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Decline and significance of Amayebe musical tradition: Implications for Primary Musical Arts Teacher Education

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Indigenous musical practices provide numerous benefits; however, in contemporary society, African musical customs have been relegated to the background. This situation is not unique to Uganda, but it reflects a global crisis in the preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). This crisis highlights a need to appraise Indigenous practices, considering the past, present, and future. This study aimed to explore the decline and significance of the Amayebe musical tradition among Busoga communities in Southeastern Uganda and analyse its implications for Primary Musical Arts Teacher Education (PMTE). Employing an ethnographic approach, data were gathered through participant observation, semi-structured interviews with five master musicians, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with the master musicians and nineteen apprentices. Findings attributed the sharp decline in Amayebe performances to the scarcity of materials for making Amayebe instruments, a loss of interest among the youths, low community recognition, its historical reservation for royal functions, the impact of Westernised schooling, the passing of master musicians, and a perceived lack of support from ministries in charge of cultural preservation. Despite its decline, Amayebe serves multiple vital functions: welcoming and entertaining the Kyabazinga (king); expressing solidarity and celebrating the deceased during the last funeral rites; and educating and counselling during traditional marriage and other social ceremonies; and denouncing wrong societal acts. Strategies to revitalise Amayebe include increasing public exposure through festivals and mass media, mobilising new members into performing groups, ensuring sustainable availability of raw materials, and integrating the Indigenous practices embedded in different traditions into PMTE curricula. The study concludes that addressing colonial mindsets, documenting Indigenous practices, and supporting cultural bearers are crucial for preserving this heritage.

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INTRODUCTION

In traditional African societies, musical traditions (song, dance, drama, and poetry) were deeply embedded in daily life and are considered as ancient as humanity itself (Guanah et al., 2020; Onwuekwe, 2009). The origin of music is linked to the imitation of natural sounds like birdsong and the patter of rain. Over time, musical instruments were crafted from readily available materials to enrich these sonic expressions (Kyambogo University, 2008). Songs were commonly composed about the common features or practices in society, such as fishing and farming. Performances were often enriched with costumes, props, and make-up, made from readily available materials, to add meaning to the performances.

Due to creativity and regular practice, many different musical traditions emerged, so even neighbouring tribes developed intricately different musical traditions and transmitted them across generations. In the case of the Busoga region in Southeastern Uganda, several Indigenous musical customs are found in communities such as *Tamenhaibuga*, *Ebigwala*, *Nalufuka*, *Amayebe*, *Enswezi*, and *Irongo*. Each of these traditions serves a particular role among the Busoga communities. *Ebigwala* is a royal gourd trumpet for leading processions and entertaining the Kyabazinga (king) (Isabirye, 2021b). *Tamenhaibuga* and *Nalufuka* are for social entertainment; *Enswezi* is for worship;

and *Irongo* is for the twin ceremony (Lubogo, 2020). Apart from mentioning it among the Busoga musical cultures, the significance of Amayebe, which is the only rattle culture in Busoga, was unclear.

The origin of rattles in musical traditions in Uganda is unclear, but leg rattles are commonly used in performances among tribes, including the Banyoro, Batooro, Banyankore, and Basoga (Kitara Media Group, 2023; Lubogo, 2020). *Orunyege* is a courtship musical tradition of the Banyoro and Batooro in western Uganda, where *ebinyege* (leg rattles) serve as the primary accompanying instrument. The Bakiga in Kigezi perform the *Ekizino* musical tradition, which involves the use of leg rattles by men, and the Banyankore in southwestern Uganda perform the *Ekitaguriro* musical tradition. In Busoga, the origin of *Amayebe* is unclear, but oral traditions suggest that it might have been adapted from the Banyoro. Lubogo (2020) notes that early settlers in Bugabula—one of the eleven hereditary chiefdoms of the Busoga Kingdom—were Banyoro, so they brought this tradition with them. From Bugabula, *Amayebe* spread throughout Busoga, primarily through imitation.

Colonialism entrenched in school-based education continues to manifest lasting effects on Indigenous musical cultures. In the earlier stages of its influence, Indigenous Ugandan musical traditions

were demonised, and converts were not allowed to practise them. Although Western rounds were used as energisers during teaching, music was not a mainstream subject, and even when it was introduced, it concentrated mainly on Western sacred singing to boost choral work in church. Such acts have continuously eroded Indigenous musical practices and their benefits to communities. For a long time, international organisations like UNESCO have been concerned about this global crisis. The loss of Indigenous traditions threatens cultural identity and signals a breakdown in intergenerational knowledge transmission. This undermines national aspirations such as Uganda's Vision 2040, which emphasises the preservation and practice of Indigenous cultural heritage (Government of Uganda [GoU], 2013). It also affects the African Union and Agenda 2063's aspiration for a strong cultural identity and inclusive growth (Akinola & Matlosa, 2025).

The school-based education system in most formerly colonised African countries, like Uganda, is highly Westernised and detached from the societal needs of the local communities. The integration of Indigenous knowledge (IK) systems into such education could make it more contextually relevant (Kaya & Seleti, 2013). Koehler (2017) argues that school-based education needs to take appropriate account of IK; otherwise, learners might not be able to connect their learning experiences with their social and cultural environment. This might negatively impact their ability to apply knowledge acquired at school in their daily life.

Incorporating IK practices into curricula might enhance decolonisation and reclamation by means of revaluing them to regain the African identity in education (Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024). Such revaluation of IK requires delving into the details of Indigenous musical traditions by unveiling their uniqueness and reappraising their role in the past and present, to anticipate the future (Ndubisi & Kanu, 2021). This underscores the critical need to reform Primary Musical Arts Teacher Education

(PMTE) because of its higher multiplier effect (Walubo et al., 2025), and equip future educators to reverse this trend. To reiterate the call, it is crucial to nurture future musical arts educators who have a profound understanding of Indigenous musical practices and are capable of effectively teaching and learning in learning institutions (Ngoma, 2024; Ngoma & Fikelepi-Twani, 2024). Therefore, this article aimed to explore the decline and significance of Amayebe musical tradition among Busoga communities, focusing on the possibilities of incorporating its practices into PMTE for meaningful decolonisation.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Particular Indigenous African practices are associated with specific occasions like funerals, twin ceremonies, work, and worship (Human & Akuno, 2024). According to Lubogo (2020), there are several Indigenous musical traditions for entertaining the Kyabazinga and the general public. In Buganda, some musical traditions, like *Amaggunju*, are specifically performed to entertain the Kabaka (king) (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2015). Musical performances are also used to express love and loyalty for the cultural leaders, and are used to welcome visitors (Kafumbe, 2006). This study intended to find out if the Amayebe tradition would be performed for the Kyabazinga and what role it played.

Success in making musical arts depends upon teamwork and harmony, so Lubogo (2020) argues that musical practices foster unity and socialisation. For example, playing *embaire* (xylophone) requires over thirty people to work together for rehearsals and performances. Accordingly, it was necessary to explore whether the Amayebe tradition also enhances socialisation.

Writing on music in Uganda, Cooke (1996) insinuates that music and dance are means of communication. For instance, at dawn, musical performances were intended to awaken the attendants early enough to prepare the king's meals

on time (Kafumbe, 2006). Also, Cooke (1996) elaborates that there were special drums that would be played to signal the king's departure from the palace. In Busoga, Lubogo (2020) explains that a drum would be sounded to call people for a gathering, warn them against approaching danger, or notify them about the king's death. Therefore, this study aimed to confirm whether Amayebe tradition played a communicative role.

Music and dance are instrumental during the installation of cultural leaders, as Isabirye (2012) recounts that the coronation of Mulooki as the Kyabazinga of Busoga in 1995 was punctuated by *Ebigwala* musical tradition. Cooke (1996) also states that the coronation of Muteesa II as the Kabaka of Buganda involved over 220 *mujaguzo* (kingly) drums that boomed alongside royal trumpeters and other praise drummers who led the Kabaka's processions. This study intended to investigate whether Amayebe plays any royal functions.

Isabirye (2019a) notes that musical traditions form one's identity, claiming that *Ebigwala* is Busoga's cultural identity symbol. Lubogo (2020) also notes that some musical instruments are used to play the clan slogans (*omubala*), which are distinct to particular clans. Further, Kafumbe (2006) states that several music and dance traditions, like the *mujaguzo* drums, are specifically Buganda's identity. It was not clear if Amayebe offered a special identity; thus, this exploration.

Cooke (1996) notes that song lyrics in Buganda are historical archives. For example, the accompanying songs for *Amadinda* (xylophone) narrate the history of the Buganda kingdom. Also, many historical details are implied in the dance formations, levels, motifs, styles, costumes, and props used in performing different dances. This study aimed to unearth the historical details embedded in Amayebe musical practices.

According to Isabirye (2012), some musical traditions are for mourning the dead; for instance,

the *Ebigwala* musical tradition is significant in Kyabazinga's palace because of its ritualistic role during the burial of kings. This study intended to unveil whether Amayebe plays any roles during mourning.

Performing musical activities develops the performers' agency as Isabirye (2019b) reports that "*the ebigwala players felt a sense of agency when they were accorded special status at the funeral and subsequently the burial of the king,*" (p.75). Agency develops self-assertiveness and selflessness, which enhance Ubuntu principles, where communal takes precedence over individualistic desires. This study, therefore, intended to reveal whether performing the Amayebe tradition enhances agency among the performers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in Busoga, in Southeastern Uganda, where Amayebe musical tradition is practised. Being the only leg-rattle culture from Busoga, this tradition was selected because it had become rare in the communities (Isabirye, 2012), yet it was believed to have some benefits which could be lost if it became extinct. This ethnographic study enabled the researchers to spend prolonged time with Amayebe practitioners for an in-depth understanding of its decline and significance. Data were mainly collected through participant observation of the Amayebe transmission process, supported by repeated semi-structured face-to-face interviews with five Amayebe masters who were selected by snowballing. Two focus groups (FGD) with nineteen purposively selected Amayebe apprentices and their masters were conducted. Informed consent was obtained, respondents were anonymised, and confidentiality was observed. Triangulation, member checking, and use of the qualitative code book were embraced to ensure data quality (Coleman, 2021). During reporting, inductive thematic analysis was employed, so themes arose from the data. (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

RESULTS

The research questions targeted exploring why Amayebe performances had declined, the occasions during which they were performed, their cultural significance, and how their performance could be increased.

Causes of the Decline in Amayebe Musical Performances

Data from the multiple sources resonated in revealing a sharp decline in Amayebe musical performances among Busoga communities, and the causes of that decline were reported in the following paragraphs.

MM₁ explained that he had spent some time without performing Amayebe tradition with his former performing group members. He narrated;

...the Amayebe instruments were all spoilt, yet getting Amayebe pods and preparing them is not easy. Most people don't know how to make Amayebe instruments; they can only buy... even where to buy from is another challenge! ...The people with whom I used to perform have lost interest, yet I have now weakened... (interview with MM₁ on August 2, 2024)

This narration shows that the group had stopped performing Amayebe tradition due to a lack of Amayebe instruments, and it was difficult to find Amayebe. It also indicated that most people depended on buying the instruments, yet it was not easy to find where to buy them. The weakening of the master musician due to health and age-related issues, coupled with the loss of interest by the group members, highlighted an intricate situation that surrounded this tradition.

On March 12, 2024, MM₂ noted that performances at different functions were dictated by the organisers, and in most cases, they never asked for Amayebe. This seemingly low interest in this tradition was further explained by another respondent who narrated that, *"People have not just taken Amayebe seriously because the audience*

would continuously shout, 'perform for us Busoga dances!' forgetting that this is also one of the Busoga dances..." (MM₅, on January 28, 2025). Amayebe tradition was not recognised as one of the Indigenous Busoga dances, and probably that is why the organisers of functions hardly allowed it to be performed, so even the audience would reject it and ask for traditions that were familiar to them. On March 12, 2024, MM₂ noted that Amayebe was originally reserved for royal functions when he narrated that, *"Amayebe performances were not so much widespread public performances... commonly for the Kyabazinga, who would take several years to pay a visit to certain places..."* Few performing groups could have ventured into their performance because it was reserved for royal occasions, yet the Kyabazinga visited irregularly, so people rarely got an opportunity to watch Amayebe performances.

Probing into the youths' reluctance to participate in Indigenous musical traditions, a respondent said, *"...after schooling, they go to practise what they trained to do... they will no longer be mindful of their culture because most of them shy away from it."* (interview with MM₁ on August 2, 2024). This highlighted that after formal education, most youths look for white collar jobs, which are mostly in urban places, so, likely, they do not have opportunities to either witness or practise Indigenous customs. Eventually, this weakens the performing groups because the few who remain in rural areas are mainly elderly and/or frail, and children. This indicates that the school curriculum might not be providing opportunities for school goers to experience and appreciate their Indigenous musical customs. Therefore, after schooling, they have no goodwill for their Indigenous culture.

On August 2, 2024, MM₁ further noted that, *"...another thing which has brought such reduction is death... if people with expertise in anything keep dying, it also weakens..."* There were very few surviving Amayebe masters, which escalated its exposure to extinction in case of their sudden death

before transmitting the knowledge and skills to others. When probed, MM₄ said:

The ministry in charge of Indigenous culture at the national level and even at Kyabazingaship is very reluctant about us [*Indigenous music masters*], and in case of death, all these skills will be lost before they are passed down to others (interview on May 17, 2024).

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and Busoga kingdom did not seem to take care to preserve and revamp Indigenous musical practices, yet the culture bearers were susceptible to health-related challenges due to their advanced age.

Occasions Where and Why Amayebe Tradition is Performed

According to MM₁, “*Amayebe used to be performed to welcome the Kyabazinga and lead his procession with Ebigwala*” (interview on August 2, 2024). Amayebe tradition and Ebigwala royal gourd trumpets would be performed during royal processions to welcome and entertain Kyabazinga. Therefore, Amayebe is a royal tradition in Busoga kingdom.

While justifying why Amayebe tradition would be performed at functions graced by Kyabazinga, MM₅ elaborated that, “*...it was a demonstration to Kyabazinga that his people were physically fit, energetic, and strong enough to protect him and his territory from foreign attacks*” (interview on January 28, 2025). Therefore, Amayebe would be used as a parade for the Kyabazinga to inspect the energetic army that would defend their territory in case of any attacks. It was a way of paying allegiance to their monarch and also assured the Kyabazinga of security during any given function.

MM₅ further narrated:

...when a wife lost a parent, during *okwaabya olumbe* [last funeral rites], the husband had to officially go to mourn through the performance of Amayebe, and get back his wife. He would be

escorted by his relatives and friends, and would perform the main part, while the others would do the supportive role (interview on January 28, 2025).

The performance of Amayebe tradition during the last funeral rites was the official way of mourning the death of a man's parent-in-law and getting his partner back. It might also be a confirmation to the wife's relatives that their son-in-law was physically fit and strong enough to defend their daughter in case of any attacks. The presents that the man brought would reveal the love he had for his wife. MM₅ further narrated that the bereaved woman would emerge from the audience with ululations, unreservedly wriggling her waist to express her gratitude. He said, “*She would dance while wiping her husband as a sign of appreciation... and that was the time she would wrap her husband with ekitambi to make him identical...*” (interview in MM₅ on January 28, 2025). It is indicative that the bereaved woman would join her husband in dancing by emerging with ululations and gracefully wriggling her waist. She expressed her gratitude by donating *ekitambi*—a woman's personal and inner linen—as an identity mark.

MM₁ concurred with MM₃ by highlighting that Amayebe tradition would also be performed during the last funeral rites to celebrate their fallen colleague. Therefore, if the deceased was a performer of this tradition, it would be performed during the last funeral rites as a way of celebrating the fallen colleague and demonstrating solidarity. Besides, it would create a special identity for the performers. MM₂ further noted that, “*The Amayebe performing group can perform only when it is specially invited, and that happens mostly if the person was a VIP [Very Important Person]*” (interview on March 12, 2024). This implies that this tradition can be performed at any last funeral rite if the performers receive an invitation.

On July 27, 2024, MM₃ noted that Amayebe performances could be staged during traditional marriage ceremonies. He said, “*Marriage is a time of joy, so they invite us to entertain them.*” Amayebe

tradition is performed during traditional marriage for entertainment, and MM₅ supported the idea by explaining that, beyond entertainment, the Amayebe accompanying songs would educate and counsel the newlyweds. Indeed, the lyrical content in the accompanying songs addressed several societal concerns like diseases, and criticised societal vices like lack of respect, especially for the elders, and hatred. MM₂ emphasised these findings that, *“Some of the songs are about our Indigenous culture while others are mainly concerned with educating people about the daily life issues* (interview on June 20, 2024). The songs, therefore, educate the audience on societal cross-cutting issues.

Amayebe tradition would be performed at social gatherings for entertainment, for instance, MM₂ mentioned that, *“... We had a trip to Mbale and another one to Munyonyo... There are some Basoga who had an annual celebration, so we went to perform there...”* (interview on March 12, 2024).

This implied that some people would embrace Amayebe performances for entertainment at different functions. During observation, it was noted:

...the master musician ushered us into a performance session... barefooted, the five dancers with Amayebe pods on their legs entered the stage in two lines while the master musician danced by their side. They look energetic, and the audience is freely performing different roles. The children are predominantly imitating the dancers as they clap their hands, and the women are mainly wriggling their waists and not joining the male dancers. They occasionally make spontaneous ululations. The men in the audience are mainly standing and witnessing the performance, while some are capturing the proceedings using their smartphones (excerpt from field notes on February 28, 2025).

This excerpt revealed that a big audience of mixed ages and genders was voluntarily drawn when Amayebe performance started, as seen below.

Figure 1: Audience Freely Joins the Amayebe Performance



They enthusiastically took various participatory roles in the performance and retired at liberty.

Strategies for Increasing Amayebe Musical Performances

Revitalising Amayebe musical tradition among Busoga communities requires creating opportunities for exposing it to the masses for them to understand and appreciate it. Accordingly, MM₄ stated that *“...we need to devise means of intentionally exposing our cultural aspects...”* (interview on May 17, 2024). Exposing cultural

aspects to the masses would be through exhibition of different cultural artefacts like musical instruments and Indigenous musical performances, on particular days and in particular public places. Special festivals could be organised where particular musical customs could be presented. For instance, MM₂ mentioned that, *“...if there is capability, there can be a festival involving only Amayebe performances. I think even that can attract and encourage formation of different performing groups...”* (interview on March 12, 2024). A special Amayebe musical festival means that every

participating group performs Amayebe tradition, so this might attract many groups to participate and big crowds to spectate.

MM₃ highlighted that mass media companies could play key roles in publicising the Indigenous Busoga culture and raising awareness among the communities. Indeed, MM₅ confirmed that mass media could have a great impact within a very short period because the message could reach many people at the same time. He mentioned that *“We can also use talk shows on radios so that the wider community can understand the different tourism aspects of culture that we possess”* (interview on January 28, 2025). Related strategies were also suggested by another respondent who stated that, *“...if we get a chance and the media people come to make recordings because you may even find that we are broadcast on television...”* (interview with MM₁ on August 2, 2024). Therefore, if Amayebe performances are electronically recorded in audio-visual forms and stored, they can be replayed during several broadcasts.

On July 27, 2024, MM₃ suggested mobilising more people to join the performing groups and to encourage many groups to venture into performing Amayebe tradition. When many members learn Amayebe musical performances, it might also act as a form of storage since many would possess the knowledge and skills on it. Therefore, there should be deliberate efforts to train others so that many can master its details and practices.

Prioritising the young people to learn Amayebe tradition ensures sustainability, and it coheres with the Lusoga saying, *“Emiti emito, n’ekibira”*, which literally translates as, “The young trees are the forest.” This implies that the young generation is more valuable because it guarantees continuity and sustainability. MM₅ narrated that:

“...we can start with the children by training them... I said, schools can be very instrumental in reviving this tradition; otherwise, the performing groups in communities prefer easy things, yet they may also

lack enough time for training and rehearsals (Interview on January 28, 2025).

This respondent emphasises incorporating Indigenous musical customs into the school system. Integrating Amayebe musical practices into the school curriculum and teacher training programmes like PMTE would be an effective strategy for revitalising cultural traditions such as Amayebe and others within the learning institutions and the community at large. This calls for collaborations between the culture bearers and the educators in schools.

DISCUSSION

The revealed factors behind the reduction in the performance of Amayebe musical tradition among the Busoga communities confirm the reluctance of the relevant people to implement meaningful strategies to mitigate the challenge. Merely talking about these challenges without practically tackling them implies that we might forego the benefits embedded in those Indigenous practices (Isabirye, 2019a). There is a need for collective efforts with individuals playing their respective roles towards solving the challenge. For instance, overcoming the marginalisation of Indigenous musical practices in communities majorly resulted from colonisation, and it is upon that perception that several scholars have advocated for meaningful decolonisation of education practices (Agbaje, 2023; GoU, 2025; Isabirye, 2021a, 2021b; Ogisi, 2019). There is a need to prioritise teacher training because of its high multiplier effect (Akuno, 2022; Walubo et al., 2025). It is more effective to decolonise others after decolonising oneself, so different stakeholders like educators and culture bearers need to begin by decolonising themselves through mindset change, before attempting to influence others. A decolonised teacher is a decolonised education, so decolonised educators have more power to influence the multitudes, especially the young people, with whom they interact. This might lead to the reclamation of African cultural identity. Bhuda and Gumbo (2024) assert that incorporating African

Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) into universities' curricula in South Africa is important for decolonisation and indigenisation, as well as revaluation of AIK. This indicates that the decolonisation process involves critical analysis of one's practices and those of others (Walubo & Hebert, in press).

The lack of Amayebe pods to make the instruments and other materials needed for performance contributes to the loss of morale among the group members. This revealed a situation similar to that experienced during the revival of *ebigwala* heritage. Although *ebigwala* players expected financial facilitation from the Busoga kingdom, there was no capacity to finance the continuous practice of that heritage in a broad context, so the youths were dismayed (Isabirye, 2019b). Their interest likely dwindled given the fact that they expected some financial compensation for their time and energy. There are some basic materials needed to ensure safety and meaningful performance, like the costumes, but given that about 38% of Busoga's populace lives under a subsistence economy (The Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS], 2024), they may not be financially able to procure those materials on their own. Although expecting financial support from other parties breeds a dependence syndrome nurtured by colonisation, the failure of Busoga kingdom to recognise and support the people involved in revamping Indigenous musical elements poses a big threat to sustainability.

The performance of Amayebe tradition during the last funeral rites, marriage, and ceremonies graced by Kyabazinga and any other social gatherings, confirms the significance of musical traditions reported by previous studies (Cooke, 1996; Isabirye, 2021b; Kafumbe, 2006; Lubogo, 2020; Tuma, 1973). During royal ceremonies, Amayebe would be instrumental in welcoming Kyabazinga, leading processions, paying allegiance to him, and providing entertainment. The dominant linear and circular formations, levels, motifs, and forward movements played a communicative role of

narrating the history concealed in the art. It also confirmed that Amayebe is a royal tradition and plays several important roles in the Kyabazinga's palace, which coheres with previous research reporting the role of musical performances in palaces (Cooke, 1996; Isabirye, 2021b; Kafumbe, 2006; Lubogo, 2020). PMTE could use such findings as an eye-opener to consider the historical details behind different traditions when choreographing similar and other Indigenous performances.

During the last funeral rites, Amayebe tradition is performed to officially mark the end of mourning, ameliorate grief, celebrate the deceased's life, forge identity, and demonstrate solidarity. Also, it is an avenue for the wife to express gratitude to her husband for respecting their fallen parents, through a sudden rapture into ululations and rigorous wriggling of her waist, and donation of *ekitambi*. These functions bear similarities with those reported by previous research (Cooke, 1996; Isabirye, 2021b; Kafumbe, 2006; Lubogo, 2020). Such practices can be replicated into PMTE and eventually transferred into the entire education system, emphasising the importance of appreciating other people's contributions and the value of feedback.

During social gatherings and marriage ceremonies, Amayebe tradition would be performed for socialisation, entertainment, and criticising wrong acts, but the lyrics of the accompanying songs criticised and educated the masses on several cross-cutting societal concerns, such as respect, hatred, and epidemics. It was also implied that the group performances inculcate generic skills like *empisa edh'obuntu* (humanistic conduct), "*okwefumintiriza* (self-reflection), and *okwekebera* (self-examination)," which help individuals to develop other skills like "*Okwezuula* (self-discovery), *obumalirivu* (self-determination), and *okweikiririzaamu* (agency)" (Walubo et al., 2025, p.183). All these are universally valued 21st-century skills and well-being outcomes. Therefore,

embracing the Indigenous Amayebe practices in communities and learning institutions can guarantee social transformation because musical performance is a tool for social change (Mugenyi, 2022).

Due to the unveiled benefits of Amayebe custom, it is important for the different stakeholders, especially educators, to adopt practical strategies that can revamp its performance in communities and learning institutions.

Making Amayebe tradition sustainable requires propagation of *emiyebe* (Oncoba Spinosa), to ensure a steady supply of the pods. This strategy resonates with that adopted in revamping *Amakondere* royal trumpets of Buganda and *Ebigwala* tradition of Busoga. The researchers had to look for the necessary seeds for propagating the required plants (Isabirye, 2012, 2019b). When Amayebe pods and other materials are available, the instruments can be made, and performing groups begin to learn. This indicates the need to mobilise membership, prioritising the young people. Educators could encourage the formation of various clubs where they can learn and perform Indigenous genres, and also organise opportunities like cultural galas for performance.

Training the young people coheres with the apprentice system in which the young men would be selected from various places in Buganda and brought to the Kabaka's palace to be trained as court musicians (Mangeni, 2019). Due to colonial influence, most people still overlook Indigenous musical practices, and having space for them in schools might not be easy. However, using his experience with the *Adungu* culture bearers, Isabirye (2024) reported that the master musician was willing to teach *Adungu* culture to the youth, but the parents discouraged their children because of their colonial perception that learning Indigenous traditions would not guarantee them a successful and economically stable future. This escalates the threat to extinction because failure to train the young generation directly points towards an approaching cultural vacuum, which might

completely detach the future generation from the Indigenous customs, such as Amayebe. PMTE, therefore, needs to intentionally integrate Indigenous musical practices into the training of teachers to empower them for the task of transmitting them to the next generation.

Organising exhibitions and festivals to expose Amayebe tradition to the masses implies that when music festivals are organised, people are massively drawn to watch the performances, and in due course, they begin to understand and appreciate it. This strategy is similar to the one adopted during the revival process of *Ebigwala* tradition, where the Senator festival was organised, primarily to promote sales for the Senator beer through Indigenous musical traditions. David Pier (2009) narrates that the festival attracted multitudes of people who appreciated the different genres of Indigenous music that were performed. Therefore, organising a festival involving Amayebe musical performance can play a significant role in revitalising this tradition among Busoga communities. This highlights that PMTE could prioritise the strategy of festivals among teacher trainees so that they graduate when they are fully equipped with experiences of how to apply it across other Indigenous traditions.

Embracing mass media requires television and radio stations in Busoga and beyond to prioritise and publicise Indigenous traditions such as Amayebe musical custom. This could be through inviting researchers and master musicians for talk shows, and broadcasting documentaries about Indigenous customs. It could also be in terms of posters to demonstrate and expose Amayebe as one of the tourism items in the region. When researched and recorded, these traditions could be safely stored in public places for easy access and on internet platforms like YouTube, X, Facebook, and TikTok (Isabirye, 2019b, 2024). PMTE could benefit from the locally recorded Indigenous musical practices and contribute to centring of Indigenous practices in the classroom, thus amplifying the formally

marginalised voices, and contributing to decolonisation of the musical arts. The use of mass media can offer a model for other communities worldwide striving to revive their endangered Indigenous customs.

Incorporating Amayebe musical performances into PMTE was anticipated to inculcate Indigenous culture and cultural values, unveil history, cause cognitive, emotional, and psychological well-being, build identities, and develop social, interpersonal skills, and other life skills. Ultimately, these benefits nurture cultural diversity, holistic learning, community engagement, and cultural competence. Such benefits might make PMTE more culturally and contextually responsive, relevant, and effective to the local communities and the entire Ugandan Education sector (Isabirye, 2021a).

CONCLUSIONS

Indigenous musical traditions still suffer a huge setback and marginalisation in communities and learning institutions, due to colonial mindsets manifesting among educators, policymakers, and the populace. It contributes to a shared post-colonial struggle in many formerly colonised nations to reform educational systems that have historically marginalised Indigenous practices. As a representative sample, this study identified several challenges impeding the performance of Amayebe musical tradition, the different occasions where this tradition was performed, and its significance in communities. It also suggested strategies for increasing Indigenous musical performances in the communities.

Dealing with these colonial legacies among us requires everyone to begin by changing the individual mindset about our Indigenous customs before attempting to change others. This should take precedence in the way we think and perceive our Indigenous traditions and the traditions of others; otherwise, we risk losing our identity. It is therefore urgent that favourable conditions are put in place for the few surviving Amayebe master musicians to

transmit this tradition to the young generation. This could be widened to all other Indigenous musical traditions by prioritising those whose performances have become very rare, profusely engaging the culture bearers and researching the practices embedded in those traditions, then training others.

Therefore, successful revitalisation of Amayebe musical tradition among Busoga communities might depend on exposing the masses to it through mass media and festivals since they draw big audiences to watch, learn and appreciate it; mobilising more members especially the youth to join performing groups; recording and archiving the Indigenous practices of this art; as well as making maximum use of the master musicians to train other people especially the young generation in communities and learning institutions.

Educators might need to reflect more deeply on how to reap the benefits of IK in school-based learning to create a clear link between life at school and in the communities. Therefore, the insights derived for PMTE can be used as a blueprint for other teacher training programmes internationally because investing in teachers, which includes teacher training, is a globally recognised principle for systemic change in educational development.

Recommendations

Embracing transformative practices. Decolonisation is a collective process, but it starts with individuals. To become transformative agents, the study recommends that all musical arts educators should first decolonise themselves and critically centre Indigenous practices discerned from Indigenous musical traditions, like Amayebe. They need to embrace nurturing transformative generic skills such as *okwezuula*, *obumalirivu*, and *okweikiririzaamu* (self-confidence/agency), among their learners.

Inscribe Amayebe on the annual list of ICH in urgent need of safeguarding. UNESCO should gazette this tradition so that in-depth research is done to audio-visually record and document its

practices. This calls for collaborations among the culture bearers and organisations like Busoga kingdom, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and educators. Findings should be archived in public and easily accessible museums so that they will become reliable sources of content, which should be at the centre of the learning sessions. The research should capture the critical aspects of the different customs and be stored for public consumption, which might make it easy to transmit it to the next generations. Such research should delve into Indigenous music to unveil its uniqueness and reappraise its role in the past and present, in addition to its prospects.

Curriculum reform. The Ministry of Education and Sports should ensure pragmatic curriculum reforms that centre Indigenous African perspectives and draw heavily from Indigenous musical learning practices, without closing doors to the global ones. This is directly relevant to all educational policy makers and practitioners globally, who grapple with how to integrate diverse IK into mainstream schooling. Indigenous music culture bearers should be included in the curriculum implementation process, especially during teacher training, so that prospective teachers can learn from their best practices through deeper exploration of the Indigenous practices, critical examination, and objective integration into school-based programmes.

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