

## FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE PERFORMANCE OF MUSIC STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

Joyce M. Mochere

P.O.BOX 7307 - 00300 Nairobi, Kenya

---

**ABSTRACT:** *In teaching music, the teachers ought to strive to transform the students in terms of the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains. Therefore, the teacher's task is to create or influence desirable changes in behavior or tendencies towards behavior in his or her student. This paper is an exploration into the factors that contribute to the performance of music students in secondary schools. Focus is on Nairobi County which was the study area. The study used a descriptive approach. The target population constituted teachers and students teaching and learning music respectively. Purposive sampling was used to select 23 schools that offer music and 23 music teachers who teach music in Nairobi County. Music students were selected using simple random sampling. A total number of 180 out of 360 form three music students and 23 teachers participated in the study. Data was collected using questionnaires, classroom observation schedule and focus group discussions. For validity in data analysis, triangulation was used in data collection and presentation. Data was coded considering the interrelatedness of responses. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in tabular form containing the number of responses per item (frequency) and the percentage of each response via graphs.*

**KEYWORDS:** Student Performance, Secondary Schools, Music Curriculum, Teachers.

---

### INTRODUCTION

Students play a crucial role in the successful implementation of the music curriculum. Adedeji, (2011) contends that students are limited in the areas of composition as they are obliged to compose in specific styles of western music. This implies that they cannot freely express their own experiences as reflected in the changing trends of the music world. Ongati (2011) adds that, at KCSE level learners are supposed to either perform a traditional dance, folksong or play an instrument. Yet the students are not taught techniques of manipulating the instrument to achieve some level of adeptness and virtuosity in the performance of the instrument. This beats the intentionality of playing an instrument which is to accompany an African song on the instrument. The education system in Kenya is dominated by exam-oriented teaching where passing an examination is the only benchmark of performance (Digolo, 1997). In practice, teachers tend to disregard aspects that are not examined despite their importance for learners' holistic development. This kind of approach disadvantages learners in that they do not fully comprehend the pertinent concepts of music. Nacino-Brown, Oke & Brown (1982) define teaching as an attempt to help someone acquire or change: some skill, attitude, knowledge, ideal or appreciation. Thus performance in school is as a result of how well these skills, attitudes, knowledge and appreciation are imparted into the students.

Monte (2009) investigated how resourceful the secondary music teacher is in instructional delivery in central province of Kenya. Findings of the study revealed that resources were inadequately used, shortage of teachers and instructional methods employed by music teachers were 'irrelevant' for resourceful instruction in music. In similar vein Nambafu

(2011) investigated the impact of instructional materials on performance in music in secondary schools in Bungoma County, and found out that inadequate resources and professional issues were causes of poor performance in music. The current study found out pedagogical issues experienced by music teachers in the music curriculum implementation that result in consistently below average examination performances at KCSE level.

Mushira (2000) investigated factors affecting the teaching of indigenous Kenyan music in Nairobi secondary schools. The findings of the study showed, among others, that inadequate time is allocated for the teaching of Kenyan indigenous music and that teaching and learning activities are predominantly theoretical hence experiential learning found to be lacking. Mushira's study was predominantly on indigenous Kenyan music in Nairobi secondary schools while this study focused on the teaching of music as a whole. Andang'o (2000) investigated on voice tuition in regard to students' learning experiences, expectations and performance at Kenyatta University. The conclusion made was that there is some apathy towards voice due to lack of exposure and guidance. The implication of the given study is that voice tuition which is part of unit 3 in the secondary school music curriculum syllabus (2002) is not given due attention and this is translated to higher levels of music education. Mbeche's (2000) study on factors affecting music performance of aural skills at KCSE in Nairobi secondary schools reveals that lack of proper teacher training acted as an impediment to effective teaching of aurals. In his study on the relationship between attitudes toward music and achievement among standard seven pupils in Kanduyi Division, Bungoma District, Wanjala (1991) concluded that pupils' most prevalent positive attitudes were centered on the teachers' methodology adopted in music teaching while pupils' most prevalent negative attitudes touched on the teacher's self concept as well as his/her attitude toward the pupils, ability to play music instruments also seemed to be an issue that created negative attitude basically because of lack of adequate exposure. Wanjala (ibid) recommended further research to establish the existence of other variables that seemed to contribute to the achievement in music in addition to attitude. It is in this breath the current study sought to determine the music teaching strategies adopted by secondary music teachers and their contribution to achievement.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study employed a descriptive survey design to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. The study was carried out in Nairobi County with a target population being all music teachers and students in form three in both public and private schools offering music within the 8-4-4 system of education in Nairobi County. According to the Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QUASO) Nairobi County, there were a total of 213 secondary schools in Nairobi County out of which 24 were teaching music as per the time of this study. To obtain the accessible number of students, simple random sampling was done. The method of proportional allocation was used to decide what number of students was to be selected from each school and was to be represented in the sample in proportion to their numbers in the population itself. According to Gray (1992), a large sample minimizes the sampling error although a minimum sample of 20% is adequate for educational research. Consequently, 180 students were adequate since they formed 50% of 380 which is more than the minimum number.

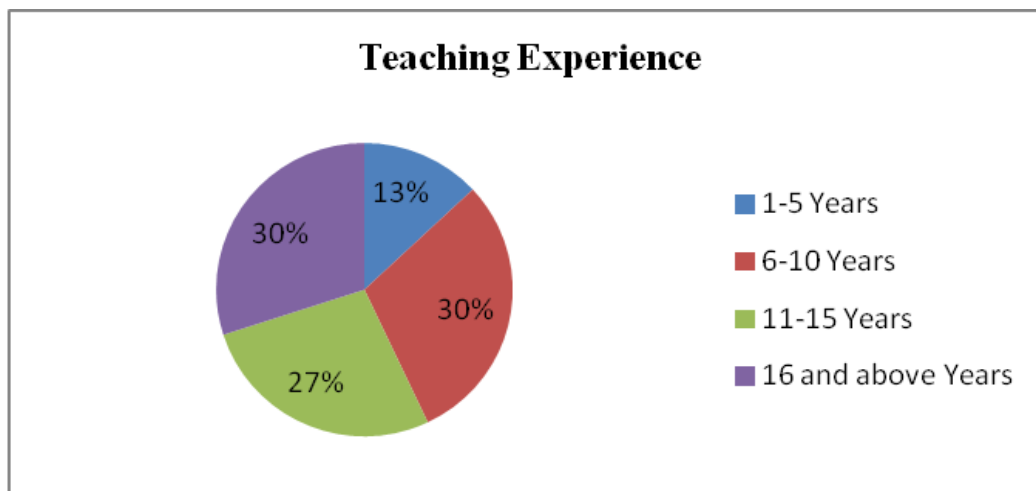
Nairobi County had a total of 213 secondary schools. Out of these schools, 24 schools which included district, provincial, private and national schools were offering music under the 8-4-4 system of education in Nairobi County. Since the music schools were few, the study selected the 24 schools which was a 100% of the sample. However, one school was set apart for pilot study leaving a total of 23 schools. In each of the 23 schools, there was one music teacher hence a total of 23 teachers was picked for the study. There were a total of 380 form three music students in Nairobi County out of which 180 (50%) music students were selected for the study; hence the total sample size of the teachers and students was 203. The study used questionnaire, classroom observation and focus group discussion for data collection.

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which include measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion and measures of association. Qualitative data on the other hand, obtained from open-ended questions and interview schedule were analyzed by employing system

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Teaching Experience of Respondents

Figure1 represents the teaching experience of form three music teachers. This could be one of the factors attributed to high performance of the students as the higher the level of teacher experience the more the ability to provide satisfactory content to the students while the reverse is true.



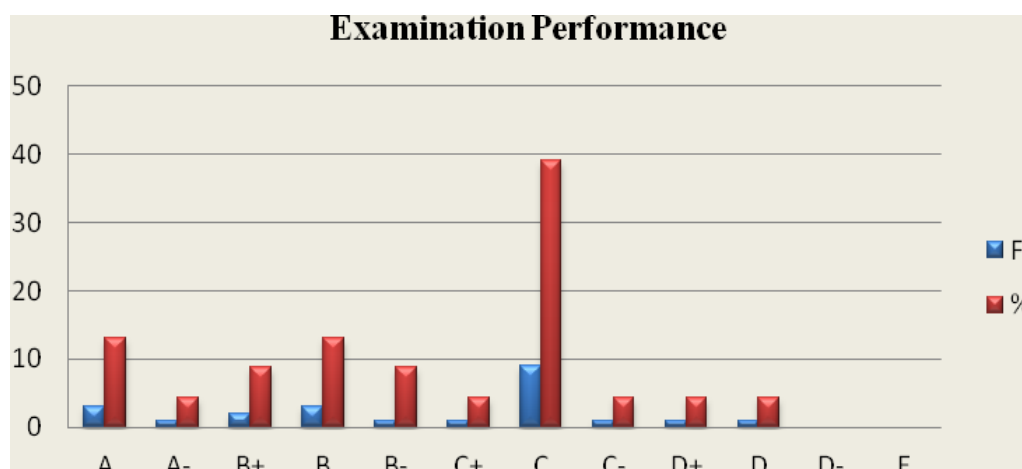
**Figure 1: Teaching Experience of Form Three Music Teachers**

Most of the teachers had over 16 years of experience in teaching as recorded by 30% and a similar percentage for between 6-10 years of experience. A minimal number represented 13% of the teachers had 1-5 years teaching experience. The large numbers of experienced teachers an indication of a likelihood of better student performance in Music.

### Performance of Form Three students in Music over the Last Three Years (2010-2012)

To determine the performance of form three music students in end-term examinations for the last three years, teachers were requested to avail a record from the examination departments

on the mean scores for form three in music end term examination for the last three years. The findings were as follows:



**Figure 2: Performance of Form Three Students in Music for Three Years (2010-2012)**  
*Source: Schools' examination departments*

Figure 2 reflects the form three students' performance in music for the last three years in Nairobi County. It is clear as recorded that a big number of schools attained below grade C+ 12(52.1%) while 11(47.8%) attained C+ and above. The mean grade for the 23 schools was a C+ (7.6). It can be concluded that the mean score was above average. Although the mean score was above average, individual grades reflect that more than a half of the schools scored grade C and below. This indicated that music was performed dismally at school level and this could be what was extended to the national examinations in KCSE. ). These findings are in line with the previous observations from KNEC report (2011) on KCSE music performance which identified poor teaching methods as a reason for poor performance in music.

A students' questionnaire was used to triangulate the teachers' questionnaire and the focus group discussion. It was geared toward investigating the contributing factors toward music students' performance in examinations. Questions were asked in regard to the teaching-learning issues faced by students that would contribute to their performance and proficiency in music and these included: learners' entry behavior, introduction of the music subject in form one, music skills development (reading skills, practical skills, history and analysis, project), types of resources used in teaching music, teaching strategies, music activities in the classroom, evaluation of music units in a term, challenging music concepts, reasons why music concepts are challenging and strategies to overcome the challenges.

### **Learners' Entry Behavior**

The question was intended to find out whether the students had been exposed to music as a subject in primary school. Majority of the music students 76.9% indicated that they had not been exposed to music at all while 24.1% had been taught some basics of music.

Those who had been exposed to music mainly came from private schools. Reimer (1989) says that each of the learners brings along to school a set of capacities, experiences, interests, beliefs and dispositions not exactly like anyone else's, so that everything the curriculum

presents and everything the teacher does is processed somewhat differently by every learner. Effective instruction attempts to maximize the learning experience of every pupil by providing necessary group learning and fine-tuning by individual attention. The results elicited confirmed that form three music students had individual challenges in music learning that affected their musicianship.

### Introduction of Music subject in Form One

In this question the students were required to state in which week they started learning music in form one. A number of students (87 %) responded that they started in week six of the term (i.e. week two after reporting to school) while (13%) responded they started in week seven (i.e. week three after reporting to school). This implies that the music teachers have a back log of approximately five to six weeks to cover the music syllabus which is already 'too wide'. Coupled with this is the students' poor background of music as some have not been taught music in primary school. This is as a result of the Koech report which advocated for the non-examination of music in primary school although it was to remain a teaching subject. However, primary teachers did not find it necessary to teach music as a subject as they concentrated on examinable subjects. Music in primary school, therefore, has mainly been considered for co-curricular activities and singing during pastoral programs (Shitandi, 2005).

### Music Skills Development

The study sought to investigate the extent to which the music skills in each unit were developed. The music students were asked to indicate how frequently the given topics were taught and obtained the following results in table 1.

**Table 1: Music Skills Development- Basic skills/Reading skills**

Music Skills	Never		Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Rhythmic dictation in simple time	10	5.6	120	66.7	20	11.1	30	16.7
Rhythmic dictation in compound time	15	8.3	115	63.9	25	13.9	25	13.9
Melodic dictation in minor keys	45	25	90	50	11	35	19.4	5.6
Writing intervals, hearing, describing the harmonic intervals	14	7.8	66	36.7	50	27.8	50	27.8
Use of the technical names of the scale	0	0	15	8.3	20	11.1	145	80.6
Description of chords in major and minor keys (I, II, IV, V, VI)	2	1.1	20	11.1	30	16.7	128	71.1
Naming and describing cadences as perfect, imperfect, plagal, interrupted	5	2.8	39	21.7	46	25.6	90	50
Composition of melodies by continuing a given melody up to 16 bars	0	0	46	25.6	54	30	80	44.4
Composition of a melody to given words	105	58.3	50	27.8	10	5.6	15	8.3
Transposition of a melody to	10	5.5	65	36.1	35	19.4	70	38.9

different keys using different clefs								
Ornaments	75	41.7	50	27.8	55	30.6	20	11.1
Modulation	25	8.7	87	48.3	34	18.9	58	32.2
Interpretation of musical terms and signs	0	0	37	20.6	68	37.8	75	41.7

In the above table (1), it is evident that in developing basic skills/reading skills most students 120(66.7%) were rarely taught rhythmic dictation in simple time; 115(63.9%) were rarely taught rhythmic dictation in compound time; 50(50%) were rarely taught melodic dictation in minor keys; 66(36.7%) were frequently taught intervals, hearing and describing harmonic intervals; 145(80.6%) were frequently taught technical names of the scale; 128(71.1%) were frequently taught description of chords in major and minor keys; 90(50%) frequently taught naming and describing cadences; 80(44.4%) were frequently taught composition of a melody by continuing a given melody up to 16 bars; 105(58.3%) were never taught composition of a melody to given words; 70(38.9%) were frequently taught transposition of a melody to different keys using different clefs while 65(30.6%) were rarely taught; 75(41.7%) were never taught ornaments while 55(26.1%) were occasionally taught and 50(27.8%) were rarely taught; 87(48.3%) were rarely taught modulation while 58(32.2%) were taught frequently; 75(41.1%) were frequently taught interpretation of musical terms and signs while 68(37.8%) were occasionally taught. It can therefore, be concluded that while some form three students received frequent tuition in certain concepts some were rarely taught or not taught at all. Development skills that stand out as receiving the least attention include rhythmic dictation in simple and compound time, melodic dictation in minor keys, modulation and transposition of a melody to different keys. The result also shows that a high percentage of students were never taught composition of a melody to given words and ornaments. This finding concurs with the teachers' response in terms of the concepts that were given the least attention or no attention at all.

**Table 2: Music Skills Development - Practical skills**

Music Skills	Never		Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Sing/play major and minor scales	0	0	49	27.2	69	38.3	62	34.4
Sing/play arpeggios both major and minor scales	0	0	70	38.9	74	41.1	36	20
Sight singing/playing at sight	0	0	60	33.3	45	25	75	41.7
Performing African folksongs and dances	0	0	125	69.4	27	15	28	15.6
Performing African instruments	45	25	135	75	0	0	0	0
Singing/playing Western set pieces	0	0	35	19.5	65	36.1	80	44.4

In relation to practical skills, as shown in table 2 above, majority of students 80(44%) were frequently taught singing or playing western set pieces while 65(36.1%) were occasionally taught; 75(41.7%) were frequently taught sight singing or playing at sight while 60(33.3%) were rarely taught ; 74(41.1%) were frequently taught singing and playing arpeggios in both major and minor scales while 70(38.9%) were rarely taught; 62(34.4%) were frequently taught singing or playing minor scales while 69(38.3%) were occasionally taught and

49(27.2%) were rarely taught; 135(75%) were rarely taught to perform on African instruments; 125(69.4%) were rarely taught to perform African folksongs and dances. It can be observed that, although practical skills were taught to some extent, performing African instruments and African folk songs and dances was given the least attention followed by singing and playing arpeggios both major and minor, sight singing and playing at sight and singing and playing major and minor scales. The observation was in tandem with the teachers' response in regard to performance of African music, instruments, singing and playing arpeggios both major and minor except for the rest.

**Table 3: Music Skills Development - History and Analysis**

Music Skills	Never		Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Listening to African recorded music	70	38.8	46	25.6	45	25	19	10.5
Observation of live African performance	69	38.3	60	33.3	35	19.4	16	8.9
Observation of live Western performance	100	55.6	40	22.2	15	8.3	25	15.6
Listening to western recorded music	0	0	42	23.3	95	52.8	43	23.9
Score reading of Western music- techniques of following a score	70	38.8	30	16.7	55	30.6	25	15.6
Writing music in open/closed score	0	0	43	23.9	100	55.6	37	20.6
Memory skills- to identify repeated sections	75	41.7	39	21.6	50	27.8	16	8.9

Table 3 above reveals findings on the development of history and analysis skills. In regard to history and analysis skills, most students 100(55.6%) were occasionally taught writing music in open and closed score; 95(52.8%) were occasionally involved in listening to western recorded music while 43(23.9%) were frequently involved; 100(55.6%) students were never exposed to live western music performance while 40(22.2%) were rarely exposed; 75(41.7%) were never taught memory skills while 50(27.8%) were frequently taught; 70(38.8%) indicated that they were never engaged in listening to recorded African music while 46(25.6%) were rarely engaged; 70(38.8%) were never taught score reading of western music while 55(30.6%) were occasionally taught; 69(38.3%) were never exposed to live African music while 60(33.3%) were rarely exposed. The findings reveal that quite a number of form three music students were never taught music analysis skills e.g. live Western music performance, memory skills, listening to recorded African music, score reading of western music, observation of live African music and score of Western music. This is in contrast with the teachers' response which revealed that only history and analysis, live Western music performance and memory skills were least attended to.

**Table 4: Music Development Skills- Project**

Music Skills	Never		Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Listening to various kinds of music	0	0	32	17.8	112	62.2	36	20
Composition of topical songs	150	83.3	30	16.7	0	0	0	0
Sight singing music from different genres (African and Western)	0	0	23.3	21.7	98	54.4	40	22.2
Performing African traditional dances	90	50	50	27.8	30	16.7	10	5.6
Analysis of different genres of music (African and Western)	100	55.6	30	16.7	15	8.3	15	8.3
Preservation/maintenance of traditional African instruments	160	88.9	20	11.1	0	0	0	0

Table 4 indicates the frequency at which project skills were developed in the music class. A great number of students 112(62.2%) indicated that they were occasionally facilitated in listening to various kinds of music; 98(54.4%) were occasionally engaged in sight singing music from different genres (African and Western) while 40(22.2%) were frequently engaged; 160(88.9%) were never engaged in preservation of traditional African instruments; 150(83.3%) were never engaged in composition of topical songs; 100(55.6%) were never taught analysis of different genres of music (African and Western); 90(50%) were never engaged in performing African traditional dances while 50(27.8%) were rarely engaged. The results reveal that generally projects were not taken seriously because a high percentage of students were never engaged in it. This is in agreement with the teachers' response that projects were hardly considered.

### Types of Resources Used in Teaching Music

The item sought to find out how often the given resources were utilized in the classroom. The findings are illustrated in table 5 below:

**Table: 5 Types of Resources Used in Teaching Music**

Materials	Never		Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I. Print Materials								
Scores/Song sheets	95	52.8	30	16.7	30	16.7	25	13.9
Textbooks	0	0	5	2.8	50	27.8	125	69.4
Music extracts	15	8.3	58	32.2	67	37.2	40	22.2
Internet	146	81.1	14	7.8	20	11.1	0	0
Music dictionaries	3	1.7	55	30.6	52	28.9	70	38.9
II. Non-projected materials								
Live performances	115	63.9	45	25	20	11.1	0	0
Resource persons	72	40	10	5.6	68	37.8	30	16.7
Music centers	100	55.5	35	19.4	25	13.9	20	11.1

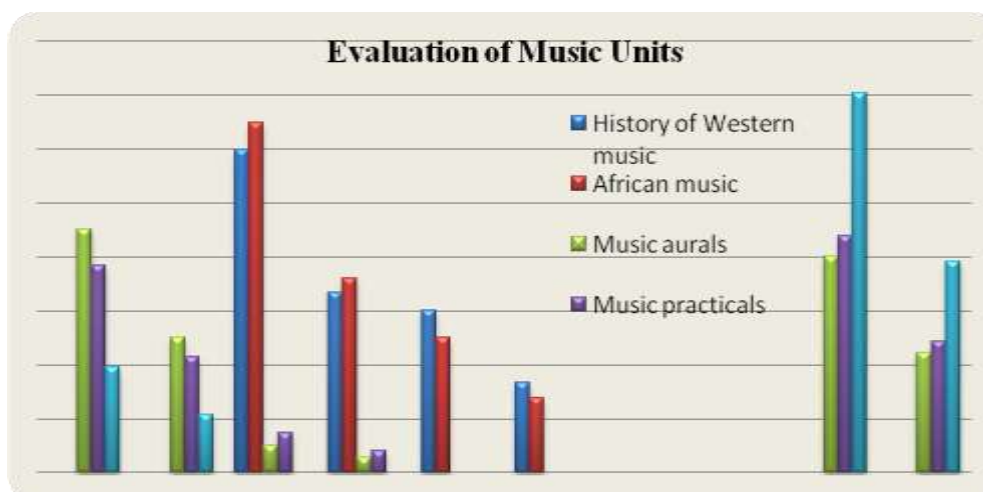


Recording studios	155	86.1	25	13.1	0	0	0	0
Kenya music festivals	0	0	20	11.1	30	16.7	130	72.2
Bands	100	55.5	0	0	30	16.7	50	27.8
African music instruments	81	45	40	22.2	24	13.3	35	19.4
Western music instruments	47	26.1	100	55.5	60	33.3	87	48.3
Flash cards	177	98.3	3	1.7	0	0	0	0
Cassette/CD/DVD recording	0	0	16	8.9	85	47.2	79	43.9
Radio cassette/Computer	21	11.7	36	20	95	52.8	28	15.6
Diagrams/charts	0	0	70	38.9	80	44.4	30	16.7
Pictures/photographs	13	7.2	116	64.4	51	28.3	0	0
Costumes and décor	0	0	22	12.2	83	46.1	75	41.7

As reflected in the result, non-projected materials like music centers, recording studios, bands, African music instruments, flash cards, pictures/photographs and costumes and décor were in most cases rarely or never used. A large percentage of print material like scores/song sheets, music extracts and internet and music dictionaries was hardly utilized. This is in agreement with the teachers' response.

### The Frequency of Evaluating Given Music Units in a Term

The question was geared towards establishing how often the given music units were tested in a term. Evaluations enable music teachers to understand music students' work hence diagnosing their needs. As a result, music teachers make more informed decisions about the most suitable help needed by the students. Figure 3 reflects the findings:



**Figure 3: Frequency of Evaluating Music Units**

Results as reflected in figure 3 show that majority of form three music students 130(72.2%) indicated African music was mainly assessed twice in a term while 50(27.8%) indicated it was assessed thrice; as for history of Western music and analysis, 120( 66.7% ) indicated it was assessed twice while 60(33.3%) indicated it was assessed thrice; some students indicated that there were units that were assessed once or not at all in a term and these included: music aurals which 90(50%) students indicated was assessed once a term while 80(44.4%) indicated it was not assessed at all; music practical, which 77(42.8%) students indicated was it was assessed once a term while 88(48.9%) indicated it was not assessed at all; 39(21.7%)

students indicated that music projects were assessed once a term while 141(78.3%) indicated they were not assessed at all. As revealed in the findings, a number of form three students were assessed in music aurals and practicals others indicating they were not exposed to adequate testing. On the other hand projects were never assessed. This was a replica of the teachers' responses. Student performance is therefore likely to be affected by this element considering that exposure to tests and evaluation improves students' perception.

Teachers must provide students with feedback about their work, thereby helping judge their own progress. If feedback is infrequent or unclear, students have no way of knowing whether they have met or exceeded teachers or their own expectations. Elliot (1995) opines that because musicianship is a multifaceted, progressive and situated form of knowledge, music educators require a multidimensional, progressive and situated approach to assessment and evaluation. Assessment of the student's progress is key in music instruction. Assessment should always be used to determine where the student should go from a given point and should not be used as a static evaluation. Progress in academic world is said to have taken place when someone understands, comprehends or has a better mastery of a subject. A teacher notes progress when a student can solve a new problem, sing better in tune or answer questions orally. Academic behaviors are easily assessed or measured because these behaviors can be observed and counted. Teachers engaged in practical music should actually assess skill development continuously. Progress is often measured with a test.

Madsen and Kuhn (1978) however, have a conflicting view that students can perform poorly because of nervousness and anxiety or appear to perform better on exams, especially objective ones, with less knowledge of the subject. This suggests that assessment instruments are often fallible and incomplete indicators of progress. Assessment or learning must be carefully structured otherwise a report card showing a grade rose from a D to a C might be misleading for a parent to think that the child progressed when in reality the child may not have learned much or even progressed but just got a C.

Nevertheless, without subsequent progress monitoring, goals will be difficult to achieve. Walker (1998) contends that far too often, worthwhile and well thought out objectives fail because no monitoring process was used and that a means of progress needs to be established. He suggests that for the general music classroom teacher, written tests, music achievement tests and close observation are useful tools in monitoring progress.

Elliott (ibid) distinguishes evaluation and assessment and concludes that the latter is crucial in achieving the aims of music education. According to Elliott (ibid), the assessment of student achievement gathers information that can benefit students directly in the form of constructive feedback according to their growing musicianship. It also provides useful data to teachers, parents and the surrounding educational community. Evaluation, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with grading, ranking and other summary procedures for purposes of student promotion and curriculum evaluation. Elliott (ibid) continues to explain that assessment of musical achievement can be communicated via coaching, cueing, correcting, advising, discussing, modeling, approving, disapproving and encouraging.

Borich (2011) points out ways of assessing the lesson outcome. Assessment activities can include scored interviews, objective and essay questions, graded homework, classroom performances and student work samples. However these more formal evaluative tasks could be counterproductive to learning if required at earlier stages, when the instructional goal is to

get learners to respond for the first time without limiting discovery, exploration and risk taking; all important ingredients to meaningful learning.

Abeles *et al.* (1995) advocate for portfolios as alternative modes of assessment. Portfolios are collections of a student's work. In some cases portfolios are kept while works are being developed. In performance class tapes of performances, rehearsals, sectionals or practice sessions as well as written critiques of the tapes by the student, teacher or peers, might be included in the portfolio. In a general music class, tapes of practices, class exercises, notes and drafts of compositions, as well as finished products might be included.

### Challenging Music Concepts

The question sought to find out challenging topics in learning music and the reasons why they were challenging. Table 6 indicates responses given on the music topics found most challenging:

**Table 6: Challenging Music Concepts**

<b>Challenging music concepts</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Continuation of melodies in simple and compound time	135	75
Composition of melodies to given words	162	90
Analysis of Western music aurally and visually	156	86.7
Harmonizing a melody in S.A.T.B	140	77.8
Aural skills	174	96.7
Ornaments	113	62.8
Transposition	84	46.7
Sight singing/playing	99	55
Playing African instruments	120	66.7
Playing Western instruments	57	31.7
Singing minor keys	123	68
Singing in major keys	35	19

The challenging music concepts may affect the students' performance such that faced with this; some of them may not be able to tackle the challenges and overcome them through their music acquisition skills.

### Reasons for the Challenging Music Concepts

The open-ended item sought to find out from form three music students why they found the given topics challenging. The views that emerged from a majority of students were categorized under several themes which included: methodology, limited time due starting some units late, frequency of practice, wide scope and teacher absenteeism due to co-curricular activities in Kenya Music Festivals (KMF), little attention given to some units, teacher's attitude, resources and syllabus relevance.

In regard to methodology, a number of students indicated that the style of teaching aurals was not satisfactory. They reported, 'when we are left to listen to the radio cassette and a marking scheme to refer to, it does not help'. This implies that they needed the teacher's guidance. In reference to music analysis, students complained that they were given notes got from

symposiums to read. Following the music score and listening to the music together with the students was rarely done by the teacher.

Another theme that emerged was limited time. Music concepts like aural skills needed much time for practice yet the forty minutes allocated on the timetable were not adequate. The students also indicated that the time allocated for music aural skills in exams was inadequate. They thought that the fifty minutes allocated did not allow them to internalize the various concepts tested and then write them down.

In addition, the theme of frequency of practice emerged. It was indicated that, there was inadequate practice of music aural skills which was hardly taught in class and was rarely practiced till form four. Other students indicated that they started learning aural skills in form three, yet aural skills required a lot of time to practice and there was hardly time to practice due to a very busy study schedule. Some students indicated that 'last minute rush approach to music aural skills and practicals makes it impossible to master concepts'. African music practicals were only taken seriously in form three third term hence they hardly had enough time to practice and master the music by KCSE.

Teacher absenteeism due to co-curricular activities especially in second term every year contributed to late syllabus coverage, omitting or 'brushing over' some topics. In most cases teachers were not available to offer individual tuition after 4.00 p.m since they were involved in other school duties. Some concept areas were given little attention. The students reported African music was taught on rare cases and mostly revised after tests. In most cases students were either given notes to read or asked to make their own notes.

## **CONCLUSION**

Contributing factors towards music students' performance in examinations were highlighted as: student's entry behavior, frequency with which music activities are utilized during the music lesson, frequency of evaluating the music curriculum.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON SUGGESTED STRATEGIES**

It would do well for music students to encourage and help each other by holding more discussions/group work. Teachers should also have practical approach in teaching music. A number of respondents complained that in most cases the teachers gave them a lecture on a music concept and asked them to make notes. They found such lessons to be boring and uninvolved, 'the teachers should make the lesson lively, I mean music is life, we should feel it!' They preferred to have discussions of African and Western music done more often: 'we should be given more exercises on analysis of both African and Western music on a daily basis.' In addition they needed to be given homework in music daily to test them on each topic learnt and music CATS were to be done once or twice a week.

Students suggested increased time allotment of lessons on the music timetable to provide more time for the wide syllabus: 'music is given few lessons. Music lessons should be given more consideration like any other subject. More emphasis should be given to music as a

subject.' Music practicals were to commence as early as form one, especially the playing of African instruments so as to avoid the rush to practice in form four.

Aural tapes ought to be listened to frequently with the teachers' help. Music projects should be frequently given to improve musical skills as students would be motivated to practice frequently for presentation. The respondents suggested that they should have more than one teacher for music to curtail teacher absenteeism especially during the Kenya Music Festivals.

A review of the music curriculum so as to determine the scope of units like history of western and African music need to be done. As for the classical music that they termed as boring irrelevant in their context, the respondents suggested that the syllabus should be reviewed to include Western and Kenyan contemporary music.

Parents should be made aware of the importance of music so that they can stop discouraging them to study music. Some indicated that school administration and other teachers should value music and allow them to practice more freely instead of restricting them during prep time. Majority suggested that it would be encouraging for the school to give positive comments about the music subject than to always condemn and demean it. In reference to the music subject teachers, form three students suggested that the teachers should be free and concerned with every student and 'should be more patient with us if we don't understand'.

Schools should consider equipping music rooms with computers to enable them to research frequently on the internet in regard to music history, listening to music and music practical. Others suggested going to music symposiums and learning from other people, exposure through visiting various music centers, music conservatoires, attending music concerts, use of visual aids for African music; actual instruments, photographs/drawings, videos of various dances and folk songs and having practical music activities, providing more music textbooks, provision of music theory revision books and writing revision materials for the music subject. Interacting with practicing musicians, buying music instruments for practicals and exposure to real situations e.g. to see different instruments learnt, to watch African dance performances at Bomas, to watch live concerts of music forms learnt was also key.

## REFERENCES

- Abeles, H.F., Hoffer, C.R., & Klotman, R.H. (1995). *Foundations of Music Education (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed)*. New York: Thomson Schirmer.
- Adedeji, F. (2011). School Music Education in Africa: The Meki Nzewi Method. In Onyiuke, Y.S., Idamoyibo, D.C., Agu, D.C.C. (Eds.) *Mekism and Knowledge Sharing of the Musical Arts of Africa: A Book of General Reading in Honour of Professor Meki Nzewi* (pp.46-53). Nimo: Rex Charles &Patrick Ltd.
- Andang'o, E. J.A. (2009). *The Use of Songs and Movement to Create a Multicultural Curriculum for Early Childhood Music Education in Kenya*. Unpublished PhD Theses, Kenyatta University, Nairobi.
- Borich, G. (2011). *Effective Teaching Methods: Research-Based Practice 7<sup>th</sup> Ed*. Boston: Pearson.
- Digolo, B.A.O (1997). *Availability and use of Technology and Learning Resources for Music Education in Kenya: A survey of Secondary Schools in Nairobi province*. Unpublished M.A Thesis, Kenyatta University, Nairobi.

- Elliot, D.J. (1995). *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Madsen, C.K., and Kuhn, T.L. (1978). *Contemporary Music Education*. Arlington Heights, Illinois: AHM Publishing Corporation.
- Monte, P.E. (2009). *Music Teacher's Effectiveness in Instructional Delivery: A Case of Secondary Schools in Central Province*. Unpublished M.A Thesis. Kenyatta University. Nairobi.
- Mushira, E.N. (2000). *Factors Affecting the Instruction of Kenya Indigenous Music: A Survey of Nairobi Secondary Schools*. unpublished M.A project, Nairobi: Kenyatta University.
- Nacino-Brown, R., Oke, F.E., & Brown, D.P (1982). *Curriculum and Instruction: An Introduction to Methods of Teaching*. Oxford: Macmillan Education.
- Nambafu (2011). *The Impact of Instructional Materials on performance in Music in Secondary Schools in Bungoma County*. Unpublished M.A project, Nairobi: Kenyatta University.
- Ongati, R.A. (2011). *Challenges Facing Music Student Teachers during Practicum: The Case of Maseno University Bachelor of Education Students*. *Problems in Music Pedagogy*, Vol. 5, 2009, ISSN 1691-2721, Daugavpils University, LATVIA.
- Reimer, B. (1989). *Philosophical Perspectives of Music Education*. Retrieved, 20/3/13 at 4.30 pm from pocketknowledge. tc. Colombia. Edu/.../34.+\_+ philosophical +perspectives
- Shitandi, W.O. (2005). *Issues of Access, Demand and Teaching of African music and its Related Technology in the Kenya Higher Education System*. In Herbert, A. (Ed.), *Emerging Solutions for Musical Arts in Africa* (pp. 283-297). Cape Town: African Minds.
- Tum, P.C. (1996). *Education Trends in Kenya: A Vocational Perspective*. Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- Walker, D.E. (1998). *Teaching Music: Managing the Successful Music Program (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)*. New York: Schirmer Books.
- Wanjala, H.N. (2004). *A Survey of Productive Musicianship. The Interface between Music Literacy and Expressiveness among Secondary Music Teachers in Kenya*. Unpublished PhD Kenyatta University. Nairobi.