

Educational Contexts Used in the Kalenjin *Kamuratanet* to Dispense Self-Regulating Social Behaviour Content

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Abstract

African cultural practices and traditions provided individuals with socially mediated contexts of behaviour adaptation and learning. With Westernization most children today have few structures to learn social self-regulating. The role of cultural structures, such as Circumcision (*Kamuratanet* in Kalenjin) was explored for its potential educational value and how it provided initiates with contexts for self-regulating behaviour management. The main purpose of this study was to carry out a qualitative research into *Kamuratanet* as an Educational self-regulating social mechanism of behaviour management among the Kalenjin with specific reference to identifying educational contexts used by *Kamuratanet* in dispensing its self-regulating social behaviour content. The theoretical foundation of this study hinges on the Functionalist perspective originated by Emile Durkheim. The study was qualitative, informed by Interpretivist paradigm and guided by Ethnographic research design. Purposive and Snowball sampling procedures were used to get participants with experience, deep knowledge and an understanding of the Kalenjin cultural systems of socialization. Twelve participants informed the research through intensive interviews. Consequently, a multi-method approach was used in data analysis in order to enhance findings. The findings of the study determined existence of specific educational contexts used to dispense self-regulating social mechanisms of behaviour management, relevant to the psychology of African behaviour management

Keywords: education, *kamuratanet*, self-regulating, social-mechanisms, educators

INTRODUCTION

This section presents the background, purpose, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, limitations and justifications of the study and finally provides a conceptual and theoretical framework for the study.

Background of the Study

Kamuratanet is a Kalenjin traditional process of teaching its members appropriate behaviour, knowledge, skills, attitudes, virtues, religion and moral standards expected of its cultural members. It is formalized during *yatitaet*/circumcision and subsequent initiation. Certainly, *yatitaet* and *tumdo* played a significant role in initiating individuals from childhood to adulthood by providing educational contexts. Because of their unique roles and peculiar usage, this study prefers to use the terms *Kamuratanet*, *Yatitaet* and *tumdo* as opposed to the distant meanings provided by their supposedly equivalent translations in English.

The colonial attitudes made some early African Christians to attempt to abandon African cultural practices in favour of Western styles but this was short-lived (Kenyatta, 1965; Ngugi 1986). More recently, some elitist Kalenjin groups made concerted efforts to remove *Kamuratanet* through Christian oriented approaches such as *Tumdo ne leel* (Chebet,

2007). *Tumdo ne leel* is an attempt to mimic *Yatitaet* based on Christian principles.

Assessed from the point of view of Developmental Psychology, *Yatitaet* is an important transition from childhood to adulthood. What remains a puzzle to this study is the re-emergence of *Yatitaet* on *Kamuratanet* standards even among the Urban Kalenjin and those in Diaspora. In addition, this study is persuaded by an apparent knowledge gap in the study of the educational contexts used in Kalenjin *Kamuratanet*.

Statement of the Problem

The intention of this study was to rediscover the specific educational contexts of behaviour regulation embedded in *Kamuratanet* and how this engendered appropriate behaviour.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify specific educational contexts employed in *Kamuratanet* to regulate the behaviour of its members.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to identify the educational contexts used in Kalenjin *Kamuratanet* to dispense self-regulating social behaviour content.

Research Question

The study sought to answer the following research question: What educational contexts did *Kamuratanet* employ in dispensing its self-regulating social behaviour content?

Justification of the Study

This study sought justification on the basis of two critical issues regarding *Kamuratanet*: First, available research has not focused itself on educational contexts used in Kalenjin *Kamuratanet*. Second, the self-regulating mechanisms are a challenge in the midst of less understood systems of schooling.

Significance of the Study

Kamuratanet imposes on its members an obligation to satisfy the cultural standards. Subsequently, the power of *Kamuratanet* as a cultural educational outfit needs to be decoded to make this knowledge available to a universal audience.

Scope

This study was primarily concerned with identifying educational contexts used in the Kalenjin *Kamuratanet* to dispense self-regulating social behaviour content. To achieve this, the study purposefully sought the recollections of an audience that interacted with Kalenjin culture in its original form.

Limitations to the Study

The hearing ability of the aged respondents was a real challenge. To ensure the dwindling memory and

failing hearing ability of the aged participants did not influence the findings, I listened to respondents patiently. I also used source triangulation to clarify views. Finally, to avoid distraction by paper work and technology I used a small tape recorder.

Assumptions of the Study

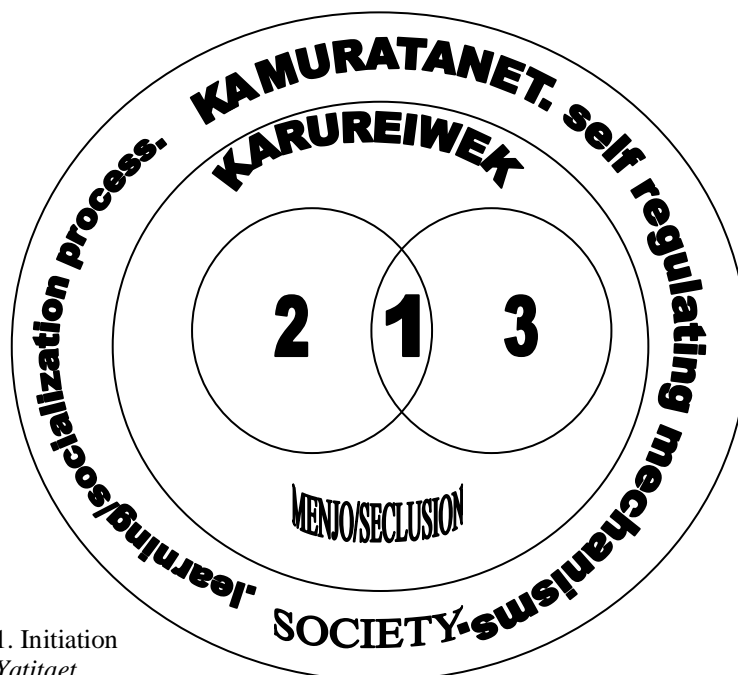
The study was guided by the following assumptions:

- a) Behaviour exemplified by the members in the target population reflected the educational influence of *Kamuratanet*.
- b) *Kamuratanet* rituals observed are a promulgation of its educational contexts.

Theoretical Framework

The study is informed by the functionalist perspective developed by Emile Durkheim and refined by Robert K. Merto, Talott Parsons (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2001). Functionalism views society as a well organized system in which members agree on common values and norms. Consequently, members do what is necessary to maintain a stable society because they accept the regulations and rules. Similarly, the Kalenjin society was stratified with various cultural forms coming together to form an organized unit under the auspices of *Kamuratanet*. The conceptualization of *Kamuratanet* can be summarized as follows:

Conceptual Framework of Kamuratanet



- 1. Initiation
- 2. Yatitaet
- 3. Tumdo/ritual (Tumwek/rituals)

Figure1: Conceptualisation of *Kamuratanet*

Kamuratanet involves educational, social and religious teachings of society's core values (Chemitei & Ogoma, 2012). Its learning processes are formalized during circumcision and initiation. Initiation among the Kalenjin is the intermediate stage between *Yatitaet* (circumcision) and *Tumdo* (ritual). The initiation rituals are carried out in *Menjo* (Seclusion) alongside special learning instructions referred to as *Karureiwek*. *Yatitaet* and *Tumdo* comprise the educational contexts

CONTEXTUAL ORGANIZATION OF YATITAET

Preparation for *Yatitaet*/Circumcision.

Overall preparation for the rite takes several years (Hollis 1909). Hollis adds that days immediately before the operation, initiated brothers and significant others build up the courage of the initiates by mocking them. Old women used this period to prepare gowns to be used by initiates during seclusion.

Ceremony: First Ritual of Initiation in *Kamuratanet*

Hollis (1909) and Snell (1954) say that preparation for initiation takes a lot of time, efforts and resources. This is because all family members and relatives are involved. Indeed, education of the youth was a collective obligation.

Function One of *Yatitaet*: Construction of Hut/*Menjet*

According to Hollis, the ceremony is commenced when the moon is in the first quarter. "Once a youth has been chosen for initiation, they lose their freedom and become captive to their tutors" (Kipkorir & Welbourn, 1973, p.45). They add that Educators/*motirenik* then proceed with their boys to a neighbouring river that has plenty of forest on its banks, to build a hut/ *menjet*.

Function Two of *Yatitaet*: Shaving the Head.

On the morning following the erection of the hut, *motirenik* pour some milk and water mixed with salt on a stool/ *ng'echeret* which has a depression in the centre and rub a little on the boy's head as they sit outside the ceremonial home/ *kot ap tumdo* (Hollis, 1909). They then shave boys' heads to signify the beginning of a new dawn (Sambu, 2007). Subsequently, young girls pay them a visit and give them some of their own clothes (*ingoriet ap ko*) and ornaments. Having attired themselves in these, the boys receive the name *torusiek* (initiates).

Function Three of *Yatitaet*

Cheptilet/Sumbererio (Song And Dance)

According to Hollis, the next day dances are held which are called *Cheptilet* or *aiyuet* for boys (and *Sumbererio* or *tien* for girls). The boys are still dressed as girls and wear a bunch of *sinendet* (figus)

on their ears. However, towards the evening, they are led away by the warriors who make them sit down and scrutinize their faces and eyes to see whether they are likely to behave in a cowardly when they are operated on. Eventually, each boy appears before the old men and asks for permission to be circumcised. The ordeal is called 'Going to *Kimosop*,' *Kimosop* being the name of the old man wrapped in furs. Kipkorir and Welbourn add that they are asked to confess all their sins.

Function Four: Circumcision/*Yatitaet*

Hollis says that at the hour, the warriors and the old men collect together round the *menjet* /huts, and the boys are brought out before sun rise (*kaech*-5 to 6 am) for the operation to commence. In the mean time, the boy's face is carefully watched by the surrounding crowd of warriors and old men to see whether he blinks or makes a sign of pain. A similar exercise is performed on the girl's genitalia by a female traditional expert-*Korgop tum*. Should the initiate in anyway betray their feelings, they are dubbed cowards and receive a derogatory nickname, *Kip-ite*.

Second Ritual of *Yatitaet*: *Lapet ap Eun* (Cleansing)

Hollis says that for the first four days after circumcision, the initiates may not touch food with their hands. At the expiry of this period, the *Lapet ap eun* (cleansing) ceremony is held. Kipkorir and Welbourn say that during the next three months or so, whilst the boys are recovering they spend their days shooting birds which they attach to a special kind of head-dress called *Kimaranguchet* to display their shooting ability.

Life in *Menjo* (Seclusion)

When the wounds are healed, the educational part-*Korureiwek*- of the initiation begins. Kipkorir and Welbourn explain that one month after the operation the initiates and their *motirenik* sing special educative songs-*kaandaet*. Kipkorir and Welbourn add that the initiates are regularly tested to ascertain their knowledge. Similarly, Snell (1954) adds that instruction is given on social behaviour. Seclusion thus provides an important formal learning context.

Third Ritual of *Yatitaet*: *Suiyet*

Hollis says that at the end, the initiates go to the river – *Kapkiyai* –where more rituals are performed. From the river, they go back to their huts, through their father's home to announce successful completion of the rituals. They shielded their head and face using *Kimaranguchet* which served as a graduation gown as they sang a song of celebration, *Suiyet*. The procession is also known as *Suiyet*. The initiates were now considered ripe (*Kakorur*).

The Fourth Ritual of *Yatitaet: Rikset*

Hollis (1909) says that at the end of seclusion period the initiates and *motirenik* held a ritual known as *rikset*. For this function, a large house is set aside for the purpose and the initiates, dressed in *nyorkit* are shown in one at a time. At the entrance stands one or two warriors who, as the *motirenik* enter, say *motir ole oi* (*motirenik* say *oi*). Then the warriors then seize the initiate by hand, fasten a leather string to his little finger, and ask him a question. In order that the boy shall not forget the answer, the string is given a sharp jerk which nearly dislocates his finger. Once all the initiates have entered the hut, they are shown both friction drums (*ng'etunyik*) and bull-roads (*tolgugut*) and taught how to play them. They have now left the *menjet* for good.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

First, this section justifies the choice of qualitative approach and justifies the adoption of Interpretivism as a paradigm to guide the study. Methodology employed is discussed.

Research Design

Maree (2008) describes research design as the plan on how to proceed with a research study while Creswell (2002) add that a research design is a plan for doing research involving procedure for collecting, analyzing, and reporting research. While agreeing with these positions, the study adopted Croft's (1998) procedure. Croft came up with four interrelated questions to consider when deciding on a research design to employ:

- i) **What epistemology?** This study subscribes to the views of Bryman and Bell on the need to employ qualitativism where the ultimate reality is subjective.
- ii) **What theoretical perspective?** This study subscribes to interpretivism. Consequently reality evolves contextually in response to lived realities encountered in the field settings (Creswell, 2003).
- iii) **What methodology?** This study is concerned with understanding of human action (Bryman & Bell, 2011).It sought to explore lived experiences of participants.
- iv) **What methods?** This study adopted face to face interview with open ended questions to prompt qualitative responses (Madil & Gough, 2008)

Deriving from the above, this study employed a qualitative approach and ethnographic case study.

Qualitative Research Approach

The main goal of this study was to capture the sense that lies within *Kamuratanet*, the structures within it and how they influence the behaviour of the Kalenjin. Another motive that favoured a qualitative study is to

“privilege indigenous knowledge, voices and experiences” (Smith, 2005 p. 87). Apart from filling an apparent knowledge gap, the study on *Kamuratanet* will be heard from an insider's perspective.

Research Paradigm: Interpretivism

Kuhn elaborates that “a paradigm is a cluster of beliefs and dictates, which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done and how results should be interpreted” (Cited in Bryman & Bell 2011, p.24) Interpretivism as a paradigm suffices the needs of this study.

Ethnographic Case Study Research Design

Ethnography is a systematic study of people and cultures (Lichtman, 2013). According to Morse and Richards (2002), “ethnography provides a means for exploring cultural groups” (p.48).However, they caution agreeably that “the key to good ethnography is the researcher's awareness of his or her own cultural values, beliefs and biases and the way they influence what data are collected” (p.52). To achieve this, the researcher acquired sufficient information on the subject matter by reading and discussing widely on issues related to *Kamuratanet*. Besides, this is a case study because it focused on one culture. The researcher however took caution from Taylor (2002) that, “if a researcher starts feeling at ‘home’ and all sense of being a stranger is lost, the critical perspective can be diluted” (p.39). The study however argues that the motivation behind a study is more critical, although a risk of bias is eminent if the researcher is not keen to observe reflexivity.

In line with Taylor's (2002) suggestions, this study was characterized by:

- a) Gathering data from a range of sources.
- b) Studying the behaviour in everyday contexts.
- c) Using a semi-structured approach to data gathering.

Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research

Trustworthiness refers to “scientific inquiry that is able to demonstrate truth value, provide the basis for applying it, and allow for external judgments to be made about the consistency of its procedures and the neutrality of its findings” (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). To ensure trustworthiness of the research findings, the study used a combination of the following strategies as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2006).

- i) Prolonged the consistent fieldwork which allows analysis and corroboration to ensure match between findings and participants.
- ii) Triangulation.
- iii) Mechanically recorded data involving use of tape recorder.
- iv) Member Checking.

v) Participant language verbatim accounts to obtain literal statements of participants.

Dependability in Qualitative Research

Dependability refers to the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world (McMillan & Schumacher, cited in Bashir, Afzal & Azeem, 2008). To ensure dependability of the findings, the study employed the following strategies as suggested by Denzin (1997):

- i) Combine the symbolic meanings with patterns of interaction by clarifying how the various coded words and phrases were operationalized.
- ii) Observe the world from the point of view of the subject.
- iii) Link the group's symbols and their meanings with the social relationships: An example of a physical symbol is the roaring bulls (*tolgugut*) while abstract symbols include uttered statement with symbolic meanings.

The Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Uasin- Gishu County in Kenya. Uasin-Gishu lies in a central position relative to other counties that are predominantly occupied by members of the Kalenjin communities.

Research Population

The target population of the study comprised the Kalenjin speakers in Uasin-Gishu county who numbered 894,179 (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

Study Sample and Sampling Procedures

Morse and Richards (2002) report that "the choice of the best method always come from the research purpose", (p.24). Consequently, the study employed a two stage procedure comprising purposive and snowball sampling techniques.

Participants in the Study

The study contacted 12 respondents. Creswell (2007) points out that qualitative inquiry usually involve few respondents. The sample consisted of six male and six female participants selected purposively due to their expertise.

Data collection methods

To obtain the required data, a number of methods of data collection were used.

Participant Observation

This technique requires the researcher spend time in the activities and culture of the society in question to obtain accurate information (Morse & Richards, 2002). To get appropriate information for this study, I organized *Yatitaet* /circumcision for my sons during the course of my study. Further, I keenly observed

the rituals associated with *Yatitaet* throughout their seclusion period with a goal of developing insights into *Kamuratanet*.

Key informant interviews in Qualitative Research

Purposive and snowball techniques were used to identify key informants who were considered knowledgeable in various aspects of *Kamuratanet*.

Tape Recording

The researcher visited the interviewees in their homes and other places of their choice. To avoid any tension and distractions that would be caused by note taking, the researcher used a small tape recorder to capture every word provided by respondents.

Research Instruments

A questionnaire comprising six lead questions and subsections was developed in consultations with supervisors at Moi University. Consequently open but guided interviews were used (Bardsley, Wiles & Powell, 2006). The study was carried out between May and December 2014.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Coding

The researcher first assigned numbers to the informants, such as; Kanaptany 12. Next, the researcher read through the transcribed data to determine emerging themes. The themes were then categorized based on topics and assigned sub-headings. The topics were assigned numerals for ease of reference. In the final analysis, it became easy to refer to an item, for example Kanaptany 12:7. (12 stand for the respondent, while 7 represent the topic and paragraph code.

Theme-ing

According to Morse and Richards (2002), once a researcher has identified a theme, he is more likely to see segments of text that are pertinent. To them "a theme runs through data" (p.21). The approach of Theme-ing yielded clear patterns that allowed the researcher to look at the data more authoritatively.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary. Informed consent was sought, while the right to discontinue participation was explained.

Confidentiality

Participants were proud to participate in documenting the Kalenjin heritage and wanted their names included. For ethical reasons only used one name to satisfy their curiosity. This is agreement with Thody (2006, p.138) who says, "cite the source if anonymity has not been requested". This presentation does not however expressly identify the participants.

Research Authorization

Moi University gave permission to conduct research through letter Ref:MU/SE/PGS/54. I also formal authority through research permit serialized: NACOSTI/P/14/7393/1235.

Conclusion on Research design and Methodology.

Interpretivism as a paradigm guided the entire study since the ultimate reality is contextual. Qualitative methods were consequently appropriate in data collection and analysis

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Educational Contexts for Dispensing Contents of *Kamuratanet*

This section answers the objective of the study which sought to identify the educational contexts used in *Kamuratanet* in dispensing its self-regulating social behaviour contents.

Kaandaet as an Educational Context in *Kamuratanet*.

In seclusion, initiates were taught special songs known as *Kaandaet*. It was educational in character. Various issues regarding conduct were addressed. *Kaandaet* is only done in seclusion. It enforces compliance to the contents of its message. Educators (*Motirenik*) played a crucial role in ensuring that the content of *kaandaet* was understood. Understanding was important since most of the content was coded to shield the message from reaching unintended audience. Furthermore, *Kaandaet* was gender specific.

According to Kipkorir and Welbourn (1973), *Kaandaet* provided a learning context for all where even the older members could go back to the "school" to renew their knowledge. Nevertheless, any sign of ignorance or forgetting was punished (Respondent 2:11).

Kotigonutik and *Korureiwek* (Instruction) as Educational Contexts

The contexts employed in *Kamuratanet* learning are housed in a threefold structure: *Korureiwek*, (special teachings in seclusion), *Kotigotutik* (general instruction outside seclusion) and *Ng'atutik* (rules). The specially designated forms of instructions provided unique learning situations. The learning contexts of *Kamuratanet* transcend over all age groups.

At home, parents and significant others gave the children specific instructions. Certainly, parental role modeling articulated by *Kamuratanet* resonates with the postulation of Bandura (1965) cited by Cloninger (1993) who says, 'humans learn by observing' (p.385). Furthermore, there were rules (*kotigonutik*) prescribed to augment learning. The rules were recited when needed. Respondent 2:8 elaborates that,

"*kimi ng'atutik ak etanik chemakisirei*" (there were rules and prohibitions which were not violated). The rules were absolute. Consequently, the populace served as its custodians. Thus, formal instruction-*Kotigonutik* and *Korureiwek* constituted critical educational contexts in *Kamuratanet*.

Drama and Dramatization as Educational Contexts in *Kamuratanet*

Rundell and Fox (2002) define drama as a play and dramatization as "to make a story into a play" (p.420). In this context, contents in *Kamuratanet* narratives were converted into plays that represented specific learning themes and clarified concepts. Similarly, Mbiti (1986) says, "... African societies mark the occasion with dramatization and physical experiences that are hard for the individual to forget (p.132). Indeed, teaching was through drama and simulations Chebet and Dietz (2000).

Spirituality as an Educational Context of *Kamuratanet*

Spirituality in the *Kamuratanet* context was explained as *chubisio* (curses), *ng'oki* (bad omen) and *kirutik or etanik* (taboos). Respondent, 9:1 says, "*Kikineti pik kokas kiy nekamwa chi neoo simaam ngo'ki*" (people were taught to obey elders to avoid *ng'oki*). Consequently, people endeavored to receive blessings and avoid curses (*chupisio*). Snell (1954) adds that curses are only pronounced in the presence of adults and served as a strategy for enforcing obedience to the moral and ethical.

Respondent, 10.3 in addition noted that "there were blessings", ("*kii mi aiyepisio*"). Again, Chebet and Dietz (2000) explain that *aiyepisio* (blessings) were bestowed by slaughtering a sacrificial ram. They point out that *aiyepisio* was also done to conclude a successful undertaking. Similarly, in *Kaandaet*, the agesets were encouraged to hold the shield with strength to protect the community "*Akotech ipindangwong koi long'et*" (Defend your ageset, your shield is strong). In this citation, the spear of the men is being blessed, implying that they should be able to raid communities for livestock and bring wealth. Consequently, even cattle raids were subject to rules governed by spirituality. Subsequently, any warrior who failed to observe the rules of engagement stood cursed.

Conclusion on Contexts of *Kamuratanet*.

It is evident that educational contexts of *Kamuratanet* and its self-regulating social mechanisms as a construct is necessary in places of work, learning institutions, family and the community at large as a strategy of promoting social cohesion. Thus, this study resonates with the position of UNESCO (2012) that "culture should be placed at the heart of Post-2015 Agenda, for sustainable development" (p.7). Thus to achieve the developmental milestones in

African contexts, African approaches are a prerequisite.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational contexts housed in African cultural practices are socially mediated and accepted and consequently produce no failure. There is need to explore these contexts further and integrate them to modern school system.

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