

COMMUNICATIVE VIABILITY OF NYATITI MUSIC WITHIN SELECTED SUB-COUNTIES IN SIAYA

Beatrice Digolo

Department of Music and Dance,
Kenyatta University; Nairobi, Kenya
Email: digolobetty@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The study presented in this article was concerned with evaluating the current role played by Nyatiti Music in communication among the rural population of Siaya County. Nyatiti is among the most popular traditional musical instrument in Siaya. The lyrics that are accompanied by the instruments are designated after its name as 'Wende Nyatiti' (Nyatiti songs). The Nyatiti songs are valued not only as forms of entertainment but also for their informative roles. The conceptualization of this paper arose due to the curiosity concerning the current status of Nyatiti as a viable medium of communication in Siaya County. About a decade ago, research was conducted that portrayed that a significant number of the population in the area had no access to the Print and Electronic Media form of communication. In order to gauge the communicative viability of Nyatiti songs, samples of the relevant songs were selected, translated and analyzed. Purposive and Snowball techniques of Sampling were employed to select the required number of study respondents. The communicative capacity of the Nyatiti songs was evaluated based on the results of the quasi-experimental process and the opinionnaire Likert scale results.

Keywords: Social concerns, Communicative Viability, Indigenous Media, Nyatiti Music, Print Media, and Electronic Media.

INTRODUCTION

In this article, the author underscores the significance of *Nyatiti* music as a traditional medium of communication with viability to almost equalize that of Print and Electronic Media. The article also makes references to selected literature that highlight the communicative capacity of indigenous music. The use of supporting literature is meant to authenticate the fact that despite the current growth rate of development within the Print and Electronic Media industry, there still exist certain sections of the rural population that depends on indigenous media as an alternative means of communication. The comparison between *Nyatiti* music and the Print and Electronic

medium of communication emerge from the existing situation in some parts of Siaya County where traditional music performances continue to play important roles in communication particularly among those who for some reasons are unable to access the modern forms of communication.

Background Information

Nyatiti is one of the most popular music instruments in Siaya County. In explaining the formation of *Benga* music, Eaagleson (2012) attributes it to having been developed from Luo musical instruments citing *Nyatiti* as the most widely played in Luo. In fact, Siaya County is known to have produced the majority of the *Nyatiti* musicians found in the Luo Nyanza region (Digolo, 2003). The *Nyatiti* instrument forms an accompaniment for songs that are performed during various occasions including funeral ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, traditional beer parties, inauguration of community leaders, traditional festivals, community celebrations and for general entertainment. The songs that it accompanies are designated as *Nyatiti* songs.

In *Nyatiti* performance, song, which comprises both text and its melodic settings, forms the very essence of the performance. The instrumental rhythms are considered rather subservient to the songs that they accompany. The text, particularly, is regarded as the most important. This is due to the fact that the communicative capacity of the songs is dependent on their texts (Digolo, 2003, p. 64).

The *Nyatiti* lyrics and other expressive forms it embodies, such as panegyrics, enrich its contents and result in its power to draw the attention of the audience to its presentation. The *Nyatiti* musicians diligently study various concerns that are expressed within their social environment and integrate such concerns into their music compositions. The same sentiments that are drawn from the social surrounding are disseminated into society. In other words, the relationship

between the society and the musicians is that which may be described as an ‘interdependent exchange’. Apart from its communicative function, the *Nyatiti* lyrics reinforce the Luo cultural norms, mores, beliefs and aspirations hence maintaining the conservation of their music and protecting them from the abrasive elements of the culture.

The communicative capacity of *Nyatiti* music has currently resulted in its potential as a viable medium for disseminating all types of social messages including those that are political, developmental, religious and educational among others. In fact, Kavyu (1986) referred to *Nyatiti* in reference to its communicative role among the rural population of Siaya as “The Rural Newspaper”. An interview held with an officer from Siaya County Cultural Office revealed the fact that a significant section of the population in Siaya County continue to have no access to the Print and Electronic Media due to various circumstances: including poverty, and inability to read printed documents such as newspapers, magazines, and electronic messages. Though the vernacular radio stations have now reached most of the rural areas, many people in the county find purchasing and maintaining the radios to be beyond their financial means because those radios use dry cells due to lack of power connection. *Nyatiti* and other forms of indigenous music then step in to play crucial roles as alternative or supplementary means of communication and thereby enabling the economically disadvantaged population in Siaya County to access the information on various social concerns.

A number of scholarly writings indicate that indigenous music genres play crucial communicative roles not only in Africa but also in other parts of the world as indicated in the subsequent paragraphs. The question asked in this article is therefore not whether *Nyatiti* music can prove itself as a viable medium of communication but rather how its communicative viability

can be verified especially with the growing popularity of the Print and Electronic Media in the rural environment.

The definition of traditional media of communication provided by Newme (2011) indicates the status of indigenous forms as recognized channels of communication. In his article, 'Traditional Media: Meaning and Practices', Newme (2011) states that "non-Electronic and Print Media which are part of our culture and are used for transmitting traditions from one generation to another generation are called Traditional Media. The transmission of traditions from one generation to another certainly includes the embodiment of new trends and concepts that emerge during the generational changes. The above definition serves as an important indication of the role of indigenous media as crucial forms of communication. Furthermore, the genres are portrayed as having the capacity to incorporate new issues and trends that constantly emerge within the changing social environment into their contents.

Kehinde, Okorie, Ahmadu and Itsekor (2014), assert that to a rural people, the use of traditional forms of communication to popularize certain government policies whether economic, ideological, cultural or educational is in tandem with their way of life. In various parts of Africa, empirical studies have been conducted with proven results about the capability of traditional media such as music to serve as effective channels of communication. For instance, Ojiugo, Nwokedi, Chidi, Edi and Tony (2015) in reference to the Igbo land in Nigeria, observe that traditional communication systems operate in urban and rural areas for the purpose of enhancing socio-economic development of these areas.

In concurrence with the foregoing sentiments on the viability of traditional media as a means of communication among the rural population, Gotmas (2017) observes that “perhaps traditional communication is one of the most important ways by which “ruralities” communicate among themselves and in effect with others. Gotmas (2017) uses the term “ruralities” as defined in (the free dictionary, 2003). According to the definition, the term ruralities refers to the state or quality of being rural or of having rural characteristics. The foregoing sentiments are but just a few examples among the many experiences that have been cited by scholars concerning the growing realization of the viability of traditional music and other indigenous forms as mediums of communication among the rural population.

METHODOLOGY

In this paper, like in many ethnomusicological types of research, the determination of the study population was realized by the use of statistical formula. The use of the formula was based on the estimation of the size of the target population. According to the formula, the target population is estimated to be ten thousand (10,000) and more. In the study, the estimated size of target population was based on an approximation of the total population of the three sub-counties from which the four (4) study locations were drawn. The study population specifically consisted of the traditional music enthusiasts particularly those who were considered to be actively involved in *Nyatiti* music activities within selected sub-counties in Siaya. Siaya County has a total of six sub-counties namely Bondo, Rarieda, Alego Usonga, Gem, Ugunja, and Ugenya. This study was focused on particular areas of interest that were selected from three of the sub-counties namely Alego Usonga, Gem, and Ugunja. In order to establish the appropriate size of the study

population, the following statistical formula was therefore employed as recommended by Fischer (1978).

$$n = \frac{Z^2 p q}{d^2}$$

Where n = the desired study population size when the target population is estimated to be 10,000 and above.

Z = the standard deviation at the required confidence level.

p = the proportion in the target population estimated to have the characteristics being measured.

$$q = 1 - p$$

d = the level of statistical significance.

The above formula was preferred in this study because the target population was estimated to be far greater than 10,000. In order to determine the value of n, the following steps were followed.

The first step was to assign values to each letter in the formula.

- i. The 'z' value was decided upon arbitrarily as recommended by Ingule (1996). Thus z = 2.58 was used. This implies that the sample mean will not be further than 2.58(z) from the population mean.
- ii. The 'p' was valued at 50% or .50, based on the recommendations of Fischer (Ibid), who suggested that if there is no estimate available of the proportion in the target population assumed to have the characteristics of interest, then 50% should be used. The use of 50%

is enough to guarantee that the size of population derived from the formula will provide appropriate and reliable results if the sample drawn from the population is adequate.

- iii. The 'q' value was calculated by subtracting p from 1.
- iv. The 'd' value or the level of significance was set at .01. The choice of .01 level of significance was based on the recommendation by Best (1977), that if the z value equals or exceeds 2.58, then the difference between population mean and sample mean is significant at .01 level. In other words, there is less than $\frac{1}{100}$ chances that the difference between the sample mean and the population mean is due to any sampling error.

Calculation of estimated size of study population using the formula

$$n = \frac{Z^2 p^q}{d^2} \quad n = \frac{(2.58)^2 (.50)(1 - .50)}{(.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{6.66 \times 0.25}{0.0025} \quad n = \frac{1.67}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 665.64 = 666$$

The study population was therefore determined at six hundred and sixty six (666). The above formula has been employed in various fields of study especially those involving survey, anthropological, sociological, and ethnomusicological researches among others, to assist researchers in the determination of either sample or population sizes.

The statistically determined accessible population was then used to obtain the study sample consisting of two hundred and nine (209) respondents. This sample size represents 31% of the study population. However, the number of respondents who actually participated in the research

activities was 29.8%. According to Borg and Gall (1989), as little as 10% sample size is adequate in descriptive studies since in such studies, the focus is usually on the description of a specific phenomenon as it exists within a given point in time. Consequently, the percentages employed for the sample size in this study are considered to be adequate. The selection of the sub-counties and sub-locations of interest to the study was carried out through purposive sampling technique. In order to reach the respondents that could provide relevant information on the communicative viability of *Nyatiti* music, the snowball sampling technique was employed. The snowball technique of sampling was used to identify the required respondents by the help of those who had information about individuals or groups who were appropriate to the study.

The respondents were aged 18 years and above. The age range was selected in accordance with the recommendation of the Kenyan constitution (2010) article no. 260 which states that “unless the context requires otherwise “adult” means an individual who has attained the age of eighteen years”. This category of people was considered to be fairly conversant with issues concerning the viability of *Nyatiti* music as a medium of communication. The study was conducted in four sub-locations which are: Wagai West (Gem Sub county), Umala and Ulaf (AlegoUsonga Sub county), and Rang’ala (Ugunja Sub county). The sub-locations were selected purposively due to the fact that a pre-study survey had indicated the pervasiveness of *Nyatiti* tradition within the areas. Consequently, the selected sub-locations were considered capable of providing adequate respondents that could yield reliable information for the study.

Research Design

The study employed quasi-experimental research design and descriptive design. In the quasi-experimental research design, the study samples were treated to the single-group pre-test-post-test, or the repeated measures approach (Allen, 2017). In this type of experimental method, the single-group pre-test-post-test uses the same group of subjects as both experimental and control group. In the case of this study, the subjects were used as experimental group during the first cycle and as control group during the second cycle. The order of exposure to experimental and control variables or treatment was reversed.

The descriptive approach was also employed in the study to analyze both etic and emic observations that were gathered during data collection. According to Glass and Hopkins (1984), when a study involves a small number of cases, descriptive design enables a researcher to organize data into patterns that emerge during analysis. Consequently, the descriptive design justifies the validity of conducting micro-researches on specific areas of interest as was undertaken in the case of this study. However, in as far as this study may be applied to a wider section of the population; it specifically describes the currently existing situation in the studied areas. Both the experimental and descriptive research designs were intended to enable the author to access data relating to knowledge acquisition from the texts of selected *Nyatiti* music in order to measure their communicative viability. The average age group that participated in the study is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Age Category of the Respondents

Age Bracket	Frequency	percentage
18 – 21	6	3.0
22 -25	19	9.4
26 – 29	30	14.9
30 – 33	32	16.2
34 – 37	31	15.7
38 – 41	24	12.2
42 -45	29	14.6
46 – 49	12	6.0
50 – 53	7	3.3
54 – 57	9	4.7
Total	199	100

Table 1 illustrates the age distribution of the respondents who took part in the study. The two hundred and nine respondents (209) that were initially identified as the study sample were not all able to take part in the study. The number of respondents who were finally interviewed was therefore 199 that represented 95% of the sample size. The percentage gave an adequate sample for the study population. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to select the study locations and relevant study respondents. The techniques ensured that only a section of the population that had relevant information was included.

The study focused on the section of the population that resides in these areas in order to establish the extent to which they are currently able to access Print and Electronic Media of communication. The study also assessed how far traditional music genres were used in such areas as alternative mediums of communication to complement Print and Electronic Media. The

study was conducted in parts of the County that were identified as homes to some of the most established *Nyatiti* musicians. The same areas obviously formed the hubs of *Nyatiti* patrons.

TRANSLATIONS AND ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED NYATITI MUSIC

The *Nyatiti* music that are analyzed in the following sections were selected from those that had been employed in the previous study but which are known to be popularly performed by various *Nyatiti* musicians in the county to date. The songs were administered to the respondents in their recorded forms. This ensured that none of their original qualities were affected as would have been the case if they were recorded again from current *Nyatiti* musicians. The examples of *Nyatiti* song texts presented in the following section represent the variety of topical songs that were administered to the respondent during the quasi-experiment. The songs were sampled from a group of twelve songs that embodied messages relating to health, literacy and family planning. However, this study concerned itself only with messages on health and literacy.

Song No. 1: ORETA DISI by Joseph Oliech

Omondi Chief nolwonga
Náwer Disi
Thorong'ong'o awerna
Samiel
Okew Kakan
Ma japuonj
Ti opuonjowa raia
Opuonjo wach Okimi

Ni ngáto ka ngáto
Orit dende
Kata in dichuo
Ma jamwaka apar gang'wen
Nyaka irit dendi
Kata ijamwaka apar gabich
Nyaka irit dendi

Kata ija mwaka pier' aboro
Nyaka irit dendi

Mano e wach Oreta
Ka opuonjo wach Okimi
Kata in miyo

- Omondi, the Chief invited me.
- So that I sing in praise of the D.C.
- Thorong'ong'o let me sing in praise of Samuel
- The nephew of the Kakan people,
- who is a teacher
- These days he teaches people.
- He teaches about AIDS

- That everyone
 - Should take care of his/ her body
 - Whether you are a male
 - Who is fourteen years old
 - You must take care of your body
 - Whether you are fifteen years old
 - You must take care of your body
 - Whether you are eighty years old
 - You must take care of your body
- That's Oreta's advice
- When he teaches about AIDS
 - Whether you are a female
- Ma jamwaka apar gadek*
Nyaka irirt dendi
Kiparo wach Okimi
- Two obiro magalagala*
Miluongo Okimi
Jomoko bende lwonge
Bu tiek ring'o
Tiek ringo idong' chogo
- Sirikal osedwaro*
yadhe
To pod ok onwang'
Nyaka irit dendi
Omiyo waluonge japuonj
Opuonjo wach Okimi
E Siaya town
- Tinde wabet ka watang'*
Jathum tinde obet oluor
Nikech winjo wach Okimi
Kod nying Samiel
Omiyo awero
- Who is thirteen years old
 - You must take care of your body
 - While you consider the problem of AIDS
- A strange disease has come.
 - That is called AIDS.

- Some people refer to it.
 - As "finish the flesh".
 - Finish the flesh and remain with bones
- The government has searched for its treatment.
 - But it has not been discovered.
 - You must take care of your body.
 - Therefore we call him the teacher (D.C).
 - He teaches on AIDS.
 - In Siaya town.
- These days we are careful.
 - The musicians are these days scared.
 - Because of receiving messages on AIDS
 - Through Samuel (The D.C)
 - Therefore I am singing in praise of the

japuonj
Disi ma puonjo raia

Tinde onyiso kijande
Kik iwuoth achach
Omiyo opuonjowa kwe
Kuom wach Okimi

Tinde orito Siaya town
Siaya tinde obet kokwe
Omiyo waluonge japuonj
Japuonj koro oriti

teacher
The D.C who teaches people
He has informed the youth
Do not roam carelessly
So he teaches us peacefully.
On AIDS issues
He protects Siaya town
These days Siaya is peaceful
Therefore we refer to him as teacher
Teacher, farewell now.

Song number 1 translated above was composed by the late *Nyatiti* musician named Joseph Oliech. The song is composed in praise of the musician's friend Oreta who was the District Commissioner at the time the song was composed. The main theme of the song consisted of a narrative on the crucial role that had been played by the District Commissioner in creating awareness about HIV/ AIDS which until today is among the most serious social concerns in the area. The *Nyatiti* musician as a member of the community, as well as a custodian of cultural heritage through his music employed the composition to transmit the important issues using a channel that was familiar and friendly to members of the community. The musician never delved deeply into narrating the proliferation of HIV/AIDS in the county. However, he insinuated the health crisis that the disease posed to members of the community by slyly making reference to it in his praise song.

Song No. 2 OMONDI LAKTAR by Otieno Dongla

Omondi katani e yueyo
To nyaka omondi ye
lima
Omondi wuodUmani
E laktarmang'ongo
Wuoyimanyagotuo

- Even when Omondi was off duty.
- He had to come early in the morning to visit me.
- Omondi of Umani.
- Is a great doctor
- The man who destroys sickness.

To Omondi niinuangó kore
Okwongo ondike "Da"
To aye ondike – "Ra"
To aye ondike "Ja"
To aye ondike Omondi

- And on Omondi's chest,
- Is first written the letter "D",
- Then is written the letter "R",
- Then is written the letter "J",
- Then is written Omondi.

Kata en Joseph Omondi
Kata en John Omondi
Kata en James Omondi
Mano pod jathum kiya

- Whether he is Joseph Omondi,
- Whether he is John Omondi,
- Whether he is James Omondi,
- That one, the musician does not know.

To Omondi kata ni e dala

- But even when Omondi was at home.

Omondi kata onwangó yueyo

Modok e dala

Nyaka oduogyé lima

Kaka anindo otieno

Ema omiyo awero

jayadha

En mogolo tuo

Ka tuo rano

jathum

Jomoko wachona

Ni tuo ni mar jopiny

Wang'ni idwar manyasi

To an aduogo adag

Atemiye osiptal

Dipoko ógolo tuo

Otera ni laktar moro

Ma nopimo jathum

To aye onyiso jathum

Ni dhie e siptal mang'ongo

Kama iyangé tuo

Ni ema inyalo thiedhie

- Even when Omondi was off duty.

- And went back home.

- He always came back to visit me.

- To know how I spent the night.

- That is why I am singing the praise of my friend.

- He is the one that removed the sickness.

- When sickness was wasting away the musician.

- Some people were telling me.

- That this disease is caused by witchcraft.

- This time use traditional herbs.

- But me I refused.

- Let me try the hospital.

- It may remove the disease.

- I was taken to another doctor.

- Who examined the musician.

- Then told the musician.

- That, go to the big hospital.

- Where diseases are operated on

- That is where you can be treated.

Awero Omondi wuod Omondi

Omondi wuon Ong'wen

Gi Ohon Wanyanga

Gi Propesa Omondi

En Omondi wuod Omondi

Wuon Ong'wen

Osiepná koro aweyi

Aweyi, Bwana Omondi

Nyathi jo Umani

- I sing the praise of Omondi, son of Omondi.

- Omondi father of Ong'wen.

- And OhonWanyanga.

- And Professor Omondi.

- He is Omondi son of Omondi.

The father of Ong'wen.

My friend, now I leave you.

I leave you Mr. Omondi.

The child of Umani people.

Song number 2 presented above depicts the musician's description of his predicament when he found himself in a situation whereby he was expected to choose between using modern or

traditional medicine when he fell sick. He however indicates that after some consultations, he settled for the modern medicine and went for treatment in a hospital. The musician continues to compare himself with his friend who had opted to treat himself with traditional medicine, a decision that ultimately led to his death. The musician expresses his gratitude to a doctor named Omondi who had accorded him good treatment in the hospital.

In his presentation, the musician is concerned not only with narrating his personal experiences but also with educating as well as entertaining his audience. Usually, during this ‘edutainment’ process, the *Nyatiti* audience receive, interpret, consume, and react to the messages in any manner that they deem appropriate. For instance, they may discuss the messages as the performances proceed, clap their hands in response to the music, join the performers in singing, dance and ululate or they may just stand and observe. The commitment shown by members of the community in attending the *Nyatiti* concerts in such occasions indicates the confidence they place in the genre as a valuable source of information. We can also say they look for entertainment.

Song No. 3 ODUOR TINGA by Ogwang’ Lelo

Awerowuod

Orindo

Wuod Ojuola.

Aomopesa mana e bengi

Ogwang’ aomopesa mana ebengi

To an pokakano kata ebengi

To chega no atero mana ebengi

To anyisokaran mar bengi

Karan kawomiyongáto

Kendo ngátokawomiyong’ato

Kae chegniduogoni

jathum

- I sing in praise of the son of Orindo

- The son of Ojuola

- I collected money from the bank

- Ogwang’, I collected money from the bank

- And yet I have never banked any

- And I took my cheque to the bank

- And showed it to the bank clerk

- The clerk took it and gave it to someone

- Then the person gave it to someone else

- When the cheque came back to the musician

To ilokonakang'eye
Ni Ogwang'ondikiengéye
To ok neneatemeyorndiko
Kanenenyithindodhiyosomo
To awuothokodthumbe
Ka janeko

Be an ok aluweyorsomo
To akwerokaran mar bengi
Ni mimisijuiyorndiko
To karan mar bengi
Kelona range ma rapir
To onyiso wuod Oguna

To akawo lweta ma thuo
Obawona e range
To obawo e tok chek
Aye to chegano iduoko

Kendo ngáto kawo
Miyo ngáto
Kendo ngáto kawo miyo ngáto
Miyo ngáto

- It was turned for me at the back
- So that Ogwang' could sign it at the back
- And yet I had never tried writing before
- When children were going to school
- I was traveling with musical instruments
- Like a mad man.

- So I never acquired any education
- So I informed the bank clerk
- That I don't know anything about writing
- And the bank clerk
- Brought me a blue paint
- And he told the son of Oguna

- And he took my thumb
- And smeared the color on it

- And placed it on the back of the cheque
- Then my cheque was returned

- Again someone took it
- And gave it to the next person
- Again someone passed it to another
- And gave it to the next person
Ay achodhopesa
e bengi
To pokneneakanoye
maga

Emaomiyoawero
WuodOjuola
Owadgi Opondo
MakaOjuola
Kod Onyango Tito
Maka Ojuola
Od Pol Ondengo
Maka Oyingo

Ora ahero
Maloyonyako
Oriti wuod Ojuola

I collected a big amount of money from the bank.
And yet I had never banked my own money.

- That's why I sing in praise of
- The son of Ojuola
- The brother of Opondo
- The son of Ojuola
- And Onyango Tito
- The son of Ojuola.
- And Paul Odengo.
- The son of Oyingo

- My brother in law whom I love
- More than a girl
- Farewell, the son of Ojuola.

Song number 3 is a praise song by the late Ogwang' Lelo in honor of a friend who provided him with financial assistance. In his narrative, the musician vividly describes the embarrassment he encountered at the bank where he had gone to withdraw the money. On reaching the bank, he was expected to sign certain documents in order to receive the payment. The musician depicts how he was flustered by his inability to read and write hence exemplifying the disadvantages of illiteracy. The musician attributes his illiteracy to his lack of childhood education pointing out to the fact that he wasted his time roaming about while his peers went to school. Due to his state of illiteracy, he had to rely on a thumbprint in order to receive the money. The musician's narrative demonstrated an element of self-reproach which he used not only to indicate his unfortunate state of illiteracy but also to inform his audience and the society as a whole about the importance of attaining education.

Song No. 4 AUMA MARGARET by Ochieng' Omingli

Aumaofisa ma dhako
Ma jomachwotiyo e bwoye
To jamaotiyomamit
Emaomiyopromoson

WoweeJangoloRateng'
Thumchandowiya
Sani
Sa ma awero
Nyarjomaolony
Nyathigi Okoth
Nyar Olang' woun Okoth

- Auma, the female officer
- Who heads male counterparts
- And those that work nicely
- Are the ones she gives promotion

- Wowee the instrumentalist, the black one

- The instrument is bothering my head now
- When I sing in praise of
- The daughter of civilized people

- The sibling of Okoth
- The daughter of Olang, father of Okoth.

Auma nyar Olang' woun
Okoth
Margaret oloyonaye mon

NyarOdindoKÓgony
AweroAumanyar
Robot
Margaret oloyoneye mon
Olang'notiegonyako
Margaret ochopo e chuny
buk

Auma, ne wanwang' orego
E Mombasa malo tawon
Ndalonogo, japuonj moro
Mi luongo bu Otieno
Ka Odenda, ka Twera
Emano omo jathum
Ugenya

To otera malo Mombasa
Kara otera rwako
Buch mon

- Auma the daughter of Olang', father of Okoth
- Margaret is better than other women
- The daughter of Odindo, son of Ogony
- I am singing in praise of Auma daughter of Robert
- Margaret is better than other women.
- Olang' educated a girl.
- Margaret has reached the heart of books.

- We met with Auma
- Up in Mombasa town
- In those days, another teacher
- Referred to as Otieno
- Son of Odenda, son of Twera
- Is the one who invited the musician from Ugenya

- And took me up to Mombasa
- He was taking me to inaugurate
- Women's Association

Noterarwako

Bura mar mon

E Mombasa malo town

Oterarwako

bura mar mon

Mond jo Kakan

makaAto

Kara Aumanyar Olang'

Ne wendomodhial

Emajathumbudho

Aneeo Auma nyar Olang'

Wacho Kisungu ka nyar odiero

Molor e ndege

Wacho ngereza e bura

Chal nyar odiero mowuok e ndege

Somo weche bura

Mana gidho sungu

Olang' nopuonjo nyako

- He was taking me to inaugurate
- Women's Association
- Up in Mombasa town
- He took me to inaugurate
- women's association
- The association of Kakan women of the Ato clan
- And Auma, the daughter of Olang'
- Was the guest of honor
- Was the one to be entertained by the musician
- I saw Auma, the daughter of Olang'
- Speak English like a white girl
- Who has just come out of an airplane
- She spoke English in the meeting
- Like a white girl from an airplane
- She read matters about the association
- In the English language
- Olang' educated a girl

Ema thum oromo Margaret

Aumanówachonani

OdwarothumKastom

N'osolo jo madongo

Osolo Ogonda wuod Agingo

Nyar jo kabuk

Eno solo jo madongo

Nyaka Okol kÓbonyo
Wakili matweyo ji

Nyar joka Olang'
Oyeyo ma odonjo
E jikond joka paka
Ma oyeyo ok chiemgaye kwero
Kata owangýe ringó gójur

Oyeyokwer
Ni dipo ka kendo walokore
Chiemo ma ichamo
Ka ring'o orumo

Auma thuon thuol
- When Margaret got satisfied with the performance
- Auma told me that
- She wanted the music at the customs
- She invited important people
- She invited Ogonda, son of Agingo
- The daughter of the book people
- Her, she invited important people
- Including Okol, the son of Obonyo
- Lawyers who jail people

- The daughter of Olang' family
- A rat that has entered
- In a kitchen belonging to the cat family
- In which rats never eat at all
- Even if there is fried meat and bile

- The rats claim
- That, we may end up becoming
- Food to be eaten
- When the meat gets finished

- Auma the big snake
Ma kata inuangó
Thuol ma nyabur
To igoyokoko to idum

Olang' ipuonjonyako
Aumaloyonyirimokosomo

Makangátookendo
To chalong'atmowilo.
Dhiang' gidhiang'

Omiyoapako doctor Onyach
Ma jaod Margaret Auma
Aumathuonthuol
Ma kata enthuol ma nyabur
Igoyo nduru to idum
Ah, to mano thuon thuol
Kata inuangó thuol ma nyabur

Engi doctor Obade ka Owiti
Gibudho jathum
Gibudho jathum
Kastom

Kendo gigolo
- That even if you meet
- A female snake
- You shout and jump

- Olang', you educated a girl
- Auma is better than uneducated girls
- Who when one gets married to
- Is like exchanging
- A cow for another cow

- Therefore I'm praising doctor Onyach
- Husband of Margaret Auma
- Auma, the big snake
- Whether it is a female snake
- You shout and jump
- Ah, what a big snake
- Even if you meet a female snake

- She is with doctor Obade son of Owiti
- They are giving the musician company
- They kept the musician company in customs

- And they were removing

Miya manyien
OgondakÓgingo
Yawuoyigolo
Miya manyien

Auma nyar Rakula
Nyargi Oje ka Okoth

- Sister of Oje, son of Okoth

Nyar Olang'
Ofisa ma dhako
Otera Kastom
Nyar Olang' wuon Okoth

- Daughter of Olang'
- The female officer
- Took me to customs
- Daughter of Olang', the father of Okoth

Awero Auma nyar gi Oje
Nyar Olang' oloyona mon

- I am singing of Auma the sister of Oje
- The daughter of Olang' is better than other women

Nyamin Owino Gogni
Nyar Olang' gomba mon
Agone thum nyaka nátho
Margaret oloyonae mon
Nyar Olang' wuon Okoth

- The sister of Owino Gogni
- Daughter of Olang' the envy of women
- I will sing in praise of her till I die
- Margaret is better than other women
- The daughter of Olang' the father of Okoth

Oriti Margaret nyar Olang'
Man woun Okoth

- Farewell, Margaret, daughter of Olang'
- The father of Okoth

- New hundred shillings notes
- Ogonda, son of Ogingo
- The gentlemen are removing
- New hundred shillings notes
- Auma, daughter of Rakula

Auma koro nindi
Oriti nyar Olang'
Margaret loyonaye mon
- Auma, now rest
- Farewell, the daughter of Olang'
- Margaret is better than other women

Song number 4 is a praise song by Ochieng Omingli in honor of a lady whom he admires for her education, immense knowledge, and her lavish lifestyle. The musician portrays his subject as one with a good educational and professional background. He further observes that his female subject has attained a high position within the society that enables her to preside over and control her male counterparts at her place of work. The musician makes use of panegyrics in referring to his subject as a *'female snake'*. The metaphorical reference is meant to portray the status of the female subject in her profession where her colleagues do not regard her as a female but only view her based on her level within the profession. In his panegyric, the musician portrays the fact that a snake is feared by all males and females alike, and its being male or female is never taken

into account when encountered. No one seeing a snake wonders whether it is male or female. Similarly, the musician's subject had attained a position whereby her colleagues never perceived her in terms of her gender. In this composition, the musician depicts the importance of education for women by metaphorically describing how his subject has been empowered through education. The song is meant to encourage the girl child and women, in general, to diligently pursue their educational goals.

Perception of the Respondents on Communicative Viability of *Nyatiti* Music

In order to analyze the respondents' opinions concerning the viability of *Nyatiti* songs as effective medium of communication, the study employed Likert Scale opinionnaire. This was based on five-point items that were intended to measure the respondents' attitudes or opinions and they included: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The responses were then analyzed as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Opinionnaire Statements Gauging Attitudes of Respondents on Communicative Viability of *Nyatiti* Songs

No. of Statements	SA/ A		Undecided/ No Response		D/ SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	150	75.4	34	17.1	15	7.5	199	100
2	12	6.1	31	15.7	156	78.2	199	100
3	160	80.2	4	2.0	35	17.8	199	100
4	53	26.4	66	33.3	80	40.3	199	100
5	140	70.6	18	9.0	41	20.4	199	100
6	32	16.0	77	38.9	90	45.1	199	100
7	102	51.3	28	14.2	69	34.5	199	100
8	18	9.1	40	19.9	141	71.0	199	100
9	101	51.0	18	8.8	80	40.2	199	100
10	65	32.8	37	18.5	97	48.7	199	100
11	120	60.3	18	9.1	61	30.6	199	100
12	60	30.1	33	16.6	106	53.3	199	100
13	56	27.9	53	26.7	90	45.4	199	100
14	110	55.3	32	16.1	57	28.6	199	100
15	90	45.2	50	25.4	59	29.4	199	100
16	34	17.1	72	36.1	93	46.8	199	100
17	115	57.8	27	13.6	57	28.6	199	100
18	32	16.1	57	28.6	110	55.3	199	100
19	122	61.3	26	13.1	51	25.6	199	100
20	50	25.1	26	13.1	123	61.8	199	100

Statement 1: Members of my village regularly participate in *Nyatiti* performances

As shown in Table 2, the findings indicate that as many as 150 (75.4%) respondents agreed with the statement. This implies that *Nyatiti* performances are popular in the studied areas to date. The numbers of respondents who provided negative responses were 15 (7.5%) while 34 (17.1%) were neutral or provided no responses.

Statement 2: We rarely have *Nyatiti* music performances in our village

The respondents that supported the statement were 12 (6.1%). Those that disagreed with the statement were 156 (78.2%) while the remaining respondents 31(15.7%) provided no response to the statement.

Statement 3: *Nyatiti* music can serve as a viable medium of communicating social concerns

The statement was supported by 160 (80.2%) respondents. Those that responded negatively were 35(17.8%). The rest of the respondents 4 (2%) were undecided.

Statement 4: *Nyatiti* songs are only useful as forms of entertainment

Majority 80 (40.3%) of the respondents refuted the statement while 53 (26.4%) of the respondents supported it. At least 66 (33.3%) provided no response for or against the statement.

Statement 5: I always pay keen attention to messages conveyed in *Nyatiti* song text

Those that supported the statement were 140 (70.6%). Those that disagreed with the statement were 41 (20.4%). The remaining respondents 18 (9.0%) provided no response to the statement.

Statement 6: I never learn much from messages embodied in *Nyatiti* text

The statement was supported by 32 (16%) respondents while most 90 (40.1%) of them responded negatively. The rest of the respondents 77 (38.9%) were undecided.

Statement 7: In most cases, I have received useful messages concerning health and literacy from *Nyatiti* music

Over this, 69 (34.5%) refuted the statement while 102 (52.1%) respondents supported it. However, 28 (14.2%) provided no response for or against the statement.

Statement 8: I only receive messages through radio, television or newspaper

The number of respondents who agreed with the statement was 18 (9.1%). Those that disagreed were 141 (71%) while 40 (19.9%) of the respondents remained undecided.

Statement 9: Indigenous music genres like *Nyatiti* have been useful means for receiving information on new events within my community

The statement was supported by 101 (51.0%) respondents. Those that responded negatively were 80 (40.2%) as the rest of the respondents 18 (8.8%) were undecided.

Statement 10: Indigenous music genres like *Nyatiti* should be solely concerned with the expression of indigenous cultural values as opposed to modern issues

Those that supported the statement were 65 (32.8%). Those that disagreed with the statement were 97 (48.7%). The remaining respondents 37 (18.5%) provided no response to the statement.

Statement 11: I always remember the messages I receive through listening to *Nyatiti* songs

This statement was supported by 120 (60.3%) of the respondents while those that disagreed with the statement were 61 (30.6%). The remaining respondents 18 (9.1%) provided no response to the statement.

Statement 12: After attending performances of *Nyatiti* music, I do not remember any messages transmitted through the songs

At least 60 (30.1%) indicated that they never remember any messages transmitted by the songs after attending a performance. The statement was refuted by 106 (53.3%) and remaining 33 (16.6%) respondents were undecided.

Statement 13: The songs at times repeat the information I have received through other means

The number of respondents that upheld the above statement was 56 (27.9%) and those that refuted it were 90 (45.4%). Nonetheless, 53 (26.7%) were undecided.

Statement 14: At certain times I have received first-hand information through the texts of *Nyatiti* songs

The statement was accepted by 110 (55.3%) respondents. The number of respondents that rejected the statement was 57 (28.6%) while the remaining 32 (16.1%) were undecided.

Statement 15: *Nyatiti* songs are a viable medium of communication

This was supported by most 90 (45.2%) of the respondents, with 59 (29.4%) disagreeing with the statement. The remaining respondents 50 (25.4%) provided no response to the statement.

Statement 16: Indigenous music forms like *Nyatiti* cannot perform the role of a communication medium in the modern socio-cultural context

This statement was supported by 34 (17.1%) respondents. Those that responded negatively were 93 (46.8%). The rest of the respondents 72 (36.1%) were undecided.

Statement 17: *Nyatiti* performances are usually attended by many people in my village

The statement was supported by 115 (57.8%) respondents. Those that responded negatively were 57(28.6%) while the rest of the respondents 27 (13.6%) were undecided.

Statement 18: Very few people in my village attend *Nyatiti* performances

Only 32 (16.1%) of the respondents were in favour of this statement. However, majority 110 (55.3%) disagreed to the statement with quite a number 57 (28.6%) of the respondents being undecided.

Statement 19: Whenever *Nyatiti* performances take place in my village, the audience discuss the song texts after their participation in songs and dances

As many as 122 (61.3%) respondents agreed that people generally discuss song messages after attending a performance. However, 51 (25.6%) indicated otherwise. At least 26 (13.1%) were either undecided or never provided any response for or against the statement.

Statement 20: People never discuss the song messages after attending performances of *Nyatiti* music

In responding to this statement, 50 (25.1%) of the respondents upheld the opinion while 123 (61.8%) refuted it. However, 26 (13.1%) of the respondents were neutral on this statement.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY RESULTS

As the opinionnaire analysis presented in Table 2 indicates, most of the respondents that were interviewed perceived *Nyatiti* music particularly the song texts or the lyrics as viable channels of communication. The twenty items presented to the respondents in the form of a Likert scale

consisted of statements that were intended to test attitudes or opinions of the respondents. As portrayed by the percentages provided in the table, in relation to the statement of the opinionnaire, the respondents demonstrated adequate consistency in their responses to the statements. The implication of the study findings as shown by the results of the opinionnaire is that despite increasing availability and accessibility of Print and Electronic Media in most parts of Siaya County, there is a section of the population that is still unable to utilize the Print and Electronic Media due to their elitist nature, inaccessibility and the monetary implications they come with.

The indigenous media such as *Nyatiti* and other forms therefore, serve as alternative channels for disseminating important social concerns. The social concerns such as literacy and health care are but among many problems that are faced by most rural populations not only within the studied county but in other areas as well. The purpose of conducting this study was therefore meant to help in assessing the potentiality of indigenous art forms like *Nyatiti* in raising the critical consciousness of community members on emerging social challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to assess the potential that indigenous art forms like *Nyatiti* have in relaying developmental messages to community members and in effect inspire informed dialogue among them. The study employed quasi-experiment and opinionnaire statements to solicit relevant responses concerning the viability of selected *Nyatiti* songs as an effective medium of communication. The study established that there are certain parts of Siaya County that are still disadvantaged regarding accessibility to Print and Electronic mediums of communication. In

such areas, the role of indigenous music as an alternative medium of communication is imperative. One would expect that currently, accessibility of Print and Electronic Media has improved due to rapid development that has occurred in most areas since the advent of devolved government. However, the results of the study pointed to the fact that there are certain areas in Siaya County that have not been fully penetrated by modern media, hence the need for alternative channels of communication. The Siaya County government has on a number of occasions banned the performances of indigenous music as well as other forms of music for one reason or another. The popularity of *Nyatiti* music as a means of edutainment in the area portrays the fact that any ban placed on it leaves a remarkable number of people without any source of information. This fact was proven by the overwhelming number of people who indicated in the study that *Nyatiti* music continues to play an effective role in communication.

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