

MUSICAL TRAINING ON TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS: INSIGHTS FROM NCHIRAA PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the status of music education within the creative arts curriculum, with a specific focus on Nchiraa primary schools in the Wenchi municipality of the Bono Region of Ghana. The primary aim was to investigate the factors contributing to the limited attention given to music instruction by teachers in Nchiraa primary schools within the performing arts strand of the creative arts curriculum. Drawing on the Music Theory Learning by Edwin Gordon, the research adopted a qualitative paradigm with a case study design. Four schools were included in the study, within the Nchiraa circuit, selecting two teachers from each school. Purposive sampling was used to select the two teachers from each school making eight participants for in-depth exploration. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews and observation, with thematic analysis employed for data interpretation. The findings revealed that while teachers in Nchiraa primary schools acknowledge the importance of music in the creative arts curriculum, they lack the expertise due to a lack of formal musical training. Recommendations include sensitising the Ghana Education Service (GES) to the need for teachers with appropriate competencies in creative arts education and establishing training opportunities for generalist teachers in creative arts in the various schools.

Keywords: Wenchi, Nchiraa, creative arts, musical training, music education

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In alignment with the guidelines outlined by the Curriculum Research and Development Division [CRDD] (2007), Creative Arts constitutes an integrated subject encompassing Visual Arts (such as drawing, weaving, carving, modeling, casting, and sewing) and Performing Arts (music, dance, and drama). Music and dance, integral components of the creative arts curriculum, are considered fundamental human needs, as suggested by Arthur (2014). Despite their inclusion in the Ghanaian primary school curriculum, the progress of learners in these disciplines is not formally assessed or monitored, as they are not designated as examinable areas of discipline for the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE).

In Ghanaian primary schools, generalist teachers who usually lack formal music training beyond their exposure during initial teacher training at teacher training institutions are the ones primarily responsible for music teaching and learning (Agbenyo et al., 2021). Emphasising the cultural importance of music, Nketia (1999) underscores the need for African children to acquire knowledge, skills, and understanding of traditional music and dance within their

environment and neighbouring communities. Obeng and Osei-Senya (2018) further assert the vital role of music in shaping human existence, influencing the social life of the communities, including religious rites, recreational activities, political and social events, and economic activities. Reimer (1989) emphasises the significance of studying music, portraying it as being responsible for personal development. He contends that studying music enhances learning skills, instils moral uplift, fulfils social needs, provides a healthy outlet for emotions, encourages self-discipline, offers a challenge for focused efforts, and contributes to the worthy use of leisure time, ultimately improving overall health.

Despite these affirmations of music's importance, a preliminary study indicated that teachers in Nchiraa primary schools allocate minimal attention to the music instruction as a strand in the Creative Arts curriculum. Motivated by this observation, this study delved into investigating the status of the teaching and learning music of the Performing arts in the creative arts curriculum within the Nchiraa circuit. The Creative Arts syllabus, emphasising critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and socio-economic progress, has raised concerns regarding the teaching and learning of its music aspect (Obeng & Osei-Senya, 2018). The researchers, involved in the basic schools cultural festival in the Nchiraa circuit, observed a lack of musical proficiency among pupils during performances. A preliminary study confirmed that teachers in the Nchiraa circuit pay minimal attention to the music strand of the Performing Arts.

Agbenyo et al. (2021) highlighted that generalist teachers lack the necessary content and pedagogical skills for effective music and dance instruction. Akuffo and Lamplighter (2020) found few primary school teachers with specialised music training in their study conducted in selected schools in Winneba.

Geographically, there is a literature gap, as no study has investigated music teaching in the Wenchi Municipality in the Bono Region of Ghana. This study then aimed at addressing this gap by examining how music is taught in Nchiraa primary schools. In dealing with the research problem, two research questions were addressed 1) What are the musical backgrounds of teachers in Nchiraa primary schools? 2) What perceptions do primary school teachers of Nchiraa hold on the teaching and learning of music? In addressing these questions, we began with a brief review of the related literature, continued with the methodology, the discussion of findings and ended with the conclusions of the study.

2.0 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

The study was grounded in the Music Learning Theory (MLT) proposed by Gordon (2007). Gordon describes Music Learning Theory as the examination and synthesis of the sequential manner in which we learn music. According to him, audiation can manifest in various forms that develop sequentially from before birth through adulthood. Through audiation, music learning is understood as a continuous, ever-deepening process for musical expression and enjoyment. Gordon (2007) identified three preparatory audiation stages, eight types of audiation, and six stages of audiation. Valerio (in press) further elaborated on Gordon's Music Learning Theory:

Music Learning Theory, researched and developed by Edwin Gordon from the mid-1950s to the present, is a set of ideas about how humans learn music through audiation.

By breathing, moving, rhythm chanting, singing, and playing instruments, we develop audiation skills that allow us to give meaning to the combinations of rhythm patterns and tonal patterns that make music a unique form of human communication. (p. 1)

Indeed, audiation is a fundamental concept in Gordon's explanation of how one learns music. Gordon uses audiation to describe the "basic patterns within music that he believed represented the basic vocabulary of music." These sound patterns form the musical vocabulary for the inner 'voices,' which sing rather than talk, as earlier echoed by Colwell (2006). This theory is pertinent to our research because primary school pupils may relate to the pre-audiation stages in Gordon's theory, which serve as the foundation before reaching the audiation stage. According to Gordon's theory, a learner cannot attain the audiation stage without first progressing through the preparatory audiation phases. The following tables illustrate the types and stages of audiation as outlined by Gordon (2007):

Table 1: Types of Audiation by Gordon (2007)

Type 1	Listening to	Familiar or unfamiliar music
Type 2	Reading	Familiar or unfamiliar music
Type 3	Writing	Familiar or unfamiliar music from dictation
Type 4	Recalling and Performing	Familiar music from memory
Type 5	Recalling and Writing	Familiar music from memory
Type 6	Creating and Improvising	Unfamiliar music while performing or in silence
Type 7	Creating and Improvising	Unfamiliar music while reading
Type 8	Creating and Improvising	Unfamiliar music while writing

Table 2: Stages of Audiation by Gordon (2007)

Stage 1	Momentary retention
Stage 2	Imitating and audiating tonal patterns and rhythm patterns and recognizing and identifying a tonal centre and macrobeats
Stage 3	Establishing objective or subjective tonality and meter
Stage 4	Retaining in audiation tonal patterns and rhythm patterns that have been organised
Stage 5	Recalling tonal patterns and rhythm patterns organized and audiated in other pieces of music
Stage 6	Anticipating and predicting tonal patterns and rhythm patterns

Clearly, to give pupils a solid and secure foundation for being able to audiate, it is crucial that primary school teachers give the required attention to the teaching of music.

3.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.1 Musical Background of Primary School Teachers

Akuffo and Lamplighter (2019) objected that, out of the eight instructors observed, 1 (12.5 %) percent had the Ghana Teachers Certificate 'A' qualification, while 4 (50%) had a Diploma in Basic Education. Teachers having a university education constituted another minority of 3 (37.5 %). This shows that all of the teachers in the sampled schools were qualified to work in primary schools as they possessed the necessary education and credentials to instruct in a Ghanaian primary school (Akuffo & Lamplighter, 2019).

Akuffo and Lamplighter (2019) revealed the musical background of primary school teachers:

The data also suggests that the introduction of Distance Education option of some Universities in Ghana has given some primary school teachers the chance to further their education while also teaching in their respective classrooms. As a result, 50% of the respondents acquired the Diploma Certificate which is higher than the certificate "A" previously the minimum qualification for teaching in Ghanaian schools. If all these teachers hold the above qualifications, then it means each one of them had tasted a music course during their training as teachers. The first question about the musical backgrounds of teachers was aimed at finding out whether teachers at the selected primary schools had received any training in music across the curriculum. That is, in the schooling life time of the respondents, from Basic School, through Senior High School to Tertiary. Respondents submitted that, all of them who attended Colleges of Education had the opportunity to study music for a semester in the first year and so had the chance to choose music as an elective subject, when they were pursuing their teaching career programmes of study. (p. 107)

They were more likely to disregard music elective classes, because the majority of them had no prior musical training from either elementary or senior high school (Akuffo & Lamplighter, 2019).

Akuffo and Lamplighter (2019) presented and explained the competence of the teacher:

Even the few who choose it then (when they were in college) did not get the in-depth knowledge of the course before coming out of school. In this case, they were not well equipped to teach the Music component in the Creative Arts subject. Collins (2014) agreed by adding that, achieving competence in a subject area is made far more difficult when the student enters a course with a low level of subject knowledge and receives minimum instruction in it. Yet these are the teachers who are supposed to teach all subjects effectively and efficiently in the primary school in each class they are assigned. (p. 107)

De Vries (2013) discovered that the causes of the relatively low participation rate in teaching music are insufficient pre-service teacher preparation in music, a lack of time to teach music, and have access to teaching resources, places, and pertinent professional development. Infact, there is a drastic decrease in the amount of time spent on music education in preservice primary teacher education programmes in Australia, raising concerns about whether graduates will

possess the abilities and dispositions needed to teach music as found in the work of Temmerman. (1991).

3.2 The Generalist Teacher

Collins (2014) described who a generalist teacher is:

Primary generalist teachers, also known as elementary classroom teachers, are a specialized group of educators. Typically, they spend most of their professional lives teaching a class of students for a school year, covering multiple subject disciplines. They need a solid foundation of knowledge in various areas and an extensive understanding of educational pedagogy and psychology. Regarding music education specifically, requirements vary across school systems. Primary generalist teachers may be responsible for delivering the music education curriculum to their class or assisting a music specialist in its delivery and reinforcement. (p.2)

Those who support music instruction in elementary schools by generalist teachers do so because they think it shows students that music is a crucial and integral part of education. The generalist teachers also have numerous opportunities during the week to teach music because they are with their students every day (Glover & Ward, 1998; Mills, 1989). Additionally, it means that the generalist teacher is in a position to guarantee that music is incorporated into all areas of the curriculum.

4.0 METHOD AND PROCESS

The study adopted a qualitative research approach, as elucidated by Chai et al. (2021), which involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data such as text, video, or audio to comprehend concepts, opinions, or experiences. Given the necessity for face-to-face interactions with teachers to explore their musical backgrounds and teaching perspectives, the qualitative paradigm was deemed suitable for analysing their opinions. Additionally, the study employed a case study design, as outlined by Yin (2003), to facilitate an in-depth exploration of complex issues within real-life settings.

The case study design proved particularly beneficial for focusing on Nchiraa primary schools to understand the teachers' attitudes. The study concentrated on four primary schools within the Nchiraa circuit, selecting two teachers from each school – one from lower primary and one from upper primary - Purposive sampling was employed to select participants based on their years of experience in teaching the Creative Arts curriculum. Semi-structured interviews and observations served as research instruments to collect data. The research instruments used ensured a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the teachers' perceptions and practices regarding music education in primary schools.

The researchers contacted participating instructors and head teachers to inform them about the study and obtain their permission before conducting interviews and observations. To ensure participants felt comfortable sharing their opinions, one-on-one interviews were conducted on agreed-upon days and times. The objective was to assess their knowledge of music and their perceptions of music teaching. For ethical considerations, participants were informed about audio and video recordings. Semi-structured interviews were guided by research questions and

conducted within a two-week period at four distinct schools. The interviews lasted fifteen to twenty minutes and took place in the participants' classrooms. Participants were contacted in advance to confirm interview times. After each interview session, lower primary pupils were monitored to gauge their understanding of different music teaching methodologies. Additionally, teaching sessions related to music by the participants were observed to ascertain how their perceptions influenced their teaching methods. Collaboratively with the participants, specific days and hours were set for classroom observations. The week following the interviews, observations were conducted with the consent of participants from different schools, and the anticipated observations were successfully completed. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes, patterns, or topics within the transcribed data, highlighting key phrases, ideas, or concepts that emerged from the study.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data was discussed based in the research questions used in the study. The primary aim of this research was to find out the musical background of teachers and their perception for teaching music.

5.1 What are the musical background of teachers in Nchiraa primary schools?

Following the data's coding and thematic analysis, the participants' responses were used to help identify the following themes:

- a. Teachers' Family Musical Backgrounds
- b. Teachers' Personal Musical Experiences
- c. Teachers' Personal Music Preferences
- d. Teachers' Educational Background in Music

5.1.1 Teachers' Family Musical Backgrounds

The main musical experiences the participants had when growing up were singing and listening, corresponding to their comments from the interview. Their family did not only enjoy singing, especially in churches, but also occasionally listened to music at home. Church music was found to be the participants' favoured genre because the majority of the participants' families were found to be Christians. The work of Van Leersum-Bekebrede et al. (2021) affirms that the love of singing, particularly in their religious group, shows a strong cultural and family connection to music, which is frequently a result of their Christian upbringing. Their families' shared love of church music highlights how religious convictions and customs influence their musical preferences and social connections. This suggests that the participants' family dynamics revolved around music, especially singing and listening to church music. Their responses indicated that the majority of the participants' families were music-loving; they attended musical events, sang in church, and enjoyed other musical activities. It was evident that their families frequently had strong passions for music and musical pursuits. When they had spare time, they constantly listen to music. They also engaged in this activity when they were bored to alleviate their boredom. This aligns with Mehr et al. (2019), who asserted that

music is one of the most universal forms of expression and communication for humankind, present in the everyday lives of people of all ages and from all cultures around the world.

Some participants' families showed a preference for traditional music over church music, a sharp contrast to others whose families favoured church music. Despite identifying as Christians, these individuals held their local music in higher esteem than church music. They viewed their traditional music as an integral part of their culture and felt a deep sense of obligation to honour and preserve it. This sentiment was echoed by a participant who identified as Dagaati, emphasising her family's profound appreciation for their traditional musical genre, Bawa. Similarly, an Akan participant (Bono) highlighted his family's fondness for Adowa and other prominent musical genres within the Akan community. They believe that these musical subgenres represent and help to define who they are as a people. With regards to this, Nketia (1999) had expressed the necessity to be familiar with traditional music: Nketia (1999) expressed:

The importance of providing learning experience that enables African children to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding of traditional music and dance of their own environment and those of their neighbours' is now generally recognized for without this preparation they may not be able to participate fully in the life of their communities to which they belong. (p. 2)

It is worthy of note that many participants expressed that their families have a strong love and passion for music, particularly in listening and singing, but these sentiments are not deeply ingrained within their households. Most families lack musicians or musicologists, so music listening is primarily for entertainment rather than a deeply rooted tradition. Religious singing constitutes only a small portion of their musical activities. As a result, these families are not typically associated with music culture. Only one participant mentioned that their mother was a chorister and their father played the keyboard in a Methodist church, suggesting that choral singing holds significance in their household and is greatly valued and respected by all members. The participant had this to say:

My father was a keyboardist at Wenchi Methodist church by then. My mother, the late, also happened to be a chorister.

5.1.2 Teachers' Personal Musical Experiences

The interview responses of the majority of participants revealed that their personal musical experiences primarily revolve around singing. With a Christian upbringing, they frequently sing in church services and other church events. Many of them are active members of church choirs, participating in rehearsals and performances regularly. Consequently, church singing emerges as the focal point of their musical experiences. These experiences are deeply intertwined with their childhood upbringing influenced by their families' backgrounds, shaping their musical development.

One individual expressed a deep passion for music, having learned to play drums and piano at church, yet still yearning for further musical knowledge. Additionally, it was revealed that another participant had a unique musical experience rooted in singing while working on the farm and composing original songs using various materials and styles. He shared that his tribe,

the Dagaati, has a tradition of singing and whistle-blowing while working in the bush. However, despite his initial enthusiasm for music during his upbringing, his passion waned due to limited exposure to quality music. It was only when he decided to become a choirmaster that he had the opportunity for informal music training. His family's rich history in choral music provided him with the chance to join the choir and sing in church from a young age, reigniting his love for music. This is what he said:

...we started our music experiences at our tender ages when we were following our parents to choir practices. We also had the opportunity to perform in the church at our tender ages so our music experiences started when we were young. ...I had an exposure to music training though it wasn't formal but I had an opportunity to go to a place. I have forgotten the name actually but it wasn't a school actually but it was a music training we had and that was when I wanted to be a choir master. So errhm ... I went in for that course though it wasn't a formal training.

The statement conveys a frequent story among people whose early musical experiences are entwined with their religion and familial background. A child's early involvement in church choir training and performances paves the way for their future musical endeavours (Garrido & Schubert, 2011). Their aspirations and interests in professions associated to music, like choir mastery, are shaped by this immersive musical atmosphere, which cultivates a strong connection to music from a young age. This story emphasizes the multidimensional nature of music learning outside of conventional educational settings, highlighting the importance of early exposure and informal training in forming musical identities and goals. Additionally, the fact that informal music training is mentioned emphasizes how crucial non-formal channels are for fostering musical abilities and goals (Koutsoupidou & Hargreaves, 2009). While academic institutions' formal music education programs frequently adhere to prescribed curricula, informal training might take place through community-based initiatives or through possibilities for mentorship in settings that are cultural or religious. People like the one in the statement benefit from exposure to musical experiences that feed their love and desire to pursue musical roles even when they lack formal schooling.

5.1.3 Teachers' Personal Music Preferences

The interview responses of the majority of participants revealed that their personal musical experiences primarily revolve around singing. With a Christian upbringing, they frequently sing in church services and other church events. Many of them are active members of church choirs, participating in rehearsals and performances regularly. Consequently, church singing emerges as the focal point of their musical experiences. These experiences are deeply intertwined with their childhood upbringing influenced by their families' backgrounds, shaping their musical development.

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5.1.4 Teachers' Educational Background in Music

Following the interview on the participants' educational backgrounds, it became clear from the comments that the majority of them did not receive any musical training until their tertiary degree. The only places students had the chance to learn about music education were in colleges of education, and even then, it was just for a semester at most. Depending on where they attended college, some of them got the chance to learn it over the course of two semesters, and one of them even mentioned that he studied it for three years. However, the majority of the responses showed that they only took one semester of music classes at the college. They were only exposed to a small portion of music, though.

A participant said that his musical instruction began at the Junior Secondary School (JSS), right before he was set to take the Basic instruction Certificate Examination (BECE).

I studied music in my let say basic, when I am about to get my basic education certificate.

In the Junior Secondary School (JSS), he studied music for a year, but he was unable to continue because it was an elective subject and he did not sign up for that program to be able to learn it. As a result, he was given the chance to study music once more at the college of

education. In contrast, a participant said that he did not have the opportunity to learn music in elementary school but did so at the SHS.

I studied music at the SHS and the college of education and that is the level I have reached. For basic, I didn't have any education in music.

In response, the participant who had a strong background in choral music and even had informal training in music when he wished to be a choir master said that he just formalized his musical studies in college. In this regard, Porter (2014) indicates and provide insights into the experiences and training of choir directors, including the formalization of musical studies. The respondent indicted that He claimed to have a music diploma from the University of Education, Winneba's Department of Music:

In my education, I did Diploma in music in the University of Education, winneba.

Therefore, despite being exposed to music at a young age, he never had the chance to pursue music in his entire scholastic career until the university level.

Unexpectedly, a participant's reaction indicated that he had never had the chance to study music throughout his entire academic career, not even at the tertiary level. He never got the chance to learn music anywhere, not in elementary school, not in secondary school, and not in college. The following was his response:

Throughout my education I have not had any course related to music and dance but whenever there is a programme that consists of singing, I always try to be part of it but pursuing a course concerning music, I have not had anything like that throughout my education from primary, junior high, senior high at the college of education even my degree I have not had any programme related to music.

Considering the variety and generally insufficient exposure they have had to the subject of music throughout their school careers, Pitts (2012) emphasised the need of understanding the background and knowledge levels of teachers in connection to music. Pitts (2012) commented on how teachers' lack of exposure to music education in the early levels of education impacts negatively on the music teaching process:

The lack of exposure to music and other arts during early, primary, and secondary schooling, coupled with minimal involvement in the arts outside of school, poses a significant challenge for arts educators. These educators must help preservice teachers become competent in teaching these subjects, often within a limited time frame. (p1)

Due of the limited exposure to music and other arts in early education and beyond, arts instructors confront a great challenge. The development of children' artistic abilities is hampered by the absence of a thorough arts education in primary and secondary schools (Eisner, 1987). Therefore, it is difficult for preservice teachers to incorporate the arts into their lesson plans. In order to address this, it is necessary to promote extracurricular arts programs, argue for greater focus on arts education, and give preservice teachers' thorough training.

5.2 What are the perceptions of teachers concerning music and the teaching of music in Nchiraa Circuit schools?

Following a thematic analysis of the data, the following topics were created for how instructors see music and the teaching of music in primary schools;

- a. Teachers' Perceptions' on the Meaning of Music
- b. Teachers' Perceptions' on the Teaching of Music
- c. Teachers' Perceptions' on the importance of Music

5.2.1 Teachers' Perceptions' on the Meaning of Music

The interview responses indicated that teachers in the Nchiraa elementary schools had various perspectives on what music meant. Some people considered music to be any soothing sound (Hutchinson, 1976). They contend that music should be pleasing to the ear rather than a sound or anything else that should distract from or appear as noise to the ear. They firmly believe that music should spread joy and amuse listeners. Some of the attendees also mentioned how they believe that music and the soul are inextricably linked. For instance, Marom (2004) mentioned that, the soul and music have a long-standing cultural and historical relationship that is universal. In the essence that, Music has long been used in spiritual activities, rituals, and emotional expression because it can evoke transcendent experiences. He believed that music is the only thing that has a significant impact on the soul. Both happiness and sadness can be felt in the soul through music. Thus, for them, anything related to music should have a direct connection to the soul. Likewise, some participants thought that music was a specific blend of elements that sent a message to its listeners. Ballas (1993) contend that the sounds we perceive as music are not produced by random chance but rather are the result of a variety of factors coming together. Though music should be pleasing to the ear, creating such sound requires critical and persistent work. To create the lovely sound that relaxes the ear, rhythms and tones must be properly arranged and blended (Akhshabi & Rahimi, 2021). It does not just happen by accident. In the words of a response, music is a melody made up of tempo and harmony that expresses a feeling. He agrees with the earlier responses who thought that music was not just a sound that happened by chance but rather a well composed sound, and he also thinks that music-making requires a lot of work to provide that calming effect. Additionally, he said that music sends messages to the listener rather than only being a form of aesthetic pleasure. However, the sounds that we perceive as music are intended to communicate to the listener in various ways, so they are not merely random sounds; rather, they are carefully orchestrated sounds that have very specialized elements like tempo, rhythm, and harmony (Fowler, 1996). Unless a sound has certain peculiar characteristics that have been thoughtfully and critically organized to communicate a message to its listener, we do not automatically label it as music. One participant claims that when we discuss music, it involves much more than just singing. According to him, music comprises both the literary and performing arts, so when we talk about it, we shouldn't simply think about the singing or the noises; rather, we should be conscious that there are so many other things outside just regular sounds. The following was said:

You know, when we talk about music it is not only the singing, singing, singing. We have so many in it, the performing and the whatever, whatever. We have the performing

arts and the written aspect. They are all there. So music to me, as a subject is how people appreciate and accept music in its form.

5.2.2 Teachers' Perceptions' on the Teaching of Music

The interview responses about the teachers' perspectives on the teaching of music revealed that every participant thought music was a subject that had to be taught in the primary school. In general, none of them thought that music was a frivolous topic to teach in primary school (Smith & Johnson, 2020). The responses showed that teaching music at the fundamental level, specifically in primary school, is very important because that is the starting point and the foundation of our educational system, and the foundation matters a lot in everything because there is nothing you can do without a strong and firm foundation.

Music should be taught in the primary school because that is where education starts.

Emphasising on the above perception, another participant also said this:

It is necessary to teach music in our schools.

It is similar to nurturing a seed; if you do it well, it will undoubtedly grow and bear fruit, but if you do not, you are to blame as Cook (2022) stated. As the foundation of our educational system, the primary school, it is crucial to give the teaching of music the attention it needs to be strong and well-established because without it, students will not be able to understand it at any level and will not be able to develop alongside it. Since music is studied as a subject in higher education, it is crucial that it be taught in primary schools since without it, those who desire to study it in college will find it extremely challenging. Furthermore, it was discovered that despite the fact that music and other subjects are interrelated, music should be taught as a separate subject in primary schools. Eerola and Eerola (2014) asserted that, if music is taught as a separate subject in primary schools, it will benefit participants by fostering interest in the subject from their early educational years through their higher education. He claimed that some of the students would become interested in becoming well-known musicians in their respective localities and the nation at large. He contends that the music curriculum for primary schools should be varied in order to appeal to each student's interests and help them develop their own. This is what he said:

I will say music should be a subject on its own as in teaching. This will help a lot because the kids will develop interest right from the basic to the secondary school and to the tertiary and also advance to become maybe renowned persons in the music field.

Furthermore, it became clear that music is deeply rooted in every Ghanaian child, and that you cannot remove music from a Ghanaian child's life. Therefore, it is imperative that music education be provided in primary schools since without music, a child is effectively dead because it serves as the foundation and fulcrum of everyone's existence. As Africans, and particularly Ghanaians, music defines who we are; therefore, because we do not give the necessary attention to the teaching of music in the primary school where school begins, we do not even know ourselves again. The disregard for music is cited as the underlying cause for the modern Ghanaian's lack of appreciation and value for their own cultural heritage. From the outset of our educational system, music should have been prioritized as a core subject deserving

significant attention. Supporting this sentiment, Obeng and Osei-Senya (2018) contend that neglecting to impart our rich musical cultural values to children hampers their comprehensive and holistic development. Glover (2004) also emphasised the importance of exposing children to music as a discipline:

Music is an art form with quite specific potential and skills and competencies and is an important part of the cultural heritage and living traditions of any people or social group. Each child's curriculum must introduce him/her to music in a wide variety of forms as a discipline in its own right, and provide a progressive learning experience in performing, composing and listening to and appraising music. This is a process of imitation into a set of practices and the development of individuals' skills, creativity and response within those practices. (p. 15)

This highlights the value of music education in school curricula for kids, recognizing its cultural significance and applicability in the modern world. Performing, writing, and listening are all included in this well-rounded approach that fosters skill development, creativity, and emotional expression. It encourages students to imitate established methods in order to develop their own artistic identities by placing a strong emphasis on active involvement and gradual learning. All things considered, this all-encompassing method promotes creativity, personal development, and a greater appreciation for music.

5.2.3 Teachers' Perceptions' on the Importance of Music

During the interviews, some participants highlighted the career opportunities that learning music can offer students, emphasizing its potential for providing diverse professional paths. They asserted that music is a talent and mastering it can unlock numerous job prospects. One participant noted the challenges of finding employment in the current competitive job market but emphasized that individuals with musical skills have the autonomy to create their own opportunities instead of relying on government employment. They likened successful musicians to renowned singers such as Sarkodie and Daddy Lumba, suggesting that musicians often enjoy greater financial rewards and recognition compared to some government employees. Another participant echoed this sentiment, pointing out that many globally recognized musicians started their careers from humble beginnings. Consequently, students who engage in music education at school can lay the foundation for their careers and contribute positively to their communities and the nation as a whole. The following transcription emanated from the interview:

The reason why music should be taught in the school is that one, it is a talent and as you know Ghana here the work is difficult for especially the youth and let's compare ourselves to Sarkodie, Kojo Antwi, Daddy Lumba and those young ones like Kuame Eugene. If the person is able to perform well, he will be more respected than the one who is teaching and even in writing the music and mixing it, creates job avenues for the individual.

The interview responses underscored that incorporating music education into schools is crucial for preserving our culture. Music plays a defining role in shaping our African identity and is an integral aspect of our cultural heritage. Therefore, integrating music education into school curricula serves as a means to safeguard and uphold our cultural traditions (Green, 2006).

Native American traditional music conveys a lot about our culture. If students are exposed to music that typically reflects our society, it will aid them in understanding, cherishing, and appreciating their own culture. On the other hand, if music is not given the proper attention in our schools, we risk becoming foreigners in our own country. Nketia (1999) asserted that being familiar with our music as Africans enables us to fully participate in the life of the communities to which we belong.

A few of the participants added that music is a universal source of amusement. They claim that music is a wonderful form of entertainment for all people and brings immense delight to the soul. Music is extremely beneficial to everyone in the world since it awakens emotions and relieves monotony. According to a participant's response, music is the only thing that can effectively energize and focus students when they are tired and bored. For instance, Tampubolon and Tamba (2022) stated that, Students who are feeling bored or fatigued can benefit from music's special power to energize and focus them. It suggests that alternative approaches or exercises might not be as successful as music in reviving students' enthusiasm or holding their interest. In essence, it draws attention to the significant impact that music, especially in educational contexts, may have on improving students' motivation and attentiveness. For some of the participants, music not only brings immense joy to the spirit, but it also gives one energy and motivation to work hard and work more effectively. They believe that working with music expedites tasks and increases productivity. However, if students are exposed to music instruction in elementary school, they will grow up with it and internalize it. Galindo (2009) emphasised that music has the ability to elevate people's spirits, evoke enthusiasm, or induce tranquillity and relaxation with importance of helping us to feel nearly all of the emotions we go through in life.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The study reveals a common lack of music instruction during the participants' early education, indicating inadequate formal music education before postsecondary studies. Most participants received minimal music education before entering teacher preparation programmes, often limited to just one semester. While some had exposure to music education in junior or senior high school, many experienced their first formal music education in college. This underscores the diverse educational backgrounds of the participants and limited access to comprehensive music education.

Furthermore, the findings highlight a unanimous understanding among the interviewed teachers regarding the importance of music education in primary schools. They unanimously recognise the value of music as an integral part of early education, emphasizing its benefits for children's development and learning experiences. Additionally, we acknowledge the potential for music education to open up various career opportunities beyond mere enjoyment, underscoring its practical relevance in the real world and its potential to pave the way for diverse career paths. For these reasons, it is important to include rigorous music curriculum, collaborate with music educators to develop standards, and provide opportunities for professional development for educators. Social and cognitive skills are improved when multidisciplinary learning includes music. Educating teachers about its advantages can help prepare the next generation for a diverse world. Clearly, the study underscores the importance

of integrating Gordon's theory of audiation principles into music education practice, ultimately enhancing students' musical development and understanding in primary schools.

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