed below.

#### **4.2.1 Sustainability of *amakondeere***

In the Buganda society, preservation and sustainability measures involve practices aimed at maintaining, safeguarding, and perpetuating cultural expressions such as music, dance, oral traditions, rituals, and other forms of intangible cultural heritage. This chapter provides an example of how the Baganda preserved their medicine in *emmumbwa*, a substance made from clay mixed with herbs for future use. They understood that valuable medicinal herbs could be destroyed by drought, cut down, or burned by irresponsible people or those unaware of their importance. Therefore, storing these herbs in *emmumbwa* was a method to ensure their sustainability. Petocz et al. (2014) describe sustainability as the preservation of the intangible elements of past societies, such as musical compositions, performance genres and

styles, musical instruments and techniques, and the social expectations related to practice and performance. They add that cultural sustainability involves the continuity of these intangible aspects of society into the future, though in a modified form. In this context, sustainability means ensuring the continuity, vitality, and relevance of *amakondeere* music practices across generations while adapting to changing environments and circumstances.

Sustainability involves preserving cultural heritage, passing down knowledge and skills, and integrating music into the social, spiritual, and daily life of the community. Bennett et al. (2014) define sustainability as maintaining continuity, connecting the past, present, and future. This concept is reflected in the Buganda's method of preserving medicine in *emmumbwa* for current and future use, including emergencies. They understood that preservation is crucial for future use, as properly stored *emmumbwa* can last for over a decade without expiring. This approach also applies to musical expressions. Knowledge and skills are orally transmitted from one generation to the next, ensuring that songs, stories, dances, and rituals remain alive. Younger members of the community learn directly from elders and master practitioners through hands-on experience and observation. They apprentice with master musicians, learning techniques, skills, and the cultural contexts of the music (Rogoff, 1990). Learning occurs effectively through participation in communal activities, where children and young people observe and emulate from experts.

The abolition of kingdoms and chiefdoms by the 1967 constitution in Uganda severely disrupted heritage practices such as *amakondeere* music since the king and his officials were the principal patrons of these traditions. Master practitioners

of various traditional arts went into hiding for their lives and others died since the intention of the new government was to demolish cultural traditions. The draconian move of erasing Buganda and other kingdoms caused chaos and significantly endangering the sustainability of the prevailing cultural practices. By the time kingdoms were reinstated in 1993, the remaining master players were too old to effectively resume and transmit these cultural musical expressions (Isabirye, 2021b; Kafumbe, 2018).

The revivalist movement thus, involved searching for surviving master musicians, sourcing seeds of *emiboga* to obtain materials for making *amakondeere*, and training new musicians in *amakondeere* music (Isabirye, 2021b). The Baganda believe that saplings sustain life in the forest, a sentiment captured in their saying, *emiti emito gye giggumiza ekibira*. Basing on this belief, the revival process succeeded, with master players passing on their knowledge to a new generation of *amakondeere* musicians. By teaching the youths how to perform this heritage, its sustainability was ensured, as learners would similarly perform and pass on their skills to future generations. Additionally, the sustainability of *amakondeere* was reinforced by encouraging community members to participate as *emiboga* farmers, and as makers and players of the *amakondeere* instruments. This way, communities ensured the availability of materials in case the need to construct new instruments arises.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that by the time these revivalist initiatives took shape, only one elderly cultural bearer was still surviving (Isabirye, 2021b). Though the people of Buganda had heard of *amakondeere*, many were unfamiliar with the music itself. Isabirye (2021b) explains that the project team searched for

*amakondeere* seeds but found none available throughout the entire Buganda kingdom. Because it is customary in African culture to keep seeds they had to consult another kingdom, and eventually, a musician from Bunyoro—about 150 km west of Buganda—located *emiboga*. The project leaders then purchased seeds and initial gourds from Bunyoro and supplied them to communities in Kassanda District, where *emiboga* gardens were established. This sparked the multiplication of *emiboga* and initiated training programs for *amakondeere* music. The materials of constructing *amakondeere* were now available, ensuring an avenue of preserving *amakondeere* music to the present day of this writing. This was confirmed by the data collected by the researcher, with participants consistently testifying that if the Buganda kingdom had not put in the effort to revive the tradition, it would not be in existence today. This revival contributed to the survival and preservation of *amakondeere* music, which is passionately cherished by the Baganda.

The Buganda kingdom believed that the key to preserving *amakondeere* for the future was to cultivate a new generation of youthful players. Thus, young people in the communities were encouraged to learn how to make and play the *amakondeere*. They were taught by master musicians and talented youths who had acquired skills during the period of political unrest in Uganda. Once trained, these youths participated in performances, including showcasing their talents before the Kabaka (**Figure 12**), to demonstrate to him and the Baganda people that they were the new generation of *Abakondeere*. This provided them with the opportunity to cultivate their identities as the new generation of *amakondeere* players capable of adapting an old tradition to suit contemporary contexts.



**Figure 12:** *Abakondeere* demonstrating their allegiance to the Kabaka during the coronation anniversary on July 31st, 2017. (Photo by the researcher)

Performing before the king attracted more youths to participate since such an endeavor was prestigious and fulfilling. To the extent of elevating musicians to positions of respect within the kingdom. And as a sign of their gratitude, the kingdom appreciated the *Abakondeere* by providing incentives such as transport from Kassanda to perform on various royal functions, which further encourages them to cherish this music (Isabirye, 2021b). This process enhanced their personal and communal identity, fostering a sense of individual and collective agency essential for the preservation and sustainability of *amakondeere* music. Therefore, the Baganda's belief that it is an honor to serve the Kabaka ensures the sustainability of *amakondeere* music.

The researcher learned that one of the primary goals of *Abakondeere* is to cultivate expertise in *amakondeere* music and educate dedicated individuals who will uphold and continue the tradition. To achieve this, *Abakondeere* started mentoring learners at a younger age, while ensuring that learning is closely linked to all

community activities. Among the Baganda, learning is connected to both the material and spiritual aspects of societal life, incorporating a comprehensive understanding of social existence and encouraging all community members to engage in collective interactions (Darron & Sharon, 2019). Master musicians, along with other skilled musicians, provide additional skills that aid in the behavioral development of learners. The researcher found that the primary concern of the *Abakondeere* community is to ensure respectful behavior and etiquette when learning *amakondeere* music. Therefore, youths must show reverence to elders, observe traditional practices, as well as maintaining humility and dedication throughout the learning process.

The researcher also discovered that *amakondeere* music is a communal activity where *okwetabamu* (participation) involves all members of society. This communal aspect allows learners to practice and perform in a supportive environment, fostering a sense of belonging and motivation. This approach keeps the music alive and promotes a collective sense of ownership, engagement, and commitment, thereby ensuring the tradition's preservation and sustainability. It is believed that setting a good example promotes unity and togetherness, reinforcing community identity and values. The master musician emphasized that the primary focus is consistently on setting a positive example and showing mutual respect. Young people cannot be inspired to pursue the profession if the elders do not uphold exemplary standards. When instructing children and youth, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of discipline and proper conduct as the master musician explained:

It is essential for *omukondeere* to consistently display good behavior to earn respect, which ensures the continuity of the tradition. Young people are inspired when they see us performing for distinguished individuals, including the Kabaka. This inspiration motivates them to join us, ensuring the preservation and continuity of *amakondeere* music. (Interview with ME, June, 13<sup>th</sup> 2024).

Setting a good example provides a moral and ethical framework that guides musicians' behavior. Respect for the art form, dedication to practice, and the responsibility to pass on knowledge are all reinforced by cultural beliefs (Greene, 1995). The Baganda believe that taboos, known as *emizizo* (*omuzizo* - singular) in Luganda, are crucial for instilling discipline and preserving resources efficiently. These taboos foster social cohesion and help maintain the community's identity. The researcher discovered that *emizizo* regulate musicians' conduct, ensuring they uphold accepted values, which in turn supports the preservation and sustainability of *amakondeere* music. The screening of *Abakondeere* is conducted through observation, and any improper behavior or misconduct can result in immediate disqualification, regardless of expertise. Effective learning is fostered by good behavior, a positive attitude, interest, and emotional intelligence.

A notable [*o*]*muzizo* related to *amakondeere* is that the instruments must not be touched by anyone who has committed adultery. Traditionally, the royal palace serves as the guardian of all royal music. The Baganda believe that if royal instruments are kept by individuals, they risk being mishandled, a situation referred to as *okusoba*. This term indicates causing significant harm, and in some cases, even death. For example, the Baganda believe that parents can cause the death of their baby by committing adultery while the baby is still being breastfed. This can happen if the parents engage in sexual activity with others who are not their legitimate spouses and then carry the baby before performing specific rituals to

prevent *okusoba*. The baby can also be affected if both parents have sex on the same bed where the baby sleeps. In such instances, the parents must immediately apply specific herbs and perform rituals to protect their baby from *okusoba* (Kirwana-Sozi, 2012).

This belief also applies to musical instruments, which can also become *okusoba* if someone who has committed adultery touches them without performing the proper rituals first. It is believed that mishandling *amakondeere* instruments in this way can make them *okusoba*, and the individual responsible, may face severe punishment. In some cases, it is thought that the instruments which are made *okusoba* can even cause the death of the person who mishandled them. This practice helps preserve and maintain the instruments and the music, as players fear causing *okusoba*.

*Omukondeere* must exhibit decorum that honors him by displaying cultural awareness, respect, politeness, humility, and composure, all of which contribute to sustainability. Children, youths, and some elders interested in learning *amakondeere* are taught holistically, integrating various aspects of life to cultivate cultural responsibility, as Ssekamwa (1997) points out. They learn how to make, play, and sing the music. For example, during an interview with *Abakondeere*, the master musician demonstrated how to play *amakondeere* to the researcher. As he played, children began imitating him, using sticks and grass stalks to replicate his actions. This demonstration (**Figure 13**) reflected their understanding of *amakondeere*, driven by their genuine desire to learn and play the instrument. Impressed by this act, the researcher asked the master musician to invite them to join him. The musician then brought additional instruments for them to play.



*Figure 13:* Children and youths demonstrating *amakondeere*

The *amakondeere* music traditions are deeply rooted within the Nnyonyi-Nnakinisige clan. As mentioned in previous sections, the Kabaka granted them private mailo land in Kassanda as recognition for their service to the kingdom, where their *obutaka* roots lie. In Luganda, *obutaka* (ancestry) is derived from *ettaka* (land), and the *Abakondeere* of Kassanda receive their *obutaka* as a reward. The land secures the sustainability of *amakondeere* heritage by enabling participation in farming *emiboga* materials. The master musician explained that:

The entire village belongs to the Nnyonyi-Nnakinisige clan, though others can occupy parts of the land. This arrangement preserves *amakondeere* tradition by ensuring land for farming, increasing raw material availability, and encouraging youth participation in making and playing *amakondeere*. Children also learn through observing and participating with family and community members. (Interview with BY, April, 14<sup>th</sup> 2024)

Today, the *amakondeere* music heritage flourishes as young people embrace it as a treasured link to their community's history. They actively work to protect and sustain it. By learning and practicing this tradition, the youth ensure its transmission to future generations. Isabirye (2021b) refers to this process as safeguarding one's identity, enabling the transfer of knowledge and skills from

older generations to the young. When asked why they enthusiastically engage in this tradition within a modern context, one young person provided an answer that many others echoed:

*Amakondeere* is our identity and culture. It is our hereditary duty which we must uphold with diligence. We have grown up surrounded by *amakondeere* music so we value it. Our ancestors played *amakondeere*, and our fathers continue to do so. We have the obligation to pass this tradition on to our own children. (Interview with DF, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024).

Customs and beliefs encourage a holistic approach to learning music, integrating it with other aspects of cultural education. This includes understanding the historical, social, and spiritual contexts of musical pieces, leading to a deeper and more comprehensive learning experience. They create a rich, supportive, and structured environment for learning music, ensuring that it remains an integral and vibrant part of the Baganda culture. While beliefs provide the foundational worldview, customs can adapt over time to changing circumstances while still reflecting core beliefs. This dynamic allows the Baganda culture to remain relevant and resilient. Additionally, customs and beliefs linked to *amakondeere* music of the Baganda people serve as pillars of cultural identity shaping diverse facets of their social life. They influence the way that music is learned and how learners gain a deeper understanding of their cultural heritage whilst developing a stronger connection to the music they study. Indeed, such cultural customs and beliefs in the end enhance sustainability.

#### **4.2.2 Rituals associated with *amakondeere* music**

The Baganda refer to rituals as *obulombolombo* (*akalombolombo* - singular) meaning a series of ceremonial acts performed according to traditional customs, beliefs, and values. They often hold significant spiritual and cultural importance, honoring ancestors, marking important life events, and ensuring community

cohesion. *Obulombolombo* are fundamental principles guiding the Baganda's behaviors, decision-making, and conduct. They serve as socio-cultural restrictions against certain actions, behaviors, or discussions, which are considered inappropriate within society. These rituals encompass a range of practices, including rites of passage, offerings, and other symbolic actions, reinforcing the connection between the people, their heritage, and the spiritual world (Kirwana-Sozi, 2007).

They are regarded as sacrosanct, aiming to avoid bad conduct, shame, and sometimes even death. For example, a married woman is prohibited from passing directly through her father-in-law's courtyard during the daytime while he is still alive but may do so at night or after his death. This practice aims to avoid incest. *Obulombolombo* (rituals) are closely linked to customs, which involve rich symbolism reflecting the beliefs of the Baganda. Many Baganda rituals and ceremonies incorporate specific musical forms and practices, providing structured opportunities for learning and performing music in meaningful contexts. The Baganda have based several of their traditions on a ritual model, thus creating a bond of values that form the true foundation of their identity.

Another example of *akalombolombo* among the Baganda is that two kings cannot reign at the same time. When the heir to the throne is born, this child is taken away to grow up in another kingdom or country. It is only following the demise of a reigning Kabaka that his heir can return to the kingdom to position himself as ready to take over the kingdom. The Baganda also believe that the *Mujaguzo* royal drums are symbolic of the Kabaka to the extent that when they are played, their sound translates into the voice of the king and for this reason, they do not reside in the same palace with the Kabaka. *Mujaguzo* ceremonies involve drumming, music,

dance and various other rituals that honor the Kabaka. These royal drums are sacred and they are only played on special occasions to serve as a link between the present and the ancestral past. For their centrality to the cultural and spiritual life of the Baganda people, the *Mujaguzo* royal drums serve as a potent symbol of the kingdom's heritage and continuity.

Similar to *amakondeere*, *Mujaguzo* royal drums must be present at important events such as birthdays, coronation ceremonies, and their anniversaries. It is *akalombolombo* for the Kabaka to play the royal drums, just as it is customary for *amakondeere* to announce the Kabaka's presence at royal functions. In fact, wherever *Mujaguzo* is present, *amakondeere* must also be there because both are royal expressions performed in the Kabaka's presence. The act of the Kabaka playing the *Mujaguzo* royal drums is culturally referred to as *okulamusa Mujaguzo* (greeting *Mujaguzo*) (Kirwana-Sozi, 2012). *Amakondeere* music serves as a link between the Kabaka and the people of Buganda, as their sound signifies his presence.

Data revealed that women do not participate in playing *amakondeere*. Instead, their role is to prepare food for the *Abakondeere* (trumpeters) and provide assistance during practices and learning sessions. During official performances, women accompany the men to help manage their belongings while they perform. This *akalombolombo*, is highly respected and cherished by the Baganda people. Part of this *akalombolombo* has to do with the women's position in culture as home carers. Since royal music performances often occur far from home, it is argued that women cannot leave their homes unattended to as that could lead to property destruction. Additionally, during their menstrual periods, women are considered unclean and

thus, prohibited from performing before the Kabaka. They are also not allowed to touch all royal instruments, including *amakondeere* during their menstrual period because doing so would lead to the defilement of such important cultural material and sometimes, potentially causing death (Kafumbe, 2006).

Another *akalombolombo* associated with *amakondeere* is that they are exclusively performed by members of *Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige* clan. As already mentioned in previous sections, the Baganda society is organized according to clans – *Ebika* (*Ekika* – singular). Each clan has its own main totem – *omuziro* – (*emiziro*, - plural.) and a minor totem *akabbiro* associated with taboos. There are about 52 clans, and each *ekika* has its own leader who is referred to as *Omutaka w' Akasolya*. This system is patrilineal, meaning that clan membership and lineage are traced through the male line. Examples of *ebika* include *Mutima* (Heart) to which I belong, *Nnyonyi* (birds of different species), *Ffumbe* (Civet Cat), *Njovu* (elephant), *Ngo* (Leopard), *Nte* (cow) among others. Every clan has its own cultural practices and a specific hereditary duty in the service of the Kabaka (Kafumbe, 2018; Isabirye, 2022; Kirwana-Sozi, 2012). Each clan also has its own unique cultural heritage, taboos, and traditional roles within Buganda kingdom. Totems – *Emiziro* - are animals, plants, or objects that symbolize *ekika* and as a precaution, the members of *ekika* are forbidden to use, harm or eat their *omuziro* (totem).

The hereditary duties for *ebika* are integral to the functioning of the kingdom and are rooted in traditional roles that have been passed down through generations. For example, the *Lugave* clan is responsible for the *Mujaguzo* and *Entenga* royal drums; the *Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige* clan is in charge of the *amakondeere*; and the *Mmamba* (lung fish) clan is in charge of the *Endere* flutes. A member of one

particular clan is not permitted to learn the duties of another since responsibilities to the royalty are closely guarded. This way, any transgressions would be viewed as a weakening factor of the connection of a clan to the kingdom. Transgressions in performative roles and activities could also lead to the loss of a clan's honor to serve the Kabaka (Kafumbe, 2018). For the purpose of this study, therefore, *amakondeere* music, the focus of this study is exclusively played by the *Nnyonyi-Nnakersige* clan.

However, exceptions could sometimes be made where a non-member joins (*ekika*) to serve the king as *omusiige* (*singular*). *Abasiige* (*plural*.) as explained in chapter one, refers to individuals who were offered by their *bika* (clans) and families to serve the Kabaka for most of their lives, fulfilling both a customary role and sometimes a request from the Kabaka. *Abataka abakulu b'Obusolya* (clan leaders) or elders (*Abataka*) were the ones who identified and trained some of their members from childhood to become successors of their noble duties. The main role of *abasiige* involved taking on the responsibilities of *ekika*, and to ensure continuity and stability within the *ekika*. *Abasiige* belonged to those very *bika* who submitted them for consideration into various roles. For example, the *ekika ky'Omutima* (the Heart clan) where I belong would send boys as *abasiige* to serve the Kabaka as fishermen a practice which is still existent. These young individuals dedicated to royal service, underwent trainings as *Abasiige*, guided by men of their clan within the palace, where they were ultimately to work. By virtue of being *omusiige*, therefore, one was subjected to a process of learning and acquisition of knowledge and skills, a forum of continuity.

Occasionally, a person could be recognized as a legitimate *omusiige* in another clan due to their expertise and experience in a particular duty. The *akalombolombo* is that, *Abakondeere* would identify an individual who would be accepted to play *amakondeere* despite the fact that this person does not belong to *Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige* clan. In such cases, *omusiige* who does not belong to the *ekika* had to undergo specific rituals to be accepted as a legitimate performer of the designated duty of that clan. At the time of this study, no individuals were submitted by their families to perform *amakondeere* as *obasiige*.

Isabirye (2022) provides an example where exceptions are occasionally made in Buganda, allowing a non-clan member and in some instances a non-Muganda to join a clan in order to serve the king. He explains that Musisi Mukalazi, an expert instructor of the *entenga* drums revival project was the *omusiige* of the *Emmamba* clan. His father was the *Magumba* (title for the head of the royal flutists) of *endere* players, making Musisi Mukalazi a legitimate player of *endere* music by heritage. However, Musisi was not interested in *endere*; instead, he dedicated his time to learning and mastering *entenga* drums, later becoming an expert. Due to his exceptional talent and interest in *entenga* drums, he was recommended and subsequently accepted as a legitimate player.

In comparison to the *Abakondeere* who lived outside the palace, the *Abasiige* were permanent residents of the *Lubiri* (Palace). However, *omukondeere omusiige* would be allowed to go for practices and then join the rest of the group during official performances. Today, the permanent residence of the *Abakondeere* is in *Kitongo ky'Amakondeere* village, in Kassanda District, Central Uganda, in the county of *Ssinga*, which is located within the Buganda Kingdom. The researcher

learned that if there were individuals interested in playing *amakondeere* and they were not members of *Nnyonyi Nnakinsige* clan, they would be required to undergo specific rituals to become legitimate players. These initiation activities include preparing a meal—*ekijjulo with obutiko obubaala* (mushrooms) without salt. When they reach *Ekiggwa ky'Amakondeere* (the shrine of *amakondeere*, which is the house of the late Ezra Mutokoto Mbabaali, father to Ssempewo the current cultural bearer) the individual is "rinsed" with herbs, including *ebbombo* (stinking passionflower/*Momordica foetida*), to cleanse him of evil spirits that may have followed him from his family and clan. This is done before the learning process begins so as to invoke blessings, honor ancestors, and establish a spiritual connection with the music. After cleansing, the individual is invited to share a meal with the legitimate *Abakondeere*, a climatic ritual that transforms one into a legitimate performer.

Another *akalombolombo* associated with *amakondeere* music is known as *okukansira amakondeere*, which means offering sacrifices to the *Abakondeere* to obtain cultural knowledge or information. In the case of this study, the research had to *okukansira* before requesting the *Abakondeere* to play some music, or visit their shrine. Arriving at *Ekiggwa ky'Amakondeere*, the researcher was initially unaware of the *kalombolombo* of *okukansira*, which affected her interlocutors' attitude about her presence. The master musician hesitated to answer the researcher's questions as other respondents whispered and murmured amongst themselves, possibly expressing concern over what could have been perceived as disrespect for not fulfilling an important ritual. Soon, one respondent explained the ritual to the researcher and requested compliance. As a shrine of a god, it was expected that any visitor makes a sacrifice (in form of *okukansira*) before dealing

with whatever took them there. Once the researcher complied, the situation transformed into a favorable one and only then did the interviews proceed comfortably.

Additionally, *amakondeere* are not played for entertainment or any other social functions. The master musician explained that *amakondeere* are exclusively played in the presence of the Kabaka, at royal funerals, or during *Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige* clan gatherings. The master musician also noted that *amakondeere* used to be performed daily for the Kabaka, but due to various cultural changes, this practice has declined, especially after the dismantling of kingship in the country. He added:

Although *amakondeere* music is enjoyable and people would love to have it performed at their events for a fee, it is considered an abomination to perform *amakondeere* at social functions. This is a restriction rooted in the moral and ethical framework that guides us *Abakondeere* and all other royal musicians (Interview with SH, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2024).

Even though the master musician expressed conformity with tradition, it is not ruled out that *Amakondeere* are played in other contexts. He also noted that *Amakondeere* are not placed on the ground. When making them, a covering must be placed on the floor to maintain their dignity and for safety purposes. For storage, the instruments are placed in a bag after use and hung on the wall. If no bag is available, a string is used to tie them individually before being hung up for safety. This practice ensures that the instruments, which are blown using the mouth, remain clean and uncontaminated.

*Amakondeere* music is a significant part of the Baganda's cultural identity. Like the *Mujaguzo* royal drums, *amakondeere* instruments are tied up and silenced after the burial of a reigning king. They remain this way until a new heir is installed, at which point they are untied and played to announce his presence. Once untied, they

are played continuously thereafter. However, due to Uganda's socio-historical and politico-economic challenges, the performance of this ritual was halted. The master musician explained that when Kabaka Muteesa passed away, his father performed the ritual and tied up some of the *amakondeere*. Unfortunately, by the time the kingdom was reinstated, most of these instruments had deteriorated, resulting into a loss of nearly all of them, including the *endeesi*, *enzigalizi* and *enkwale* (type of instruments in *amakondeere* set), to the extent that no one knows how to make these instruments anymore.

The *Abakondeere's* custom not to performing at social gatherings, even for a fee, exemplifies their pride and identity. When someone is accustomed to a specific way of being, any attempt to alter it can be a disrupting and thus, challenging experience involving giving up what is already known for negotiating new ways of being and knowing. It requires balancing conflicting views and considering all possibilities, so that when an individual makes a choice, the new aspect of their identity represents a hard-won personal victory. This is why the master musician insists on maintaining tradition so that no one would go through such a challenging experience. And by doing so, a sense of continuity is secured.

#### **4.2.3 Ceremonies associated with *amakondeere***

According to the Baganda, ceremonies are significant cultural and social events marking important life milestones, community celebrations, and religious observances. These ceremonies are deeply rooted in specific traditions, reflecting the values, beliefs, and history of the people. In Luganda, ceremonies are referred to as *emikolo* (plural - *omukolo* - singular). They are performed to celebrate achievements, observe established activities, or honor the lives of elders. These

norms are highly respected and comprised of various *obulombolombo* (rituals) that must not be undermined, as doing so can lead to severe consequences.

During a focus group discussion (FGD), participants shared that the coronation of the Kabaka holds profound significance in *amakondeere* practice, marked by elaborate rituals and music. *Amakondeere*, along with other royal instruments, are played to celebrate and announce the new king's ascension. The researcher learned from FGD participants that for the Baganda, *amakondeere* specifically honors their king, symbolizing their identity and connection to their traditions. *Amakondeere* represents a royal tradition deeply connected to the king, embodying the values and heritage of the Buganda kingdom. In the FGD, the master musician expressed their pride in their association with the Kabaka, who symbolizes the essence of the kingdom. He remarked:

We felt a sense of achievement when we were invited to play at the coronation anniversary on July 31, 2017. Initially, we did not realize that *amakondeere* could elevate us to the heart of cultural power. However, when Buganda officials arranged transportation for us to the Lubiri (king's palace), we were overjoyed. Our primary goal in learning *amakondeere* was to perform before the Kabaka and to be recognized as the new generation of *amakondeere* musicians, and we achieved it. (Interview with KB, May 13<sup>th</sup> 2024).

Being linked to the Kabaka holds great importance among the Baganda, as the king is the foremost symbol of the kingdom. Being closely connected to him enhances one's social status within the community. For the youths in Kassanda, an invitation to perform for the Kabaka turned this aspiration into reality. They understood that mastering *amakondeere* would raise their status in Buganda. They said that at the coronation ground, they played *amakondeere* with pride, moving energetically and bending down with excitement. This demonstrated a strong sense of agency through their joyful commitment to a music tradition that boosted their social

standing. They also learned to show allegiance to the Kabaka before and after performing, showcasing a strong sense of self-determination before the entire Buganda Kingdom.

During royal processions, especially when the Kabaka is traveling or making a public appearance, *amakondeere* are played to herald his arrival and signify his presence. The performance of *amakondeere* during coronation ceremonies is a royal tradition that leads the king's procession at the event. When the king arrives at the coronation anniversary venue, shortly before greeting the *Mujaguzo* royal drums, *amakondeere* are played to honor his presence. Following this, *Abakondeere* musicians lead the Kabaka in a procession to his throne and as this happens, he waves to his people who in turn wave back in ululations.

*Abakondeere* expressed their honor in being the ones to accompany the Kabaka to his royal seat. Wherever they go for performances, villagers, relatives, and family members eagerly watch them on TV. This highlights that *amakondeere* is a symbol of their identity, creating joyous moments for participants and the entire community. It reflects a strong determination of achieving their collective goal of playing *amakondeere* for the king. This experience excited the youth into valuing *amakondeere* and in the end becoming passionate about learning it. One respondent mentioned:

I was hesitant to learn *amakondeere*, but I did not realize how much it would affect me! Every time my friends were called for to perform at the palace, I felt terrible for not being part of them. I missed the opportunity to see the Kabaka and to share in the respect and honor they received upon their return. Everyone in our village honored them, and they were even referred to as *Abazira* (heroes) *b'Essaza lyaffe* (of our County) – Ssingol. (Interview with DF May, 13<sup>th</sup> 2024).

The researcher also learned about some exceptions to the performance of *amakondeere*, which accordingly can be performed at the funeral of the *Omutaka w'Akasolya k'Ekika ky'Ennyonyi-Nnakinsige* (head of the *Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige* clan which is bestowed upon the duty of playing *Amakondeere*). The *Abakondeere* explained that the sound of *amakondeere* communicates with spirits and ancestors, guiding the soul of the deceased to the afterlife. Additionally, the master player mentioned that during cultural gatherings of the *Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige* clan, *amakondeere* are performed to entertain the *Omutaka w'Akasolya* and his grandchildren, reminding them of their hereditary responsibilities. Furthermore, *amakondeere* are played as part of a musical ensemble to entertain, convey cultural narratives, and remind the clan members of their hereditary duty, ancestry and origins.

*Amakondeere* music is also played during clan gatherings, known as *okumanyagana* (getting to know each other), a ritual of great importance among the Baganda (**Figure 14**). *Okumanyagana* is a ritual among the Baganda people in which all clan members gather at their ancestral grounds or at the home of a clan member. This gathering aims at fostering strong relationships among members of the same lineage and discussing social and developmental matters within the clan. This ritual foster unity and togetherness, strengthening the identity of clan members. It also aims at preventing incest, as all clan members belong to the same lineage, forming a large extended family. This lineage, traced back to a common ancestor, means that all clan members are considered brothers and sisters, regardless of the actual distance in blood ties.



**Figure 14:** *Abakondeere* performing at a clan gathering - *okumanyagana* (Photo by Ssempewo Stephen)

Engagement with *amakondeere* music provides individuals with a deep understanding and awareness of their culture, including their values, beliefs, practices, customs, and social norms. This involvement fosters respect and sensitivity towards cultural diversity, enabling individuals to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. With this knowledge, they become respectful, avoiding assumptions or judgments based on their own cultural perspectives. They become accommodating, adaptive, and open-minded, continually seeking to expand their understanding and appreciation of their heritage and identity. *Amakondeere* becomes their unique identifier, distinguishing them from other communities. Their customs and beliefs empower them to become experienced teachers, instructors, and mentors, qualified to provide guidance,

support, and instruction based on established cultural norms and values, in the end ensuring that knowledge is passed down accurately and effectively.

### **4.3 Contribution of language and values in learning of *amakondeere***

A language is a critical element that distinguishes people from other ethnic groups and fosters a sense of pride and belonging among its speakers. It is the primary medium through which people connect, share ideas, and engage in communal activities, thereby reinforcing social cohesion and unity in society. A language is a vital vehicle for education and the transmission of indigenous knowledge. Elders and educators use a language to teach traditional practices, ethical values, and practical skills, ensuring the continuity of cultural knowledge, thus, a potent attribute of cultural identity and belonging.

#### **4.3.1 Language as a means of transmitting *amakondeere***

Luganda, the language of the Baganda people, includes oral traditions such as stories, proverbs, and songs that are integral to their cultural heritage. Known as *olulimi* by the Baganda, it plays a significant role in how individuals understand and engage with the cultural dimensions of music. Among the Baganda, language (*olulimi*) is divided into two categories: verbal and non-verbal. The verbal category is referred to as *olulimi lw'ebigambo* (language of words), while the non-verbal category is known as *olulimi lwe'ebikolwa* (language of actions). Through both categories of *olulimi*, the Baganda communicate societal norms, preserve and transmit cultural knowledge, values, and identity. This transmission occurs orally through stories, songs, proverbs, poetry, folklore, historical events, customs, narratives, and traditions. Elders often spend time with the younger generation, verbally sharing information and fostering a rich oral tradition.

For the Baganda people, language is more than a means of communication; it is a fundamental part of their cultural identity and heritage. *Olulimi*, is crucial for learning musical traditions, as it conveys musical concepts, history, and playing techniques, in all aiding the transmission of various components of knowledge. The values embedded in *olulimi* and music shape how individuals perceive and engage with the cultural aspects of music. *Olulimi* is seen as a unifying factor, fostering socialization, love, and friendship among family members and the community. The Baganda believe that *olulimi* is a source of wealth and good health, as it facilitates effective communication, preserves valuable knowledge, enhances education, and creates economic opportunities. This belief is captured in the saying: *Olulimi bwe bugagga*, meaning language is wealth.

Through oral traditions, *olulimi* serves as an educational framework in Baganda community. Elders and knowledgeable members of society use storytelling and oral instruction to impart wisdom, moral lessons, and practical knowledge to the younger generation. *Olulimi lw'ebikolwa*, is also vital among the Baganda people. This includes gestures, facial expressions, and signs to convey messages. For instance, parents can use their eyes to caution, warn, or reprimand their children. Thus, language acts as a window into the cultural and social functions of the Baganda, aiming at informing and sharpening the mind.

The Luganda language is essential for learning *amakondeere* because it enables adults, youths, and children to acquire skills through explanations of techniques, rhythms, and cultural context. Among the Baganda, learning occurs through productive experiences accessible to schooling and non-schooling youth, as well as illiterate adults, emphasizing observation, emulation, and practice. *Amakondeere* knowledge is gained through dialogue and structured training guided

by indigenous music practitioners following an unwritten curriculum (Ekadu-Ereu, 2012). Respondents shared that *Abakondeere* mastered *amakondeere* through traditional learning, inspiring youths despite limited literacy. The diverse skills of teacher-experts greatly inspired learners in various ways.

Language is essential for providing instructions and constructive feedback. Master trainers explain how to produce specific sounds, maintain rhythm, and perform as part of an ensemble. They also correct mistakes and offer guidance to improve skills. Verbal instructions help the learner to understand concepts and develop competence through spoken texts from experts and peers. Learners decide on the appropriate instrument to play and focus on it. The researcher discovered that after effectively listening to both the instructor and the music, learners choose whether to play the *ensaasi* or the *enjawuzi*. As they attend to various tasks, they learn to perform them better and, through observation, tackle more complex tasks. Effective listening, which stems from good conduct, facilitates language learning. A good listener asks clarifying and meaningful questions, whose answers enhance learning. Good listening is linked to good behavior, which in the end creates conducive learning environments.

In addition to spoken language, the Baganda use non-verbal cues such as gestures and facial expressions to convey nuances in performance techniques and emotional expression, enhancing the learning process. In *amakondeere* engagements, learning is demonstrated through actions based on verbal instructions. As learners listen, they observe and try out tasks based on their own understanding, applying what they have learned. This method teaches children practical skills for the present while also preparing them for future roles in the community. The researcher observed that *amakondeere* processes result in groups of children who engages in

a shared activity with joy and in a meaningful way. They invest energy, time, and concentration in this process, making the experience of learning *amakondeere* significant to them. Such pedagogical approaches enable learners to acquire various skills, such as imagination, critical thinking, shrewdness, literature, composition, and the art of public speaking. They develop a sense of confidence, empowering them to function meaningfully and contribute to addressing the needs of their communities.

#### **4.3.2 Significance of values in the process of learning *amakondeere***

Values are the core principles and beliefs that shape the behavior, social interactions, and cultural practices of the Baganda. They define what is considered desirable and worthwhile within their culture, guiding individuals and groups in their decision-making and actions. Values can be explicitly taught or implicitly understood, playing a crucial role in defining cultural identity and guiding behavior. Deeply embedded in daily life, these values are essential for maintaining the social fabric of the community.

In Luganda, the term for value is *omuwendo*, which is often associated with objects. However, the Baganda also use this term to signify the importance of their culture in fostering good values among individuals. They have expressions like *olulimi kya muwendo*, meaning that language is valuable for instilling values and good character among children and people. Thus, the concept of values reflects the desirable way of living or worthwhile conduct for an individual in their interactions with others and the community at large. The Baganda understand values as shared cultural ideals, embodying the notion of what should be. These values encompass core principles such as integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, humility, calmness,

hospitality, hard work, and good character, among others. These aspects represent what is deemed desirable and worthwhile in their culture, guiding both individual and collective decisions and actions.

Values are deeply rooted in the Baganda's way of life and are evident in their traditions, rituals, and daily interactions. These shared ideals foster a sense of identity and belonging, thereby strengthening the cultural fabric of their society. Music traditions often reflect these values, helping individuals cultivate their sense of identity and belonging. The role of language and values in learning *amakondeere* music will be explored under the following sub-headings: pedagogical approaches to teaching *amakondeere* music, ethical considerations in learning *amakondeere* music, and measures to preserve *amakondeere* music

#### ***4.3.2.1 Pedagogical approaches in teaching amakondeere***

Values guide musicians in their personal and artistic growth, fostering an environment conducive to making, learning, and practicing music effectively and meaningfully. Among the Baganda, customs and beliefs are integral to these values, playing a crucial role in reinforcing proper methods for learning *amakondeere*. This is achieved through various interconnected mechanisms, including the transmission of musical knowledge across generations and providing a natural, immersive learning environment through traditional ceremonies, festivals, and rituals that often involve musical expressions such as *amakondeere*. Beliefs emphasize the importance of these practices, ensuring their preservation and transmission. For example, the belief that *amakondeere* should not be placed on the ground enhances a sense of responsibility and cleanliness, promoting good character and maintaining a peaceful mind and soul.

Among the Baganda people, knowledge and skills are communicated orally and aurally by various community members. The pedagogical approaches used in learning *amakondeere* are rooted in indigenous music practices which creates opportunities for learners to think critically and enhance their understanding through discussion and collaboration. These methods emphasize problem-solving experiences, enabling learners to take charge of their learning and work together to address individual and community issues through collective reasoning. This empower them to behave musically (Bruner, 1996). Ruiz-Alfonso et al. (2018) explain that passionate individuals, whose activities align with their values and other life aspects, experience higher levels of concentration, flow, affect, and energy during learning situations. Expert musicians in *amakondeere* engagements provide pedagogical support to all learners, considering their age, status, and education level which foster productive learning experiences that emblematically reinforce their understanding of concepts.

Cross-generational learning was so evident in *amakondeere* engagements. Children, youths and elders shared knowledge, skills, and experiences, fostering mutual understanding, respect and collaboration among different age groups within their community of learning (Wenger, 1998). Values such as discipline, commitment and openness were emphasized to ensure that musicians dedicate the necessary time and effort to practice and refine their skills. Customs and beliefs associated with *amakondeere*, play a crucial role in reinforcing commitment and discipline among learners and also provide effective methods for learning *amakondeere* music as was noted by elders. The researcher discovered that one of the objectives of *Abakondeere* is to cultivate discipline among the youths and children. The master musician explained that to uphold integrity, they firmly

encourage good behavior, honesty, trustworthiness, and calmness, among other values.

Setting a positive example and respecting one another as elders, are key components of pedagogical approaches in *amakondeere* engagements, thus, reflecting a unique way the community conveys its identity. Schippers and Bendrups (2015) underscore the significance of musicians and communities, highlighting the positions, roles, and interactions of musicians within their communities and the social foundation of their traditions. They emphasize the importance of values in shaping the repertoire, teaching methods, and attitudes towards music within a culture. This creates an authentic and immersive environment for learning, enhancing the transmission of musical knowledge and skills across generations.

Furthermore, collaboration and teamwork, evident across all activities in *amakondeere* engagements, are integral to learning music. The researcher discovered that values such as cooperation, respect, and empathy are vital for fostering harmonious collaboration among the *Abakondeere*, enabling them to listen attentively to each other and create cohesive performances. This collaborative spirit is evident in the various tasks involved in crafting, playing, and maintaining *amakondeere*, where each member actively participates. Responsibilities range from cutting and hollowing out wood to washing and preparing animal skins for sewing, among other tasks. This underscores how values contextualize, impart meaning, and shape identity, influencing the perception, practice, preservation, and transmission of music across generations.

Elders diligently pass down knowledge to children and youth, establishing a solid foundation for a tradition that encourages proactive learning. The participatory nature of engagement in learning *amakondeere* fosters skill development at all levels. As Turino (2008) suggests, the values expressed and practices within musical events reflect broader social patterns, where individuals find consistency between these activities and the values guiding their daily lives. This aligns with the social constructivist perspective that emphasizes how lived experiences are socially constructed within specific historical and cultural contexts known to individuals. Performing for the Kabaka exemplifies a socially constructed and meaningful lived experience shared within the community.

The practical sessions inherent in *amakondeere* practice stimulate creativity and innovation, prompting learners to explore fresh ideas and to inspire others to respect and cherish the tradition. The *Abakondeere* attest to this, particularly evident as they prepare for performances during coronation anniversaries. They explained that the significance of *amakondeere* became evident when kingdom officials enthusiastically invited the new generation of *amakondeere* players to perform at the coronation anniversary on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017. The *Abakondeere* received a special welcome from the organizers and were given a tent where commoners (*abakopi*) were not allowed (Isabirye, 2021a, 2021b). This highlighted the high regard for *amakondeere* at the ceremony and as a tradition. The master musicians described how they were honored and given special attention, akin to that of royals. Upon their return, they were exalted and praised, with everyone eager to hear about their experience in *Lubiri* (king's palace where the function took place). The master musician recounted telling the story repeatedly following constant congratulatory messages over a month. This account inspired the youths

to value *amakondeere*, igniting their passion to learn. In large numbers, the youths dedicated days to learning how to make, play, and sing *amakondeere* music. They mobilized their peers, working diligently to ensure its continuity.

The master musician explained that they have gained recognition throughout the kingdom and take pride in their positive contributions to the development of Buganda and Uganda as a whole. According to McLaughlin (2012), recognition is essential for a healthy self-identity. He observed that their TV appearances fostered a sense of ownership of the music, which evolved into a social identity, as *amakondeere* fostered a feeling of shared identity. One of the respondents expressed his pride, saying:

I am proud of being *omukondeere* because I have become known by many people and, most importantly, by our subjects within the kingdom and the country as a whole. I started performing *amakondeere* music when I was fifteen years old, and now, at twenty, I am considered a very important person in the Buganda kingdom. (Interview with MI, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2027).

Musical expressions often serve as a community's unique way of conveying its identity. The pride and prestige demonstrated by the youth reflect a significant achievement, leading him to view *amakondeere* as a path to elevate himself and attain cultural prominence. He believed that his esteemed status in society as *omukondeere* was a major accomplishment derived from learning *amakondeere*. The pedagogical approaches used in engaging with *amakondeere* were meaningful to him personally and to the community as a whole. Schippers and Bendrups (2015) emphasize the importance of musicians within their communities, focusing on their roles, positions, and interactions within social traditions. They highlight that customs and beliefs are crucial in shaping the repertoire, teaching methods, and attitudes toward music within a culture. This aligns with the Baganda's belief that

customs and beliefs provide context, meaning, and a sense of identity, influencing how music is perceived, practiced, preserved, and passed down through generations.

The apprenticeship model as described by Rogoff (1990) was observed in *amakondeere* engagements reflecting a collaborative environment where youths and children work closely with their mentors, fostering personalized guidance. This enhanced a direct relationship between the master (teacher) and the apprentice (learner) through observation, imitation, and active participation in the tasks and practices of the tradition. Many of the *Abakondeere* testified that they drew inspiration from their parents, who earned great respect throughout the kingdom because of *amakondeere*. They view *amakondeere* as a symbol of their identity (Isabirye, 2021b), showcasing their uniqueness. They take immense pride in how *amakondeere* music has significantly contributed to their cultural growth, reinforcing their identity and deepening their understanding of cultural values and norms. This recognition has attracted people, including those from foreign countries, seeking information, thereby contributing to the kingdom's growth and development.

Apprenticeship also fosters experiential learning and active involvement in all aspects of learning, from preparation and setup to performance and refinement of skills. This active engagement fosters a deeper understanding and mastery of the tradition and reflects communal values. It is an expression of the community's will, viewing *amakondeere* as a valued heritage worth investing time, energy, and effort to nurture a new generation of players (Isabirye, 2021b). Much of the learning is informal, with knowledge passed down through demonstration and practice, but

formal instruction is provided by the master musicians, who explain techniques, principles, and context. This develops a strong relationship of trust and respect between the master and apprentice, creating a supportive environment conducive to learning and personal growth. Apprenticeship often occurs within the broader community context, where it gains acceptance and recognition as a learner progresses in the learning journey, ultimately contributing to the cultural continuity and vitality of the tradition. It also emphasizes practical, experiential learning under the guidance of a master practitioner, thus, ensuring a holistic transmission and preservation of the musical tradition (Rogoff, 1990).

Values are deeply rooted in the Baganda's way of life and are evident in their traditions, such as *amakondeere* music, rituals, and everyday interactions. These shared ideals help individuals develop a sense of identity and belonging, reinforcing the cultural fabric of their society. Music traditions often reflect these values, fostering a sense of identity and community. The role of values in learning *amakondeere* music is apparent in both the pedagogical approaches and the ethical decisions involved, thus, playing a significant role in shaping the context in which the learner's learning processes occur (Wiggins, 2011).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Overview

The discussions of findings are organized based on the objectives of the study and are presented under the following headings: how participation influences learning of *amakondeere* music, the contribution of customs and beliefs to the process of learning *amakondeere* music, and the role of language and values in the transmission of *amakondeere* music. These sections will be followed by conclusions about the study and recommendations.

Upon deeper reflection on the themes that emerged from the initial data analysis, I discovered that *amakondeere* music fosters a sense of valuing fellow players and encourages participation that benefits the collective good. The structure of this music underscores the importance of relationships and active involvement. To create this music, performers need high levels of coordination and cooperation. Teamwork is crucial as it enhances the potential for participation. Wenger's (1998) description of participation as both the process of taking part and creating relationships with others reflects this process. His idea that participation involves both action and connection is a precise description which define the structure and operations of *amakondeere* music. According to Wenger, participation is both a personal and social endeavor, encompassing a complex process that integrates actions, discussions, thoughts, emotions, and a sense of belonging. This engagement involves the whole person, including physical presence, mental engagement, emotions, and social relationships. A key aspect of participation is the development of an identity rooted in these participatory relationships which are reflected in *amakondeere* music.

## **5.1 How participation influences the learning of *amakondeere* music**

Participation in a musical expression like *amakondeere* encompasses various activities, including active performance, listening, creating, and learning music, as well as supporting and passing on musical knowledge to future generations. It represents the different ways individuals interact with music within a specific cultural context. Carver (2012) emphasizes that a core principle in African music is community participation, with music traditionally taught and transmitted orally from one generation to the next. Music is intertwined with daily activities, making it an integral part of everyday life.

In the Baganda community, participation is largely communal, reflecting the social and cultural values and contributing to the preservation and evolution of their music culture. *Amakondeere* music is performed in contexts that fosters unity among members, encouraging active participation in social practices and identity construction. The Baganda acknowledge the significance of engaging in indigenous community music, agreeing that such participation is vital for learning music (Turino, 2008). Learning is a collective and collaborative effort involving interactions across generations, with mutual support. Through observation and reflection on how participants collaborated to learn *amakondeere*, these themes emerged: the dynamics of social interactions in *amakondeere* learning processes, the pedagogical approach of the master musicians, and the nature of leadership in *amakondeere* learning processes.

### **5.1.1 Dynamics of social interaction in *amakondeere***

The dynamics of social interaction refer to the patterns and processes that characterize how individuals interact within social contexts. It involves the behaviors, communications, and relationships that occur during these

engagements. According to Heinz & Marshall (2003), social dynamics involve the processes and factors driving changes and developments within societies. They emphasize the importance of historical context in understanding social dynamics, believing that historical events and trends offer valuable insights into the current state and future direction of social change. The dynamics of social interactions include continuous adaptation and innovation, where individuals and institutions within society adapt to changing circumstances, and this adaptive behavior drives social progress.

The Baganda people, like all humans, are inherently social beings who experience life together and learn through their interaction with one another. They participate in various collective activities such as living, cooking, playing, and working together. These interactions allow them to share and construct experiences, exchange ideas, as well as knowledge, values, and skills. Due to the dynamics of social engagements, some individuals acquire more knowledge through their life experiences, enabling them to gain a broader understanding of certain issues. This accumulated experience allows them to provide guidance to the less experienced ones. In turn, those with less understanding of certain life issues enhance their comprehension through these social interactions with others. The Baganda recognize that the construction of understanding happens at an individual level, even though learning processes occur within a social context. Therefore, personal engagement in these processes determines what one learns from any given social experience.

The concept of social interaction is clearly evident in the practice of *amakondeere* music. *Amakondeere* are played in a hokey style, where each player contributes a single repeated note to the piece. Each player must play their note precisely on the

right pulse for the music to sound as intended. The music largely rely on coordinated participation and exceptional musical cooperation as Isabirye (2019a) notes. This music-making practice is inherently social, as it requires cooperation and teamwork from the players. The performance involves both action and connection with a high level of coordination and cooperation from the players to create the music. Joint problem-solving is crucial, as each player's single note must effectively contribute to an excellent performance.

The data revealed that a set of *amakondeere* instruments consists of five instruments: *ensaasi* (the one which strikes and with the lowest pitch), *enjawuzi* (mixer), *endeesi* (the starter), *enzigalizi* (the one that comes at the close), and *enkwale* (partridge, the loudest and highest in pitch). However, only *ensaasi* and *enjawuzi* are currently available, since the other instruments were lost during the 1966 political crisis that led to the abolition of kingdoms during Obote's presidency. Additionally, the experts in making *endeesi*, *enkwale*, and *enzigalizi* had passed away, leaving no one with the knowledge to craft these instruments. Given the situation, the *Abakondeere* did not abandon their hereditary duty, which also serves as a profession and a reflection of their identity. With the available instruments, each musician plays a single repeated note, and this requires precise coordination and timing. They are able to adapt to changes, reflecting a form of deep social interaction, whereby they must be highly attuned to one another.

Wenger (1998) view learning as a process of enhancing individual and collective ability to find life and the world meaningful. He emphasizes that practice involves sharing historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives that sustain mutual engagement in action. The absence of the three instruments in a set did not

prevent *amakondeere* from being performed. The *Abakondeere* used what was available, operating within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). They engaged in highly effective social interactions that facilitated joint problem-solving (Hatano, 1993). Through negotiation, they collectively supported the construction of their own understanding. They understood that their success relied on their ability to coordinate and exchange roles seamlessly to achieve a perfect performance. By engaging in collaborative experiences, they solved problems collectively and expanded their knowledge base through sharing musical ideas. These interactions enhanced their personal and interpersonal identity, which in turn strengthened communal identity and fostered ongoing progress and transformation of *amakondeere* music within their communities.

Social interactions occur both verbally and non-verbally. Verbal interactions typically include greetings and instructions to guide the learning process. Non-verbal interactions are seen in handshakes, finger-pointing, nodding heads, smiles, facial expressions, and body movements, during performance. The researcher observed that peaceful-physical contact is a common gesture among the *Abakondeere*. Within *amakondeere* engagements, verbal interactions dominate the crafting of instruments because of the nature of activities involved. It was evident that as people arrived for practices, they would shake hands and exchange greetings, nod heads vertically and horizontally, move shoulders, smile, laugh, blink and many other body movements. They engaged in cutting the guards, hollowing them, washing, *okuwawula* them and participated in all activities in peace and harmony an exhibition of belonging and togetherness.

Throughout these processes, participants exchanged thoughts, feelings, ideas, and experiences as they worked towards a common goal. *Amakondeere* music features five or more monotone gourd instruments played in a hocket style to produce a melody, sometimes accompanied by the *Mujaguzo* royal drums. A typical performance begins with one *kkondeere*, then others join in. The song lyrics, known to the *Abakondeere*, narrate the history of the Baganda, focusing on the Kabaka and their chiefs, thus reinforcing their identity and ties to their heritage. Even though these songs were composed long ago, they still relate to current situations in the kingdom of Buganda and Uganda as a whole. The songs discuss the Kabaka and the kingdom, as well as the lives of the people of Buganda, addressing both mythological history and everyday life matters. During practices and performances, non-verbal communication is vital as players combine their strength, knowledge, skills, and creativity in a coordinated social, physical, and conceptual performance (Ratner, 2006). They interact through their breaths, constructing narratives of the songs whose lyrics are not spoken but understood, informing people about their social priorities (Elliott & Silverman, 2005).

*Amakondeere* provides contexts where each player contributes to its continual success. The master musicians offer guidance and make informed decisions that build bridges, enabling everyone to reach new understandings and develop skills with dynamic shifts in each one's responsibilities. They engage in shared interactional patterns of human effort aimed at achieving specific outcomes and human ends carried out ethically, for the benefit of their well-being, growth, democratic participation, and educational development (Elliott & Silverman, 2005). As leaders, master musicians determine the distribution of leadership within a social context, ensuring democratic engagements and values that guide behavior.

*Amakondeere* engagements facilitate the development of a participatory identity, thereby extending family relationships to the broader community. For example, during clan gatherings, it is mandatory for the children of all women in the clan to gather with their spouses, children, and grandchildren if married. This is to establish good relations with a wide range of individuals, in the end strengthening moral, social, emotional, and economic support among clan members. The Baganda people understand that social gatherings can both create tension and resolve conflicts within the community. Social events like *okumanyagana* serve as excellent opportunities to develop social networks, allowing individuals to share experiences, thoughts, and feelings. They are also essential platforms for learning, where community members gain insights into their culture, historical context, and social roles, which foster a sense of shared identity and purpose.

The purpose of all the aforementioned interactions is to communicate, brainstorm, negotiate, agree, compromise, and blend ideas from all members of the practice community. The researcher observed that in *amakondeere* engagements, a significant amount of implicit information was exchanged enhancing the sharing of ideas and understanding. These interactions exemplify the Baganda people's communal way of life, reflecting their values and identity, and serving as a form of indigenous education. They learned to make and play *amakondeere* music through these traditional community interactions. This process aligns with the social constructivism theory, which emphasizes the importance of interaction as a means for active construction of knowledge and meaning. Constructivists see knowledge as socially constructed, contextually understood, and shaped by an individual's historical and cultural experiences. The practice of *amakondeere* provides a platform for the learner to build their own understanding.

### **5.1.2 Pedagogical approaches of learning *amakondeere***

Knowledge and skills among the *Abakondeere* are primarily transferred by a master musician, supported by two elders and three youths. They teach the youths how to cultivate, create, and perform *amakondeere* music, while identifying others who can pass on this knowledge. Indigenous learning methods are used to impart these skills. The researcher observed that the master trainer, instead of instructing the learners directly, demonstrated the tasks himself. This approach contrasts with formal school settings, where, as Augustyniak (2014) notes, music education typically involves a didactic teacher-to-student approach.

Among the Baganda people, music is integral to daily life, and deeply woven into all community activities. Children incorporate music into their play, mimicking roles of adults like parents, aunts, uncles, and other community members. They observe and imitate each other while singing, dancing, and clapping hands. This describes the essence of *amakondeere* music participation in their communities. In one engagement, master musicians, adults, and youths fostered social interaction, facilitating learning through shared thoughts and musical collaboration. Children observed from the sidelines, sometimes imitating the activities. Youths naturally supported one another as they worked and played together, creating an enjoyable environment where they were not only inspired, but also valued the musical tradition, and as such embraced it at an individual and collective level.

When the process of making *amakondeere* began, the master musician presented all the materials and tools to the youths, who were already enthusiastic from his inspirational demonstrations and explanations. He also informed them about the objectives of the exercise, one of which involved each participant in the making of

*ekkondeere* that they would play at the coronation anniversary the following year. This motivated them to work hard, as they were eager to perform before the Kabaka, a platform of demonstrating their allegiance. The researcher noted that this exercise had not taken place for some time because the *Abakondeere* had insufficient instruments for practice and performance. This training was conducted at the researcher's request for the study, and it was purely coincidental that the master musician had some reserved gourds available for use.

The master musician often spoke briefly to set a holistic context for the youths before inviting them into the process of making and playing the instruments. There was limited verbal instruction, a style known as verbalization (Dunbar-Hall, 2011). The youths were engaged in participatory activities almost the entire time of the learning session, dividing tasks among themselves: some cutting gourds, others washing them, some removing and saving the seeds, while others prepared the skins and stitches. The researcher observed that the entire learning process matched Gardner's (1995) description of learning through direct observation, interactive engagement, and punctuated by overt instructions.

The master musician demonstrated to the youths, who closely observed the process under his supervision. Given the complexity of cutting the mouthpiece, he ensured they performed it correctly by first having them practice on pawpaw stalks before moving to the real gourds. He identified two older youths to supervise the mouthpiece cutting, a task they performed diligently and efficiently. The entire process was participatory, guided by demonstration, observation, motivation, brainstorming, and positive feedback. The master musician employed a workshop method, emphasizing exchange and facilitation as his pedagogic approach (Higgins, 2006).

Young children were included, with the master musician being mindful of the varying abilities of his participants. Children observed adults making and playing *amakondeere* and waited for their turn to try them out during breaks. Youths, sometimes unfamiliar with their cultural practices, were curious and found joy in discovering and learning about their ethnic heritage through listening, observing, imitating, and hands-on activities. They demonstrated emerging leadership by instructing fellow youths, a common community practices.

Additionally, the youths began learning to blow *amakondeere*, starting by experimenting with how to produce the sound on the instrument before combining the sounds to create a song. They supported peers who struggled with making or blowing *amakondeere*, while the master musicians observed without interfering. They taught peers and children of various ages together, creating situations that mirrored community interactions. They keenly observed to ensure that everyone was accomplishing the work suited to their abilities. The goal of performing for the Kabaka inspired them and made them take ownership of their learning (Isabirye, 2019b). *Amakondeere* was a manifestation of their identity, which they felt obligated to uphold as an avenue of contributing to its continuity.

From an educational perspective, teachers need to recognize learners' abilities to enhance interactive knowledge acquisition. They should understand that music is influenced by culture and that education and culture are interconnected as Boon (2014) notes. Teachers should create experiences where music is learned through participation within a community of learners, and where it is presented in a holistic context that fosters joy. It is the teacher's responsibility to offer experiences within the learner's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). This helps learners

in developing new skills, giving them a feel for these skills, and helping them build confidence in their abilities.

The learning processes of *amakondeere* music position teachers to effectively perform their scaffolding roles. As Muhonen (2014) notes, these varied teachers' roles as scaffolders facilitate collaborative processes that create empowering learning situations, enabling learners to address social, political, or economic challenges. This support allows learners to perform new tasks they could not do alone and to apply previous knowledge in new contexts by connecting new material to what they already know. Master musicians created contexts where new information was aligned with the learner's existing knowledge and skills (Rogoff & Gardner, 1999), which is a crucial aspect for successful learning. Learners frequently scaffolded each other (Marsh, 2008; Wiggins, 2015) as they worked and played together, thus, sharing ideas as they sought guidance and corrections from experts.

### **5.1.3 Nature of leadership in the *amakondeere* learning process**

Leadership is a multifaceted concept that has been defined and interpreted in various ways by scholars. At its core, leadership involves guiding and influencing others toward achieving common goals. Northouse (2020) defines leadership as a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal, emphasizing the relational and process-oriented nature of leadership and focusing on the influence aspect. Sun et al. (2017) define leadership as specific actions that help a group accomplish its goals. These include, inviting contributions from group members, proposing an agenda for orderly completion of work, and

seeking consensus about solutions to problems. This definition highlights the responsibility and initiative required for a group to achieve its goals.

During the *amakondeere* learning processes, the master musicians provided expert leadership to the youths and created an environment that allowed other leaders to emerge. These leaders exerted intentional influence, both individually and collectively, to structure the activities and relationships within their community of practice (Wenger, 1998). The researcher observed that learning dimensions were primarily characterized by teacher-leadership and learner-leadership. The *amakondeere* engagements offered instances of productive leadership in learning processes. The master musician assisted learners who were struggling to blow *amakondeere* by observing them, identifying their problems, suggesting solutions, and participating with them until they showed signs of improvement. This participatory leadership emphasized involving learners in sharing experiences and collaboratively developing solutions.

The youths identified to guide their peers closely observed the master musicians, leveraging their expertise to learn quickly and later assist younger learners. By selecting these youths, the master musicians were fostering effective leadership and involving learners in problem-solving. This approach signaled to all participants that learning is a collective experience and that the master musicians were integral to the learning process. This contrasts with the traditional teacher supremacy, where teachers may position themselves as the sole source of knowledge, an approach that undermines learner agency to the extent of slowing down learning (Schippers, 2010). Instead, the master musicians provided healthy, participatory leadership, making the experience more productive.

As the learning process progressed, the researcher observed some youths emerging as leaders. They spontaneously began performing leadership functions, engaging in all activities, and guiding their peers without being prompted. These emergent leaders identified needs and offered assistance to solve problems. This form of leadership is productive in the learning process as it fosters learners' ethical dispositions and helps them become competent citizens. Other learners welcomed the assistance from the emergent young leaders, transforming a less focused experience into a productive engagement (Isabirye, 2019b). The *amakondeere* learning processes created contexts where learners developed new identities, inspiring social learning processes similar to what Hargreaves et al. (2002) suggest that, in social constructionist terms, identities evolve and shifts, with each interaction, leading to new constructions.

The researcher also took on a leadership role from the sidelines. As the master musicians guided and scaffolded (Bruner, 1966) the learners, the researcher passionately observed and took notes. Occasionally, she made suggestions to youths who were struggling, advising them to observe a peer who was more skilled to better understand the process. Although the researcher could not actively participate due to restrictions exclusive to women, she played a significant role in leading the learning process. The youths recognized that her presence and involvement were valuable for future *amakondeere* players. The researcher attended all activities as a legitimate peripheral participant (Lave & Wenger, 1991), even though she did not actively participate. Her presence and dedication were motivated by a commitment to respecting the norms and values of *amakondeere* and safeguarding a community heritage.

The *amakondeere* learning processes provided opportunities for various forms of leadership to emerge and flourish. These processes nurtured and sustained different leadership styles, enabling learners to support their peers in gaining competence. When learners noticed their peers struggling, the context was ripe for intervention and assistance. This form of leadership in learning aligns with the concept of social learning processes, as articulated by Bruner, 1996; Rogoff, (1990; and Wenger, (1998).

Additionally, incorporating these learning processes into formal school education can create experiences that foster positive, passionate, and joyful learning environments, where learners feel safe and protected. Music teachers and educators should create contexts that empower learners to achieve their musical and educational goals through critically reflective learning processes, encouraging innovative thinking. The school experience should become a place that empowers learners in multiple dimensions, allowing them to negotiate their identities and increase their agency and passion for learning as Eliot & Silverman, 2015 notes.

## **5.2 Impact of customs and beliefs in learning of *amakondeere* music**

The impact of customs and beliefs on learning *amakondeere* music is profound. These cultural elements shape the educational environment and influence how knowledge and skills are transmitted. Customs dictate who can participate in the learning process, such as gender restrictions on playing *amakondeere* instrument and generally all royal instruments in Buganda. Beliefs about the importance of preserving cultural heritage motivate learners to attach great respect onto them and also engage deeply with the music, thus, fostering a sense of responsibility and pride. Additionally, traditional methods of instruction, such as learning through

observation and participation rather than formal teaching, are rooted in these customs and beliefs, which create a communal and immersive learning experiences.

Among the Baganda people, experienced musicians often hold esteemed positions, reflecting cultural beliefs that emphasize respect for elders, recognition of the authority of skilled individuals, and encouragement of the young learners to seek guidance from mentors a channel of preserving and sustaining their traditions. Respect for elders is a crucial element among the Baganda people, considered the foundation of wisdom and a cultural necessity for everyone in the community. For example, the custom of *okweyala mu maaso ga Kabaka* (men lying flat on the ground before the Kabaka) is a practice of decorum that honors the Kabaka regardless of one's status. This act of respect is so influential that even people from outside Buganda willingly adopt it. Thus, customs and beliefs dictate that youths respect their elders and follow a structured apprenticeship process closely observing and emulating their mentors. Through these customs and beliefs, elders ensure that proper methods of learning *amakondeere* music are transmitted, establishing a framework for instruction, one that is deeply rooted in the cultural understanding and adherence to norms and values. Isabirye (2021b) notes that during *amakondeere* cultural revival sessions, master players inspired and instructed youths using indigenous pedagogies, revitalizing a tradition that had disappeared for almost twenty years.

Customs and beliefs provide a structured approach to learning, with rituals, ceremonies, and traditional practices creating a predictable educational framework. They instill a sense of purpose and motivation in learners, who understand that

their efforts are valued and that their skills contribute to the cultural and spiritual life of their community. This understanding encourages participation and enhances motivation. Dewey (1916) refers to this as the continuity of experience—a means of social continuity of life. Learning *amakondeere* occurs in communal settings that facilitate this continuity, allowing individuals to observe, practice, and receive feedback in a supportive environment. This communal aspect strengthens social bonds and fosters a sense of belonging, aligning with Elliott and Silverman's (2015) description of learning and teaching as a musical-moral-ethical community where everyone receives and enjoys respect, acceptance, and personal fulfillment.

Among the Baganda people, customs and beliefs integrate learning into everyday activities, making it a continuous process of acquiring knowledge. Knowledge and skills are not taught in isolation but are part of daily life. The symbolic acts involved in customs and beliefs such as becoming a royal musician; convey deeper meanings and reinforce important lessons, helping learners internalize complex concepts and values in a memorable and impactful way. Additionally, they often include systems of recognition and reward for achievement and progress. This recognition can take the form of titles, roles in various activities, or even acknowledgment in the public, which motivates learners to strive for excellence. The cultural identity and learning of *amakondeere* music promote meaningful learning that is contextually relevant and integrated into daily experiences. For example, the Baganda believe that performing before the Kabaka is an honor, and to become a royal musician, one must have demonstrated exceptional expertise and a high degree of moral values.

Transferring such learning engagements to formal school classrooms can provide learners with the opportunity to create their own meaning and narratives, constructing their understanding through a pedagogy of mutuality within a community of mutual learners as Wiggins 2011 explains. She adds that such processes allow learners to discover and develop their potential through interpersonal negotiation shaped by various cultural layers: the school and classroom culture, the shared local experiences of learners, and their general experience with music. As Wenger (1998) also suggests, learning becomes a vehicle for the development and transformation of identities, benefiting the entire community. This experience can lead learners to the construction of new cultural identities, creating contexts that help them to become aware of who they are and what they want to become, a social constructivism vision. Cultural identity is significant for learners because it enables the recognition and appreciation of their heritage and the continued search of their identities.

More to that, participatory forms of leadership reflected the openness of *amakondeere* engagements to multiple perspectives and involvement. When the nature of interaction and engagement is participatory, it indicates that the performance is culturally driven. Learners are encouraged to join from different perspectives and participate according to their abilities (Higgins, 2006), backgrounds, prior experiences, and interests. They are equipped with self-esteem and skills that enable them to effectively compete with others in society. If teachers create similar contexts in formal schooling, learners can construct genuine understanding, which they can utilize in diverse circumstances to transform their potential and develop new skills for the global era. This aligns with Wenger's (1998) argument that participation goes beyond direct engagement in specific

activities with specific people; it places the negotiation of meaning in the context of our forms of membership in various communities and is a constituent of our identity.

### **5.3 The role of language and values in the transmission of *amakondeere* music**

Among the Baganda people, language serves as the primary vehicle for expressing, transmitting, and reinforcing cultural values. It is the main medium through which values are passed down from one generation to the next. Elders and educators use storytelling, proverbs, and oral traditions to convey the moral and ethical principles that guide behavior and decision-making. Language expresses cultural identity, embedding specific words, phrases, and idioms that reflect the community's priorities and norms, thereby shaping and reflecting their collective identity. In this section, both concepts will be discussed simultaneously.

The researcher discovered that, similar to other musical expressions among the Baganda people, *amakondeere* music traditions are transmitted orally and aurally across generations. Esteemed musicians, as revered elders and guardians of the tradition, impart knowledge through practical demonstration, repetition, and memorization. In Buganda, oral traditions hold profound significance as repositories of historical wisdom. Sayings like *amagezi muliro, bwe guzikira oguggya ewa munno* (meaning: knowledge is like fire; if it dies, one can rekindle it from a friend) indicate that useful knowledge and education regarding traditional and cultural issues, including societal norms and behaviors, are communicated orally. These traditions encompass cultural values and practices conveyed verbally or through performance, providing valuable insights for adapting to environments and societal norms. They embody both admirable qualities worthy of preservation

and negative traits that require rectification. Moreover, oral traditions are integral to their language and serve as a fundamental method of education (Ssekamwa, 1997).

In Buganda, language is categorized into both verbal and non-verbal forms as already explained in previous sections. The verbal language, referred to as *olulimi lw'ebigambo* (language of words), is deeply rooted in oral traditions, serving as valuable and practical tools that enrich and give meaning to daily communication. The non-verbal language, known as *olulimi lw'ebikolwa* (language of actions), is primarily expressed through peaceful physical contact, which holds significant importance among the Baganda people. This form of language includes gestures such as hand clapping, nodding, smiling, laughing, blinking, facial expressions, demonstrations, and other body movements. The *Abakondeere*, in their interactions, utilize both verbal and non-verbal languages. Verbal language is used for interactions with other community members and as a mode of instruction during *amakondeere* engagements. However, non-verbal communication is crucial during performances as an indication that music-making is a fundamental way for people to express their cultural values while also fostering a sense of enjoyment as noted by Elliot & Silverman (2015).

Like many African societies, Baganda people believe that the youth represent the future of society. This belief is encapsulated in the Luganda proverb: *emiti emito gye giggumiza ekibira* (saplings sustain life in the forest). This aligns with Sesay's (2014) observation that African countries place significant importance on their youth population. The rationale is clear: the youths are seen as the custodians of the future. The Baganda understand that empowering and equipping young people with relevant skills ensures sustainability. Through proverbs and riddles, the youth

receive guidance and mental stimulation through advice on matters that highlight the importance of both individual and communal responsibilities in society.

Language is an invaluable reservoir of the Baganda people's values, and they use oral traditions to convey and reinforce these values. During *amakondeere* engagements, master musicians shared stories about the importance of *amakondeere*, their achievements, and the respect they command in society. These stories inspired the youth and other participants, instilling in them the confidence that learning *amakondeere* can elevate their social status within Buganda. Elders narrated their past with pride and joy. These engagements became avenues for shared interactional patterns of human effort aimed at achieving specific outcomes and human ends. And like Elliot and Silveman's (2005) observation, such participatory avenues of *amakondeere* music contributed to the ethical ethos of society and for the well-being, flourishing, democratic engagement, and educative teaching and learning scenarios.

The researcher established that songs in *amakondeere* engagements are learned by listening and imitating experts. One might wonder why *Abakondeere* need to learn songs when *amakondeere* are blown instruments. The master musician explained that learning songs first, helps individuals to reproduce them by ear when playing the instruments. Secondly, it aids in the internalization of the songs, the basic of their recollection when performing collectively. Since these songs are not written down, one must listen, memorize, and then play them on the instruments. Learning involves mimicking the expert's demonstration of the music, closely observing and copying performance nuances such as rhythmic pitch, dynamic, and phrase control. The researcher noted that effective listening enhances language values, as it is

considered a sign of good conduct among the Baganda people, an aspect that facilitate effective learning.

Proverbs, stories, songs, and other oral traditions help the learners to grasp the ethical and moral lessons associated with the music, an integral component of its performance practices. These elements play a significant role in molding responsible citizens equipped with the skills and values essential for community survival. Language embeds the values, beliefs, and social norms of the community as crucial components of learning and productive being. It also enhances self-confidence, perseverance, creativity. In the context of Buganda, parents, especially mothers and other experienced adults share proverbs, riddles, fables, tales, stories, and myths with their children, enabling the young ones to learn their language, as well as social morals, practices of memory, and leadership, among other societal attributes.

Such communal, yet intimate approaches of learning not only fostered emotional and social bonds, but also created supportive networks that enhanced the overall learning experience. Knowledge acquired by the learners, whether children or adults was meaningful to their way of living, and learning was a vehicle for the development and transformation of identities. It was also a form of apprenticeship, heavily contextualized and genuinely oriented towards community service. Therefore, teachers should understand that cultural identity is meaningful to learners as it helps them recognize and appreciate their heritage and who they are. It enhances their growth and encourages them to continue searching for answers about their identity. If only educators could understand this, they would be empowered to address the disunities and discontinuities enshrined in the post-independence education system.

## 5.4 Conclusion

In Buganda society, education, known as *okugunjula* (upbringing), was a communal responsibility deeply embedded in cultural norms, customs, and oral traditions. Kigozi (2019) explains that the community collectively took on the duty to *okugunjula abaana b'eggwanga* (educate the nation's children), preparing them to become responsible citizens. This process involved cultural heritage through music, poetry, art, drama, dance, and storytelling, including mythologies, proverbs, and oral history. Music, especially, was central to *okugunjula*—used in fieldwork, children's play, and preparing youth for adulthood, as songs conveyed moral lessons, accompanied by stories and choreography to highlight their deeper meaning.

However, the traditional system was disrupted by missionary schooling, which led children to view it as less valuable compared to Western education. Ssekamwa (1997) highlighted that missionary schooling eroded indigenous practices and their associated social benefits. This form of schooling removed youths from their families and communities, isolating them and distancing them from their cultural practices and values. Ekadu-Ereu (2012) also noted that the adoption of the Western educational system by Africans, negatively impacted the meaning and practice of music in Africa. The significance of African musical expressions as part of their identity has long been overlooked, with some, especially the elites, viewing these expressions as outdated. Given the type of music dominating the internet, FM radio stations, and television, traditional expressions like *amakondeere* do not attract much audience.

Despite the challenges, musical expressions play a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and strengthening community bonds, which can facilitate learning. *Amakondeere* music, in particular, plays a significant role in uniting the Baganda people. The lyrics of these songs recount the history of the Baganda, with a special focus on their king, thus reinforcing their identity and connection to their heritage. According to Isabirye (2021a, 2021b; 2019a; 2019b), UNESCO noted that such music is an essential component of the royal ceremonies and the community. It provides the Baganda people with a sense of shared identity and historical continuity, reinforcing social cohesion and allowing contemporary individuals to connect with their ancestors.

This study, rooted in social constructivism, draws on scholars such as Vygotsky (1978), Boardman (1989), Rogoff (1990), Lave and Wenger (1991), Bruner (1996), Wenger (1998), Brooks and Brooks (2001), Wiggins (2015), and Dewey (1938), who emphasize that learning is a socially constructed process involving participation in community engagement. These scholars agree that learning is very crucial in identity development, meaning-making, and social participation. The *amakondeere* music heritage aligns with their views, focusing on active involvement in social communities where knowledge and skills are learned through shared experiences, helping learners take on evolving roles that shape their identities. As Isabirye, (2019a, 2019b, 2021a, and 2021b) notes, engagement with *amakondeere* can be viewed through various lenses, including agriculture, craftsmanship, performance, and commerce, enabling individuals to find solutions within their community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

In this section, the researcher provides background information on the findings related to the *amakondeere* music heritage. The practice involves cultivating *emiboga* materials, an indication that participation extends to wider community circles. This heritage includes the craftsmanship of creating instruments from gourds, mastering songs, and playing the instruments. It requires a wide range of knowledge and skills, and learning is conducted socially, reflecting the communal identity of the Baganda. The practice is transmitted orally, with no written resources available for reference. The music and its success is based on the communal role that each individual performer brings into play.

Through discussion, negotiation, collaboration, and mutual understanding, consensus building is enhanced, allowing all learners to focus on a common goal and ultimately produce a complete song. This inclusive approach to learning strengthens the identity of its members as Wenger, (1998) points out. Unlike in mission schools, where teacher dominance disempowers learners and restricts them to merely following instructions, these learners enjoyed their activities. They were encouraged to appreciate, understand, and create their personal histories within their communities, becoming active musical agents. The *Abakondeere* took charge of their learning, with master musicians fostering a supportive environment that considered each individual's competence potential. This learning process was rooted in coordinated participation, with the success of the group relying on exceptional musical cooperation. The structure of the music highlighted the significance of relationships and participation.

Data revealed that the *amakondeere* music heritage is currently facing threats against its viability. These include the limited number of cultural bearers, the

weakening of traditional modes of transmission, the lack of knowledge or interest among the youth, and the economic insecurity of both current bearers and potential future performers. Additionally, financial obstacles have hindered the transmission of this heritage. The researcher also found out that the revival efforts by the *Singing Wells* organization were insufficient to ensure the permanent sustainability of this music (Isabirye, 2021b). Yet, the oral transmission process of *amakondeere* heritage places it at risk of continued erasure.

This was also evident in the research findings that instruments like the *endeesi*, *enkwale*, and *enzigalizi* were unavailable, and no one was knowledgeable enough to craft them. As Isabirye (2019a) highlights, the current *Abakondeere* in Kassanda District lack the empowerment to establish a strong foundation for the *amakondeere* music heritage. Additionally, the abrupt cessation of *amakondeere* and other royal music expressions in Buganda in 1966 meant that master musicians were not adequately mentored to teach the youth the full repertoire of *amakondeere* songs. Although communities view heritage practices as vital expressions of their long-standing social investments, meant to be passed on orally and aurally, they have not provided sufficient support to revitalize the *amakondeere* heritage. Therefore, there is a need to protect *amakondeere* music from the suppressive effects of modernity and other related forces.

Furthermore, data reveals that the heritage is exclusively performed by members of the *Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige* clan and those submitted to the palace as *abasiige*. The collected data shows that the practice of submitting children to serve the Kabaka has been halted due to the sensibilities of modernity and the missionary schooling system which have directed the attention of the concerned would-be learners

elsewhere. This creates uncertainties about the future of *amakondeere* musicians. Additionally, the music is generally regarded as an old-generational practice, facing competition from other modern music expressions featured on radios, TV, and the internet. This creates a conflict, especially among the youth who find it difficult to construct a sense of identity through the performance of *amakondeere*. Therefore, it is essential for the Baganda community to re-teach and re-learn the tradition to cultivate new generations of *amakondeere* performers throughout the kingdom.

Given these challenges and setbacks, the researcher discovered that the learning processes characterizing *amakondeere* music might offer valuable insights for contemporary music education theory and practice and the general education process in Uganda and beyond. From an educational perspective, findings revealed that learning *amakondeere* occurs through mutually shared participatory experiences that learners find relevant and meaningful through their connection to the community. The learning process in *amakondeere* aims at preparing individuals to function meaningfully and contribute to society's well-being. Learners have the opportunity to take charge of their learning, with knowledge being co-created by both the learner and the master musicians, making the process enjoyable. Everyone is accepted regardless of age or status in the community, and the process is characterized by negotiation, emphasizing Wenger's (1998) view of learning being a social process. Master musicians, as more experienced and knowledgeable leaders, scaffold the learners through constructing understanding (Wiggins, 2015). Active participation is crucial, providing an environment conducive to the thriving of the learner's identity.

Reflecting on the learning processes described above, it becomes clear that the indigenous methods discussed in this study provide a holistic learning experience. Learners engage with peers and facilitators while actively participating in the social interactions that foster an understanding of tackling real-life, problem-solving activities. This approach makes learning enjoyable since it involves self-direction process (Dewey, 1916). The Baganda people believe that everyone has a potential in them, which determines the kind of tasks a learner is given, as well as things they cannot manage. *Amakondeere* learning processes establish contexts that are tailored to the learners' abilities. Scaffolding, as emphasized by Bruner (1966), is used to help learners develop the necessary skills to participate in these activities, addressing real challenges in the educational practice. These observations led the researcher to suggest that *amakondeere* learning processes could inform the teaching and learning of music education in schools and potentially influence the broader education system in Uganda.

As Tuohey (2012) notes, the most effective way of music learning takes place in the community. The researcher considered situations where schools can create communities of participation where learners from diverse cultural backgrounds could engage freely, without fear of having their perspectives rejected, but instead be supported and empowered to collaborate on addressing both individual and community issues. From observations and the researcher's experience as a music teacher, contemporary school education in Uganda often sidelines learners' cultural backgrounds, leading to an identity crisis. Learners are subjected to controlling pedagogies that isolate and distance them from their communities, cultural practices, and the learning processes embedded within the cultural values of their background. This system is characterized by pedagogies that control

learners and portray teachers as all-knowing. It promotes a classroom environment where students are expected to keep quiet, listen, and take notes, overlooking the fact that they can also contribute to the learning process and as such to construct their own identities. This system has adversely affected the meaning and practice of music in Africa ((Isabirye, 2019b; Ekadu-Ereu, 2012).

At the time this study was written, schools in Uganda were implementing two distinct curricula: the O level section was utilizing the new lower secondary curriculum known as the competence based curriculum, whereas the A level section was still adhering to the old curriculum known as the knowledge based curriculum. In the old curriculum, the learning environment is characterized by excessive teacher authority and student oppression (Freire, 1970), ultimately impacting the learning process. There is little continuity between knowledge acquired outside of school and what is learned within the school setting. In many Ugandan schools, subjects are presented for students to follow, and teachers impose a non-creative, programmed way of thinking. Students are forced to understand pre-constructed and pre-understood material, which does not inspire creative thinking or personal understanding. They are taught to memorize and recite information rather than developing their own ideas. This method produces students who excel in rehearsing facts but lack originality and creativity, necessary for societal improvement. Consequently, many graduates lack creativity and fail to connect with their communities, as their personal agency was not fostered in schools (Isabirye, 2021b).

On the other hand, the new curriculum aims to provide opportunities for learners to engage in open-ended investigations, enabling them to solve problems through social interaction and mutual understanding. This approach offers hope for

Uganda's future generation, in contrast to the previous system, which fostered inappropriate competition among learners and did not reflect how people interact in communities. In reality, people work collaboratively in teams and communities of practice (Green, 2011; Wenger, 1998), supporting each other to perform effectively. This new curriculum resonates with *amakondeere* learning engagements where master musicians enthusiastically recounted how they learned the tradition from their fathers, absorbing teaching practices through their own experiences as students (Dunbar-Hall, 2011). These master musicians did not present themselves as all-knowing but listened to learners' ideas and solved problems collaboratively. The communal nature of *amakondeere* learning processes motivated learners and encouraged them to continue the tradition.

The new competence-based curriculum aims to enhance the quality and relevance of secondary education. The proposed learning activities in the music syllabus are designed to help learners achieve outcomes from multiple perspectives, encouraging experimentation, exploration, investigation, collaboration, and teamwork. This approach empowers learners to make choices and plan their actions as musicians. However, the implementation of this curriculum has not been extended to higher levels of education, potentially hindering the goal of producing competent and skilled citizens. Consequently, learners are not empowered to develop confidence in identifying similarities between new and old problems as they progress through their education in Uganda. The old curriculum does not provide instances where learners are guided by past experiences with similar problems and taught how to interpret and solve them (Gardner, 1995). This stifles learners' creativity and their willingness to explore new opportunities to develop skills and exceed their limits (Boardman, 1989).

Desirable education should connect with students' lives, communities, and environments, addressing global concerns. The *amakondeere* learning process takes place in interactive and accommodating settings. Learners are not restricted; instead, learning occurs through real-life experiences, hands-on activities, and practical application. Master musicians guide learners in a non-coercive manner, avoiding the intimidating "keep quiet" approach typical in formal schooling. This demonstrates that the society within which an individual interacts significantly influences their identity. Yet, schools, as societies of learners, are suitable places for identity construction through learning.

The pedagogies and assessment processes in the knowledge-based curriculum that was followed by schools in Uganda, granted teachers unchecked authority, ignoring students' interests. The primary focus was on content coverage, compelling teachers to ensure students memorized textbook information and repeated it for examinations. This approach disregarded students' ideas and experiences, which are crucial to their identity. Schools neglects the individuality of learners, and music teachers are not trained to encourage students to share musical ideas (Blair, 2006). Many music teachers graduate lacking competence in general music performance and knowledge of indigenous music (Ekadu-Ereu, 2019).

The pedagogical practices in Ugandan schools focus on teacher-delivered materials and student testing, instead of creating opportunities for learners to engage directly with musical concepts and practices (Isabirye, 2021b). As Isabirye (2021a) states, identity is the ability to utilize opportunities to express ourselves as individuals, communities, families, workers, students, youths, musicians, politicians, and other associations with value systems. He adds that cultural identity is meaningful to

learners, because it helps them to recognize and appreciate their heritage and foster a continuous search for their identities. As Hargreaves et al. (2002) suggest and from a social constructionist perspective, identities are constantly evolving and changing, with each interaction leading to new constructions.

According to Boardman (1989), a teacher should be a facilitator, a guide, a nurturer of curiosity, a cognitive referee rather than a teller, an expert, a disseminator of knowledge, which aligns with the curriculum's goals. *Amakondeere* engagements provided instructors the opportunity to include experiences that engage learners in inquiry, promote the transfer of learning, and help learners make sense of discrete facts and skills to uncover the big ideas of the content. This is the essence of ideal learning. Schools should offer a conceptual framework that helps learners become competent and adaptable individuals who can cope with life's challenges.

Observations by the researcher indicates that the mission of missionary education is to advance Western colonial values. It primarily promotes English speaking rather than the use of indigenous languages in learning, which would create a favorable context for acquiring knowledge, skills, values, and other elements of socially acceptable and productive ways of being. This formal approach to learning thus contradicts the societal view of education as a means of promoting people's ways of living. It isolates learners from their society, even though these learners are expected to serve and seek jobs within their communities. In contrast, musicians of *amakondeere* music do not need to search for jobs; after acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge, they serve the Kabaka. Learning and subsequent service happen in the same context, the palace, making learning directly connected to the actual place of work—something that formal school education should promote.

It was also revealed that there is hardly any literature that emphasizes the importance of cultural identity in learning music in schools. Few scholars have written extensively about the role of cultural identity in the context of music education in Uganda. Additionally, teachers in schools often fail to safeguard and support the identity of learners, putting their sense of belonging at risk or potentially damaging it. Observations of *amakondeere* engagements revealed that cultural identity is crucial for music teachers to consider because it helps learners to understand who they are and how they can associate with others. This is an indication that identity can be a social and communal process whereby learners with different identities can meet and influence one another. People develop their sense of belonging through relationships with family, peers, and larger societal groups. These interactions influence how individuals perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others.

In *amakondeere* engagements, learners collaborate as a team and reap the rewards of their communal learning. Their enthusiasm for *amakondeere* music drives them to develop a deep expertise, fostering a strong attachment to this heritage. This connection, coupled with their identity as Baganda youth, empowers them to effectively and proficiently complete tasks. Even during rehearsals and performances, their collective purpose is evident in the harmony of the songs they play, where each individual note contributes to the whole composition. Such experiences are valuable in educational settings, especially for students from diverse cultural backgrounds, where mutual influence shapes learning experiences. Schools should recognize the importance of adapting teaching methods to align with the cultural expectations of learners. Teachers, therefore, need to understand

that while social and personal identities may seem distinct, they are closely intertwined within these communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).

This study therefore, highlights the necessity of adopting a new perspective on teaching music in schools. Educational planners should develop guidelines that support learner-centered instruction rather than rigid, programmatic approaches. By understanding students' cultural identities and how these influences their learning characteristics and motivation, teachers can better enhance student achievement. Addressing learners' cultural backgrounds is essential, as differences in ethnicity, language, religion, and socioeconomic status can lead to cultural disconnect and loss of motivation if overlooked. Education, therefore, must aim at positive life transformations by recognizing that cultural identity plays a crucial role in shaping both individual and national values.

Furthermore, this study plays a critical role in preserving and understanding the unique significance of *amakondeere* music within the *Abakondeere* community, the Buganda Kingdom, and Uganda as a whole. By examining this distinctive instrument, its rhythms, and its ceremonial roles, the research not only sheds light on the region's traditional musical expressions but also contributes to the broader disciplines of ethnomusicology and organology. In documenting indigenous knowledge systems, this research promotes cultural continuity, ensuring that future generations will appreciate and engage with this rich art form and other similar music expressions in Uganda.

Looking ahead, educational planners in Uganda should consider integrating cultural identity into music education and the wider curriculum. This approach would help learners build trust and foster strong relationships within their

communities, enhancing engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm for learning. The future of Ugandan education should envision communities where cultural practices like *amakondeere* provide diverse learning opportunities that enrich both individual and collective identities, ultimately adding deeper meaning to life.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

Basing on the findings of this study, I hereby recommend that the heritage of *amakondeere* music should be incorporated into university research programs, particularly in the fields of education, organology and ethnomusicology. This would include creating video and audio recordings to disseminate the knowledge more widely. Universities could also organize workshops on the cultivation, crafting, and performance of *amakondeere*, promoting in-depth exploration of cultural identity and its role in education.

Educational planners in Uganda need to prioritize integrating cultural identity into music education and the broader curriculum. This would help learners build trust and forge stronger relationships within their communities, boosting engagement and motivation. By fostering an educational environment that respects and celebrates cultural heritage, music practices like *amakondeere* can provide diverse learning opportunities that enhance both individual and collective identities, ultimately enriching students' educational experiences.

Scholars can also be encouraged to explore and write extensively about the role of cultural identity in education, especially its impact on the teaching and learning process. Understanding cultural identity can help educators bridge gaps in learning and develop more inclusive and motivating environments for students.

The work currently being done in Kassanda, where *amakondeere* music is being practiced, provides a valuable model that schools across Uganda need to emulate. By adopting this approach, schools can create a more culturally inclusive curriculum that resonates with learners' experiences and strengthen their connection to their heritage.

Music educators need to acknowledge the crucial role of cultural identity in motivating students to learn about their heritage. Schools can embrace the concept of *abasiige*, which enables individuals from other clans and ethnic backgrounds to participate in cultural practices under specific conditions. This approach fosters inclusivity while respecting cultural traditions.

Additionally, schools need to develop learning resources that explore the historical and cultural aspects of *amakondeere* music and similar expressions. This can include multimedia resources and materials explaining the significance of *obulombolombo* (rituals), *emizizo* (taboos), and the role of *abasiige* in allowing participation by non-members of the Nnyonyi-Nnakinsige clan. Such materials can deepen students' appreciation of cultural music and foster inclusivity within the curriculum.

Royal authorities and cultural institutions should initiate efforts to record, document, and archive *amakondeere* music and similar musical traditions. This archive would serve as an educational resource, preserving knowledge for students from various backgrounds and ensuring that the music and its practices are maintained for future generations.

## 5.7 Recommendations for further research

This study explored how cultural identity can enhance learning of *amakondeere* music. It also aimed at understanding how lessons from community learning settings could support music education in schools and the broader education system in Uganda and beyond. The research focused on the learning of *amakondeere* music in the Buganda region, examining how evolving learning processes might influence music education theory and practice. Among the Baganda, the term *amakondeere* has multiple meanings and is perceived from various perspectives. It is a holistic expression that encompasses farming *emiboga*, craftsmanship, singing, playing instruments, and loyalty, among other aspects. These diverse perspectives facilitate a deeper understanding of participation, as learning and problem-solving require exploring alternatives. *Amakondeere* encompasses a system of interrelated perspectives, forms of participation practices, and meanings, thus, making it valuable and useful to the Baganda people.

Therefore, since *amakondeere* learning process involves shaping and transforming the learner's self-perception and motivations, the researcher suggests that educators could incorporate elements of this process into the education system. This would enable learners to engage in experiences that make them productive, useful, and valuable to the community and the country as a whole. The data revealed that, in addition to cultural identity, other factors can facilitate the learning of *amakondeere* music, including radio, television, and the internet. Listening to radio programs with expert commentary and historical context about *amakondeere* music can inspire and attract learners. Similarly, learning can occur when students watch television programs, videos on streaming platforms, social media, and tutorials on platforms like YouTube, Coursera, and Khan Academy, which offer

structured lessons on various music cultures. Blogs, podcasts, and academic articles can also provide detailed information, enabling people to learn *amakondeere* music.

The researcher, therefore, recommends further research to examine the impact of radio, television, and the internet on the learning and dissemination of *amakondeere* music. This investigation would significantly enhance the sustainability and transmission of *amakondeere* music in Uganda, Africa, and beyond.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix: II Interview guide for master musicians and the youth

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Can you please explain to me what *amakondeere* is?
2. Can you please explain to me your experience about *amakondeere* music?
3. What are your views about learning Amakondeere music in communities?
4. How do customs and traditions influence the learning of *amakondeere* music?
5. What values are key in learning *amakondeere* music?
6. Can you explain why it became necessary for you to participate in *amakondeere* music?
7. Can you explain what the kingdom has done to ensure that *amakondeere* is sustained?
8. Can you explain what actions you, as the bearer of the culture, have taken to ensure that *amakondeere* continues to be performed?

Thank you.

### Appendix III: Focus group discussion guide


Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your knowledge of *Amakondeere* music?
2. Have you been involved in learning and performing *amakondeere* music?
3. What aspects attracted you to perform *amakondeere* music?
4. How would you describe the process of learning *amakondeere* music?
5. Can you explain how you perform *amakondeere* music in your community?
6. What role do language and values play in the process of learning *amakondeere* music?

Thank you.

## Appendix IV: Introductory Letter

  
**KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY**  
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**Directorate of Research and Graduate Training**  
*Office of the Director*

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Date: 21/03/2024

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**RE: KIBUUKA MOREEN**

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is to introduce to you the above-named student Reg: No **21/U/GAME/14239/PE** pursuing Master of Arts in Music Education, Department of Performing Arts, Kyambogo University.

She intends to carry out research on **“Cultural Identity and Learning of Amakondeere Music of the Baganda People in Communities of Kassanda District, Central Uganda.”** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts in Music Education of Kyambogo University.

The purpose of this letter therefore is to request you to grant her permission to carry out her study in your institution.

Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

  
Prof. Bosco Bua  
**AG. DIRECTOR**

