

**TOOLS FOR ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF VOCAL MUSIC AMONG  
SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Vocal music performance occupies a dominant position in Kenya's musical landscape yet academic study has raised numerous debates concerning its assessment and evaluation. It has been realized that performance in the arts presents an intricate problem and an absence of certain theoretical frameworks that stimulate vocal music discourses. Indeed in all levels of vocal music performance there is a need for instructors to provide a thorough documentation of student performance. Guided by Constructive Alignment Model (Biggs, 2003), this paper sought to analyse the tools and techniques used in assessing students' feedback in vocal music performance by selected universities in Kenya. Twelve (12) universities that offer music were purposively sampled out of which random sampling technique was used to select six (6) universities. Students of music were selected using stratified sampling to acquire gender representation before simple random sampling technique was used to acquire the actual sample size  $n=30%$  of the population. This paper attempts to enlighten and improve the understanding of the tools used in assessment and evaluation of vocal music in Kenyan universities. Data was collected using opinionnaires for individual student responses, questionnaires for voice instructors and heads of the departments, focus group discussion for students, observation schedule by the authors and content analysis then presented in bar charts and frequency tables. Content analysed data was presented thematically. The study findings established that evaluation tools such as goal setting forms, templates for practice guidelines, lesson journals were inadequate. Therefore, the authors conclude that tools for assessment and evaluation of vocal music are of great significance to the growth of students' vocals.*

**Key words:** Vocal music, constructive alignment model, assessment, tools, techniques, universities, Kenya.

**INTRODUCTION**

Vocal music as a universal part of all cultures exists in many forms which are purposefully used at many levels of complexity. Porter (2016) describes it, is the oldest form of music, since it does not require any instrument besides the human voice. Vocal music among university students is a phenomenon that has increasingly been noted in Kenyan universities.

As noted by Andang'o (2000) the voice instrument supersedes other existing instruments because of its uniqueness and potentiality. Coupled with the ongoing rapid expansion in vocal music programmes are the rising concerns on the tools and techniques that could be used in its assessment. Andang'o (2000), Davidson and Coimbra (2001), and Leong and Cheng (2014) advocate for relevant criteria that is obligated in interpreting unbiased ratings of vocal validity and a need for developing more focused and efficient assessment and evaluation systems that would enhance techniques and quality vocal music performance practice.

In Kenya like other parts of the world, assessment and evaluation of university examination is not centralized in all subject areas. Therefore, there is no common language among scholars from different institutions on how to assess and evaluate various aspects of their programmes. The situation affects music more than any other subject area in which teaching and learning domains are more objective. The present study concerns itself with the current situation in assessment and evaluation of vocal music in Kenyan universities, and whether, the techniques used in vocal music objectively achieve the assessment criteria that would support vocal music. Vocal music like other aspects of music studies has been disadvantaged by these situations hence the formulation of this study.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Descriptive survey design was used in conducting the study. According to Kothari (2013) descriptive survey design includes fact-finding inquiries that focus on the state of affairs as it exists. A descriptive design provided comprehensive information towards the current study since it was more precise in its focus and scope. Data was collected through qualitative and quantitative approaches to interpret inquiries concerning the tools used in assessing and evaluation of vocal music in universities. Qualitatively because through emanating open-ended questions and procedures; information was collected in the context of the participants

then the authors constructed analysis of the information gathered. Quantitatively it was applied by use of closed-ended questions in a form Opinionnaires and focus discussion groups which were administered to students, questionnaires used on the music instructors and observation schedules conducted by the authors. In addition, measurements of variables were drawn from the instruments after which numbered data was interpreted using statistical procedures drawing a summary to complement qualitative data.

The study was conducted in Kenya's selected universities that were well-established with music departments. The universities had diverse sampling strata that were conveniently available for conducting the study. Music educators and music students in the selected universities formed the target population. Six (6) out of 15 universities in the country were selected with students being randomly selected from strata of students in the music and vocal performance departments. Music instructors and head of music departments were also considered. The study adopted purposive (Benard, 2002), stratified random (Mugenda, 2008) and simple random (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012) techniques of sampling.

The target population ( $N^h$ ) therefore comprised 6 universities in Kenya from which a sample ( $n^h$ ) of 3 private and 4 public universities that offer music as a subject were sampled in a stratum  $h^i$  with  $N = \sum_{h=1}^L N^h$  and  $n = \sum_{h=1}^L n^h$ . From the 6 universities, 6 music instructors, 6 heads of music department and 81 students participated during the study bringing the study sample to 93 respondents. The study was conducted by use of Opinionnaires, focus group discussion, questionnaires, and observation schedules. A pilot study was conducted before the major survey to establish the accuracy of the study instruments in obtaining the required data (Mugenda, 2012).

Data was then collected using both primary and secondary sources. Primary data collection was done through questionnaires, Opinionnaires, focus discussion groups and observation

schedules while secondary data was collected from journals, books, articles, academic papers and magazines from Kenyatta University, Daystar University and Government libraries. Government census and internet data which referred to reliable sources for accurate information were also used. Analysis of data was done qualitatively and quantitatively through content analysis and descriptive statistics respectively since both designs give comprehensive and complete results of the instruments. The reportage of findings is presented in tables of frequency distributions, percentages and bar graphs.

## **RESULTS**

### **Instructional Techniques Used for Assessment of Vocal Music**

In pursuit of this aspect respondents were asked to state the instructional techniques used for assessment of vocal music. A descriptive analysis was carried out and the findings indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Various instructional techniques used**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Mean response</b>
Vocal warm ups	-	3 (3.7%)	15 (18.5%)	25 (30.9%)	33 (40.7%)	4.16
Arpeggios	6 (7.4%)	11 (13.6%)	23 (28.4%)	23 (28.4%)	13 (16.0%)	3.34
Sight singing	6 (7.4%)	11 (13.6%)	19 (23.5%)	28 (34.6%)	17 (21.0%)	3.54
Singing scales	6 (7.4%)	9 (11.1%)	21 (25.9%)	28 (34.6%)	17 (21.0%)	3.64
Recital performance	2 (2.5%)	11 (13.6%)	30 (37.0%)	24 (29.6%)	14 (17.3%)	3.52
Listening and watching other music performance	4 (4.9%)	7 (8.6%)	13 (16.0%)	25 (30.9%)	32 (39.5%)	3.95
Breath control	8 (9.8%)	7 (8.6%)	12 (14.8%)	24 (29.6%)	30 (37.0%)	4.01
Non-verbal communication principals	24 (29.6%)	13 (16.0%)	16 (19.8%)	14 (17.3%)	14 (17.3%)	3.17

**Source: Field data (2018)**

The study established that vocal warm ups (M=4.16), breath control (M=4.01) and listening and watching other music performance (M= 3.95), were the most frequently used activity to enhance the students' vocal experience. This is exemplified by the fact that, out of the 81 students, (40.7%) noted that their instructors always use vocal warm ups, (21.0%) used sight

singing and the same percentage used singing scale. Arpeggios were always used by (16.0%). The students felt that vocal music should always be assessed separately from other practical (M= 4.00). Thirty nine (39.5%) of the students were of the opinion that listening and watching other music performance is always used in enhancing their vocals.

### **Opinions on the Instructional Techniques for Assessment and Evaluation of Vocal Music**

An inferential analysis was conducted to establish the use of the instructional techniques used by the universities for assessment and evaluation of vocal music as shown by the results in Table 2.

**Table 2:** ANOVA table for the use of Arpeggios for assessment in the universities

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between Groups	15.823	5	3.165	2.598	.033
Within Groups	85.282	70	1.218		
Total	101.105	75			

**Source: Field data (2018)**

Using a likert scale of 1 – 5 (1-never, 2- rarely, 3-occasionally, 4-frequently, 5-always), an evaluation of the use of instructional tools in the universities based on the students' opinion was done using Analysis of variance (One Way ANOVA). The study established that there was no significant difference in the use of vocal warm ups (F = 1.286, P = 0.280), sight singing (F = 0.680, P = 0.640), singing scales (F = 0.672, P = 0.646), recital performances (F = 0.322, P = 0.898), listening and watching other music performances (F = 1.984, P = 0.091).

A further descriptive analysis was done to assess the use of Arpeggios in the selected universities, and the results indicated in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Use of Arpeggios as an instructional technique of vocal music assessment

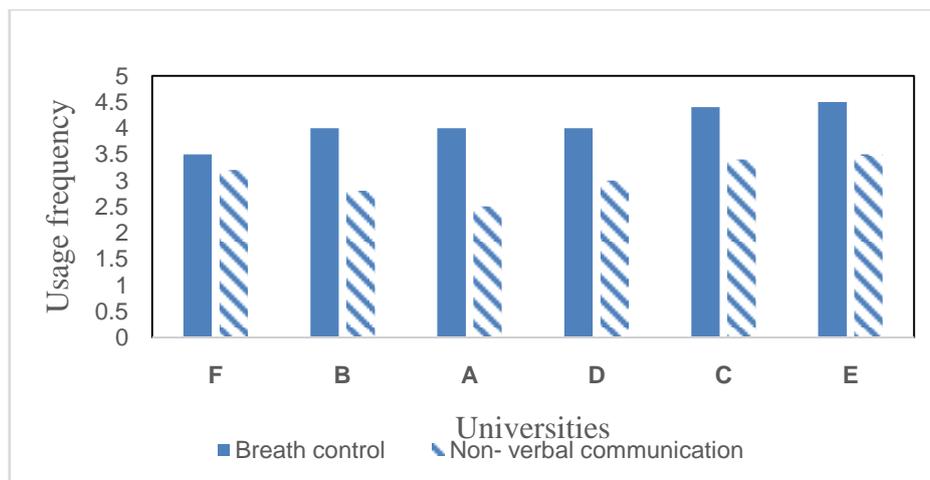
University	Mean ± SE
University F	2.94 ± 0.32a
University A	3.15 ± 0.19ab
University C	3.17 ± 0.31ab
University B	3.28 ± 0.30ab
University D	3.29 ± 0.36ab
University E	4.31 ± 0.24b

Mean values denoted by similar letters are not significantly different at  $P \leq 0.05$ .  $F = 2.598$ ,  $P = 0.033$ .

**Source: Field data (2018)**

It was established that use of Arpeggios was significantly different in the Universities ( $F = 2.598$ ,  $P = 0.033$ ). Arpeggios were frequently used in University E ( $M=4.31$ ), University D ( $M= 3.29$ ), University B ( $3.28$ ), UniversityD( $M= 3.17$ ), University A ( $M= 3.15$ ) and University F ( $M=2.95$ ).

The authors also sought to establish how breath control and non-verbal communication was used to assess vocal music in selected universities. As such, a descriptive analysis was done and results are shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Use of breath control and non-verbal communication in assessment of vocal music  
**Source: Field data (2018)**

The study findings indicated that breath control and non-verbal communication was used in assessment of vocal music mainly in University A and University C. However using One way ANOVA showed there was no significant difference in the use of the two in the universities ( $F = 1.697$  and  $1.858$ ) respectively.

### **Observation on Lesson Introduction and Assessment**

During the observation made, it was established that voice training is given a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 1 hour. This gave an average of 48 minutes given to introduction of a lesson. The teachers start the lessons with vocal warm ups. Except in University F, the lesson is always linked to the previous ones in the other universities. The teachers in universities B and A corrected the students through demonstrations. Materials for learning were not provided in all the universities. Materials were not provided in University A but were provided for students in Universities F, B, D, E and in C in terms of music pieces or repertoire. During the training, some of the learning activities involved vocal warm ups. After every exercise during the lesson, it was observed that there was no evaluation process used.

### **Aesthetics Preferences Assessment**

In a vocal performance, music instructor in University F assessed vocal sonority for each voice. In University B, the instructor assessed dress code, if it suits the performance; use of stage, this is if a song demands movement. In University A, the instructor assessed good tone colour, student makes effort to apply timbre character of culture of music; applying articulation according to culture for instance Italian crisp consonants. In University D, the instructor assessed; tonal expression, poise, vocal resonance and control singing. In University C, the instructor used communication; emotional sense of a piece/performance,

engagement of a performance, physical expression, emotional expression, breath control techniques and tone quality.

### **Students' Expectations**

Students' expectations were checked using focus group discussion. University F, learners' expectations were that they expect to learn all types of different vocal techniques such as learning how to sing better using articulations and all types of genres, how they are performed and their relationships. University B, learners' expectations were to learn breath control techniques, improving their voice to suit pop and classical genres, different types of genres and how to perform them. University A, learners as well expect to learn and perform diverse genres, different types of vocal techniques, professionalism, breath control techniques and how to approach challenging notes. University learners' expectations during vocal classes were that they expect to learn all the techniques but in a less classical music oriented manner, relaxation techniques, breath control techniques, aural exercises, dynamics, voice control. In University D, they expect to learn all voice techniques like breath control, how to at least know performance for all genres, vocal techniques, how to be a better performer in terms of techniques and be able to perform a song the right way. They expect to learn different ways of singing different genres. Lastly University E, students expect to identify their voice range, Intonation, hearing technique and how to resonate.

### **Learning in a Vocal Class**

Using focus group discussion, the study established what the students learn in a vocal class which include; University E, projections, breath control, articulation, diction, warm up exercises and facial expressions. University C, learn sight singing, breathe control, posture, sight reading, performance techniques, projection, listening skills and how to control the

voice. University A, they learn vocal techniques, general posture, stage etiquette, western music in opera genre, diverse genres and breath control. University D, voice shifts, voice production, sitting position when learning, proper technique to make the best out of the voice. They learn breath control, being independent, understanding music and facial expression. University B, learn breath control, jazz techniques, expression, posture, vocal flexibility, accuracy of sound, voice control and how to manage stage fright. Lastly University F, learn popular genres, breath control, smooth leaps, range expansion, diction, posture and singing techniques

### **Use of Students' Own Music to Learn**

Based on the focus group discussion held with the students, it was established that the students would like to use their own music when learning. They felt that they would like to grow by making good music themselves. The authors established that students think that teachers bring them pieces because that way the teachers easily identify the students' strengths and weaknesses. On the contrary, teachers want the students to grow on repertoire exposure through use of different genres. Teachers want to see how students interpret and perform them, to improve the vocal ability and range strengths. They expose the students to variety of songs and styles of singing. Teachers ensure a new perspective on how to express different moods. Learners stated that they would all like to use their own music.

### **Real World for Kenyan Vocalists**

In the focus group discussion, the students felt that there is not enough emphasis put on recording artists having been exposed to the background in music education. They do not have very many job opportunities. Vocalists are mainly appreciated in acappella performance and not in bands. What students perform outside class is always divorced from what they

perform in class. The students always try to improve from what they learnt in class. It was established out that the things they learn in class sometimes are not applicable to the real world especially during gigs and performance. For instance the western classical concepts learnt in class do not apply to most of the contemporary African performances. Some and not all of the things learnt in class help the students compose songs which help them in the real world. This was noted especially in learning about chord work and ear training.

In University B, learners felt that what they perform outside class was not the same as what they learn and do in class. However in the Universities F and A, they felt that what they perform outside is sometimes the same as what they learn in class since they always apply what they have learnt in class. In the universities C and E, students stated that most of the times, what they learn in class at least relates to what they perform outside class. They noted that everything they have learnt in terms of vocal and breathing exercise have helped before and during performance. Students always take what they have learnt in class and add to it since class helps them to open up their minds outside.

### **Applicability of Things Learnt in Class**

Students in Universities B, F and C noted that at least some concepts they learnt in class are applicable to real world especially during gigs and live performance. In University A, students think that it is not in all cases that things they learnt in class are applicable to real world. They opined that it all depends on the audience although what they learnt in class is applicable in choir training and in vocal classes.

Things taught in class helps students to compose songs which help them in real world especially learning about chord work and ear training, arrangement and music appreciation. In University C, the students felt that it is not always true since what the students sing in their

vocal class are far removed from their musical reality, but sometimes they pick something up. The lecturer helps one develop melodies for their compositions which are of great help in the real world.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Instructional Vocal Techniques Used for Assessment of Vocal Music**

Based on the descriptive analysis on the instructional vocal techniques used in the universities, vocal warm ups were the most frequently used instructional activity followed by breath control, then listening and watching other music performance. The findings also indicated that, arpeggios and non-verbal communication principles were the least used activities.

Instructional vocal techniques are of great significance in students' vocal growth. In response to students' opinions, specific instructional techniques were identified. Majority of student respondents stated that they frequently used vocal warm ups as the activity for enhancing their vocal experiences and also helps in loosening of muscles, avoid strenuous performances and develop growth to voice students. It is recommended that vocal warm ups are the first technique exercises given to voice students in preparation for intense vibrations that comes along with singing.

Stegman (2003) encourages trainers to set up attainable warm ups that will improve musical knowledge and progress within a given time frame. The time frame given to vocal warm up practices becomes very essential when vocal music learning and growth are of the main focus. Other instructional activities used in universities were sight singing, and singing scale, breath control, arpeggios and non-verbal communication principles of which indicated the least instructional activity used by the studied universities yet they are equally important.

Sight singing is a very significant technique yet the method used in teaching is less articulated. Studies by Demorest (1998) alluded to the urgency of objective studies towards training on sight singing.

Arpeggios as well are very significant in terms of building the muscle memory and pitching ability. Arpeggios, non-verbal communication principles and singing scales as shown by other findings from scholars such as Wang (2001) and Kurkul (2007) are given less attention yet they are the most effective techniques that should be used in assessment and evaluation of vocal performance instruction. Scholars such as Stegman (2003) highly advocate for establishment of a variety of instructional techniques that are significant for students' vocal growth. There is need to focus on various instructional techniques that are balanced with continued methodologies that are necessary to students' vocal performance growth.

Majority of the students also confirmed that listening and watching other music performances should be used in enhancing their vocals. However, a few of them stated that they were not in a position to watch and listen to other music performances. Watching and listening to other performances is one way of enhancing students' growth in performance through practice. Students should be encouraged to attend vocal music performances whether they are in master classes, concerts or recitals within and out of class. This way they get to borrow ideas on how to express out different artistic elements.

The study established that use of Arpeggios for assessment and evaluation of vocal music varied from university to university while non-verbal communication as an activity in vocal music performance was the least performed. Majority of the students stated that they never performed non-verbal communication principles of vocal music performance. A study by Wang (2001) indicated how non-verbal communication principles are of great significance in terms of students' cognitive ideas and affective states. This is one of the less studied instructional technique yet one of the most important in terms of voice training. Kurkul

(2007) agrees that usually trainers' nonverbal feelings are linked to validity of assessment by their learners and external juries

The study also established that there was no significant difference in the use of vocal music warm ups, sight singing, singing scales, recital performances, listening and watching other music performances in the universities of study. The use of these tools for assessment was the same in all the studied universities. There was no significant difference in the use of breath control and non-verbal communication which was used in assessment of vocal music mainly in two out of the six selected universities. No significant difference was observed in the use of breath control and listening and watching other music performance which were considered second.

#### **Use of the Instructional Techniques for Assessment and Evaluation of Vocal Music**

Through an inferential analysis of variance (One Way ANOVA), the study established that there was no significant difference in the use of Vocal warm ups ( $F = 1.286$ ,  $P = 0.280$ ), sight singing ( $F = 0.680$ ,  $P = 0.640$ ), singing scales ( $F = 0.672$ ,  $P = 0.646$ ), recital performances ( $F = 0.322$ ,  $P = 0.898$ ), listening and watching other music performances ( $F = 1.984$ ,  $P = 0.091$ ). However, the study findings established a significant difference in the use of Arpeggios for assessment and evaluation of vocal music with F value ( $F=2.598$ ), and P value of ( $P=0.033$ ).

Most students felt that vocal music should always be assessed separately from other practical. Observations made earlier in the study indicated how vocal music performance is in dire need to be assessed on its own. Observations on the importance of vocal music are reported by Harrison et al. (2008) and McPhail (2014). They posit that it is mandatory for all students admitted for music programs in Europe to take vocal music before branching to their preferred areas of specialization hence enabling students to highly recognize themselves within their music units and the importance of the conceptual knowledge of the subject.

Likewise, Emielu (2011) observes how vocal music occupies a dominant position in African institutions making voice to be the most available instrument in Africa. In Kenya, there are already a number of vocal music programs offered in various institutions. Voice being continuously the most available instrument in Kenya as observed by Andang'o (2000), is the most exploited instrument that has the potential which supersedes any other existing instrument, and as such it takes a lot more to it in terms of instructional strategies and even how to assess and evaluate the voice instrument.

Stegman (2003) encourages trainers to establish and explore possible voice training activities that enhance singing and musical learning experiences. Nevertheless, non-verbal communication as advocated by Levasseur (1995) is a very crucial aspect that should be used in a vocal performance instruction to communicate both the affective attitudes and cognitive concepts that build a good relationship between instructors and students. A study by Kurkil (2007) a gap in perception of instruction validity on a one to one instruction between trainers and students, hence suggested external juries as the most recommended sources of evaluation in vocal music performance.

### **Observation on Lesson Introduction and Assessment**

Results that were established from observation schedule on lesson introduction in the study indicated that voice training in all universities is not based on a specific common schedule. A study conducted by Stanley et al. (2002) reveals that assessment in its right way is very important for it provides answers to both the trainers' and students' progress towards teaching goals. Structures on how a lesson is introduced in a class matters a lot. It was realized that only one university linked lessons to previous ones. Trainers are advised therefore to consider teaching methodologies that will provide their students with an ongoing feedback that records their progress so as to attain a sense of accomplishment of the musical experiences. It was established also that some trainers never provide the necessary reference

materials to their students. For instance, the course outlines and objectives, templates for practice guidelines or goal setting forms to enable students understand what they are intended to learn and what is expected of them. In most universities it was observed that there was no assessment process used. This is a challenge that has been noted even by scholars such as Veigh (2013) and Thompson et al. (2007). If there is no ongoing assessment processes, then students and their instructors may not be able to track their performance progress. In every vocal music performance - may it be during rehearsals, class assignment performances, there is need to have formal assessment guidelines and marking criteria are highly recommended.

### **Aesthetics Preferences Assessment**

Findings established in aesthetic preferences varied from university to university. Aesthetic preferences according to Arbor (1999), depends on how one characterizes a message out of a performance and how it is then articulated or expressed out. In this case vocal performance music instructors assessed vocal sonority for each voice, others assessed dress code and how it suits the performance; use of stage whenever a performance demanded movement. Other instructors assessed good tone color, how a student makes effort to apply timbre character of culture of music; applying articulation according to culture for instance Italian crisp consonants, tonal expression, poise, vocal resonance and control singing, communication; emotional sense of a performance, engagement of a performance, physical expression, emotional expression, breadth control techniques and tone quality. For a quality vocal music performance, aesthetic preferences are recommended since they interpret a variety of meanings and expressions in a range of dramatic text styles and performance circumstances.

### **Students Expectations in a Vocal Class**

Students expect to learn breath control during voice tuition which is vital in improvement of the voice to suit both pop and classical genres, be better performers in terms of techniques

and perform a song the right way. They expect to learn different ways of singing different genres. In every learning and teaching environment, there are always needs and goals which are important aspects that are supposed to be achieved. Findings from a study by Carey and Grant (2014) indicated very distinct perceptions and differences between learners' expectations, trainers' goals and teaching practices. Usually learners will always have their learning expectations different from their trainers. Instructors are therefore urged to prioritize teaching methods and objectives that satisfy students' needs and accommodate every student's learning experiences. Kelly (2019) has suggested several ways trainers can accommodate or communicate expectations to and from students. If trainers of music do not appreciate the expectations of their learners then they are likely to be unsuccessful in their field of training. Trainers are recommended to know exactly their students' needs and expectations.

- i. While trainers reinforce their expectations to students they should also allow them to outline their expectations.
- ii. A template form with specific outlines of expectations from both the trainer and students put in place throughout the training
- iii. Providing students with an opportunity to demonstrate what they understand and can carry out. This way they can satisfactorily be able to solve their issues and have a chance to demonstrate maturity in problem solving.

Trainers need to understand the fact that students always have healthy glimpses on which styles of music they would want to perform. Instructors' response is therefore, to make sure that students are slowly energized to consistently and widely explore their musical styles. Students have different needs that trainers need to sensitively consider when especially choosing their music pieces for them to perform. Trainers are therefore urged to have an open and positive mind

towards students' expectations and suggestions of what they want to learn in a vocal music class. This is one way of enhancing students' growth and success.

### **Learning techniques in a vocal class**

The study through focus group discussion showed that students learn breath control, jazz techniques, expression, posture, vocal flexibility and voice control in a vocal class. They also learn how to produce acute sound and how to manage stage. As explored earlier in this paper are many more relevant techniques required in a vocal class. Observations made by scholars such as Hewitt and Smith (2004) and Bergee (2003) insist on trainers putting in place assessment criteria that will satisfy their learners as well as methodologies that are focused on what learners must know and are able to execute. The strategies need to include concepts that will apply safe voice practices for instance the anatomy and physiology towards breath control, voice production and articulation.

There are other techniques that can be applied to reinforce and strengthen a voice, for example applying technical control and vocal range techniques will help students to freely be able to control their breath in terms of phrasing, flexibility and control of articulation. Such techniques if applied will develop and maintain students' vocal range and posture. Practices such as vocal expressions in different text types if applied appropriately will help students learn techniques towards vocal expressions, characterization of emotions and nuances and even be able to interpret variety of meanings in different music performances and vocal experiences. Stegman (2003) eminently recommends instructors to constitute varied instructional techniques that are balanced with continued methodologies that are necessary to students' vocal growth.

### **Use of Students' Own Music to Learn**

Based on the discussion held with the students, it was established that the students prefer to use their own music when learning. Klingstein (2008) in his case study discovered some challenges when trainers pick music for their students for performance, even if it is recommended to do so for easier identification of students' strengths and weaknesses. The challenge is that some pieces can be challenging such that they cause a lot of unnecessary mental pressure for the learner and at the end of the day, there is lack of a musical experience to the learner. It is advisable for teachers to help students to grow on repertoire exposure through use of different genres, to ensure students learn how to interpret and perform the pieces of music, to improve the vocal ability and range strengths. According to Kageyama (2018) it is advisable that students be allowed to choose their own music that they feel would benefit them artistically and musically.

While most trainers provide music pieces that are from one style, allowing learners to choose their music encourages a variety of different styles and creates musical exploration that provides constructive music performance practice and customs. Some student statements were that, teachers' choices ensured new perspectives on how to express different moods from the music pieces and probably test their vocal capability. As much as it is a requirement for learning, to test ability vocal wise, the teachers need to understand learners better and know what would help in different areas.

### **Real World for Kenyan Vocalists**

In the focus group discussion, evidence indicated that students having been exposed to the background of music education, there is need for emphasis on those who would want to be recording artists. Responses from students indicated that whatever is offered in a voice class may not be significant in real world given that there are not many job opportunities out in the

Kenyan music industry since the industry is overwhelmed. It was also established that most vocalists appreciated out in the industry are those who offer a cappella performances and not band performances. The students further shared sentiments that what they perform outside class is always divorced from what they learn and perform in class especially during gigs and band performance. Some methodologies further do not even improve their ability to compose their own music for performance. When trainers develop their assessment strategies they should consider all areas of music performance as well as frameworks that are both local and international. Locally this will cater for the local needs of the learner. Borne (2015) observed ways in which educators can incorporate programs that can satisfy their students.

### **Applicability of Things Learnt in Class**

Study findings indicated that some of the concepts students learn in class are applicable to real world especially during gigs and live performance. It was evident that at least some concepts apply into real life music performance. However, other students felt that most of the things they learn in class are not applicable to the real world after school. This is because the world outside class has varied audiences that appreciate different types of genres. Most of the things they learn in class are applicable for choir training and in probably improving their vocal techniques of which may not help in other genres apart from classical performances.

Some of the techniques as noted can only help them in song writing of which they can perform outside class. Some of the things learnt and are applicable are elements such as use of chord work and ear training, music arrangement and appreciation. Some students felt that some concepts learnt in their vocal class are far removed from their musical reality. According to Kageyama (2018), musicians' training should be around their interests of performance areas that communicate to their audiences. It is advisable for trainers to develop strategies that are varied to accommodate their learners' interests and goals.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that tools for assessment and evaluation of vocal music are of great significance to the growth of students' vocals in Kenyan universities. This is premised on the fact that instructional vocal techniques; usage of Arpeggios for assessment; listening and watching other music performances; assessment guidelines and jury rubrics; breath control, jazz techniques, expression, posture, vocal flexibility and voice control; are of great importance to students' vocal growth. This therefore means that the authors largely acknowledge the importance of adopting various evaluation tools and techniques that fulfil the needs of students in any institution of study.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Trainers should consider the learners' needs in and outside class thus consider using tools and techniques geared towards this need satisfaction.
2. Students should also be offered a wide range and balanced techniques of study so as to promote and enhance their vocal music ability. As trainers evaluate them, they should also be provided for with an opportunity to evaluate and reflect on their progresses through various techniques recommended in this study.

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