

## ADJUDICATION OF MUSIC PERFORMANCES IN THREE SELECTED MUNICIPALITY/ DISTRICT IN GHANA

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### ABSTRACT

This paper presents an inquiry into the adjudication of music performances during cultural festivals within two municipalities and one district in the Central Region of Ghana. It examines the competence levels of adjudicators engaged in the process and elucidates the employed adjudication process, aiming to foster understanding and appreciation among all competition participants. Guided by Dworkin's theory of interpretation, which delineates pre-interpretive, interpretive, and post-interpretive stages in adjudication, the research adopts a qualitative paradigm, utilizing interviews and document analysis as primary data collection instruments. Convenience and purposive sampling were employed to select both the geographical area and study participants respectively. The findings indicate that the selection of adjudicators is the prerogative of cultural coordinators, resulting in a less competitive process that may compromise competence in adjudication. Furthermore, although the cultural festival employs a scoring system across various disciplines to ensure precision and equity through expert adjudication, adjudicators struggle to provide comprehensive feedback that could aid participating groups in improving future performances. The paper suggests the establishment of strategies to introduce competitiveness in the engagement of adjudicators, coupled with plans to ensure their training as part of the pre-interpretive stage before proceeding to the interpretive and post-interpretive stages. This approach aims to enhance the overall quality and effectiveness of the adjudication process.

**Keywords:** Cultural Festival, Adjudication, Central Region, Interpretive Stage, Music Performance.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Ghana, renowned for its abundant cultural heritage, places significant emphasis on conserving its traditions through cultural festivals. Within Ghanaian educational institutions, these festivals are integrated into the curriculum, affording students the opportunity to cultivate and showcase their musical abilities. Cultural festivals held within Ghanaian schools serve as pivotal societal events, enabling students to commemorate their traditions, history, and values. However, organizing and adjudicating such events requires careful consideration and understanding of the cultural and artistic value attached to the performances. These festivals often feature various art forms, such as music, dance, drama, and visual arts, which are essential components of Ghanaian culture.

The Effutu Municipality, Agona West Municipality and Awutu Senya West District are some of the administrative areas in the Central Region of Ghana which are known for their vibrant cultural festivals. These areas hosts a variety of events and celebrations, showcasing the talents of the students, especially in music performances. In this regard, school cultural festivals are regularly organized in the municipalities/district to foster a sense of cultural identity and pride among

students of the various schools. This is why Osei et al. (2020) documented and reviewed the National Cultural Festival from 2009-2019 using Effutu Municipal Education Directorate as case study. Apart from these scholars, Edusei (2021) evaluated the operations of the cultural education units in Ghana education service and dwelt on the festival in its entirety. Howard (2012) also examined how certain non-musical variables influenced adjudicators' evaluations of solo vocal performances by high school students.

Other scholars have researched into the benefits and challenges of large-ensemble instrumental music adjudicated events, drawing insights from experienced music teachers (Rawlings, 2019), while Walubo (2022) documented music performances from Nwanzi music region in Uganda touching on adjudication issues. Nevertheless, there exists a scarcity of research examining the competence levels of the adjudicators and how the adjudication itself is done. This creates gap in literature that relates to the adjudication process and the choice of the adjudicators. The paper, therefore, addressed two questions. 1. What are the competence levels of selected adjudicators in Effutu, Agona West and Senya municipalities/district? How is the adjudication of musical performances done in these areas during the municipal/district school cultural festival?

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The work was rooted in the Dworkin's theory of interpretation in law which is ascribed to artistic interpretation, as elucidated by Lewis (1983). The author is of the view that the theory is anchored on constructive interpretation which also involves the understanding of a piece of art (Pannik, 1980). The theory presents three concepts which are Pre-interpretive, Interpretive and Post interpretive as used in the work of Schulman (2022). These concepts represent sequential stages which are integral to a judge's process of constructively interpreting something. The pre-interpretive stage focuses on identifying the rules and standards that underpin the content of the performance. (Donato, 1988; Etxabe, 2023; Riesthuis, 2023 & Pannik, 1980). At this stage, the interpreters must be clear about what they are interpreting and should identify what is to be included on and/or excluded from the content. The authors contend that achieving a degree of consensus is necessary before progressing to the interpretive stage. This consensus-building process must be accomplished during the pre-interpretive stage.

Again, Gentithes (2011), emphasizing on what Pannik (1980) had explained on the interpretive stage, averred that, this second stage establishes broad rationale for the primary components of the identified practice, building upon the groundwork laid during the pre-interpretive stage. In this stage, the elements of the performance are contextualized within the festival and its theme. The interpreter evaluates the coherence of the performance elements with the interpretation. In the post-interpretive stage, the outcomes of the second aspect of interpretation are considered, where the interpreter analyses the preceding two stages to ensure coherence. These three concepts of Dworkin's theory of adjudication served as guiding principles for the study on how the adjudication process should be conducted, particularly in relation to musical performances. This is to say that the process of adjudication, as well as adjudicator competency, were applied in how adjudication of music performances was done at the municipality/district level. The three stages of Dworkin's theory of adjudication were utilized to determine how adjudicators of music performances are chosen and how adjudication is executed. First, the pre-interpretive stage guided in investigating the selection of adjudicators and their preparation towards the adjudication while

the interpretive stage guided in finding out the process of the adjudication. Finally, the post interpretive stage guided in finding out if post adjudication evaluation of this festival's results was done. This certainly addressed the process of the adjudication from the preparation to the declaration of results.

### 3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature was reviewed identifying the concept of adjudication, cultural preservation and education, role of cultural festivals in community engagement as well as challenges and improvement in organizing music performance adjudication.

#### 3.1 School Music Adjudication

As explained by Floyd (2010), adjudication is a process aimed at delivering a succinct assessment of the strengths and weaknesses evident in each musical presentation. Accordingly, it serves the purpose of providing recommendations for musical development. In this regard, adjudication furnishes precise feedback aimed at enhancing performances among participants, thereby contributing to the improvement of school performance activities. It is notable that such comments are not typically provided to schools within the chosen Municipalities/District for improvement purposes. This raises the question of whether adjudicators indeed offer comments. If they do, the inquiry arises as to their whereabouts. Conversely, if no comments are provided, it prompts consideration regarding potential factors such as lack of competence. Walubo (2022) asserts that individuals selected or engaged as adjudicators must possess specific competencies. The author elaborated on the characteristics:

to work as an adjudicator of music performances has to possess some desirable characteristics. S/he should also be a member of an association in charge of adjudicator welfare. Therefore, selection of persons to become adjudicators is an important step in preparing for adjudication of music performances. (p.45)

He made mention of institutions such as Missouri State High School Activities Association [MSHSAA] as well as Florida Orchestra Association who take keen interest in the selection of adjudicators in competitions. In this instance, he is of the view that adjudicators should be individuals with demonstrated experience and a significant track record of excellence in adjudication.

Similarly, Kiiru (2017) also commented on some of the characteristics and intimated that adjudicators should be selected on the bases of their previous achievements in the field of music performance and adjudication.

It is noteworthy, as highlighted by Walubo (2022), that in certain jurisdictions, adjudicators must receive approval through a majority vote from the Executive Board members of the relevant Association to which they belong. The scholar suggests that this routine vetting process ensures that adjudicators remain current and proficient in the required competencies, as they are obliged to uphold established standards. Moreover, Walubo indicates that aspiring adjudicators seeking inclusion in the approved list may register for the approval process and undergo a selection

procedure. Subsequently, selected adjudicators will receive training on the approved adjudication sheet.

According to Walubo, citing NZ Choral Federation (2019), individuals must complete the entire training process before being included on the approved list. The preparation for the adjudication process, as per Walubo's reference to the NZ Choral Federation, commences with the appointment of adjudicators.

### **3.2 Cultural Preservation and Education**

As per the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2014), cultural heritage comprises the physical artifacts and intangible qualities of a community or society that are passed down from previous generations, preserved in the present, and entrusted for the welfare of future generations. This definition notably encompasses the physical attributes, historical background or origin, and significance or future potential of cultural heritage. Consequently, the preservation of cultural heritage entails safeguarding both tangible manifestations of culture, such as everyday items like clothing and housing, as well as various forms of art ranging from pottery and music to beadwork, painting, and sculpture (Yang et al., 2018). Additionally, it extends to intangible yet equally significant elements of traditional lifestyles, including language, oral narratives, customs, and beliefs. Buckley and Graves (2016) indicate that cultural heritage preservation initiatives frequently prioritize equitable representation of the history and heritage of formerly marginalized or underrepresented cultural and ethnic communities. Thus, one approach to addressing the challenges of cross-cultural engagement in preservation endeavors is to leverage educational institutions' activities that foster cultural preservation connections.

Understanding cultural heritage entails recognizing how individuals perceive the trajectory leading to their current circumstances and discerning their aspirations for the present and future. Cultural festivals in schools serve as significant endeavors in preserving cultural heritage. Consequently, stakeholders involved in organizing and evaluating such musical competitions must comprehend the event's content and adjudication process (Rawlings, 2019). This understanding enables them to appreciate various authentic histories intertwined with the community's culture. Recognizing the interpretative process unfolding in the present forms only a portion of this comprehensive narrative. This is because, individual adjudicators may present diverse versions of the past based on contemporary events, leveraging varying resources to render their interpretations more or less persuasive to others. Therefore, it is imperative to closely examine the role of adjudication within such social contexts.

### **3.3 Role of Cultural Festivals in Community Engagement**

Culture plays a profoundly significant role in shaping the communities in which we reside, and through effective education, authentic cultural practices can be transmitted from one generation to the next. Globally, the proliferation and diversity of cultural festivals have experienced remarkable growth. These festivals can serve as pivotal attractions for tourists to cities, enhancing the city's reputation and consequently stimulating inward investment. For local residents, cultural events can promote the development of social capital, communal solidarity and identity, and leverage the development of infrastructure (Sibiya et al., 2023). Indeed, socioeconomic conditions can

significantly impact the objectives of a specific event. The structure and scale of the local economy play a pivotal role in determining how expenditure translates into economic impact. Cultural festivals held in major cities encounter distinct challenges and opportunities in contrast to those organized in smaller towns. For instance, cities offer access to larger local audiences and facilitate easier reach to specialized services, artists, and performers. On the other hand, in cities, many residents and visitors may not even be aware of the event taking place, making it more challenging to demonstrate local impacts. Cultural festivals present a compelling opportunity to develop and implement multidimensional measures of value within a society. Economic or financial impacts occur when new funds are introduced into an economic system due to visitors from outside the region. These visitors typically spend money on various goods and services such as accommodation, transportation, food, shopping, and tickets as Soltani-Nejad et al. (2022) once intimated. Subsequently, this expenditure circulates within the host economy, leading to heightened sales and employment opportunities for local businesses. As Quinn (2016) indicated, Festival evaluations have tended to prioritize economic impact methodology, often at the expense of other significant measures of value, in spite of the growing skepticism regarding the validity of such studies (Quinn, (2020).

Additionally, cultural events contribute to the creation of social values, encompassing benefits to society such as education, creativity, innovation, social cohesion, and identity formation (Tarkivska-Nahynaliuk et al., 2023). Cultural festivals serve as significant venues for interaction for both producers and consumers. For producers, according to Ferguson (2013), arts festivals serve as "touchstone experiences" that facilitate the formation of networks and social capital. Festivals offer artists opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and access to "inspirational capital," which in turn contribute to the accumulation of symbolic capital (having influence in the field) and enhance the likelihood of artistic and financial success. This is why Finkel and Platt (2020) point out that festivals frequently serve as bridges between individuals and locations, connecting personal geography with shared collective experiences. With regards to this, Bourdieu (1989) had earlier on commented on cultural identity and the celebration of the festival:

The symbolic and affective dimensions of festivals have the potential to stimulate the reevaluation of both individual and group identity, as well as place-based heritage, through the presentation of symbolic meaning. Festivals extend their appeal beyond conventional motivations, fostering the formation and consolidation of communities with shared tastes

It is a gainsaying that the dearth of studies focusing on the competitive nature of the festival activities must be looked at while it is also suggested that there is a paucity of research regarding adjudication process in such festivals including music adjudication. As earlier on indicated, this gap is being filled with the current study, concentrating on adjudication process as espoused in the thought of Dworkin's theory of interpretation.

### **3.4 Necessities of Adjudication of Cultural Events**

Music adjudicated events have been a topic of dialogue among American music teachers since before the Great Depression (Cohen & Duncan, 2022). The authors observed that while other countries have engaged in the adjudication process, there remains a focus on addressing the necessities that are worthwhile to improve the adjudication system. Indeed, the adjudication of

cultural events serves not only to equip students with lifelong skills but also to teach them how to manage nervous energy effectively to achieve desired outcomes (Nussbaum, 2023; Davico et al., 2022). Additionally, the adjudication of cultural events acts as a motivational tool for students, encouraging them to dedicate more time to practice and advocating for the inclusion of music education programmes at both national, municipal and district levels (Hedgecoth & Major, 2019). Furthermore, it provides an opportunity for impartial feedback on music performance (Walubo, 2022). As indicated earlier on in this section, adjudicated event makes room for the performers to perform before a panel of judges to receive a rating, ranking, score, and comments. Furthermore, according to Rohrer (2002), adjudicated events have the potential to elevate performance standards, boost morale within a music programme, stimulate interest, and offer both students and directors opportunities to enhance ensemble quality (Rawlings, 2019; Wilkin, 2020).

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research method was used for the study to allow for an in-depth exploration of the complexities surrounding cultural festivals and music performance evaluation. The study used case study research design within the qualitative research paradigm through the use of interviews and document review. As Rashid et al. (2019) explained, a case study as a qualitative design delves deeply into a specific phenomenon - event, activity, process, or individuals. This approach was applied because it was interactive, naturalistic and descriptive, thus allowing freedom of expression of the participants (Xu & Zammit, 2020). The study targeted all adjudicators who have been involved in evaluating music performances at the municipal and district levels within the two municipalities and the one district over the past ten years. Orodho, as referenced in Wanjiru (2014), describes the target population as the specific group of elements that the researcher concentrates on, and to which the findings derived from the sampled individuals are intended to be applied. Additionally, the study included the cultural coordinators of the municipalities and the district as outlined below:

**Table 1: Target Population**

S/N	Municipality/District	No. Coordinators	Number of Adjudicators
1.	Awutu Senya West District	2	3
2.	Agona West Municipality	1	4
3.	Effutu Municipality	2	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>

Convenience and Purposive sampling strategies were employed to source samples for the study. Scholtz (2021) explains convenience sampling as a sampling strategy that involves selecting participants based on their accessibility and availability to the researcher while purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method where units are chosen based on specific characteristics that align with the researcher's needs for the sample (Lee et al., 2017). In pursuance to these thoughts, the geographical areas of Effutu municipality, Agona West Municipality and Awutu Senya West

District were sampled by convenience. These areas have common borders within an approximation of 20km distance connecting them from Winneba, where the researcher resides. Purposive sampling was used to select adjudicators who have assessed such musical performances on three or more occasions. The idea is that, they might have appraised themselves with the routine of adjudication in the districts or the municipality. In this regard, out of the 9 adjudicators, only two of them qualified to be selected for the study. The 2 apparently were selected from Effutu Municipality due to their consistency in the adjudication. 3 of the coordinators were also sampled by purposive means. Kothari (2004) notes that in purposive sampling, items for the sample are selected deliberately by the researcher and his choice concerning the items remains supreme. These participants were preferred because of their central role in the administration of the cultural festivals, being the current cultural coordinators of the selected areas. Accordingly, the researcher selected samples as indicated by the table 2 below:

**Table 2: Sample**

S/N	Description of Participants	Number Sampled
1.	Number of Coordinators	2
2.	Number of Adjudicators	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>

Interview guides and documentary checklist were used to collect data for this study. Guest et al. (2013) note that ensuring the reliability and comprehensiveness of qualitative data involves cross-referencing multiple sources of information pertaining to the same event. As such, this study used methods of interview and document review to ensure reliability of the results. Each of the instruments was developed by the researcher based on the objectives of the study. Creswell (2012) elaborates that the interview method of data collection involves the presentation of oral-verbal prompts and eliciting oral-verbal responses. Moreover, Creswell (2012) suggests that this method can be conducted through face-to-face interviews and, if feasible, via telephone interviews. To address the study's objectives, the researcher developed two sets of semi-structured interview guides. As described by Walliman (2011), semi-structured interviews feature both structured and unstructured segments, incorporating standardized and open-ended questions. This approach allowed interviewers to explore the interviewees' perspectives more deeply. Consequently, one interview guide was administered to the Adjudicators, while the second guide was used for the Coordinators.

Bailey, as cited in Mogalakwe (2006), explains that the document review method involves analyzing documents containing pertinent information about the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, a document review checklist, aligned with the thematic areas of the two objectives, was devised to scrutinize documents utilized by adjudicators during the adjudication process. The documents examined included adjudicator appointment/invitation letters, blank adjudication sheets, and filled adjudication sheets from cultural festivals over the past decade.

The data collection process commenced with identifying study participants, securing necessary permissions from individuals, district and municipal education offices to determine the types of information to gather from various available sources, selecting appropriate instruments to yield valuable data, and administering the data collection process to collect data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data was subsequently coded, followed by thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke, as cited in Kiger and Varpio (2020), elaborate that thematic analysis as a qualitative data analysis method involving systematic identification, analysis, and reporting of recurring patterns within a dataset. A deductive approach (Kiger & Varpio, 2020), guided by Dworkin's theory of adjudication, was employed to generate appropriate themes.

Each coordinator was interviewed to ascertain the competencies utilized in selecting adjudicators and their preparation before adjudicating performances at the festival. Information was gathered on how adjudicators are invited, and samples of invitation letters were obtained. Additionally, both blank adjudication sheets and completed ones with comments were collected. Coordinators were also questioned about their satisfaction with the adjudication process and their overall perception of it. Furthermore, selected adjudicators were interviewed to assess their competences, with a focus on their adjudication practices over time. Some adjudicators provided copies of their blank and completed adjudication sheets as part of their portfolio, along with their appointment letters. Subsequently, the documents collected, including adjudicator appointment/invitation letters, blank adjudication sheets, and completed adjudication sheets, were analysed to determine the consistency in adjudicators' competencies demonstrated in their adjudication practices.

### **Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

The study sought to investigate the competence levels of adjudicators and how adjudication of musical performances had been done over the past decade (2013 -2023) during the school cultural festival in Effutu Municipality, Agona West Municipality and Awutu Senya West district. The competence levels were presented and discussed within two overarching themes: the selection of adjudicators for music performances and their preparation for adjudicating at cultural festivals. This analysis aligns with the pre-interpretive stage of the theory utilized in the study. The interview findings indicated that the responsibility for selecting adjudicators rested with the cultural coordinator. The cultural coordinator usually considered the academic status of the adjudicator as well as the professional practice of the adjudicator in music performances.

One of them had this to say:

*In my process of selecting adjudicators for assessing music performances at the national festival, I refrain from personally choosing individuals. Instead, I seek recommendations from individuals with backgrounds in music education, such as lecturers and colleagues actively engaged in the field. I believe that individuals with such qualifications are better equipped to provide objective assessments of the performances.*

This is to say that the competences used as criteria for the selection is based on academic knowledge and professional practice. Another coordinator indicated how the adjudicators are contacted:



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*Typically, I inform my education director about the need for adjudicators and proceed to contact individuals with musical knowledge who have received formal education in the field. I engage in discussions with them regarding their potential involvement, and if they express willingness, official letters are then sent to them from the education directorate, formalizing their engagement as adjudicators of the music performances of the festival.*

This finding highlights that while the selection of adjudicators is the responsibility of coordinators, the issuance of official invitation letters is governed by the directors of education in the district/municipality. It suggests that the authority to select adjudicators lies primarily with coordinators rather than the organizing committee of the events. Additionally, the finding indicates that adjudicators do not undergo a vetting process; instead, once appointed, their engagement is assured. This contrasts sharply with situations where adjudicators are required to apply, undergo vetting by a committee, and then appointed to adjudicate as intimated by (Walubo, 2022). Consequently, maintaining specific standards in the adjudication process may not be a primary focus in the overall adjudication process. The analysis of filled mark sheets revealed a lack of comprehensive comments to assess the competencies of the adjudicators. Instead of providing detailed feedback on the score sheets, only supplementary sheets contained limited comments such as "poor attack," "good voice rendition," "poor conducting," "excellent comportment," and "spelling of notes instead of singing." These comments did not offer sufficient insight or constructive feedback for improving standards, thus failing to accurately portray the level of competencies of the adjudicators.

Consequently, it becomes challenging to ascertain the competencies of adjudicators when they are not selected through a competitive process and are not provided with training before the adjudication process.

Like one coordinator indicated, he was asked whether adjudicators are given orientation. He had this to say:

*I perceive adjudicator training as unnecessary and costly because adjudicators are already knowledgeable in their field. Simply providing them with the score sheet should suffice, as they possess the requisite expertise to understand and fulfill their roles effectively.*

This account is corroborated by insights gleaned from interviews with some adjudicators, who indicated that their formal music education provided them with skills in musical analysis that align with the adjudication process, even though adjudication itself was not a specific subject of study. While these adjudicators expressed the belief that formal training for adjudication may not be necessary, they acknowledged the importance of some form of orientation prior to the festival to familiarize themselves with the criteria sought by the coordinators in evaluating performances as expressed by Easter Jr (2020). Again, I hold a strong opinion that when adjudicators are informed about areas in need of improvement and actively address these concerns, their adjudication becomes more reliable, objective, and accurate. Thus, while formal training may not be deemed

essential, providing guidance and feedback can enhance the effectiveness of adjudicators' evaluations.

The second objective of the study delved into the adjudication process, spanning both the interpretive and post-interpretive stages of evaluating music performances. These stages encompass the constructive interpretation of performances and the subsequent declaration of results. The themes developed revolved around the types of musical performances featured in the cultural festival, the criteria and standards outlined in blank adjudication sheets utilized during the adjudication process, and the final results documented in filled adjudication sheets, encapsulating the entirety of the adjudication process. Interview results indicated that the cultural festival has both performing and visual arts.

One of the participants commented on the details of the aspects of the cultural festivals:

*In the realm of visual arts, exhibitions featuring various forms of visual artifacts such as paintings, sewing, crafts, and drawings are showcased for evaluation by experts in the visual arts domain, who assign marks accordingly. On the other hand, the performing arts component encompasses a diverse range of activities including choral music, sight singing, drum language, poetry recitals, dance, and drama performed in English. Specifically, within the realm of musical performances, the focus is on choral music, sight singing, and drum language.*

This highlights the necessity for adjudicators to possess competencies in choral singing, sight singing, and drum language in order to objectively evaluate musical performances in these areas. Additionally, it was found that adjudication sheets for the performances are provided to adjudicators on the day of the performances for their use. One of the adjudicators explained:

*The coordinator responsible for inviting me to adjudicate typically designs the blank adjudication sheets, outlining all the criteria and aspects to be evaluated. These sheets are then provided to adjudicators at the beginning of the festival. Each music performance is assessed using a specific adjudication sheet tailored to its particular category. For example, separate sheets are designated for Choral Singing, Sight Singing, and Drum Language, each detailing the benchmarks for assessment. Scores are allocated based on these criteria, with a total of one hundred points available for each performance.*

This indicates that separate adjudication sheets were used for each distinct item being adjudicated, as each item possesses its own unique criteria and requirements. The explanation provided suggests that the adjudication sheets utilized for evaluating music performances at the cultural festival were crafted by the coordinator or their office. When queried about the design process, it was disclosed that these sheets had been inherited within the office and had been in use for several years. Furthermore, the interviews uncovered that in the singing category, each group is required

to perform a specific set song assigned for the festival. Typically, both a compulsory song and an optional song are presented by each group, as inferred from the available documents.

One participant also explained to buttress the point made by the previous participant:

*When it comes to adjudication, distinct score sheets are employed for each discipline. For instance, choral music has its own score sheet, which assesses various aspects such as general performance, appearance, harmony, melody, accuracy, and overall impression. Similar procedures are followed for other aspects, with specific score sheets tailored to each discipline, enabling adjudicators to evaluate performances comprehensively and systematically.*

It was also explained that a stipulated number of singers for each group including the conductor was 25 but for sight singing, only one person represents the group or the school while in drum language, 2 persons are made to represent the group/school – one recites the prepared language of the drum while the other depicts the tonality of the recitation on the drum.

This clearly demonstrates that each music performance was evaluated on a scale of one hundred, based on the various criteria outlined on specific adjudication sheets. Additionally, it reveals that each adjudication sheet was tailored to assess a particular type of performance. This was confirmed during the document review process, wherein the blank sheets were carefully examined and analysed. The adjudication sheets typically included details such as the name of the festival, year, and specific aspect being evaluated. They also featured sections for recording the performing group, song title, as well as columns for comments and marks on all individual sheets.

As part of the adjudication process, it was analysed from the filled adjudication sheets that comments given were not comprehensive and may not define a constructive adjudication commentary. Adjudication commentary are the remarks that adjudicators of music performances write to the performing groups about their performances for improvement (Dickelman, 2023). Typically, this process occurs during the post-interpretive stage, providing an opportunity for performers to gain insight into the adjudication process and gain appreciation for the overall results and rankings in the competition.

Adjudicators typically calculate the average scores for each group or school, assess progressions, and assign ratings accordingly. This process indicates that the decisions made by the adjudicators are considered final and do not warrant any review. There is no opportunity for rectifying inconsistencies that may have been identified after the results are announced. Moreover, document analysis revealed that adjudicators do not have the chance to evaluate the work of their peers, which precludes the possibility of a panel review of scores. Instead, individual scores are aggregated, and the average mark is determined as a representation of the performances of each group or school.

According to the second adjudicator, one's educational background and level play a crucial role in determining competency in adjudicating music performances. She emphasized that while education is important, the specific area of study is what truly solidifies one's competence. For instance, her highest qualification in music is a diploma, as she pursued education without specializing in music at higher levels. However, what sets her apart is her opportunity to study music the University. During her time there, she focused on Music Analysis, which included components related to adjudication.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Pre-interpretive stage of adjudication revealed that adjudicators receive invitation letters specifying the specific items to be adjudicated at the festival. However, it was found that there is no formal orientation provided to adjudicators, and they rely solely on their own experience to interpret the benchmarks provided. Furthermore, the appointment of adjudicators lacks a competitive selection process, as coordinators choose individuals based on their own discretion. This practice may impact the competence of adjudicators, as competence in adjudication requires not only academic qualifications but also professional experience in the relevant field. Therefore, it is recommended that the appointment of adjudicators for such programmes be made through a competitive selection process, and there should be a concerted effort to provide practical training to selected adjudicators during the pre-interpretive stage. Orientation sessions can assist adjudicators in producing comprehensive comments that are beneficial for performers to improve future performances. It is palpable that music educators, who prepare groups with the aim of achieving success in competitions, rely on feedback to guide their future work and reflect on their teaching practices in the classroom. Indeed, adjudicator competency can be assessed based on the quality of their commentary and scores provided during adjudication.

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