

**BELIEFS ON NYAWAWA SPIRITS AMONG THE LUO IN KISUMU  
WEST AND RANGWE SUB-COUNTIES, KENYA**

**BY**

**CATHERINE AKINYI SEWE**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree  
Of  
MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGION**

**Department of Social Studies**

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**JARAMOGI OGINGA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Copyright, 2022**

## **DECLARATION AND APPROVAL**

### **Declaration**

This Thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a diploma or conferment of a degree in any other university or institution.

Signature ..... Date.....

CATHERINE AKINYI SEWE

E151 /4713/ 11D

### **Approval**

This Thesis has been submitted with our approval as university supervisors:

Signature ..... Date.....

DR. CHARLES ODUKE, PhD

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Signature..... Date.....

DR. HEZEKIAH OBWOGE, PhD

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This dissertation is a culmination of study and research made after several years. Its fruition has been realized with intellectual support and pupillage of Dr. Charles Oduke and Dr. Hezekiah Obwoge who being my supervisors worked closely with me to give the requisite critique and corrections from time to time.

I am equally indebted to the late Prof. Mildred Ndeda and Dr. Odhiambo Okoth both of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, who also spared their valuable time to go through this work and give much needed advice on how to progress. I am further grateful to Mr. Jacob Odeny who aided me in collecting and assembling the data. I also owe gratitude to my informants among who are Mr. Richard Onyango, Ignasio Ogwena, Hellen Osango, Mr. Jack Agingu, Awiti Obala just to mention a few, who volunteered the information without which no conclusion would have been realized in the study.

Last but not least I acknowledge the support and encouragement I received from my family who helped me to remain on course however challenging or busy I thought I was with other tasks and obligations.

Finally, I thank Almighty God for enabling me to go through the entire process and without whose intervention none of the efforts made here could have been possible.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my children Pheona, David, Theodora, Shalom and Darlene, who as result of this work, all have a challenge to undertake scholarly pursuit to its terminal end in their respective areas of interest.

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Kisumu West Sub-County Population by Sub-Location .....	34
Table 2: Rangwe Sub- County Population by Sub-Location.....	34
Table 3: Kisumu West Population Sample Size .....	35
Table 4: Rangwe Population and Sample Size .....	36
Table 5: Distribution of the respondents by socio-demographic factors .....	43
Table 6: Origin .....	44
Table 7: Manifestation .....	47
Table 8: Frequency of Experiencing <i>Nyawawa</i> .....	50
Table 9: How the Effects of <i>Nyawawa</i> are Managed by the <i>Luo</i> Community .....	51

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Where <i>Nyawawa</i> Spirits are Most Common .....	49
Figure 2: Whether or not <i>Nyawawa</i> Spirits are Experienced Nowadays .....	50
Figure 3: How <i>Nyawawa</i> Spirits Were Perceived.....	54

## **ABBREVIATIONS /ACRONYMS**

<b>ACK</b>	<b>Anglican Church of Kenya</b>
<b>AIC</b>	<b>African Inland Church</b>
<b>DS</b>	<b>Descriptive Survey</b>
<b>FGDs</b>	<b>Focused Group Discussions</b>
<b>IEBC</b>	<b>Independent Electoral Boundary Commission</b>
<b>Kisumu West</b>	<b>Kisumu West</b>
<b>TAS</b>	<b>Traditional African Societies</b>
<b>SDA</b>	<b>Seventh Day Adventist</b>
<b>S-County</b>	<b>Sub-County</b>
<b>SPSS</b>	<b>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</b>
<b>SRS</b>	<b>Stratified Random Sampling</b>
<b>RS</b>	<b>Random Sampling</b>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iii
DEDICATION .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vi
ABBREVIATIONS /ACRONYMS .....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	8
ABSTRACT .....	xi
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	8
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	10
1.4 Research Questions.....	10
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	10
1.6 Scope of the Study .....	11
1.7 Assumptions of the Study .....	11
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1. Introduction.....	12
2.2 Origin of Spirits in Traditional African Society .....	12
2.3 Manifestation of Spirits in Traditional African Society .....	16
2.4 Decline of Belief in spirits in Traditional African Society .....	21

2.5 Theoretical Framework.....	23
2.6 Conclusion .....	28
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	29
3.2 Research Design. ....	29
3.3 Study Area .....	29
3.4 Study Population.....	30
3.5 Sample Size and Sample Procedures .....	32
3.6 Methods of Data Collection.....	34
3.6.1 Document Review .....	34
3.6.2 Oral Interviews .....	34
3.6.3 Questionnaire.....	35
3.6.4 Focused Group Discussion .....	35
3.7 Data Collection Procedures .....	36
3.8 Data Analysis Techniques .....	36
3.9 Ethical Considerations .....	36
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>38</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	38
4.2 Questionnaire Return Rate.....	38
4.3 Demographic Data .....	39
4.4 Origin and of <i>Nyawawa</i> in Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-counties.....	41
4.5 Manifestation of <i>Nyawawa</i> in Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-counties .....	47
4.6 Decline of belief in Nyawawa in Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-counties.....	59
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>5.1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>90</b>

<b>5.2 Origin of Nyawawa in Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-counties .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>5.3 Manifestation of the belief in Nyawawa in Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-counties .....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>5.4 Decline in the Luo belief in Nyawawa.....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>5.5 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>5.6 Recommendations.....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>5.7 Suggestions for Further Study.....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>96</b>
Appendix II: Luo Version of the Oral interview Questions .....	101
Appendix III: Questionnaire.....	102
Appendix VI: Map of Kenya with transposed Kisumu and Homabay counties .....	111
Appendix V: Map of the Kisumu West Sub-county .....	112
Appendix VI: Map of the Rangwe sub-county .....	113
<b>Appendix VII : Glossary of terms .....</b>	<b>114</b>

## ABSTRACT

In the traditional African religion, the concept of spirits is widespread. This is because Africans believe in, recognize, and accept the existence of spirits. The spirits sometimes use material objects as temporary abode and manifest their presence and action through natural objects and phenomena. However, the fact that the spirits are non-descript, immortal, and invisible entities have raised deep confusion in terms of their manifestation, prevalence, and effects to the living. Arguments on the origin of the various spirits in Traditional African society remains clouded in mystery not only because of their overlapping and interrelated symbolisms but also because of lack of clarity on how they affect African communities in different geographical settings. It is also unclear how different communities have endeavored to manage their related effects with some informants arguing that within the Luo society, common mechanisms are adopted while some posit that the approaches have changed over time depending on the geographical locations of respective communities in the region. This study has established the origin of *nyawawa* spirits among the Luo communities, examined their prevalence and manifestation, determined forms of managing their possible effects and explained causes of their perceived decline. The study aimed at assisting researchers in religious studies to improve their knowledge on how the Luo perceive *nyawawa* spirits and manage their effects. It has further preserved information about *nyawawa* which with time would be lost. Literature review revealed that belief in *nyawawa* played a significant role in the world view of the Luo communities as it helped them to explain causes of diseases like smallpox, whose treatment they never knew and hence, helped them to cope with devastating effect of death caused by the diseases which the Luo associated with the *nyawawa* spirits. This is true to Durkheim Functional theory of Religion which asserts that religion plays several functions among communities that practice them; in this case it helped to rationalize the effects of the said diseases. Secondary data further displayed management strategies of various spirits; a vivid example is amongst the Zulu of South Africa that built huts behind the Kraal to confine them. The study endeavored to interrogate the way the Luo communities under study managed *nyawawa* spirits. This study was conducted in Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-Counties. These areas of study were selected purposively to address the possible influence of geographical settings on the opinions on *nyawawa* with Kisumu West representing cosmopolitan and peri-urban population while Rangwe representing rural and homogenous Luo population. The study applied mixed methods design that brings together qualitative and quantitative methodologies within a single study to answer or understand a research problem. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through questionnaires. The questionnaires were used on target population of 382. Key informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions were conducted with selected informants in different locations. Purposive sampling was used to identify potential informants among who were traditional healers, elderly people above 60 years of age, and religious leaders of African Religious Movements. Qualitative data was analyzed through qualitative techniques involving classification of information based on themes and content according to the objectives and was processed by transcribing, translation, corroboration and validation of results from secondary and primary data. Quantitative data was analyzed and presented through descriptive statistics. The study was also guided by functionalism theory. The study revealed that the Luo associated *nyawawa* with the lake but was experienced everywhere; that various approaches were employed to manage them as their presence was associated with death and spread of diseases. It further showed that today belief in *nyawawa* is on the decline due to influence of Christianity and urbanization besides other factors. Further recommendation of the study is that future study on *nyawawa* should take a multicultural approach as to establish if neighboring communities also held similar views, as the spirits were dispelled to them as well, besides the belief that the spirits came from the neighbors of the Luo necessitates such an inquiry.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Belief in existence of beings and mode of existence of life after death has always been intriguing since ancient times. (Iteyo, 2009) writing on philosophical analysis on belief in Spirits in Africa, quotes ancient scholar, Plato who asserted that the soul is not only immortal, but contemplates truths after its separation from the body at the time of death. According to Greeks of Classical antiquity (Iteyo, 2009) this assertion implies that the soul does not perish at the time one dies and that the soul is characterized by cognitive features". Mcculloch (2017) writing about the Ovimbundu of Angola states that the part of man that does not die is referred to as "*Ntima*". Assuming that the soul herein referred is the spirit then inference can be drawn from such works to create interest in the study of belief in spirits among the Africans generally and the Luo in particular.

The concept of spirits in African traditional religious ontology has been a controversial and misunderstood concept. Various factors led to this controversy and misunderstanding, such as prejudice by Western scholars who measured African traditional religious concept with Christianity. Other factors include lack of in-depth study of African religion leading to hasty conclusions. Most of those who came to study the religions of Africa had very low understanding of African cultural heritage and religion and depended mainly on anthropological data from missionaries who themselves concentrated in one community or tribe. Most of them used the scanty information derived from one or two localities in Africa to draw conclusion about the ontology of God, divinities, and spirits in Africa (Ekeke & Chike, 2010).

This misunderstanding has however been demystified through research by indigenous African scholar like Mbiti, who set out to refute some of the erroneous claims about African religions. He gave Africans their religion and confirmed that in different ways Africans expressed their belief depending on the different communities. He also echoed the fact that, Africans had known God before the missionaries came in to batter, shatter, and disintegrate their religion and integrity (Mbiti, 2015). Against this background, there are realities in African religion which have not been properly analyzed even by Africans scholars, especially those relating to the world of spirits whose origin, manifestation, and influence have received diverse interpretations based on communities and their geographical settings. It should also be noted that varied Africans communities also believed in a variety of spirits, hence no specific or even general study on this vast area in any one or several African communities can be exhaustive.

In some instances, depending on the negative effects of particular spirits, African religious societies have observed that spirits contradict the role of the Supreme Being while in some circumstances spirits are seen to enrich the authority of the Supreme Being by communicating with the people especially in regard to good tidings (Williams, 1976). However, most communities observe that divinities and spirits are messengers of the Supreme Being regardless of their manifestations. Based on these contradictory observations, the belief that through spirits, the Great Being reveals Himself in many different ways to humanity, and human beings in particular have always felt His presence through spirits and responded to Him in worship through the same spirits. This continues to raise doubts on the link between spirits and the Supreme Being (Ekeke & Chike, 2010).

Some scholars like Magesa (2014) have argued that the attributes of spirits in traditional African societies are anthropomorphic in nature in that they are viewed in human terms. This is because without the anthropomorphic phenomenon the African perception of spirits remains abstract and lacks human feelings and is not fully realizable in their world view. Some spirits are ascribed with

human character to make them real to Africans: Africans do not perceive spirits as abstract entities whose existence is in the mind. The spirits are seen and perceived as real personal entities that are believed to have influence in human society. The various names given to spirits in different African societies explain the different ways in which they are understood. Different people and communities have however experienced their activities and many folk stories have been told of spirits describing them in human form, activities and personalities, though sometimes, these descriptions are exaggerations created by the elders to teach special lessons (Mbiti, 2015).

There are also those scholars like Njogu, who argue that Spirits are nondescript, immortal and invisible entities because they do not possess material body through which they could be seen, they do not have any family or personal ties with human beings, and so cannot be regarded as the living dead (Njogu, 2002). This is why people fear them as they may incarnate into any material thing in order to make themselves seen for any reason or purpose. Ontologically, spirits are depersonalized and not a completion or maturation mode of existence. The spirit mode of existence according to Mbiti is the withering of the individual, so that this personality evaporates, his name disappears and he becomes less and not more of a person: a thing, a spirit and not a man any more (Mbiti, 2015). The belief of their continued existence in this unclear form and their influence in the life of the Africans is what generates interest in them as a subject of study.

There are two major schools of thought as regards the origin of spirits. The first school of thought is led by Mbiti, who posits that spirits were created by the Supreme Being. He explains that divinities have been created by God and are associated with him, and often stand for His activities or manifestation either as personifications or as the spiritual beings in charge of these major objects or phenomena of nature (Mbiti, 2015). By this view of Mbiti, spirits are under the Supreme Being through the divinities in the order of things. However, this element may not be universal because some spirits are associated with misfortune. Thus, not all spirits can be seen as manifestations of the

characteristics or attributes of the Supreme Being. The second school of thought, championed by Magesa, argues that spirits were not created but were brought out into being. In his words, from the point of view of the theology of African traditional religion, it will not be correct to say that the spirits were created. It will be correct to say that they were brought into being, or that they came into being in the nature of things with regard to the divine ordering of the universe Magesa, (2014). Whether spirits were created or they came into being is not a subject of argument but the fact they are perceived to be real and consequential to the Africans is the concern of this study.

Based on these arguments it can be concluded that the belief in spirits is endemic with African people (Haar, 2009). Likewise, (Mbiti, 2015) notes that, Africans believe in myriad of spirits. Belief in spirits therefore greatly influences the Africans worldview, it defines and shapes their entire preoccupation and therefore it is an important area of study. (Olajubu, 2012) sees belief in Spirits as pillars or tenets on which African religion and philosophy rests. From a wider perspective Africans believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, divinities, common spirits and ancestral spirits in a descending hierarchy respectively. Furthermore, they believe that human beings and other living things are spiritual beings; as nonliving things like rocks, caves, mountains etc. are abode of spirits (Mbiti, 2015). Varied names were given to these spiritual entities by different African communities for example the Yoruba call the supreme being, *Olodumare*, which means Almighty, (Adegoke, 2018), while the Baganda refer to the supreme being as *Katonda we Butonda*, meaning creator of creation (Kyeyune, 2012), the Zulu call him *Mveliqangi* meaning the source of all that exist, (Thomas & Alanamu, 2018) . Example of names given to divinities includes *Orisa* among the Yoruba, and *Abasom* among the Mende of West Africa (Mbiti, 2015). However, the African understanding on the interrelation between these spirits and the manner of their interaction with them was quite similar amongst varied communities as is evident from secondary data (Ngong, 2010).

When attention is paid to West Africa it is evident that belief in spirit is fundamental in their religious belief. The people of West Africa believe that there is no object, creature, no corner of the earth that is not inhabited by spirits (Kanu, 2013). According to (Falola, 2017), the Yoruba for example believe in the existence of a pantheon of divinities associated with different natural phenomena, as well as human activities; an example of which include *Orisa-nla*, the supreme divinity. Likewise, the Ashanti of West Africa, and Dinka of South Sudan amongst others hold similar beliefs. Dinka for example believe that *Marcadit* was a divinity associated with suffering and misfortune (Mbiti, 2015).

Further still, Africans societies including those in Central Africa classify spirits into two broad categories, as either malevolent or benevolent. The Chewa of Zambia for example regards the ancestral spirits as benevolent. They were seen to be source of naming, blessings, protection, custodian of traditions and ancestral land. As already noted in West Africa there is a belief in the existence of malevolent spirits which are greatly feared. It is believed that some spirits are wandering spirits as they are not admitted into the abode of the dead. Such spirits have a haunting existence and cause suffering to people (Varner, 2010). Together with many others, such spirits are greatly feared and detested. The Ovimbundu of Angola too believe in the existence of spirits of people who did evil and therefore their ghosts can do evil hence are bad ghosts (Cohan, 2010). Though Nyawawa spirits are mainly conceived as spirits among the Luo, the study would create enlightenment in case the perception of the Luo on Nyawawa, have any semblance with any of the divinities or other malevolent spirits already mentioned above. According to Mbiti, they are part of human families, guardians of family affairs, traditions, ethics and activities (Mbiti, 2015). (Mugambi, 2015). Kibicho, (2006) confirms this further by stating that they are considered as the invisible members of their families. Many Africans believe that both human suffering and prosperity have their origin in the relation with the spirit world. As such cultivating a good relationship with the spirits is of great importance to the Africans (van den Bosch-Heij, 2013). The Zulu believe that the

back of the hut is the abode of the guardian spirits; hence rituals were performed there to maintain a cordial relationship with the spirits (Ntreh, Aidoo, Aryeh, & Asamoah-Gyadu, 2019). Commenting on malevolent spirits amongst the Banyarwanda, (Iteyo, 2009) observes that *Bazimu* are bad spirits and observances must be done to avoid irritating them. For instance, small huts were built for them in the enclosure of the home, thus confining such spirits. This confirms the existence of spirits that Africans were wary of yet had to be close to, so as to protect themselves from their anticipated harmful effects.

In Kenya evidence of belief in spirits can be traced in varied communities. Kenyatta (2015) outlines the categories of spirits that the Agikuyu community believed in. According to Kenyatta, the Agikuyu had three main types of ancestral spirits; spirits of the mother or father, *ngoma cia aciari*, clan spirits *ngoma cia moherega*, and age group spirits *ngoma cia riika*. These spirits were friendly to human beings and in case they were offended and they showed their displeasure for example by causing sickness, and in such cases, they had to be appeased. Writing about the Maasai and the Kamba, Kenyatta describes the rituals associated with the veneration of the ancestors. This confirms that the said communities regarded the ancestral spirits as special thus maintaining a close link with them.

The Luo, Nilotics speakers living along the shores of Lake Victoria like their fellow Africans also have their beliefs in spirits. They believe in a supreme being whom they call *Nyasaye Nyakalaga*, meaning he who is beseeched and is present everywhere. According to Ocholla-Ayayo, the Luo believe that *Nyasaye* is a personalized God who apart from being the creator is an unfathomable force that controls everything (Ocholla-Ayayo, 2002). We learn from Iteyo that the Luo believe that a human being created by God, is made up of two parts, the visible (body), and the invisible part, shadow (*tipo*). At death the body perishes and the *tipo* becomes spirit (Iteyo, 2009). Other spirits the Luo believe exist are such spirits as: *juogi* (family or clan spirits), *mumbo* (lake spirits), *juok kwere*

(spirits of grandparents), *sambwa* (spirits that cause convulsion in children), amongst others. *Juogi* are understood to mean spirits in general, ghosts, or some occult spiritual powers, (Owuor, 2006). Ochola- Ayayo affirms that the Luo believe that, the *juogi*-clan or family spirits were benevolent. However, the Luo interact more with *juok kwere* which were ancestral spirits or spirits of grandparents which could still be remembered by their names and appearances. Interactions with benevolent *juogi* spirits was maintained through pouring libation, invoking their names for blessings, preserving their graves, offering to them sacrifices and naming children after them.

According to Orowo (2012), the benevolent *juogi* could be invoked by specialists like mediums, diviners, medicine men etc. for example in case of breaking of a taboo which caused *chira* (wasting body condition that affected one and could cause death to the victim if not treated). The benevolent *juogi* spirits expressed their wishes to the living through dreams and also through the named African specialists like the mediums. Benevolent *juogi* spirits could also possess an individual and after being appeased through a special ceremony could enable the victim to be a healer or even a diviner. In his study on healing dances among the Luo and Dawida, Orowo describes *miend juogi*, which was a special song and dance done to charm benevolent *juogi* spirits; so that they don't harm their victim but can be beneficial to them, for example enable them to become healers (Orowo, 2012). It should be realized that in the event that the *juogi* spirits were not appeased and tamed through the special ceremony they could cause illness or even death to their victim.

Some of *juogi* spirits were however malevolent, as they caused harm to their victims. Such spirits could possess their victims and cause madness or even barrenness in women or any other misfortune. They could also be manipulated by *jojuogi*-witches to cause harm to others, (Knowles, 2019). In this category of harmful spirits were also demons which caused suffering and are called *jachien* (singular) or *jochiende* (plural). These could have been spirits of people whose death were

characterized as bad death, for example, committing suicide, a woman who died barren, a woman or man who died just before marriage etc. Ochola- Ayayo (2002) as does Iteyo (2009) suggests that those who died and were not accorded honorable burials could also become *jachien*. There were also the *sambwa* spirits which the Luo believe cause convulsion in children. Such children had to be given *afita*, herbal drops which caused them to sneeze out the *sambwa* spirits.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the Luo believe in the existence of a variety of spirits of which a lot has been researched yet little mention is made about *Nyawawa* spirits hence the relevance of this study. The study sought to understand what *Nyawawa* spirits are, and establish if the belief in *Nyawawa* is prone to certain areas closer to the lake as opposed to areas far away. Besides it aimed at establishing the seasons when *Nyawawa* menace was most prevalent. It sought to examine the prevalence of this belief amongst the present Luo communities in the study area and try to find out the prevalence in the past. The study further endeavored to find out causes behind the decline of practices related to *Nyawawa* and establish if this assumption is true. Should the study reveal that belief in *Nyawawa* is still widespread; the study would try to establish factors that are sustaining the belief. In conclusion to the background of the study, it is noteworthy that the study of *Nyawawa* was done from the perspective of belief in Spirits in Africa. This would enable us understand practices associated with *Nyawawa* better as similar practices with other African communities would be noted. On the contrary certain unique practices related with *Nyawawa* would be established.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The concept of God, divinities and spirits in African traditional religious ontology is still misunderstood by many scholars to the point of seeing Africans as people who did not know the Supreme Being nor distinguish his attributes with that of spirits. Misunderstanding has also continued in terms of distinguishing different forms of spirits among African communities in light of

their origin, manifestation and management in as much as scholars like Adegoke (2018), echo that through belief in spirits, Africans express their understanding of good and bad. The notoriety of the Africans on matters religion as Mbiti, (2015) posits, is a conclusion reached due their belief in varied spirits and their endeavor to appease the said spirits through their lifestyle, as they repulsed the undesired ones; and in the process aim at interacting with God, the supreme spirit.

Studies conducted by scholars like Ochola- Ayayo (2002), Nyakiti (2000) amongst others, have revealed that the Luo believe in spirits such as *Mumbo*, which are lake spirits, *Sepe* which are malevolent family spirits, *Juogi*, which refer to benevolent clan spirits, *Juok kwere*, which refers to benevolent family spirits. *Jochiende*, these refer to evil spirits of those who died bad deaths, amongst others, of which a lot has been researched. Ochola- Ayayo (2002) has argued that the belief of the Luo on *Nyawawa* spirits has not received the necessary exposition as is the case with other named spirits above, while there is evidence that practices associated with belief in *Nyawawa* are on the decline. Various arguments on the origin of the *Nyawawa* spirits in Traditional Luo society remains clouded in mystery not only because of its overlapping forms of manifestation with other related spirits but also because of lack of clarity on how *Nyawawa* phenomena particularly affects Luo communities in their different geographical settings.

It is also unclear how different Luo communities have endeavored to manage their related effects with some informants arguing that within the Luo society, common mechanisms are adopted while some posit that the approaches have changed over time depending on the geographical locations of respective communities in the region. Arguments on the origin of the various spirits in Traditional African societies therefore remains clouded in mystery not only because of their overlapping and interrelated symbolisms but also because of lack of clarity on how they affect African communities in different geographical settings. This study therefore sought to provide a clear understanding on the origin, manifestation and the decline in belief on *Nyawawa* spirits among the Luo of Kenya as an

attempt to fill the barn of knowledge.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study were: -

- i. To establish the origin of *Nyawawa* Spirits.
- ii. To examine the manifestation of the *Nyawawa* spirits among the Luo of Kisumu West and Rangwe.
- iii. To analyze the causes of decline of belief in *Nyawawa* spirits among the Luo of Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub counties.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. Where do *Nyawawa* spirits originate from?
- ii. How often are *Nyawawa* spirits experienced among the Luo of Kisumu West and Rangwe?
- iii. What have led to the decline of belief in *Nyawawa* spirits among the Luo of Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-counties?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study on *Nyawawa* would improve the understanding on African beliefs in spirits as it seeks to provide in-depth information on *Nyawawa* spirits among the Luo which is quite scanty. This would assist in further research in religious studies as it will improve knowledge on how the Africans managed these unique sets of spirits. It would appear that practice like *goyo Nyawawa* is becoming less frequent with time, indicating that belief in *Nyawawa* may be on the decline. Should really this be the case, indications would be that belief in *Nyawawa* may soon die. Should this happen before a serious inquiry is done on the belief in *Nyawawa*, valuable knowledge related to this belief in

*Nyawawa* would be lost.

The onset of the county government will soon transform otherwise rural population to semi urban life, besides opening such populace to influence from other ethnic communities from varied parts of Kenya. Besides this, influence from non-indigenous religions such as Christianity, Islam amongst others and African's high affinity to western practices, are factors that have affected various African traditional beliefs and practices. Beliefs in *Nyawawa* are no exception, hence the need for this study to ensure that practices and beliefs related to *Nyawawa* are documented. Study on *Nyawawa* like any serious study would be added to existing knowledge, besides providing new frontiers for intellectual inquiry to future scholars of African traditional religion.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study focused on the perceptions and beliefs on *Nyawawa* spirits among the Luo of Kenya. It was conducted amongst the Luo communities in Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub- County in Homabay.

## **1.7 Assumptions of the Study**

The study assumes that belief in *Nyawawa* is prevalent in all the Luo communities and Luo communities are homogenous, hence the study has picked two sub counties from various Luo Counties purposively as representative of the rest of Luo of Nyanza.

The study further assumes that manifestation of *Nyawawa* is less frequent and soon or later this religious practice may die off hence the need for the study. The study further assumes that belief in *Nyawawa* is on the decline; hence relevant information to the study may mostly be collected from the elderly population.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter of the study looked at the related literature upon which the study was based. It covers areas like historical background and theoretical framework. From available literature it is evident that the Luo believe in existence of spiritual forces which prevailed in the atmosphere moving from place to place causing various epidemics such as small pox (Ochola-Ayayo, 2002). They referred to these spiritual forces as *Nyawawa*. From this it is concluded that *Nyawawa* are malevolent spirits. They are also referred to as *nundu*, a word also used to mean small pox. Ochola- Ayayo (2002) describes that they are believed to be an army of merciless spiritual beings attacking human beings. They are also referred to as *Nyawawa* because they are chased away by making noise and hitting objects that could sound in a process that the Luo refer to as *goyo Nyawawa*. What is not clear however is where the Luo believe these spirits originated.

### **2.2 Origin of Spirits in Traditional African Society**

A lot of confusing information is noted as to where exactly *Nyawawa* came from. Mbiti (2015) writing generally on spirits indicates that spirits dwell in woods, bushes, forests, rivers, mountains or just around the village insinuating that spirits are in the same geographical region as men. Writing on the Efe, pygmies of Democratic Republic of Congo, Sawada states that they believe that the dead dwell in the forest (Sawada, 2000). Ochola- Ayayo (2002), on the other hand points out that everyone who dies goes to *piny juok* the land of the spirits, which according to him is below the sea or below the earth. This view is supported by Kayeli (2012) whose study was conducted amongst the Bukusu and Logoli of western Kenya.

It is uncertain that *Nyawawa* could have lived in the same geographical area as human beings yet certain times they did not manifest; and if their abode is below the sea or underneath the earth which passage do, they use to exit and return to their abode. Despite their being ubiquitous, that is being in several places at the same time; one would expect that such places would be more prone to their manifestation. Further still, a study conducted among the Luo of Uhero in Yimbo in Bondo sub-county, by Geissler & Prince, indicate that *Nyawawa* are spirits of unknown clan that some people from Uhero say that they are spirits from Nandi and Luhya clans, who descend from the hills near Kisumu and move across Luo land towards the lake (Geissler & Prince, 2010). This opinion presented by Geissler and Prince can be subjected to criticism following the geographical disparity between the two regions. There would be need to establish if the Luo of Kisumu West and Rangwe, also held the belief that *Nyawawa* spirits are from alien clans or if the findings from Uhero village are unique to Uhero village alone or they could have been as a result of general bias and prejudice to foreign communities or maybe they could be mere exaggerations about *Nyawawa* phenomenon.

Yet a study conducted amongst the Suba of Mfangano and Rusinga Islands of Lake Victoria indicate that, while chasing *nundu*, the islanders would direct the spirits towards the mainland with the understanding that that's where more people dwell. This would leave one to guess that these communities believe that the origin of *Nyawawa* is the expansive Lake Victoria. This study should therefore indicate whether Luo of Kisumu West and Rangwe, have varied belief as to where *Nyawawa* emanate from, like evidence from these varied communities vary or, if they believe *Nyawawa* spirits come from one place.

Owuor, Oketch-Rabah and Kokwaro (2006) contends that following the belief of the Luo that *Nyawawa* are malevolent spirits prevailing in the air causing epidemics, it would be of interest for this

study to establish indications that make these communities to know when *Nyawawa* spirits were in the village. Writing on the *Jok* concept among the central Luo, points out that they believe, that certain spiritual entities called *gemo* manifested as dwarfs who travel by night, punishing the people and causing them to suffer. Given that the Luo communities have common beliefs; it would be necessary to establish if *Nyawawa* are similar to *gemo* in any way given that they also manifested at night.

Knowles's evidence is however contradicted by Owuor, Okech-Rabah and Kokwaro (2006) who conducted a study amongst the Luo Basuba. The trio state that *nundu*, another reference for *Nyawawa*, though believed to travel at night, could not be seen. This study is therefore necessary to establish particularly from the Luo community of Kisumu West and Rangwe, their belief on how *Nyawawa* spirits were experienced. According to Ochola- Ayayo (2002), *nundu* are believed to travel at night and in bands and could be heard talking. Ochola- Ayayo further states that *nundu* could be deceived by maintaining dead silence in the night to let them to pass on. This implies that *Nyawawa* are intelligent beings in that they could be deceived. This view is supported by de Wolf (2019) whose study on spirits amongst the Bukusu and Logoli reveal that the spirits of the dead possess qualities of the living, in that they can think, feel and act as living persons. Iteyo support their view about spirits when he states that at death a spirit retains an individual's identity but become more intelligent and powerful than he was in the previous life, (Iteyo, 2009). Ochola- Ayayo's (2002) claim that *Nyawawa* spirits could be heard cooking and talking creates further confusion as to whether these spirits inhabited the villages and only chose to remain dormant at certain times.

Ochola-Ayayo's assertion that *Nyawawa* could be deceived by maintaining silence is a contradiction to the fact stated by Gleisser and Prince (2010) that whenever *Nyawawa* spirits were in a village people had to make noise and hit any objects available so as to make *Nyawawa* not enter their

homes. This study is therefore necessary to establish what exactly the Luo of Kisumu West and Rangwe believe concerning this, and if clarity can be created about the contradictions indicated from secondary data. Ochola- Ayayo (2002) contends that another aspect about *Nyawawa* gathered is that they were experienced at twilight, *ang'ich welo* or at dawn, *kogwen*. This may make one to question if the spirits were felt at twilight because of the quietness in the village at this time. Ochola- Ayayo points out further that *Nyawawa* was seen as moving wind entering people's homestead where no metallic clanging noise was made. From this, it is important to understand that the Luo use the word *yamo* to mean wind and at times it also means spirits, so one can question whether *Nyawawa* are an imagination in the Luo's mind for example to explain such phenomenon as storm or whirl winds in case they did not understand such conditions or feared them.

Orowo (2012) indicates that whirlwind is *Jok* on transit. Is it possible that sound from strong wind could have been confused for *Nyawawa*? Was it also possible that people would begin to hit objects in the night just because they heard others hitting and out of fear that *Nyawawa* would invade their homes they also did the same? These are questions that this study sought clarifications for and purposed to reveal more for *nyawawa* phenomenon is to be understood more clearly.

According to Owuor, Oketch-Rabah and Kokwaro (2006), *Nyawawa* has been associated with epidemics especially small pox to the extent that the term *nundu* amongst some Luo communities is used to mean small pox and *Nyawawa* spirits interchangeably. Ochola- Ayayo further supports this view as he states that *nundu* generated heat when they entered a village and it was the heat that burnt people, (Ochola-Ayayo, 2002). From the foregoing one would wonder if the fact that small pox was highly contagious and could spread very fast, besides, the fact that it had no cure is what made the people to think that its causes and spread was due to attack from ghosts.

A study conducted in Nyangoma in Bondo by Nyaga (2001) on perception and management of malaria, indicates that the perceived causes of malaria were mostly associated with supernatural forces like ancestors, evil spirits like *Nyawawa*, *jochiende* and much more. In as much as this gives us an idea of how the Luo could have perceived causes of diseases, its findings were outside our study area, besides its allegations lack specificity on *Nyawawa*. The study did not come out to specifically attribute the cause of malaria to *Nyawawa*. As such this may need to be proven or disapproved by further research about *Nyawawa*. (Westerlund, 2006), writing about the Akan of Ghana expressed the above view. He indicated that Africans view diseases to be caused by attacks from evil or bad spirits. He mentioned that when ancestral spirits are neglected by their relatives, they become angry and may cause diseases or misfortunes as punishment. As such he stated that diagnosis of a disease could be physical or mystical that is, associated with attack of spirits for varied known and unknown reasons. This is relevant to the study as the *Nyawawa* spirits under study are believed to cause diseases.

Belief that diseases were caused by evil spirits was not found among the Africans alone. Thompson, (2018) writing about the Halloween tradition among the Celts explains that Halloween tradition among the Celtic was maintained due to Bubonic plague that decimated populations in Europe in the medieval period. It was believed that spirits of the dead became active during winter and caused these deaths. The wearing of masks and visiting homes of people was to confuse the spirits that they had visited the homes and hence they don't go there to cause death (Thompson, 2018).

### **2.3 Manifestation of Spirits in Traditional African Society**

In Africa, there were various methods used to manage, control or exorcise malevolent spirits. Mbiti

(2015) states that the methods ranging from invoking ancestral spirits to ward off evil spirits; to use of rituals, music and dance. Antidotes could also be administered to victims of spiritpossession by specialists like diviners, mediums and medicine men. Kenyatta (2015) mentioned that among the Agikuyu the spirits would be chased away by making noise, hitting bushes with sticks symbolizing a mock fight with spirits. This chase would end in a river where all the sticks would be thrown and left to be swept downstream. This symbolized that the spirits were being swept away as the river flowed down stream.

Evidence on management of evil spirits described above are general and were mainly used on varied types of malevolent spirits that possessed people to torment them, causing sickness or even death. This study however endeavored to show how *Nyawawa* spirits are managed by the communities under the study.

Writing about Luo on use of music and dance to charm or exorcize spirits, Orawo (2012) indicates that instrumental music produced by *ajawa* or *poko* –gourd rattles and vocals were used to exorcize or pacify a stubborn *juogi* spirits. This according to Orawo was done by a specialist for example a medium. This evidence by Orawo however, deals specifically with *juogi* hence the need to pay attention to what happened in case of *Nyawawa*.

According to Owuor, Oketch-Rabah and Kokwaro (2006), the Suba hit metallic objects as they shouted whenever *Nyawawa* were experienced. It was believed that if members of the homestead failed to do so, *Nyawawa* spirits would enter such homes causing sickness and death. According to their evidence, they state that the noise convinced the *nundu* Spirits that they were coming against a vast army of family ancestors. The resultant effect would be that the spirits would change their course and move to the next homestead. Evidence needs to be gathered from the Luo of Kisumu West and

Rangwe to understand how they managed *Nyawawa* and the meaning they gave to their actions.

Owuor, Oketch-Rabah and Kokwaro (2006) further states that *nundu* spirits were also set up against the ancestral spirits which had the duty of protecting the living. If ancestral spirits overpowered them, the latter audibly chased *Nyawawa* away. According to Ochola-Ayayo (2002) and Owuor, Oketch-Rabah and Kokwaro (2006), many times the ancestral spirits were overpowered hence the need for beating *Nyawawa* i.e., the noise and hitting of objects. From the evidence, we gather further that such a fight would take place at the entrance of a homestead. The Suba, according to ( Owuor, Oketch-Rabah, & Kokwaro, 2006), fear that once *Nyawawa* enter a homestead, they would attack people with diseases and leave after all members are dead.

The effort of the ancestral spirits in a duel with *nundu* spirits is complemented by intervention of elders of the homestead. The elder would take a big pot to the gate and place it upside down, he would wait for *nundu* spirits to come, and the elder would be prepared with a big club which he would use to beat the pot with all force. The shocked *nundu* beings would cry out in confusion as they flee. The action by the village elder gives an impression that the *nundu* spirits were anticipated and visible for the elders to know that they would be at the gate. Mbiti (2015), states that spirits are ubiquitous, meaning that their presence are everywhere at the same time. This evidence however assumes that *nundu* spirits could enter the homestead through the gate only. Such ambiguity needs further corroboration through research to establish if the Luo have such beliefs or there is some element of exaggeration. Stull (2016), indicate that the Luo of Nyakach Plateau understand *Nyawawa* as a sort of battle between the living and the dead.

The Luo also chase *Nyawawa* spirits to the lake. Ochola- Ayayo (2002) stated that the objects used to produce sound while chasing *Nyawawa* spirits would not be brought back home. Likewise, Kenyatta (2011), writing on Kikuyu chase of spirits also shows that items used to beat bushes in their chase of spirits, would be thrown in the river. However, in the Kikuyu chase of spirits, only non-metallic objects like sticks would be used to hit bushes. This study would seek to understand where the Luo communities in the study areas chased the spirits to, given that some of these communities lived far away from the lake. The practice of chasing *Nyawawa* spirits to the lake finds semblance in the Jewish belief that the lake is the abode of the spirits. This is confirmed in the incident of the exorcism of the Gedarene demoniac; when Jesus sent the demons from the demoniac into the pigs which later ran into the sea, Luke.8: 27-33. In Mathew14:26, the disciples on seeing Jesus' walking on water readily confused him for a ghost. This may leave one to think that the Jews believe that ghosts live in water.

From the study done among the Banyore by Olumwullah (2002), an explanation is accorded to the effect that, the Banyore to send their evil spirits to the expansive Lake Victoria. Lake Victoria which lies to the West of Banyore land was associated with death, given that the sun sets in the West. The Banyore are neighbors of the Luo of Seme, North West Kisumu and of Gem in Kisumu and Siaya Counties respectively. As such the Banyore could have had a cultural influence on the Luo. This explains their relevance in the search for explanation as to why the Luo sent *Nyawawa* to the lake. It is not clear whether the views expressed by Olmwullah could have informed the Luo while chasing *Nyawawa* spirits to the lake or was informed by Ochola- Ayayo's view that the abode of the spirits was beneath the sea. The study then would be interested in finding out what belief the Luo had that explained why *Nyawawa* had to leave their abode to cause havoc to the living.

Ochola- Ayayo, (2002) brings out yet another view that signs could be made at cross roads using

ashes or grain flour pointing a wrong direction to confuse *Nyawawa* spirits. This view makes us question if *nyawawa's* manifestation was anticipated and if so, what informed the choice of path chosen to confuse the spirits? This view may sound contradictory to the notion that *Nyawawa* spirits were assumed to be experienced spontaneously and sporadically. However, these may be proved through research on *Nyawawa*.

The notion raised by Ochola-Ayayo that signs could be made to confuse *Nyawawa* readily compares with Halloween tradition in the Celtic European countries of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland and later in Britain. Halloween was a Celtic festival of Samhain. It was done on 1<sup>st</sup> November to appease souls in hell. Before the Christians took over the practice of Halloween it was celebrated on 31<sup>st</sup> of October, the last day in the Celtic Calendar, which also marked the beginning of winter. Halloween was done at a time when it was believed that spirits could come into the World and become active, just before winter. According to Ekeke, Emeka, & Chike (2010) the spirits were feared and were to be appeased to ensure people survived winter. The Celts believed that such malevolent spirits were prevalent during winter and since they caused death men would wear ugly masks or darkened their faces with sacred ash to scare these spirits. Faki, Esha, Kasiera & Nandi (2010), pointed out that during Halloween the people wore strange costumes and made mock graves moving from house to house. They guised themselves as spirits to ward them off so they don't enter people's houses. Besides people would leave foodstuff like turnips, candies outside presumably for the spirits so that they don't stray to their homes. Whether this practice yielded desired outcomes is another subject, but parallels can be drawn to the fact that just like *Nyawawa* were feared, so were these spirits, hence ways of confusing them were conjured up like in the management of the *Nyawawa* spirits in discussion.

Similar rationale to practices related to *Nyawawa* can be drawn further on how the Celts managed to control perceived evil spirits during Halloween. Thompson (2018), writing on the true origin of

Halloween, indicate that pots and pans could be banged on the Halloween night so that souls in hell are made happy so that they don't cause trouble. Besides this the Celts made bonfires and burn their harvest as sacrifice to the feared evil spirits. This readily compares with the beliefs and practices associated with *Nyawawa* as hitting of objects was one of the measures adopted to ward off these spirits. The reason for hitting objects however differed in these incidences as the Celts hit object to please souls in hell while the Luo hit object to scare away the *Nyawawa* spirits. In both incidences however the action was to keep away the unwelcome spirits. The contradiction in management practice during Halloween when compared to management of *Nyawawa* is the fact while the druids- Celtic priests lit huge bon fires to please the souls of the dead, the Luo put off all fires to deceive the *Nyawawa* spirits that people are not living in that neighborhood.

Another way of management of *Nyawawa* spirits according to Ayayo is that the people could choose to remain totally silent and put away any form of light to confuse *Nyawawa*. However, this stands out as a contradiction of the earlier discussed view that whichever home that failed to make noise by hitting object would actually be invaded by *Nyawawa*. Clarity was therefore sought to set the facts on *Nyawawa* right. This study sought to unearth these unraveled issues about *Nyawawa*, reveal more about this belief among the Luo and create a better understanding on this category of spirits for future scholars on African religion.

## **2.4 Decline of Belief in spirits in Traditional African Society**

With the widespread of Christianity and other religions like Islam, in Africa there is the general view that belief in *Nyawawa* like other beliefs and practices in Traditional African Religion and related practices are on the decline. However, information on whether belief in spirits is on decline from different parts of the world give mixed signals, that is to say that whereas in some parts this belief is on the decline in other parts belief in spirits is noted to be on the rise. A report given on Todays

Networks European Union Experience, USA Today, from a survey done by Pews Research Centre, showed that 45% out of 1000 people interviewed believed that sprits exist, 32% believed that they hurt people while 43% believe that they are harmless (Ashley May, USA Today; Oct.25th2017). This information was vital as it tells us that belief in spirits in USA is still evident. The same survey reported that 65% believe in God than in Ghosts, which is a clear indication of contradiction of what has been seen in the same surveys which showed that a good percentage of Americans interviewed believed in existence of ghosts.

A United Kingdom Government survey also conducted by Pews Research Centers indicated that the British are more likely to believe in ghosts than a creator. Another survey done by the same Research Center on Religion and Public life in 19 countries in Africa, show that ½ of the population in these countries believe in offering sacrifices to the ancestors for protection from harm. The above information is relevant in our study as it gives the relevant comparison from other parts of the world on whether belief in spirits is on decline or not.

From the foregoing it is clear that there is no overriding view from information gathered about belief in spirits in the few reported cases. As the study progressed to collection to primary data, evidence gathered from study on spirits indicate a lot of divergent views on spirits generally and *Nyawawa* in particular. The divergent views are seen in all the 3 objectives under study, thus the appropriateness of the study. From the foregoing exposition from the available literature on spirits in general and *Nyawawa* in particular, effort has been made to establish the understanding of the communities under study about *Nyawawa*. This was done to cause clarity to already known facts and add further information to the study besides creating new inquiries in the understanding of these spirits.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by functionalism theory. The proponent of the functionalism theory is Emile Durkheim. Durkheim conducted a study of the Arunta, an Australian aboriginal tribe's religious beliefs in order to establish the function of the beliefs and ceremonies and what it really signified. Durkheim deliberately chose what he considered to be a very primitive religion in order to focus on the essential elements of belief and its functions. He argued that society divided objects and activities into the sacred and the profane. The profane were everyday experiences with a clear function, while the sacred had a greater, collective significance.

Durkheim studied, various “totems” that among Australian Aboriginal clans in which the sacred totem represented different clans and stated that religious symbols are simultaneously symbols of God and Society, and thus when people worship religion they are also ‘worshipping society’. The fact religious symbols serve as a simplified representation of a more complex whole, reminded individuals that they are merely small and part of a much ‘bigger picture’. Religion acts as a constraining (conservative) force, therefore through religious worship (ceremonies) the ‘collective conscience’ is imprinted on the individual and they literally ‘feel’ the weight of the community on them as religion reinforces a sense of belonging and shared identity to society.

From his detailed study of “primitive religion” he identified four key functions of religion in society: The first function is discipline. Religious rituals impose self-discipline, which encourages individuals to behave sociably and not simply pursue their own selfish course of action, which would be anti-social and destabilizing. The second function is cohesion. He observed that the key function is social cohesion. Worship brought the community together and through worship people reaffirm and reinforce the bonds that keep them together. Vitalizing was the third function of religion

according to Durkheim. He argued that religious belief-maintained traditions, ensuring that the values that are passed down from generation to generation are kept vital and at the heart of the society. Finally, the euphoric function of religion was noted. He observed that, if members of society were ever to become frustrated or lose their faith, the religion serves to remind them of their place in something much bigger. Again, it prevents individuals from becoming anti-social.

Durkheim concluded that when a society came together to worship collectively, what they were really worshipping was society itself. Durkheim recognized that society was becoming less religious and more secular, but he argued that there was still this secular function for religious belief. Emile Durkheim highlights that society is a unit that works together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole. For example, each of the aspects of the society contributes important functions for the society. The functionalist perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts. Functionalism uses the terms functional and dysfunctional to describe the influence of phenomena on the society. Elements of society are functional if they build social stability and dysfunctional if they disrupt social stability. Aspects or elements of the society can be both functional and dysfunctional. Functionalism is a theory that is bound up with a view that all phenomena in a system are interrelated. A change in one element of a system will therefore have consequences for all other elements in the whole system. Functionalism is thus based on an organic analogy- that every part of the society plays a role in the social life of the community, in the same way in which an organ plays a part in the life of an organism.

Functionalism has been used in the academic study of religion by other scholars such as Oberg. Oberg (2014) used the theory to understand how witchcraft and development can work side by side in Agriama Community. Utsu (2021) did a study on Religious Functionalism as an influential tool

for Harnessing Corruption in Ghana. He observes that, amid the widely spread commitment to different religions by public officials, the reality of corruption alongside its destructive nature still infringes on the public administrative efficiency in Ghana. With regards to this submission, one question worth asking is, can religion, owing to its measurability, be operable in curbing corruption in a notoriously religious and corruption-spotted country like Ghana? In finding a response to this question, he argued that religious functionalism can be used as a practical tool in the fight against corruption in Ghana as in its definitional postulation it refers to activities that promote social integration, adhesive group formation, and social control that foster a moral framework that contributes to the development of a society. He recommended that in order to fight corruption in Ghana the functional dimensions of Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion should be emphasized. Specifically, the adherents of these religions owe a responsibility to their religious moral frameworks.

Anthony, I. J. (2019) conducted a critique of Functionalism as a theory of the Contemporary Nigerian Social System and argued that Functionalism as one of the sociological theories deals with the study of the social systems such as the family and politics in Nigeria. Functionalist view on contemporary religious dynamics in Nigeria was critically analyzed with a view to seeing how this sub-system is affecting the entire social systems of the Nigerian society. Danjibo (2010) also applied functionalism theory to study the Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria, Isa (2010) also used functionalism theory to analyses the Militant Islamic group in northern Nigeria and Adibe (2012) who studied Boko Haram as a symptom of crisis in Nigeria also based his study on functionalism theory. The findings of these studies showed that functionalism is inadequate in explaining the social conflict that has bedeviled the Nigerian contemporary society today.

Functionalism theory was used in this study since the study sought to explain the phenomenon of

spirits in African societies with specific focus on the Luo of Nyanza; their belief on the origin and manifestation of *Nyawawa*; the perceived effects of these spirits, and how they attempted to manage such effects. According to Gillat, Levy, and Ronny (2006), individuals and societies have different beliefs and interpretations of spirits. This heterogeneity of belief in spirits has created difficulties in understanding the role and concept of spirits amongst human societies. The Functional theory of Religion, Durkheim (Lidz, 2010) was used to interpret the findings of this study.

Functional theory holds that all religious beliefs including the one on the spirits have their functions and roles in the behavior and understanding of a people. The theory further states that, members of a religious group or ethnic group share similar beliefs for example in spirits. Thus, the rituals that they perform in regards to the spirits are communal as the members cooperate in terms of practice. Most religious rituals on spirits are therefore conducted communally. This also serves the sociological aspect of religion. The interpretation of uncertain events linked to the phenomenon of spirits is therefore shared.

According to Durkheim, Functional theory identifies religion in terms of creating social cohesion through social rituals. Thus, spirits have their role in religious belief systems. These roles could be positive or negative depending on the prevailing circumstances and behavior of the community. Lidz (2010) Functional theory therefore enabled the researcher to appreciate the rituals related with *Nyawawa* and the roles these rituals played in so far as the Luo of Nyanza is concerned. The theory also aided in understanding the fact that rituals associated with management of perceived effects of the spirits provided the communities with coping mechanism with their undesired consequences.

Despite its popular use by social scientists, critiques have been leveled at functionalism by proponents of other social theories, particularly conflict theorists, Marxists, and feminists. These proponents of other social theories argue that functionalism has been unable to account for social

change, or for structural contradictions and conflict thus has often been called “consensus theory”. Conflict theorists criticized functionalism for giving far too much weight to integration and consensus and neglecting independence and conflict (Holmwood, 2014). In line with conflict theory, functionalism misses the concept of system contradiction. It does not account for those parts of the system that might have tendencies to mal-integration. Holmwood (2014) posits that it was these tendencies that come to the surface as opposition and conflict among actors. However, Durkheim thought that the issues of conflict and cooperation were very much intertwined (Halmond, 2014). In this however, Durkheim was limited by his analysis of an ideal type of society which was characterized by consensus.

Marxism criticized functionalism for being partisan to advanced welfare Capitalism (Gordon, 2017). Gordon argues that functionalism theory specifically was an expression of the dominant interest of welfare capitalism, that it justified institutions with reference to the function they fulfill for the society. it may be that Durkheim work implied or articulated that certain institutions were necessary to fulfill the functional prerequisites of society, but whether or not this is the case, Durkheim explicitly states that institutions are not indispensable and that they are functional alternatives to the current institution does reflect a conservative bias which is a product of the specific time that Durkheim lived.

As functionalism prominence was ending, feminism was on the rise, and it attempted a radical criticism of functionalism. It believed that functionalism neglects the suppression of women within the family structure. Barnes (2015) shows however, that Durkheim did in fact describe the situations where conflict and tensions existed or were about to take place, even if he did not articulate those conflicts. Feminists agree suggesting that Durkheim provided accurate descriptions of these

situations. On the other hand, Durkheim recognized that he had oversimplified his functional analysis of women in relation to work and the family, and focused on the positive functions of the family for society and not on its dysfunctions for women thus lacking feminist sensibility (Barnes, 2015).

Some, such as P. Worsley (1956) have criticized Durkheim's study of the Arunta from an anthropological and theological perspective, suggesting that he misunderstood certain aspects of the religion, particularly the idea of the separation between the sacred and profane and the significance of totems. These theories are outdated and arguably tell us little about religion today. They envisage a society with a single unifying religion that brought people together, whereas in most developed, western societies today there is no consensus about religion. Even in countries where there is a state religion and significant levels of religiosity, religion is often a major factor in conflict, such as in several Middle Eastern countries. Durkheim's study was unusual for a functionalist in that it was a participant observation. This was high in validity and was very detailed, conducted over four years. However, from a positivist perspective, it was unreliable and the conclusions could not be generalized to other tribes or societies.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

From literature review it is clear that belief in spirits is not only in Africa and among the Luo of Kenya but is a phenomenon that intrigues all mankind in all generations. The study of any aspect on Spirits is therefore necessary to unfold and create understanding in this component of human belief. In my opinion the fear of existence of malevolent spirits may explains the Africans conversion to Christianity where belief in more powerful Spirits that keeps the undesired spirits at bay is displayed whenever Jesus is presented to confront such Spirits.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a description of the research methodology. It constitutes a procedure that was followed to realize the research objectives. This includes a description of area of the study and justification for the selection of the area of the study, the research design, study population, sample size, and sampling procedures. Other aspects include methods of data collection, piloting, validity of the study, reliability of the study, data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations presented in the same order.

### **3.2 Research Design.**

This study used mixed method design. A mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem. For this study, both quantitative and qualitative data, were considered useful in providing a better understanding of the research problem than either type by itself, particularly in establishing the frequency or number of responses on specific elements of the study and reasons or opinions associated with the responses. The design is ideal since it helped the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data about peoples` attitudes, opinions, habits, and beliefs on the perceptions on *Nyawawa* spirits among the Luo of Kenya.

### **3.3 Study Area**

The study was conducted in Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-Counties. The named study areas were selected purposively, considering their proximity to the Lake Victoria otherwise earlier known as Lake Sango or Lolwe to the Luo communities living around it. Kisumu West Sub-County has 19 locations of which 5 were sampled purposively for the study. These include Osiri which was selected

because of its close proximity to the lake. Kogony location which was selected because it has a cosmopolitan population. Dago and Newa were selected because of being uphill, while Korando B was selected for convenience since the researcher resides in the sub location.

Rangwe Sub County was purposively selected because it is basically rural with a large homogenous Luo population. Rangwe has 4 wards namely West Gem, East Gem, Kagan and Kochia. It has 15 sub locations of which 5 were selected purposively. These include Kaura, because of its close proximity to the lake; Kanyanjwa, Kokoko, Kanyarwanda and Komenya for being far removed from the lake and being on the hills.

### **3.4 Study Population**

The target population was arrived at after getting the population of the two sub-counties counties from Housing and Population Census 2009 which indicated the population of Kisumu West to be 42,490, and that of Rangwe at 26,790 as indicated in the table 1 and 2.

**Table 1: Kisumu West Sub-County Population by Sub-Location**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Sub-Location</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total Population</b>
West Kisumu	Newa	1,612	1,809	3,421
Kisumu South-West	Osiri	3428	3846	7274
Kisumu Central	Korando B	3116	3330	6446
Kisumu East	Kogony	10,041	9,584	19,625
Kisumu East	Dago	2803	2921	5724
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42,490</b>

**Source: Housing and population Census 2009**

**Table 2: Rangwe Sub- County Population by Sub-Location**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Sub-Location</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total Population</b>
West Gem	Kanyanjwa	2,676	2,975	5,654
West Kochia	Kaura	1,619	1,822	3,441
East Kagan	Kanyarwanda	2,274	2,646	4,920
West Kagan	Kokoko	1,684	2,040	3,724
East Kochia	Komenya	4,271	4,780	9,051
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,790</b>

**Source: Housing and Population Census 2009**

### **3.5 Sample Size and Sample Procedures**

This study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The study sampled all the respondents in the 10 Sub-locations of the 2 Sub-Counties due to manageability of the population size. The study used Stratified Simple Random Sampling to select a total of 382 respondents (from 10 sub-locations within the 2 sub-counties), 234 respondents from Kisumu West and 148 from Rangwe Sub-County. The Population data was obtained from Housing and Population Census of 2009, from which the samples were drawn using Simple Random Sampling. The sample size will be 382 respondents. This was arrived at using the formula proposed by (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996)

$$s = X^2 NP (1-P) \div d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P). \text{ Where:}$$

$s$  = required sample size.

$X^2$  = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

$N$  = the population size.

$P$  = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

$d$  = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

Therefore: -

$$\begin{aligned} & (3.841)^2 (69,280)(0.5)(1-0.5) \div 0.05^2 (69,280-1) + (3.841)^2 0.5(1-0.5) \\ & = 382 \end{aligned}$$

The table 3 presents the summary of the sample size.

**Table 3: Kisumu West Population Sample Size**

Location	Sub-Location	Population	Sample Size
West Kisumu	Newa	3421	19
Kisumu South West	Osiri	7274	40
Kisumu Central	Korando B	6446	35
Kisumu East	Kogony	19,625	108
Kisumu East	Dago	5724	32
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42490</b>	<b>234</b>

**Table 4: Rangwe Population and Sample Size**

Location	Sub- location	Population	Sample size
West Gem	Kanyanjwa	5654	31
West Kochia	Kaura	3441	19
East Kagan	Kanyarwanda	4920	27
West Kagan	Kokoko	3724	21
East Kochia	Komenya	9051	50
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,790</b>	<b>148</b>

Purposive sampling was done to identify respondents of certain characteristics e.g., Luo specialists like medicine men, diviners, *Ker*, elderly men and women amongst others. Homogeneous sampling was done to bring together respondents with common or similar characteristics e.g., culturally, age wise etc. and have FGD with them. Snowballing sampling, which is also referred to as referral sampling (Mugenda, 2013), was also used to identify key informants such as medicine

men, diviners, mediums etc. This is where an informant upon request would assist to locate another subject who would provide more information relevant to the study.

### **3.6 Methods of Data Collection**

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies. These included, Oral Interviews, Questionnaires, Focus group Discussions and Document analysis.

#### **3.6.1 Document Review**

This involved the use of secondary sources like books, journals, theses, and book chapters to acquire data. Data from these documents not only formed a precursor to the interviews but also provided more meaningful reflection and corroboration of issues from the interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions. This corroboration was necessary for purposes of examining information in documents, in light of other data sources.

#### **3.6.2 Oral Interviews**

Oral interviews were conducted with a wide range of participants. A list of interview questions was developed, pre-tested and discussed with key experts before they were put to use in the field. The interviewees were selected purposively. They were identified through their ages or if they play special role in the society e.g., as traditional specialist like healers or diviners. The elders were interviewed because they are considered to be custodians of Luo tradition. The information obtained was recorded and also collected through writing. This data was later transcribed and presented thematically based on the study objectives

### **3.6.3 Questionnaire**

The study used structured questionnaires to collect data. Questionnaires were made for each and every category of respondents. The questionnaire addressed the objectives of the study. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), observe that questionnaires enable the person administering them to explain the purpose of the study and to give meaning of items that may not be clear. The participants were chosen using Stratified Data Sampling technique in which sub-locations acted as strata. A sample of participants was considered for interviews in the study of 5 sub-locations in the 2 sub –counties in the study. The questionnaires were administered on 382 respondents only.

### **3.6.4 Focused Group Discussion**

Focused Group Discussion was conducted by identifying participants who are 60 years and above. Every group interviewed had at least 6 members and a maximum of 12 (Mugenda, 2003). A list of interview questions was prepared and used to guide the discussions. The list contained questions generated from the study objectives. The participants of the FGD were randomly selected from a homogenous group for example determined by age or role played in the society.

FGDs were carried out in the targeted sub-locations using FGDs guides developed by the researcher, pre-tested and extensively discussed with experts. The FGDs guides contained a list of questions generated from the study objectives. The participants of the FGDs were randomly selected by the researcher. Every FGD had 12 participants, randomly selected among the inhabitants of the area. For purposes of plural investigations to be conducted with a broad range of representation within the community to enable triangulation of findings and incorporate wide range perspectives.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher booked appointments with sampled participants and notified them of the mission and purpose of the study. The researcher personally made familiarization visit to the sampled sub-location to make appointment days and dates to deliver and administer the questionnaires. The researcher trained enumerators and supervised the research process.

### **3.8 Data Analysis Techniques**

Since the study was both qualitative and quantitative, the researcher used the mixed method of analyzing the data. Quantitative data was transcribed and coding was done to translate questions and responses into specific categories. Descriptive statistics such as Frequency Distribution and Percentages were then used to analyze the data. The qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis. This was done by recording qualitative data from the oral interviews, and the focus group discussions. The recorded data were then typed on the computer. Emerging themes were identified and classified. When the final classification of the themes had been constructed, discussion of the findings was done by relating to, comparing to, and contrasting data from the interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires and corroborating the same data (primary data) with the documents reviewed (secondary data). Functionalism theory was used in the analysis and discussions to explain the findings of the study. Conclusion was drawn on the themes and sub-themes in order to develop a comprehensive description of the study based on the three objectives of the study.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

This study followed the following laid down ethical procedure: the proposal went through an Ethics Review Process; a research permit was sought from the board of postgraduate studies of JOOUST to

legitimize the research activities. Research authorization was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) to authorize the research activities. Identity of the key informants was anonymized by coding to safeguard their interest and future wellbeing. The key informants and the respondents were assured of confidentiality on the information obtained from them.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents findings from the study in line with the research objectives. The data presented in this chapter was collected and analyzed using mixed method analysis. The chapter presents the empirical findings, analysis, and discussions based on the research objectives. The researcher used the functional theory in the analysis and discussions to explain how belief in *Nyawawa* is interwoven into the fabric of socio-economic life among the Luo community of Kisumu West Sub- County and Rangwe Sub- County. The chapter presents the result of the study in three parts based on the findings of every objective of the study under the following headings demographic characteristics; *Nyawawa* origin and manifestation; *Nyawawa* prevalence and how the effects are managed by the Luo community; perceptions on decline of Luo belief in *Nyawawa*.

The data was obtained by administering questionnaires to 382 respondents randomly selected from 10 sub locations; 5 from Rangwe and 5 from Kisumu West sub counties. The sub counties were purposively selected. Responses of the respondents were analyzed and presented as follows.

### **4.2 Questionnaire Return Rate**

The 382 respondents were given questionnaire to fill. The questionnaire return rate was recorded as shown in the table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Questionnaire Return Rate**

<b>Number Administered</b>	<b>Number returned</b>	<b>Return Rate (%)</b>
382	296	78

**Source: Field Data (2018): Percentage figures are rounded to the nearest whole number**

The information in table 4.1 shows that a total of 296 out of the 382 (78%) of the respondents were able to fill and return the questionnaire, which is an acceptable rate in descriptive research (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). The high return rate for the respondents was realized because the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the 296 respondents in person and emphasized to them the importance of filling in and eventually handing over the questionnaires.

### **4.3 Demographic Data**

Table 5: Distribution of the respondents by socio-demographic factors

<b>Outcome (n=382)</b>	<b>N (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	191 (50)
Female	191 (50)
<b>Age</b>	
Below 20 years	33 (8.6)
21-30 years	87 (22.8)
31-40 years	70 (18.3)
41-50 years	64 (16.8)
51-60 years	54 (14.1)
Above 61 years	74 (19.4)
<b>Religious affiliation</b>	
Anglican	54 (14.2)
Atheist	2 (0.5)
Catholic	99 (26.1)
Muslim	6 (1.6)
Protestant	121 (31.8)

	SDA	86 (22.6)
	Other	12 (3.2)
<b>Level of education</b>		
	Primary	132 (36.7)
	Secondary	109 (30.3)
	College /university	110 (30.6)
	Never attended school	9 (2.5)
<b>Occupation</b>		
	Farming	134 (36.1)
	Fishing	16 (4.3)
	Business	107 (28.8)
	Teaching	30 (8.1)
	Other	84 (22.6)

**Legend:** Data presented as numbers and proportions (%) of study respondents. Descriptive statistics like percentage was used for the presentation of Socio-demographic data.

From the table above, the number of males 191 (50%) was equal to females 191 (50%). Most of the respondents were aged 21-30 years 87 (22.8%) with the least age being below 20 years 33 (8.6%). Majority of the protestant respondents (121 or 31.8%) attained primary level of education 132 (36.7%) and practicing farming 134 (36.1%) as means of livelihood.

#### 4.4 Origin of *Nyawawa* in Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-counties

Table 6: Origin

Outcome (n=382)	N (%)
<b>Have you heard about <i>Nyawawa</i> spirits?</b>	
Yes	366 (96.3)
No	14 (3.7)
<b>Do you have a personal experience of <i>Nyawawa</i> spirits?</b>	
Yes	158 (42)
No	218 (58)
<b>In your view what are <i>Nyawawa</i> spirits?</b>	
Spirits of ancestors	141 (37.8)
Spirits from neighboring Communities	6 (1.6)
Unknown evil spirits	226 (60.6)
<b>Where do <i>Nyawawa</i> originate from?</b>	
The valley	5 (1.3)
The hills	47 (12.5)
The lake	237 (62.9)
The river	16 (4.2)
Don't know	39 (10.3)
Others	33 (8.8)
<b>How do people know origin of <i>Nyawawa</i>?</b>	
By associating high prevalence of <i>Nyawawa</i> to those areas	68 (18.6)
By guessing	100 (27.3)
Through hearsay	129 (35.2)
By observing the direction of wind	69 (18.9)

**Legend:** Data presented as numbers and proportions (%) of study respondents. Descriptive statistics such as percentage and was used for the presentation of the origin of *Nyawawa* data.

Most of the respondents acknowledged that they've heard about *Nyawawa* 366 (96.3%) with only 14 (3.7%) saying that they've not. 218 (58%) do not have a personal experience with *Nyawawa* spirits while 158 (42%) have; 6 (1.6%) said that *Nyawawa* are spirits from neighboring Communities, while 226 (60.6%) said that they are unknown evil spirits and 141 (37.8%) spirits of ancestors; Most of the respondents believe that *Nyawawa* originate from the lake 237 (62.9%), while only 5 (1.3%) believe that they originate from the valley; 129 (35.2%) attribute their knowledge of *Nyawawa* origin to hearsay, 100 (27.3%) by guessing, 69 (18.9%) by observing the direction of wind and 68 (18.6%) by associating high prevalence of *Nyawawa* to those areas.

Furthermore, the study endeavored to establish if the respondents are aware of *Nyawawa*, and indeed the majority of those interviewed and those who filled questionnaires stated that they are aware of *Nyawawa*. As 366 (96.3%) are aware of *Nyawawa* as they have heard about them, only 14(3.7%) are ignorant of them. It should be noted however, that the majority of the respondents have no personal experience with *Nyawawa*. Only158 (42%) had personal experience with these spirits, while 218 (58%) did not. The question asked to find out how the respondents got to know about *Nyawawa* also had 100 (27.3%) knowing through guesswork while 120 (35.2%) through hearsay. This confirms the assumption of the study that the world of spirits is shrouded with mystery that can only be unfolded through study as many respondents claim awareness of these spirits yet they lack experience of the same. This also supports the hypothesis of the study that belief in *Nyawawa* spirits is on the decline.

The study also purposed to create an understanding on what exactly these spirits are perceived to be. From the responses collected majority of the respondents acknowledge that they are unknown evil spirits, 226 (60.6%) alluded to this fact. However, the respondents that stated that *Nyawawa* are spirits

of the ancestors were 141(37.8%) of the target population. This forms a significant percentage of the respondents. This evidence was further emphasized through in-depth interviews as several respondents attested to the fact that some voices of dead ancestors could be identified as these spirits passed in the villages. As a confirmation to this fact, in some cases the respondents were able to identify those ancestors by their names. Some respondents also clarified that the ancestral spirits are not necessarily Nyawawa, but they come out when Nyawawa spirits are lurking in air to protect the communities or rather their kinsmen from the former's adverse effects.

As to where Nyawawa came from most respondents agreed that they came from the lake. A total of 237 respondents making (62.9%) of the total target population stated that they are from the lake. A respondent from Osiri narrated that there is a home of spirits in Lake Victoria. According to him it is a place deep in the lake where many lit insects with heavy winds whirling on the surface of the water. The participant added that old men have been seen grazing animals in the deep waters. Caution is given to anyone not to keep on looking at such places in the lake nor tell anyone else lest they die and join the spirits.

Even though interviews of key informants indicate that Nyawawa originated from the lake and from the hills as seen from interviewees from Kogony and Korando; other communities who live far from the lake have varied opinions. A focused group discussion conducted in Kanyanjwa sub- location near Asumbi mission gave the following evidence; that Nyawawa came from a specific area in the locality that was used as limbo. The respondents indicated that this place which was used as a burial ground for the missionaries and Christian converts, was the origin of Nyawawa spirits whenever they were experienced in the village. The place is called Nyawawa to date. This evidence had support from those who said that Nyawawa menace is also common near cemeteries in towns especially respondents from Kogony sub-location. To some extent this corroborates with the evidence given by Ochola-Ayayo

(2002) says that nyawawa came from gundni – deserted homesteads wherein laid graves of departed family members.

Further evidence gathered through interviewing a member of Luo Council of Elders 74 years old from Kokoko sub-location, indicated:

*Nyawawa* originated from places where a lot of blood had been shed like a place called Wadh Remo which was an open ground and was never inhabited. It was used as battles field between Kagan community and Kanyaluo of Karachuonyo hence the name *Wadh Remo* which when translated directly means blood shore. The place was also used for rituals of the dead like *tero buru* –cattle drive done to chase away spirits of death.

On the same length, similar evidence was also received from an elder 73 years old from Kamenya sub-location in Kochia. He is the Chairman Luo Council of Elders Kochia chapter. He opined:

*Nyawawa* originated from an open battle field between Kagan and Kochia called Uriek. He further purports that Uriek which is near Maugo river valley is prone to Nyawawa menace. Notably Wadh Remo is also near River Awach that divides Kagan and Kanyaluo.

Besides from in depth interviews in Rangwe and Kisumu, there was evidence that the Luo people also believed that there are several other spirits in the lake such as Nyakoe, Mumbo spirits amongst others. Like the Ovimbundu that buried those who committed suicide at the rivers side (Heywood, 2017), it should be noted that traditionally the Luo people never buried those who drowned in the lake in the homes but they would be buried along the shores of the lake. (Ochola- Ayayo, 2002). Whether such are the spirits that turned out to become *nyawawa* spirits should be questions that other scholars could establish in future studies.

From the in depth interviews an informant reckoned:

Nobody could tell for sure where these spirits came from but people would just come to realize that they are in the village, in his own words “*ne ipoyo gi apoya e gweng.*” He reckoned that as soon as people heard the sound of objects being hit, they would begin to hit also and so

knowing the direction from which the spirits came was not easy.

Both respondents also agree that Nyawawa also dwelt in bushes and along river valleys. This evidence corroborates with Mbiti's evidence that spirits dwell in the surrounding and evidence gathered from the Ife who believe that spirits dwell in the forests (Adegoke, 2010).

The evidence gathered from respondents from Kanyarwanda, Kamenya, Kanyanjwa and Kokoko also gave report that Nyawawa or spirits that dwell in the villages could occasionally engage in cooking; smells of burnt sweet potatoes, pumpkins and the like could sometimes be felt in the atmosphere where nobody lived. This corroborates with evidence given by Ochola- Ayayo (2002). This however needs to be observed further to ascertain the claim. It is worth noting that this evidence was not given by any respondent in Kisumu County.

From the fore going, it is evident that different Luo communities have varied beliefs as to where Nyawawa originates, the prevailing opinion though is that they come from the lake. The evidence given by Jack Agingu 65 years of Korando village on how they experienced Nyawawa coming from the lake when they went fishing supports this notion. The respondent stated they first heard a scary sound like of a swarm of birds leaving the lake in a rush, soon after the sound of noise like of a large crowd of mourners leaving the lake with noises like of people going to a traditional Luo funeral. Shortly afterwards they heard people in the surrounding villages hitting objects presumably to send away the spirits. The belief that Nyawawa comes from the lake corroborates with belief of the Kenyan coastal communities that associate the vast ocean with the abode of Jinni, Swahili name for ghosts (Faki, Kasiera, & Nandi, 2010). The evidence given by Agingu further, gets support from the work done by (Stull, 2016) from Nyakach. According to evidence gathered through his study, Stull posits that Nyawawa is a procession of birds that move towards the lake bringing about illnesses such as measles. The opinion that Nyawawa comes from the lake, further supports the hypothesis of (de Wolf,

2019), and Ochola- Ayayo (2002), who opined that the abode of spirits is either below the earth or in the sea.

The fact that places associated with origin of Nyawawa spirits in the evidence given at Kochia and Kokoko, are places connected with death, bloodshed and bad omen also explains why these spirits are regarded as malevolent spirits. It is worth noting that places which had been associated with Nyawawa, in Kochia and Kagan namely Uriek and Wadh Remo respectively; remained uninhabited for a long time. Today Uriek is used as a market place though it's ever deserted, while at Wadh Remo a secondary school and polytechnic have been established.

From the description given by various respondents it is of the view that Nyawawa spirits are of human descent, in that they seemed to call the living by their names and understood their set up. Further to this their quoted talks exhibit human characteristics. This confirms the assertion of Iteyo (2009) and Mbiti (2015), that spirits though corporeal, exhibit human characteristics i.e., they can talk, cry, laugh, and sing. What is however not clear is how they hit non-existent drums and cowbells and drive non-existent cows? These may need further research for clarity. It leaves one with the question whether animals and material objects like drums have spiritual existence.

The opinion that Nyawawa spirits originate from the lake also finds semblance in the Biblical perspective where Jesus having exorcised the demoniac at Gedarene sent the demons into the pigs which later drowned into the lake Lk.8v.28-33. This gives the view that Jews associate water bodies with spirits similarly to the inherent belief of the Luos about Nyawawa. Ochola- Ayayo (2002), points out that the lake could have been abode of several other spirits as he describes rituals that had to be done to *yondho yie* i.e., ritually launch a boat into the lake for first time in a bid to appease spirits of the lake so that the boat does not cause deaths in the water.

Functionalism theory has been used in the findings of the first objective to explain that Nyawawa is both a functional and a living culture in Kisumu West Sub- County and Rangwe Sub- County. As a living culture, it plays key functions in the society and as such have been propagated from generation to generation. Even where the Luos have prohibited the belief in Nyawawa and punished perpetrators, it continues secretly and resurges with different outfits because people hold strong belief that if they don't hit objects when the Nyawawa spirits are passing in the villages, then misfortunes would befall their families.

These findings on the origin of Nyawawa apply to the theoretical perspective of Durkheim's functional theory, particularly in reference to essential elements of religious beliefs and its functions to societies. The varied beliefs on the origin of Nyawawa spirits and consensus on these positions by informants resonates with Emile Durkheim's idea that society is a unit that works together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole. For example, each of the aspects on the origin of Nyawawa spirits provides and contributes important perspectives of understanding and managing the spirits. The consensus on the origin across the study region confirms the interconnection of society according to functional theory in describing the influence of phenomena on the society. In this case according to the theory, the different beliefs on the origin of Nyawawa are functional because they build social stability among the Luo based on the understanding of the phenomenon.

#### **4.5 Manifestation of *Nyawawa* in Kisumu Sub- County and Rangwe Sub- County**

Most respondents acknowledge that *Nyawawa* are in the village through hearing their voices in the village 312(86.5%); 53((14.4%) people say that they are seen. The spirits are distinguished when they

are heard talking; 93(29.2%) identify them by their movement from place to place, while 34(10.7%) are told by the elders that *Nyawawa* are in the village. *Nyawawa* are likely to be experienced during sunny period 136(35.6%) respondents stated so 115(30.1%) associated the spirits with windy condition; while 53(13.9%) respondents stated that the spirits were experienced in calm weather: while 18(4.7%) stated that the spirits can be experienced during any weather. Most respondents concur that *Nyawawa* manifested at night 361(95.5%) noted so: 14 (3.7%) stated they appear during the twilight only 3(0.8%) responded that they are seen in the afternoon as 2(0.5%) stated they appear any time. 171(46.5%) stated during drought or dry season; 104 (28.3%) that they are experienced during harvesting or end of rains: 50 (13.6%) associates *Nyawawa*.

With weeding season 43(11.6%) stated that the spirits were experienced on the onset of rains that is during planting. The table 7 below illustrates.

Table 7: Manifestation

<b>Outcome (n=382)</b>	<b>N (%)</b>
------------------------	--------------

<b>How do people know <i>Nyawawa</i> are in the village?</b>	
They are seen	2 (0.5)
Their voices are heard	312 (85)
People say they are around	53 (14.4)
<b>How do people distinguish <i>Nyawawa</i> from other spirits?</b>	
They are heard talking	192 (60.2)
They move from place to place	93 (29.2)
The elders tell people they are around	34 (10.7)
<b>Prevailing weather conditions associated with <i>Nyawawa</i> spirits?</b>	
Sunny	136 (35.6)
Rainy	53 (13.9)
Windy	115 (30.1)
Calm	49 (12.8)
Any prevailing weather conditions	18 (4.7)
Other	7 (1.8)
<b>Times <i>Nyawawa</i> likely to be experienced</b>	

Morning	0 (0)
Afternoon	3 (0.8)
Twilight	14 (3.7)
At night	361 (95)
Any time	2 (0.5)
<b>Season Nyawawa mostly experienced</b>	
Ploughing / dry season	171 (46.5)
Planting / onset of rains	43 (11.7)
Weeding / rainy season	50 (13.6)
Harvesting / end of rainy season	104 (28.3)

**Legend:** Data presented as numbers and proportions (%) of study respondents. Descriptive statistics such as percentage was used for the presentation of *Nyawawa* manifestation data.

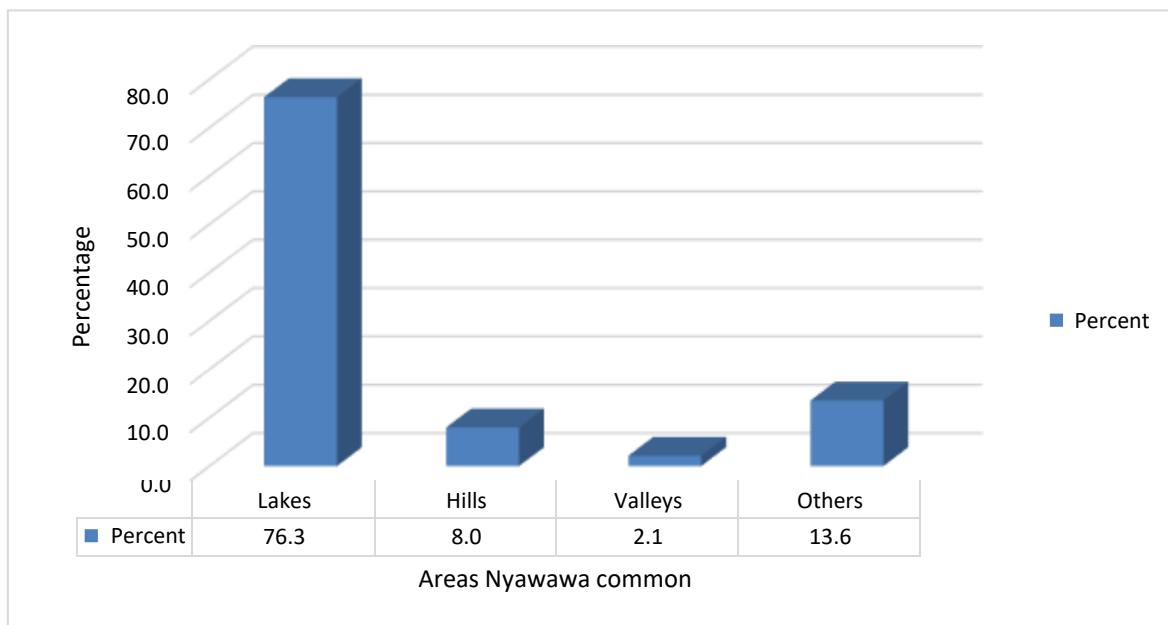


Figure 1: Where *Nyawawa* spirits are most common

Most respondents indicated that *Nyawawa* are most common around the lake, 292 (76.3%), 22 (8.0%), indicated that they are common around the hills. Only 8 respondents (2.1%) indicated that the spirits came from the valleys. 51 (13.6%) represents those who indicated that the spirits are common in places like bushes, village, rivers, and uninhabited places among others.

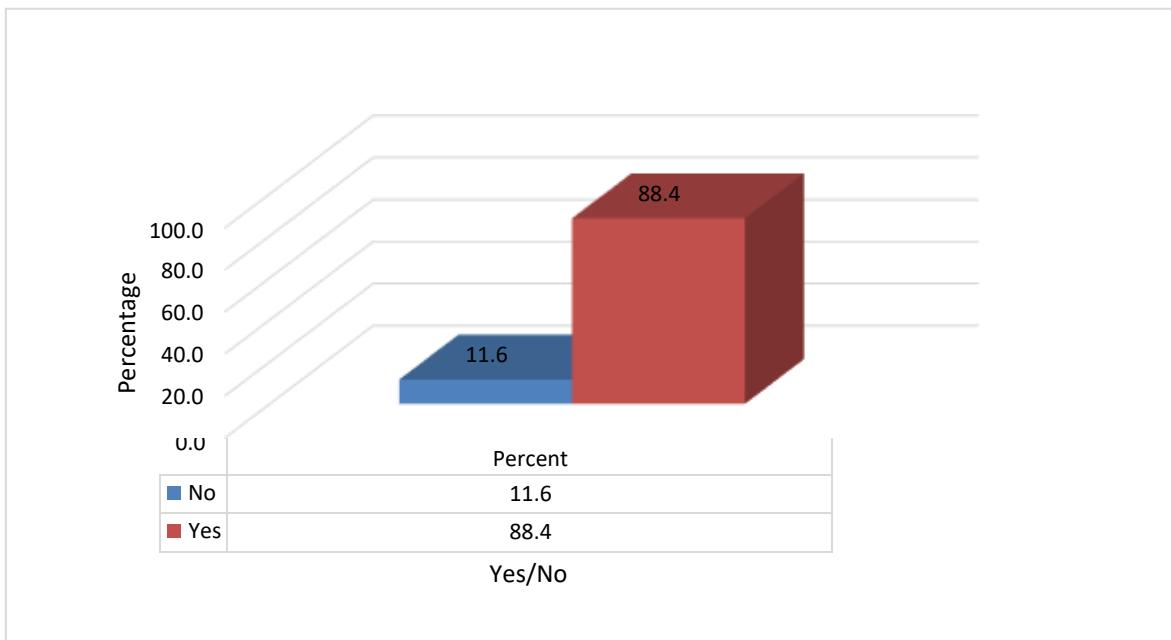


Figure 2: Whether or not *Nyawawa* spirits are experienced nowadays

From the figure above 338(88.4%) respondents stated that *Nyawawa* are still experienced today, while 44 (11.6%) felt that they are no longer experienced nowadays

Table 8: Frequency of experiencing *Nyawawa*

Outcome (n=382)	N (%)
<b>How often do you experience <i>Nyawawa</i>?</b>	
Very often	8 (2.3)
Often	98 (29.4)
Rarely	123 (68.3)

**Legend:** Data are presented as numbers and proportions (%) of study respondents. Descriptive statistics such as percentage was used for the presentation of frequency of experiencing *Nyawawa* data.

The table above indicate that 123(68.3%) respondents stated that *Nyawawa* are rarely experienced today, while 98(29.4%), indicated that they are experienced often, 8(2.3%) showed that *Nyawawa* are experienced very often.

From the data collected interviews, a clique of informants stated that they had seen *Nyawawa*. This category of respondents is quite elderly and incidentally is healers, mediums, or diviners. Of special interest was the interview conducted on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2017 to an elder and a traditional healer from Kokoko sub location. He narrated:

I saw like figures of shadowy people who cannot be seen clearly. That before they manifest there is a sound like of wind and then voices of people singing, hitting drums, talking and driving cattle. Sounds of crying children and women lamenting about many things would be heard. He narrated that as the spirits passed, they caused him to fear that he had to hide in the nearby bushes and only steal glances.

Another elderly healer from Kanyarwanda, East Kagan who claimed to be an eye witness of these spirits, posited:

As *Nyawawa* approaches a sound of wind can be heard accompanied by drum beats, voices of people can be heard but he could not see anyone.

The evidence of these respondents corroborates with the description given by Bitek (2010) while describing *gemo* spirits among the Southern Luo communities. It further finds semblance with the description by Folger and Naphtally in their description of the *nundu* spirits among the Abasuba. Whereas this evidence is available proving this evidence right is quite a challenge given that these spirits manifested sporadically and more so at night and the fear attached to coming into contact with these spirits.

Kenyatta (2011) reveals that the Agikuyu associated whirlwind with movement of spirits. He stated that when voices are heard from strong whirlwinds it was assumed that the spirits are gathering to attack the people. The association of spirit and wind finds semblance in the Bible as well. During Pentecost the book of Acts of Apostles chapter 2 verse2 describes the Holy Spirit as manifesting in form of a rush of mighty wind. Owuor (2006) also described whirlwind as *jok* spirits on transit. Associating spirits with wind is not unique to *nyawawa* alone as respondents gave example of *Nyakoe* which according to them is also a lake spirit which manifests in form of whirl wind which they said connects the lake to the sky.

Another key informant narrated how he heard *Nyawawa* talk and lament while passing along *tepath* from Kagan going to Kochia:

We are tired of traversing the earth wearing shoes made from the back of eucalyptus tree belonging to Obonyo.

This is in tandem with the evidence of manifestation of *Nyawawa through* voices. (Mbiti, 2015) gave evidence of spirits that would be heard talking in the valley telling boys not to cross the river. He further stated that fires would be seen in such places that were not inhabited by people. While assuming that God too is a spirit it is evident that God spoke to Moses in form of a voice in a bush that was getting burnt and not getting consumed, Exodus 3:4. These evidences corroborates the fact the associating spirits with voices was not unique to the Luos alone.

A respondent from Osiri also narrated how *Nyawawa* manifested while she came from the market late one evening:

As I was coming from the market, I kept hearing voices ahead. I thought that there were people ahead and so I hurried up after them but as I hastened my pace the voices moved fast ahead. Finally, I reached some vast open space and the voices ceased and on seeing nobody I realized that I had been following *Nyawawa*. I got scared and took a different route to reach her home.

This evidence confirms the fact that the Luo perceived that *Nyawawa* manifested through voices. From the respondents' feedback 136(35.6%) said the spirits appeared on sunny periods, followed by 115(30.1%) who noted that the spirits are most likely to be experienced during windy period. 53(13.9%) associate presence of *Nyawawa* with rainy seasons as 49(12.8%) associate their presence with calm weather conditions. From my own observation there can never be a season that specifically has one weather condition and so given that the spirits are observed like during every season type, then one can opine that these spirits manifested any time irrespective of the season.

As to when these spirits manifested most respondents noted that they appeared at night as 361 (94.1 %) attested to this. Most of the respondents went ahead to state the time to be 9pm. From in-depth interviews some respondents indicated that certain times they would also maraud the villages in the dead of the night like at 2am or even 3am as they made their way back to the lake. According to Richard Onyango many people would not hear because they are asleep. Very few respondents stated that the spirits manifested at twilight, to be precise only 14 (3.7%). Assertion by Ochola-Ayayo (2002) that *Nyawawa* manifested at dawn *kogwen* did not get a lot of backing from the collected data as no respondent attested to that. It is also certain that the spirits did not manifest during the day as only 3(0.8%) stated this. It is because the people associate *Nyawawa* spirits with darkness that they are also regarded as malevolent spirit as darkness is associated with bad /evil spirits. Several respondents also intimated that *Nyawawa* were believed to be malicious that is, they were not of good intent hence were not experienced during the day.

From the collected data most respondents acknowledge that they would know *Nyawawa* are in the village from the voices heard talking as these spirits passed along. 312 (85%) of respondents attested to this. 93 (29.2%) know *Nyawawa* because according to them they are like roving spirits without any fixed abode. From the respondents the fact that *Nyawawa* spirits were experienced like they were on transit made them to be understood to be different from other known spirits

i.e., they moved from place to place. This fact could have made these spirits to be distinct as other spirits like *Juogi* which possessed their victims remained in them for a long time if not tamed, Orawo (2012). 53 (14.4%) know that they are around through what other people say while 34 (10.7%) said they got this information from elders. From my own observation this category of respondents represents those who could hit the objects out of fear or just because they heard others do so without any tangible reason for doing so. They represent those who would insist that *Nyawawa* exist without any experience of the same. Whereas experiences of individuals cannot be disputed, it however becomes difficult to understand how the noise from *Nyawawa* was differentiated from other noises given that whenever people suspected that these spirits were in the village, they began hitting objects moreover in most cases the people remained in doors. Evidence gathered from a 49-year old key informant at Kanyarwanda stated the following:

Some children were playing in Oyugis imitating the hitting of tins when *Nyawawa* were in the village caused everyone to start shouting *Nyawawa* and hitting objects. People had beaten *nyawawa* all the way to Migori without having any evidence as to whether these spirits were present or not.

This points to the evidence that it is possible that certain times people would make noise and hit objects when *Nyawawa* were not present but merely because they heard noises of objects being hit and became scared that the spirits were around.

From the collected data, it is noted that *Nyawawa* were mostly experienced during dry and windy season, as 136(35.6%) and 115 (30.1%) alluded to this respectively. This claim coincides with the 171(46.5%) respondents that observed that *Nyawawa* was mostly experienced during dry / ploughing season which is remarkably dry and more often than not windy. It is noteworthy that 53(13.9%) indicated that they manifested during rainy season, however this is questionable if these spirits were noticed through their own noises that they made. 49(12.8%) respondents indicated that they were experienced during calm weather.

From the in-depth interviews it was also gathered that *Nyawawa* followed designated paths. A key informant from Kokoko stated:

In Kagan the spirits would be heard from Wadh Remo, through Manyatta, then through Onjinyo, to Namba Nyokal then to Rangwe, and then they would disappear towards Kanyada, then finally to Milambo then move to the lake. In a Focused Group Discussion held in Osiri this view was also maintained that the spirits would come from around Kaloka beach then move to Paga beach then proceed towards Osiri, via Nyanginja, then to Kanyawegi of Usare and then move towards Winam, which refers to Kisumu.

This view is supported by Ochola- Ayayo (2002), who observed that due to this they could be influenced to follow other routes. Some respondents also stated that they liked following River valleys like that of Maugo River. However, some respondents insisted that *Nyawawa* would move in any direction following any path depending on the direction from the noise of objects being hit would come from. An informant from Kanyarwanda described:

Nobody can tell for sure where *Nyawawa* follows for the spirits pass in the village in a flash hence their route in and out of the village cannot be specified.

From such conflicting evidence it thus indicates that belief in spirits is very confusing and findings drawn from one study may not be sufficient to draw conclusions.

In light of Durkheim's functional theory, discussions on manifestation of *Nyawawa* spirits can be explained by his conception of society as provided by Poggi (2000), who argues that, for Durkheim, society is cultural in nature and thus not a material thing to be observed existing in nature; therefore, it is, in essence, something that is both external to individuals' consciousness and finding its place of residence in the very thing to which it is external. In presenting the cosmology of the society Durkheim says that the society view reality in two perspectives - from that of the material and that of the non-material world. The non-material world is composed of two categories, namely, that of God, and (2) the spirit of the dead. The spirit of the dead continues the individuality of living persons, and

have the same names. Though non material, they are localized by their activity. They are viewed as not drinking, eating, or mating, but their existence in other respects is similar to that in the world of the living. It is this conception of a dual form of existence that, according to Durkheim that confirms the different forms of awareness among the different Luo clans in Nyanza of the contingent nature of society. Thus, taking account of the material experiences and the immaterial or spiritual experiences, society in Durkheim's thought is the totality of collective representation guiding interactions between practical experiences and imaginations relating to the world of spirits.

#### 4.6 Decline of belief in Nyawawa in Kisumu West Sub- County and Rangwe Sub- County

Table 9: How the effects of *Nyawawa* are managed by the *Luo* community

Outcome (n=382)	N (%)
<b>What do people do when they experience <i>Nyawawa</i>?</b>	
They keep very silent	20 (5.5)
They light fires	5 (1.4)
They hit objects and make noise	339 (92.6)
They run helter-skelter	2 (0.5)
<b>Where do they send the spirits to?</b>	
Lakes	309 (84.9)
Hills	13 (3.6)
Valleys	3 (0.8)
Neighboring communities	31 (8.5)
Other	8 (2.2)
<b>What do people do when they experience <i>Nyawawa</i>?</b>	
They make noise by hitting objects	341 (87.7)
They light fires	10 (2.6)
They offer sacrifices	4 (1.0)

	They keep silent and put off all lights	34 (8.7)
<b>What was the effect of their actions?</b>		
	It makes <i>Nyawawa</i> stay with them peacefully	5 (1.4)
	It sends <i>Nyawawa</i> away	353 (98.6)
<b>In case <i>Nyawawa</i> remained in the village they dwelt in</b>		
	Forest	113 (33.7)
	Neighboring communities	29 (8.7)
	Un-inhabited places	81 (24.2)
	Rivers	42 (12.5)
	Lakes	70 (20.9)
<b>In case <i>Nyawawa</i> were sent away they went to</b>		
	Lakes	283 (77.5)
	Forest	14 (3.8)
	Un-inhabited places	54 (14.8)
	Hills / mountains	14 (3.8)

**Legend:** Data presented as numbers and proportions (%) of study respondents. Descriptive statistics such as percentage was used for the presentation of data on how the effects of *Nyawawa* are managed by the *Luo* community.

From the Table above it is clear that 339(92.6%) stated that people hit objects and made noise when *Nyawawa* were in the village, 20 (5.5%) people felt that the people kept silent, as 5 (1.4%) stated that people lit fires. 2 (0.5%) of them stated that people ran helter-skelter. As to where the spirits are sent to 309 (84.9%) informants stated they are sent to the lake; 31 (8.5%) stated that they came from neighboring communities, 13 (3.6%) stated that they were sent to the hills, as 3 (0.8%) stated that they are sent to the valley. This notwithstanding, 8 (2.2%) informants felt that

the spirits were sent to other places like bushes, rivers etc.

Then 341 (87.7%) stated that people make noise by hitting objects when they experience *Nyawawa*. 34 (8.7%) stated that they keep silent and put off all the lights. 10(2.6%) stated that they light fires as 4 (1.0%) stated that they offer sacrifices. Moreover, 353 (98.6%) indicated that this was done to send away *nyawawa*. 5 (1.4%) said that the above actions were done to make *Nyawawa* stay with them peacefully.

113 (33.7%) stated that incase *Nyawawa* spirits remained in the village they dwelt in the forest; 81(24.2%) stated that they went to uninhabited places. 70 (20.9%) indicated that they dwelt in the lakes while 42(12.5%) noted that they went to the rivers. 29(8.7%) stated that they went to the neighboring communities. 283(77.5%) observed that incase *Nyawawa* were sent away they went to the lake, as 54(14.8%) noted that they went to the neighboring communities. 14 (3.8%) noted that the rivers and the forests.

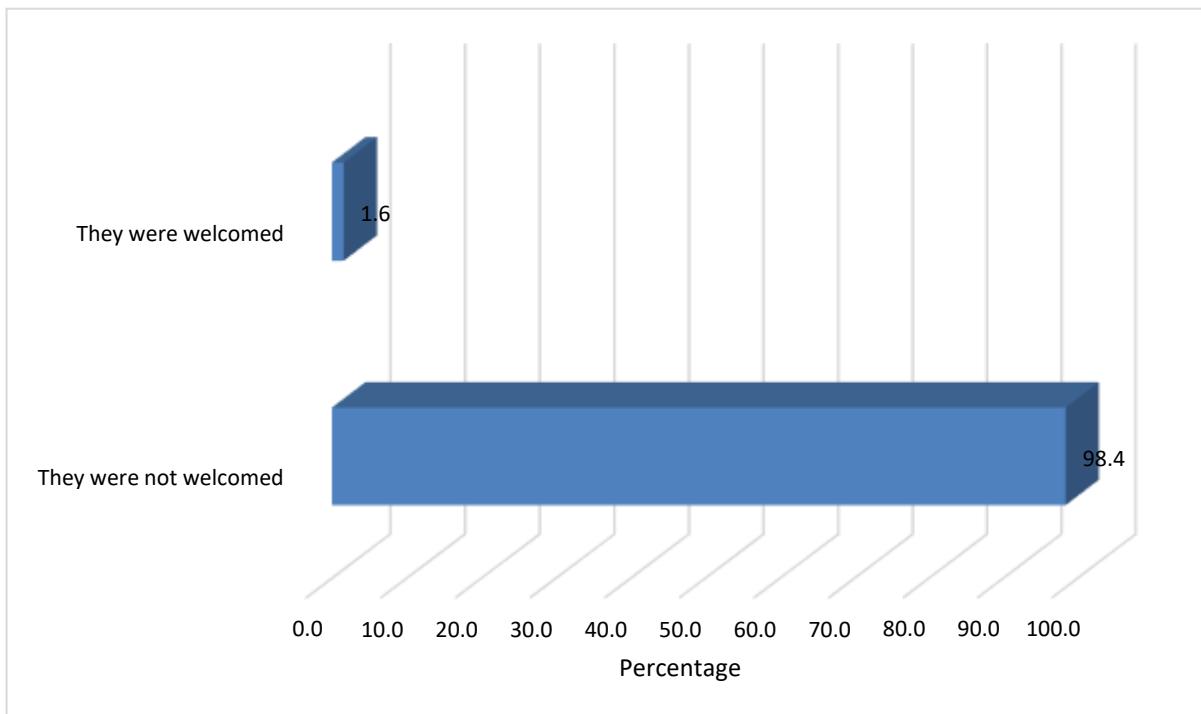


Figure 3: How *Nyawawa* spirits were perceived

The Fig. above shows that 6 (1.6%) respondents indicated that *Nyawawa* were welcomed. 375 (98.4%) stated that *nyawawa* were not welcomed.

To establish the prevalence of *nyawawa* reference will be made to Figure 1. Most respondents responded to the question of where they believe *Nyawawa* spirits were most common as follows: 215 (76.3%) of the target population Stated that they are most common around the lake. This fairly compares with 237 (62.9%) that stated that they come from the lake as per **Table 6**. Then 23 (8%) stated that they are common around the hills, again 12.5% observed that *Nyawawa* originated from the hills; while 8 (2.1%) stated that they are common around the valleys. Whereas data collected through questionnaires have it that only 8 respondents stated that the spirits came from the valley, evidence gathered through interview of key informants indicated otherwise.

Several informants from Rangwe associated movement of these spirits as following the river valleys like Maugo and Awach. Informants opined that *Nyawawa* dwelt along the river valleys and as such were prevalent there. In fact, they observed that it was common to smell the food cooked by *Nyawawa* along the bushes along the river valleys. In my view it is likely that most sub locations selected for the study do not have valleys hence most respondents could not associate the valley with these spirits as they did not have such geographical features in their vicinity. It is noteworthy that 51 (13.6%) respondents felt that they are common in varied places like bushes, rivers, caves, huge trees among others. Further still it is clear that whereas *Nyawawa* is presumably common around the lake even people who live far away from the lake like in Dago and Newa in Kisumu West and Kanyanjwa, Kamenya, Kanyarwanda, and Kokoko in Rangwe also had experiences with *Nyawawa*.

From the in-depth interviews it was realized that respondents observed that these spirits were common everywhere in the sense that they noted that they prevailed in the air from time to time irrespective of the where these respondents came from. Most informants noted that they manifested at least ones or twice a year. From the evidence collected through the questionnaires one may posit that these spirits were experienced everywhere as there is no place that did not register presence of these spirits even if percentage of prevalence varied.

When asked which season *Nyawawa* was most prevalent 173(46.6%) of the respondents stated that they were common in dry/ploughing season refer to **Table 6**. Most respondents associated *Nyawawa* with suffering and so explained that the spirits manifested when people were most vulnerable i.e., when they were lacking food. 79 (28%) observed that the spirits were common during harvesting or end of rainy seasons. This too gives a significant percentage. This corresponds to the season called *yugni* in Luo. This refers to the cold season around the month of July associated with cold period marked with prevalent sicknesses particularly coughs.

When the prevalence of *nyawawa* is to be compared over period of time, it is noteworthy that most respondents when asked whether or not *Nyawawa* are still experienced 334 (88.4 %) respondents Said yes, while 45 (11.6%) respondents said no; refer to **Figure 2**. However, it should be noted that when asked as to how often these spirits are experienced majority of the participants 123 (68.3%) stated that they rarely manifest. **Table 8** refers; only 8 (2.3%) respondents indicated that they are experienced very often. In my opinion this confirms the pre conceived perception that the prevalence of *Nyawawa* is declining in the sense that respondents acknowledge that the spirits rarely manifest though they feel that they still exist. When informants were asked the years, they experienced *Nyawawa* more vividly many of them quoted

1980s and early 1990s. In as much as they insist that the spirits manifest at least once or twice a year, they are not able to explicitly tell of a recent experience or interaction with the spirits.

**Table 8** indicates that a large number 123 (68.3%) stated that *Nyawawa* are rarely experienced. In as much as majority of the participants 334 (88.4%) reported that *Nyawawa* is still experienced nowadays, only 8 (2.3%) stated that they are experienced very often. From the evidence gathered through interviews of informants, it also came out that the younger informants did not have vivid explanations on the manifestation of these spirits compared to the older respondents. They relied more on hearsay for their accounts. It is also noteworthy to point out that respondents from Rangwe had more elaborate explanation about *nyawawa* compared to those from Kisumu especially Kogony, Newa and Dago. Nevertheless, respondents from Osiri, and Korando B (which are closer to the lake than the other sub-locations from Kisumu); had elaborate evidence. From the aforementioned sentiments it is of the opinion that the rural communities are more aware of the *nyawawa* spirits than the communities that are cosmopolitan. If not, then awareness of *Nyawawa* is more prevalent in the rural sub-counties as compared to the cosmopolitan areas.

It would be important to point out that the cosmopolitan sub locations may be having more noise disturbance from the traffic, some light industries and the like which may hinder such population from hearing *nyawawa* noises in event that they are manifested. It is also true to say that due to modernization most families even in the rural have radios and televisions which may hinder them from hearing the noises from *nyawawa* given that these spirits are experienced at night.

Influence from churches like African Inland Church (AIC) which is prevalent in Dago and Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) which is predominant in Newa explains the low prevalence of belief in *nyawawa* in these sub-locations. Like Seventh Day Adventist (SDA), these churches have little tolerance for belief in the traditional African Religion hence the ignorance of respondents in

SDA, AIC and ACK prone areas like Kaura, Dago and Newa. This therefore gives room to further research on impact of varied denominations to Traditional African Beliefs particularly belief in *nyawawa*.

The assumption of the study that belief in *Nyawawa* is more prevalent near the lake was challenged by the study done in Kaura sub location in Kochia. Interviews conducted in this sub location which was chosen because of its close proximity to the lake revealed that younger or middle-aged respondents were either not aware of these spirits, if not were not keen on sharing information about *Nyawawa*. The communities around Kaura are predominantly Seventh Day Adventists. This is unlike the respondents who came from Kanyanjwa and Kokoko sub locations which are far removed from the lake whose population is predominantly Catholic. It is possible that the people of Kaura have been influenced by their church doctrines which are stricter, not to pay attention to belief in these spirits. However, some old respondents in this area gave very detailed information about *Nyawawa*. The Catholic Church on the other hand when compared with the Seventh Day

Adventist, incorporates a people's culture integrating what is good in it with the faith through the process of inculcation. This enables their faithful to embrace the Catholic faith as well as maintain positive aspects of their traditional culture accepted by the church. This being the case therefore, traditional views are not scorned upon but maintained within the confines of the church doctrines. It is for this reason that the respondents from the Catholic dominated areas were more open to sharing information pertaining to these Spirits unlike those in the Anglican and S.D.A areas. It can therefore be deduced that denominational influence on the target population explains this contradiction to the assumption held before the study that the people around the lake are more conversant to the spirits.

The above conclusion is however not universal in the entire Luo communities under study. In

Kisumu West the picture is true to the assumption held above; that belief in *Nyawawa* is more prevalent near the lake. This is so because the respondents from Osiri and Korando sub-locations seemed to be more aware of these spirits than from other sub-locations that are far from the lake like Newa, and Dago. The description of respondents from Osiri about these spirits was more elaborate and most youthful respondents besides elderly ones are aware of these spirits. It is important to note that unlike Kaura where most people are predominantly Seventh Day Adventists, the people of Osiri have churches like Legio Maria, Roho and the Pentecostal churches like Apostolic, Voice of salvation and Healing amongst others. These churches which in my view are more prone to belief in spirits have influenced the high prevalence of belief in the existence of *Nyawawa* in these sub-locations.

From the secondary data, it is evident that the Africans did several things in their interaction with spirits, whether such spirits were perceived as benevolent or malevolent. From the works of (Iteyo, 2009), the Banyarwanda built huts for *Bazimu* spirits which they believed could cause harm if not kept close. Amongst the Ovimbundu of Central Angola, a medicine man is invited to foretell the future and if there is fear of ill fortune, he is told to persuade *olosande*, the benevolent spirits, to counteract the intentions of *Olondele*, malevolent spirits and prevent sickness and death (Heywood, 2017). In the study of *Nyawawa* collected evidence indicate that people did several things when they perceived the presence of *Nyawawa* Spirits.

Reference is here made to **Table 9**, 339 (92.6 %) respondents indicated that they hit objects and made noise whenever these spirits were perceived to be in the villages. The respondents indicated that this was done to send the spirits away. The fact that *Nyawawa* was sent away confirms the belief that *Nyawawa* were undesirable in the village. 20 (5.5 %) of the respondents indicated that the people remained silent. However, the fact that some respondents mentioned that people kept

quiet, supports the notion that silence was used to manage these spirits. This brings confusion as it is not clear when the noise was made and when the silence was maintained in any case the chase of *Nyawawa* spirits never took a long time. Reasons given for sending these spirits away was because they were perceived to cause deaths and sickness of children whenever they were experienced. Several respondents indicated that *Nyawawa* would move where someone was about to die and thereafter the person would die. In the language used by a respondent Mr. Chrisantus Odero of Kokoko village, *nyawawa ne rawo ni joma chiegni tho*". This means that they came to receive those who were about die; hence they were associated with death.

Further still, *Nyawawa* spirits were believed to cause several other misfortunes like causing people to be dumb in case one talked to the spirits, or even one could be mad. An informant in Kokoko 49years, interviewed indicated that *Nyawawa* would cause death of livestock. This view was never corroborated by secondary data nor was it supported by primary data collected from several other respondents interviewed on the same. Several respondents noted that *Nyawawa* caused death to its victims. A respondent from Newa reported that he lost 12 brothers to a disease associated with *nyawawa*.

Evidence gathered from an informant 78years from Kokoko confirmed that a man called died after he joined these spirits and danced to their songs and drums. This according to the respondent took place in Kokoko clan in Kagan village in 1976. Similarly, a key informant from Kamenya sub location shared:

In 1982, Ndige wuod Sara who was drunk quarreled with *Nyawawa* asking them why they are disturbing people in the village and that if they liked they could kill him and leave people in peace. He was found dead along the path the following morning.

On the same breadth, an informant described:

*Nyawawa* paused like people who had a patient to a certain medical attendant in the evening and said that the patient was in a nearby home they walked with the medical attendant to the home and disappeared before they could show him the patient. The man went and narrated this to his family members. He died the following day.

Most respondents said that *Nyawawa* caused diseases like measles, smallpox, cough, diarrhea amongst others. Ochola- Ayayo (2002) indicated that *Nyawawa* created heat on people's bodies thereby leading to blisters which would burst, create wounds on their victims which in turn lead to death. This too corroborates with evidence given by several other scholars like Folger and Naphtally, (1997), Geissler and Prince (2010) amongst others. What is intriguing is that with the control and eradication of diseases with relevant symptoms associated with these spirits, the presence of *Nyawawa* has also declined. This may cause one to conclude that association of *Nyawawa* spirits with these diseases may have been coincidental i.e. the spirits may have been prevalent at the time when there was outbreak of these diseases. One could also guess that the massive deaths caused by these infectious diseases made the people to imagine that it was an act of malevolent spirits.

Evidence gathered from a respondent who hailed from Gem in Siaya Sub County gave a very confusing position on the effect of *Nyawawa*. This respondent aged 80 years, hailing from Maliera sub-location: acknowledged that *Nyawawa* spirits were experienced in Gem. That like the people of Kisumu these spirits were sent away asking them to go back to Yimbo, believing that that's where they came from. It should be noted that the Gem people call these spirits *nyawawa*. That whenever they sent them away, they would tell them to go away so that people and the community would realize a good harvest. They would say, "Nyaware, Nyaware, dog uru Yimbo e nam mondo piny ochieg." This is interpreted to mean *Nyaware*, *Nyaware* (referring to the spirits), go back to Yimbo, to the lake, so that there can a bumper harvest.

According to that respondent bumper harvest was realized in the years following chase of *Nyawawa*. This opinion was however unique to this respondent from Gem hence the need to incorporate it in

the outcomes of the research as it is exposing divergent opinion of varied Luo communities about *Nyawawa* spirits. This respondent however concurred that the reason why these spirits were chased by beating tins and shouting was because they caused sickness and death more so to the children. From the opinion of this respondent, it would appear that the people of Gem regarded these spirits as both malevolent and benevolent as their presence was believed to cause illness and death while their departure occasioned a good harvest.

The contrast of opinion on the malevolent spirit mentioned above readily compares with the expectation of the Druid priests that the spirits of the dead during Halloween would enable them to foretell the future, yet at the same time they feared that the spirits would cause harm to the people (Thompson, 2018). Such confusion and contradictions in opinions related to belief in spirits is what necessitates constant study in this aspect of traditional religious belief.

An informant from Kamenya in Kochia noted:

*Nyawawa* cause rains to fail before people would realize this. This would only be averted if sacrifices would be offered to ward off the evil spirits.

This opinion that sacrifices could be offered to avert the effects of *Nyawawa* was also given by an informant aged 85 years from Korando village in Kisumu Sub County. He intimated that sometimes *Nyawawa* would be in the village and remain discreet; it is the diviners or medicine men, or mediums that would expose them and give direction on what animal to sacrifice to send them away. Mr. Andiego shared that one such public sacrifice of a white rooster was done in Korando where Present day Kenya Medical Research Institute lies in 1985 when there was spate of death in the village. These deaths according to respondent had occurred because *Nyawawa* spirits were hiding in the village. To explain that *Nyawawa* spirits were malevolent, another informant intimated that the spirits would cause a village to stagnate through epidemics, poverty and death. The informant therefore concurred with the others that *Nyawawa* were undesirable.

From secondary data, a lot of evidence clearly indicated that varied communities in the Africa and also in Europe expressed fear and caution in their relationship with the spirits. The Halloween tradition confirmed that the Celts feared spirits and believed that they caused deaths in winter hence the Halloween practice Thompson, (2018). The Zulu of South Africa built huts behind the Kraals to confine the spirits in these huts besides using such huts as shrines. This was to keep the spirits close so they don't cause havoc but also confine them in a closed entity so they do not maraud around. Manci, (1985). Similarly, the Mende of West Africa too built shrines in the homestead where homage was paid to the spirits to avoid their adverse effects.

According to Kenyatta (2011), the Agikuyu of Kenya too practiced the belief. From the works of Kenyatta, the Kikuyu would engage in a well-organized and mobilized chase of spirits whenever it was suspected that the spirits were lingering in the villages. The elders after consulting the seers and confirming that an epidemic was as a result of attack by spirits would mobilize the entire community into going out in the night and beating the bushes with sticks. They believed that the spirits were hiding in the bushes. War horns, (*Coro wa ita*) were blown to signal members to start the fight. Men and women and children would all come out in the fight to chase the spirits. The spirits would be chased up to the river thereafter the sticks used would be thrown into the river. On return the young children who did not participate would be smeared with red ochre. This was done to make lingering spirits not attack those children. (Kenyatta, 2011). It was

Believed that once that was done the spirits had to go away and as they went away, they took away their illnesses.

The picture is the same about the Luo and their belief on *Nyawawa* spirits considering that they were associated with death. From the study it is evident that the people came up with preventive management measures and what we can call curative. Preventive to me were those measures that aimed at causing the spirits not to come to their homes or rather measures taken to avoid the spirits. Curative measures to me are measures adopted once the spirits had affected an individual hence; they were adopted to mitigate the effects of *Nyawawa*.

Preventive measures include actions taken to ward off the spirits once it was suspected that they could be experienced in the village. From a respondent from Kokoko who advanced that the spirits followed specific paths, reiterated that flour could be poured on the path to confuse the spirits to avoid following such paths. The spirits would then follow paths that don't lead to any home. This corroborates with assertion of Ochola-Ayayo on the same. Ochola- Ayayo, (2002). This opinion however lacks backing from evidence gathered in Kisumu West. Other respondents also maintained that *Nyawawa* appeared spontaneously and sporadically hence this was not possible. As to how these paths were identified it was reported that the information was given prior by the medicine men and seers in Luo referred to as *ajooke, jokoro* etc. Since the appearance of *Nyawawa* was anticipated the known paths to be followed by these spirits was avoided. If by chance the spirits appeared when one was on the paths, they had to hide in the bushesto avoid direct contact with these spirits.

Owuor, Okech-Rabah & Okwaro (2006) mentioned that an elder in the village would hinder *Nyawawa* from entering his homestead by hitting a pot in front of the gate. This opinion got support from interviews conducted in Osiri and in Kamenya however with some variations. It was gathered from a respondent in Kamenya that a pot would be hit until it breaks and *Nyawawa* would take off as they would think that a mighty host of spirits were out to attack them. When the respondent was asked if the spirits could not access the home through other routes, the respondents insisted that Luo homesteads could only be accessed through the official gates and not even the *rot* (official side gates). For that reason, the spirits too were believed to enter into the homes through the gates. This therefore provides one reason that made the Luos to have natural fences around their homestead, with gates fastened with plunks of wood and poles known as *okol*.

The belief that Luo homesteads could be accessed through the gates only by spirits, informed the Luo traditional practice that if someone died outside the home stead an opening was made in any part of the fence and used to bring the body in. This unofficial entrance is called *Mbuga* in Luo language. The unofficial entrance was closed ritually and never used again. The understanding was that getting the dead into the homestead through the official entrance (otherwise called *rangach*) in Luo, meant opening the homestead to the spirits of death. This was believed to cause further deaths to people in the homestead.

This opinion however contradicts Mbiti's description of spirits as being ubiquitous. (Mbiti, 2015). Meaning that spirits are found everywhere, hence cannot be kept away from accessing a place by mere use of a fence or obstructing a gate. Further to this some respondents said that an elder would stand by the gate as *Nyawawa* spirits passed and through ash from a fireplace after they had passed. Besides, the evidence gathered indicates that rotten eggs would be smashed on a tree as *nyawawa* passed to make them leave in haste and not desire to linger around that specific home due to the bad

smell. These views given by Ignasio Ogwena confirm the assertion of Iteyo that spirits have human characteristic. The above actions were meant to cause the spirits pass the village in a flash hence they would not enter into any homestead to cause havoc.

It was opined by some respondents that charms would also be sprinkled on certain paths that *Nyawawa* spirits were anticipated to follow to cause them not to follow those paths. According to Ignasio Ogwena concoction would be made out of *yadh jok*, meaning medicine for spirits, *Njaga* otherwise known as Marijuana and *ang'we*, an herb whose name means “it smells bad”, then the mixture would be sprinkled on the known paths that *Nyawawa* would follow and this would ward off the spirits. It should be noted The Luo use *ang'we* to treat measles, a disease also associated with *Nyawawa*. The concoction of *angwe*, *Njaga* and *yadh jok* could be sprinkled in the homestead to ensure that the spirits do not enter into that homestead.

Further to this, it was gathered from Ignasio that the elders would go to *jobilo/ajuoke* (traditional healers) who would give them *bilo* (charms that are burnt and turned to ash), this would be placed inside *odundu*, pipe made from a reed. They would then get hold of an antelope and blow the *bilo* into the nostrils of the antelope and release it to go. Whenever it went if the people of that place killed the antelope the *Nyawawa* menace would have to be experienced there. This was done to ward off the spirits and cause them to go a different place. Hence this was a preventive approach in managing *Nyawawa* menace.

A lot has been mentioned about hitting objects, putting off fires, maintaining dead silence whenever it was feared that the spirits are in the village. A respondent mentioned that cold *ugali* could be left outside. When *Nyawawa* saw it they would be convinced that people did not live there and thus move to the next village. This opinion is however contradicted by those who said that no food would be left and water had to be poured in the fireplace. Again, it should be noted that descriptions of varied types of management were gathered from different communities. These add to the list of preventive measures as they aimed at making the spirits to move out of the village in a hurry usually in a flash.

Making of noise has been mentioned as another strategy used to manage the spirits. According to (Ochola-Ayayo 2010), and as mentioned by several respondents the noise made the spirits to leave the village in a flush. Noise making as presented in this study therefore is one of the preventive measures used to ward off *Nyawawa*. (Stull, 2016) questions the validity of this noise in the chase of *Nyawawa* in that the spirits are said to be noticed by the noise they make and the people also use the very noise to send them away. He therefore refers to the noise as being punitive in that the spirits are assumed to be making noise and in return the people also begin to make noise in a bid to send the spirits away.

In tandem with the aforementioned sentiments, the noise that is registered by most people is the noise made to chase the spirits. It is worth noting however, that the use of noise as a process of exorcism is still practiced in the churches today. In the Pentecostal churches rhythmic clapping and spontaneous prayers are used to drive away demonic spirits. While casting out demons the whole congregations join hands in chasing out the demons in the name of Jesus. In some African Churches like Roho Israel drums and gong (*ongen'go*) are also sounded during exorcism. In the

Luhya Divine Church they would shout *Riswa* to chase the evil spirits. Therefore, the use of noise in managing *Nyawawa* is not unique to the Luos alone.

As for silence it important to note that the Luos do not allow people to shout the names of other people at night. This was to avoid a situation where incase the spirit were around; they would also call such names and incase one responded they may become victims of *Nyawawa*. It is for the same reason that Luos do not respond to those who call them at night. The Luos also don't whistle at night as this too can attract the *Nyawawa* spirits or any spirits that could be lingering in the night. This is also true about the Ovimbundu of Angola who believe that the spirits move at night hence the names of the dead cannot be mentioned at night neither are people allowed to whistle at night as this would attract the spirits (Heywood, 2017). As for maintaining dead silence to confuse *Nyawawa* spirits it is possible that the members of the families, who were not bold like women and children, were made to stay in the houses and to remain silent so as not to attract the spirits. It should be noted that even calling the names of *Nyawawa* whenever they were in the village was avoided. They would be referred to as *yambe maricho*, meaning bad spirits. Any talks about them whenever it was suspected that they were in the village were done in hush tones. A respondent from Kanyarwanda mentioned that it took great courage even for the elders to wait for *Nyawawa* by the gates as the spirits would terrify people.

To confuse the *Nyawawa* spirits that there was no life in the villages the people other than remaining silent had to put off all fires and all sources of light. The children were made to sleep early so that they don't disturb in the night. It is intimated that it is after the spirits had passed that the people would begin making noise and hitting objects, presumably to ensure that the spirits keep moving and to set off any spirits that would be lingering behind.

*Juok kwere*, ancestral spirits were believed to participate in trying to ward off the *Nyawawa* spirits. They would be heard telling *Nyawawa* spirits not to enter homes of their surviving relatives. It is due to this that some people believed that *Nyawawa* are ancestral spirits. A respondent in Korando called Mary Ajwang (interviewed on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2017), said that one time when the spirits were passing in front of their homestead, which is near the road and they heard the voice of their late father-in-law shouting that the spirits, should not enter in the home of Wambuaya because everyone had died there.

Most respondents indicated that *Nyawawa* were sent to go to the lake. 283(77.5%) respondents believed that *Nyawawa* were sent to the lake. This therefore is a management strategy of the spirits. When asked why they think the people sent *Nyawawa* to the lake most respondents said that it is because there are no people who inhabit the lake hence, they would not cause harm to anybody there. Other respondents noted that the lake is the abode of Spirits. The most intriguing response was given by Ernest Lego from Kamenya. He stated that it is believed that the lake has many fountains which he called *Nger*, and it is believed that the spirits would drown in these deep fountains and be swept to other water masses far away. To prove the existence of the said fountains and if indeed the spirits drowned in them is again not feasible, but one can say that this is one of the coping mechanisms that the Luo had to deal with *Nyawawa*.

The fact that the Luos chased the spirits to the lake compares well with the Agikuyu chase of spirits to the rivers that is to water bodies. However, while the Agikuyu made a deliberate attack and even sounded drums of war before they began to hit the bushes in a bid to fight the spirits (Kenyatta 2011); the Luo acted rather in a cowardly manner as they tried to deceive the spirits that they did not exist only to begin hitting objects once the spirits had passed. This comparison is to make us understand

the attempt by the Luos to manage the spirits in the wider picture vis-a-vis beliefs and practice of the same by other African communities.

As to whether the spirits were indeed sent to the lake, I am of the view that if at all *Nyawawa* exist they were actually sent to the neighboring community and it was upon the neighboring communities to also send them further. No specific community chased the spirits all the way to lake, but rather they were relayed from one community to the next. In my view therefore this explains why some respondents believed that the spirits came from their neighbors. Perhaps the communities that live adjacent to the lake may have been the ones that sent them to the lake e.g. the people of Osiri. However, this too can be disputed when we consider that the people of Kisumu believed that these spirits came from Yimbo. Although Yimbo is close to the lake it is very far from Kamū it is therefore not clear if *Nyawawa* noise would be started all over after reaching Kisumu ~~twāt~~ Seme through Asembo and Sakwa then back to Yimbo. It is for this reason that the study considers the beliefs manifested about these spirits as perceptions as no specific belief can withstand serious interrogation.

Evidence gathered confirmed that the influence of foreign religions Christianity included, play a crucial role in the management of *Nyawawa*. This is more so in communities that are Christian.

Information gathered through Focused Group Discussion conducted in Kanyanjwa sub location near Asumbi Catholic Mission showed that the people of that locality got Holy water from the church and used it to sprinkle in their homes as a means of warding off the spirits. This information was also gathered in Osiri where Legio Maria Church is common. A respondent from Osiri intimated that they are not bothered of *Nyawawa* because they have a Cross in the mission and with that *Nyawawa* would not dare to enter their missions. For that reason, they Legio Maria also use Crucifix, Rosaries, wooden swords and small crosses which they carry to ward off the spirits from their homes or as

they moved in the villages.

Evidence gathered from respondents who subscribe to Legio Maria faith and even Catholic faith show that some of them have prayer altars in their homes where statue of Mary the mother of Jesus, the Crucifix of Jesus, the picture of Melkio Ondeto, the founder of the Legio Maria Sect, amongst others are placed. Prayers are offered regularly in such homes and these helps to keep the spirits at bay.

The practice of Exorcism form's part and parcel of African Spiritual Churches and Pentecostal prayer service. Individuals in the congregation who may be possessed are taken through deliverance service. In cases where it is believed or imagined that demonic spirits are in operation, the congregation join prayers to cast away such demonic forces. In event that *Nyawawa* would be lingering anywhere then they would suffer the fate of being cast away and sent to the lake of fire. This besides efforts of individual Christians to chase away demon's form reasons why belief in *Nyawawa* is on decline. Commenting on how evil spirits are controlled Mbiti, (2015) states that bothersome spirits may be kept at bay or be chased away by appealing to God for help. That through constant prayers mischievous spirits are overcome. This belief is hinged on the tenet that God is supreme and omnipotent hence has power to overcome demonic forces.

Data collected from respondents of Kogony showed influence from Islamic religion in the sense that they indicated that they would put bones of pigs at the door frames to ward off the spirits. Some respondents further mentioned the burning of incense in homes as a protective measure. This practice draws semblance from the actions taken by the Swahili to tame spirits, or ward off offensive *jinni*, water spirits (Faki et al., 2010). Back to the use pig bone to ward off spirits, this to me is not originally a Luo practice since the Luo traditionally never kept pigs. The Luo do not have a traditional name for

pigs. The use of pig bones to ward off spirits may draw its origin from the Muslim tradition which abhors pigs. The Swahili see it as *Mnyama haramu* hence it cannot be eaten or be used as an animal for sacrifice (Faki et al. 2010). It is for the same reason that the pig is repugnant and is believed it repels the spirits. This opinion was quite prevalent in Kogony where Islamic faith has gained root.

Attention is now paid to ways used to manage the effects of *Nyawawa* after they had attacked their victims, otherwise also referred to as curative measures in the sense that they were applied on those who had suffered attack from *Nyawawa*. Most respondents concurred that *Nyawawa* caused sicknesses like smallpox, measles, and cough, diarrhea amongst others. Evidence gathered from Ignasio was quite informative as he indicated that *yadh Jok*, *Njaga* or *angwe* were given to the children who suffered attack of *Nundu*, disease associated with *Nyawawa*. Evidence collected from Kanyarwanda Focused Group Discussion, revealed that Cannabis Sativa otherwise called *Njaga* in Luo, was used to make concoction and given to children who were attacked by measles

(Anyiew). Such children would also have that concoction poured into the water used to wash them then they would get well. The discussion revealed further that spirits repulse the smell of *Njaga* to the extent that even if someone drowned in the river a person under influence of cannabis cannot help to recover their bodies. It is with this belief that it was used to cure *Nyawawa* related diseases. In Osiri, evidence gathered revealed that a medicinal herb called *ang'we/achieth* was used in a similar way described for Cannabis. *Achieth/ ang'we* is a plant that has a foul smell. Its leaves were dried, ground and then mixed with oil/ghee and smeared on the body of a person attacked by smallpox. Concoctions were made out of it and this too was drunk. Further still *thowi* (fermented finger millet used to brew traditional beer) could also be smeared on the affected person.

Seemingly, the *Nyawawa* spirits were distracted by putrid smells considering that rotten eggs would

also be thrown at them to repulse them, besides use of *Njaga* and *ang'we* to treat those affected by *Nyawawa* related diseases. According to Chrisantus Odero it is worth noting that the herbs named above are still used by herbalists to treat measles also referred to by the Luo as *two Matindo*. This could be of interest for scholars in health-related fields to establish the medicinal value of named plants associated with ailments related with *Nyawawa*.

The evidence gathered also confirms that several victims of *Nyawawa* died after the encounter. To be considered under curative measures of management of their effects are ways that those who survived death ensured their safety. According to an informant of Kaura Kochia when *Nyawawa* caused death of a person no wailing was done at the funeral. No strangers entered homes of such funerals. People whose deaths were associated with *Nyawawa* were not mourned until grass grew on their graves.

It was feared if people attended burial of a person *Nyawawa* had caused their death, then the spirits would join the mourners and come and cause further deaths. The respondent narrated how *Nyawawa* entered a home where they had caused death in Kochia and danced around the grave of the deceased. She further narrated a song that was sung when *Nundu* manifested. The song was as follows;

“*Nundu odwa negayo, odwa negayo,*  
“*Nundu odwanega, nundu magawa wange otinga.*  
“*Akwacha gima oa e boma odwa nega”*

This can be translated to read

“*Nundu almost killed me, it almost killed me, it almost killed me,*  
“*Nundu who stares, his eyes have carried me,*  
“*Akwacha something that has come from a town almost killed me”.*

Varied opinions are held on whether *Nyawawa* spirits are on decline or not. Whereas several respondents indicated that *Nyawawa* are not on decline, careful decipher on facts gathered through the interviews conducted through the questionnaire and oral interviews reveal the contrary. When consideration is made on the details on *Nyawawa* it is clear that there is an age group especially those living in cosmopolitan areas that are not aware about *Nyawawa*. Most evidence gathered from

such respondents was obtained through hear say an indication that they do not have first-hand information about the spirits.

It is also worth noting that the respondents who gave in depth interview on the *Nyawawa* spirits do not have recent incidents to talk about; yet the age group of informants with detailed information about the spirits are those who are 50 years and above. The respondents who had first-hand experience with *Nyawawa* also tended to be specialists mostly traditional healers. The traditional healers are also getting fewer with time due to the fact that modernity is rendering reference to them irrelevant. These clearly indicate the decline of belief in these spirits.

The words of (Gehman, 2005) quoted as “The cultures of Africa today are no more what they used to be. In many areas the traditional customs are changing-technologically, educationally, politically, culturally and to some extent religiously.” pg. 17 However, in his very words Gehman indicates that all matters pertaining to beliefs and customs cannot be totally lost when he continues and says that.....That superficial customs change easily with passage of time.... but deep core world views beliefs of a person are persistent.” This thus explains that even though indications of decline in belief in *Nyawawa* may be observed these perceptions and practices cannot be pushed to total oblivion.

This assertion of Gehman gets support from the recent occurrence of *Nyawawa* that was observed on 3rd April 2020 in Kisumu. The *Nyawawa* noise was heard in Korando at 9pm. After 10 minutes a respondent in Mamboleo called and reported that the *Nyawawa* noise was made in the area going through Obwolo, to Gita, Wathorego, through Kamenya clan and died off in the sugar belt around Miwani area. As a matter of fact, *Nyawawa* noise was made throughout Kisumu West Sub- County on that night. I conducted telephone interviews on the morrow to assess the general occurrence of *Nyawawa* that night. I established that the *Nyawawa* noise was done in Alego, neighboring Sakwa clans, right through Seme and then throughout Kisumu ending in the Sugar belt of Miwani. The noise was however not made in Yimbo, Uyoma, Nyakach, Homabay or Migori. Of interest here is the coincidence of the *Nyawawa* noise with the spread of Covid19 pandemic. It should be noted that the

impact of *Nyawawa* noise was significant that the Cabinet Secretary for health Hon. Mutahi Kagwe castigated Kisumu residence for breaking the curfew rules imposed to put on check the spread of COVID19 pandemic. This incident also got the attention of a one Daily Nation reporter Rushdie Oudia, on the Nation Newspaper (7<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 edition. Oudia attributed the noise at the lakeside town to *Nyawawa* spirits, who according to him are” ghosts of people who drowned in the lake and come from their watery graves from time to time to torment the living” (Daily Nation, 2020, p. 22).

Reporting further on *Nyawawa* the reporter mentioned that faced with the curfew, and the threat of *Nyawawa* spirits the people went ahead and got out their houses hitting metallic objects fearing that the spirits would cause to them out break of diseases or even death if ignored. The Luo elders contacted by the journalist, namely Opiyo Otundi-Chairman Luo council of elders, and Mzee Odungi Randia concurred that the Luo community associated the Spirits with outbreak of Smallpox epidemic.

It is worth noting that at this time churches too have remained closed because of the fear of spread of the pandemic. The fact that even churches were closed and curfew imposed, created room for the *Nyawawa* noise to be heard more clearly hence many people participated in the chase. But of most significance is the fact that with the closed churches many people found a way of venting their frustration and fear of the dreaded COVID-19 disease which as yet has no cure. The observation left to be made is whether the making of *nyawawa* noise would be followed by trail of deaths as per the belief of the Luo about *nyawawa*.

*Nyawawa* were known to be in the villages through the noises that were heard from them. Today a lot of noise is experienced in the environment form motor vehicles, industrial noise, and entertainment spots including discos played during funerals in Nyanza and Western which are scattered in the rural areas. Besides a lot of noise is generated from night prayers otherwise referred to as *Kesha*, as such

notice of these spirits would elude several people. Apart from this several factors can be sighted to explain decline in belief in *Nyawawa*. This fact is vital as the noises generated in the nights may hinder people from noticing if the spirits are in the village as a result, they would fail to hit tins for *Nyawawa* when they should have.

It is reported that in West Kagan the Spirits were experienced severally during the election campaigns of 2017 but could not be noticed because they imitated campaign songs sang around that time. They were specifically reported to have moved around *God Puro* where an elderly man called Vitalis Ogalo had died. It is possible that the spirits do not manifest often and that if they do, they are not noticed. In Luke's Gospel when Jesus commissioned his disciples to go and preach the kingdom of God, he gave them power and authority to drive out demons and to cure diseases. (Luke 9:1). This therefore is an indication that whenever Christianity spread any belief in spirits, other than the Holy Trinity was under threat of being expunged whether such spirits were considered benevolent or otherwise. Hence the spread of Christianity in Luo land as in any other place in Africa spelt doom for any such beliefs and practices. Therefore, one major reason why belief in *Nyawawa* and related practices are in decline is the spread of Christianity in Luoland.

The evidence gathered in Kaura gives a good example. People living in Kaura which is very close to the lake, are not keen on practices related to these spirits presumably because of influence from Seventh Day Adventist church hence they are either not aware of them or are not willing to discuss about them. In Kanyanjwa where people had identified some locality with *Nyawawa* spirits the fear of the said spirits no longer prevails and people have since settled in the area due to spread of Catholicism in the area. Chrisantus Odero, a traditional healer from Kokoko when asked why *Nyawawa* no longer attack people with diseases; responded that the spirits are no longer strong because they have been weakened by constant prayers that are said in churches, homes, open air

Christian meetings amongst others. Even then he insisted that the spirits are still experienced.

From the study it was realized that there are those who totally deny that *Nyawawa* spirits do exist and that the things people do are out of their fears and imagination. One such respondent is Mr. Henry Obala age 63years interviewed at Korando B on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017. He insisted that in spite of having lived in Korando village for years he has never experienced the *Nyawawa* spirits. He has only heard people claim they were heard passing and later heard sound of objects being hit. This respondent is a Christian convert and a lay reader in the Anglican Church. To this category of respondents' belief in *Nyawawa* is an illusion.

It was eluded from respondents who have embraced Islamic faith that *Nyawawa* may never have impact on them because they too have ways of warding off evil spirits, by burning incense, keeping bones of pigs. Decline of *Nyawawa* may as well be attributed to cultural change occasioned by decline of several cultural practices. A respondent from Kokoko called Robinson indicated that the spirits were rampant in the past because a lot of attention was paid to the ancestral spirits in particular. He said that a lot of sacrifices were offered to appease the spirits on top of *God Puro* where a specialist called Oswago went to offer sacrifices of goats, chicken, etc. on behalf of the community whenever there was need. According to this respondent the attention given to the ancestral spirits provoked the *Nyawawa* spirits to jealousy as no one paid attention to them.

This therefore, caused them to manifest often to cause havoc in the villages. Today both ancestral spirits and *nyawawa* are regarded as demonic and are rebuked and chased away in the same strength by the Christians. This according to this respondent explains the reason why *Nyawawa* are not common.

Coupled with cultural change is influence of modernization and spread of education. The worldview

of the present youth is quite different from that of yester generation. The current generation spends all their time in school and interacts with information beyond their traditional ethnic entity. This has made them to be cut off from traditional beliefs and practices. Besides, they can interrogate certain practices that may not be proved empirically. This leads us to the problem of generation gap as being a reason for decline in belief in *nyawawa*. Youth from Cosmopolitan sub-locations have very vague ideas on *Nyawawa* as some have no idea at all.

While this opinion may be held as valid, it is important to note that traditional specialists that would predict the presence of spirits and how to appease them are nowadays rare and very little attention is paid to them hence communication about the spirits whether benevolent or malevolent is quite rare hence the decline in their prevalence. It is important to note that the prophets whose opinions are sought or preferred today subscribe to Christianity, which is in competition with Traditional African beliefs and practices, hence through their consultation belief in *Nyawawa* cannot thrive or prevail.

From the evidence given about origin of *Nyawawa* indications are that the spirits were believed to originate from grave sites and for that reason such places were greatly feared. As a matter of fact, the Luos never lived in *Gunda* (singular), or *gundni* (plural) meaning deserted homesteads were the dead family members were buried. Today due to urbanization which has brought in plural societies that bring together people with diverse cultural back ground; even cemeteries have been destroyed and such places cleared for settlement. In Kisumu the Polyview Estate near the Kisumu stadium is one such estate hived from a former cemetery and is occupied by people majority of who are Luos. Well interviews were conducted there to know whether *Nyawawa* menace is experienced there nevertheless, no reports of such kind have been heard from residents of that Estate. The same evidence is also reported in Kanyanjwa where the place named *Nyawawa* and was associated with origin of *Nyawawa* spirits has been occupied and even has a primary school named *Nyawawa*.

established there.

Most respondents had initially indicated that when the spirits were around people had to put off fires and any form of light lest the lights attracted the spirits. When asked why then the spirits are not experienced in the homes given extensive rural electrification, a respondent Mr. Ernest Lego noted that the light produced by electricity is so strong that the spirits cannot stand, besides the light from electricity caused the spirits to imagine that it is daybreak. He noted that fires from fire places also released some warmth and smoke which made the spirit to believe that people existed there.

The belief that *nyawawa* spirits caused diseases is no longer tenable with the eradication of smallpox and invention of vaccines that control measles amongst children. Widespread scientific approach to diseases and condition with logical explanation has led to diminishing *Nyawawa* belief. As noted earlier, causes of diseases such as measles, small pox, diarrhea, high fever and other diseases related to *Nyawawa* are known scientifically. Measles, also known locally as *two matindo*, is highly infectious especially amongst children. It is caused by the rubella virus, also known as rubella or morbilli. It is an endemic disease, meaning it is continually present in the community, though many people develop resistance. However, if measles enters an area where the people have not been exposed, the outcome is devastating as it can kill many people. The causes, symptoms, management and control measures against measles are well known and it is clear to many that its cause is not *Nyawawa*.

Today measles is preventable through use of vaccines. According to Kenya Expanded Program on Immunization (KEPI), Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is routinely given to children

who are nine months old. It is known that new born carry their mother's immunity for a few months after birth. Whenever there is a measles outbreak, vaccination is rolled out again to boost immunity of exposed population. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that measles vaccination program led to a 79% drop in measles deaths globally, from 2000 to 2015, preventing around 20.3 million deaths. Suppose these deaths were to be reported without scientific explanation, they would probably be associated with *Nyawawa*, which is not the case today.

Cholera, *ndira* in local languages of the respondents, a disease caused by eating food or drinking water contaminated with bacteria called *vibrio cholerae*. It is an infectious disease that causes diarrhea leading to dehydration and even death if not treated. Cholera is treatable through conventional drugs like ORS and antibiotics. The other disease associated with *Nyawawa* is smallpox. Smallpox is an infectious disease of the past that was eliminated worldwide by vaccination. The disease was caused by the *ravioli* virus, which is spread from person to person; this infection like the others was highly infectious. Affected people became very ill with a high fever and a characteristic rash. Up to one third of people with smallpox died. With the eradication of Smallpox belief in *Nyawawa* as being the cause of the spread is not tenable.

Functionalism theory has been used in this objective to explain that the influence of spirits is woven into the fabric of societal life of the Luo to the extent that it is not easy to say whether the phenomenon is a product derived from influence of *Nyawawa* or calculated malevolence by witchdoctors. As a result of its dysfunction, many people have resorted to use various ways to respond to, manage, and protect themselves from harm and possible extinction due to *Nyawawa*. In other words, functionalism has been unable to account for social change, or for structural contradictions in the Luo society. Functionalism has been used in this objective to explain that regardless of the decline in the belief on *Nyawawa*, the Luo society continues to be integrated, however, the theory has not been useful in explaining possible conflicts and contradictions arising from experiences attributed to *Nyawawa* phenomenon. In line with

this argument, functionalism misses the concept of system contradiction.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This study set out to investigate the perceptions and beliefs on Nyawawa spirits among the Luo of Kenya. This chapter presents the summary of study findings, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further study. The summary of the study findings is presented based on the three objectives that guided the study i.e. first, origin of Nyawawa spirits among the Luo of Kisumu West Sub-county and Rangwe Sub-county, secondly, the manifestation of the belief in Nyawawa spirits among the Luo of Kisumu West Sub-county and Rangwe Sub-county, and thirdly, the decline of belief in Nyawawa spirits among the Luo of Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-county.

### **5.2 Origin of Nyawawa in Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-counties**

The study endeavored to establish if the respondents are aware of *Nyawawa*, and indeed the majority of those interviewed and those who filled questionnaires stated that they are aware of *Nyawawa*.

It is evident that different Luo communities have varied beliefs as to where Nyawawa originates, the prevailing opinion though is that they come from the lake. It is characterized by a scary sound like of a swarm of birds leaving the lake in a rush, soon after the sound of noise like of a large crowd of mourners leaving the lake with noises like of people going to a traditional Luo funeral. Shortly afterwards, people in the surrounding villages start hitting objects presumably to send away the spirits.

On the same length, the study also found out that nobody could tell for sure where these spirits came from but people would just come to realize that they are in the village. This prompts object being hit, they would begin to hit also and so knowing the direction from which the spirits came was not easy.

Though belief in *Nyawawa* is still held in the areas of study, the knowledge and practices held about *Nyawawa* is not consistent and is varied in different areas. For example, whereas in some communities it was held that the spirits lived in the surrounding, in other places it was held that these

spirits came from outside the community.

The research further established that *Nyawawa* spirits did not necessarily come from the lake. This is supported by the fact that even areas that are far removed from the lake experienced the spirits. The fact that some communities singled out places they associated with the origin of *Nyawawa* shows that varied opinions about origin are held and all opinions must be acknowledged.

### **5.3 Manifestation of the belief in Nyawawa in Kisumu West and Rangwe Sub-Counties**

On the manifestation of *Nyawawa* it is clear that most respondents have not had firsthand experience with the spirits, but those with explicit description about the spirits are of the older age group and particularly so, those that have special connection with the spirits e.g., as diviners, medicine men, mediums amongst others. This creates an opinion that belief in *Nyawawa* is waning. Further on manifestation, the study has established that *Nyawawa* could have been experienced any time of the year as even respondents interviewed from the same locality gave varied opinion as to when in the year these spirits were experienced. This is confirmed further by the fact that some people were not aware of their manifestation. The study confirmed *Nyawawa* are mainly seen as malevolent spirits. That whenever the people interacted with them, they were feared and had to be chased as *Nyawawa* spirits were believed to cause death to anyone who came into contact with them. In my view *Nyawawa* were also never sent to the lake whenever they were chased away. Every community that chased them pushed them out of their territory and left them to go to the next community to push them further away. This relay went on for as long as it had not reached a place that was not inhabited. This explains why some communities believed they came from neighboring communities.

The study also revealed that, if it is true that *Nyawawa* exist they operated in vast numbers. They moved in large numbers and did not operate individually. This could therefore explain why the communities also joined efforts to chase them away. It is also evident that *Nyawawa* could be composed of unknown spirits.

## **5.4 Decline of the Luo Belief in Nyawawa**

The study has established that belief in *Nyawawa* is generally affected by competing religions like Islam and Christianity. The two religions have so far provided beliefs and practices that have been used to counteract belief in *Nyawawa*. So far even in places where *Nyawawa* spirits are still believed to be experienced the diseases and deaths caused by measles, smallpox amongst others is not reported. It is my view that the Luo communities used their belief in *Nyawawa* to explain existence of plagues like smallpox, measles amongst others that they were unable to control. This belief then became to them a coping mechanism to the devastation caused by death of victims of the plagues.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The main conclusion drawn from the first objective which examined the origin of *Nyawawa* spirit in Kisumu West Sub- County and Rangwe Sub- County is that *Nyawawa* should be extended to communities outside Luo Nyanza hence is given a multicultural approach. This is because of the fact that the communities neighboring the Luo have this cultural practice. Moreover, this would help to find if indeed the spirits originated from some of these places.

Moreover, study should also be conducted where there are other water bodies other than Lake Victoria, for example around Lake Simbi, in Kendu Bay, Lake Kanyaboli, in West Alego and areas where rivers like Nzoia or Yala flow for example Ugenya and Gem respectively. This will confirm if belief in *Nyawawa* is associated with other water bodies other than Lake Victoria. Conclusions about *Nyawawa* should also not be generalized for varied Luo Communities but can only be true for specific Luo community as each community had its unique beliefs and practices about *Nyawawa*.

The major conclusion drawn from the second objective which assessed the manifestation of belief in *Nyawawa* spirits among the Luo of Kisumu West Sub- County and Rangwe Sub- County is that belief in *Nyawawa* is widespread amongst the Luo particularly communities under study. As it is with

every cultural belief and practice this belief has been exposed to threat of extinction, as many people claim knowledge of them but lack experience of these spirits. It can be pointed out that the variance in belief and perception of various Luo communities about *Nyawawa* has been occasioned by geographical disparities, exposure to varied religious and cultural influence. Further research on this subject should try and establish if decline in belief in *Nyawawa* has any bearing with the eradication of diseases that the Luo believed to have been caused by these spirits.

The main conclusion drawn from the third objective which evaluated the decline in the belief on *Nyawawa* in Kisumu West Sub- County and Rangwe Sub- County is that the widespread *Nyawawa* noise in the wake of spread of Corona Virus pandemic further points out that the change caused by foreign religions e.g., Christianity may be superficial as long as there is nothing that affects the general status quo of the people in general. Otherwise, many individuals given a chance would still appeal to their traditional practices when faced with uncertainties.

## **5.6 Recommendations**

This section stipulates the recommendations to be implemented by community leaders, community members, and church leaders in order to enlighten the people on beliefs and practices surrounding the phenomenon of Nyawawa among the Luo. This is because such beliefs and practices have remained a mystery among community members.

Based on the first objective which examined the origin of Nyawawa spirits among the Luo of Kisumu West Sub-county and Rangwe Sub- County and concluded that the origin of Nyawawa spirits is from the lake, this study recommends that the worldview of community members in Kisumu West Sub- County and Rangwe Sub- County needs to be focused on more positive things, rather than being preoccupied with the belief and practice of Nyawawa. This is due to the fact that such beliefs in Nyawawa have not contributed to any positive bearing on the development efforts in the community.

Concerning the second objective which assessed the manifestation of belief in Nyawawa spirit among the Luo of Kisumu West Sub- County and Rangwe Sub- County and the study concluded that belief in *Nyawawa* is widespread amongst the Luo particularly communities under study. As it is with every cultural belief and practice this belief has been exposed to threat of extinction, as many people claim knowledge of them but lack experience of these spirits. It can be pointed out that the variance in belief and perception of various Luo communities about *Nyawawa* has been occasioned by geographical disparities, exposure to varied religious and cultural influence. Further research on this subject should try and establish if decline in belief in *Nyawawa* has any bearing with the eradication of diseases that the Luo believed to have been caused by these spirits. This study recommends that the Luo community needs to desist from the practice of and belief in all socially divisive and retrogressive superstitions, including Nyawawa. This is because such beliefs have continued to frustrate the spread of Christianity which has benefited the society in terms of religious stability than

beliefs in Nyawawa.

Pertaining to the third objective which evaluated the decline of Luo belief in Nyawawa and the study concluded that such superstitious beliefs should be done away with in the community, this study recommends that the Luos need to stop living double lives by believing in both the evangelical truth of the scripture and the efficacy of Nyawawa.

### **5.7 Suggestions for Further Study**

The study suggests that going forward, similar research to be done in other communities. Finally, the study suggests that further studies should be done on other phenomena of society such as Christianity deemed to be influenced by Nyawawa in the society.

## REFERENCES

- Adegoke, B. (2018). *The Spiritual Heritage of the Yoruba*: GRIN Verlag.
- Cohen, J. A. (2010). *The primitive mind and modern man*: Bentham Science Publishers.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*: sage.
- De Wolf, J. (2019). *Differentiation and Integration in Western Kenya: a study of religious innovation and social change among the Bukusu* (Vol. 10): Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.
- Ekeke, E. C., & Chike, A. E. (2010). God, divinities and spirits in African traditional religious ontology. *American Journal of Social and Management Sciences*, 1(2), 209-218.
- Faki, E., Kasiera, E., & Nandi, O. (2010). The belief and practice of divination among the Swahili Muslims in Mombasa district, Kenya. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 2, 213-223.
- Falola, T. (2017). *Africanizing knowledge: African studies across the disciplines*: Routledge.
- Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction*: Longman Publishing.
- Gehman, R. J. (2005). *African traditional religion in biblical perspective*: East African Publishers.
- Geissler, P. W., & Prince, R. J. (2010). *The Land is Dying: contingency, creativity and conflict in Western Kenya* (Vol. 5): Berghahn Books.
- Gikonvo, D. (1997). Worship Of God the Creator Among The Agikuyu And Christian Worship.

- Haar, G. (2009). *How God Became African: African Spirituality and Western Secular Thought*: University of Pennsylvania Press, Incorporated.
- Heywood, L. M. (2017). *Njinga of Angola*. Harvard University Press.
- Holton, J. A. (2008). Grounded theory as a general research methodology. *The grounded theory review*, 7(2), 67-93.
- Iteyo, C. (2009). Belief in the spirits of the dead in Africa: A Philosophical interpretation. *Thought and Practice*, 1(1), 151-163.
- Kanu, I. A. (2013). The dimensions of African cosmology. *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*, 2(2), 533-555.
- Kenyatta, J. (2015). *Facing Mount Kenya: the traditional life of the Gikuyu*. East African Educational Publishers.
- Kibicho, S. G. (2006). *God and Revelation in an African Context*: Acton Publishers.
- Knowles Girling, F. (2019). *Lawino's People: the Acholi of Uganda*: Lit Verlag.
- Kothari, C. (2004). Research Methodology Methods and Techniques, new Age International (P) Ltd. *New Delhi*.
- Kyeyune, P. S. (2012). *Shaping the Society Christianity and Culture: Special Reference to the African Culture of Baganda*: Author House.
- Lidz, V. (2010). The Functional Theory of Religion. *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, 76-102. Magesa, L. (2014). African Religion: Moral Traditions of Abundant Life. Orbis Books.
- Mbiti, J. S. (2015). *Introduction to African religion*: Waveland Press.
- Mugambi, J. N. K. (2015). *A Comparative Study of Religions: Second Edition*: University of Nairobi Press.

- Mugenda, A. G. (2013). Qualitative research methods. In: Nairobi: Applied Research and Training Services.
- Ngong, D. T. (2010). *The Holy Spirit and Salvation in African Christian Theology: Imagining a More Hopeful Future for Africa*: Peter Lang.
- Njoku, F. O. (2002). *Essays in African Philosophy, Thought & Theology*: Claretian Institute of Philosophy.
- Ntreh, B. A., Aidoo, M. S., Aryeh, D. N. A., & Asamoah-Gyadu, J. K. (2019). *Essays on the Land, Ecotheology, and Traditions in Africa*: Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Ocholla-Ayayo, A. (2002). Culture as a Lived Experience. *Population Studies and Research Institute, University of Nairobi*.
- Olajubu, O. (2012). *Women in the Yoruba Religious Sphere*: State University of New York Press.
- Olumwullah, O. A. (2002). *Dis-ease in the colonial state: medicine, society, and social change among the AbaNyole of western Kenya*: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Orodho, A. (2003). Essentials of educational and social science research methods. *Nairobi: Masola Publishers*, 23-45.
- Orowo Nyakiti; (2012): *Healing dance: A case study of the Luo and Dawida Mwanzidika Dances* International Journal of Business and Social Sciences, Vol 3 No 2 special issue (January 2012).
- Owuor, B., Oketch-Rabah, H., & Kokwaro, J. O. (2006). Reinventing therapo-spiritual fellowships: The jolang'o in Luo African Independent Churches. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 9(5), 423-434.

Owuor, V. B. (2006). *Resurrection hope in the African context: Challenging Luo beliefs and practices concerning death*. North-West University,

Stull, Dillon C. (2016) *Gathered Story Telling: Death and Disease among the Luo of NyakachPlateau*. Waco: Baylor University.

Thomas, D., & Alanamu, T. (2018). *African Religions: Beliefs and Practices through History*: ABC-CLIO.

Thompson Augustine O.P, (2018). *The true origin of Halloween-Pagan Druid orChristian*. Dallas Crossroad Initiative.

Van den Bosch-Heij, D. (2013). *Spirit and Healing in Africa: A Reformed PneumatologicalPerspective*: Rapid Access Publishers.

Westerlund, D. (2006). *African indigenous religions and disease causation: From spiritual beings to living humans*: Brill.

Williams, C. G. (1976). David A. Brown. A Guide to Religions. Pp. 271. (London: SPCK 1975).  
*Religious Studies*, 12(3), 397-398.

Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*: Sage publications.

Mcculloch, M. (2017). The Ovimbundu of Angola: West Central Africa Part II. Routledge.

Kayeli, E. C. (2012). The role and meaning of birth, naming, initiation, marriage and death rituals among the Logoli of Western Kenya in view of inculturating related sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi, Kenya).

Kariuki, N. (2006). Inculturating Biblical Metaphors among the Agĩkũyũ of Kenya. Inculturation and Post-Colonial Discourse in African Theology. New York: Peter Lang.

## **APPENDICES**

---

### **Appendix I: List of Questions for oral interviews**

1. Where in your view do Nyawawa originate from?
2. How do people know that Nyawawa are in the village?
3. How often do Nyawawa spirits appear?
4. During what seasons/times of the year, times of the day/night do Nyawawa spirits manifest?
5. In which places do Nyawawa manifest more often?
6. How do Nyawawa affect the people, socially and/or economically?
7. What do people do to cope with Nyawawa?
8. What happened to Nyawawa after such interventions?
9. Are Nyawawa spirits experienced nowadays?
10. How often? When was the last time you had an experience with Nyawawa?
11. Narrate/ describe what you experienced from the beginning to the end.
12. If in your view Nyawawa is rarely experienced, what in your view has led to this?

## **Appendix II: Luo Version of the Oral interview Questions**

1. *Nyawawa gin an ng'o?*
2. *Nyawawa wuok ga Kanye?*
3. *Ere kaka ji ne ng'eyo ka Nyawawa nitie e gweng'?*
4. *E higa Nyawawa ne nyalo wuok e gweng' maromo nade'?*
5. *E kinde mage mane Nyawawa bedo mang'eny e gweng'? Esesche mage mane Nyawawa iwinjo e gweng'?*
6. *Kwonde mage mane Nyawawa iwinjoe mang'eny?*
7. *Nyawawa ne timoji nang'o?*
8. *Ji ne timo ang'o mondo ogeng' Nyawawa?*
9. *Nyawawa ne dhi Kanye sama iriembogi?*
10. *Ekindeggi bende Nyawawa wuok e gweng'? Nyawawa mane iwinjo mogik ne enkarang'o?*
11. *Kadipo ni gi wuok, ere kaka ji ng'eyo ni Nyawawa nitie e gweng'?*
12. *Wachiegik mane otimre mane iwinjo Nyawawa.*
13. *Kadipo ni Nyawawa ok thor bedo e gweng' iparo ni ang'o' ma omiyo mano timore.*

### **Appendix III: Questionnaire**

My name is Catherine Akinyi Sewe:

I am a student at JOOUST undertaking a study on M.A Religion. For the purpose of the study I am conducting a research on Nyawawa spirits among selected Luo communities. I request you to fill this questionnaire to aid this study.

Assurance is hereby made that responses made for the purposes of the study will be treated with confidentiality and are going to be used only for the purposes of the study. The information given and the identity of the respondent will not be disclosed. The responses given will only be used to draw conclusion and to add knowledge on Luo beliefs in spirits.

#### **Demographic Questions**

1. What is your gender?

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What is your age bracket?

Below 20years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21-30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
31-40 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
41-50 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
51-60 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Above 61 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. What is your religious affiliation?

Catholic

Anglican

Protestant

SDA

Others

Specify: .....

4. What is your highest level of education?

Primary

Secondary

College /university

5. What is your main stay occupation?

Farming

Fishing

Business

Others

Specify: .....  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Origin**

6. Have you heard about Nyawawa spirits?

Yes

No

7. Do you have a personal experience of Nyawawa spirits?

Yes

No

8. In your view what are Nyawawa spirits?

Spirits of ancestors

Spirits from neighboring Communities

Unknown evil spirits

9. Where do Nyawawa originate from?

The Valley

The Hills

The Lake

The River

Others

Specify: .....

10. How do people know origin of Nyawawa?

- |                                                          |                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| By associating high prevalence of Nyawawa to those areas | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By guessing                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Through hearsay                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By guessing                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By observing the direction of wind                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### **Manifestation**

11. How do people know Nyawawa are in the village?

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| They are seen              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Their voices are heard     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People say they are around | <input type="checkbox"/> |

12. How do people distinguish Nyawawa from other spirits?

- |                                             |                          |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| They are heard talking                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| They move from place to place               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The elders tell people that they are around | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Specify other ways: .....

13. What is the prevailing weather conditions associated with Nyawawa spirits?

Sunny

Rainy

Wind

Calm

If others specify: .....

14. At what time is Nyawawa likely to be experienced?

Morning

Afternoon

Twilight

At night

If others specify: .....

## B. Prevalence

1. In your own opinion Nyawawa spirits are most common around?

Lakes

Hills

Valleys

If others specify: .....

2. Which season is Nyawawa likely to be experienced?

Ploughing/dry season

Planting/onset of rains

Weeding/ rainy season

Harvesting/end of rainy season

3. Are Nyawawa spirits experienced nowadays?

Yes

No

4. If yes how often?

Very often

Often

Rarely

5. If no, give reasons why you think they are not experienced?

.....  
.....

6. If yes, what do people do when they experience Nyawawa?

They keep very silent

They light fires

They hit objects and make noise

They run helter skelter

7. Give possible reason for their behavior/reaction when Nyawawa is experienced?

.....  
.....

8. Where do they send the spirits to?

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Lakes                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hills                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Valleys                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neighboring communities | <input type="checkbox"/> |

9. In your own opinion why do you think they send them there?

.....  
.....

10. How were Nyawawa spirits perceived?

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| They were welcomed     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| They were not welcomed | <input type="checkbox"/> |

11. If welcomed show how?

.....  
.....

12. If not welcomed show why?

.....  
.....

13. What do people do when they experience Nyawawa?

- They make noise by hitting objects
- They light fires
- They offer sacrifices
- They keep silent and put off all lights

14. If others specify?

.....  
.....

15. What was the effect the effect of their actions?

- It makes Nyawawa stay with them peacefully
- It sends Nyawawa away
- It makes Nyawawa to bless them

16. In case Nyawawa remained in the village they dwelt in?

- Forest
- Neighboring communities
- Un-inhabited places
- Rivers
- Lakes

17. Incase Nyawawa were sent away they went to?

Lakes

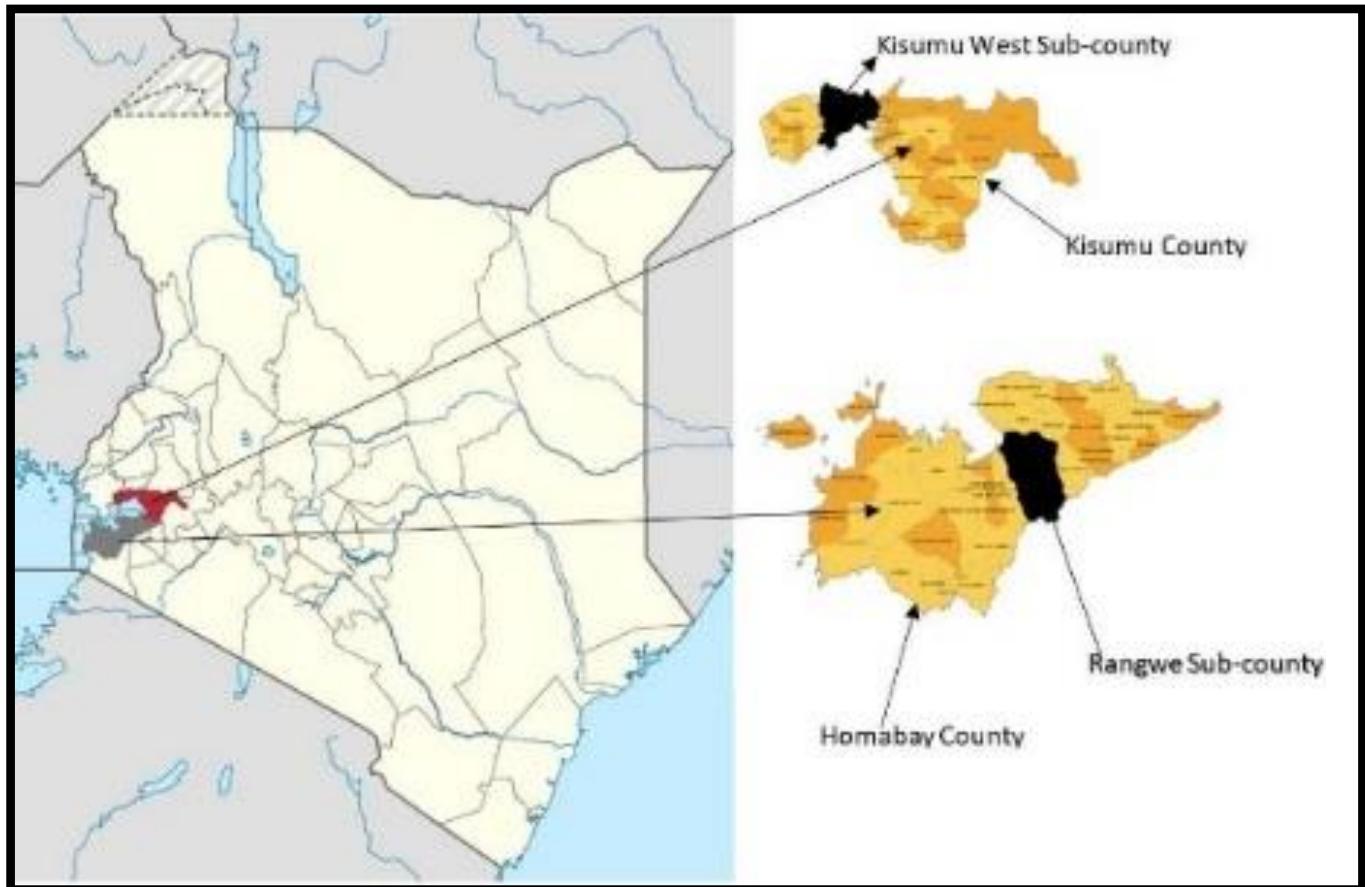
Forest

Un-inhabited places

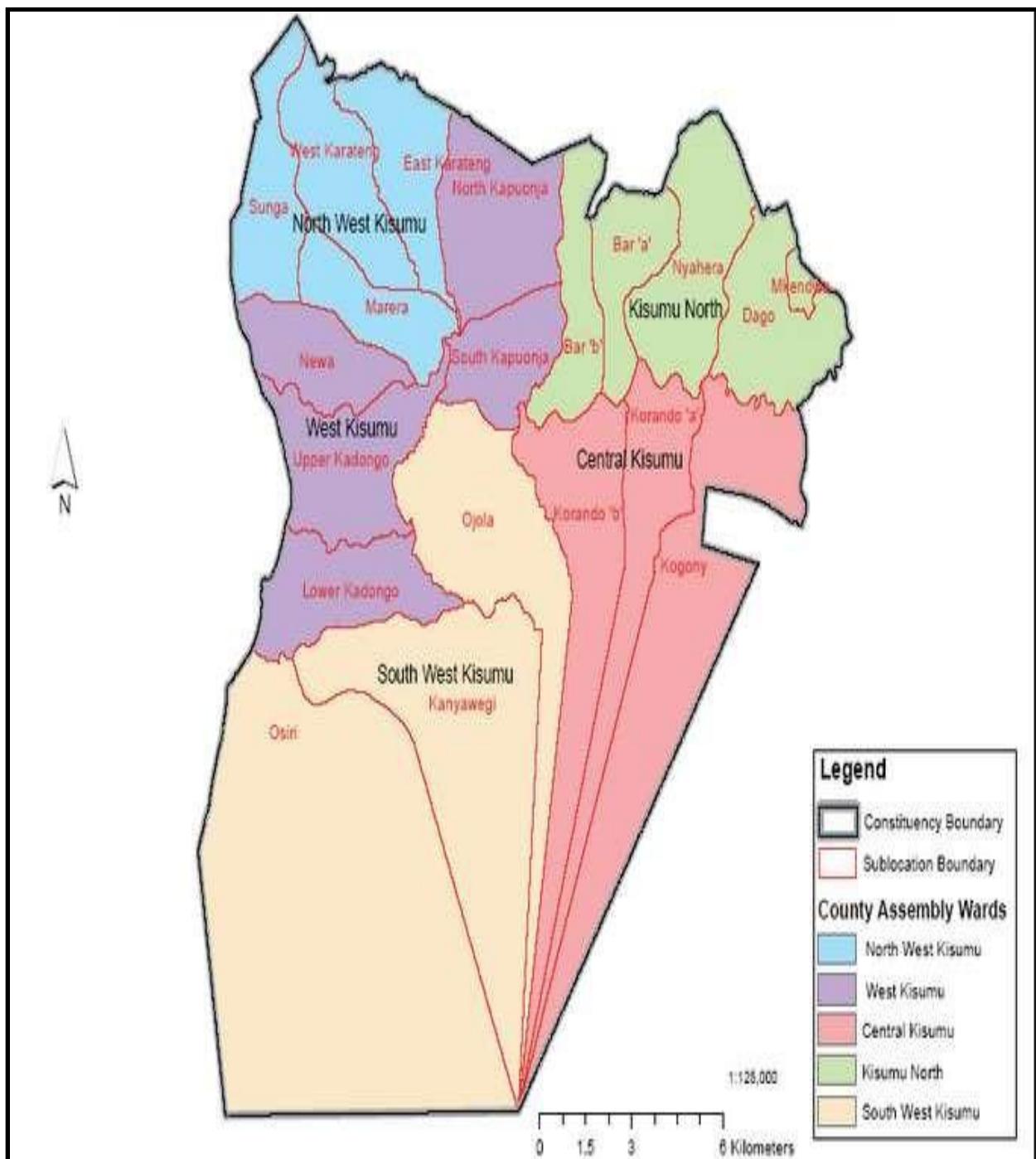
Hills/mountains

If others specify .....

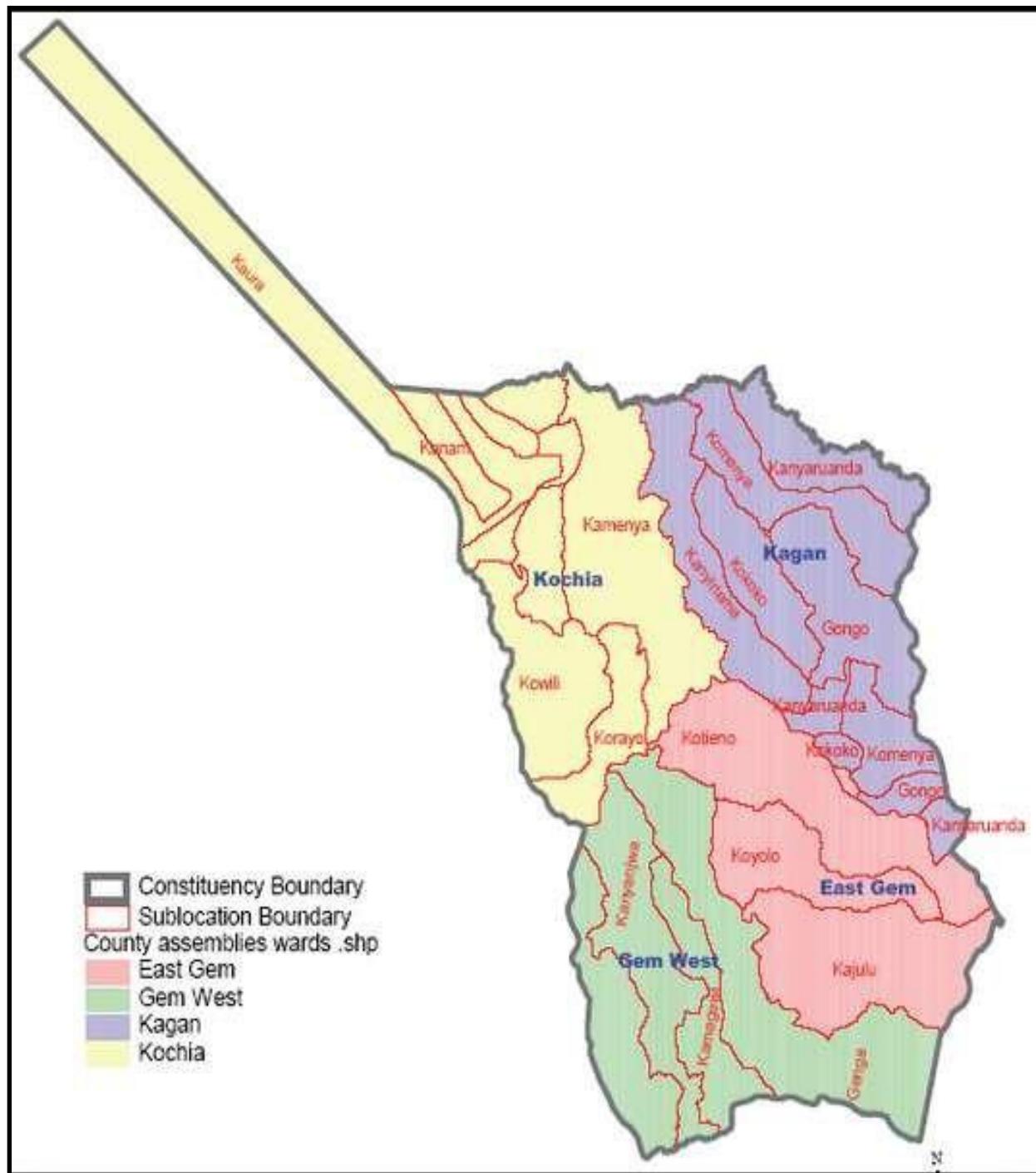
**Appendix VI: Map of Kenya with transposed Kisumu and Homabay counties**



## Appendix V: Map of the Kisumu West Sub-county



## Appendix VI: Map of the Rangwe sub-county



Source: IEBC

## **Appendix VII: Glossary of terms**

*Angich Welo* Twilight

*Chira*-A condition where one wastes away due to breaking of a taboo. If not addressed the Luo believed it could lead to death.

*Goyo Nyawawa*-clanging of metallic objects to chase away *Nyawawa*

*Jachien/jochiende (Pl)*-Evil spirits, demons

*Jobilo*-witches that use *ndagla/bilo*, charms of witchcraft, to kill people

*Jojuogi*-Witches. Wizards

*Jok/juogi*-Ancestral spirits, vital force in all being such as God, man animal, trees, rocks etc.

*Juogi*-Depending on context *Juogi* can mean benevolent family/clan spirits (children were named after them) or free malevolent spirits.

*Juok Nyakalondo*-Spirits that possess medicine women and enable them to practice healing.

*Juok lang'o*-Spirits that behave like the Maasai and Kalenjin neighbors of the Luo who had unique antics in war

*Juok mumbo*-Lake spirits

*Ker*- A sage from Luo community

*Kogwen*-dawn or before sunrise

*Kwere*-Ancestral spirits of the family/spirits of grandparents or great grand- parents.

*Limbo*- grave yard or burial site

*Nundu*-Small pox also used to mean *Nyawawa*

*Nyawawa*-Malevolent lake spirits which are believed to cause small pox and death

*Nyasaye* –Luo word for God, which means one who is beseeched

*Piny juok*-Land of the spirits/abode of spirits

*Tipo*-shadow/invisible part of man after death