

Intergenerational Transmission of Adungu (Bow-Harp) Musical Knowledge in Bweyale-Karuma, Uganda: A Phenomenological Study of Indigenous Pedagogy, Embodied Learning, and Decolonial Praxis

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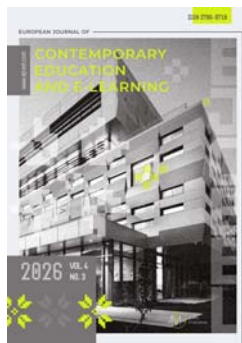
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Abstract

The *Adungu*, a multi-stringed arched bow-harp indigenous to the Alur and Lugbara communities of north-western Uganda, represents one of East Africa's most architecturally sophisticated traditional instruments. Despite its ceremonial significance and growing presence in formal music education contexts, the pedagogical mechanisms through which *Adungu* musical knowledge is transmitted across generations remain substantially undocumented in scholarly literature. This qualitative phenomenological study investigates how master *Adungu* players in Bweyale-Karuma a multi-ethnic community in Kiryandongo District renowned across Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom for producing the finest *Adungu* instruments and most accomplished players transmit complex musical, cultural, and embodied knowledge to apprentices. Drawing on six months of intensive fieldwork (February–July 2025), the study employed Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to generate rich, experience-near accounts from eighteen participants: six master players, nine apprentices at varying stages of learning, and three cultural leaders. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews, participant observation across rehearsal and ceremonial performance contexts, and audio-visual documentation of teaching interactions. Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework revealed seven interconnected transmission mechanisms: graduated tonal scaffolding, ensemble interdependence, embodied string memory, improvisation within communal constraints, master-apprentice mentorship, contextual performance immersion, and cultural narrative integration. These mechanisms constitute a sophisticated distributed pedagogical system that challenges deficit assumptions about oral, non-notational music education and offers critical insights for decolonial music education theory and Uganda's Competency-Based Curriculum reform.

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