

**EXAMINING INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR POPULAR
MUSIC CURRICULUM INCLUSION IN KENYA: A STUDY OF SELECTED
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI COUNTY**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Institute of Postgraduate Studies of Kabarak University
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Master of Music
Education Degree**

KABARAK UNIVERSITY

NOVEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

My late parents, Harrison Mwai and Penina Wambui, taught me that education is freedom. I dedicate this study affectionately to them.

ABSTRACT

Many scholars have advocated for the inclusion of popular music in the Kenyan secondary school music curriculum to align with 21st-century approaches to music education. The challenge is determining which materials and tools to include, which affects the pedagogical approach. This study focused on identifying instructional tools that comprise inclusion materials and examining pedagogical strategies for inclusion as its primary objective. The study focused on selected Secondary Schools in Nairobi County. The research was based on three main theories: LeBlanc's Theory of the Sources of Variation in Music Preference, Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory, and Dewey's Social Constructivism Theory. The research employed a qualitative design to present a case concerning the main objective. The study targeted 24 secondary schools offering music education in Nairobi County. A total of 436 participants were selected: 380 students, 24 music teachers, and 10 key informants (KIs) across key curriculum policy stakeholders. Purposive sampling was used to select 180 students, 23 teachers, and 10 key informants to generate the required findings. The inclusion of popular music genres such as Afrobeat, Hip-hop, Reggae, Gospel, Benga, Genge-tone, and contemporary pop in the secondary school music curriculum is highly beneficial because these genres are relatable to students and reflect local culture, history, and social themes. Findings from music students, teachers, and KICD officials indicate that effective teaching of popular music genres in secondary schools requires a combination of audio-visual resources, musical instruments, digital tools, printed learning materials, practical spaces, and teacher-led guidance. The study concluded that the inclusion of popular music genres in the secondary school music curriculum is both relevant and beneficial. The study recommends that educational institutions formally incorporate popular music genres such as Afrobeat, Hip-hop, Reggae, Gospel, Benga, and Gengetone into teaching materials and resources.

Keywords: *Popular Music Education, Popular Music, Contemporary Music, Curriculum, Pedagogical Issues, Popular Music Inclusion, Conventional Teacher*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
RECCOMENDATION	iii
COPYRIGHT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
DEDICATION	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xiv
CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS	xv
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	9
1.3 Objectives of the Study	10
1.3.1 General Objective of the Study	10
1.3.2 Specific Objectives	10
1.4 Research Questions	10
1.5 Justification for the Study	11
1.6 Significance of the Study	12
1.7 Scope of the Study	13
1.8 Limitations of the Study	13
CHAPTER TWO	14
LITERATURE REVIEW	14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.1.1 Contextualization of Popular Music Education	14
2.1.2 The Music Education Curriculum	19
2.1.3 The Popular Music Genres as Teaching Materials in the Curriculum	25
2.2 Theoretical Review	40
2.2.1 LeBlanc's Theory of the Sources of Variation in Music Preference	41
2.2.2 Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory	43
2.2.3 Dewey's Social Constructivism Theory	43

2.3 Empirical Review	44
2.3.1 Popular Music Genres that should be included in Secondary School Music Curriculum.....	44
2.3.2 Pedagogical Issues that May Affect the Inclusion of Determined Popular Music Genres in the Secondary School Music Curriculum.....	47
2.3.3 The Instructional Tools Required for the Inclusion of the Popular Music Genres	49
2.4 Conceptual Framework	54
2.6 Research Gaps	56
CHAPTER THREE	57
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	57
3.1 Introduction	57
3.2 Research Design	57
3.3 Location of the Study	59
3.4 Population and Target Population of the Study.....	60
3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size.....	61
3.6 Instrumentation.....	63
3.6.1 Pilot Study	63
3.6.2 Trustworthiness.....	64
3.7 Data Collection.....	65
3.8 Data Analysis.....	66
3.8.1 Potential Risks	67
3.8.2 Protection Procedures	67
3.9 Ethical Consideration	67
CHAPTER FOUR	69
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION.....	69
4.1 Introduction	69
4.2 Response Rate	69
4.2.1 Years Teachers Had Taught Music in Secondary School	69
4.2.2 Teaching Qualifications.....	70
4.2.3 Gender of KICD	70
4.2.4 Number of Years Working with KICD	70
4.3 Popular Music Genres for Inclusion in the Secondary School Music Curriculum .	70
4.3.1 Students' Views on Genres/Styles of Music Taught	71

4.3.2 Analysis of Students' Perceptions of Music Genre	71
4.3.3 Comparison of Teachers' and Students' Views on Genres	72
4.3.4 Student Views Concerning Music Genres Mentioned Above	74
4.3.6 KICD Officials' Perspectives	76
4.4 Instructional tools Relevant to Including Popular Music Genres.....	77
4.4.1 Instructional Tools Students Require for the Popular Music Genres Curriculum.....	77
4.4.2 Instructional Tools Students Could Access	79
4.4.3 Musical Activities Students Engaged in Outside the Classroom.....	79
4.4.4 Music Genres Students Performed or Listened to Frequently.....	80
4.4.5 Improvements Suggested by Students and Teachers in Relation to Music Genres	81
4.4.6 Instructional Tools Associated with Including Popular Music Genres in the Curriculum	82
4.5 Pedagogical Issues Arising from Including Popular Music Genres.....	83
4.5.1 Pedagogical Issues that May Arise from Including the Identified Popular Music Genres in the Secondary School Music Curriculum.....	83
4.5.2 Pedagogical Issues Connected to Popular Music Genres	86
4.5.3 Tools Required for a Popular Music Education Curriculum	88
4.6 Discussion of Findings	89
4.6.1 Theoretical Implications	90
4.6.2 Cultural and Educational Balance	91
4.6.3 Pedagogical and Institutional Implications.....	92
4.6.4 Socio-Economic and Policy Relevance	92
CHAPTER FIVE.....	94
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	94
5.1 Introduction	94
5.2 Summary of the Findings	94
5.2.1 Popular Music Genres Suitable for Inclusion.....	94
5.2.2 Instructional Tools Relevant to Inclusion.....	95
5.2.3 Pedagogical Issues Arising from Inclusion	95
5.3 Conclusion of the Study	96
5.4 Contribution of the Study	97
5.5 Recommendations of the Study.....	98

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research	99
REFERENCES	100
APPENDICES	114
Appendix I: Informed Consent Form.....	114
Appendix II: Interview Guide for Music Teachers.....	115
Appendix III: Interview Guide for Students.....	117
Appendix IV: Interview Guide for officials from KICD	119
Appendix V: Population of the Study	121
Appendix VI: KUREC Clearance Letter	122
Appendix VIII: NACOSTI Research Permit.....	123
Appendix IX: Evidence of Conference Participation	124

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Population of the Study	61
Table 2: Sampling Procedure.....	62

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework	51
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework	54
Figure 3: Location of the Study	59

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBE	Competency-Based Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
GMIT	Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
ICT	Information Communication Technology
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
QASO	Quality Assurance and Standard Officer
CQASO	County Quality and Standard Officer

CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Popular Music Education: Smith et al. (2018) define it as the study and teaching of popular music genres and practices within educational settings. It typically emphasises hands-on learning using traditional and modern educational tools, including performance, composition, production, and analysis. Popular music education encourages creativity, collaboration, and skills development that align with the dynamics of the contemporary music industry.

Curriculum refers to the structured plan or guidelines that outline the content, subjects, lessons, and learning experiences to be taught in an educational programme (Kesson & Henderson, 2010). It includes the goals, skills, and objectives students are expected to acquire over a specific period. The curriculum provides educators with a framework to follow, ensuring a coherent, organised, and aligned learning process.

Pedagogical issues refer to educators' challenges and considerations when teaching popular music in an educational setting. These issues can arise from the unique nature of popular music as a genre and students' diverse backgrounds (Hess, 2013).

Popular music inclusion refers to integrating popular music genres, traditions, and styles into educational settings, ensuring they are recognised, valued, and taught alongside other types of music. It emphasises broadening the scope of music education to reflect students' diverse musical tastes and cultural backgrounds (Davis & Blair, 2011).

Popular music is music that is well-known and liked by the masses

Contemporary music is music of the present time.

A Conventional Teacher uses teacher-centred instructional methods.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

According to Clarke (1990), popular music has a long history in many civilisations. In English, the term “popular” has traditionally meant “of the ordinary people.” The first work to associate the term with a specific type of music that reflected this meaning was *Popular Music of the Olden Times*, published in instalments beginning in 1855 by William Chapple. Popular music, she says, has always been a great mainstay with many offshoots, encompassing a dizzying array of styles such as jazz, ragtime, blues, rhythm and blues, country, rock, pub rock, punk rock, acid rock, heavy metal, bubblegum, and reggae, to name a few (Clarke et al, 1990). The commercialisation of popular music and the acceptance of genres perceived as strongly commercial are related to this expansive approach to genres (Shuker, 2001).

Music education has evolved with different cultures. The place of popular music education among adolescents (ages 12-18) is embodied in the knowledge encapsulated in youth cultures (Vasil, 2015). This is the highest age restriction for students in Kenya's secondary schools. Allsup et al. (2012) and Campbell et al. (2007) opine that youth cultures reflect the diversity and creativity of the youths who participate in them. Since the necessity of including popular music genres in school music curricula has been the subject of much research and debate, the cultural disjunction that exists is crucial in deciding both individual preferences and curriculum content (Green et al, 2003). It is imperative to incorporate popular music into the curriculum as a whole because the current system is based on practices and ideas handed down by those who first brought formal education to the nation over a century ago (Monte & Mochere, 2019). As a result, music educators now face the challenge of creating lessons that are relevant to students'

local and global contexts (Monte & Mochere, 2019). Making, listening to, and performing music in all its forms is an efficient activity. In that case, it is realistic to affirm that music is ubiquitous and should be treated as such (Green, 2006).

Given the merits of popular music education as currently perceived, it is time to reflect on and interrogate its impact, checking the facts and reality. Furthermore, there is a clear feeling that the world, with its cultural diversity, has come to age in embracing the differences positively, an impression that is highly needed in accommodating popular music education (Vasil, 2015). This begs the question: What is popular music? What are the merits and parameters of inclusion? What is to be included, and what will be the criteria for inclusion, both in pedagogy and genres? Additionally, who is the target of inclusion?

Research in Kenya by Akuno (2019), Adhiambo (2021), and Msimango (2023), among others, on the inclusion of popular music in the secondary school curriculum has highlighted the need for its integration by outlining the various reasons it should be incorporated on the topic of popular music in the secondary school curriculum, have established the need for inclusion by outlining why it should be included. They, however, have offered modalities of inclusion. Limited resources, including training for instructors, instructional materials, and technology, hinder the inclusion of popular music in the curriculum. As a result, the three aspects of popular music study are not addressed. Countless variants, styles, and advancements in music exist at the global and regional levels. Despite this, children create a cultural bubble around popular music that educational curriculum stifles (Daniel, 2021). Furthermore, adolescent listeners utilise popular music to identify with and break away from adults, such as parents and instructors (Allsup et al., 2012).

According to Akuno (2008), Adhiambo (2021), and other scholars who widely agreed that, because the majority of Kenyans are Christian converts and have limited knowledge of popular music, teachers focused on the syllabus and placed less emphasis on practical performance, which was done only for examination purposes. This further exacerbated the issue of excluding popular music from the curriculum, leading to the current state of confusion.

Regional variations within national marketplaces may significantly impact a product's popularity (Shuker, 2001). There can be no adequate description of popular music that does not account for its musical and socio-economic aspects. As Elpus and Abril (2012) point out, every genre of popular music incorporates elements of other forms. Additionally, many buyers give it ideological weight despite its purely commercial nature (Elpus & Abril, 2011). Across the globe, popular music has been intertwined with the “populace's” expectations and has supported existing cultural diversity. As an example, popular music has become the primary tool for teaching music in schools in many Nordic countries and Scotland. Popular music activities, such as songwriting and beat-making, are becoming more prominent in most American schools (Elpus & Abril, 2011). The American Music Curriculum also included jazz and rock as forms of music to appeal to younger audiences and the Southern culture, respectively (Humphreys, 2004).

In line with Griffin's (2010) observation, the secondary school music curriculum can provide students with meaningful experiences only when there is a connection between the music learners encounter in their daily lives and that taught in classrooms. As noted by Dunbar-Hall and Wemyss (2000), the incorporation of popular music in most schools in Australia reshaped how the music subject is taught and learnt. Music is a universal art that can inspire students to achieve more academic success in other subjects (Adams, 2011; Vera, 2011). This presents several opportunities to inspire and motivate students to

perform well in music and other subjects, thereby positively contributing to students' overall academic performance (Vera, 2011). This is because studying popular music improves students' cognitive abilities, which in turn enhances reading ability (Holochwost et al., 2017). It also makes the students' music skills relevant and functional in the modern world. Young people's popular music is self-directed teaching (Green, 2006). Many musicians share the desire to play and study music in settings where few adults are present, such as in informal bands outside of formal education (Kuzmich, 1991; Rusinek, 2008). Many of the students in this age bracket, who make up the bulk of the student body, prefer studying in both small and large groups and having greater freedom to choose their own pace and instructional methods (Howell, 2002).

These are opportunities educators can take advantage of as efforts to mainstream music education in schools continue. Nevertheless, the benefits of incorporating popular music into the school curriculum are restricted to certain nations, such as Scotland (Elpus & Abril, 2011), Zimbabwe (Ganyata, 2015), and South Africa (Buthelezi, 2016).

According to Hugill's 2012 observation, popular music relies heavily on modern technology. According to Hugill (2012), modern technology is an integral part of the music industry, impacting every step from creation to production, expression, marketing, and consumption. The rapid growth of popular music has been mainly due to the influence of the internet and mass media. The advancement of the Internet has increased connectivity worldwide, thereby enhancing access to popular music for a large audience. Through the internet, various audiences can easily download popular music at their leisure (Verboord & Noord, 2016). Secondary school students are technologically inclined and can resonate well with popular music that relies heavily on digital technology.

The Kenya Education Commission drafted the National Goals of Education in 1964, and the Kenya Institute of Education amended them in 2002; the latter is now known as the Kenya Curriculum of Development (KICD), which was changed in early 2013. These revisions form the basis of the secondary school curriculum in Kenya. The goals are geared towards helping learners develop adaptive skills to fit into local, regional, and international communities.

The competencies acquired in technology and industry should align with regional and global contexts. A self-controlled, morally upright, and religiously observant citizen is what the country hopes its students will become by instilling in them the national ideals. These goals capture opportunities for realisation in Kenya if particular popular music genres are introduced into the music curriculum. As a result, the national education objectives may be utilised to decide which popular music genres should be taught in the secondary school curriculum.

This study will refer to goals 2, 3, and 4.

Goal number 2: Promote social, economic, technological, and industrial needs for national development.

Goal number 3: Promote individual development and self-fulfilment, help people grow and achieve their goals. Each student should have the chance to blossom into their unique person via their educational experience. In an ideal world, it would help kids pursue their passions and hone their skills. Character development is an essential part of growing up.

Goal number 4: Promote sound moral and religious values: Advocate for strong spiritual and ethical principles. To help children become disciplined, independent, and

contributing members of society, education should focus on expanding their knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in ways conducive to the formation of strong moral principles.

Although advancements have influenced the expansion of popular music in music education worldwide, educators and students still face pedagogical challenges when incorporating popular music into educational programmes. According to Hanley and Oehler (2009), there is an increasing need for lesson plans and textbooks that treat popular music as an art form and teach it in a way that is appropriate to its subject matter. Methods for studying popular music have also been controversial, with some arguing that they encourage, and others say that they discourage, the inclusion of subpar songs in the canon. Using aesthetics based on evaluation standards established for specific musical genres and their musical features is essential to such discussions (Bayles, 2005). This shifts the discussion of implementation to the resources needed to include popular music in the curriculum.

In Kenya, Mochere (2017) focused on the future of popular music as a teaching and learning subject, emphasising teaching strategies and curricula implementation. The study demonstrated that Kenyan music teachers are unable to handle music more broadly. According to many studies, music educators face challenges keeping up with ever-evolving popular genres (Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall & Tarrant, 2003; Väkevä, 2006; Veblen, 2006). According to Veblen (2006), educators have a perpetual challenge when choosing repertoire that connects with their students: the ever-changing preferences, genres, and sensitivities of popular music. Teachers have a hard time keeping up with their pupils' ever-evolving musical tastes, according to Vasil (2015), citing Green (2006) and Hess (2013). Because of ongoing problems in implementing the curriculum, the author says that music as a subject performs poorly.

The present study will build on this information to explore how including popular music in the curriculum would improve music performance as a learning subject in Kenya. Not only that, but according to many studies (Hughes, 1969; Jaffurs, 2004b; Rodriguez, 2017; Veblen, 2006), many music educators struggle to connect with students' contemporary popular music. It is well known that students and instructors in Kenya and other nations that offer music instruction often have differing musical preferences (MacCluskey, 1979). Many teachers can't help but relate to the music they listened to when they were young and can't think their students' music is good (Green, 2006; Rodriguez, 2004). It has implications for the methodological framework that predicts popular music education instruction. The utilisation of materials and methodologies that relate to students' lives, both in and out of school, is essential for secondary school music programmes to be genuine (Vasil, 2015; Mochere, 2018). Conversely, the instructors have remained steadfast in the curriculum and shown little regard for students' musical tastes (Green, 2008).

In Kenya, popular music gained fame in the late 1950s, starting with Benga, which became significant in the late 1960s. The two popular music genres in Kenya at the time were Congolese and Swahili (Roberts, 1968). The two genres are based on rumba from Congo, and they are in Lingala, or one can be in one of the native languages in Kenya. Regional popular music. Other popular music genres in Kenya include hip-hop, Afro-fusion, reggae, dancehall, Genge, and Gengetone.

The 8-4-4 system in Kenyan secondary schools covers a wide range of musical styles, including traditional African music and modern Western classical music. Nonetheless, the music curriculum has not incorporated popular music, a genre to which students have more exposure and encounter regularly (Law & Ho, 2015; Thompson, 2007; Otoyoy, 2010). As a result of this exclusion, fewer students are interested in music, and fewer are

taking music as a secondary school or college major (Kenya National Examination Commission [KNEC], 2017). Many students have chosen not to take music courses due to the excessive regulations and strict curriculum.

According to Shuker (2001), cultural studies examine the interplay between three aspects of popular culture: the lived cultures of consumers, their social beings, the symbolic forms or texts consumed within these cultures, and the economic institutions and technological processes that produce these texts. Within this framework, the study of popular music fits in with this larger discussion. Regardless of those mentioned above, the following must be addressed in Kenyan popular music education, as pointed out by Shuker (2001):

- a) The conflict between the economic factors and market forces that shape popular culture and the power of consumers to make choices is evident in individuals' purchasing, viewing, reading, and listening habits regarding mass-produced television, films, magazines, bestsellers, and popular music (Shuker, 2001).
- b) The essence of existing cultures and the interconnectedness between cultural inclinations and criteria such as social status, gender, ethnic background, and age.
- c) The ideological function of popular culture is to sustain prevailing ideals, while also offering the potential for subversion and resistance against these favoured interpretations.
- d) The essence of the allure of popular culture (the enjoyment derived from the written word) and its function as a cultural asset.
- e) The frequent occurrence of a "moral panic" response to popular culture and the related concepts of "effects" and causation involved in such incidents. It clearly

emphasises the need to use popular music to demonstrate a significant change in how popular music education is taught and learnt (Shuker, 2001).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is a pressing need to align Kenyan secondary school music education with students' interests and with global, regional, and local music trends. While there has been advocacy for the inclusion of popular music genres, actual classroom practices largely fail to reflect this. The current music curriculum predominantly references music outside the context of Kenyan learners, omitting popular music—a genre with which most youth identify and which shapes their experiences and identities. This omission not only limits students' engagement with music education but also undermines their ability to connect their learning to social, cultural, economic, technological, philosophical, and anthropological realities, thereby constraining the achievement of the national education goals. Incorporating popular music into the curriculum requires more than minor adjustments; it necessitates a rethinking of pedagogical approaches.

Teachers must be equipped with the skills, creativity, and digital competencies necessary to teach popular music effectively. Currently, Kenyan music teacher training emphasises theoretical knowledge while offering limited exposure to popular music, creating a significant pedagogical gap. Consequently, there is a need to identify and implement instructional tools and strategies that can support the practical inclusion of popular music genres in secondary schools. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the integration of popular music into the Kenyan secondary school curriculum, with a particular focus on instructional strategies and tools that facilitate effective teaching and learning. By doing so, the research aims to provide practical solutions for bridging the gap between curriculum advocacy and classroom practice, ensuring that music education is both relevant and responsive to the interests and realities of Kenyan learners. Thus, the

principal research question of this study is: What instructional tools and strategies are available for integrating popular music into the Secondary School music curriculum in Kenya?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective of the Study

To examine instructional tools and strategies for the inclusion of popular music in the curriculum in Kenya, using a case study of selected secondary schools in Nairobi County.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To analyse the suitability of selected popular music genres for integration into teaching materials and resources within the secondary school music curriculum.
- ii. To examine the pedagogical challenges associated with incorporating popular music genres into the secondary school music curriculum.
- iii. To investigate instructional tools that support the effective inclusion of popular music genres in secondary school music education.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. Which popular music genres are relevant for inclusion in the Kenya Secondary school music curriculum?
- ii. What are the potential pedagogical issues associated with the inclusion of popular music genres in the Kenyan secondary school music curriculum?
- iii. What are the instructional tools for the inclusion of popular music genres?

1.5 Justification for the Study

Transitioning from elementary to secondary school is a turning point for young Kenyans. Understudies' passions and hobbies are likely to take shape over this time. If they pursue these interests, students will be more energized, inspired, excited, and motivated to study, build their careers, and explore their social lives. One area of study in secondary school curricula that helps solidify these passions is music. Understudies may broaden their social circles, advance their careers, and improve their listening, performing, and creative abilities by participating in various musical activities.

Despite the pupils' increased exposure to and engagement with popular music (Law & Ho, 2015), it is not a part of the music curriculum (Thompson, 2007; Otoyoy, 2010). As a result of this omission, fewer students are interested in music, and fewer are taking music as a secondary school or college major (Kenya National Examination Commission [KNEC], 2017). Adhiambo (2021) found that students view the curriculum as lacking popular music to which they can connect. Sadly, present-day students think these processes are challenging (Adhiambo, 2021). This has led several students to abandon the field altogether, perhaps because they are more interested in performing modern (pop) songs than in studying music theory (Adhiambo, 2021). Consequently, this highlights the need to re-evaluate the curriculum to better meet students' needs and market demands by including popular music.

The programme's uptake, focusing on the inclusion of popular music in the curriculum, is affected by the attitudes of the following groups: curriculum experts, administrators, the public, and facilitators. Since music is not yet regarded as a fundamental study, its continued inclusion in school curricula is perilous. This scenario depicts the current state of widespread music curriculum implementation in secondary schools worldwide, based on the exact circumstances in Kenya. This informs the research on what kinds of popular

music should be taught in secondary schools in Kenya. The integration of popular music education into the music curriculum will help identify and seize opportunities that align with the national education objectives.

Disagreements arise when there are few opportunities for professional development, limited resources, teachers' opinions on popular music, and institutional restrictions that make it hard to incorporate informal music learning practices into popular music (Abramo & Austin, 2014; Abril, 2009; Allsup, 2003). Many studies have highlighted the significant role that technology plays in popular music. Following the selection of appropriate genres, the research should investigate supplementary technological resources essential to meeting the educators' educational needs.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study's findings will be helpful to secondary school music teachers and administrators, as they will provide guidance on boosting students' academic performance through popular music. The research will help secondary school students by showing which popular music genres should be taught in music classes, which opportunities exist for their teaching, and which pedagogical issues need to be resolved to teach them effectively.

The research will help the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) determine which popular music genres should be taught in secondary school music programmes, as some are rife with vulgarity, drug abuse, and criminal tendencies. Allowing such defeats, the purpose of a moral student is. It will also be helpful for the Ministry of Education and county education officials, who will use the study's results to formulate policies regarding music education. Educational planners will find research valuable, as it provides data to improve their development plans and fill gaps in popular

music instruction. Future research projects by several academics will also benefit from the study's reference resources.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Geographically, the study focuses on the secondary schools offering music education in Nairobi County. Objectively, the study focused on the curriculum used in schools for music education, the entry of popular music, pedagogical issues arising from the disjuncture in the curriculum, and on tools, pedagogy, and strategies that ensured inclusion in the curriculum. Importantly, Nairobi has 386 secondary schools, of which only 24 offer music, according to 2024 KNEC data. This research helped secondary school music curricula decide which popular music styles to teach and which tools and strategies to use in their instruction. KICD was involved because it spearheads curriculum formulation in Kenya. The observation unit included music teachers and Form Three students.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Given that Nairobi is an urban centre, there was variation in the celebrated genres of popular music, which affected the respondents' ability to remain objective and avoid being persuasive about their preferred genre. The effectiveness of the research was hindered if instructor respondents were afraid to share important information, which was seen as a sign of incompetence or self-incrimination. Reassuring respondents that their replies remained confidential helped reduce this. Due to their heavy workload, music teachers did not have enough time to complete the surveys. The researcher provided them with an additional day to finish the surveys to address this. Nonetheless, participants' levels of professional expertise varied during the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the literature relevant to the research, the theories that will guide the research, previous empirical studies, and a conceptual framework. This is to contextualize the research objectives within the literature framework.

2.1.1 Contextualization of Popular Music Education

Popular music is often defined by its context of origin and reception (Hooper, 2017). According to Flynn (2005), social and cultural experiences, especially educational ones, shape the development of musical selves. From a global perspective, changes in music education's teaching and learning have been mainly driven by current events (Mark & Madura, 2012). The field of music education, for example, has mirrored and even expedited the significant historical shifts the United States has seen (Mark & Madura, 2012). Even though Western hegemony shapes the current music curriculum, the critique of its ineffectiveness poses a problem for students and teachers who consider widespread music exposure practically superior (Stone, 2008).

According to Till (2020), the inclusion of popular music education in the UK highlighted several needs within the sector, including the need for greater support for educators working in the field, including tools relevant to teaching. Research from around the world, from universities to high schools, has shown that music departments have been exploring culturally contextual frameworks for the interpretation and analysis of popular music to meet classroom demands.

Because of this, the utilitarian rationale that had previously guided early European music instruction in the Americas would no longer apply (Mark & Madura, 2012). Given the

ever-changing nature of popular music education and the surrounding business, it is imperative to address the problem of overreliance on Western classical music, as this can leave the practical student feeling estranged. This is based on the idea put forth by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education Benchmark for Music (QAA, 2008) that all music students, regardless of setting, should actively participate in reflecting on and making sense of their personal experiences with musical objects and materials, as well as building their conceptual frameworks for the intersection of theory and practice (QAA, 2008).

According to Nzewi et al. (2001), the current discourse in music education philosophies is that indigenous African models and resources should form the basis of the formal system of music education's content and pedagogy. Mochere (2017) argues for the inclusion of popular music in the Kenyan Music Curriculum, stating that this will foster a pragmatic approach that helps young people understand their social and cultural backgrounds in relation to their immediate surroundings.

According to Abramo (2011), the responsibility for incorporating popular music into the curriculum rests with teachers. New possibilities in popular music pedagogy emerge when educators recognise and actively engage with the effects of discourses and identities. This opens up opportunities to teach students about the role music plays in their identity formation and to expose them to new experiences that could change their musical understanding. According to ChenHafteck and Heuser (2017), a popular music school curriculum requires teachers to have excellent musicianship and demonstrate creative abilities, in addition to cultivating relevant pedagogical dispositions. However, it is essential to note that many of these wishful advocacies can be realised by agreeing to put in place formal structures for resources, as elsewhere in the globe.

According to research conducted in various African countries, such as South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, and Nigeria, there is a common issue with curriculum gaps that target Western theory of music over popular music education (Chanunkha, 2005; Iriwieri, 2009; Mumpuka, 2009; Musakula, 2014; Carver, 2020). As per Akuno (2019), the majority of the world uses the music curriculum introduced by European colonisers as a yardstick for evaluating musicianship in educational settings. Based on the early work of British sociologist Bernstein, who was concerned with perpetuating inequality through education systems (Carver, 2020), there is a clear need to change the current music curriculum. This is primarily because the interconnections between the three main areas of music education, performance, composition, and analysis are typically taught separately and are considered tacit.

According to Maton (2010), modern policy insights on education policy indicate that schools should teach students to keep studying throughout their careers so they can adapt to the dynamic nature of the knowledge economy. A form of cumulative learning, policy rhetoric highlights workers' capacities to continuously develop knowledge, acquire new skills, and give new meaning to existing talents (Maton, 2008). According to this strategy, the present music curriculum is counterproductive when seen through the lens of the nation's educational objectives. As per Akuno (2019), indigenous peoples learn music in the context of its practical use, and experiential learning is a defining feature of musical arts education.

In Kenya, various scholars have delved into popular music in general. Much of it is advocacy to include popular music in the school curriculum (Otieno, 2021; Mochere, 2017). Those who propped into the subject are limited to including popular music in existing systems that require a review of the existing curriculum. To confront the fundamental conflict between the practical and theoretical aspects of integrating popular

music, it is necessary to develop new instructional tools and re-evaluate the pedagogical demands of this area (Carver, 2020). This practical disjuncture has not long been fully addressed in the popular music curriculum (Mochere, 2017). Once again, this demonstrates the lack of endeavour to align educational policy with the national objectives of education and the practical consequences that result.

As stated by Chankseliani and McCowan (2021), the following are the eight guiding principles of Kenya's educational curriculum: It is clear from the first goal, "Foster nationalism, patriotism, and promote national unity", that the individuals who make up Kenya's diverse population have every right to coexist peacefully and harmoniously. The overarching purpose of popular music is to unite young people and foster a sense of community. Therefore, it tends to achieve this aim.

According to the second goal, which is to "promote the social, economic, technological, and industrial needs for national development," schools should equip students to make a positive impact on their country. How can this be achieved?

- a) Social Needs: The learner should be able to participate effectively in family, community, national, regional, and international development if they are taught social and adaptive skills.
- b) Economic Needs: The student should possess the skills to support a modern, self-sustaining economy. Individuals should be able to enjoy a good quality of life.
- c) Technological and Industrial Needs: The student should have the skills to keep pace with global trends. Education should equip students with the skills to contribute to the nation's technical and industrial growth.

According to the third goal, which is to "promote individual development and self-fulfilment", students should be allowed to reach their full academic and personal

potential. This means positively impacting the world by developing one's interests, skills, and character. Because secondary school students often form strong connections to music through their musical tastes, including popular music in the classroom in its unique form might be beneficial (Allsup et al., 2012). The students also judge the quality of secondary school music programmes based on teachers' instructional methods. Adolescents' self-esteem and self-image might be negatively affected if their musical classroom experiences do not support the identities they have developed, according to Allsup et al. (2012). This long-term objective is affected by the disconnect between music study and its practicality for the general public.

Education should foster the acquisition of the national values stated in the Kenya Constitution, in line with Goal 4 (raising solid moral and religious values). Ideally, the goal of education would be to help students become disciplined, morally upright adults who uphold strong spiritual and ethical principles.

The fifth goal, "Promote social equity and responsibility," emphasises the importance of education in this regard. Students with impairments and special education needs should be able to participate fully in high-quality, individualised education programmes. Community service learning is one way students may practice taking responsibility for their actions and those of their peers.

To achieve goal six, which is to "promote respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures," students must learn to value and appreciate Kenya's many different cultural traditions. As members of a multicultural and ever-changing society, students should cherish their cultural traditions while enjoying themselves and learning from others.

Regarding the seventh goal, which is to "promote international consciousness and foster positive attitudes towards other nations," it is stated that Kenya is a part of an interconnected web of diverse peoples and nations. It is believed that education should teach students to value diversity, respect one another, and take advantage of opportunities presented by the global community. A well-rounded education should also equip students to participate actively in global society while being well-informed about the privileges, rights, and duties.

Lastly, objective eight states that education should teach students the importance of caring for their own and others' physical and mental health. In the interest of long-term sustainability, it should advocate for measures to protect natural resources and enhance animal welfare.

Supporters of this ideology argue that students don't effectively apply what they have learnt in the classroom to real-world situations without engaging in authentic learning activities that mimic real-world practices and provide them with access to the expertise of professionals in the field (Maton, 2008). This, in turn, affects the content of continuous teaching and learning in music outside the practical lives of learners. For any reason, an education system is an organ with the capacity to evolve and adapt. Intentional adaptation makes the difference; hence the need for curriculum reviews and harmonisation.

2.1.2 The Music Education Curriculum

Focusing on the future of music as a teaching and learning subject, with an emphasis on teaching strategies and curriculum implementation, Mochere (2017) demonstrated that Kenyan music teachers are hindered in handling music more broadly. Mochere (2017) further states that the inadequacy of relevant pedagogical methods may have been a key

hindrance to the inclusion of popular music in mainstream music education in the African context. Due to the rigid nature of the curriculum, teaching music is met with unending rules; hence, students opt out, while teachers are insensitive to the music of young people and strictly follow the syllabus (Green, 2008).

This study will build on this information that including popular music in the curriculum would improve the performance of music as a learning subject in Kenya. Emielu (2013) aimed to explore how African popular music pedagogy can be developed. It emerged that the use of popular music, past and present, can help teachers shift classroom dynamics while equipping students to stay relevant before and after school (Emielu, 2013).

The study hypothesised that, in producing proficient musicians who the job market can easily absorb, teachers are critical agents in implementing music curricula in schools. By leveraging the information sought from the field experiences of the author as a teacher of music, coupled with data from auxiliary sources, Emielu (2013) demonstrated that as long as there is the exclusion of popular music in classrooms, the link between music in schools and its broader utilisation outside the school surroundings will remain elusive.

Popular Music as part of the Music Curriculum

According to Sevim and Güleriyüz (2012), popular music can be traced back to specific eras each of which leaves its societal imprint. Cultural understandings and interpretations are intrinsic to musical texts and performances; this is essentialism (Shuker, 1998). Across cultures and periods, the course material delves into the history, present, and future of various artistic forms. This defines unavoidable variety in ecosystems and socio-political life. One way these interpretations emerge is from the people who make the music in these many forms, but they also emerge from how listeners connect with it (Shuker, 1998).

Students and their friends create a cultural space around popular music, even if it is explicitly forbidden in the school curriculum (Daniel, 1998). Various renditions of popular music genres have emerged worldwide. Mostly, this has happened through appropriation, a catch-all term that may mean "use" and encompasses related ideas such as indigenisation, transculturation, hybridisation, and syncretism. All these things, taken together, suggest that new cultural forms and locations are formed via appropriating, transforming, and blending elements from other sources (Woodstra, 2001). The term "appropriation" is most often used in musical reworkings, such as when a performer takes on another musician's accent, style, or sounds.

Notably, education evolves; these changes are accompanied by the acquisition of different likes and tastes, a highly prevalent phenomenon in music (Shuker, 1998). The rise of popular music, full of cultural differences, and the continued reliance on old musical material for teaching indicate that music education is a disservice. These old forms are short on the basic material for music education, which then opens the greatest debate over their authenticity, either contextual or conceptual. The music curriculum is important in addressing this disjuncture, as the very definition of "popular music" ensures that there will always be listeners for this kind of musical expression (Woodstra, 2001). A well-organised curriculum will lay out the desired outcomes, the course of study to reach those goals, the activities and approaches most likely to bring about those outcomes, and the means to assess progress. Considering the pervasiveness of music in a capitalist industrialized society, it is crucial to analyse the scholarly contributions that have attempted to mainstream popular music to promote certain traits on a global scale (Tagg, 1982). The value, essence, and importance of education must be considered. The continued use of Western classical music has not objectively helped music education, but it has created a gap between education and its value to societal needs and expectations.

The fact that many nations are recognising the value of popular music education is a significant development. Recent events hint at a tipping point, with growth accelerating and now cascading outward (Kratus, 2007).

Vidal (2002) argues that educated people become aware of their environment and become more productive, thereby enhancing their lives and making them good ambassadors of their country and people. He further states that education can easily shape a person's attitude toward life. An educated person can think positively about the progress of their society, and through education, young people are prepared to meet the demands of global competitiveness. The big idea is that no matter the level of education one has acquired, that individual will have undergone extensive training that helps them become better by learning the basics of life and gradually advancing to higher levels of world acceptance. Popular music, without a doubt, bridges the gap between social injustice, cultural prejudice, and the reality of cultural divergence, which is the expected result of education.

This rationale now goes to popular music education. Research at all levels and in related domains has consistently shown that music education is an effective tool for the holistic development of students' cognitive, affective, physical, and social capacities for learning (Onwuekwe, 2009). From the most mundane aspects of human life to the most foundational ideas and beliefs that underpin a society's culture, music education reflects a society's societal ideals. It constitutes an essential educational forum through which learners learn to cope with life's ever-changing challenges. This means it provides learners with an effective medium for acquiring new skills and innovative ideas in the classroom. There is a need to examine and interrogate thoroughly the power that comes with popular music curriculum education.

Biasutti and Concina (2013) have shown that music education has provided evidence of music's potential impact on specific talents. The most pressing concern is the impact of music instruction on the process known as learning transfer. What we call "transfer of learning" happens when knowledge gained in one setting influences the growth of other cognitive capacities that may be "transferred" to different domains (Marini & Genereux, 2013).

One cannot understate the power of music education to help students develop specific abilities that will serve them well in other subjects of study. For example, the progress in one area of content and performance may be enhanced by studying music. Several studies have examined possible links between musical aptitude and linguistic proficiency (Piro & Ortiz, 2009; Chobert et al., 2011), literacy (Gromko & J.E., 2005; Corrigall & Trainor, 2011; Moreno et al., 2011), and spatial reasoning (Orsmond & Miller, 1999). When it comes to life's emotional and social aspects, music can support communication and social skills. Emotional awareness and control are two areas that fit this description (Lima & Castro et al., 2011). Even though these are general musical achievements, they cannot be fully understood or achieved using foreign materials; they should be locally produced and taught to build compatible, universal, and culturally diverse, conscious people.

Based on his research, Elliot (1995) concluded that while music education primarily focuses on teaching students how to make and listen to music, music theory, history, and formal knowledge of these topics are also essential parts of music education. Additionally, he states that there are primarily two approaches to music education: one is to help students become proficient musicians, and the other is to prepare them for careers in teaching, composing, history, criticism, research, or performance. As a last point, Elliot (1995) argues that the first three aims—improving one's health, intellect, and soul

indirectly or directly intersect with music instruction. How, for instance, can one play a foreign classical piece in an authentic African setting?

According to Adeogun (2006), who wrote on music education, including musical instruction in K-12 and higher education, curricula are essential to cultural renewal and transformation. Given music's transformative power, it follows that students benefit from a music education programme when they can grasp socio-musical ideals that adapt to different contexts. According to Anya-Njoku (2021), it provides a basis for negotiating in music cultures by allowing society to study and understand history, folklore, poetry, beliefs, and other aspects that generate knowledge of music, culture, tradition, and identity, which are the foundations of popular music.

The benefits of music instruction for students' academic performance across disciplines are well-documented and warrant careful examination. The ability to read, learn a new language, and so on is all impacted by this. The influence of transfer mechanisms on the development of cognitive capacities and academic achievement in early infancy and adolescence may be further explored through music education. Attitudes towards popular music education are influenced by factors such as the teacher's ability to establish an acceptable classroom atmosphere, students' level of engagement in class, the techniques used in the lessons, students' expectations about the lessons, and the working environment (Aktepe et al., 2014).

Popular music provides a more realistic assessment of student knowledge than is currently available in the curriculum. Remember that the "praxis" of music influences human sociality in terms of "values" and might differ in its degree of intentionality. Thus, such should be "binding" to achieve the eight national goals of education, which have so far been partially achieved because of the persistent decline in funding, and which include, among other things, the promotion of national unity, the development of

individuals, and the attainment of a sense of personal fulfilment concerning moral and religious principles. Unless understood locally, it cannot be understood in any other way. Regelski (2016) alludes to the fact that, like a language, the praxis of music is valued for its contributions to sociality; how do we measure this verily important aspect of music if it is not socially cultured and grown? This then advocates for popular music.

Music is a cultural phenomenon (Njoora, 2015). Being immersed in a culture and its music allows one to gain a deeper understanding of its capabilities, connections to many aspects of life and social dynamics, and how it mirrors significant qualities of its people. Music conjoins and intertwines communities to build cultural tranquility when used appropriately. This is best done with a popular music approach. Francis (2013) notes that music facilitates communication beyond words and promotes the development and maintenance of individual, group, cultural, and national identities. While ‘popular music studies’ have indeed consolidated over the last decade, it remains a fragmented study area. Its intellectual magpie character persists; it draws on diverse sources and brings together experts from many fields. People have considered music essential to their survival since the beginning of time (Akuno, 2015). Consequently, they say that every culture loves its music because its members think it improves life.

Various research has been conducted on the inclusion of popular music in the primary music curriculum in Kenya. Adhiambo (2021) has recently explored the issue, and each proposal is as genuine and intentional as possible.

2.1.3 The Popular Music Genres as Teaching Materials in the Curriculum

The current Kenyan syllabus in music education, with its focus on Western classical music, cannot address this disjuncture (Adhiambo 2021). Because of the rigid curriculum and the unending rules governing music instruction (Green, 2008), there is a need to

examine instructional tools to formulate a curriculum that holistically accommodates current learners. Education is conceptualised as a cultural relay, the mechanism by which culture is generated and reproduced (Bernstein, 2000), and this research is based on Bernstein's notion of the pedagogic device, which connects to this abstract idea. It is a way to investigate the overarching principles that govern the conversion of any intellectual, practical, expressive, official, or local into pedagogic communication (Carver, 2020).

From international and continental evidence, there have been deliberate, intentional processes and research aimed at accommodating popular music within the music education framework. Research into popular music is a subfield of music education. Onwuegbuna (2015) introduces topics surrounding popular music in Africa. Importantly, Onwuegbuna (2015) argues that discussions of popular music in Africa tend to centre on styles that openly incorporate Euro-American practices, such as diatonic and chromatic scales, triadic harmonic principles, and instruments like the guitar, keyboard, trap drums, and brass and reed instruments. Undoubtedly, popular African music predates the arrival of Portuguese merchants in Africa in the 15th century (Onwuegbuna, 2015).

This approach is based on what Ewens (1991) says: it is hard to imagine Africa without music. Regardless of the contemporary perspective, African popular music has deep roots in a musical tradition that has always been there, accompanying both official and informal events (p. 8). He draws parallels between the ebb and flow of existence and the rhythms of African popular music. The idea that the African diaspora can be heard anywhere there is music is more accurate than funny. From the moment of conception till the moment of death, music follows the African (Onwuegbuna, 2015).

Understanding what to teach is not just about the content but about the reflection of the environment, space, and influence through which the learner is presented, cultured, and

created (Davis and Blair, 2011). Both the general public and students are influenced by popular music. According to research by Davis and Blair (2011), pupils exhibit an unusually high level of musical understanding when given the chance to engage with popular music in a classroom setting.

Amidst all this, looking back on the guiding national education goals enshrined in the education policy framework, the continued reliance on these archaic educational materials in teaching music has proven ineffective in realizing them over time. The fact that secondary school music classes are often poorly attended is, according to Bray (2000), because many teachers come from musical backgrounds that are drastically different from those of their students (Eaves et al., 2003; Green, 2002; Gammon, 1996).

Arnstine (2000) suggests that since education is inherently a moral endeavour, the only way to comprehend the ethical function of music instruction is to examine education as a whole. This suggests that something valuable is being sent or has been transmitted intentionally in an ethically acceptable manner (Arnstine, 2000). It would be contradictory to claim that a man's education had no positive impact on his life or that a father was not making a worthy effort to educate his child (Arnstine, 2000). It raises fundamental questions that we all ought to interrogate, mainly those in the music education business:

- How relevant are the music curriculum and the music education policy framework in helping realise music's full potential in the institutions that have music programmes?
- How effective is music education in driving change that aligns with Kenya's national education goals to address the dynamics of the 21st century?

The national goals of education require that the system produce individuals who are fully aware of nationalism and patriotism and are keen to promote social, economic, and technological development. Further, it requires such people to grow individually with self-fulfilment. This is the vital point of popular music in education. Wanyama (2006) underpins the value of music education, which is not maximised in Kenya.

As both a verbal and a visual art form, music performances embody people's cultures, as Wanyama (2006) noted. Thus, strengthening music education is one strategy to promote cultural identity and integration and prevent cultural fragmentation. Rapid social, economic, and technological progress is often associated with cultural preservation and identity, as evidenced by examples from industrialised nations. Physical education, music therapy, dance and movement, and visual and verbal arts actively draw on indigenous knowledge systems embedded in different cultures (Wanyama, 2006). In South Africa, the need to introduce popular music and revise it further stemmed from the fact that, in Arts and Culture, the curriculum lacked sequential conceptual coherence, which inhibited progression (Carver, 2020). The suggestion to enhance the specified content aims to provide a more comprehensive portrayal of music standards that align with the principles of advanced skills and knowledge, as well as progression and integration. This recommendation is closely related to the Kenyan Curriculum.

The question of morality in education cannot be underestimated. Popular music currently is flouted in 'anything' can sell, making it essential to its phrase Arnstine's question; are ethics.

What are the considerations relevant to music education? Understandingly, while it may be morally questionable to introduce specific musical works in school, it cannot be argued that certain forms or types of music are good or bad (Arnstine, 2000). So, whose responsibility and capability is it to influence the proper and ethical avenues that need to

be in the learning and teaching of music education? The answer is no doubt; this study will help find the answer(s) because it will focus on the questions. Elliot (1989) notes that assimilationist, amalgamationist, and open society curricula all share the same hidden aim: eradicating cultural variety in favour of cultural homogeneity. Of course, the inculcation of majority ideals, including musical standards and values, is an explicit aim of these curricula. Hence, even though these ideas are often portrayed as valid variants of multiculturalism, they do not embody multiculturalism. Their only support seems to be for the sonic and pedagogical analogues of free speech, conflicting ideals, and diversity. Elliot affirms that the real change is in curricula, but the delivery of those curricula is fundamental and cannot be reduced to an observer in such life-changing moments (Elliot, 1989).

According to Elliot (1989), there is a unique opportunity to realise dynamic diversity through music education. In addition, he insists that we can build a vibrant musical community that recycles ideas and experiences across different musical settings, making them even better by taking a pan-human view of a wide diversity of global music. A school is a multicultural environment; instinctively, one cannot find learners taking music or in a music class from the same socio-cultural setup. (Thompson, 2007; Ondieki, 2010). According to Akuno (2012), the issues affecting the delivery of the popular music curriculum are technical in nature. But again, only a genius can understand the vast range of popular music and develop material tailored to each learner.

Finally, at all levels of education internationally and here in Kenya, today's learner is tomorrow's teacher, artist, practitioner, or educator. This translates to education for sustainable development. Xavier (2004), trying to explain why popular music is not used in schools in the USA, gives the following reasons: Various factors contribute to the current state of school music, including a lack of demand, social-class linkages, cultural

prejudice, local control, a leaning towards cognitive training, and a desire to change preferences. This study will attempt to identify the working formula for the emergence of popular music in schools. Each of those issues resonates with fears associated with any curriculum review. Indeed, common is comfortable. The study, however, is designed to unravel the uncommon that is already common so that music education becomes efficient and perfect for those learners who want to pursue their fortunes in music.

The Pedagogical Discourse and Teacher Preparedness

According to Akuno (2019), pedagogies and teaching approaches originating from native African musical systems are primarily disregarded in the continent's music education programmes. Here, the foundation of teaching knowledge is a complex path to effective music education, and educators' knowledge is highly correlated with their unique life experiences and perspectives (Msimango, 2023). Codified and context-specific knowledge are the two main types of educator knowledge (Msimango, 2023). Georgii-Hemming (2013) states that codified information is built upon formal/vertical learning, which mainly consists of propositional knowledge or cognition gained from prior learning and different contextual contexts. On the other hand, practical, context-specific informal/horizontal learning is the foundation of context-specific knowledge (Georgii-Hemming, 2013). According to Msimango (2023), music educators use their professional and social knowledge and abilities to teach music in various learning environments, both formal and informal.

As per Msimango's (2023) research, which takes a sociological and historical approach to the topic, teacher education programmes should be included in knowledge about teaching. Educator's knowledge has multiple dimensions, including personal and cultural knowledge, professional training, disciplinary knowledge, curricular knowledge, and experiential knowledge. It is often believed that colleges and universities train future

educators to follow, and even shape, the curriculum in music education. Educators are shifting their focus from method-based to competency-based learning. According to Darling and Hammond (2017), this kind of learning emphasises tailoring learning tools to individuals' preferences and methods. Kelly (2004) argues that for teaching to be successful, assessment must be present. Whether they realise it or not, all educators must constantly evaluate their pupils. To guide students towards more significant growth, teachers must continuously assess their students' learning levels. The conventional classroom setup does not provide the adaptability many of today's pupils need. According to Serdenciuc (2013), students have more agency and a higher probability of success via competency-based education (CBE). As a result, the focus shifts from the teacher to the student, from emphasising subject matter to students' ability to apply what has been learnt (Jolanta & Yuqing, 2017). In the beginning, there is the instructor.

This then demystifies the notion that music practitioners need not be music educators. Learning by seeing in today's learning environment is far better than learning by hearing; in any case, both can work. It reflects the teacher's practical skills proportionately to their theoretical skills. For example, according to Karmazina (2009), a competence-oriented model for music teachers would include the following as personal and professional performance indicators:

- a) Displays suitable conduct while exhibiting the circumstances of educational contact; has the necessary psychological and pedagogical understanding to use a variety of approaches to work with children of varying ages.
- b) Second, this kind of educator is technically and methodologically savvy, enabling them to design engaging lessons for both individuals and small groups that leverage cutting-edge tools.

- c) The instructor also has the drive and research abilities necessary for independent study, research, and evaluation.
- d) In addition, a good teacher must possess the personal traits that underpin professional competence, as well as specialised (musical) and general educational abilities.
- e) Lastly, this kind of educator should be well-versed in the arts and creative processes to fully realize the classroom's cognitive, transformational, value-oriented, and communicative potential.

The reason is that a music instructor requires a unique set of skills, most of which are honed via formal education. A musician might excel as a performer (singer, pianist, conductor) yet struggle as a music educator, proving the concept's significance once again. For a teacher musician to be effective in their work, their credentials in both popular music and teaching must be tightly aligned. Because of the unique nature of creative expression and its connections to educational pursuits, the competency of a popular music instructor is related to the acquisition of certain traits. According to Tavoras (2011), these factors determine how one's professional abilities develop. In this instructional discourse, there are essential ideas.

Music Education Involves Broadly Teaching the Skill

Teaching students how to perform is the cornerstone of music instruction. Aural and motor conceptions must be formed to learn performance abilities. The role of the music educator is fourfold: to introduce the material, to help students understand it in context, to assess their performance, to provide opportunities to practice individual portions as needed, to determine their performance again, and finally, to reinforce the ideas (Akuno 2015). The instruction and study of popular music are severely lacking in the required musicianship, which will assist in development. An understanding of rhythmic and tonal

movement in music, as well as the development of notions of tonality, chordal and tonal tendencies, the meaning of notational symbols, and the relationship between the symbols and the sounds they represent, is all necessary for teaching popular music reading (Akuno 2015). Teachers may assist their pupils in conceptualising the tonal and rhythmic flow of music through sight, sound, and movement by focusing on these senses across several significant encounters with the score to achieve mastery. This is crucial from an empirical standpoint, as adaptations will need to change over time to achieve their goals.

Pedagogy Approach to Handle Competence and Complex Issues in Popular Music Education

The instructional models put forward by McNergney and Herbert, including Joyce et al. (2001), have my full support. 'There is no one optimum technique to educate all individuals for all reasons,' as you say, since students have different strengths and weaknesses. Those suitable for main sciences and technology-oriented, pragmatic courses should be encouraged, and those whose intrinsic ability, motivation, and talent are based in music should be supported. The teacher holds the last call necessary to realise the full potential of music education. Like teachers' competencies are in their ability to see the goal of music in each child before they even start teaching. They need to understand the essential evaluation and assessment methods that help them realise this.

Curriculum Change by Inclusion of Popular Music Education Directs the change of Instructional Materials

At the same time, studies must show that the curriculum is changing, and that goals and objectives must change as well. Hence, pedagogical frameworks need to evolve. Most music courses should be structured to allow for many connected tasks rather than isolated ones, as Mochere and Weil (2017) suggested. Incorporating sequencing, aural, and harmonic elements into the instruction of scales is one way to ensure that all musical

elements, not just the primary topic, are taught. Because of the diversity, this is more motivating and helps put ideas in perspective (Mindoti et al., 2004). To keep the students from becoming completely disengaged, many of these resources need to have a popular viewpoint on music.

Popular Music Education is Conceived from Music Practices

Regarding the holistic approach to music education, I concur with Elliott's (1995) contention that the field views musical performance and composition as "practices." To begin with, he says music should be considered an activity that people do. Contrarily, listening and "musicing" (composing music) are fundamental to musical activity. The creative aspect of musical activities, known as musicing, considers the "musicer" as an agent, the music as a result, and the musical setting as a whole.

In addition to these four aspects, he posits four more facets of hearing: the act of listening itself, the listener, "listenables" (sounds that should be heard), and the listening environment. One can look at the four dimensions of musical creation and reception from four different angles: directly, as the result of independent systematic action; behind, as motivated action; in front, as goal-directed action; and around, as an action within a context of similar actions. According to Elliott, music is best understood as a multifaceted phenomenon that relies on the reciprocal processes of making and listening. This is the same concept regarding the teaching itself, and it must be correctly applied in the classroom. This will help pragmatic music teaching, allowing learners to interrogate their reasons for making music, which I know provides them with a strong opportunity to make the right choices. It will also shape their ability to listen and their capacity to build musicianship. If this were derived from local popular music, it would bring the efficiency much needed.

Appreciating Culture in the Class Offers a Way to Enhance Local Music, which Influences the Class's Musical Aptitudes

Our perspective on and reaction to music may be profoundly impacted by its cultural and ideological connotations. Each style displays a distinct pattern of values, which some may find appealing while others find repulsive, depending on their sensitivity to this dimension. Such tests predict whether a person will find it easier to respond freely to music. According to Bowman (2005), the approval or disapproval of a musical style often happens subconsciously. For example, someone from a working-class upbringing could feel out of place listening to classical music. They could dismiss it as uninteresting because it is not their style (Bowman, 2005).

As a rule, music teachers cannot sit on their hands when students want to avoid specific genres and traditions. Even if the exact strength of cultural-ideological meaning barriers is unknown, they should endeavour to remove them to the best of their ability. One cannot disregard the reality that many segments of our society have a strong attachment to their musical heritage. The future of multicultural music education is dependent on our ability to free musical appreciation from limiting ideological frameworks. Our society's educational system will succeed if it brings together people of many cultural backgrounds. Music education is crucial in this context because it can bring individuals from diverse backgrounds together harmoniously (Bowman, 2005).

Technology in Teaching Popular Music

With the advent of the 21st century and the shift from conventional education to student-centred approaches, the role of the teacher has evolved. Instead of only providing students with knowledge, teachers help them find it and take charge of their learning (Sevan & Nart, 2016). It is now expected that a teacher who instructs students keep up with the latest technological trends in their profession, become proficient with the

technology used in the classroom, and find ways to incorporate it into their teachings (Prensky, 2001). Because kids spend so much time every day interacting with electronic devices like computers, the internet, video games, iPads, iPhones, and TVs, he claims that today's pupils are all "native speakers" of the language of "digital" and refers to them as the Net generation. There is a pressing need to investigate and identify potential classroom applications of these technological advancements in teaching popular music.

New sensory organs that promote creativity and productivity have also been created for educators and students who are up to date on technological trends and are receptive to change. Consequently, technological tools and resources are pivotal in the modern popular music classroom. Questions such as "How can I learn?", "How can I teach easily?" and "How can I teach persistent knowledge and skills?" within learning-teaching contexts were the inspiration for educational technology, according to Günay and Özdemir (2012). As a result, more and more people realise how important it is to include ICT resources in classroom instruction and use them effectively. This highlights the need to adapt the technical component to meet the unique requirements of popular music.

Teacher Professional Development (TPD)

According to Sarason (1971), educators have been considering professional development for 30 years, beginning in the early 1970s. This points to almost 65 years of continuous research on educators' professional development. Music educators' professional development has been the subject of a few systematic studies, in contrast to the vast literature on teacher professional development (Resnick, 2005; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Each of these professional development opportunities hinges on its effect on educators and, by extension, the kids in their care. To achieve this goal, many music educators participate in beneficial, fruitful professional development opportunities, such as seminars, conferences, and professional groups. To better

understand how to adapt to diverse trends, instrumentals, and individual pupils, instructors must stay up to date through professional development (TPD).

Heightened Collegiality and Collaboration Between Teachers

According to Berliner (2001), educators should prioritise setting aside time for mentorship and cooperation, and allocating time for educators to consult with one another about their teaching experiences. Collegiality and teamwork have also been deemed crucial by other academics. Some people believe that a productive setting for professional growth cannot exist without fostering collaboration and collegiality. Collegial relationships, supportive leadership, clear and focused goals, support systems, sufficient time for learning and collaboration, shared governance, appropriate rewards and recognition, and adequate resources are all components of a supportive learning context in schools, according to Killion (1999). Educators in collaborative and collegial settings work towards shared objectives and shoulder collective student accountability for their learning (Lieberman, 2009).

In the early 20th century, the prevailing philosophy of music education was characterised by its ability to foster society's socialisation and citizenship ideals (McPhail, 2012) in line with the guiding national aims of education. The only real benefit of musical education in the classroom is its positive cultural effects. The skills students learn to effectively manage their free time and the growth of their empathy and creativity (Pitts, 2000). This is in perfect harmony with the aims of encouraging personal growth and happiness, good morals, and preserving and enhancing Kenya's diverse and vibrant cultural heritage via a firm foundation in national pride. Ultimately, it is worth noting that popular music serves both purposes: supporting social, economic, technical, and industrial needs for national growth while also boosting creativity. People believe "good" music may elevate society and serve as a moral compass (McPhail, 2012).

This is why the person teaching popular music must be up to standard in everything, not just pedagogy; they are music shapers in all ways. This study will focus on developing teacher relevance in popular music. Inwardly, such a teacher should command competence to move this child from a classroom to a professional. They should be teachers with the capacity to mentor and model. In this current era of education, the climax of the process is the ability to be functional in the job market. If popular music education does not reflect that, then the rest cannot happen. It can only be made possible through the teacher. Therefore, the teacher must be competent and skilled enough to help the learner fully understand this job market and remain socially functional.

I want to establish a philosophical connection among a global viewpoint, the concepts of aesthetic education (Reimer, 1989), education of perception (Gardner, 1993), music education as an entrance into a discourse (Swanwick, 1994), and praxial music education (Elliott, 1995). This philosophical approach influences the teacher's focus on relevance and abilities, and I must strive to cultivate the teacher-student connection.

Perkins (1988) discusses the notion of teaching for transfer, which refers to the capacity of an educational concept to be used in a different environment or area. The concept of the student as a creator should primarily focus on the role of music education in developing character, specifically by recognising and describing the processes that enhance, solidify, and give meaning to the music learning experience. This determining element establishes the individuals who should be responsible for teaching (Dillon, 2001).

In addition, Dillon (2001) introduced the concept of the "student as maker". These three pillars are the focal point. The first is that listening to, performing, and composing music are all essential components of the musical experience that need contemplation and introspection. According to Schon (1984, 1987), this procedure must include

contemplation of action. In addition, he suggests that the school community as a whole should be involved in music-making activities. On the one hand, it must be aesthetically pleasing and innovative within the field; on the other, it must be practical and useful, serving the community with sensitivity, respect, and engagement. Lastly, various sources should be considered when selecting content. Music from other cultures and with different tastes should be a part of this material, which should also include multimedia and a globalised repertoire and process; moreover, this music should add to our understanding of music by bringing us back to previously explored components (Dillon, 2023). This is fundamental because it establishes the framework for our teaching method for popular music.

Dillon (2023) posits that a student who strives to solidify fundamental knowledge does so by integrating these concepts into extracurricular, co-curricular, cross-curricular, and curriculum-based initiatives. In addition, it aims to investigate the impact of settings and institutions on arts and music education by drawing philosophically on existing ideas in the field. "Student as maker" subsumes these concepts under the umbrella of "art life reintegration," which acknowledges the importance of art education and schooling in shaping students' identities (what Buber (1969) terms "the education of character"). These principles inform the main objective of popular music at the end of the period for those learners taking it. Additionally, this reflects the botanical aim of my study: to realise how capable those learners have already been through music, using various institutional data, which will then present my analogy as more of an affirmative action in the line of popular music education.

The core of "student as a maker," according to Dillon (1995), is to acknowledge the merging of art and life and to provide people with the critical principles and educated perceptual abilities necessary to identify and evaluate art in everyday life, both up close

and from a distance. Engaging with the postmodern world and beyond requires thinking in this manner. On top of that, the capacity to create or be creative with aesthetic materials, or, in my opinion, any materials, is where one may find the general abilities that will serve them well in their intellectual, social, and occupational lives. As we engage in creative production and reflection, we transform our creations and ourselves; this is undoubtedly a lifelong kind of education, according to Dillon (2023). This informs that the objective of “how” popular music is taught is the product of the learner, not necessarily the character of the student learning music. This forms the pedagogical discourse that must radiate the pragmatic expectations of the learners taking popular music. The measure of understanding cannot be one way but must be round; that’s the only way of raising the idea of the student as a maker.

To further break this down in principle, regarding popular music education and specifically in the classes where they are effective, the approach, as mentioned earlier, is based on the principles and techniques of the three philosophies embedded in music education. The approach refers to utilitarianism, the aesthetician approach, and paraxial philosophies. In music education, these are the most critical components because they reflect and shape the context through which popular music will be taught.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This aligns with the guiding principles that inform the study and cuts to the specifics embedded in the study to achieve the study’s objectives. The idea of popular music education may be grounded on applicable ideas such as Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory (1983, 1993, 1999, 2006b, 2006c), LeBlanc's Theory of the Sources of Variation in Music Preference (1980), and Dewey's social constructivism (1938, 2003, 2017). The goal of LeBlanc's Theory of the Sources of Variation in Music Preferences is to identify the essential factors that lead listeners to choose a specific style of music. This may help

determine whether listeners will accept or reject a particular musical taste. GMIT justifies enriching the educational curriculum with popular music genres, arguing that students may understand the world through musical thinking. A learner-centred classroom and the use of multiple platforms for teaching are major pedagogical concerns under this paradigm. Therefore, incorporating popular music in secondary curricula widens the available platforms for student mastery while delivering content; this theory relates to the specific objective of exploring the popular music genres that can be included in teaching materials and resources in the secondary school music curriculum. Dewey's social constructivist theory (Williams, 2017) argues that students' interests should inform curriculum development based on experience. Hence, incorporating popular music genres into secondary school curricula would increase students' autonomy and enhance their ability to express ideas.

2.2.1 LeBlanc's Theory of the Sources of Variation in Music Preference

With this theory as a guide, we can better understand which popular music genres work best for classroom music instruction. The Kenyan society already has popular songs. Commercially produced and promoted music is what Roy Shuker (2005a) calls "popular music" (p.14). This music is mass-produced, technologically enhanced, commercially oriented, and listened to by everyone (Otieno, 2021). Additionally, it is often transmitted via mass media, including the internet, YouTube, television, and broadcasting, and recorded and stored on compact discs (CDs) (Otieno, 2021), which also relates to (Middleton, 2013, p. 224). Therefore, this theory is vital because local music exists in a local way (popular).

LeBlanc developed the theory in the 1980s and has since conducted various studies on music preferences. The theory seeks to identify relevant influences that allow listeners to choose a single musical preference. The theory could inform whether listeners accept or

reject a musical preference. The theory identifies probable sources of music preference while illustrating variables such as psychomotor, affective, and cognitive constructs of music learning. The theory is based on a hierarchical structure of indicators that collectively form eight levels. The first level comprises the input variables that include cultural influences and physical properties. The second, third, and fourth levels cover physiological enabling circumstances, basic attention, and current affective state. The components in level five include personality, the need to train, and maturation influences. The sixth, seventh, and eighth levels influence preference, brain processes, the point of decision, and the judgement of preference.

Teachers of music face the difficult decision every day of choosing the kind of music to use in the classroom. Although several factors to focus on and consider exist, teachers have some flexibility in how they are ranked. Thus, a critical review of this theory can offer relevant insights to music instructors and other stakeholders, as well as the necessary information to choose music. The theory argues that the preference decision does not result from one factor or a combination of factors. However, music preferences are informed by the interaction between input information and listeners' attributes. The input information components include the listeners' cultural environment and the musical stimulus.

This theory is relevant to the study, as it will guide curriculum developers in determining which popular music to include in music education in Kenyan secondary schools. An appraisal of this theory's components can provide additional guidance on the popular music genres that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms.

2.2.2 Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory

This theory was developed by Gardner (1983), who posits that learning materials should be produced in multiple ways, regardless of the subject being taught (history, science, or art). This not only helps learners study the materials but also allows educators to reinforce students' ability to master the content. This theory can be applied to the development of curricula, the planning of instruction, and the selection of activities for the course, among other things. The theory argues that specific weaknesses and strengths in different bits of intelligence characterise everyone. This is why teachers need to decide on the best way to present the course materials, taking into account individual learners and the subject matter at hand (Gardner, 2013).

Students' learning and mastery are enhanced when instruction uses a range of appropriate and meaningful methods, assessments, and activities. In most cases, the most logical or articulate individuals are highly esteemed. However, Gardner (1983) argues that equal attention should also be given to individuals who are talented in other fields, such as musicians and artists. Unfortunately, most learners with such talents lack adequate reinforcement from schools (Strauss, 2013).

The relevance of this theory to the study is that it advocates the inclusion of multiple music genres in secondary school curricula. This will improve the students' mastery and learning outcomes. Thus, the theory will underpin the variable pedagogical issues of popular music genres.

2.2.3 Dewey's Social Constructivism Theory

The proponent of this theory was Dewey (1916), who argued that social and individual knowledge can be constructed. It argues that knowledge is not specific and must be utilised, as it helps interpret reality. The theory is premised on the idea that people learn

when they acquire experience from what they have learnt. In other words, experience helps people develop their sense of meaning. Thus, the teacher's role is to present the main idea to learners, and students will capture the finer details.

The key thing about this theory is that learners should strive to emphasize learning. It is the learners' responsibility to develop their knowledge actively. In other words, each learner should be responsible for their learning outcome. Therefore, students are directed and motivated to learn new ideas through discovery learning, for example, learning about popular music by listening to various genres to identify the multiple attributes of each genre.

This theory will therefore argue for the inclusion of popular music in curricula to provide students with practical learning experiences. The theory will underpin the variable of opportunities presented by including popular music genres in the secondary school curriculum.

2.3 Empirical Review

This section provides empirical reviews of past studies. Empirical reviews help researchers find areas where more research is needed. This can lead to more relevant and impactful research.

2.3.1 Popular Music Genres that should be included in Secondary School Music Curriculum

In a study conducted by Borthwick and Moy (2004), the focus was on popular music genres. Some relevant popular music genres noted in this study include reggae, rap, soul, and heavy metal. Errey (2019) provided the most popular music genres: dance, country, jazz, blues, rock, and roll. The study conducted by Chen-Hafteck and Heuser (2017) found that including popular music in school curricula requires teachers to have

excellent musicianship skills and to demonstrate creative abilities, in addition to cultivating relevant pedagogical dispositions and abilities among learners.

Popular music genres like rock and jazz originate in the UK. In Nordic countries, popular music has been widely included at every level of formal education (Green, 2008). This assertion is supported by Karlsen and Väkevä (2012), who observed that popular music was introduced as a compulsory part of school curricula starting in the 1970s. For instance, in 1971, styles and genres like rock, pop, folk, and jazz were established in the school curricula in Gothenburg, Sweden (Olsson, 1993)

In the USA, there has been growth in popular music brought about by the success of organisations (for-profit and non-profit organisations) that provide curricular resources, convene workshops, give classes, and organise training in popular music. One of the largest and most popular organisations behind the success of popular music in the USA is Little Kids Rock (LKR) among other things, it provides instruments for popular music, organises for workshops for teachers and gives curricular resources to teachers in public schools, in the USA (Welch, Purves, Papageorgi, Creech, Himonides, Duffy, Morton, Potter, Haddon, Whyton and de Bezenac, 2008).

The study in Norway by Dyndahl, Karlsen, Nielsen, and Skårberg (2017) focused on higher education and examined how popular music can be academised there. The study focused on the forms of popular music excluded and included in school curricula. The study found that popular music has been successfully used in Norwegian school curricula, raising concerns about academic openness.

Garvis, Barton, and Hartwig (2017) compared the school music curricula of Australia and Sweden. It was hypothesised that, although music is a critical subject in schooling, other subjects, such as science, math, and English, are accorded privileged status at the

expense of art-based subjects. By leveraging content analysis, several themes emerged from the curricula, including making and responding to music, health and safety concerns, and indigenous music. The importance of conducting such comparative studies is that they help improve curricula development and understanding of the skills and knowledge students are expected to acquire from a global perspective.

Garvis, Barton, and Hartwig (2017) explore the discourse of music education using Sweden as a case study. The paper acknowledged that significant progress and development had been realised in music education in Sweden, mainly due to learners' considerable influence on curricula, thereby increasing the use of popular music. It was discovered that the music curricula in Sweden are practical, resulting in learners' social and musical personal development. However, because it placed greater emphasis on individual social development and the musical interests of specific students, the study acknowledged that music education in Sweden has become inadequate, with teaching methods and content that offer limited direction and little creative engagement with the subject.

The study by Sanderson (2014) focused on Nebraska high schools to examine how music classes were taught. The study noted that most schools in the USA offer more music courses than just choirs and bands. Allsup (2011) compared classical and popular music by emphasising perspectives and strategies. The study described the methods used to teach and practice popular music. It emerged that collaborative learning is a necessary approach for classical musicians to acquire knowledge of popular music.

In the context of South Africa, Matthews (2011) explored adolescents' preferences for generic music styles, focusing on genres such as rhythm and blues, house, and hip-hop. The study was exploratory in its design. The study was anchored on LeBlanc's Model of the Sources of Variation in Music Preference. Participants were selected purposively. It

was noted that the most and least preferred music styles among urban adolescents in South Africa were blues and rhythm, western pop, reggae, house, hip-hop, rock, and gospel jazz.

In Kenya, Mochere (2017) focused on the future of music as a teaching and teaching subject, emphasising teaching strategies and curriculum implementation. The study demonstrated that Kenyan music teachers are unable to handle music more broadly. The paper noted that performance in music is dismal due to the perennial challenges encountered in implementing the curriculum. The present study will build on this information to explore how including popular music in the curriculum would improve music performance as a learning subject in Kenya.

2.3.2 Pedagogical Issues that May Affect the Inclusion of Determined Popular Music Genres in the Secondary School Music Curriculum

Dunbar-Hall and Wemyss (2000) investigated the implications of studying popular music in Australian music education. It was proposed that the introduction of popular music into the Australian music syllabus in the 1970s disrupted and prompted a rethinking of music education. This disruption was occasioned by music educators, who realised that the methods used to teach art music, which essentially underpinned syllabuses before the 1970s, were not suitable or relevant for teaching popular music. In response to this realisation, alternative music education methods have been developed, reshaping the learning and teaching strategies. This means that including popular music in school curricula will provide an opportunity to reshape and redefine the content, teaching methods, and techniques.

Özdemir and CiftcibasÄ (2017) examined the impact of popular music on students' attitudes toward music lessons. The study's key focus was to determine whether using

popular music to teach songs resulted in significant attitudinal differences among students in middle schools in Turkey. The study noted that using popular music examples in learning songs increased students' attitudes to participate in music lessons. It further disclosed that students enjoyed music lessons and classes more when popular music samples were used to teach songs. The study noted an increased motivation for lessons and a desire to participate in activities in and out of the classroom.

The study by Szentgyorgyi (2015) primarily focused on popular music and its impact on students' achievement. In this study, the effect of playing popular and classical music on students' achievement was compared. The findings showed that playing popular music improved students' scores compared to playing classical music. This implies that including popular music in school curricula can improve scores and, thus, students' overall academic achievement.

Tan and Conti (2019) analysed the familiarity of popular music among Chinese people compared to traditional Chinese music. A quantitative experimental design was employed in this study, conducted at an institution of higher learning, with undergraduate students as respondents. It emerged that participating in world music courses may contribute to the preference for Chinese traditional music. However, exposure to popular versions of traditional Chinese music does not appear to foster a preference for traditional Chinese music. An explanation noted for this was that popular music is characterised by its own specific cultures and attributes that may not necessarily be transferred to music from other genres.

Several opportunities arise when popular music is incorporated into mainstream classroom teaching and learning. This is an essential strategy for helping young students to bridge to classical music (Ng, 2018). The rise of modern technology allows young people to download and listen to popular music, thereby increasing their interest when

the same is taught in the classroom. Students can use electronic devices such as laptops and mobile phones to access popular music on websites (Fautley, 2021). Popular music is entertainment, as it is used as background music in most television and commercial shows that students can access. Popular music can attract students' interest since most young learners enjoy it. Despite these opportunities, there are also divergent views on integrating popular music into school curricula, as its educational value has been questioned. As Frith (1987) observed, popular music lacks aesthetic worth, and Davis and Blair (2011) argue that this is not critical in pedagogy. On the other hand, proponents of popular music pedagogy argue that performing these genres in learning institutions broadens student representation while increasing creativity. This enhances their appreciation of different worldviews and lifestyles, thereby fostering diversity (Hebert, 2009).

2.3.3 The Instructional Tools Required for the Inclusion of the Popular Music Genres

Mochere (2016) conducted a study focusing on the pedagogical issues that music teachers face when implementing music curricula. The study hypothesised that, in the production of proficient musicians, teachers whose job markets can easily absorb them are critical agents in implementing music curricula in schools. The paper identified pedagogical issues that music teachers face, including negative attitudes towards music, insufficient pre-service training, and the use of theoretically based instructional methods. The present study will establish whether these pedagogical issues can affect the inclusion of popular music in curricula.

The study conducted by Emielu (2013) aimed to explore how African popular music pedagogy can be developed. By leveraging the author's field experience as a music teacher, coupled with data from auxiliary sources, the study demonstrated that, as long as

popular music is excluded from classrooms, the link between music in schools and its broader utilisation outside the school environment will remain elusive. The paper further observed that the inadequacy of relevant pedagogical methods may have hindered the inclusion of popular music in mainstream music education in the African context. The concluding remark of this study was that only after thorough fieldwork can the relevant methods for popular music pedagogy in the African context be developed. However, this should be informed by students' learning experiences.

Powell, Smith, and D'Amore (2017) evaluated pedagogical approaches to challenge hegemony and symbolic violence in music education. The study hypothesised that music education is conducted within social-political systems that contribute to the institutionalisation of cultural domination. It emerged that class structures and divisions tend to be perpetuated by education systems, thus excluding the aspirations and music of many individuals.

Klonowski (2021) examined teachers' perspectives on the inclusion of rock in high school classrooms in the USA. The study noted a moderate link between jazz and rock. This meant that teachers who had prepared to teach jazz were likely to offer rock, too. The teachers' open response was fear that students would shift from jazz to rock. Music teachers also indicated the need for more training to teach rock music more comfortably.

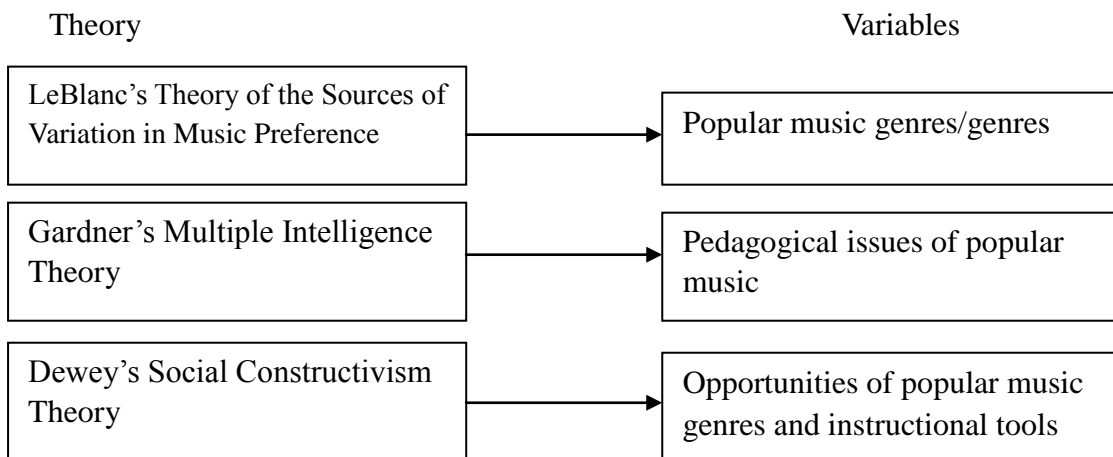
Hebert (2011) set out to establish the factors that hinder the need to resist popular music pedagogy within the USA context. It was shown that the most popular music in the world is blues and rock, originating in the USA. The pedagogical issues in teaching popular music noted in the study include teachers' preferences for listening to and teaching it, as well as their preparedness to teach it. Kruse (2015) examined students' attitudes and experiences towards various music genres and suggested that participants' performance experience and interests inform the teaching and learning of popular music.

Davis and Blair (2011) argue that some teachers may resist including popular music in the classroom because of inadequate teacher education, inadequate resources and strategies for teaching, and their general perceptions of popular music.

The philosophical stances opposing the inclusion of popular music in school curricula were analysed by Herbert and Campbell (2000), who appraised the reasons against the inclusion of rock in the curriculum. It was noted that conventional teacher education has failed to provide adequate training in rock; the genre was seen as anti-educational and rebellious, and it was challenging to develop a sound instructional design for rock music. Springer (2016) identified music educators' perceptions of popular music as a key factor in shaping its teaching and learning in schools. These perceptions include perceived effectiveness and appropriateness of popular music, perceived preparation in teaching popular music, and attitude towards the music genre (Mroziak, 2017). The investigation will be guided by the theoretical framework shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Theoretical Framework



The theoretical framework is grounded in three key theories: LeBlanc's Theory of Music Preference, Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory, and Dewey's Social Constructivism Theory. Each theory supports a specific component of the study and, collectively, explains how popular music genres can be integrated into the secondary school curriculum, how teachers engage with them pedagogically, and how students benefit from their instructional use.

LeBlanc's Theory of Music Preference provides the foundation for understanding the inclusion of popular music genres and subgenres in the curriculum. According to this theory, learners' preference for certain types of music is shaped by factors such as age, exposure, cultural background, and social context. This makes popular music a powerful and relevant medium for teaching because it reflects the musical experiences students bring to the classroom. LeBlanc's theory, therefore, supports the study's first construct by explaining why popular genres such as Afrobeats, Hip-hop, Benga, Reggae, and Gengetone are meaningful to learners and should be considered in curriculum design.

Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory informs pedagogical issues in teaching popular music. The theory argues that learners possess diverse intelligences, musical, interpersonal, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic, and others, which influence how they learn. Popular music genres naturally engage multiple intelligences, yet teachers may face challenges if they lack training or resources to utilize teaching approaches aligned with these diverse learning pathways. Gardner's theory, therefore, explains the pedagogical challenges encountered when integrating popular music genres, including the need for specialized teacher preparation, differentiated instruction, and diverse teaching strategies.

Dewey's Social Constructivism Theory underpins the opportunities created by the use of popular music genres and instructional tools in the curriculum. Dewey argues that meaningful learning occurs through active participation, collaboration, and real-life

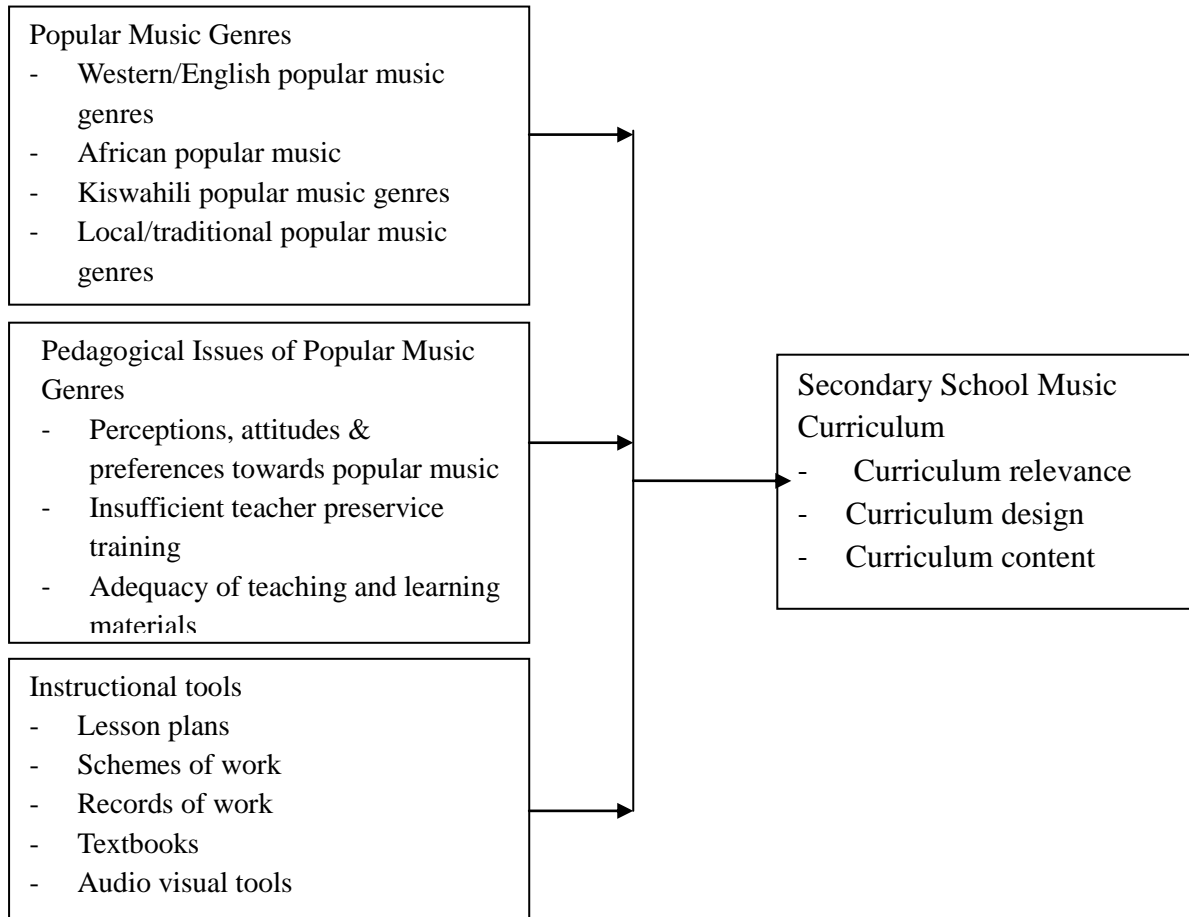
experiences. Popular music, when socially grounded and culturally relevant, creates opportunities for learners to engage in group performance, creativity, problem-solving, and critical reflection. This theory supports the idea that the use of digital tools, collaborative activities, and practical performance tasks enhances learning outcomes in popular music instruction.

Taken together, the three theories show a coherent flow: LeBlanc explains why popular music genres are relevant to learners. Gardner describes how teachers should pedagogically address the diversity of learners through these genres. Dewey explains what learning opportunities emerge when instructional tools and activities are aligned with popular music. Thus, the framework illustrates how theoretical foundations support the inclusion of popular music, inform effective pedagogy, and enhance instructional opportunities in the secondary school music curriculum.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework



Source: Autour, 2025

The conceptual framework for this study is structured around three key variables: suitability of popular music genres, pedagogical challenges, and instructional tools and strategies. These variables interact to explain how popular music can be effectively integrated into the secondary school music curriculum in Kenya. The first variable, suitability of popular music genres, focuses on determining whether selected genres such as Afrobeat, Hip-hop, Reggae, Gospel, Benga, and Gengetone are appropriate for inclusion in teaching materials and learning resources. Suitability is assessed based on musical structure, cultural relevance, educational value, and alignment with curriculum

goals. This variable serves as the foundation of the framework because only music that is both pedagogically meaningful and curriculum-aligned can be effectively taught. When a genre is deemed suitable, it directly influences how teachers approach instruction and the types of challenges they may encounter.

The second variable, pedagogical challenges in teaching popular music, explores the difficulties teachers face when incorporating popular music into classroom instruction. Such challenges may include limited teacher training, inadequate content knowledge, insufficient resources, unclear curriculum guidelines, or negative perceptions of popular music. Pedagogical challenges act as mediating factors within the framework. Even if a music genre is suitable, these challenges can impede its effective integration, shaping the selection and use of instructional tools and strategies.

The third variable, instructional tools and strategies, represents the resources, techniques, and methods that facilitate the teaching of popular music. Examples include digital music software, audio-visual equipment, musical instruments, notated scores, online platforms, performance-based activities, and collaborative learning approaches. The choice and effectiveness of these tools are influenced by the suitability of music genres and the pedagogical challenges teachers face. For instance, a suitable genre may require specific instruments or software to teach effectively. At the same time, existing pedagogical challenges may necessitate additional training or alternative instructional approaches to ensure successful learning outcomes.

Overall, the conceptual framework illustrates a logical progression. The suitability of popular music genres determines what content can be included in the curriculum. Pedagogical challenges affect the extent to which this content can be effectively taught. Finally, instructional tools and strategies determine how the content is delivered and whether the challenges are successfully addressed. The interaction of these variables

demonstrates that the successful integration of popular music in the secondary school curriculum depends on a coordinated process of selecting appropriate genres, addressing teaching challenges, and adopting practical instructional tools and strategies.

2.6 Research Gaps

The discussion has reviewed several studies that present some gaps. Some studies present conceptual gaps that have been addressed in different countries, such as Sweden, rather than in Kenya. (Garvis et al. 2017; Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010), the USA (Sanderson, 2014), Australia (Dunbar-Hall & Wemyss, 2000), and China (Tan & Conti, 2019). Other studies focused on universities rather than secondary schools, for instance, Tan and Conti (2019), and also present contextual gaps. Some studies create methodological gaps by relying exclusively on qualitative data analysed through content analysis (Garvis et al. 2017), while the present study will cover both qualitative and quantitative methods. Some studies generate contradictory findings. For instance, Herbert and Campbell (2000), Frith (1987), and Davis and Blair (2011) presented opposing views on the inclusion of popular music genres in secondary curricula, while Hebert (2009) presented a positive view supporting their incorporation. In light of these gaps, the present study seeks to determine which popular music genres should be included in the secondary school music curriculum using a case study of Nairobi County, Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Exploring issues and dynamics associated with the music curriculum in Kenya, while beneficial to different stakeholders in the education sector, can be relatively complex due to multiple factors. The recognition of this complexity implies that the methodological approach adopted in the study should be multilayered and adaptable to account for the underlying challenges, yielding better insights into the identified research problem. To ensure such a level of adapted piety, this chapter describes procedures and strategies to be adopted in the research process. It mainly focused on key elements such as research philosophy, research design, data collection procedures, instrumentation, data analysis, and ethical considerations of the research process. This chapter also discussed issues surrounding the reliability and validity of the collected data.

3.2 Research Design

According to McCombes et al. (2019), research design is a framework that includes methods and procedures for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data. It is, in fact, the conceptual framework within which the research is conducted. Since research involves answering questions, there must be ways to navigate the framework. The framework ensured that the researcher's belief systems regarding the perception or interpretation of real-world events and scenarios were taken into account. This was a key part of the research process.

Perceptions and ways of thinking about the world are known as research paradigms, which inform the design and conduct of research projects (Alele & Malau-Aduli, 2023). There are four research paradigms: positivism, realism, critical theory, and interpretivism

(Healy & Perry, 2000). Research paradigms consist of four philosophical elements: ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology. A paradigm is a set of theories, assumptions, and ideas that shapes one's worldview and approach to engaging with other people or things.

Alele and Malu-Adui (2023) define ontology as how reality is viewed (nature of reality) – accurately captured as an entity or entities. It describes how the researcher perceives reality and the nature of human engagement in the world, focusing on the assumptions researchers make to accept something as accurate. Epistemology is the study of knowledge and beliefs and describes how knowledge about reality is acquired, understood, and utilised. This helps increase the researcher's confidence in their data. Axiology deals with values that inform what is right and wrong in the research process. It measures the level of development and types of perceptual biases. Methodology is the strategy or action plan that informs the selection and use of specific data collection tools and the analysis within the context of a particular research paradigm.

This level of accountability in this study grounded the study in an interpretive research paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm is based on the assumption that reality is socially constructed and subjective, and thus, understanding human experiences requires deep engagement with respondents in their natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This philosophy was appropriate for educational research where socio-cultural settings shape meanings, values, and practices.

This study adopted a qualitative case study design grounded within the interpretivist paradigm. This design was appropriate for exploring the complex instructional tools and strategies for popular music instruction within real-life educational settings. The selection of this design was rooted in its ability to explore “how” and “why” questions related to educational phenomena and in its capacity to collect data from multiple

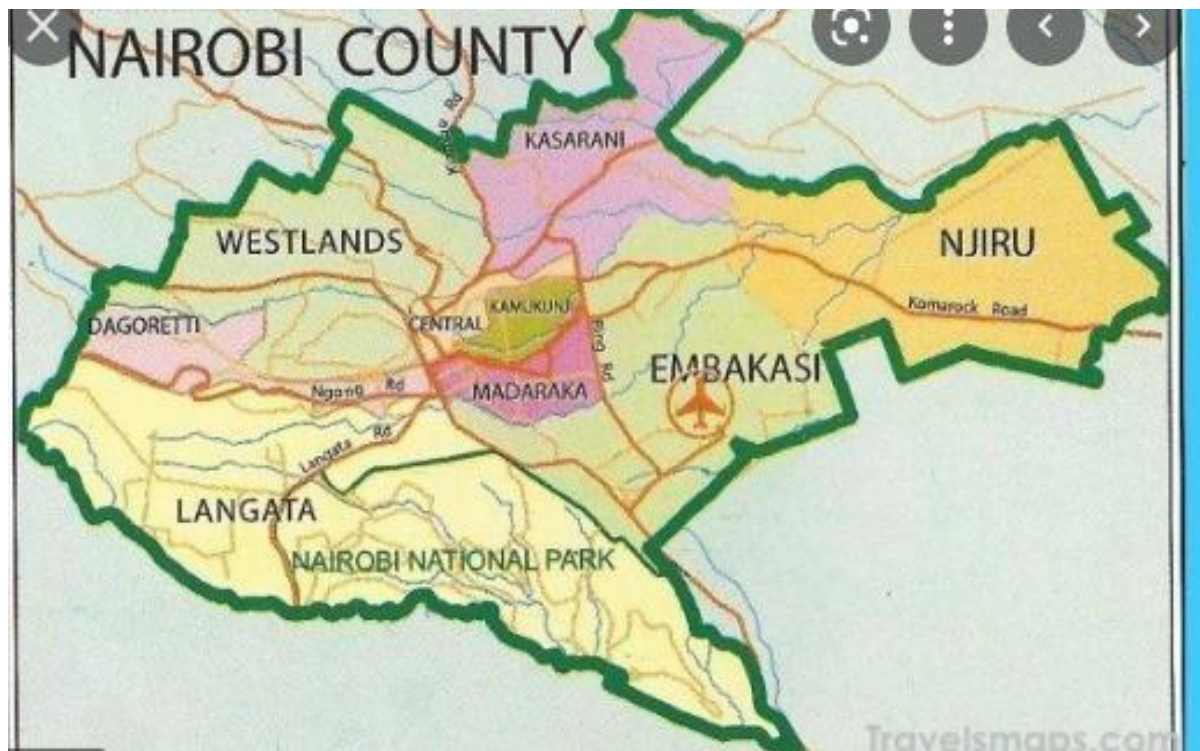
sources, including open-ended questionnaires and interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Building on this ideology, Yin (2015) asserted that qualitative research recognises the value of collecting, organising, and presenting data from multiple sources during the research process. This process enabled the research to achieve greater practicality through descriptive elements, such as participants' behaviours and the beliefs that underpinned them (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Nairobi County, the capital city of Kenya, with an estimated area of 696 km². According to the 2019 Census, Nairobi City has a population of 4.397 million. The County has a total of 386 secondary schools, according to the 2024 statistics from the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC). Figure 3.3.1 is a map of Nairobi County.

Figure 3

Location of the Study



The rationale for choosing Nairobi was that it offered a variety of schools offering music education at an examinable level and, as an urban area, was disposed to diverse cultural aspects among students relevant to research on popular music genres, which eased data collection. It was also close to the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), where the key informants were readily accessible.

3.4 Population and Target Population of the Study

The research was conducted in Nairobi County, focusing on all music educators and students in the third year of education in both public and private schools that provided music as part of the 8-4-4 educational system in Nairobi County. According to the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC, 2024), Nairobi County has 386 secondary schools. However, only 24 of these schools offered music education under the 8-4-4 system. Forms 1, 2, and 4 were excluded from the study for several reasons. Forms 1 and 2 were for students who had not yet selected music as an examinable subject. Form 4 students were excluded from the study because they were busy preparing for their national examinations; thus, it was not appropriate to interfere with their preparation. The Form 4 students would also benefit from the research findings.

Form three music teachers were selected because they were believed to have relevant information that would inform the development of the new music curricula. Based on data from the County Quality Assurance and Standards Office (CQASO, 2024), the total number of form three music students in these schools was 380, the number of teachers was 24, and 10 curriculum experts and policy stakeholders from KICD and the Ministry of Education. In addition to music teachers and students, officials from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) were purposively selected and included as key informants in the study. The total study population was summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 1

Population of the Study

Category	Population
Form three Music Students	380
Form three Music Teachers	24
Key Informants	10
Total	414

Source: Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO), Nairobi County (2024)

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Given the study area and the number of schools, students, and educators available for the study, engaging all of them posed significant constraints on the time required and the resources needed to accomplish the research objectives. Sampling techniques were used to address these challenges, ensuring the resulting data were representative of the population within the Kenyan education system. As such, the study employed a mixed sampling approach combining purposive sampling and stratified sampling to ensure school representativeness. This approach aligned with the best practices in qualitative case study research, where a balance between contextual relevance and variability was key (Creswell & Poth, Singh, 2018).

A stratified probability sampling was used to ensure fair representation of schools across Nairobi County. Nairobi County was divided into educational sub-counties (strata), and from each stratum, one secondary school that offers music was selected using random sampling (Singh et al., 1996) (see Table 3.2 below). The choice of sampling technique improved generalizability for findings by accounting for institutional and geographical diversity (Yu, 2007). After identifying schools, stratified sampling was used to select Form 3 students from each school. The rationale for choosing this form level was due to

strategic placement in the curriculum. This was because at this point, students had chosen music as an examinable subject and had substantial exposure to both practical and theoretical elements.

Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate for selecting teachers and curriculum officers for their specific roles, responsibilities, and expertise in implementing music or design music education solutions. According to Singh (2018), purposive sampling emphasises the use of expert knowledge to select a sample most useful to the research objectives and the underlying questions. The rationale for adopting purposive sampling is that it enables a researcher to gain detailed knowledge of a specific phenomenon (Yin, 2015). Music teachers were chosen based on their active involvement in teaching music and their willingness to participate. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with purposefully selected curriculum developers from KICD.

A sample size of 180 Form three music students and 23 teachers were selected using stratified and purposive sampling to ensure maximum participation from each of the 24 music-offering schools in Nairobi. Approximately 7–8 students per school were included, along with nearly all music teachers, ensuring comprehensive representation.

Table 2

Sampling Procedure

Category	Population	Sample size
Form three Music students	380	180
Form three music teachers	24	23
Key informants	10	10
Total	436	213

Source: Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO), Nairobi County (2021)

3.6 Instrumentation

Instrumentation refers to the design of the tools to gather data in a survey (Privitera, 2018). The question of applying different research instruments arises based on the various experts and personnel, including the research participants. The emergence of these questions led to the adoption of diversion tools that significantly improved data collection. As a result, the study focused on gathering data from primary sources. During the primary research, the study used open-ended questions to gather qualitative data on integrating popular music into the music curriculum in Kenyan secondary schools and its impacts. The utilisation of these tools was essential in providing insights into the tools and strategies needed to successfully incorporate popular music into the secondary school curricula in Kenya.

3.6.1 Pilot Study

A pilot test is a mini study conducted before the actual inquiry. Its essence lies in identifying potential challenges respondents are likely to face in the field (Quinlan, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2019). It also aims to identify and address issues, while clarifying the interview guide for respondents to understand the fieldwork. The county's quality assurance and standards officer (CQASO) reports that 24 secondary institutions in Nairobi County offer music programmes. Out of 24 schools, one was designated for a pilot project to test the instruments in practice and rectify any resulting shortcomings before they were rolled out. In this case, eight students and one music teacher from the school were selected. The feedback necessitated an additional section on the years of experience of the teachers and KICD officials. There was also a need to explain the meaning of pedagogy to 5 percent of teachers who had not studied education.

3.6.2 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a crucial element of modern research. Its essence stems from the potential of research to advance knowledge and from the applicability of recorded information in real-life situations. Accounting for these elements, trustworthiness will be enhanced by ensuring the provided information is credible, transferable, and confirmable (Holloway, 2005). To ensure credibility, the research process focused on extending participants' involvement to ensure that all required parties shared their opinions reflexively (Barrett, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Similarly, triangulation, which utilises multiple data sources, benefited the research process.

In terms of transferability, the first aspect accounted for was the description of key concepts and the contexts of the various elements of the research (Burchett et al., 2013). In particular, the study provided detailed descriptions of elements with specific concepts, including the research participants and settings associated with the research process. Providing a detailed description of how the findings were applied beyond the set context was also essential to enhancing the study's validity and reliability. Given the study's transferability, it is vital to ensure the information provided was reliable.

This was achieved through rigorous documentation of various aspects of the research, creating an auditing trail that showed how the research was conducted and also benefited the study. Where confirmability is concerned, taking an objective reading of the data to ensure the results reflected the participants' perceptions or views was critical (Enworo, 2023). Authenticity was determined by conducting and evaluating research to ensure it was credible and genuine. This entailed analysis of the study for novelty, credibility, validity, and reproducibility (Bell et al., 2011). In addition, engaging external auditors to examine the data collection and analysis was crucial to improving the study's trustworthiness.

3.7 Data Collection

Based on the adopted data collection instruments, ensuring that the data collection process was sufficient to meet the set research objectives was vital. To achieve these objectives, the first step was to obtain a letter of introduction from the university in advance. The letter of introduction was critical in providing contact information for the institution's head, teachers, and key informants, thereby reducing potential barriers to data collection. Once the letter of introduction was obtained, the next step was to get a research permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Like the letter of introduction, the research permit helped inform potential research participants, particularly school leaders, about the objectives and instruments needed for the data collection process.

Upon obtaining the necessary research permit, the respective schools were notified in advance in writing, thus avoiding potential time management challenges or scheduling clashes. At the same time, research assistants were recruited and trained to ensure they adhered to the established ethical standards and focused on collecting information relevant to the research questions and objectives.

Given the dynamic nature of the preliminary actions in the search process, the next step was to focus on the actual data collection. In this case, open forums and semi-structured interviews were utilised to obtain key information from the research participants (Gill & Baillie, 2018). The use of qualitative interviews was driven by the need for in-depth insights into teachers' experiences and key information on integrating popular music into the school curriculum (Gill & Baillie, 2018). As such, it was essential to enhance the researcher's understanding of the complex events within the school system concerning the use of popular music. In addition, qualitative interviews were crucial for ensuring that unique or unexpected events within the education system were accurately tracked. In

selecting open forums, the choice was based on their potential to ensure research participants' comfort when discussing sensitive aspects of the research topic (Mack, 2005). Its dynamic approach to guaranteeing free expression and anonymity, as well as the wealth of data in the site's forum, also benefited the study.

To ensure the completeness of responses and questionnaire accuracy, interviewers' work was cross-checked by the Principal Investigator (PI) (Nshimiyimana et al., 2020) and the university research supervisor before acceptance. All returned questionnaires were reviewed for completeness, and interview audio recordings were matched with transcripts to ensure accuracy. Routine check-ins with the supervisor helped address any inconsistencies or data gaps during the collection process.

3.8 Data Analysis

The collected data were organised and categorised based on the key elements being studied. This implied that the recorded interviews were transcribed and organised by participant strata before any analysis. Once transcribed, thematic analysis was adopted as the data analysis technique, which implied categorising the collected data into themes relevant to the study (Terry et al., 2017). During the thematic analysis, coding was used to identify appropriate information for the study. This step entailed highlighting keywords and phrases that the observer found interesting to convey the participant's view. Upon coding, key themes were extracted from the texts by identifying patterns, combining generated codes, and linking them to specific research questions and objectives. The themes were further reviewed to ensure they were explained within a given context and were significant or relevant to the research.

3.8.1 Potential Risks

There was minimal risk to the participants involved in this research. Only possible discomfort from discussions of music experiences was anticipated (Korte et al., 2020). Participants were nevertheless made aware of their right of withdrawal on a non-punitive basis. When no risks were encountered, that was recorded in the debriefing process as well.

3.8.2 Protection Procedures

Participants were protected from foreseeable risks, helping to develop trust, encourage honest responses, and minimise emotional burden. The right of the respondents to suspend or withdraw at any time was made known to them. The researcher reported any distressed student respondents to the school administrator or their class teacher so that appropriate support could be provided through the school's current counselling and advisory services. Confidentiality was rigorously maintained by anonymising all responses (Hwang, 2023), thereby minimising psychological pressure and reputational risk. The Principal Investigator monitored the process through post-fieldwork scrutiny and compliance checks.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Researchers have a responsibility to their participants, their audience, their society, and their academic counterparts to adhere to ethical guidelines. (Israel, 2015). This is to ensure that they comply with the principles of acceptable research practices when collecting and analysing data. These include ethics of respect and conflict of interest, relationship with participants, Informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, reporting back to the participants, trustworthiness of research, and issues of translation

Respondents provided informed consent to complete the form before undertaking the study. No participant was forced or coerced to participate in the survey, as participation was voluntary. The respondents were not required to disclose their names during the interview, and their responses were kept confidential. All information used in the study was appropriately protected and archived for future use if the survey needed to be revisited.

After completing the study, all data were stored on a password-protected laptop (Creswell et al., 2013). Backups were saved on Dropbox, an external hard drive, and a thumb drive, all encrypted and access-limited to the Principal Investigator (PI) and the University Supervisor. Data was securely preserved for 6 years after the dissertation defence, in compliance with institutional policy, after which all digital files were permanently deleted and physical documents shredded.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, methodological issues pertinent to this study were discussed. In this chapter, findings are presented, analysed, and discussed in three broad sections, informed by the objectives of this study. The chapter begins by outlining popular music genres suitable for inclusion in secondary school music curriculum materials and resources. This is followed by pedagogical issues arising from the inclusion of the identified popular music genres in the secondary school music curriculum. A highlight of the instructional tools relevant to the inclusion of popular music genres in the secondary school music curriculum follows this. After this, the data discussion is divided into three sections.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 180 questionnaires were sent to Form 3 music students in Nairobi County, 23 Form 3 music teachers in Nairobi County, and 10 KICD officials. A total of 167 questionnaires from music students, 20 from teachers, and eight from KICD officials were returned, yielding response rates of 92%, 87%, and 80% respectively. According to the inquiry, this return rate was sufficient for data analysis.

4.2.1 Years Teachers Had Taught Music in Secondary School

Forty percent (40%) of the teachers had taught music in secondary schools for more than 20 years, 30% had taught between 15 and 20 years, 15% between 1 and 5 years, 10% between 6 and 10 years, and 5% between 10 and 15 years. This information indicates that most teachers possessed extensive experience and were therefore qualified to respond competently to the research questions.

4.2.2 Teaching Qualifications

The findings revealed that 75% of the teachers held a bachelor's degree in music, 20% had a Certificate in Music Education, and 5% had a Bachelor of Music Technology with a Certificate in Modern Music Production. These qualifications suggest that most teachers have professional music training, enabling them to teach both theoretical and practical aspects of the subject effectively.

4.2.3 Gender of KICD

According to the findings, 62% of the KICD officials were female, while 38% were male. This gender distribution indicates that female representation was slightly higher among KICD respondents, suggesting gender inclusivity in the institution's staffing and participation.

4.2.4 Number of Years Working with KICD

Half (50%) of the KICD officials had worked with the institution for 10–15 years, 25% for 6–10 years, 12.5% for 1–5 years, and the remaining 12.5% for more than 15 years. This distribution implies that most officials had significant institutional experience, which enhances the reliability of their responses on curriculum development and policy matters

In summary, the demographic characteristics of respondents, particularly the teachers' experience and qualifications, and KICD officials' professional tenure, support the credibility and depth of insights gathered for this study

4.3 Popular Music Genres for Inclusion in the Secondary School Music Curriculum

The first objective of the study was to analyse the popular music genres for inclusion in teaching materials and resources in the secondary school music curriculum. The following subsections present the findings and stakeholder perspectives

4.3.1 Students' Views on Genres/Styles of Music Taught

Form 3 students stated that the genres and styles of music they were taught included:

- Kenyan Traditional Music: Folk songs (work, lullabies, initiation, and wedding songs), traditional instrumental music (nyatiti, orutu, kayamba, drums), dances (Isukuti, Ohangla, Mũgithi, Chakacha), and call-and-response forms.
 - Kenyan Contemporary/Popular Music: Benga (e.g., D.O. Misiyani), Kapuka/Gengetone, and Afro-fusion (e.g., Sauti Sol, Eric Wainaina).
 - African Music Beyond Kenya: Highlife, Soukous, Afrobeat, Marabi/Mbaqanga, and African drumming traditions.
 - Western Classical Music: Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin).
 - Western Popular Music: Jazz, Blues, Rock, Pop, and Gospel (both African and Western forms).
 - Other World Music Styles: Caribbean (Reggae, Calypso), Asian (Indian Classical, Chinese Traditional), and Latin American (Samba, Tango).

4.3.2 Analysis of Students' Perceptions of Music Genre

Students expressed appreciation for learning diverse music genres, noting that each holds unique cultural and artistic value. They valued traditional Kenyan music for preserving culture, history, and identity through its rhythms, dances, and storytelling. At the same time, modern genres such as Benga, Kapuka, Genge, and Afro-fusion were seen as expressions of creativity, social awareness, and evolving cultural identity. Although some students cautioned that modern music can sometimes emphasise entertainment over meaningful content, they agreed that studying both traditional and contemporary styles broadens understanding, enhances listening skills, and fosters cultural respect.

Teachers shared similar views, emphasising that genres like Afrobeat, Benga, and Taarab promote cultural appreciation; Classical, Blues, and Jazz provide historical insight; Rock, Pop, and Gospel enhance performance skills; and Hip-Hop and Electronic music stimulate creativity. They added that genres such as Gospel, Reggae, and Conscious Rap support moral and social education, while exposure to diverse styles prepares students for music-related careers and global engagement. Overall, both students and teachers affirmed that exploring varied genres enriches musical knowledge, creativity, and cultural awareness.

4.3.3 Comparison of Teachers' and Students' Views on Genres

Both teachers and students recognised the educational value of engaging with multiple music genres, though their emphases reflected their distinct roles and experiences within the curriculum. Teachers tended to approach genres from a pedagogical and theoretical perspective, while students framed them in terms of creativity, identity, and enjoyment.

Teachers highlighted the importance of diverse genres in fostering cultural appreciation, developing technical skills, promoting moral education, and preparing for careers. They viewed genre diversity as an essential pedagogical tool for developing well-rounded musicians who can understand the theoretical, historical, and socio-cultural dimensions of music. Their knowledge spanned a wide range of genres and sub-genres, including Classical Music (Baroque, Romantic, and Contemporary), Jazz (Swing, Bebop, Cool Jazz, Smooth Jazz), Blues (Delta, Chicago, and Electric), Rock Music (Classic, Hard, Punk, Alternative), and Pop Music (Dance-Pop, Synth-Pop, Teen Pop). Teachers also cited Hip-Hop/ Rap (Old School, Trap, Conscious Rap), Reggae (Roots, Dancehall, Dub), Electronic Music (House, Techno, Trance, EDM), Gospel/ Christian Music (Contemporary Gospel, Praise & Worship, Southern Gospel), Country Music (Traditional, Bluegrass, Country Pop), R&B/Soul (Neo-Soul, Motown, Contemporary

R&B), World Music (Afrobeat, Highlife, Benga, Taarab, Latin), Folk Music (Traditional, Contemporary, Celtic), and Film/Stage Music (Soundtracks, Musical Theatre, Video Game Scores). This broad repertoire underscores teachers' concern for ensuring that learners are exposed to both global and local traditions, equipping them with analytical and performative versatility.

Students, on the other hand, focused on genres that resonated with their daily experiences, social realities, and cultural environments. They expressed appreciation for learning about different genres, as each had its own artistic and cultural value. Most students were familiar with and enthusiastic about Traditional/Folk Music (e.g., Luo Benga, Luhya Isukuti, Kamba folk songs, Kikuyu Mũgithi), Benga (e.g., Daudi Kabaka), Genge (e.g., Jua Cali, Nonini), Kapuka/Boomba (e.g., Nameless, E-Sir), Afro-fusion/Afro-pop (e.g., Sauti Sol, Nyashinski), Reggae (e.g., Lucky Dube, Chronixx), Hip-hop/Rap, Gospel Music, R&B/Soul, and Taarab. These genres appealed to them not only for their rhythmic and melodic qualities but also for their relevance to Kenyan identity, popular culture, and self-expression. Students emphasised that learning traditional music helped them understand and preserve their heritage. At the same time, exposure to contemporary genres enhanced their creativity and broadened their understanding of music as a social and emotional language.

Analytically, both groups demonstrated convergence in appreciating music as a multidimensional learning medium that combines cultural, moral, and creative functions. However, a clear divergence emerged in their depth of exposure and pedagogical orientation: teachers approached genres as structured learning domains requiring theoretical and analytical rigour, while students experienced them as expressions of identity, emotion, and community belonging. This comparison reveals a pedagogical gap between curricular intent and student engagement, highlighting the need for instructional

approaches that integrate students' lived musical realities with formal theoretical frameworks. Such integration would promote a more inclusive and relevant popular music curriculum that aligns academic instruction with students' cultural contexts and aspirations.

4.3.4 Student Views Concerning Music Genres Mentioned Above

Student 41 stated, "I believe that all the music genres I have mentioned are important because they each play a unique role in entertainment, education, and cultural preservation. Traditional genres like folk music, *Benga*, and *Taarab* help us connect with our roots, preserve our languages, and celebrate the customs of different communities. They also promote unity and cultural pride. Modern genres like Genge, Kapuka, Afro-fusion, R&B, and Hip-hop allow young people to express themselves creatively and address social issues in relatable ways. They also put Kenyan music on the international map and create opportunities for artists."

Student 33 also added that, "Gospel music inspires hope, encourages moral values, and strengthens faith. Reggae promotes messages of peace, love, and justice, while also being enjoyable to dance to. I appreciate the diversity across these genres because it gives me a broad understanding of music styles, improves my listening skills, and inspires creativity. However, I feel that some modern songs focus too much on entertainment and lack positive messages, and that their lyrics can sometimes negatively influence young listeners. Despite this, I value all genres because they contribute to our society in different ways and make music an important part of our daily lives."

4.3.5 Preferred Genres for Curriculum Inclusion

Students and teachers agreed that both traditional and modern genres should be incorporated into the secondary school music curriculum to promote cultural continuity,

relevance, and learner engagement. The inclusion of a diverse range of styles was seen as essential for nurturing well-rounded musicianship and artistic appreciation.

Students emphasised that Traditional and Folk Music from Kenya's various communities is vital for preserving culture and heritage. They highlighted Benga as a uniquely Kenyan style with strong cultural roots, Taarab for its Swahili coastal influences, and Genge and Kapuka as expressions of modern Kenyan urban culture. Additionally, Afro-fusion and Afro-pop were viewed as creative blends that connect tradition and modernity. Gospel music was valued for its moral and spiritual relevance, while Reggae was appreciated for promoting peace, unity, and social awareness. The inclusion of Classical music was seen as beneficial for developing musical literacy, notation, and theoretical understanding, whereas Jazz was commended for encouraging creativity and improvisation. Students also supported the inclusion of World Music to broaden global cultural knowledge. Overall, they agreed that integrating both traditional and modern styles would make the curriculum more interesting, balanced, and responsive to contemporary realities.

Teachers similarly advocated for a diverse curriculum that integrates Traditional African Music (e.g., Benga, Taarab, Isukuti, and Folk Songs) to preserve cultural heritage, foster identity, and develop appreciation of indigenous instruments and performance practices. They recommended Classical Music, including Baroque, Romantic, and Contemporary styles, to enhance understanding of theory, notation, and history while cultivating discipline and listening skills. Jazz and Blues were valued for their role in developing improvisation, harmonic sense, and rhythmic awareness. Gospel and Christian Music (e.g., Choral, Praise and Worship) were viewed as vital for instilling moral values and teamwork through ensemble singing. Teachers also supported Reggae and Afrobeat for raising social consciousness and enhancing rhythmic development, and Pop and Rock for

sustaining learner interest and supporting creativity in songwriting. World Music (e.g., Latin, Indian Classical, Celtic Folk) was recommended for promoting cross-cultural understanding, while Electronic Music (e.g., House, EDM) was considered crucial for developing technological competencies and preparing students for the demands of the modern music industry. In summary, both students and teachers demonstrated consensus that the curriculum should balance cultural preservation with contemporary relevance by integrating traditional, classical, and modern popular genres.

4.3.6 KICD Officials' Perspectives

The KICD officials recognised that music education plays a central role in promoting cultural preservation, creativity, and holistic learner development. They emphasised that the curriculum should enable learners to appreciate Kenyan traditional music, engage creatively with popular and global styles, and develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies through listening, performance, and composition. Such engagement nurtures creativity, cooperation, communication, and self-expression, aligning with the goals of Competency-Based Education (CBE).

Officials noted that music learning strengthens broader academic skills, including listening, concentration, and pattern recognition, while also fostering social cohesion and intercultural understanding. Practical participation in performance and ensemble activities was associated with improved self-confidence, tolerance, and collaboration among students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

They observed, however, that while many students are drawn to popular and contemporary music, the existing curriculum remains heavily Western classical, potentially alienating learners and reducing subject uptake. They stressed the need for a more inclusive and contextually relevant approach that reflects students' musical

interests and local realities. Curriculum gaps, such as a disjointed topic sequencing and limited coherence across forms, were identified as barriers to effective learning progression. Additionally, challenges such as insufficient pre-service training, limited teaching resources, and weak institutional support continue to constrain the delivery of music education. The officials recommended in-service teacher training, infrastructure improvements, and policy-level interventions to strengthen curriculum implementation.

4.4 Instructional tools Relevant to Including Popular Music Genres

This section interprets the findings on instructional tools and activities for integrating popular music genres into the secondary school music curriculum. The discussion draws on data from students, teachers, and officials from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). The findings are organised around four main categories: student needs, tools accessed, related musical activities, and institutional perspectives. Each subsection concludes with an analytical interpretation comparing the ideal instructional environment with the realities of school contexts.

4.4.1 Instructional Tools Students Require for the Popular Music Genres

Curriculum

The music students indicated that if popular music genres were to be effectively integrated into the secondary school curriculum, they would require a range of instructional tools that support listening, performing, creating, and analysing music. They emphasised the importance of access to audio and visual materials, such as music recordings, videos, and documentaries, that demonstrate different popular music styles and cultural contexts. Projectors and smartboards would further help present musical examples during lessons, thereby enhancing engagement and comprehension.

Students also identified the need for appropriate musical instruments and equipment, including guitars, keyboards, drum sets, microphones, amplifiers, and speakers. They

expressed a desire to access traditional instruments such as the nyatiti, kayamba, and African drums to experiment with cultural fusion between traditional and modern sounds. Technology and software were also viewed as essential learning tools. Students highlighted the need for computers or tablets equipped with digital music production software such as GarageBand, FL Studio, or Logic, as well as audio editing applications for beat-making, remixing, and songwriting. Internet access was equally crucial for research and exposure to current musical trends.

In addition, they emphasized the importance of appropriate learning materials, including music notation books (both staff and tonic sol-fa), lyric sheets, chord charts, and textbooks that explain the history, techniques, and stylistic elements of popular music genres. Students also require practical spaces, such as soundproofed music rooms for rehearsals, recording corners for digital music production practice, and school halls that can serve as performance spaces for live showcases. They further emphasised the need for teacher guidance and collaboration, through instruction from teachers skilled in both theoretical and performance practices of modern music, as well as workshops and mentorship sessions with professional musicians.

In summary, students expressed a desire for a balanced mix of traditional and modern learning tools to engage with popular music genres effectively. The analysis suggests that learners' aspirations align with global shifts toward technology-integrated, experiential learning in music education. However, these tools remain largely aspirational in most Kenyan schools, highlighting a significant resource gap between the envisioned and the actual learning environments.

4.4.2 Instructional Tools Students Could Access

While students identified an ideal range of resources, the tools they could access were more limited and largely dependent on teacher initiative and school activities. Teacher guidance played a central role, as instructors introduced students to the theory and practice of various genres, demonstrated performance techniques, and provided feedback during rehearsals. Peer collaboration was another significant aspect of resource access, as students formed small bands, choirs, or songwriting groups, allowing them to share ideas, practice teamwork, and build confidence.

School-based activities also provided avenues for practical engagement. Students participated in music clubs, talent shows, and inter-class competitions under teacher supervision, which helped them apply classroom concepts in performance settings. Some schools occasionally organised workshops or festivals where professional musicians interacted with learners, exposing them to industry practices and performance standards.

Despite these efforts, the accessibility of technological and instrumental resources remained limited in many schools. The findings reveal that, while students benefit from collaborative, teacher-driven learning, their exposure to digital music tools and well-equipped practice environments is minimal. This suggests that current instructional environments rely heavily on human capital and creativity rather than material and technological resources.

4.4.3 Musical Activities Students Engaged in Outside the Classroom

Both students and teachers reported that learners were actively involved in musical activities beyond formal classroom instruction. Within schools, students participated in choir rehearsals, band practice, and school assemblies where they performed songs for entertainment and communication. They were also active in music clubs, drama, and

music festivals, as well as inter-class competitions, which provided opportunities to showcase their talents and learn from peers.

Outside the school environment, students participated in church choirs, youth group performances, and community cultural events, where they explored a wide range of popular genres, including Gospel, Afrobeat, Hip-hop, and Reggae. Many practiced instruments such as the guitar and keyboard at home, composed their own songs, or participated in informal performances during social gatherings. Teachers observed that these activities complemented classroom learning by helping students develop creativity, performance confidence, and teamwork skills.

The analysis indicates that students' participation in music outside formal settings reflects a vibrant and self-motivated musical culture. Such engagement demonstrates the potential for popular music to act as a bridge between formal education and informal creative expression. However, the lack of structured institutional mechanisms to integrate these out-of-class experiences into the formal curriculum limits their full educational potential.

4.4.4 Music Genres Students Performed or Listened to Frequently

Findings revealed that students engaged with a wide variety of musical genres, reflecting both cultural diversity and contemporary tastes. They commonly performed and listened to Gospel music during school assemblies, choir sessions, and church activities. In contrast, African traditional music featured prominently in cultural events, music festivals, and folk song presentations. Benga and other popular Kenyan styles were common at school concerts and social functions, while Reggae and Afrobeat were often performed informally in school clubs or at social gatherings. Hip-hop and Gengetone were particularly popular among younger students, often performed in talent shows or

group projects. Classical and choral music continued to be practiced mainly for competitions and syllabus requirements.

Teachers confirmed similar trends, noting that these genres were popular because they combined educational value, cultural relevance, and entertainment. The presence of both traditional and modern genres within the learning environment demonstrates the pluralistic nature of Kenyan musical culture. However, while students widely appreciate popular genres, formal teaching still privileges classical and traditional music, leaving contemporary styles to informal and extracurricular spaces. This imbalance highlights the need for curricular inclusivity that reflects students' musical realities.

4.4.5 Improvements Suggested by Students and Teachers in Relation to Music Genres

Students and teachers both agreed that the secondary school music curriculum could be improved by making it more inclusive, practical, and relevant to modern learners. Students suggested that, in addition to classical and African traditional music, the curriculum should give more attention to popular genres such as Afrobeat, Hip-hop, Reggae, Gospel, and Benga. They believed that such inclusion would make music lessons more engaging and relatable to their everyday musical experiences. They also emphasised the need to incorporate digital music production, beat-making, and modern performance techniques to equip learners with skills applicable in today's creative industry.

Teachers echoed these sentiments, proposing that the curriculum should integrate contemporary popular genres and modern music technology to make learning more relevant. They recommended introducing cross-genre learning activities that blend traditional and contemporary styles, thereby fostering creativity and cultural identity.

Additionally, both groups highlighted the importance of providing more opportunities for live performances, school concerts, and workshops with professional musicians to give students real-world exposure.

The analysis shows a strong consensus among stakeholders on the need for curriculum reform. Both students and teachers recognise that aligning school music education with current musical trends and technological realities would enhance creativity, engagement, and industry preparedness. However, achieving this vision would require curriculum revision, teacher retraining, and infrastructural investment.

4.4.6 Instructional Tools Associated with Including Popular Music Genres in the Curriculum

According to KICD officials, the successful inclusion of popular music genres in the secondary school curriculum would depend on the provision of diverse instructional tools. These include access to audio and visual resources, such as recordings, videos, and documentaries, to illustrate performance styles; a range of musical instruments, including guitars, keyboards, drums, and traditional percussion, for practice and performance; and digital tools, such as computers or tablets with music production software, for composing and editing. Printed materials, such as chord charts, lyric sheets, and textbooks, that explain the stylistic and historical aspects of popular music would also be essential.

They further emphasised the importance of well-equipped practical spaces such as music rooms, rehearsal halls, and recording corners to facilitate learning and creativity. Collaborative activities, mentorship programmes, and live performances under teacher guidance were also seen as crucial instructional components. Internet access and streaming platforms would provide students and teachers with opportunities to explore global music trends and contemporary practices.

The interpretation of these findings indicates that KICD envisions a modern, technology-driven, and performance-oriented curriculum aligned with global educational standards. However, many schools currently lack the infrastructure and technological capacity to effectively implement this vision. Addressing these resource limitations would be essential for the successful integration of popular music genres into Kenya's secondary school music curriculum.

4.5 Pedagogical Issues Arising from Including Popular Music Genres

This section examines the pedagogical challenges and the tools required to incorporate popular music genres into the secondary school music curriculum. The findings were drawn from responses by KICD officials and music teachers and reveal thematic concerns regarding content appropriateness, teacher competency, resource limitations, and curriculum integration. The section also highlights essential instructional tools necessary for effective teaching and learning of popular music.

4.5.1 Pedagogical Issues that May Arise from Including the Identified Popular Music Genres in the Secondary School Music Curriculum

The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) officials identified several pedagogical concerns that may arise from incorporating popular music genres into the secondary school music curriculum. These concerns were categorised under key themes, including content appropriateness, teacher competency, resource limitations, assessment challenges, curriculum balance, cultural sensitivity, and the potential overemphasis on entertainment. Together, these highlight the complex nature of adapting popular music into formal educational settings.

In terms of content appropriateness, a primary concern is the suitability of the lyrics and themes in some popular music genres. Certain songs contain explicit language,

suggestive content, or controversial social messages that may conflict with the moral expectations and values upheld in schools. As such, the inclusion of these genres requires careful vetting and adaptation of materials to ensure alignment with educational goals and to promote positive moral and social values among learners. Teachers must exercise professional judgement to modify or contextualise content while maintaining musical authenticity and engagement.

Another major issue pertains to teacher competency. Many music teachers were trained primarily in traditional or classical music pedagogy and may lack the requisite knowledge, skills, and exposure to contemporary genres and digital technologies. This limited preparedness can hinder their ability to teach performance, composition, and production aspects that are integral to popular music. Without professional development opportunities, teachers may feel less confident in delivering effective instruction in modern genres. Continuous in-service training, workshops, and curriculum support are therefore essential to strengthen teachers' pedagogical capacity in contemporary music education.

Resource limitations also present a significant challenge. The teaching and learning of popular music depend heavily on instruments such as guitars, keyboards, and drum sets, as well as digital recording and editing equipment. Many schools, particularly public institutions, face shortages of such facilities. Additionally, the lack of computers, music production software, and reliable internet connectivity restricts students' exposure to music technology and contemporary industry practices. These constraints limit both creativity and practical learning opportunities, undermining the experiential nature of popular music education.

The issue of assessment challenges was also emphasised. Unlike traditional or classical music that relies heavily on written notation and theory-based evaluation, popular music emphasises improvisation, collaboration, and aural learning. This makes it difficult to develop standardised assessment tools that can capture students' creativity and originality while maintaining fairness and objectivity. Designing assessment rubrics that value both performance quality and innovation is therefore necessary to reflect the distinct learning outcomes of popular music.

Maintaining curriculum balance poses an additional concern. Integrating popular music into the curriculum must not overshadow traditional and classical components that provide foundational knowledge in music theory, notation, and cultural heritage. Overemphasising popular genres could erode these essential skills. A balanced approach that blends theoretical, traditional, and contemporary elements is needed to ensure that students receive a holistic musical education that is both academically rigorous and culturally relevant.

Cultural sensitivity remains another key consideration. Some popular genres or their associated lifestyles may conflict with community values or local cultural norms, potentially generating resistance from parents, school administrators, or regional leaders. Teachers and curriculum developers must therefore engage stakeholders in dialogue and select content that respects cultural values while still exposing learners to modern artistic expressions.

Finally, there is the risk of overemphasis on entertainment. Because students often associate popular music with leisure, there is a danger that they may not perceive it as a serious academic subject. This could lead to diminished academic engagement or a focus on celebrity culture rather than learning outcomes. Teachers must therefore design

pedagogical strategies that frame popular music as an avenue for critical listening, creativity, composition, and cultural understanding rather than mere entertainment.

Overall, these pedagogical challenges underscore the need for careful curriculum design, teacher training, adequate resource provision, and community involvement. Addressing these areas would enable popular music to be effectively integrated into the curriculum as a valuable educational tool that enhances creativity, cultural appreciation, and practical musicianship.

4.5.2 Pedagogical Issues Connected to Popular Music Genres

Music teachers raised similar concerns, emphasising the day-to-day pedagogical challenges they encounter when implementing popular music instruction. Their perspectives revealed five interrelated themes: teacher expertise, resource constraints, content suitability, assessment difficulties, and curriculum balance, along with considerations of student motivation. Regarding teacher expertise, most teachers acknowledged limited exposure to modern genres, production techniques, and digital recording methods. Many felt inadequately equipped to teach aspects such as beat-making, sequencing, or studio performance, which are central to popular music learning. This knowledge gap hampers their ability to plan lessons effectively, guide student creativity, or connect classroom instruction with real-world music industry practices. Teachers stressed the importance of continuous professional development, peer mentorship, and access to modern teaching aids to enhance their competence in these emerging areas.

Resource constraints were another recurrent concern. Many schools operate with minimal facilities, lacking even basic instruments like drum sets, guitars, and keyboards, as well as computers and software for music production. Without these tools, practical lessons become largely theoretical, depriving students of the experiential learning that

defines popular music pedagogy. Teachers noted that resource inadequacies create inequities between well-funded private institutions and public schools, thus affecting overall learning outcomes. The issue of content suitability was also highlighted. Teachers expressed apprehension about the explicit nature of lyrics and videos in some popular songs, which could conflict with schools' ethical and cultural standards. They emphasised the need for clear selection criteria and contextual adaptation to ensure that only appropriate materials are used for instructional purposes. This calls for professional discretion and collaboration between teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers to maintain both relevance and decency.

Teachers also identified assessment difficulties as a primary pedagogical concern. Because popular music values originality, collaboration, and improvisation, evaluating students fairly can be challenging. Existing assessment models, developed primarily for classical or traditional music, often fail to capture the creativity and diversity inherent in popular music performances and compositions. Teachers recommended the development of flexible, criterion-based assessment frameworks that appreciate both process and product, allowing for individualised evaluation of creativity, technique, and innovation. Balancing the curriculum and managing student motivation presented further challenges. Teachers noted that while students are highly enthusiastic about popular music, this interest sometimes leans toward entertainment rather than structured learning. Overemphasis on popular genres might also reduce attention to essential theoretical, cultural, and historical aspects of music education. Teachers, therefore, advocated a balanced curriculum that combines practical engagement with popular music with theoretical grounding in music literacy, composition, and analysis.

In summary, teachers emphasised that addressing these pedagogical issues requires comprehensive training programmes, improved resource allocation, and structured curriculum guidelines. With these measures in place, popular music can become an effective educational platform that enriches students' learning experiences and prepares them for diverse musical careers.

4.5.3 Tools Required for a Popular Music Education Curriculum

To successfully implement a popular music curriculum in secondary schools, teachers identified a range of essential tools and resources that support both teaching and learning. These tools encompass audio-visual materials, musical instruments, digital technologies, printed learning resources, suitable practice spaces, professional guidance, and internet access. Audio and visual resources are fundamental in illustrating stylistic nuances, performance techniques, and historical developments within various popular genres. Recordings, music videos, documentaries, and live concert footage enable students to experience different musical styles and analyse their structures, instrumentation, and production qualities.

The use of musical instruments such as guitars, keyboards, drum sets, and percussion instruments allows students to engage actively in performance and practice. The inclusion of selected traditional instruments further enriches students' understanding of cross-genre fusion and promotes cultural inclusivity in popular music education. Digital tools and software play a central role in contemporary music learning. Devices such as computers and tablets equipped with digital audio workstations (DAWs) like GarageBand, Logic Pro, or FL Studio facilitate composition, recording, remixing, and editing. These tools provide students with hands-on experience in music production, reflecting the realities of the modern music industry.

The availability of printed learning materials, including chord charts, lyric sheets, music notation guides, and textbooks covering music theory and genre history, supports structured learning. Such materials provide reference points for theoretical understanding while complementing practical exercises. Equally important are practical learning spaces. Well-equipped music rooms, rehearsal studios, and small recording corners offer conducive environments for collaboration, experimentation, and performance. These spaces foster creativity and confidence, allowing students to translate theoretical knowledge into practice.

Teacher guidance and collaborative activities also form vital components of popular music pedagogy. Workshops, mentorship programmes, and group projects encourage experiential learning, peer interaction, and professional exposure. Live performance opportunities, whether within schools or community settings, further enhance students' artistic growth and stage confidence. Finally, internet access and streaming platforms are indispensable in exposing students to global music trends, online tutorials, and digital learning resources. Through these, students can explore a vast range of styles, technologies, and cultural influences, promoting innovation and cross-cultural understanding. Collectively, these tools form a practical framework for popular music education. When strategically integrated into the curriculum, they enhance creativity, technical proficiency, and digital literacy, ensuring that students develop both artistic and industry-relevant competencies.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal a strong and steadily growing demand for the inclusion of popular music genres in Kenya's secondary school music curriculum. Both students and teachers demonstrated a keen awareness of the relevance of popular music to their lived experiences. At the same time, curriculum developers from the Kenya Institute of

Curriculum Development (KICD) acknowledged the need to modernise the curriculum to reflect contemporary cultural dynamics. This demand is not merely a call for entertainment-oriented content but rather a reflection of broader educational, artistic, and socio-economic realities in Kenya's evolving music landscape.

4.6.1 Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, the findings align with several key educational theories that emphasise learner-centred and experience-based approaches to instruction. Central to this is John Dewey's experiential learning theory, which posits that education should connect learning to real-life experiences and social contexts. The integration of popular music genres provides such a platform, as it allows learners to engage with familiar sounds, themes, and social narratives that mirror their day-to-day realities. By engaging with music they listen to and identify with, students are more likely to participate actively in class, demonstrate creativity, and derive intrinsic motivation to learn.

Furthermore, the findings resonate with constructivist learning theory, which views knowledge as something learners actively construct through meaningful engagement with their environment. Popular music, as part of learners' cultural environment, serves as a powerful medium through which abstract musical concepts such as rhythm, harmony, and form can be concretised. Through activities such as songwriting, improvisation, and performance of contemporary genres, students construct musical understanding based on prior knowledge and experiences. This process fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, competencies at the heart of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) currently being implemented in Kenya.

In addition, the results reflect principles of Gardner's multiple intelligence theory, particularly as advanced by scholars such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, which

emphasise the holistic development of the learner. The incorporation of popular music into the curriculum supports the development of self-expression, identity formation, and emotional intelligence. As students engage with music that speaks to their realities, addressing issues such as social justice, love, hope, and resilience, they find opportunities for personal growth and self-actualisation. This approach not only humanises the learning process but also aligns music education with broader goals of nurturing well-rounded, emotionally balanced citizens.

4.6.2 Cultural and Educational Balance

A key issue emerging from the study concerns the balance between cultural preservation and curricular modernisation. Teachers and KICD officials emphasised the need to maintain Kenya's musical heritage while responding to contemporary trends in youth culture. Popular music, in this sense, serves as a bridge between the traditional and the modern. Genres such as Benga, Taarab, Afrobeat, and Kenyan gospel reflect the country's dynamic cultural hybridity, rooted in indigenous forms yet open to global influences. Including these genres within the curriculum promotes cultural continuity while ensuring relevance to the current generation of learners.

At the same time, the study identified concerns about content appropriateness, particularly lyrics or themes that may conflict with educational values. This calls for careful selection and adaptation of repertoire, guided by pedagogical principles and ethical considerations. A culturally sensitive approach should emphasise socially constructive popular music that fosters national cohesion, respect, and creativity, while avoiding content that may promote negative values.

4.6.3 Pedagogical and Institutional Implications

The findings underscore several pedagogical implications. Teachers play a central role in mediating the inclusion of popular music, yet many reported limited training in contemporary genres, music technology, and digital production techniques. This points to the need for targeted professional development and pre-service teacher preparation programmes that equip educators with the necessary skills to teach both traditional and modern music effectively. Integrating workshops on music production software, live performance techniques, and digital pedagogy would enhance teachers' capacity to handle an expanded music curriculum.

Institutionally, schools require investment in instructional resources, including modern instruments, recording equipment, and audio-visual materials. Such tools are essential for facilitating practical engagement with popular music forms, as theoretical instruction alone may not suffice to develop relevant skills. Collaboration between schools, local artists, and creative industry stakeholders could provide additional mentorship opportunities and exposure to authentic performance contexts.

4.6.4 Socio-Economic and Policy Relevance

Beyond pedagogy, the findings hold significant policy and socio-economic implications. Kenya's Vision 2030 and the Creative Economy Blueprint highlight the creative arts as a key pillar of economic growth and youth empowerment. Including popular music in the secondary school curriculum, therefore, aligns education with the country's broader economic agenda by nurturing talents that can contribute to the creative industry. Popular music education can also create pathways for entrepreneurship in performance, production, event management, and digital content creation, thus linking education to employability.

The integration of popular music further contributes to national identity formation and social cohesion. By embracing diverse genres that reflect Kenya's ethnic and regional diversity, the curriculum can foster mutual respect, intercultural understanding, and the values of unity in diversity enshrined in the national philosophy of education. Moreover, it offers students a platform to engage critically with social issues, thereby developing a sense of civic responsibility and cultural literacy.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the data were presented and analyzed. This chapter summarizes the study's findings. Specifically, it provides a brief explanation of how the researcher conducted the research and the results. It weaves together the threads of analysis from the preceding chapters to present a cohesive understanding of instructional tools and strategies for popular music curriculum in Kenya.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

5.2.1 Popular Music Genres Suitable for Inclusion

The study found that both students and teachers in Nairobi County hold a positive attitude towards the inclusion of popular music genres in the curriculum. Students expressed a deep appreciation for music that mirrors their lived experiences and contemporary realities, particularly Benga, Gengetone, Afrobeat, Gospel, Reggae, and Pop. These genres were viewed as culturally relevant and engaging, capable of inspiring creativity and enhancing learner motivation. Teachers equally acknowledged the educational value of such genres, emphasising their potential to make music learning more dynamic, inclusive, and reflective of modern Kenyan society.

Officials from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) recognised the growing importance of integrating popular music into the curriculum to reflect Kenya's evolving cultural identity and to ensure that learners are equipped for participation in the creative economy. However, they cautioned that curriculum inclusion should be guided by structured policies that preserve cultural integrity and ensure moral appropriateness. The study, therefore, concluded that genres such as Traditional African Music, Benga,

Afro-fusion, Jazz, and Gospel are most suitable for inclusion, as they embody both cultural heritage and modern relevance.

5.2.2 Instructional Tools Relevant to Inclusion

The study revealed that the limited availability of instructional tools and learning resources constrains the effective inclusion of popular music genres in the curriculum. Most schools were found to have traditional instruments such as drums, kayambas, and shakers, but lacked modern tools like electronic keyboards, sound mixers, computers, and music production software. This gap has hindered teachers' ability to practically engage students in the study and creation of popular music. The majority of teachers relied on outdated textbooks that emphasised Western classical and African traditional music, with minimal reference to contemporary popular genres.

KICD officials observed that curriculum support materials need to be revised to incorporate digital and multimedia resources that reflect modern music production and performance. The integration of technology, including online platforms and digital learning tools, was identified as essential to support experiential and interactive learning. Without such resources, music education risks remaining detached from the realities of today's music industry and learner experiences. Therefore, the study highlighted the urgent need for investment in instructional tools and digital infrastructure to make the inclusion of popular music genres effective and sustainable.

5.2.3 Pedagogical Issues Arising from Inclusion

Several pedagogical issues emerged as critical considerations in the inclusion of popular music genres. One of the main concerns is the appropriateness of the content, as some popular music features explicit or controversial themes that may conflict with educational and moral values. Teachers are therefore required to exercise careful

judgment when selecting songs for classroom use, ensuring that the content aligns with educational objectives and cultural values.

Another challenge pertains to teacher competency. Many music teachers were found to lack the training necessary to teach contemporary genres that rely on digital tools and modern compositional techniques. The study underscored the need for continuous professional development and retooling programmes to build teachers' capacity in popular music pedagogy. In addition, resource limitations such as inadequate instruments, recording equipment, and instructional materials further constrained effective teaching. Despite these challenges, the study established consensus among teachers and KICD officials that integrating popular music into the curriculum is feasible and beneficial when accompanied by adequate preparation, professional training, and institutional support.

5.3 Conclusion of the Study

The study concludes that the inclusion of popular music genres in the Kenyan secondary school curriculum is both necessary and achievable. The evidence indicates that students are more motivated when the learning content reflects their social realities. At the same time, teachers and curriculum developers recognise the value of popular music in enhancing creativity, cultural awareness, and learner engagement. A culturally inclusive curriculum would therefore promote both personal expression and national identity.

Regarding the first objective, the study concludes that Traditional African Music, Benga, Afrobeat, Gospel, Jazz, and Reggae are the most appropriate genres for integration. These genres embody Kenya's diverse musical heritage while remaining relevant to contemporary cultural and social contexts. Their inclusion would promote cultural preservation, creativity, and learner-centred education.

With respect to the second objective, the study concludes that the current instructional resources are inadequate for effective teaching of popular music. The lack of modern instruments, music production tools, and multimedia resources has created a disconnect between curriculum content and the realities of the music industry. The study emphasises that effective inclusion requires investment in modern instructional tools, digital platforms, and curriculum materials that reflect technological advancement.

Regarding the third objective, the study concludes that several pedagogical challenges must be addressed to ensure successful integration. Teachers need adequate training in modern music pedagogy, technological skills, and content selection. Resource limitations and content appropriateness remain key areas of concern, but they can be mitigated through policy reforms, curriculum innovation, and continuous teacher professional development. Overall, the study concludes that integrating popular music genres into the secondary school curriculum will enhance cultural responsiveness, promote creativity, and align education with the aspirations of Kenya's creative economy.

5.4 Contribution of the Study

The study makes significant theoretical, practical, and policy contributions. Theoretically, it advances constructivist and experiential learning perspectives by demonstrating that students learn more effectively when educational content connects with their cultural and social experiences. By emphasising real-life relevance and cultural identity, the study reinforces the idea that meaningful learning occurs when students actively construct knowledge from familiar contexts.

Practically, the study provides empirical evidence to guide curriculum developers and educators in designing music programmes that integrate traditional and contemporary genres. It highlights the need for teacher-training institutions to embed music technology,

composition, and production into their curricula to prepare educators for modern classrooms. The study also offers practical insights for schools to adopt blended learning models that utilise both traditional and digital tools.

At the policy level, the study contributes to the ongoing educational reforms under Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) by supporting creativity, innovation, and cultural inclusivity. It offers a framework for the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development and the Ministry of Education to develop structured guidelines for incorporating popular music into the national curriculum, balancing creativity with cultural preservation and moral responsibility.

5.5 Recommendations of the Study

The study recommends that the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development review and update the secondary school music curriculum to incorporate a balanced mix of traditional and popular music genres that reflect Kenya's cultural diversity. KICD should also develop clear pedagogical guidelines to ensure that popular music is taught responsibly, emphasising educational value and moral appropriateness. Furthermore, it should design multimedia teaching and learning resources, including digital archives of Kenyan music, to enhance access to instructional materials.

The Ministry of Education should allocate adequate funding to schools to acquire modern instruments and technological tools necessary for teaching popular music. It should also establish and support continuous professional development programmes to equip teachers with skills in music technology and contemporary pedagogy. Collaboration with the creative industry would further strengthen experiential learning by providing students with mentorship opportunities and exposure to real-world practices.

Teachers are encouraged to adopt a balanced approach that integrates traditional and popular music genres in classroom activities to promote inclusivity and creativity. They should select songs and materials that are culturally appropriate and educationally relevant while embracing continuous learning to remain current with emerging trends in music education and technology. Students, on their part, are encouraged to actively participate in musical learning experiences that explore both heritage and modern genres, using music as a means of positive self-expression and cultural appreciation.

Finally, the study recommends that future researchers conduct similar studies in other countries to identify regional variations in attitudes towards the inclusion of popular music. Further studies could also examine the impact of integrating popular music on learner performance, creativity, and career choices. Additionally, research could examine how digital platforms and online music resources can enhance music teaching and learning in Kenyan schools.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

- i. Conduct comparative studies across different regions of Kenya (or other contexts) to examine which popular music genres resonate most with students and how cultural diversity influences preferences.
- ii. Explore the effectiveness of digital platforms, mobile applications, and online resources in teaching popular music genres.
- iii. Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the sustainability and outcomes of integrating popular music into the secondary curriculum.
- iv. Compare Kenyan experiences with those of other countries that have formally integrated popular music genres into their curricula.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: Examining Instructional Tools and Strategies for Popular Music Curriculum Inclusion in Kenya: A Study of Selected Secondary Schools in Nairobi County

Researcher: Veronicah Mwai

Study Description: If you are willing to participate, you will be required to fill out an open-ended questionnaire. You are free to ask for clarification when the tasks are unclear. The responses will only be accessed by the researcher and authorized team members.

If you decide to participate, the study will not require you to identify yourself by name. Note that you are allowed to skip any question that you may not be willing to answer. Also, you can opt out of the process at any time if you feel uncomfortable or inconvenienced.

There will be no financial compensation attached to your participation. However, I acknowledge and sincerely appreciate the time you will spend on the process. By sharing your opinions, experiences, and insights, you will assist in critical decision-making regarding the Kenyan Secondary school music curriculum.

Consent: I have read and understood the content of the consent form, or the content has been clearly read to me by the research assistant. I have understood what the study entails, and all the questions and concerns I had have been adequately addressed. I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw at any time.

I freely consent to participate in this study.

Signing this form does not in any way imply that I have given up the rights I am entitled to as a participant.

• I agree to participate in this research: YES _____ NO _____

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact: Veronicah Mwai on: +254721313352 or email: nyaguthiimwai@gmail

Appendix II: Interview Guide for Music Teachers

1. What are your teaching qualifications?

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2. How long have you taught music in secondary school?

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3. Kindly indicate other popular music genres/sub-genres you know about.

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4. What are your views concerning the music genres you have mentioned in (3) above?

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5. Which genres/styles of music do you think can be included in the secondary music curriculum? Give reasons for your answers.

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6. What are other pedagogical issues connected to popular music genres?

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7. What tools are required for a popular music education curriculum?

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8. Given a chance, what can be improved in the secondary school music curriculum with respect to the genres of music being taught today?

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9. What musical activities are students engaged in outside the classroom and within the school?

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10. List the music genres that students perform most frequently during the activities mentioned in (8) above.

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Thank You

Appendix III: Interview Guide for Students

1. What genres/styles of music are you taught in the classroom?

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2. What are your views concerning the music genres you have mentioned in (1) above?

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3. Kindly indicate popular music genres/sub-genres you know about.

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4. What are your views concerning the music genres you have mentioned in (3) above?

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5. Which genres/styles of music do you think can be included in the secondary music curriculum?

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6. What instructional tools would you require for a curriculum on popular music genres?

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7. What instructional tools that you have mentioned in (6) above can you access?

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8. What musical activities do you engage in outside the classroom and within the school?

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9. List the music genres that you perform/listen to most frequently during these activities.

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10. Given a chance, what can be improved in the secondary school music curriculum with respect to the genres of music you are being taught in the classroom?

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Thank You

Appendix IV: Interview Guide for officials from KICD

1. Kindly indicate your gender.

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2. Kindly indicate the number of years you have been working with KICD.

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3. Kindly provide your knowledge on the relevance of the Secondary School Music Curriculum.

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4. Kindly provide your knowledge on the content of the Secondary School Music Curriculum.

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5. To the best of your knowledge, do you prefer Popular Music Genres to be included in the Secondary School Music Curriculum? Kindly explain.

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6. Kindly list some of the Popular Music Genres that, to the best of your knowledge, should be included in the Secondary School Music Curriculum. Give reasons for your answer.

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7. Kindly list some of the instructional tools associated with including Popular Music Genres in Secondary School Music Curriculum.

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8. To the best of your knowledge, kindly list some of the pedagogical issues that may arise from including the identified popular music genres in the secondary school music curriculum.

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Thank You

Appendix V: Population of the Study

Parameter	Number	Source
Total secondary schools in Nairobi County	386	Ministry of Education (2024)
Secondary schools offering music	24	Based on curriculum audits and MoE data
Estimated music teachers (1 per school)	23	School staffing patterns
The average number of Form 3 music students per school	15–20 students	Based on school reports and teacher interviews
Estimated total Form 3 music students	~380 students	(24 schools × ~15.8 students)

Appendix VI: KUREC Clearance Letter



KABARAK UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Private Bag - 20157
KABARAK, KENYA
Email: kurec@kabarak.ac.ke

Tel: 254-51-343234/5
Fax: 254-051-343529
www.kabarak.ac.ke

OUR REF: KABU01/KUREC/001/17/05/25

Date: 12th May, 2025

Veronica Mwai
Reg. No: GME/M/0100/01/22
Kabarak University,

Dear Veronica,

RE: EXAMINING INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR POPULAR MUSIC CURRICULUM IN KENYA: A STUDY OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI COUNTY.

This is to inform you that **KUREC** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is **KUREC-170525**. The approval period is **12/05/2025 – 12/05/2026**.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. All researchers shall obtain an introduction letter to NACOSTI from the relevant head of institutions (Institute of postgraduate, School dean or Directorate of research)
- ii. The researcher shall further obtain a RESEARCH PERMIT from NACOSTI before commencement of data collection & submit a copy of the permit to **KUREC**.
- iii. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA Material Transfer Agreement) will be used
- iv. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by **KUREC**;
- v. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to **KUREC** within 72 hours of notification;
- vi. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risk(s) or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to **KUREC** within 72 hours;
- vii. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions and submit a copy of the permit to **KUREC**;
- viii. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal and;
- ix. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to **KUREC**

Sincerely,


Prof. Jackson Kitetu PhD.
KUREC-Chairman

Cc Vice Chancellor
DVC-Academic & Research
Registrar-Academic & Research
Director-Research Innovation & Outreach
Institute of Post Graduate Studies

As members of Kabarak



faithfully, we purport at all times and in all places, to set apart in one's heart, Jesus as Lord
(1 Peter 3:15)

Kabarak University is ISO 9001:2015 Certified

Appendix VII: NACOSTI Research Permit


NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Ref No: **846531**

RESEARCH LICENSE

Date of Issue: **15/July/2025**




This is to Certify that Ms. VERONICAH NYAGUTHII MWAI of Kabarak University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: EXAMINING INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR POPULAR MUSIC CURRICULUM IN KENYA: A STUDY OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI COUNTY for the period ending : 15/July/2026.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/25/4176710**

Applicant Identification Number: **846531**

Ag: **Director General**
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code



NOTE: This is a computer-generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

See overleaf for conditions

Appendix VIII: Evidence of Conference Participation



Appendix IX: List of Publication

PAN African Journal of Musical Arts Education

Vol. 2 No. 2 (2024): ISSN (Online): 2958-4558

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58721/pajmae.v2i2.756>

Reimagining Arts Education and Practice in the Digital Space



Reimagining Arts Education and Practice in the Digital Space

Veronica N. Mwai & Mellitus N. Wanyama

Kabarak University, Kenya

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Abstract

This paper investigates the urgent need to reassess arts education, particularly popular music education, in the digital space. It highlights the importance of pedagogical preparedness among educators while examining the gaps, challenges, and opportunities digital tools present. Integrating these technologies is essential for fostering students' creativity, critical thinking, and digital literacy (Rexhepi et al., 2024). Using a constructivist paradigm and a qualitative research approach, the study analyses existing data to evaluate digital adoption in popular music education. The findings suggest that while digital tools offer significant benefits, their integration is incomplete, with many educators relying on traditional methods. The study acknowledges limitations, mainly focusing on teacher-centred data with less emphasis on student experiences. As education systems worldwide confront rapid technological advancements, traditional frameworks in arts education face significant challenges. This research examines the transformative potential of digital tools in popular music education, emphasising the need for professional development and systemic support to equip educators with the necessary skills. The paper stresses the importance of addressing these challenges to create an environment where digital tools enhance traditional popular music education. Moreover, it considers how digital transformation reshapes the roles of educators and students, offering opportunities for more dynamic and interactive learning experiences. The study also explores the potential of digital tools to democratise access to quality popular music education, breaking down barriers related to geography and economics. Ultimately, this paper advocates for a balanced approach to digital integration, ensuring that innovation complements essential pedagogical principles.

Introduction

The digital revolution has permeated nearly every facet of human life, significantly altering how people communicate, work, and learn. Education has not been exempted from these sweeping changes as a cornerstone of societal development. Among the various disciplines impacted by this technological transformation, arts education, specifically popular music education, stands at a critical juncture. The traditional frameworks that have long governed popular music education are now challenged by the need to integrate digital technologies. This integration is not merely a matter of