

FIELD WORK REPORT

A Comprehensive overview of field activities and learning

Location: Magu district, kisesa ward (Sukuma Tribe)

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Institution /Organization: Open university of Tanzania

1. Introduction

The purpose of this fieldwork was to document and analyze traditional cultural practices of the Sukuma tribe in Kisesa Ward, Mwanza Region. This 30-day field research project aimed at profiling key aspects such as leadership structures, festivals, dances, stories, rituals, and other cultural activities. The focus was to gain firsthand knowledge through interviews, observations, recordings, and discussions with the local community, particularly elders and cultural leaders.

2. Daily Activity Report (Diary)

Week 1 (8th May – 14th May)

Day 1 (8th May): Arrival in Kisesa Ward, orientation, and meeting with local leaders for permission and planning.

Day 2: Conducted interviews with village elders and traditional leaders regarding the clan system and roles.

Day 3: Participated in observation of a local evening storytelling session – recorded one folklore story.

Day 4: Attended community meeting about cultural values; discussed marriage customs.

Day 5: Observed local food preparation traditions and medicinal herbs.

Day 6: Recorded traditional Sukuma drumming session and interviewed dancers.

Day 7: Rest and organization of field notes and audio files.

Week 2 (15th May – 21st May)

Day 8: Observed a local fishing ceremony; noted spiritual aspects involved.

Day 9: Interviewed traditional healer on local healing practices.

Day 10: Documented local dances performed by youth and women's groups.

Day 11: Discussed initiation rites and roles of elders in maintaining culture.

Day 12: Visited household elders and documented wedding songs.

Day 13: Recorded a village folktale from a respected elder.

Day 14: Day off due to heavy rain; reviewed notes and reorganized interviews.

Week 3 (22nd May – 28th May)

Day 15: Participated in traditional farming ceremony – symbolic planting observed.

Day 16: Conducted interviews with youth on modern vs. traditional values.

Day 17: Visited local shrine and documented cultural taboos.

Day 18: Recorded a Sukuma cultural dance session with local dance team.

Day 19: Attended elder women's storytelling group session.

Day 20: Organized video footage and audio files.

Day 21: Attended minor festival involving drumming and prayer to ancestors.

Week 4 (29th May – 4th June)

Day 22: Interviewed local leader on intermarriage and its impact on culture.

Day 23: Documented traditional musical instruments and their use.

Day 24: Participated in evening song practice with traditional musicians.

Day 25: Focused on funeral customs and ancestral respect rites.

Day 26: Recorded community member telling a historical migration story.

Day 27: Organized cultural material for report writing.

Day 28: Day off; minor health check and rest.

Week 5 (5th June – 8th June)

Day 29: Final group discussion with cultural stakeholders and leaders.

Day 30 (8th June): Departure and farewell to the community.

3. Supervisor's Brief Report

Supervisor Name: Kabula Kazimoto Malale

Title: Cultural Officer

The fieldwork gave the student practical experience in community engagement, cultural data collection, and ethical research practices. Skills gained include:

Effective communication and interviewing.

Accurate note-taking and documentation.

Use of audio and video equipment for cultural documentation.

Cultural sensitivity and respect.

Basic data analysis and organization of information.

The student showed good initiative in approaching leaders, adapting to local customs, and managing time in challenging rural settings.

4. Recording and Notes

All interviews were recorded using mobile audio recorders and transcribed into field notebooks. Cultural dances and stories were filmed with prior consent. Data is organized under categories such as:

Leadership and governance

Festivals and rituals

Music and dance

Oral stories

Traditional medicine

Backups were saved on a secure hard drive and cloud storage for analysis and archiving.

5. Suggestions for Future Improvement

To enhance the effectiveness of similar fieldwork:

Extend Duration: One month is not enough to explore all cultural areas in-depth.

Improve Scheduling: Proper field schedule adherence by students and community support staff is essential.

Provide Equipment: High-quality recording and storage equipment should be provided.

Research Support: Trained guides and translators can help in areas with language barriers.

Pre-field Training: More training before deployment on data collection tools and ethics would be useful.

Transport and Mobility: Provide better transport to reach distant locations

6. Challenges Faced

Limited Time: Cultural events did not align with our timeframe.

Budget Constraints: Low funding affected logistics and ability to hire assistants.

Management Oversight: Some scheduled interviews were delayed due to lack of follow-up.

Community Skepticism: Some elders were initially hesitant to share stories due to trust issues.

Environmental Conditions: Rains and power outages disrupted some activities

7. Lessons Learned

Cultural sensitivity is essential: Respecting local customs and etiquette leads to better cooperation.

Oral traditions are rich but fragile: Without documentation, much of this knowledge may disappear.

Building trust takes time: Meaningful data comes only after forming good relationships with locals.

Flexibility is key in fieldwork: Weather, cultural schedules, and other events may cause changes to plans.

Community ownership matters: When local people feel involved, they are more open and helpful.

8. Conclusion

This 30-day research fieldwork provided significant insight into the traditional cultural heritage of the Sukuma tribe. The field study successfully documented various aspects of Sukuma customs, rituals, stories, and dances, with strong participation from the community. The student acquired practical research skills while contributing to the preservation of intangible cultural

heritage. However, limitations in time, funding, and tools highlight the need for better planning and support in future undertakings.

9. Recommendations

Increase funding support to facilitate better equipment and extended field periods.

Ensure close supervision and accountability during fieldwork to encourage consistency.

Establish cultural hubs in wards like Kisesa to preserve stories, dances, and rituals through regular practice.

Conduct follow-up projects to build on the data already collected and expand into nearby communities.

Train more local youth in digital recording and cultural documentation.