
ABSTRACT

Although it can be argued that much of the cultural values and social meanings of the rites of passage have drastically changed and are no longer relevant due to influences of modernity and technology that has reduced the world into a small global village, rural communities such as the Abagusii still mark the transition of the young from childhood to adulthood through rites of passage. This article attempts to show that, through these rites an individual earns his/her social identity and a sense of belonging to one’s ethnic community. The social identity qualifies the individual not only to assume his/her adult roles in the community, but, more importantly, it enables him/her to engage in inter-ethnic and inter-racial interaction in what has now become a global village. The success or failure of this interaction does depend largely upon the kind of instructions the individual receives during the performance of these rites. Since the majority of those now interacting in the small global village grew up in the rural social environment that gave them the social identity with which they interact in a global environment, it is important that the content of these rites of passage be understood in order to appreciate their impact upon the individual’s behaviour in the global environment.