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**Nashirobe Everlyne, Dr. Selline Oketch & Sr. Lucy Nabukonde**

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# The Role of Youtube in the Preservation and Dissemination of Initiation Songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma

<sup>1\*</sup>Nashirobe Everlyne

Department of Languages, Literature and Communication

Catholic University of Eastern Africa

[nashirobeverlyne@gmail.com](mailto:nashirobeverlyne@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Selline Oketch,

Catholic University of Eastern Africa

[sellineoketch@gmail.com](mailto:sellineoketch@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>Sr. Lucy Nabukonde

Catholic University of Eastern Africa

[sisterlucy2004@yahoo.com](mailto:sisterlucy2004@yahoo.com)

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## Abstract

The paper examined the role of YouTube in the preservation and dissemination of initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma. The paper used a qualitative research design employing the method of document analysis and used random sampling technique to select seven initiation songs on YouTube site. The study was further guided by functionalism theory. The findings of the study showed that YouTube has created accessibility to Bukusu initiation ceremony to all its members spread across different parts of the world. The study concluded that YouTube was found to be effective in the preservation and dissemination of initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma. YouTube videos give relevant knowledge on the philosophies of Bukusu initiation ritual and keep the originality of *Babukusu* initiation ceremony. The study also concluded that initiation songs contain a lot of wisdom in-so-far as virtues related to humanity are concerned. The study recommended that the Ministry of Culture, Gender and Sports should encourage and support the preservation and dissemination of traditionally or culturally loaded practices by documenting them for future reference and posterity. Besides, scholars and researchers must pay attention to oral tradition and social media with a focus on YouTube as a mode of preservation and dissemination of initiation songs. Researchers must engage in the study of YouTube as a mode of preservation and dissemination of initiation songs to investigate the many responsibilities that YouTube offers to a global audience. Researchers need to engage in the study of YouTube as a mode of preservation and dissemination of initiation songs to investigate the many responsibilities that YouTube offers to a global audience. Further, the study recommended that since these initiation songs contain a lot of wisdom in-so-far as virtues related to humanity are concerned, they should be preserved and widely disseminated for the attainment and moral standards within a community.

**Keywords:** *YouTube, Preservation, Dissemination, Initiation songs, Bukusu.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

YouTube is the world's most popular video site, with users watching 4 billion hours' worth of video each month and uploading 72 hours' worth of video every minute (YouTube, 2013). Having started in 2005, YouTube has developed into a prominent online video-sharing destination. The millions of video clips on YouTube represent a broad spectrum of user interests including the artists. The video-sharing website has grown to become the largest and most highly visited online video-sharing service over the last two decades (Alexa, 2012). The development of this platform has formed a new opportunity where information can be exchanged between individuals with common goals and backgrounds. Agarwal (2012) noted that over 4 billion YouTube videos are viewed daily.

Besides, it is one of the leading video-on-demand platforms for user-generated content for it permits users to creatively produce and share content on the platform, to empower new ideas and business opportunities (Snelson, 2010). Shao (2009) argued that YouTube does not only allow users to share their information but also allows users to share different cultural aspects hence becomes significant for entertaining, teaching and passing knowledge to future generations. Usually, the channel allows users to keep track and manage a record of users that view, subscribe, like and dislike the videos. In this regard, the YouTube platform has made it easy for artists to reach a tremendous target audience within short periods. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) opined that this platform has several embedded features to boost social interaction such as, the users 'ability to comment on a video, liking/disliking a video, or sharing a video to another social network platform such as, Facebook or Twitter which contribute positively to the spread of a video. Thus, the different categories of video such as, music, comedy, drama and animation may reach different phenomenon and a global audience.

In Kenya, YouTube is becoming popular among the adults and the youth for anyone with internet access can visit the site. Makokha (2018) revealed that YouTube as Google's social media platform is the primary provider for online videos. The study further noted that the internet holds a lot of information, on different subjects such as education, culture, lifestyle among others. Many people's lives have been changed due to opportunities created by the YouTube website. Besides, various information uploaded on the video-sharing platform has got teachings that help the young to get back to their roots and follow the morals of the society.

The video-sharing website has a wide verity of contents in social, cultural, scientific, sports and entertainment aspects in Kenya. Society is completely dependent on technology due to the increase in the trend of digitization. Besides, culture and technology cannot be separated, the regular and wide use of YouTube has impacted the needs and demands of people to preserve and disseminate various rites of passage. Omosa (2005) explicated that rites of passage form a platform where societal norms, beliefs or taboos are learnt. They instil morals not only to the initiates but to society members too. The research further noted that circumcision is a rite of passage at which people are accepted into the society as adults. The rituals aims at strengthening cultural continuity by passing over of cultural responsibilities and ideologies to young ones. Besides, Wanyama (2005) posited that Bukusu circumcision is not only a rite of passage among the young initiates but also an initiation into the secret rituals of the tribe and the teaching of tribal customs. Through initiation songs that tribal customs, morals and religious codes are taught and insisted on.

The practice of circumcision is definitive of one's identity among Babukusu, initiation songs are sung to prepare the initiate for the task ahead of him and mark the ceremony's climax. Through the songs, a candidate is encouraged to be strong and withstand the pain of the knife to prove manhood in the society otherwise he will be banished from his clan and the community. These songs form a platform where societal norms, beliefs or taboos are learnt. The existence of the initiation ritual and songs sung during this rite of passage are being abandoned, threatened by loss of memory, urbanization, western civilization, education, religion and immigration. This leads to a lack of transfer of important initiation aspects [songs] in the Bukusu community by the younger generations. Therefore, necessary actions should be taken to preserve and disseminate initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Songs are primary components in the Bukusu initiation ceremony. Circumscion songs which are set to accompany every step of the circumscion ritual play essential roles as means through which morals and rules of Babukusu are passed through. These songs intend to mock the novices, harden and praise them. At the same time, they warn and advise *baasinde* (initiates) not to be scared otherwise they will be banished from their clans and community.

Due to the great importance attached to circumcision songs, several scholars have endeared to analyze contents of the Babukusu *chinyimbo che baasinde* (initiation songs) to expose the important information embedded in their songs. However, the evidence that accrue from the existing studies indicates that intensive research still needs to be carried out on the preservation and dissemination of the initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma. Society is changing due to migrations, transnationalism and multiculturalism these also impact on modes of communication in this digital age. A community's live performances, like those of the Bukusu, may not be accessible to all its members spread across different parts of the world. It is therefore imperative to investigate the role of social media in the study of various aspects of oral tradition. This study examines the role of social media, with a specific focus on YouTube, as a mode of preserving and disseminating the initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma.

### 2.0 Literature Review.

Fiberadimin (2010) noted that YouTube has become the new TV; it is the undisputed leader in online video. Users worldwide gather to share and watch original videos through YouTube's simple interface and their websites, mobile devices, blogs, email, etc. Besides, it is a host to a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips, and music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos. Besides, Couldry (2008) found that writers and musicians across the world are increasingly using new media forms such as YouTube to upload their songs. He further posits that YouTube is the key enabler that writers and musicians across the world are increasingly using to upload their songs and relevant information on cultural aspects. Equally, Hudson (2007) stated that new media technologies have made it possible for people to produce and upload their music and have allowed those both in foreign and local countries to view these songs. The current researcher is informed by the above studies for they acknowledge the use of new media technologies in producing and uploading music, however, the current research examines the role of YouTube in the preservation and dissemination of the initiation song of the Bukusu of Bungoma.



Cult (2003) researched technology and online resource. The study found that technology provides a place for dialogue, connect and directly links people and projects related to the return of cultural and linguistic materials to indigenous communities globally. It is through social media that culture is highly spread to a wider and global audience. Cult's study focuses on the role of technology and online resources in providing a place, connecting and directly linking people to the return of cultural materials to indigenous community globally. The current study examines specifically, the role of YouTube in preservation and dissemination of initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma.

Jain (2010) conducted a study on communication and knowledge dissemination. Her study looks at radio program broadcasts and finds out that radio has a powerful influence on the culture of people and influences intercultural dialogues. The study concluded that this medium plays a vital role in enlightening people on the need to uphold their culture. Jain's study finds out that radio has a powerful influence on the culture of people from all parts of the world. The present study acknowledges the role of radio in the transmission of culture but goes further to analyze the role of YouTube in preservation and dissemination of initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma.

Omeluzor (2006) conducted a study on technology and culture in Nigeria and concludes that technology as a tool has the power of cultural learning, preservation and dissemination. It plays a vital role in the protection of a people's culture and the promotion of language, culture and community connectedness. The study further noted that technology provides many opportunities for renewing, preserving, strengthening the social and cultural fabric of communities. This study differs with the current research in terms of location, research design and methods of collecting data. The study was focused on technology and culture in Nigeria, the researcher unlike the present researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research and his tools of data were focused group discussion and open-ended interview. The present study analyzes the role of YouTube in the preservation and dissemination of initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma. The current researcher also used qualitative research employing a document analysis method of data collection.

Locally, Olilo (2018), studied the role of YouTube tutorials in the development of individual sports in Kenya at the department of Communication Skills at the University of Nairobi. In the study he aims at examining YouTube tutorials' role in the progress of sports in some of the athletes in Kenya. This research employed two mixed methods of research methodology; it used both in-depth interviews and focused group discussions. The study found that YouTube has digitized the coaching phenomenon such that athletes can now learn new skills and techniques online without employing an actual tutor. Like the current study, Olilo's study looks at YouTube as a mode of developing individual sports in Kenya; the current research focuses on YouTube as a mode of preserving and disseminating the initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma. The current research unlike Olilo's research uses qualitative research methodology and document analysis method of data collection.

### **3.0 Research Methodology.**

The study adopted a qualitative research design. The data was collected by using document analysis. Document analysis is a research method that reviews and evaluates booklets whether printed or electronic. Data collected from this study was analyzed through document analysis. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is a qualitative method of data analysis in which researchers analyze their data from the existing documents to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic. Documents that may be used to analyze data take a variety of forms; they may

include advertisements, books, charts, newspapers, journals, radio, television scripts, public records and institutional reports among others.

#### 4.0 Research Findings

This paper examined the role of YouTube in the preservation and dissemination of initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma. The roles of YouTube in the preservation and dissemination of the initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma, below, are divided into thematic areas. This thematic area includes originality of the context, accessible to Bukusu audience away from the community, reflect or mirrors the Bukusu initiation ritual and actual performance, accessible to people from other cultures and therefore cross-cultural dialogue.

##### 4.1 Originality of the context.

YouTube platform has kept the originality of the initiation ceremony of the Bukusu of Bungoma. One of the fundamental roles of YouTube is to preserve the originality of the context of circumcision. For instance, a sacred initiation song that touches on the origin of Babukusu initiation rite is *sioyaye*. Circumcision ritual among Babukusu is said to be a myth attributed to Mango a brave and vigilant warrior. Mango was valiant to an extent that he managed to kill a dangerous snake alone. At first the serpent killed a daughter of a village elder who was able to plan for mass hunting of the snake to be killed but it was impossible. After a short while the same serpent killed Mango's son an incident which made him to be furious. He, therefore, decided to hunt for it in the cave, and when he found it he killed it. With his tactics and courage Mango killed the serpent and after he rested for a little while, he regained his senses and dashed out shouting with great joy. The news about the killing of the serpent were spread out to the whole village, people were astonished by Mango's noble character. Apart from that Barwa (their neighbours) were as well amazed since the snake terrified them like chicks. The Barwa who then practised circumcision vowed to circumcise Mango and give out one of their daughters to him as a spouse. According to the myth, Barwa circumcised him and as he was being taken to the circumcision ground (*etiang'i*), his old mother uttered in her tears that she had earlier warned him about the pains of the knife but he accepted it. His old mother's tearful words were then changed into the sacred initiation song *sioyaye*. An initiation song known to be sacred in the Bukusu community which is only circumcision ng during the circumcision period. Any member who sings *sioyaye* out of the circumcision context is fined a sheep which is slaughtered by the clan elders and its inner parts (*busee*) are smeared to the singer. This ritual is performed as a symbol of purification to the offender and the ancestors of the clan. The songs that keeps the originality of Bukusu initiation rite goes:

<i>Eee--ehe--ehe--ehee</i>	<i>...Eee—ehe—ehe--ehee</i>
<i>Hohoweeh</i>	<i>...Hohoweeh</i>
<i>Musindewe</i>	<i>...Uncircumcised</i>
<i>Hoho, musindewe</i>	<i>Hoho, uncircumcised,</i>
<i>Hohohoo</i>	<i>...Hohohoo</i>

#### 4.2 Accessible to Bukusu audience away from the community and actual performance.

It is worth noting, too, that YouTube being the second-best watched website by a bigger audience, it transmits or disseminates initiation songs from one generation to another and a wider audience away from the community and actual performance. YouTube videos on Bukusu initiation songs are highly viewed and subscribed by many viewers thus indicating that YouTube has enhanced the accessibility of the Bukusu initiation songs. It was found out that through YouTube Bukusu's live performances like circumcision is reachable to all its members spread across different parts of the world. Initiation songs are also disseminated to a global audience; this is seen through the comments, views and subscription sections. Quite a bigger audience viewed, commented and subscribed on the uploaded songs. For instance, some viewers watch the songs from Sweden, New York, Uganda, Germany, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia and many other places. Apart from preserving and disseminating the initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma, YouTube provides a chance to its audience to comment or share their views on the videos hence lure the audience into watching and liking the songs. Once initiation songs are disseminated to masses of people through YouTube, they get to learn the Bukusu initiation ritual.

#### 4.3 Accessible to people from other cultures and therefore cross-cultural dialogue.

YouTube helps in ensuring that the Bukusu initiation songs are available to its audience. Through YouTube mode, initiation songs are accessible to numerous people across the world. Just by one click on YouTube in search of Bukusu initiation songs one finds quite several circumcision songs uploaded by different people, artists, groups and television stations. By being accessible on the YouTube website, the audience can learn the Bukusu initiation culture or customs. Moreover, the central values of Babukusu initiation ritual are learnt by a large audience. Costumes worn, beads, guards (*emuka*), *chinyimba* and *birere* are known to different people from other cultures and parts of the world. Since all the stages performed during the initiation ceremony are depicted through YouTube, they provide knowledge on Bukusu initiation rites. Therefore, YouTube makes it easier for an audience to access the songs from different places. The songs are also accessible by a large audience.

#### 4.4 Fosters traditional education of the Bukusu initiation ritual.

Videos on *Embalu* ceremony put a lot of emphasis on respect, selfless, hospitality, honesty, hard work and other virtues in the Bukusu community. The performance process can be referred to as a form of a school for traditional education or a higher school of learning the secrets of the Bukusu tribe. During Khuminya period young boys are taught rules of morality, importance of helping people, the need to avoid laziness and the importance of respecting elders. These lessons are imparted through songs whose lessons are explained afterwards by the circumcisers, uncles, attendants or the elderly clan members from Bukusu community. Besides, the teaching against laziness or about hard work is emphasized more during the initiation period. Hard work does not only contribute to the development of an individual, community or family, it makes one independent. Moreover, by working hard, the man will eliminate poverty in his community. This advice is imparted through the following song, which is the first to be sung during every teaching session at *Imbalu*.

*Enje chele chenje.....Enje chele chenje*

*Kumwesi kufwa*

the moon is shining

<i>Aaah.....Oweeh</i>	<i>Aaah Oweeh</i>
<i>Hamba Omutalia</i>	Capture the Italian
<i>Enje chele chenje ...Enje chele chenje</i>	
<i>Mulamwa kecha ne siyula</i>	In-law has come with a sisal skirt
<i>Aaah-----Oweeh ...</i>	<i>Aaah-----Oweeh</i>
<i>Hamba omutalia</i>	Capture the Italian

This song encourages the novices to work hard, it warns against laziness. The novices need to know the importance of working hard and being courageous to capture the Italians during the battle. As men they need to eradicate poverty and cultivate food for the community depends on subsistence farming or agricultural activities. The novices need the courage to face the knife which is ahead of them hence the circumscion becomes an enemy to be faced. The twin aims of the initiation ceremony is imparting of moral lessons on the young. This is the major reason as to why the Babukusu send their children to *Imbalu*.

#### 4.5 Mirrors the Bukusu initiation stages.

It plays a major role in reflecting Babukusu initiation ritual stages. *Khuminya* is the heartbeat of the Bukusu traditional circumcision ceremony. A good *omusinde* (initiate) must be good at *Khuminya*. *Omusinde* announces their readiness to face the knife and this is done through calling. Calling involves going round the villages while singing circumcision songs and beating on jingle bells (*chinyimba*) as you invite people to attend the initiation ritual. As the initiation songs are sung, all the initiation steps by the initiate towards his journey to manhood or *Imbalu* are reflected. The first stage of circumcision starts when the candidate goes to his father to inform him about his readiness for circumcision, his father as per the culture gives him a go ahead. Each song uploaded and analysed on YouTube shows all the stages performed during the initiation process. Other stages reflected include the *khuvita* a candidate is given the key aspects of manhood among Babukusu, he is further given the dos and dons of the community. Another stage is known as *khuchukhirira*, a candidate brings water from the river in a pot, this water is meant to brew traditional beer (*kamalwa*) and *khwalukha* stage which marks the climax, of the ritual. Initiates are taken to the river to wash away the childhood in a running river and put on new clothes which signify adulthood and new members in the society. Through all these initiation stages, the initiate is told about the kind of men the Bukusu community treasures: strong, tough, and aggressive men. At the same time, the songs warn and advise *baasinde* (initiates) not to be scared otherwise they will be banished from their clans and community.

#### 5.1 Analysis of YouTube Video viewed.

The study gathered and analyzed 7 YouTube videos on Bukusu initiation songs. In analyzing this data, the focus was on the views, likes, dislikes, subscriptions and finally the comments left on the comments section. These comments were analysed qualitatively by studying the keywords in context.

Song 1 gathered 56 K no. of views, 320 likes, 13 dislikes, 14 k subscribes and 50 comments. S1 reputes witchcraft and any other evil as a social control measure in the society. Initiates are forewarned not to marry from the babuya clan for it is believed to have bewitched a teacher from



the community. As the song highlights that food poisoning and witchcraft are not good practices in the community, it as well disseminates the same message to other communities. Thus from the song, one can learn to shun away from such vices and chose to follow good morals or values of the society. As one of the contemporary initiation songs it is sung to ridicule and warn those who indulge in practices such as witchcraft, prostitution and other evils in the society. From the analysis given the no. of likes, subscribes, no. of views and comments one can a firm that YouTube plays a fundamental role in the preservation and dissemination of initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma. Channel (2018), postulates that when somebody commits to viewing or subscribing a video, it means that this specific video has value because it keeps viewers on the platform longer.

Results demonstrated Song 2 having accumulated 218 K no. of views, 479 likes, 29 dislikes, and 1.86 k subscribes and 320 comments. This specific video gave out the history of the Bukusu warriors in the ancient days as they fought the Italians. The video also encouraged the warriors at that time to soldier on, fight their enemies and conquer them. The Bukusu people however took over from the warriors and used it as an initiation song. Additionally, S2 encourages Babukusu to perpetuate the old circumcision traditionally handed to them from Mango their great ancestor. The song as well inspires the initiates and prepares them to know that time for war (Knife) has come thus there is no turning back. YouTube mode was found out to encourage the Bukusu community to uphold their culture as their earlier ancestors did; it enhances the Bukusu culture and educates the masses to follow the good values of the society.

Song 3 amassed 132 K no. of views, 107 comments, 650 likes, 12 dislikes and 6k subscribers. From the number of views and subscriptions, it was found out that YouTube has played a role in the preservation and dissemination of the initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma. In S3, the singer tells the initiates and the community at large to open up the true self, the song further urges people to open their inner self to help each other rather than being hypocrites. This is a clear picture that apart from YouTube teaching people on true self and loyalty it has also preserved important messages embedded in *simbula ndole emayeye*.

Additionally, Song 4 amassed 102 K no. of views, 520 likes, 50 dislikes 182 comments and 180 K subscribes. Sindu syanuma informs the initiates that circumcision in on the way waiting for them, initiation is very painful only those who will go endure will gain. For instance, Tsebeni Ivan said: We are the mighty brave Bamasaba, Babukusu we stand to represent true African culture. Thanks to the candidates who only make it to this far. We must follow our ancestor's footsteps to make us known to the entire world.

Song 5 gathered 200 K No.of views, 200 likes, 8 dislikes, 42 comments and 121 subscribes. It was found out that *sioyaye* song arouse/elicits deep cultural attachment to its viewers. Some felt that they were almost attached to their ancestors. Besides, the video revived the warrior kind of instinct of Babukusu *Kumusambwa Kwa Mango* (the spirit of Mango). The mention of the name of their great ancestor Mango, creates a sense of belonging identity among the Bukusu community is shown.

It is revealed that Song 6 had 62k no. of views, 402 likes, 7 dislikes, 59 comments and 2.4 k subscribe. The song informs the initiate to courageously put his penis ahead to be cut by the circumciser. Through the analysis of this video, the researcher found out that YouTube has a great impact on creating identity.

Finally, Song 7 equally shows that the video attracted 38 k No.of views, 1000 likes 20 dislikes and 2.484 subscribes. As discussed earlier this song is performed after the initiate has faced the knife courageously. It relieves the parents and other relatives that their son has shown his brevity as a man hence the childhood is gone. He is now able to take on the responsibilities of a man in the Bukusu community. The video by attracting quite a big number of viewers has an impact to its viewers or audience. The key finding in this video is that YouTube broadens the awareness of societal subjects practised by the Bukusu ancestors from the ancient times to date.

## **5.2 comments depicting YouTube's role in the preservation and dissemination of Bukusu initiation ceremony.**

Comments by different viewers depicted the role of YouTube in the preservation and dissemination of the initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma. Their comments were transcribed as an outcome of the role played by YouTube to preserve and disseminate initiation songs of *Babukusu*. Some of their comments on the outcome of YouTube's role in the preservation and dissemination of *Babukusu* initiation songs were generated through the analysis of songs uploaded on YouTube platform as stated below.

*(Viewer A Comment: 20th Sept, 2019)*

*"Lol! I am on the right side of YouTube watching Orao Bachonga. Reminds me of 1992 when I went through Imbalu. This is what makes me identify myself with my people the ancestors of Mango. Circumscion to the Bukusu is not just a mere practice it is an identity. It is only through this cut that Babukusu identifies themselves with their ancestors. A spirit of unity and togetherness is also created through this platform; those of us who went through this circumscion ritual are always united."*

*(Viewer B Comment :)*

*"I am in Brooklyn New York ese omubukusu (I am a Bukusu). I made sure that my American wife has known my culture through watching those videos uploaded on YouTube. Thereafter I talked to her and made sure that all my sons went through it. I had to fly my children from the US to go face the cut and be connected to their Bukusu ancestors." He further commented and said that, "traditions are a must. I teach American boys how to be an African man while teaching them Africa culture".*

*(Viewer C Comment :)*

*"I am proud of my culture; I love it so much, watching from Duisburg, Germany."*

*(Viewer D Comment :)*

*"Niko Mbali but nafeel Niko home woyeeee, nachangamsha Arabs with my culture wanacheka Sana kip it up. ( I am far from home but I feel as if I am at home, I am showing Arabs my culture and they are enjoying it keep it up!) Oh thanks to whoever created YouTube, it is making it live from anywhere. I am still your follower from the Middle East, Orio Yaya Choffuri (thanks brother Choffuri) watching from Saudi Arabia."*

*(Viewer E Comment :)*

*"Bukusu circumscion culture speaks volume, it is a culture of brave warriors and it is only for African men who can stand a live knife cut!! Long live my culture. Thanks YouTube for enabling me to associate with my culture. I am a proud Bukusu watching from Switzerland."*

(Viewer F Comment :)

*"Though I am not a Luhya, this is what makes a man to be a real man land culture. Once this song is sung its wartime now, Amba Mutalia literary means get hold of an Italian man. It was incorporated when Italians attacked Ethiopia and were repulsed by the Afrikans."*

(Viewer G comments: 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2018)

*"My tribesmen...it's harsh but it makes us who we are in the society, Bukusu never gives up easily and we don't condone the childish way. This makes us to come out of childhood to manhood."*

(Viewer H Comment :)

*"Though I am not a Luhya, this is what makes a man to be a real man! Endurance, at its highest order and when he remembers what he went through he becomes more courageous. Without this kind of circumcision, men would not be stronger, therefore according to this viewer's comment, the Bukusu initiation practice makes men to be stronger and more dauntless. Other people should hence embrace this knife like the Luhya men do."*

(Viewer I Comment :)

*"YouTube is not only the kingdom of digital entertainment but it can also be a great environment for learning or educating. This video can particularly be educative since it can be re-watched as many as one may wish. Through watching the video many times those that do not understand my Bukusu culture will end up learning our initiation rite."*

(Viewer K Comment: 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2019)

*"We as African –American's just recently found out about our Nigerian and Kenyan heritage, specifically, Luhya on the Kenyan side and Ensa on the Nigerian side. Wonderful to discover and learn our ancestral roots and cultures. This has made us learn what our culture is; it has educated us or rather taught us here in the diaspora"*

(Viewer L Comment :)

*"Even though I am not a Luhya, I just enjoy and love their traditions so much. I am Kenyan born in the US but I watch Bukusu initiation songs and they have taught me more about my Kenyan culture. Long live our cultures we learn morals from our very own cultures."*

(Viewer M Comment :)

*"Very powerful historical information is given at this moment by the circumciser and the elderly to this new adult man. Circumscion in the Bukusu culture context does not start and end with the cut; although the cut is the most significant stage. The entire ritual has got nothing with the reduction of HIV/AIDS, through some songs people are warned against such menace. The essence of circumscion is to mark the transition from boyhood to manhood, and education of the boy child on how to live responsibly. The dos and the don'ts are passed from elders to the younger generation during this period."*

(Viewer N Comment :)

*“Siefwe sia Mango siola. Mkosa Mila ni mtumwa (Ours for Mango has come, whoever leaves his culture is a non-member) the concept of embracing biblical religion is denying as our reality of who we are. Remember the Jewish Jesus was identified by the Jews through circumcision.” Circumcision is part of our identity; it identifies Babukusu from the rest. Thanks a lot to YouTube and artist for enabling many to know our Bukusu culture.”*

(Viewer O Comment)

*“I am a proud Bukusu and these videos make and help my children to know, learn and enjoy my African roots and culture, however, they do not need to be misled together with many others watching sioyaye in all parts of the world. It is a sacred song and a backbone of the origin of Babukusu circumcision.”*

These comments expressed by the viewers and captured in this study concurred with the ideas of Cult (2003) who noted that YouTube provides a place for dialogue, connect and directly links people and projects related to the return of cultural and linguistic materials to indigenous communities globally. Wanyama (2005) showed that it is through social media that culture is highly spread to a wider and global audience. The video-sharing platform reflects and shapes values, beliefs and aspirations of the Bukusu's thus defining a people's national identity. Consequently, it has become the best platform to help masses to learn indigenous cultures. Besides, YouTube plays a role in disseminating the initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma to a wider or global audience. During the analysis of YouTube videos, the researcher found out that quite a big number of viewers watched Bukusu initiation songs from all parts of the world. Some viewers went as far as thanking the specific artists and all participants for making it live. They watched videos from different parts of the world such as the Middle East, United States of America, Germany Uganda, and Sweden among others. This is a clear indication that the initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma are disseminated through YouTube to a global audience. These videos also bring its viewers closer to their very own culture and home, this is evident from the above comments in which viewer D who remarks that she is far from home but this particular video makes her feel as if she is at home. This is evocative that YouTube platform is a great environment for learning or educating masses on culture and confirms that through YouTube mode many are educated on the morals and virtues of the society despite of them being far away from home.

Apart from preserving initiation songs, the same video-sharing website has revolutionized the way of preserving the initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma. YouTube is an outstanding website that has fundamentally preserved the initiation of the Bukusu of Bungoma. Circumcision songs were earlier preserved and disseminated from one generation to another through the word of mouth. The young ones would seat around fireplaces to listen to the narrations and singing from the elderly. This endangered the loss of initiation due to technology, western education, loss of memory and immigration. YouTube has preserved these songs and made them available at any time. Viewers can watch and re-watch initiation songs, give their comments, views, subscribe, like and dislike.

## 6.0 Conclusion

YouTube was found to be effective in the preservation and dissemination of initiation songs of the Bukusu of Bungoma. YouTube videos give relevant knowledge on the philosophies of Bukusu



initiation ritual and keep the originality of *Babukusu* initiation ceremony. The findings showed that YouTube has created accessibility to Bukusu initiation ceremony to all its members spread across different parts of the world. On the other hand, the video-sharing platform helps Bukusu's live performance such as initiation ceremony not to come into extinction. The study concluded that initiation songs contain a lot of wisdom in-so-far as virtues related to humanity are concerned. Further, the study concluded that preservation and dissemination of initiation songs has been thought as unnecessary activity. Numerous communities have always thought it better to preserve and disseminate initiation songs through memory, yet songs are threatened by loss of memory, urbanization, western civilization, education, religion and immigration leading to a lack of transfer of important initiation aspects [songs] in communities.

## 7.0 Recommendations

The study recommended that the Ministry of Culture, Gender and Sports should encourage and support the preservation and dissemination of traditionally or culturally loaded practices by documenting them for future reference and posterity. Besides, scholars and researchers must pay attention to oral tradition and social media with a focus on YouTube as a mode of preservation and dissemination of initiation songs. Worldwide, this field has received minimal study as compared to other genres of oral tradition such as oral narratives. Researchers must engage in the study of YouTube as a mode of preservation and dissemination of initiation songs to investigate the many responsibilities that YouTube offers to a global audience. Researchers need to engage in the study of YouTube as a mode of preservation and dissemination of initiation songs to investigate the many responsibilities that YouTube offers to a global audience. Moreover, the study found that traditional Bukusu initiation songs put more emphasis on messages perceived as taboos which the initiates must partake. These messages are accompanied by threats of curse if they are not adhered to. This serves as a very effective tool for social control within the community. In as much as the study did not analyze such songs in detail, a song like *Sioyaye* is loaded with a lot of threats of ex-communication if one went against the norms. These songs should therefore be embraced as they balance the attainment of moral standards within a community.

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