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## **INVESTIGATING LUHYA NAMING RITUALS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH IN VIHIGA COUNTY, KENYA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

African Christianity remains sandwiched between the western-prejudiced Christianity and traditional positioned Christianity. Western Christianity condemns and opposes Christian involvement in African rituals in the rites of passage lead to syncretistic practices in the Church. These ritual practices particularly naming cannot be divorced from religious perspectives of the Luhya tribe of Kenya. The study investigated Luhya naming rituals and their implications on Christian worship on Christian worship in the Baptist Church in Vihiga County, Kenya. Descriptive research design was employed with qualitative approaches. Random sampling procedure was used to sample 183 Lay Christians while purposive sampling was applied to sample 16 Pastors and 22 Church Leaders making a total sample size of 221 respondents. The study was informed by animism and sociological theory that was pivotal in reviewing the literature and computation of data from Likert scale questionnaire and interview schedules. Qualitative data from respondents was thematically coded, cleaned, analysed, and tabulated into descriptive statistics, frequency tables, pie charts and bar graphs then documented. On naming of children, the study found that children were named after ancestors, dead relatives and Christian saints bringing in the concept of blending and inculcation of traditional Luhya practices with Christian values. The findings revealed that there were salient levels of inculcation of Luhya naming rituals and rites of passage into the Baptist Church liturgy. The study will help the Church leadership and scholars in reviewing Luhya naming rituals on Christian worship and incorporation of relevant practices in Christian worship.

**Keywords:** Animism, Christian teachings, Christian Theology, Christian worship, Inculcation, Naming rituals, Veneration of ancestors, Veneration of Saints

### **1. Background of the Study**

The practice of rituals creates conflicts to African Christians on whether to discern traditional birth and naming process or adopt missionary Christian approach. African Christianity was determined by two different traditions – Western tradition and local tradition that embed the people's cultural practices (Matobo *et al.*, 2000:105). Each of these two traditions possessed its own regard of religious practices and rituals. The former was embraced by white mainstream affiliated churches and (Baptist church) and Pentecostal churches, which subscribe on pure Christianity without any trait of African cultural influences. Naming of a child was an important occasion marked by many ceremonies in African communities. Asante & Mazama (2009) affirmed that naming was an important initiation function in the society and a continuation of practices presided by priests. In the Bible Mary and Zechariah sung songs in praise of God at the birth of Jesus Christ, they thanked him for his faithfulness to the people of Israel and the promise he made to Abraham (Luke. 1:55, 73). These songs significantly focused on salvation and restoration of mankind just as reckoned by Simon the priest on the meaning of the name Jesus "Lord was salvation for Israel" (Luke 2: 29-32). Simon affirmed that birth of children was a very important function for mankind, the lord as a fulfilment of his creation. The new-born child passed through purification rituals for protection against magic, sorcery, witchcraft, evil eye, disease and malicious spirits (Mbiti, 2015). In a Christian perspective naming through baptism and birth rites, infants and family members were anointed with oil and ghee to symbolise salvation from sin (Karibu, 2018). 1 Peter 3:21 recognizes baptism as an appeal to God for his conscience while acts 22:16 echoes that baptism was an act of washing away of sins and calling on the name of the Lord (White, 2000).

Among the Avalogoli the child's name was chosen by the father or mother in-law depending on the prevailing circumstances at birth, twins were called *Mukhwana* or *Mulongo*, the one that followed twins was named *Kisia*, on the road was *Wanjila* (Kayeli, 2012). Among Nusayris of Antakya of Japan, the names of religious figures and prophets were maintained in the course of nonsacred daily life. Among the Christian the sacrament of baptism was used during naming the new-born child in which water was used for purification and salvation of the child into the Christian community (Adamo, 2011). According to Cox & Haar (2003) names given to the African children during the traditional naming ceremony were unacceptable in the Christian books due to incompatibility with the Christian faith. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria twins and children of opposite sex were named on the 8<sup>th</sup> Day early in the morning for protection from the gowing ancestor. In Judaism the name of a person represented the society and their religion they belonged was given great importance and respect (Sahin, 2017). Under the law or Torah Jewish boys were named during a circumcision ceremony called after ancestor *Brit Milah* that meant an agreement God maintains for generations. In this community the child's name was determined by the grandfather who took part in the circumcision and bore the ritual expenses during the ceremony. In Spanish after a baby girl was born, she was named between 8 to 40 days in a ritual known as *Zeved HaBat* (vijola). The baby was dressed up nicely and a rabbi prayer calls her name holding it on his lap (Sahin, 2017). Due to their belief that people were addressed by their middle names on the Day of Judgment, Nusayris (Arab Alevis) of Hataya give children middle names. Christians name their children after grandmothers or grandfathers whose names are typically found in the Bible or Torah such as Kettur, Katerina, and Maria for girls (Sahin, 2017).

According to Maynard-Reid (2000) the issue of names raised the need for studying liturgies in scriptures and Christian history to discover essential elements to establish proper worship theology a gap the study intents to fill. Gehman (1989) pointed out that the Akamba of Kenya ushered in the naming of the child through prayers and libations by elders throwing pieces of ugali (simmer) on roofs to appease the ancestral spirits. The family elder wore the child a necklace made of a goat's skin or cloth with magical medicine (*Muthea*) to mark a ritual entry into the family. The elder carried the child announced the name, tossed the child up, spitted alligator pepper in its mouth for boldness and prevention from shameful acts in life (Nwandiokwu *et al*, 2016). Mbiti (1997) alludes to the fact that sacrifices and offering constituted a common act of worship among Africans. According to Akaranga (1986) anointing with chrism (Holly oil) or water was used during the naming of the new-born implying spreading goodness, holiness and forgiveness of sins for salvation. In Judaism names were quoted from the Holy Scripture, religious figures, saints and prophets (Sahin, 2017). The Church should rethink for a way of addressing the implicit faith African Christians.

The church in every sense should disseminate Gods love within the evaluation of the Africans. Nwandiokwu *et al* (2016) observed that the Luo of Kenya a child's name was sought when the child was crying hence the consent of the living dead are sought for the right name. At times the baby was named departed relatives it resembled preside by a priest (Acquah, 2011 & Akaranga, 1986). Among the Avalogoli during the naming ceremony the child was presented with gift from the maternal grandmother and women friends. The baby's head was shaved, the hair placed in a clay dish then kept in a secret spot for disposal at night. The mother's head was also shaved symbolizing the end of seclusion period and re-acceptance into the community (Akaranga, 1986). The child naming was accompanied with hand washing ceremony to cleanse the baby and the mother from misconduct toward her in-laws, a curved stick was dipped in cow ghee and smeared on the lips of the baby and the mother as a sign of blessing.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that Luhya Baptist church members profess their faith in Christ as the saviour, their worship practices remain influenced by traditional practices particularly naming rituals of new-born children. These ceremonies are accompanied with customs and rituals that tend to undermine Christian worship. The Luhya people give reverence to ancestors and God for their needs hence practice dual worship when naming their children. The church leadership seem to conform to both traditional Luhya naming practices and Christian naming. Rituals, particularly naming rites have profound religious and spiritual implications on the Christians community. African religious rituals particularly Luhya rituals enrich Christian worship; however naming rituals such as offerings, sacrifices to spirits, ancestors, libations and other practices seem to undermine Christian worship (Kayeli, 2012). This ritual practise undermine Christian faith and worship that emphasizes the centrality of Jesus (Bonsu, 2016; Nyahela,

2015). The integration of traditional rituals into Christian worship tends to lead to syncretism that causes opaqueness of the Christian faith. These cultural practices and rituals negatively affect the structure of worship in the Baptist church yet it remains to be addressed the gap in the study on Luhya naming rituals and their implications on Christian worship in the Baptist Church in Vihiga County, Kenya.

### **1.3 General Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study was to investigate Luhya naming rituals and their implications on Christian worship in the Baptist Church in Vihiga County, Kenya.

### **1.4 Justification of the Study**

Rites of passage and religious faith practiced through rituals punctuate all aspects of African religious life (Lugira, 2009). This made Africa a meeting place for fundamentally two different Christian traditions: Western prejudiced Christianity and African tradition-positioned Christianity (Matobo Makatsa & Obioha, 2009:105). Each of these two traditions possesses its own regard of African traditional religious practices and rituals that should be researched. The former has been taken up by white Mainstream churches (Baptist church) and Pentecostal churches, which subscribe to pure Christianity without any trait of African cultural influences. This group opposes and condemns the involvement of Christians on traditional rituals related to cult of ancestors, spirits rituals, and so on while the latter does not perceive any of the conflicts between Christian worship and African traditional rite of passage that entail naming rituals. This study takes the position that African religious rituals, particularly Luhya rituals on naming enrich Christian worship; however, there are other birth rituals such as sacrifices to spirits, ancestors, libations and other practices that undermine Christian worship particularly in the Baptist church the study investigated and tried to fill the study gap on the implications of Luhya naming rituals on Christian worship in the Baptist Church in Vihiga County of Kenya.

### **1.5 The Scope of the Study**

This study fill gaps on Luhya naming rituals and their implication on Christian worship in the Baptist Church in Vihiga County of Kenya.

### **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

The study was enucleated by animism theory of religion by Edward Burnett Taylor (1832-1917) and sociological theory of religion by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917).

#### **1.6.1 Animism Theory of Religion**

Animism theory of religion was advanced by Edward Burnett Taylor (1832-1917) who analysed religion as a belief in spirits, totems, fetishes and taboos that governed human spirituality. Taylor pointed out that religion originated when humans started to worship spirits, constructed cults in which they believed and practiced rituals centred on spirits as agents to the Supreme. From large-scale industrial societies to small-scale hunter-gatherer societies, these fundamental beliefs are shared by all major world religions. They hold that spiritual beings are an outgrowth of the human soul and are responsible for the existence and proper functioning of the human body, projecting their nature and causes as spiritual beings. He concentrated on the cultural postulation of cosmic personal powers through which humanity engaged with natural phenomena, anthropomorphic gods ruling the cosmos, and ethereal spirits without bodies. He hypothesized that spirits from the hereafter were waiting for the soul of a person. He posted that people have relationship with objects and environmental forces around them to which they bore reverence and worship. This brings about the doctrine that human beings have a soul which survives after death and the doctrine of spirits (Opoku-Boateng, 2010). These spirits are invisible beings that possess powers for good or evil, are grand and powerful, associated with physical features such as mountains, animals, rivers, wells, trees, springs and are personified with inanimate parts of nature significantly applied during worship (Harvey, 2005). Animism brings up the belief of spirits dwelling in rivers, lakes, rocks that take care of the mundane affairs of people. These supernatural mystical powers exercised through magic, witchcraft, sorcery, rainmaking, mediums, diviners, sorcerers, magicians and witches believed to influence the course of human life. It on this accord religious rites and rituals pertaining to Luhya naming were addressed in addition to their implications on Christian worship in the Baptist Church of Vihiga County.

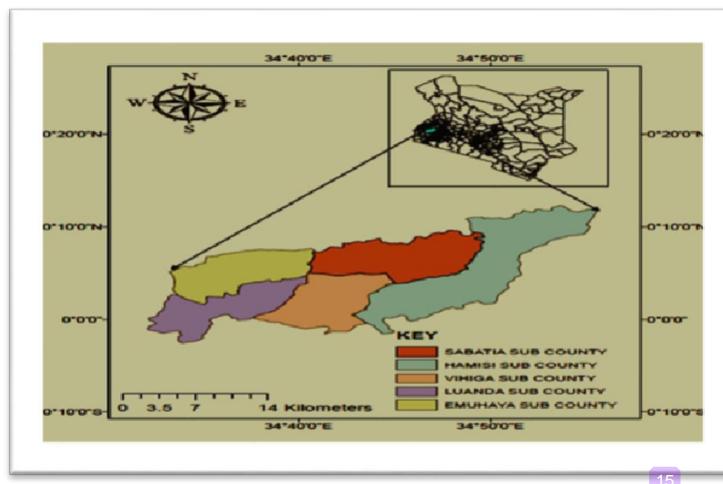
#### **1.6.2 Sociological Theory of Religion as per Emile Durkheim (1858-1917).**

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) viewed religion as Sacred and profane in which religion was a reflection of the concerns of the society. He propounded that the sacred (religion) reinforces group interests that very often clash with individual interests. The religious groups were linked with classical symbols like religious rites and rituals that express sacred and profane beliefs. Sacred things were symbols of society

or collective representation attached to Holiness whose prohibitions protect and separate human beings. He held that the central features of religion are the distinction between things understood as sacred and profane be they are moral (licit or illicit), spatial (holy or unholy), temporal (special or ordinary) functional (priestly or lay), relational (believer or unbeliever). The concept of the sacred and profane emphasizes the worship of God to be practiced more than the worship of society. Religion as a belief system and practice should be unified to cater for sacred things in society. The sacred and the profane are opposite to each other. He propounds that man has equal morale towards both society and God in which there is awakening of consciousness of divinity in the minds of its members. He advocated for moral authority for awakening selfless devotion and self-sacrifice in religious engagements. To him religion was a unified system of beliefs and practices that relate to the sacred based on the phenomenon of totemic ideals of the Aborigines. He propounded that each clan have different objects, plants or animals that were sacred symbolizing a simple form of religion which generated more complex religions in society. He argued that human sociality comprises symbols and rituals that express social dynamics that make human society. He believed that indigenous cultures were living laboratories of social and religious evolutions that religion emerges as a symbolic preservation of societal dynamics. Religion also provided opportunities for establishment of moral unity among social groups that include temples, churches and mosques where people worship and believe in God. The theory was instrumental in reviewing literature, analysing data and documentation of the report on the implication of naming rituals on Christian a worship in the Baptist Church in Vihiga County of Kenya. Criticism of the sociological theory of religion is its rudimentary application, use of statistics and questionnaire provenience for field data upon which he withdraws the ideals of religion. His theoretic approach that society is autonomous from human occupants, over-emphasizing on social order, and detriment of social dynamism and transformation of religion marks the limitations of the theory.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1



**Figure 1 Location of Vihiga County (Vihiga County KNBS, 2019)**

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study employed descriptive research that allowed the researcher to collect and analyse non-numerical data in order to understand concepts, opinions and experiences of the respondents on Luhya naming rituals on Christian worship and consequently facilitated in-depth data to give insight on the study problem and generate new ideas for research (Bhandari, 2020). It further gave room to thematically analyse and describe the causes of recourse to Luhya naming rituals and their implications to Christian worship in the Baptist church.

### **3.3. Target Population**

The study population comprised 2288 members of Baptist Church in Vihiga County. The population data of the members was derived from 22 Baptist churches spread across the Vihiga County through the Kisumu Regional Baptist office. Baptist churches were sparsely located in Vihiga with a massive Christian religious denomination. The coverage of these churches was to come up with an equal representative sample for the study on the implications of Luhya naming rituals on Christian worship in the Baptist Church for objectivity and generalization of the findings (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The target population was Pastors, Lay Christians and Church Leaders as summarized in table 1 below.

**Table 1 Summary of Target Population of Baptist Churches in Vihiga County**

<b>Category/Name Church</b>	<b>of Target Population</b>	<b>Lay Christians</b>	<b>Pastors</b>	<b>Church Leaders</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Mbale Baptist Church	200	188	2	10	8.7
Gemende Baptist Church	50	38	2	10	2.1
Kapsotic Baptist Church	75	63	2	10	3.2
Chavakali Baptist Church	250	235	2	10	10.9
Fundumi Baptist Church	60	48	2	10	2.6
Soliani Baptist Church	100	88	2	10	4.3
Hamisi Baptist Church	180	168	2	10	8.8
Jeprok Baptist Church	120	108	2	10	5.4
Maganyi Baptist Church	65	53	2	10	2.8
Demesi Baptist Church	55	43	2	10	2.4
Jepkoyai Baptist Church	120	108	2	10	5.4
Grace Baptist Church	130	118	2	10	5.6
Luanda Baptist Church	110	98	2	10	4.8
Mahanga Baptist Church	35	23	2	10	1.5
Simbi Baptist Church	58	45	2	10	2.5
Magui Baptist Church	40	28	2	10	1.7
Light house Baptist Church	380	368	2	10	16.6
Faith Baptist Church	120	108	2	10	5.4
Maseno Baptist Church	55	43	2	10	2.4
Illungu Baptist Church	35	23	2	10	1.5
Tambua Baptist Church	50	35	2	10	2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2288</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Researcher, 2020**

## **2.4 Sampling Methods**

The study used random and purposive sampling techniques to sample the respondents. Simple random sampling was applied to sample the Laity while purposive sampling technique was sampled pastors and Church Leaders as theological experts governing the church and the Christian faith. The strategy was applied to ensure appropriate of all clusters for the study (Oso & Onen, 2005).

## **2.5 Sample Size**

The determination of the sample size was guided by Mugenda (2009) who explained that a sample size of 10% was suitable for a population exceeding 1000; whereas a sample size of 30% was suitable for a population of less than 1,000. However, for a population of 100 and below the researcher should take 100%. Thus the study adopted the sample of 10% for Lay Christians. This category was sampled as key informants particularly on collection of data on the implication of Luhya naming rituals on Christian worship in the Baptist of Vihiga County, Kenya. These participants were sampled from the 21 Baptist churches in the five sub counties comprising Luanda, Hamisi, Sabatia, Vihiga and Emuhaya of Vihiga as shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2 Sample Size**

Target group	Target Population	Sampling procedure	Sample size	%
Pastors	42	Purposive	16	6.7
Church Leaders	220	Purposive	22	9.2
Lay Christians	2026	Random Sampling	202	84.1
Total	2288	Stratified Sampling	240	100

**Source:** Researcher (2020)

The sample size of 240 was deemed suitable for the study, which was in accordance with Devi (2017) who asserted that a good sample must be representative of the entire population. The sample size for the unit of analysis for the questionnaire was 202 Lay Christians, while a total sample the other 38 participants comprised 16 pastors and 22 Church leaders for the interview schedules.

## **2.6 Data Collection Instruments**

The choice of data collection instruments was informed by Kumar (2014) and Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) who stated that qualitative studies employed mainly questionnaires and interview schedules for data collection. While Cohen *et al* (2007) maintained that the use of more than one instrument avoids bias, as it helped to cross-check the authenticity of data gathered and maximizes the validity and reliability of the study. In support to these researchers, the study used two data collection tools: the questionnaire and interview schedule.

### **2.7.1 Validity of Research Instruments**

The study questionnaire and interview schedule questions were subjected to validation process to determine their ability to measure the content of the data on the implications of Luhya birth naming rituals on Christian worship in the Baptist church. They were to measure what they were required to quantify in the study objectives (Kothari, 2009). In the validation process, copies of the study questionnaire were given to experts in the field of religion with further verification by departmental supervisors who helped correct the errors.

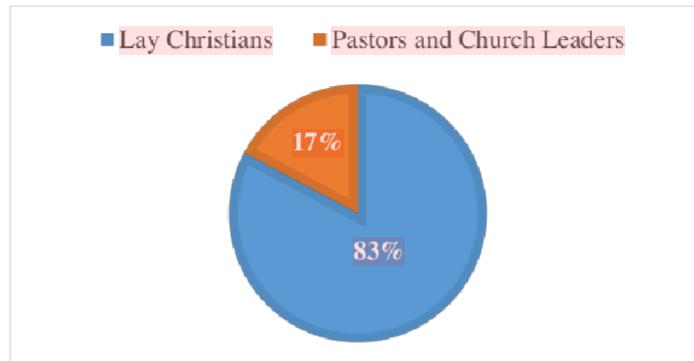
### **3.7.2 Reliability of Research Instruments**

Reliability was meant to measure the degree to which the data collection instruments under the same conditions produced dependable outcomes after repeated trials on the same study variables (Heale & Twycross, 2015). In this study the reliability of the items was carried out using Cronbach's alpha to test for the validity of instruments on the Luhya naming rituals and their implications on Christian worship in the Baptist church. Kline (1999), noted that a standard value for Cronbach's alpha was between 0.7 and 0.9. In this case Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.980 indicated there was a high level of internal consistency for the research instruments.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Socio-Demographic Data of Participants**

Figure 2 socio-demographic data comprised Lay Christian, Pastors and Church Leaders from the Baptist Church discussed below:

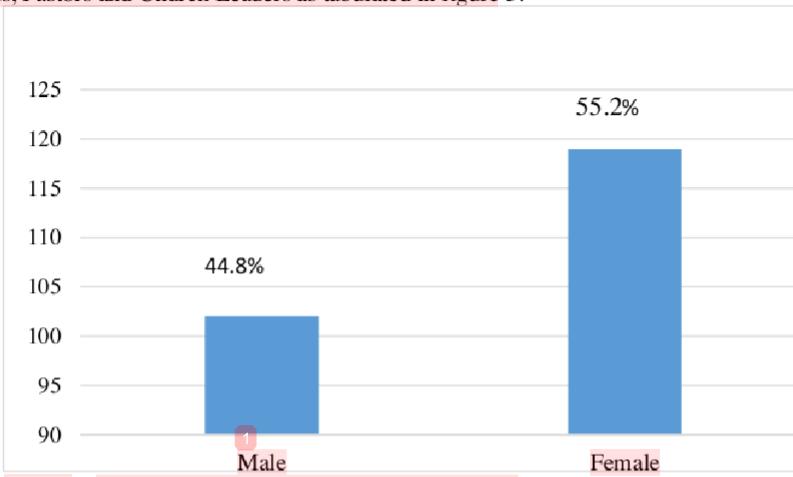


**Figure 2 Socio-demographic Data of Participants (Field Data, 2023)**

The research instruments were particularly the Likert Scale questionnaire was issued to 202 Laity and interviews schedules to 38 Pastors and Church Leaders collectively. The response rate for the questionnaires was 183 out of 202 (90.5%) Lay Christians completed and returned the questionnaires for analysis and documentation in the report. All the 38 Pastors and Church Leaders cumulatively responded to the interview schedules resulting to 38 out of 38 (100%) success rates. These show the participants were willingness and committed in contributing to the study. Moreover 100% participation rate for the pastors and church leaders on interviews highlights their interest and cooperation in sharing their expertise that influenced the validity and reliability of the study findings. The total participants were 221 (183 Lay Christians and 38 Pastors and Church Leaders) computed as 92.1% forms the recommended percentage for the study. It's on this total of (221) participant the findings were tabulated. These show a balanced distribution and return of data instruments for analysis and documentation. The sample was in tandem with Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) who affirmed that sample of 80% was appropriate and recommended for analysing data for valid findings.

### 3.2 Gender of Participants

The section discusses the analysis on socio-demographic data of participants who comprised Lay Christians, Pastors and Church Leaders as tabulated in figure 3.

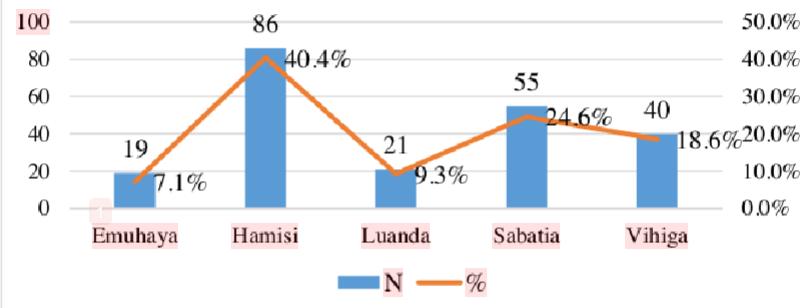


**Figure 3 Gender of Participants (Field Data, 2023)**

The research results presented above show the distribution of participants based on gender. The study comprised a total of 221 participants (183 Laity and 38 Pastors and Church Leaders) in which, 102 (44.8%) were female. On the other hand, 119 (55.2%) participants were male, making up of the total sample. These findings indicated a relatively balanced representation of gender with a slightly higher percentage of male compared to female participants. Kurgat (2009) denotes that the church as a business family of men, women and the youth are the backbone of the Christian faith.

### 3.3 Distribution of Participants per Sub County

Figure 4 presents the data on how the performance and return of the research instruments were filled and returned for analysis and documentation from the five Sub counties of Vihiga County namely Emuhaya, Hamisi, Luanda, Sabatia and Vihiga. The tabulations and discussions are illustrated below:



**Figure 4 Distributions of Participants per Sub-County (Field Data, 2023)**

The research findings revealed that the distribution of participants from various sub-counties of Vihiga County. The study a total sample size of 221 participants comprised the Laity, Pastors and Church Leaders from Baptist churches in Vihiga County was well distributed to balance the findings of the study. The results demonstrated that the number and percentage of participants from each sub-county. Hamisi had the highest representation accounting for 86 out of 221 (40.4%) of the total sample. Sabatia accounted for 55 (24.6%) of participants, while Vihiga constituted 40 out of 221 (18.6%), Luanda had 21 out of 221 (9.3%) then Emuhaya had 19 out of 221 (7.1%) respectively. These findings revealed that Hamisi, Sabatia and Vihiga have many Baptist Churches with larger congregations compared to Emuhaya and Luanda with the least participants tabulated in the five sub-counties of Vihiga County. The results show that most Baptist churches in Tiriki were planted and nurtured by European missionaries in Hamisi.

### 3.4 Sub Clan of Participants

Table 3 presents the analysis and frequencies of Abanyole, Avalogoli, Tiriki and other sub-clans who took part in the study as discussed below:

**Table 3 Participants Sub clan**

Sub Clan	Frequencies	Percentages
Abanyole	26	13.1%
Avalogoli	72	32.8%
Tiriki	98	42.6%
Others	25	11.5%
Vihiga County	221	100.0%

**Source: Field Data, 2023**

The research findings in table 3 illustrated above, show the distribution of participants among different sub-clans within Vihiga County. The study shows 98 out of 221 (42.6%) of the total sample were from the Tiriki Sub clan, Avalogoli recorded 72 out of 221 (32.8%) of the participation, Abanyole constituted 26 out of 221 (13.1%) involvement in data collection while 25 out of 221 (11.5 %.) stood for other sub clan who attend the Baptist Churches and involved in data collection for the study. The results significantly show that most Baptist churches were planted among the Tiriki and Avalogoli with a small number among Abanyole of Luanda and Emuhaya of Vihiga County. Despite the uneven distribution; all churches were given equal chances and opportunity to respond to the research instrument for tabulation of the study findings. 11.5% standing for other sub-clans represent Luhya from other sub-clans with congregation in the Baptist churches in Vihiga County. The category was selected on the merit that they were experienced in the liturgical worship. This resonates with Farhadian (2007) who observed that the hierarchy of the church leadership bears a lot of significance to the organisation of Christian worship.

### 3.5 Participants Age Group

Table 4 presents the analysis and frequencies of the age groups of the respondents on naming rituals on Christian worship in the Baptist church as illustrated below.

**Table 4 Participants Age Group**

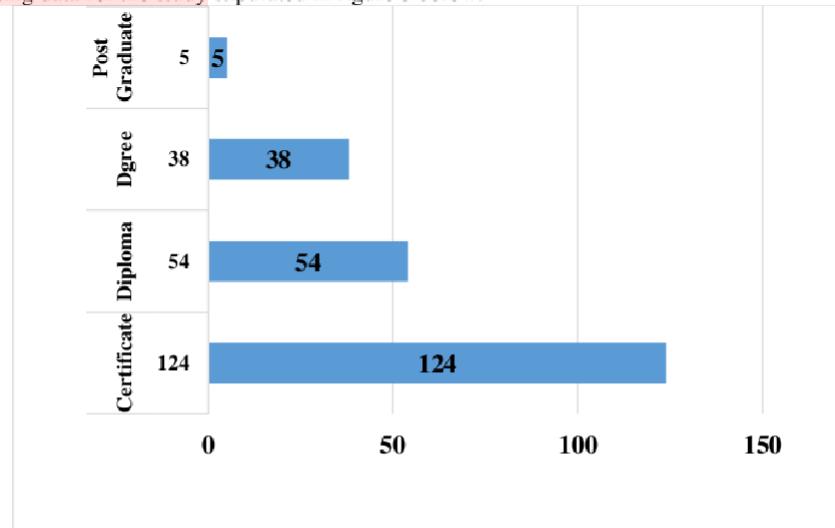
Age Group	Frequencies	Percentages
20_29 Years	15	5.6%
30_39 Years	40	16.4%
40_49 Years	67	31.1%
Above 50 Years	99	47.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Data, 2023**

The research findings depicted the distribution of participants across different age groups. The study encompassed a total of 221 participants; the results indicate the number and percentage of participants in each age group. The highest representation of participants were above 50 years that accounted for 99 out of 221 (47.0%) of the total sample. The category was selected on the basis that they have a massive experience in relation to the search topic particularly birth and naming rituals. The age group of 40-49 years had 67 out of 221 (31.1%) participants was also a prime age for the study since they are a productive age hence provided the most current experiences both in the church and Luhya practices on birth and naming rituals as well as their implications on Christian worship in the Baptist church. Participants in the age groups of 30-39 years constituted 40 out of 221 (16.4%) while 20-29 years had 15 out of 221 (5.6%) of the sample that for the young people encounter challenges in conforming to the church doctrines or Luhya traditional practices hence instrumental in this study. The findings show that a larger percentage of the participants were aged between 50 -30 years.

### 3.6 Participants Educational Background

The section presents the results of the educational background of the participants who were involved in collecting data for the study stipulated in figure 5 below:



**Figure 5 Participants Educational Background (Field Data, 2023)**

The research findings in figure 5 show the distribution of participants based on their educational background. The study included a total of 221 participants, and the results indicated the number and percentage of participants in each educational category. Among the participants, the highest proportion had a certificate level of education accounting for 124 out of 221 (56.1%) of the total sample, those

with diploma were 54 out of 221 (24.4%). Participants with a degree constituted 38 out of 221 (12.7%), while those with a post graduate degree were 5 out of 221 out of 221 (2.3%). These findings indicate that the selected Laity and clergy had the requisite theological and cultural knowledge to interpret the constructs in the research instruments. Kurgat (2009) affirms that local priests as leaders in the local parishes have the responsibility of keeping order and values of the Christian faith.

### 3.7 Participants Marital Status

The frequencies on marital status of participants particularly areas of divorce, married, separated, single, widow or widower as presented in table 5 as indicated and discussed below

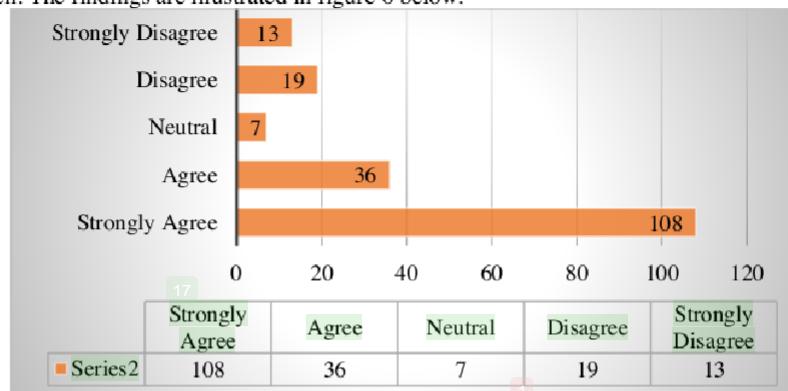
**Table 5 Participants Marital Status**

Marital Status	Frequencies	Percentages
Divorced	11	6.0%
Married	114	51.4%
Separated	18	6.6%
Single	33	15.3%
Widow/Widower	45	20.8%
Total	221	100.0%

**Source: Field Data, 2023**  
In table 5 the research findings present the distribution of participants based on their marital status. The study involved a total of 221 participants as displayed in frequencies and percentage of participants in the marital status category. Among the participants, the largest group were married representing 114 out of 221 (51.4%), widows/widowers, accounted for 45 out of 221 (20.8%) participants. Single individuals were 33 out of 221 (15.3%) of the sample, while separated participants constituted 18 out of 221 (6.6%) of the study sample. The divorced accounted for 11 out of 221 (6.0%) of the participants. These findings show that all categories of Christians in the Baptist church congregation were involved in data collection. This in tandem with Njoku (2016) who observed that the clergy and the concentrated men and women should work towards understanding the Christian belief system.

### 3.9 Naming Rituals

The researcher wanted to establish on whether Baptist church members participate in naming rituals of children. The findings are illustrated in figure 6 below:

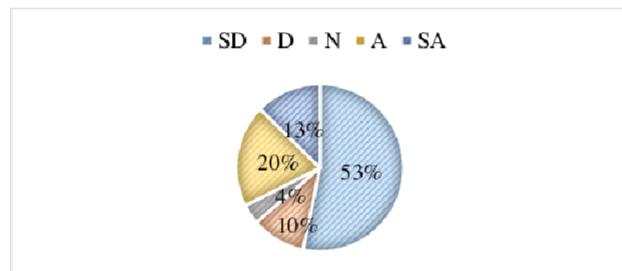


**Figure 6. Participation in Luhya Naming Rituals (Field Data, 2023)**

The research findings in figure 6 indicate that the majority of participants, representing 118 out of 183 (64.5%), strongly agreed that Christian participated in performing naming rituals of passage and rituals of their children at home. In contrast, 37 out of 183 (20.2%) of the laity agreed, 15 out of 183 (8.2%) were neutral, 7 out of 183 (3.8%) disagreed while 6 out of 183 (3.3%) strongly disagreed that they take part in naming rituals. A study Kanu (2019) depicts that the oldest family member has the responsibility of presiding over the naming ceremony.

### 3.10 Community Elders Naming New-born Children

Figure 7 presents data generated on the functions of community elders in naming new-born children as illustrated below.



**Figure 7 Community Elders Naming New-born Children (Field Data, 2023)**

The research wanted to establish on who names the new-born in accordance to the Abaluyia traditions. The research findings in figure 7 indicate that 98 out of 183 (53%) of the Laity strongly disagreed, 19 out of 183 (10%) disagreed, 7 out of 183 (4%) were neutral 36 out of 183 (20%) agreed while 23 out of 183 (13%) strongly agreed that naming of new-born children was performed traditionally by elderly persons in accordance to Abaluyia traditions and customs. Cumulatively, 65 out of 183 (52%) of the Laity were neutral, agreed and strongly agreed that the naming was traditionally performed giving a significant prominence that Laity in the Baptist Church practice both Christian doctrines and their Abaluyia traditions during naming ceremonies.. It signifies the importance of considering individual beliefs and practices when examining the naming rituals within in the Baptist church and their implications on Christian worship. Some African communities customarily incorporate God's name. The names become life-long testimonies of particular concepts of expressing Gods wisdom (Mbiti, 1999).

### 3.11 The Church Celebration of Luhya Naming Rituals

The study sought to find out whether Church members celebrate naming ceremonies of new-borns. The results are presented in table 6

**Table 6 Church Celebration of Luhya Naming Ceremonies**

Naming Rituals	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Church members take part in naming ritual.	102	55.7%	34	18.6%	8	4.4%	23	12.6%	16	8.7%
Church embrace Luhya naming rituals	130	71%	20	10.9%	5	2.7%	21	11.5%	7	3.8%
Naming ceremonies are celebrated in the church	117	63.9%	26	14.2%	8	4.4%	19	10.4%	12	6.6%

**Source:** Field Data, 2023

The findings in table 6 above show 102 out of 183 (55.7%) strongly agreed, 34 out of 183 (18.6%) agreed, 8 out of 183 (4.4%) were neutral, 23 out of 183 (12.6%) disagreed, and 16 out of 183 (8.7%) strongly disagreed Church members take part celebrating naming ceremonies of new-borns. The research result indicates that the majority of the Laity 136 (74.3%) strongly agreed and agreed that church members take part in the naming ritual ceremonies.

1 The study sought to establish whether Baptist church members embrace Luhya naming practices. The results in table 4.6 indicate that a significant majority of the participants' church members 130 (71%) strongly disagree that they embrace Luhya cultural practices on naming. Furthermore, 21 (11.5%) of the church members disagree, 21 (11.9%) are neutral, 20 (10.9%) agree, and only a small percentage 7 (3.8%) strongly agree with the statement. Christian folk (Leviticus 12:1-8 and Luke 2:22-24) followed by naming the child. Giving a child a meaningful name in Africa requires accepting that the child has a personal dignity right from the moment of conception that needs to be respected and protected.

The study investigated on whether naming rituals are celebrated in the Baptist church. The research result in table 6 indicates that a majority of the Laity 117 out of 183 (63.9%) strongly disagree that birth and naming rites ceremonies are celebrated by members of their church. Furthermore, 19 out of 183 (10.4%) of the Laity disagree, 8 out of 183 (4.4%) are neutral, 26 out of 183 (14.2%) agree, and 12 out of 183 (6.6%) strongly agree with the statement. These findings significant revealed that a portion of the Laity do not acknowledge the celebration of birth and naming rites celebrated in the church. It implies that there might be variations in practices or beliefs regarding the celebration of these ceremonies among the church members (Kanu, 2019).

The findings on whether Church members celebrate naming ceremonies of new-borns the Pastors and Church Leaders responded as follows 24 out of 38 Pastors and Leaders said "Yes" while 14 out of 38 said No that the Church members take part in celebrating naming ceremonies of new-borns. 24 Pastors and church leaders gave a clear standing of the Christians in the Baptist church that they practice Luhya traditional practices a long-side Christian teachings and worship. A Church leader from Hamisi reiterated that naming rituals were culturally acceptable hence didn't interfere with the church worship since they entail godly virtues.

### **3.12 Naming After Ancestors and Saints**

The researcher asked the Laity on whether children were given Luhya ancestral names. The findings are presented in Table 7 below:

**Table 7 Naming after Saints and Ancestors**

Saints and ancestral names	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Luhya ancestral names	9	4.9%	32	17.6%	7	3.8%	18	9.8%	116	63.4%
Saints names	6	3.3%	38	20.8%	12	6.6%	21	11.4%	105	57.4%
Christian and Luhya names	27	14.8%	22	12.0%	6	3.3%	14	7.7%	113	61.7%

### **Field Data, 2023**

The researcher sought to find out on whether children are given Luhya ancestral names. Table 7 show 116 out of 183 (63.4%) strongly disagreed that new-born children in their church are given Luhya ancestral names. Additionally, 18 (9.8%) disagreed, 7 (3.8%) were neutral, 32 (17.6%) agreed, and 9 (4.9%) strongly agreed with the statement. These findings reveal that there was a significant portion of the church members who didn't give new-born children Luhya ancestral names. According to Igwebuike the naming of a child was symbolic for it incorporated the child into the family or community. The diviners consulted to know the personality ancestor who has returned and then name the child or not (Kanu, 2019).

The study sought to investigate on whether new-born children are named after saints. According to the findings in table 7 the total Laity 105 (57.4%) strongly agreed that new-born children in their church are named after saints, 21(11.4%) agreed, 12 (6.6%) were neutral, 38 (20.8%) agreed, and 6 (3.3%) strongly agreed with the statement. These findings suggest that a majority of the church members name their new-born children after saints with a few disagreeing. This indicates a diversity of perspectives

and practices within the church regarding the naming of new-born children after saints. Adamo (2011) reiterates that each and every person has to reach the spirit world of ancestors, to be venerated by one's descendants as an ancestor and eventually be reincarnated. He sees the ancestors as people who have made it to the spirit land hence should be venerated by their descendants. The ancestors are not worshipped, but highly respected as family members, they are next to the divinities hence mediate people with God. On types of names the child is given 4 out of 38 said traditional Luhya names, 9 out of 38 and 25 out of 38 chose both Christian and Luhya traditional name. The result significantly reveals that Christians in the Baptist name their new born child both Luhya and Christian names. The naming of Christian and traditional names explains the tribe and clan the baby was born.

The study sought to find out whether children are given both Christian and Luhya names during baptism. The table 7 presents the responses to the question regarding the practice of giving children both Christian and Luhya names during baptism in the church. Out of the total Laity 113 (61.7%) strongly agreed that children in their church are given both Christian and Luhya names during baptism. Additionally, 22 (12.0%) agreed, 6 (3.3%) were neutral, 14 (7.7%) disagreed, and 14 (14.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. These findings indicate that 135 (73.7%) of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that church members practice giving children both Christian and Luhya names during baptism. However, there are individuals who hold different views, with a portion disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that children are given both types of names during baptism. The findings from Pastors and Church Leaders show 4 out of 38, traditional Luhya names 9 out of 38 and 25 out of 38 choose both Christian and Luhya traditional name. The result significantly revealed that Christians in the Baptist name their new born child both Luhya and Christian names. A church leader from Luanda Church reiterated that:

*In my church children are named after seasons, time, place, situation at birth, names of places born during rainy seasons are called rein, Olwanda (rock), Wanjila (roadside), Night. Both Christian names and surnames are given by parents and not the church (Field data, 2023).*

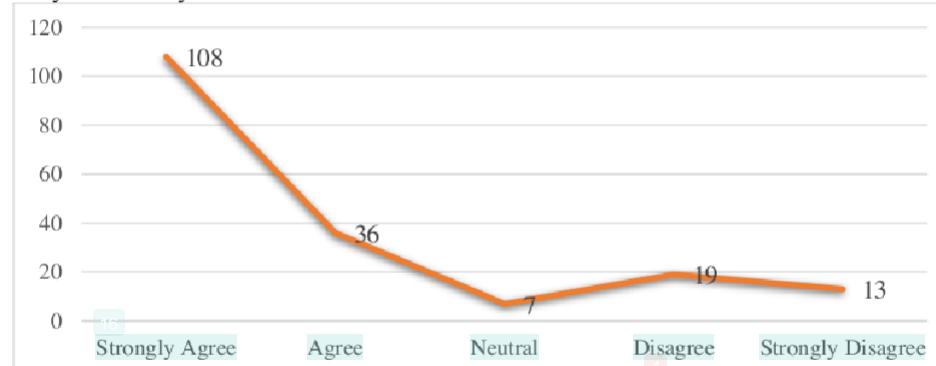
Another church leader from Sabatia reiterated that the difference in names is that Christian names were from the Bible and are given as first names while Luhya names have ancestral background and are given as surnames for family lineage. A pastor from Luanda Church said:

*Christian names are important binding symbol in the child's faith in Jesus Christ and God the Almighty. It bears a lot of significance in relation to the spiritual growth and character of the child (Field data, 2023).*

Certain names were avoided depending on the character of the person the child was being named after. According Mbiti (2015) African names have a religious meaning, in Nigeria names like Babatunde meant father returns and was given to the boy child while a girl child was named Yetunde meaning mother returns. These names were a remembrance and restoration of the ancestors.

### 3.13 Luhya Traditional Naming Practices

Figure 8 below discuss the constructs Luhya Traditional Naming Practices by the elderly people in the Luhya community.



**Figure 8 Luhya Traditional Naming Practices by the Elderly (Field Data, 2023)**

The study sought to find out on whether the elderly persons performed the actual naming of children in accordance to Abaluyia traditions and customs. The figure 8 presents the responses to the question regarding the naming of new-born children being performed by elderly persons in accordance with Abaluyia traditions and customs. Out of the total Laity, 108 out of 183 (59%) strongly agreed that the naming of new-born children was performed by elderly persons in accordance to Abaluyia traditions and customs. 36 out of 183 (19.7%) agreed, 7 out of 183 (3.8%) were neutral, 19 out of 183 (10.4%) disagreed, and 13 out of 183 (7.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The majority of participants either agreed or strongly agreed 144 (73.3%) that the elderly persons named children in families. The study shows that the practice of having elderly persons perform the naming is widely followed or recognized in their community. Among the Bukusu of the Luhya community the head of the family perform rites of naming the child (Marjie-Okyere, 2015).

#### 4.3.5 Place of Naming Children

The study investigated on whether the naming of children takes place at home or in church. The findings are discussed in Table 8 below:

**Table 8. Place of Naming Children**

Naming Children	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Naming children at home	34	18.6%	18	9.8%	16	8.7%	28	15.3%	86	47.0%
Naming children in the church.	21	11.5%	25	13.7%	16	8.7%	5	2.7%	114	62.3%

**Source: Field Data, 2023**

On naming ceremony performed at home, table 8 above show 34 out of 183 (18.6%) of the Laity strongly agreed and 106 out of 183 (57.9%) agreed that naming ceremonies taking place at home while 16 out of 183 (8.7%) were neutral, 8 out of 183 (4.4%) disagreed, and 18 out of 183 (9.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. These findings indicate that there is a lack of consistency on Christian naming ceremonies in the Baptist Church. The findings show that holding Christian naming ceremonies at home may vary within the community, with some church members observing naming at the same time practicing Christian naming practices in the Baptist Church. Ntombano (2015) alludes to the fact that Mission Churches freely express their Africanises their Church.

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Luhya naming rituals were noted to be a common practice performed by Christians during worship. The study clearly show children were named after their ancestors, saint, situations at birth and environmental conditions. Naming of children remain a theologically challenge due to blending Luhya and Christian naming in the Baptist church. Veneration of saints and ancestral spirits remain a conflicting practice between Christians and the secular world. Christians participated in libation practices during naming children. These calls for further exploration to understand cultural dynamics and traditions related to Luhya naming and Christian teachings on worship. The study recommended for blending Luhya with Christianity names to enrich the Baptist church liturgy. Ceremonies attached to naming of children should be accepted and blended to enrich the community and the church.

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PAGE 11

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PAGE 12

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PAGE 13

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PAGE 14

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