ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION IN MUSIC EXAMINATIONS IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: A DISCOURSE

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Abstract

Evaluation is known to involve assessment and judgement about a student's performance in a program of studies. It also determines to what extent the objective of a program is being achieved. This paper explores the current music assessment and evaluation practices in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It examines the factors affecting validity, reliability, objectivity, and consistency of assessment and evaluation in music examinations in these institutions. It equally collated and reviewed the assessment sheets (scoring criteria) for practical examinations in fourteen Nigerian tertiary institutions (seven universities, six colleges of education, and one polytechnic) from four geo-political zones in Nigeria where music is offered. This research used an observation schedule, an online interview and a library search to source its information. The study discovered that there is no uniform practical examination scoring criteria in the Nigerian tertiary institutions (University/Polytechnics/College). The paper recommends a uniform criterion to be used in the tertiary institutions to avoid subjective evaluation. This will help in attaining and sustaining the best practice of music education standards through the music program in Nigeria.

Keywords: assessment, evaluation, music examinations, rubric, music practical

1   Introduction

Music examination in Nigerian tertiary institutions for a very long time has been dominated by diverse approaches and formats. Music education examinations in these institutions of learning differ in implementation and quality. This is because a unified set of music examination policies and evaluation is yet to be fully implemented. At present, the Federal Government has total control over admissions, examinations, and certification of music programs. The establishment of the National Commission for different segments of Nigerian tertiary institutions, the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) in 1962 as an advisory agency but became a statutory body in 1974, the Nigerian Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in 1989, and the Nigerian Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in 1989 gave rise to the minimum standards for all tertiary institution programs leading to the award of Nigerian degree certificates. In Nigeria as of today, the sole purpose of these commissions is to ensure that all tertiary institutions in Nigeria have a uniform standard of operation with strict compliance to the guidelines provided in the different curriculum. In relation to this is the constitution of examination boards both at the national and the state levels. These examination boards have members and workers that produce, from time - to - time, guidelines for examination writing and modalities for assessments and evaluations. These modalities are spelled out in clear and specific terms to enhance objective, unbiased assessment and to avoid subjective assessment.

The NCCE has also reviewed the methods of assessment in colleges of education with a view to harmonising them to ensure parity among these colleges and also ensure consistency with recent developments in education. Much as this act is laudable, it has been found out that there are different interpretations of the curriculum because of its nomenclature as the minimum standard. Coupled with the diverse interpretation of the curriculum is the assessment and evaluation standard, which differs from one institution to the other. This has given room for diverse ungraded examinations in music programs in our colleges of education, polytechnics, and universities. Therefore, a

unified comprehensive assessment rubric and evaluation criteria for practical music examinations are needed to consider all the different elements that are required in assessing music teaching and learning towards music teachers' competence. Two limitations have prevented this type of research in music education from being accepted. These are: (1) the belief by some music educators that results of music practical are affective and therefore cannot be measured without being subjective, and (2) the lack of agreement on what should be assessed and how it should be assessed. But lately, music researchers have agreed on what to teach and have also come to terms that music can be assessed without being subjective, hence, the conduct of this research.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to:
(i)   find out if Nigerian tertiary institutions (Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, and Universities) are having a uniform practical music evaluation and assessment format that contains all the descriptors of observable indices in accordance with professional guidelines.
(ii)   discover whether this evaluation instrument contains all the descriptors provided in the specific curriculum to evaluate student practical examinations.
(iii)   present indices for writing good and standard questions and marking guides in music theory and practical examinations.
(iv)   initiate a uniform music practical examination format that contains all the descriptors of observable indices following professional guidelines in Nigerian tertiary institutions (Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, and universities).

Scope of study

This study used fourteen tertiary institutions that offer music from four geo-political zones in Nigeria for the research. This includes six universities (four public and two private), two polytechnics, and six colleges of education (four federal and two state-owned). The two

polytechnics used are the only ones that offer music in Nigeria. The list of the institutions is as follows: (i) Obafemi Awolowo University (ii) University of Nigeria, Nsukka (iii) Delta State University (iv) Olabisi Onabanjo University (v) Bowen University (vi) Babcock University (vii) Federal University of Technology, Ilaro (viii) The Polytechnic, Ibadan (ix) Federal College of Education, Abeokuta (x) Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri (xi) Federal College of Education, Okene (xii) Federal College of Education, Pankshin (xiii) College of Education, Ilesa (xiv) College of Education, Nsugbe.

Sampling technique

The study used purposive and stratified sampling methods to select institutions for the research. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants because we believe that they might contribute something to the research analysis. Cresswell (2014) suggests being purposeful in identifying participants that might provide insight into our research question. Stratified sampling was used because our population's characteristics are diverse and we want to ensure that every characteristic is properly represented in the sample. This helps to give a good spread across the zones and to capture different strata of public (federal, state) and private institutions. It also provides a robust view, experience and practice of music examiners across the country. Seven universities (three federal, two state, and two private) and polytechnics were selected from the south-west, south-south, and south-east zones of Nigeria. Six public colleges of education were selected from the south-west, south-south, south-east, and north-central zones in the country. Out of these six, four were federal colleges, while the other two were state-owned institutions.

Concept of Assessment

The term assessment is commonly used with a variety of different meanings. Brown (2004) defined it as 'any act of interpreting information about student performance, collected through any of a multitude of means or practices. Assessment is operationally defined as a part of the educational process where (faculty) instructors appraise students' achievements by collecting, measuring, analysing, synthesising,

and interpreting relevant information about a particular object of interest in their performances under controlled conditions in relation to curricula objectives set for their levels, and according to the procedures that are systematic and substantively grounded. It requires assigning students' performances numerical descriptions of the extent to which they possess specific characteristics or traits measured according to specific standards, or criteria serving as a source of evidence of many aspects of an individual student's knowledge, understanding, skills and, or abilities (Ghaicha, 2016). Assessment is germane in any field of study; it is needed to know what students have learnt and what is yet to be learnt or improved upon. It is meant to be a comprehensive educational process that determines learning outcomes in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective objectives drawn from the subject curriculum. Harlen, (2005) defines it as all processes employed by academic staff to make judgements about the achievement of students in units of study and over a course of study. Hamlin (2017) sees assessment as a window to see into what students have learnt. He says music teachers are often unsure what to assess and lack appropriate assessment measures or training to create their own measures for classroom use. The purpose of assessment is to promote student learning, evaluate their knowledge, provide a mark or grade for their academic performance, and give a certificate as evidence of attainment of a level of achievement. Due to the varying guidelines and principles that abound, assessment has remained one of the most controversial issues in higher education today. Many teachers view assessment as simply giving test questions to students and assigning scores and grades. This conception of assessment is vague and narrow. Assessment requires criteria, measures, and is evidence driven. There is a need for a 'proven model of assessment with valid and reliable measures for use in performance examinations. According to Norton (2009), as cited by Akinkuolie, Ogunboye and Adeyemi (2019), there are six principles of assessment. They are:

(i) Consistency: This means ensuring that marking and grading are appropriate and comparable by institutional guidance on grades or numerical marks. (ii) Reliability: This means that any two markers would assign the same grade or numerical mark to the same piece of work. It is

usually ensured by using assessment criteria and /or marking scheme. (iii) Validity: This essentially means establishing that the marking measures what it is supposed to measure. (iv) Levelness: This means assessing learning outcomes that are appropriate for each level of study. (v) Transparency: This includes making sure that the assessment criteria and marking schemes for each assessment task are published and open to all: ensuring that assessment tasks are published in good time, and having a fair and equitable appeals and complaints process that is accessible to all. (vi) Inclusivity: This means making reasonable adjustments in assessing students who have disabilities.

Types of Assessment
There are two main types of assessment: they are formative and summative assessment.
(a) Formative (b) Summative

Formative assessment is the process of monitoring and assessing students' learning and understanding to adapt the teacher's teaching methods to better address students' individual needs. The result of this continual formative feedback is that both teacher and student know the areas of greatest strength and the areas for improvement (Benjamin, 2024). Formative assessment is by its nature, a low-stakes form of assessment. Trumbull and Lash (2013) define formative assessment as tools that identify misconceptions, struggles, and learning gaps along the way and assess how to close those gaps. It includes effective tools for helping to shape learning, and can even bolster students' abilities to take ownership of their learning when they understand that the goal is to improve learning, not apply final marks. Summative assessment is a formal method of evaluating learning by comparing it to a standard or benchmark. It is usually given at the end of a unit, module, or time and period. Summative assessment is also known as assessment of learning. It is used to assess the effectiveness of the program and the learning of the participants. They are designed to both assess the effectiveness of the program and the learning of the participants. This contrasts with formative assessment, which summarises the participants' development

at a particular time to inform instructors of student learning progress.

2   Concept of Evaluation

Evaluation and assessment are often used interchangeably, but they mean different things. Assessment is the immediate measurement of students learning, while evaluation is a larger concept that involves assessment. An assessment is an ongoing process, while an evaluation is a judgement given at the closure of the process. Assessment is graded while evaluation is not graded (Bhasin, 2019). However, both evaluation and assessment are used to review the performance of individuals. Assessment and evaluation are needed to measure whether learning objectives have been met. The essence of evaluation is to build an educational program, assess its achievements, and improve upon its effectiveness. Evaluation is a very important requirement for the education system because it helps in forming the values of judgement and achievement of students. It is useful in improving teaching and the curriculum. Evaluation judges learning level and it is applied against standards. Goods in Phycistcatalyst (2019) defined it as "a process of judging the value of something by certain appraisals." Evaluation is also defined as a systematic process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting information to determine the extent to which pupils are achieving instructional objectives. From this definition, there are three elements on focus, they are: (a) systematic process of collecting (b) analysing and (c) interpreting information. According to Disha (2021), the 'systematic collection' implies that whatever information is gathered should be acquired in a systematic way with some degree of precision. This means that there should not be any subjectivity in the collection.

The next element is the analysis, which must be devoid of any sentiment or bias. The third element has to do with interpretation, which portrays the judgement aspect of the exercise. Evaluation is used as the measure to know the extent to which the objectives have been achieved. This means that the objectives of such programs are known and specified clearly. Just like assessment, evaluation too has criteria for measuring the programs. The criteria are: continuity, consistency, validity, reliability,

compatibility, and objectivity. In setting evaluation terms, there should be determination of what to evaluate: knowledge, recall of facts, understanding (cognitive), values, attitudes, interests (affective), and skills (psychomotor).

Evaluating musical knowledge

Music knowledge is domiciled in three domains; these are cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. In evaluating musical knowledge, different methods of assessment and evaluation are needed for all these domains. This should be clearly specified because each of the domains has peculiarities. Another focus in music evaluation is that students and teachers must be aware of the goals of the program in practical terms. This is because goals produce learning objectives and these translate into learning outcomes.

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┌──────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│  GOALS   │ ───▶ │  LEARNING    │ ───▶ │  LEARNING    │
│          │      │  OBJECTIVES  │      │  OUTCOMES    │
└──────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘
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Figure 1: Achieving Learning Goals

Reasons for evaluation should also be specified with clear explanations of evaluation methodologies. Adeogun, (2018) stated four recognised and advocated goals of tertiary music education in Nigeria. They are: (a) preparing students for the next level of music education; (b) pursuing, promoting and disseminating music knowledge, not merely for its own sake, but for supporting local change in Nigeria. (c) preparing skilled music personnel for the workplace: and (d) propagating a universal and developing an African music knowledge that will enhance Nigerian musical life. All these goals are taken into consideration for setting the program objectives. For example, an objective could be'student will be able to play or sing a piece of music in clear tones, good interpretation with melodic and rhythmic accuracy. Here, the learning outcomes to be

measured will be (i) tone clarity (ii) good interpretation of the music (iii) accurate melody and (iv) accurate rhythm.

Assessment Tools

Assessment tools aid in assessing and evaluating student learning and can provide different options to assess students beyond the traditional examinations. Several tools are available, including grading rubrics, self-assessment, surveys and so on. (CTI, 2021). There are many assessment tools that can be used to assess music knowledge. These could be examinations, tests, or quizzes. According to Davis (2024), examinations are the classic assessment tool used in education. Examinations could be conducted using essay questions, multiple choice questions, fill-in-the-gap questions, matching questions for testing the cognitive domain, listening and appreciation examinations for the affective domain, and practical examinations that are skill-based for testing the psychomotor domain. But, constructing good examination questions could be tasking and challenging.

Designing Effective Examination Questions

Designing effective examination questions is crucial for assessing students' understanding, knowledge, and critical thinking skills. Extramarks (2024) explains that the main purpose for conducting examinations is to test students' learning outcomes and identify their points of strengths and weaknesses, it may also be used to determine prior knowledge, evaluate program effectiveness, or for diagnostic purposes. Well-crafted questions not only evaluate students' comprehension but also encourage higher-order thinking and promote meaningful learning. Writing good examination questions should accurately measure students' learning outcomes and provide valuable insights for both students and educators. Extramarks (2024) emphasised that an exam paper should be designed with the intent to enhance students' learning outcomes by testing their knowledge effectively. Validity and reliability are essential considerations when writing

examination questions. Validity refers to the extent to which the questions measure what they are intended to measure. Campbell in Turnitin (2024) explains that valid assessments are crucial for achieving academic or curricular goals. Poorly designed assessments can hinder program success and impact students' learning outcomes. Shaw & Crisp (2011) expressed that validity is not a simple concept in the context of educational measurement, its effects on educational outcomes can have high stakes in terms of consequences, and thus the validity of assessments is highly important. To ensure validity, questions should be reviewed against the learning objectives. Examination questions should be free from bias, discrimination, or any form of unfair advantage or disadvantage. By creating a fair and unbiased assessment environment, students will feel motivated to perform their best, regardless of their individual characteristics or backgrounds. It is equally imperative to maintain a balance and appropriate coverage of topics within an examination. Questions should cover all significant aspects of the curriculum and reflect the relative importance of different topics or themes. Appropriate weightage should be allocated to different sections or question types based on the learning objectives. For example, a 1-unit course examination should have three questions out of which two should be answered. 2-unit course questions should be five to answer three, while 3-unit course questions should be six to answer four questions. This balanced approach ensures a comprehensive evaluation of students's knowledge and skills, preventing any overemphasis on specific areas and providing a more accurate representation of overall learning outcomes. These are best current practices that should not be ignored. There are other steps that are to be ensured in writing good questions for examination. They are:

(i) Alignment with Learning Objectives

The first step in writing good examination questions is ensuring alignment with the learning objectives. Assessments should reveal how well students have learnt what we want them to learn, while instruction ensures that they learn it. For this to occur, assessments, learning objectives, and instructional strategies need to be closely aligned so that they reinforce one another (Niemer, 2024). The desired outcomes of the

assessment should be clearly defined and specific knowledge, skills, or competencies that students should demonstrate should be determined. Each question should directly assess these objectives, focussing on the essential concepts and principles covered in the curriculum. Aligning questions with learning objectives ensures the assessment measures what students are expected to learn and helps maintain consistency in evaluating student performance.

(ii)   Clarity and Precision

Clarity and precision are crucial elements of well-crafted examination questions. Questions should be clear, concise, and free from ambiguity or vagueness. Use simple language and avoid jargon or complex sentence structures that may confuse students. What is expected from the students in terms of responses should be clearly stated, such as, providing definitions, explaining terms, and discussing concepts. Precise instructions help students understand the question's requirements and allow for accurate evaluation of their knowledge and skills.

(iii)   Variety of Question Types

Incorporating a variety of question types can assess different levels of cognitive skills and engage students in diverse ways. Some commonly used question types include multiple-choice, short answer, essay, problem-solving, and scenario-based questions. Multiple-choice questions assess knowledge recall and understanding, while open-ended questions promote critical thinking and application of concepts. A mix of question types allows for a comprehensive evaluation of students' learning, encourages deeper understanding, and accommodates different learning preferences.

3   Marking Guide

A standard marking guide is needed for the music theory examination and a well-detailed assessment format for the practical examinations, which should include collections of concrete information about musical skills and concepts accurately and objectively. The language used in a good marking guide should be descriptive and evaluative. These are

strongholds and backgrounds for examination marking guides. Developing a well-designed marking guide is crucial for ensuring fair, consistent, and accurate evaluation of student responses to examination questions. A quality marking guide should align with learning objectives, provide clear criteria, assign appropriate weights, promote consistency and calibration, differentiate levels of performance and allow flexibility.

Alignment with Learning Objectives

The marking guide should be directly aligned with the learning objectives established for the examination. Clearly defining the criteria and performance indicators that reflect the expected outcomes of the assessment. Each criterion should be linked to specific learning objectives, ensuring that the assessment accurately measures the intended knowledge, skills, or competencies. Alignment with learning objectives maintains consistency and helps assess student performance in relation to the desired outcomes.

Clear and Specific Criteria

The marking guide should include clear and specific criteria that outline what constitutes a successful response for each question. This should clearly define the key components, concepts, or skills that should be demonstrated by the students and provide specific descriptions or examples of exemplary, acceptable, and inadequate responses for each criterion. This clarity helps both the markers and students understand the expectations, leading to consistent and accurate evaluation.

Weighting of Criteria

Assigning appropriate weights to different criteria ensures that each aspect of the assessment carries the intended importance. This will enhance consideration of the relative significance of the learning objectives and the depth of understanding or complexity required for each criterion. Allocating weights accordingly to reflect the importance

and emphasis placed on different aspects of the assessment ensures a fair evaluation and prevents any disproportionate impact of individual criteria on the overall grade.

Consistency and Calibration

To achieve consistency in grading, it is essential to calibrate markers and provide clear guidelines for applying the marking guide. This will involve conducting training or calibration sessions to familiarise markers with the marking guide and its criteria. Providing sample responses and discussing the rationale behind the assigned scores will encourage dialogue among markers in order to address any discrepancies and promote a shared understanding of the marking standards. Consistent calibration enhances the reliability and fairness of the grading process.

Differentiation of Levels of Performance

The marking guide should differentiate levels of performance to reflect varying degrees of achievement. Establishing clear descriptors for each level, such as excellent, good, satisfactory, and poor, to represent the range of performance will clearly define the characteristics, depth of understanding, or quality of reasoning associated with each level. These descriptors provide markers with guidance and ensure that students are evaluated fairly based on the demonstrated level of proficiency.

Flexibility and Adaptability

A marking guide should allow for flexibility and adaptability to accommodate different question types and unexpected variations in student responses. Anticipating potential alternative approaches or valid interpretations of the questions and including guidelines for addressing such scenarios is necessary; this will encourage markers to exercise professional judgement within the defined criteria and provide a mechanism for resolving any ambiguous situations or unforeseen circumstances that may arise during the marking process.

Feedback and Transparency

A marking guide should facilitate meaningful feedback to students, promoting their learning and improvement. Providing constructive comments or explanations for the assigned scores, highlighting areas of strength and areas requiring further development, is needed. It is also good to ensure that the marking process is transparent and that students understand how their responses were evaluated. Transparency fosters trust, motivates students to reflect on their performance, and helps them identify specific areas for growth.

Table 1: Sample Marking Guide for Choral Performance

No	Title	Dynamics	Rhythm 2	Clarity/ Precisenes s	Technical Control/Pronunciation 2	Total 10
1.	Ise sise lope by Ebenezer Omole					
2.	I have a Dream by Benny Anderson and Bjorn Ulvaeus					

Table 1 is an assessment sheet sample for choral performance in one of the Nigerian higher institutions. The instruction attached is that students are required to perform the following pieces and assessed on the listed indices. The pieces that are listed in the table does not indicate whether the pieces are graded and their grades. The choice of musical pieces are expected to portray level of

performance; this will give an indication of growth and expected attainment. While there is need for performance of Western and African pieces, the pieces should be of quality standard and a commensurate grade with the class of the students.

Table 2: Sample Marking Guide for Choral Performance

No	Title	Clarity of Music and Language	Clear Communication of Dramatic Intent 5	Rhythm /Tempo 5	Dynamics	Improvisation 5	Technical 5	Dressing 5	Total 40
3.	Trial by Jury (Opera) by Gilbert and Sullivan								

Table 2 is the second sample for the choral performance marking guide. The indices to be assessed in both samples are different. But there are some similarities in items like Dynamics, Clarity and technicalities. The scores are different because Table 2 is a marking guide for an opera, which is more elaborate than a choral performance.

4   Rubrics

Rubrics are written criteria that detail expectations of what students will need to know and be able to do in order to receive a given grade. They are used as grading criteria for students. Rubrics help instructors to develop clear learning objectives for their students, and if provided to students prior to the activity, serve to guide their efforts. In music education, the use of rubrics in examinations provides a structured framework for assessing students' musical

abilities, performances, and compositions. Rubrics offer clear criteria and performance indicators, enhancing objectivity, consistency, and fairness in evaluation. Rubrics in music examinations clarify the assessment criteria by breaking down the components of musical performance or composition into specific skills, techniques, and musical elements. The rubric should encompass areas such as pitch, rhythm, tone quality, expression, interpretation, musicality, and technical proficiency. By explicitly stating the expectations for each criterion, rubrics provide a comprehensive understanding of the dimensions on which students will be evaluated. It ensures consistency and objectivity in the evaluation process by providing clear benchmarks and descriptors for different levels of performance. By standardising the assessment criteria and descriptors, different examiners can apply the rubric consistently, minimizing potential subjective biases. This promotes fairness and equitability in the assessment process, enabling students to be evaluated fairly across different exam sessions or locations. Rubrics allow for differentiation of levels of performance, reflecting the varying degrees of achievement and proficiency in music. Each criterion within the rubric should include descriptors for different performance levels, such as novice, developing, proficient, and advanced. These descriptors outline the specific characteristics and qualities expected at each level, providing students with a clear understanding of the standards they need to meet for each criterion. It facilitates the provision of constructive feedback to students, offering specific comments and suggestions for improvement. The detailed criteria and descriptors within the rubric enable teachers and examiners to provide targeted feedback on students' strengths and areas for development. This feedback not only informs students about their performance but also guides their future practice and helps them set realistic goals for their musical growth.

Rubrics empower students to engage in self-assessment and reflection on their own musical performances or compositions. By sharing the rubric criteria and descriptors with students in advance, they can evaluate their own work and identify areas where they excel

or require further practice. This self-assessment process enhances students' metacognitive skills, enabling them to take ownership of their learning and strive for continuous improvement. Rubrics should align with the specific goals and standards of music education, whether based on national or regional curricula, or established by music education organizations. The rubric should reflect the core competencies, skills, and knowledge emphasised in music education frameworks. This alignment ensures that the assessment focuses on the essential elements of music and provides a comprehensive evaluation of students' musical development. While rubrics provide structured evaluation criteria, they should also leave room for artistic expression and individual interpretation in music performances or compositions. Allow for flexibility and creativity within the rubric, recognising that musicality, expression, and originality are integral aspects of music. Balancing the technical aspects with the artistic elements in the rubric allow students to showcase their unique musical voices while meeting the desired standards of musicianship. Rubrics enhance the assessment process, promote musical growth, and inspire students to reach their full musical potential.

5   Music Evaluation in Nigeria Institutions

The evaluation of music examinations in Nigeria can be approached from institutions and conservatories perspectives. There are similarities and disparities in the examination structure, assessment methods, quality control, and overall effectiveness. The structure of music examinations in Nigerian conservatories typically follows established international standards, such as those set by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), Music Society of Nigeria (MUSON) or the Trinity College London. These examinations are divided into graded levels, starting from beginner levels (e.g., Grade 1) and progressing to advanced levels (e.g., Grade 8). This tiered structure allows students to progress systematically and provides a clear framework for learning and assessment. Music examinations in these centres often consist of practical and

theoretical components. The practical component assesses the candidate's performance abilities on their chosen instrument or voice, covering aspects such as technique, interpretation, and musicality. The theoretical component evaluates the candidate's knowledge of music theory, including topics like notation, scales, harmony, and analysis. The use of both practical and theoretical assessments ensures a well-rounded evaluation of the student's musical abilities. Quality control is a critical aspect of music examinations in institutions and conservatories in Nigeria. It involves ensuring that the examination processes, materials, and assessment criteria are standardised, consistent, and fair. This is typically achieved through the involvement of qualified and experienced examiners who adhere to established guidelines. Grading systems provide students with a clear indication of their progress and achievements. Music examinations in Nigeria typically employ a pass/fail system, along with graded distinctions (e.g., Merit and Distinction) to recognize exceptional performances. Certificates are awarded to successful candidates, providing them with tangible evidence of their musical accomplishments. The grading and certification system encourages students to strive for excellence and provides them with a sense of achievement and recognition.

The effectiveness of music examinations in Nigeria can be evaluated by assessing their impact on students' musical development, learning outcomes, and the overall growth of the music education sector. These examinations provide students with structured goals, encourage disciplined practice, and foster a sense of musical proficiency. They also serve as a benchmark for teachers, parents, and students to gauge progress and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, music examinations can contribute to raising the overall standard of music education in Nigeria by promoting a standardised curriculum and encouraging professional development among music teachers. However, it is important to regularly review and update the examination syllabi and assessment criteria to ensure their relevance and alignment with contemporary musical practices. Continuous evaluation and feedback from stakeholders, including

students, teachers, and examiners, can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that the examinations remain dynamic and effective. Music examinations in Nigeria have a solid structure, employ appropriate assessment methods, and incorporate quality control measures. They provide students with a pathway for musical development, recognition, and personal growth. However, ongoing evaluation and improvement are crucial to adapt to changing musical trends, promote inclusivity, and maintain the highest standards of musical assessment.

Music programs in Nigerian tertiary institutions (Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges) are both theory- and practical-based, just as we have in the conservatories. Students are exposed to knowledge in music theory, history, and appreciation of western literature of music, African music, aural and sight reading, applied music and ensemble studies. To create an unbiased assessment, there is a provision for an external moderator or examiner to moderate the questions, the marking guides, and also the results after each semester examination. The moderators are professors in the university while chief lecturers are used in the colleges and polytechnics. After the moderation of the questions, the lecturers are expected to use the marking guides for both the theory and practical examinations. The theory examinations are to be marked by individual lecturers that taught the course, while the practical examinations are assessed by a joint pool of lecturers. Most of the time, the assessment for the theory courses does not have much problem to a large extent because an individual is involved, but the practicals do have traits of subjective assessment. This happens because there is no unified and adequate broad-based framework of what constitutes assessment of practical music examinations in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

There are varied standards by the lecturers, and this is gradually affecting the performance of students. For example, a first-year degree student that already has some background knowledge of music is given a higher graded piece of music to perform on the piano or any western musical instrument. This type of practice makes the examinations of double standard and often times affects the

morale of other students who see themselves as inferior. The explanation given most times is that other students should aspire to meet the standard of their classmates who might have had years of music practice. Couple with this are the vague indices for assessment in the assessment sheet. Music education examinations require strict compliance with a quality driven assessment framework.

Music Assessment Sheets Samples

Looking at the samples of music assessment sheets used in some selected universities in Nigeria, it is obvious that there are no specific indices to be judged in the instrumental practical examinations. Below are typical sample of music assessment sheet collated from different tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Table 3: Assessment Sheet Sample for Musical Instrument I

Name	Reg. No	Instrument	Score

The content of table 3 is very simple and not detail specific. There is no indication of assessing peculiarities of different musical instrument. This is general and may be allow subjectivity.

Table 4: Assessment Sheet Sample for Musical Instruments II

Name	Subj Comb	Scale 6		Arpeggio 6		Major Instr 20		Min Instr 10	Orchestra 8	Unseen 6	Viva 4	Total 60
		Maj	Min	Maj	Min	1st	2nd					
		3	3	3	3	12	8					

Table 4 is more specific but like the previous tables, it does not identify the specific indices to be assessed in each of the instruments.

Table 5: Assessment sample for musical instruments III

No	Matric No	Appearance	Posture 3	Major Scale		Arpeggio		Virtuoso Pianist	Hymn	Minor Instrument	Total
				Fingering 1	Regularity 1	Fingering 1	Regularity 1				

Table 5 is equally explicit but it looks more like a marking guide for piano. But, judging from the assessment sheets in tables 3, 4, and 5, one can see the irregularities and the absurdities in these sheets. While some are well detailed with reasonable score, some have scanty details with no score attached. This leaves a gap and room for subjectivity and inconsistency in the scoring styles. A good assessment sheet should have indices that are clearly spelt out; this will affect a judgement that is transparent and devoid of bias and impartiality.

Assessment Musical Sheets

This research work develops four specimens of Assessment music sheets for the classes of western musical instruments and the voice. This is designed to assist the teacher in achieving assessment that is objective and void of bias. The indices for assessment are clearly stated with the marks to be obtained.

Table 6: Assessment Sheet for Practical Music Examination (Woodwind/Brass)

Reg No.	Dressing/ Comportment 4	Posture	Scale 6		Arpeggio		25				Exam piece	Unseen piece 10			Viva	Total
			Melodic Accuracy 3	Regularity 3	Melodic Accuracy 3	Regularity 3	Melodic Accuracy 6	Rhythmic Accuracy 6	Tone Clarity/ Embouchure Control 8	Interpretation 5		Melodic Accuracy 4	Rhythmic Accuracy 4	Tone Clarity 2		

The assessment sheet in table 6 is specifically for woodwind instruments, comprising of Recorder, Piccolo, flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Cor anglais (English Horn), Bassoon and the brass instruments - Cornet, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone (tenor and bass), Tuba and Baritone T/C. On the sheet, there is a column for tone clarity and embouchure control which is peculiar to Woodwind and Brass instrument.

Table 7: Assessment Sheet for Music Practical Examination (Percussion)

Reg No.	Dressing/ Comportment 4	Posture 4	Stroke/Rolls 6		Patterns 6		Exam piece 25				Unseen piece 10			Viva	Total
			Timing/ Regularity 3	Rhythmic Accuracy 3	Timing/ Regularity 3	Rhythmic Accuracy 3	Rhythmic Accuracy 6	Timing/ Regularity 6	Rolling Techniques 8	Coordination 5	Rhythmic Accuracy 4	Timing/ Regularity 4	Coordination 2		

Table 7 captures the peculiarity of the percussion instrument-rolling techniques, interpretation is replaced with coordination. Though, all musical instruments are captured under psychomotor skill, yet there are different manifestation of the skill. This is why coordination of the patterns in the drumming skills is used to replace interpretation as we have in other musical instruments.

Table 8: Assessment Sheet for Music Practical Examination (Strings)

Reg No.	Dressing Comportment 4	Posture 4	Scale 6		Arpeggio 6		Exam piece 25			Unseen piece 10		Viva 5	Total 60
			Regularity 3	Melodic Accuracy 3	Regularity 3	Melodic Accuracy 6	Rhythmic Accuracy 6	Bowing/Plucking Techniques 8	Interpretation 5	Melodic Accuracy 4	Rhythmic Accuracy 4	Tone Clarity 2	

Table 8 states the bowing techniques as a specific index that is peculiar to violin and other strings instruments like Viola, Violon Cello and Double Bass vis-à-vis the plucking techniques of the Guitar and the Harp. Other general indices include regularity, rhythmic and melodic accuracy.

Table 9: Assessment Sheet for Music Practical Examination (Voice)

Reg No.	Dressing/ Comportment 4	Posture 4	Scale 6		Arpeggio 6		Exam piece 25			Unseen piece 10		Viva 5	Total 60
			Regularity 3	Melodic Accuracy 3	Regularity 3	Melodic Accuracy 3	Melodic Accuracy 6	Rhythmic Accuracy 6	Singing Techniques / Diction 8	Interpretation 5	Melodic Accuracy 4	Rhythmic Accuracy 4	Tone Clarity 2	

Table 9 is for voice, and it captures the singing techniques (quality, using head voice and so on) and diction as special indices for voice assessment. The viva in all the categories could be diverse in each institution, but it

should capture general questions, ranging from the history of the composer to an explanation of the tempo and dynamics. It can also involve questions on the instruments (care, maintenance and minor repairs of the instruments). This is relevant because it is expected that an instrumentalist should have in-depth knowledge of the instrument they play.

6   Conclusion

Assessment and evaluation in music examinations are crucial in determining how students develop academically and artistically in Nigerian higher institutions. Harning (2023) stated that 'we assess students to make sure they are learning and growing'. Through the integration of theoretical and practical components, these assessments guarantee a thorough comprehension of music, promoting the development of skills and critical thinking. Nevertheless, in order to improve their efficacy, issues like uneven standards and criteria need to be addressed. The findings of this study reveal the lack of a uniform criterion in assessing music in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It was equally discovered that each institution has its own criteria, which were found to be not detailed enough or to have unbalanced marks to be obtained. Since one of the underlying concerns of this study is to avoid subjectivity and bias in music assessment, so that the student can have a fair and reliable assessment; it made an attempt to present assessment samples that can be used in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The samples are prototypes that could be used as they are or with minimal adjustment as regards the standard and interpretation of the music education curriculum of each institution. By placing a strong emphasis on uniform standards, and flexible approaches, the assessment procedure can be enhanced and brought into line with international best practices. In the end, improving these systems will improve student preparation for success in the workplace in addition to raising the standard of music education.

7   Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, it recommends that:

(i)   There should be regular training and calibration sessions for

examiners to help maintain the quality and reliability of assessments.

(ii) Tertiary institutions should have a uniform music assessment criterion in order to avoid subjective evaluation.

(iii) Music questions should not be ambiguous but should be written in straight forward and clear terms.

(iv) There is the need to have good questions that are fair and consistent, to give a good assessment or evaluation.

(v) Writing good questions in music theory examinations could be in form of essay, multiple choice, or objective questions.

(vi) Alternative to practical examination should be avoided.

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