

TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND THE CURRICULUM IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS: A SURVEY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS

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Abstract:

A survey was conducted using the questionnaire methods among the undergraduate student of the University of Lagos, Nigeria, the summary of this survey was that out of the 150 students that were examined in this survey, only 30% has learnt, listened and even played a traditional musical instrument at the primary and secondary school levels respectively, the remaining 70% were astounded at what indigenous music or musical instruments actually meant. The question then is what kind of music, if any were the teacher teaching our student's at school? Were parents exposing their children to cultural traditions of their fore-fathers? This study examines the best ways music teachers play active roles in resuscitating the musical culture in their students as well as examines parental roles in promoting cultural practices in their children/wards' daily activity. Having lost touch with their African foundation, the present generations of Nigerian Youths have suddenly become classified in their own choice of cultural values, embracing all varieties of values and cultures from all parts of the globe like India, China, Korea, Saudi Arabia, and so on. Thanks to the IT which has created an information superhighway. In the past, our composers and musicians such as Fela Sowande, Ayo Bankole, T. K.E. Philips, Samuel Akpabot and so on, fired by the flame of nationalism, drew inspiration from indigenous music and oral traditions in their art of composing and performing music in both serious and popular or mass culture style. They got popular with their arts and attracted world attention through the use of indigenous materials in the works. The implication of the study is that when cultural practices in music are continuously practiced, there is hope for expansion in indigenous music in the future.

Keyword: Music, School Curriculum, Indigenous Music, Western Music

Introduction

The former theory as expressed by Mereni (2017) that the music educational curriculum drawn up by the colonialists was intended to destroy the African (and Nigeria) indigenous culture, may no longer stand the scrutiny of criticism. The Colonialists introduced music as a school subject just as any other subject in the educational curriculum. It lay with beneficiaries of that education to harness the music theory they learnt for creating or enhancing their even indigenous (cultural) music. As Mereni pointed out all music are one. Indigenous music is grown in any given culture. Famous composers such as Ludwig Van Beethoven, Henry Purcell, and Bela Bartok to mention but a few used the theory of music which they learnt to enact their indigenous music.

To be fair, a couple of Nigerian musicologists such as T.K.E. Philips, Ayo Bankole, Olusoji, Mereni, Laz Ekwueme, Fela Sowande, who are art composers used the theory they learnt in western music to enhance their indigenous music such as '*E mi yio gbe oju mi soke won ni*' (*I will lift up my eyes unto the hills*), *O re ofe Jesu* (*Grace of our Lord*), *O buru na Jehovah* (*Except the Lord build the house*) and such likes. They transliterate the western theory into their indigenous music. It is unfortunate today, that technological mass media has reduced music to sheer entertainment, rubbishing the work of intellectuals who are promoters of

school music and they fail to recognise that music is an intellectual culture. This study aims to point children back to the art of appreciating music as a culture that should be learnt and embraced.

Indigenous Music in Nigerian Educational System:

From the perspective of CHAT, music is a product of cultural history that always encompasses a number of actually present or virtual co-actors. As a cultural phenomenon music activity can be directed in terms of rule-based, goal directed, and tool-mediated actions with sounds. Such musical activity can take several forms, such as reproduction of previously composed music or production of new musical pieces (composing). According to CHAT learning to take part in such cultural practices with culturally more experienced people who can guide the novice towards appropriation of actions or fundamental operations that are deemed relevant by the music community involved. Hence music education can be conceived as a cultural endeavour to get children collaboratively engaged in musical practices of the community and assist them in appropriating the roles and related tools in order to enhance their participation in such roles as listeners, singers, players of musical instruments, or composers. Music education in schools today includes several domains of musical behaviour such as singing, playing instruments, listening to music, music and movement, working with musical notation, and reflecting on listening and or performance (Hogenes, Van Oers and Diekstra, 2016, P. 131).

Emielu (2006:3) submits that Africa as a continent of which Nigeria is a part before European and Islamic contacts was made up of self –sustaining ‘ethnic nations’ who lived in more or less homogenous communities where life was largely communal. Music in these societies was an integral part of life and musical performances punctuated important milestones in the life of the individual from the cradle to the grave. Music making was built around communal activities such as agricultural and other economic activities, domestic chores, religious rites and rituals, festivals etc. Song texts were derived from shared history, myths, legends and philosophies, while musical instruments were constructed from materials found in the environment. Music was also an instrument of social control as well as a symbol of political authority. The songs were folk in nature and no body claimed authorship of any composition. Music was used for recreational activities as well as worship and at no point was music or musical performance sold as an economic product. However, this state of things changed drastically with the coming of Islam and Arabic culture as well as the European contact with Africa. The most far reaching influence on African music, both in the colonial and modern times, is Africa’s contact with Europe.

This European legacy has come through trade, Christianity, colonialism and western education. European trading activities in Africa included trade in legitimate goods as well as the obnoxious slave trade. Millions of Africans (mostly black Africans) were forcefully transported to the new world and other parts of Europe

as house helps, plantation and industrial works during the slave trade era which lasted several centuries until it was abolished in about 1807.

The Rise of Cultural Alienation and Hybridization

As Nketia rightly observed, the slave trade from Africa paved the way for the transportation and growth of African and African derived music in America and Europe (Nketia citd.in Emielu, 2006:3). By accepting those aspects of the master's culture which were either congenial to their past learning or necessary for their survival, and retaining such aspects of African culture for which they found no substitute, African slaves carved a niche for themselves; a hybridization of cultural practices which combined African and foreign cultures. Such Cultural practices have been given such labels as Afro-American, Afro-Cuban, Afro- Haitian, Afro Brazilian and such likes, reflecting African cultural practices in foreign lands. After the abolition of slave trade, the returning former slaves to the African soil became human agents for the propagation and spread of western musical traditions in Africa. African music also received a new impetus as popular musicians experimented with the fertilization of African musical ideas in the homeland with those from the diaspora. Most significant in this aspect is the influence of Afro American music which has grown so luxuriantly all over Africa and keep providing the driving force for world music in contemporary times.

European contact marked the beginning of professional musicianship in Africa, where musicians make a living from musical performances and recordings. Music in Africa lost its communal role and cultural relevance as musicians tailored their music to the tastes of urban dwellers that were mostly wage earners living in heterogeneous societies. Colonialism in Africa was an instrument of economic, political and cultural domination. Colonialism sought to create an African elite class who were alienated from their cultural roots, and who were euphemistically referred to as European Subjects. Colonial education goal was also intended to make Africans appendages to European interests. As Dzobo has rightly observed, modern education has become a powerful tool for separating the educated African from his village folks, from his indigenous culture and from the illiterate masses of his society (Dzobo cit. in Emielu 2006:3).

The most dominant European influence and one that has had significant impact on the relegation of African music is that of Christianity and missionary education. Unlike Islam that was tolerable of African traditional practices, the acceptance of Christianity in Africa meant the rejection of African cultural practices. The gospel of Christianity was perceived as that of 'light' while African cultural practices was that of 'darkness' and as quoted in the Bible: What fellowship has 'light' with 'darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14 KJV). This was the mind-set of European missionaries in Africa. Consequently, African songs and musical instruments were banned from Christian worship as they were considered devilish and unfit for Christian worship. In their place European hymns and chants were taught to the congregation while

harmoniums and organs replaced African musical instruments. Attempts were made to translate European hymns into Africa languages, but were quite unsatisfactory because of the tonal inflections of African languages, where a single word could mean different things depending on the intonation of alphabets.

Christian missionaries also introduced western education through mission schools. The missionary schools provided a good basis for the Christianization of Africans where a good knowledge of the Bible, ability to sing hymns and recite catechism, were considered essentials for a good Christian. The schools were therefore natural extensions of church missions. Music teachers in mission schools introduced European hymns and classical music and taught European musical instruments to pupils. To be considered educated therefore, the African had to accept European way of life and reject African cultural practices including music.

These trends are still obtainable today as the music curriculum is basically not totally music oriented but tends so much towards creative and cultural arts where fine arts and dance takes the bulk of the curriculum. However, the teacher's approach to the teaching of music makes or mars the attitude of the children to music of their culture.

The Rise of Enculturation and Cross-Culturalism

Vidal (2016) once notes that it was customary to find in the past the bell/town crier going round the town and announcing the approach of a festival, the commencement of an event or the passing away of a paramount ruler, the king. Today, the role has been taken over by the mass media, the radio, television and the news print. Citizens of the town now hear that the king has joined their forefathers through the radio or even reads it on the newspaper, even before the beating of the drums, hence making the roles of the town-crier unnecessary. The plaintive melodies that young girls and women used to hawk and advertise their trade early in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening or at night which sometimes constitute some kind of noise in the environment has gone into obscurity as the modern day 'jingles' and billboards with its flashy electronic coloured lights has taken the function of the indigenous ways of advertising music. The traditional roles of the moonlight plays that usually teach children moral lessons has been replaced by our television and our video vision, this is one of the fall out of today's changing times. Modern military technology has rendered the use of songs in psychological warfare unnecessary, thus driving indigenous war songs and war music into obscurity, in so much that most of the songs are lost and are no more. Music scholars now develop apps for teaching music effectively in the classrooms; all of these have been achieved through information technology.

The writer has conducted a research which sees the solution of the problem in pointing them back to the main thing! "Usages" of our fore-fathers.

Suggested Solution

The onus of pointing back this generation to the indigenous music of our fore-fathers lies solely on the teacher of music who happens to be a second parent as well as the parent himself. A study by Nweke (2015) shows that parental involvement in music helps the development of musical aptitude. The study shows that out of about 518 respondents who participated in the study, the percentages of respondents whose father and mother were musically involved had a higher level of musical aptitude than those whose parents are not musically involved. The implication of this is that when children are brought up musically, these children have a better chance to develop intellectually as well as morally, making the society to be a better place to live in.

Theoretical Framework

This study hinges on Social constructivism theoretical framework: The Social constructivism theory emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (Derry, 1999:2; McMahan, 1997:2 cit. in Kim 2006). This perspective according to Kim is closely associated with many contemporary theories, most notably the developmental theories of Vygotsky and Brunner, and Bandura's Social cognitive theory (Shunk, 2000:3, cit. in Kim, 2006). Social constructivism sees knowledge as socially constructed and learning as essentially a social process. It is mediated through cultural tools, above all by language, which needs to be the learner's first language or at least one very familiar to them, and facilitated by drawing on examples or contexts familiar to the learners so that meaning making is prioritised. This theory is relevant to this study in the sense that, the indigenous music exposes the child to the life that the ancestors had lived with different cultural practices that have been practiced in the time past when the child was not even born. Often times, when children are growing up, they tend to learn the language of their parents faster through indigenous songs that are of short lyrics. To this end, the first thing a child mutter may really not be a specific language but a musical sound in the mother's tongue. When this is absent then values and respect for the immediate society will be lacking.

More so, indigenous music comes with indigenous language, this study is of the opinion that a typical twenty first century child hardly speaks the mother tongue, so, children learn to speak their language better when folksongs are taught, and this could be an aspect of language acquisition as well as cultural expectations. This aspect of development through learning of music in the mother tongue is common in some areas in Nigeria especially the rural areas. The urban dwellers have a lot to do in this regard simply because western education is the order of the day. Hence, the onus lies on the teacher.

Although, Nairne (2009:286) explains that it's of enormous interest to psychologists that children develop sophisticated language skills during their preschool years, whereas before this time, as the child

approaches the end of his or her second year a phase of combining two words into one begins this is referred to as telegraphic speech. Westbrook and Vygotsky propose that the constructivism theory can be achieved when the teachers apply this model by setting up a 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) that is, an area of activity where, with the aid of a teacher or more knowledgeable peers, students are able to do what they cannot achieve alone, hence, the teacher must allow the child to have a sense of ownership (Westbrook *et. al. in* Vygotsky, 1986). There should be inter-subjectivity among the students so as to enable them have a personal feeling of the culture expressed. Learning involves students gradually internalising social activity with higher order of cognition. Hence, situated cognition builds on social constructivism, but holds that 'knowledge is situated, being in part a product of the activity, context, and culture in which it is developed' (Brown et al., 1989).

Learning occurs when students participate in activities that are ideally in authentic situations, or those that approximate as closely as possible to the contexts in which the knowledge will later be required for development or thinking directly developed and structured by their external social speech. Children's natural or 'spontaneous' concepts meet with and are further developed by the scientific or more abstract concepts they are taught in school or by an adult through guided instruction (Vygotsky, 1986). Such scaffolding or guided support requires a skillful mix of teacher demonstration, praise, minimisation of error, practice and direct instruction (Wood et al., 1976).

Westbrook *et al.* (2013) also are of the opinion that pedagogic practices consistent with social constructivist approaches prioritize student-teacher or student-student interaction. Small-group, pair and whole-class interactive work, extended dialogue with individuals, higher order questioning, teacher modeling, showing, reciprocal teaching and co-operative learning can all be seen as justified by social constructivism. To this extent, social constructivism could be seen as supporting student- or learner-centred pedagogy, terms which feature very strongly in curricular reform in developing countries, although social constructivism would suggest a much stronger role for the teacher than would be suggested by student or learner-centred, these authors conclude. Assumptions around student-centred pedagogy are that teachers share their students' language and culture, accept a more democratic and less authoritative role, and know how to set up effective group work and tasks and to offer skillful supported instruction at the point it is needed. Furthermore, these researchers express that space is needed for flexible social groupings, and within this, students need to feel that they have the right to talk and contribute to their peers' learning. Inherent within this is recognition of the student as a person with rights, taken on formally by UNESCO within Child Friendly Schools, with its human rights-based approach to schools and pedagogy.

Parental Roles in Learning of Indigenous Music

There is no doubt that the home plays a major role in a child upbringing, so also in music. Parental influence over the kind of music their children consume at a tender age is a pre-requisite for the output of the child in musical knowledge. Heiner & Davidson (2002:18) express that parents, teachers and peers strongly influence music development. Early nonverbal interactions between child and mother or care taker, and parental support for music activities in childhood, seems to be of particular importance as well as exposing the child to a wide variety of music.

In connection with this, Papousek & Papousek's (1995:23) view that the use of preverbal, quasi-musical interaction between parents and child in the course of child care, is stated as what makes musical competencies to be developed almost incidentally unknown to the parents, however, they provide their infants with a type of elementary music education that stop the acquisition of language. Since, both the child and the parents are a product of the environment, so this kind of musical communication is presumably the most important environmental influence on musical development in early childhood as stated by Noy (1968:67).

Music related activities of the family support the development of children in many ways, such as primary singing and making music together especially indigenous music. The Nigerian environment is unique so much that parents can actually take their children to their villages where they will learn music of their culture. This will help the children in developing interest in the indigenous music of the land. It is however pathetic and a thing of great pain that this study finds out that virtually all the respondents in this study had no adequate knowledge of the indigenous music of their culture.

Research Methods

Research Design: The descriptive survey method was used in this study. A survey was conducted using questionnaires among the undergraduate students of the University of Lagos, Nigeria.

Area of Study: The study covered selected students in 100 and 200 levels of the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

The Target Population: Students of the Department of Creative Arts, both male and female were purposively selected to give answers to the study questionnaire.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The selection process was purposive which was based on the researcher's discretion. However, 150 questionnaires were distributed to different students at the 100 and 200 levels. The questionnaires were filled and the successfully returned questionnaires were then used for the analysis.

Table1: Profile of Respondents

Item	Options	No of Respondents Frequency	Percentage (%)
Educational level of Respondents	100 level	130	87
	200 level	20	13
	Total	150	100
Gender of Respondents	Male	74	49
	Female	76	51
	Total	150	100

Table 1 shows that out of the 150 respondents used for the study, 87% are 100 level respondents, while 13% are 200 level. This is because at 100 level in the Department of Creative Arts, students don't have area of specialization in this course of study, but at the 200 level students are expected to specialize either in music, visual arts or theatre arts, hence this study used the respondents whose area of specialization is music.

Instruments and Validation: The instruments were face validated in conjunction with music experts. These experts were given a draft copy of the questionnaire together with the title of the study as well as the abstract of the study. The questionnaire was critically examined and they ensured that it aligned with the study. The level of clarity of the items, instructions and arrangement in order to avoid ambiguities and ensure adequate comprehension of the intention of the study was considered. The face validators complied and made corrections which were later effected by the researcher.

Sources of Data Collection: Primary and secondary data were used in this study, the primary data includes questionnaires, and secondary sources of information includes books and online journals articles. The structure of questionnaires adopts the 'Yes' or 'No' options to the research questions.

Statistical Methods of Data Analysis: The data generated were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and simple percentages.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentages distribution of Respondents by Exposures to musical instruments

Items	Options Yes	No	Total 150 (100%)
1. Respondents can identify the different kinds of traditional musical instrument prior to studying at the higher institution	45 (30%)	105 (70%)	150 (100)
2. Respondents can identify Western Musical instruments before gaining admission to higher institution.	45 (30%)	105 (70%)	150 (100)
3. Respondents participated in music at the:			
i. primary school level only	30 (20%)	120 (80%)	150 (100)
ii. at the secondary school level only	45 (30%)	105 (70%)	150 (100)
iii. at both the primary and secondary school	75 (50%)	75 (50%)	150 (100)
None of the above	75 (50%)	75 (50%)	150 (100)
4. Respondents play traditional musical instruments as a child	45 (30%)	105 (70%)	150 (100)
5. Respondents plays western musical instruments only at the university.	105 (70%)	45 (30%)	150 (100)
6. Respondents sing in the village choir	45 (30%)	105 (70%)	150 (100)
7. Respondent sing in a choral group	150 (100%)	0 (0%)	150 (100)
8. Respondents whose parents sang in the village choir	50 (33%)	100 (67%)	200(100)
9. Respondents whose parents play musical instruments	35 (23%)	115 (77%)	150 (100)
10. Respondents whose parents sang and played traditional musical instruments in the villages	85 (57%)	65 (43%)	150 (100)

Findings:

From table 2, 30% of the respondents can identify traditional musical instruments while 70% cannot identify traditional musical instruments; 30% of respondents can identify musical instruments prior to their entering into the higher institution, while 70% of the respondents actually saw western musical instruments only at the higher institution. This means that majority of the respondents did not offer music as a discipline in the primary school. Twenty percent (20%) offered music in primary school while 80% did not offer music in primary school. At the secondary school level only 30% of the respondents studied music while 70% did not study music in secondary school. The implication of this is that the higher institution level where we have majority of them coming in to study music, it becomes difficult in understanding the importance of music especially the indigenous music which should have formed a bedrock for music appreciation. This study finds out that of the respondents, 75% did not offer music at both the primary and secondary school level. As a result, learning to play traditional musical instruments as a child was not possible. Thirty percent (30%) played traditional musical instrument as a child, while 70% did not, 70% of the respondents played musical instruments for the first time at the higher institution level, while 30% are still learning to play musical instruments; 30% sang in the village choir while 100% sang in the choral group at the university; 33% of the respondents had parents who sang in the village

choir, while 67% said their parents had no interest in singing in the village choir; 23% had parents who played traditional musical instruments, while 77% did not play any musical instrument. The study finds out that 57% of respondents played and sang traditional music in the village, while 43% did not sing nor play any musical instrument.

There is a significant relationship between parental involvement in indigenous music and children's knowledge about music.

Table 3: Relationship of Respondents and Parents by Participation in Music Group

	Respondents who sang in village choir 45 (30%)	Parents who sang in Village Choir 50 (33%)
Music	Respondents who played Western 105 (70%) Mean score: 50.0%	Parents who played Western Music 35 (23%) 28.0%

There is no significant relationship between respondents who sang in the village choir and the parents who sang in the village choir as revealed in this study. This is based on the fact that the number of respondents who had parents who were in the village choir are encouraged by these parents to join the village choir. Whereas, the number of respondents who played the western music are more than those that did not participate. This is based on the findings that most of these respondents learnt western music in the higher institution, while most of these parents were not opportune to learn these western music as a result of the circumstances of where and when they were born.

This study revealed that there is a positive change western culture has brought to the present generation, only if they can learn and base their musical style on school music even if they are involved in music writing or music performance of indigenous music.

Implications for the Study

It is obvious from the study that most of the respondents only learnt to play music at the higher institution for the first time in their lives, while most of their parents also did not play any traditional musical instrument as a child. The strong will to learn to play or sing traditional musical instruments lies not only on the pupils but basically on the parents who should direct and probably teach the children what to do. When this is lacking, no child will on his or her own learn to play the traditional musical instruments. Therefore, the role of parents in directing their children to be involved in indigenous music is crucial while also emphasizing formal education both in music and other disciplines.

Furthermore, the school has a great role to play as an agent of socialization. At the primary school level, the school should practically make the child understand basic societal norms which does not only come up theoretically but in a practical way by making music out of those norms in such a way that, the child understands what the society expects from him/her, learns to appreciate and value the culture of the

society. The curriculum of study at the primary and secondary school level should emphasize the use of indigenous music and children should be made to learn these indigenous music because if the children do not learn the basics of their indigenous culture early in life, then the rest of the curriculum is inaccessible to them, often leading to early school dropout in the music field. In other words, music at the higher level becomes seemingly hard to comprehend and therefore reduces learner's chance of performing effectively at the higher level because of lack of solid foundation.

Conclusion

Early exposure to musical values makes the child to appreciate music at an older age, hence, parent should learn to guide their children in music and ensure they are well nurtured especially in the indigenous music of their culture. The curriculum should cater for the immediate environment of the child as well as help to develop the child in all parts of human development.

Finally, it is imperative that the study of traditional Nigerian and African music be undertaken right from the lower level of education. This will not only ensure the development of a positive attitude towards music and enhance the appreciation and understanding of musical forms, but will also contribute to its development as a modern art form.

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