Conceptual Discourse of African Traditional Music Pedagogy in Selected Primary Schools in Ogbaland of Rivers State.

By

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to critically interrogate the necessity and effectiveness of African traditional music in pedagogy of primary school pupils in Ogbaland of Rivers State. African traditional music, until present time is gradually loosing it's values due to misrepresentation, and the presence of western musical ideologies and applications as prevalent in the teaching and learning process in the selected primary schools in Ogbaland. The incursion of western music to the indigenous pedagogy has gradually made the African traditional music values to gradually drift into extinction. The study therefore made use of survey research design of the qualitative methodology in collecting it's data. One research hypothesis is tested to guide the research. Statistics of percentage, mean score ratings and standard deviation were applied on a four-point likert scale to assess the opinions of music teachers and head teachers while an inferential statistics of t-test analysis was used to verify the various claims of the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance and 154 degrees of freedom (df). The result positions inadequacy of the music education curriculum in the coverage of traditional music pedagogy instructions and lack of

traditional music infrastructure as major hindrance of African traditional music education in the selected primary schools in Ogbaland. The study therefore recommends amongst others that Nigerian indigenous music should be given it's appropriate place in the music education curriculum and the misrepresentation and misinterpretation of African traditional music should rather be avoided in order to promote African cultural values.

Keywords: African, Traditional, Music, Pedagogy, Primary, Education.

Introduction

The history of school music education in Nigeria dates back to the 19th Century when Christian Missionaries arrived in Nigeria. Consequently, music as a subject was introduced into secondary schools through the singing of European songs; in addition to rudiments of music. That Western influence has continued to devastate the cultural heritage of the people (Omibiyi, 1983). African traditional music practices embrace many aspects of the African experience in culture, and every culture all over the world has its own traditions. But perhaps the teaching and learning of African traditional music is that aspect of music education that will bring about the transmission and perpetuation of our African heritage to children in the primary schools.

Music in particular has been found to be very important and to be one of the most effective ways of preserving, promoting, and transmitting the indigenous cultures of the Nigerian society from one generation to another. Music and traditional African practices are integral parts of Nigerian (indigenous) society that are inseparable. Music cannot be properly understood and appreciated without some knowledge of traditional music in its socio-cultural context (Nettl, 1998, p. 23). African traditional music is a symbolic expression which is quite important as the socio-cultural organizations and traditional African institutions. African traditional music has been found to be an important aspect of culture and socialization. Therefore, within African traditional music practices the values of the creators of the music are reflected. It is therefore to interrogate the effect of pedagogy on the African Traditional Music that forms the thrust of this study.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The aim of the study is to establish the necessity and effectiveness valuee of African traditional music pedagogy to some selected primary schools students in Ogbaland, Rivers State. Specifically, the objective of the study is to determine the availability of African music studies and facilities of teaching and learning materials available for traditional music education in the primary schools in Ogbaland of Rivers State.

Research Question

To what extent is African music studies and facilities of teaching and learning materials available for traditional music education in primary schools in Ogbaland of Rivers State?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis that is tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the opinions of music teachers and Head teachers concerning the availability of African music studies and facilities of teaching and learning materials for traditional music education in primary schools in Ogbaland of Rivers State.

Significance of the Study

The study will be beneficial to different groups of persons such as the primary school administrators, the primary school teachers, the curriculum planners, education authorities, music teachers, parents, pupils as well as research students. The findings of this study have both empirical and theoretical significance.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is on assessment of the teaching and learning of African traditional music in selected Primary Schools in Ogbaland, Rivers State.

Concept of Music Teaching and Learning in Primary Schools

Ancient Greek Philosophers, Aristotle and Plato introduced the study/practice of music for good up-bringing of Greek children at the primary school level. They argued that music has power to influence the mind towards good behaviour since

it teaches moral dos and don'ts of the society. In Ancient Greek education system only three subjects were recommended; thus music, physical education and poetry (literature), were used in the schools in training for character and good behaviour. In Nigeria, our fore-fathers also discovered the power of music in training for good character hence they encouraged their families to learn and participate in the performance of folk music and dances.

The Nigerian Government in its National Policy on Education encourages the use of folk materials for the education of the Nigerian child. According to the National Policy on Education (2004):

> There is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria: to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive: while interest and ability should determine the individual's direction in education (p. 7).

Music in the Primary Education Curriculum

The main purpose of primary music education programme in Nigeria is to develop cultural arts embedded in performance experiences such as music, drama and dance of a child to its highest possible level. Agawu (2003) say:

> Curriculum is the planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning outcomes formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience under the auspices of the school, for the learners' continuous and willful growth in personal social competence (p. 89).

The National Implementation Committee on National Policy of Education (NPE 1998) included music in the primary school curriculum as one of the cultural and creative arts subject that incorporates music, dance and drama, and art. This new curriculum in music content is divided into six areas of instruction.

Problems of Teaching Music in the Primary Schools

Adedeji and Ajewole (2008, p. 99) commenting on the problem of teaching music in the primary school said that one major area of imbalance in music curricula of

Nigerian primary schools (and which is the concern of this research work) is the extent of African traditional culture in the primary school music curriculum.

There are many problems that militate against the teaching and learning of music in Nigerian primary schools. Mbanugo (1999, p. 17) listed such problems as the following:

1. Government undue emphasis on its educational policy on science and technology to the detriment of the arts as pointed out by Sowande (1967).
2. Lack of adequate resource mobilization in the form of equipment, textbooks and instructional material among other things as noted by (Nzekwe, 1981; Omibiyi-Obidike, 1987).
3. Societal emphasis on social events of music as against the aesthetic contemplation (Euba, 1969).
4. Inadequate curriculum aided by attitudinal indifference Mbanugo (1984).
5. Poor methodology of teaching (Akrofi, 1987); Okafor & Maison, 1987); and Omibiyi-Obidike (1987).
6. Immoral behaviours and ideals are being introduced in western music.

Concept of Traditional Music

Maduekwe (1994, p. 2) defined music as "a cultural phenomenon which is present in every society and experienced by every individual". This definition has far reaching implication that it aligns music to culture. The easiest way to substantially reflect the people's cultural heritage is by emphasizing the indigenous music of the people which by its definition reflects its origin, nature and usage/functions. According to Odogbor (2008, p. 68), traditional Nigerian music constitutes the music which the various peoples of Nigeria use in their day-to-day life where both the language and style of rendition and instrumental accompaniment are characteristically localized.

Ekwueme (2001, p. 18) felt that "traditional music should be seen as the folk music of Nigeria". One thing is certain from the above definitions and that is the relevance of culture in indigenous music. Therefore, a deep knowledge and understanding of the musical heritage of the Nigerian society by its people is very vital if they, as individuals are to function effectively within the society and thus help in upholding its identity.

The term traditional music covers a vast area of musical discourse. Numerous scholars have defined the term. However, this study adopts the definition of Agawu (2003) where he maintained that:

> African music is best understood not as a finite repertoire but as a potentiality, in terms of what exists and has existed in the past. African music designates these numerous repertoires of songs and instrumental music that originate in specific African communities, and are performed regularly as part of play, ritual, and worship, and circulate mostly orally/aurally, within and across language, ethnic, and cultural boundaries (p. 16).

Supporting the above view, Nketia in Agordoh (1994) notes that "traditional Nigerian music is the indigenous music of the different ethnic groups in Nigeria; it is the music of the pre-colonial era" (p. 23).

The Roles of Government in Promoting Interest in the Study of Music in the Primary Schools.

The National Policy on Education revised (2004) outlined some of the roles of the government in actualizing the policy. Some of them stipulated that the government should train and appoint teachers for the various courses and also provide music facilities in schools. It is very unfortunate that these roles had never been met by the authorities in power. Although colleges had been established and new ones are springing up, at graduation, the teachers are never appointed, the instruments are too few to make any impact. Worst still, some music graduates get frustrated and get employed elsewhere, thus rendering the profession with a lot of inadequacies.

The Role of Parents/Environment to Sustain the Practice of Traditional Music Pedagogy in the Primary Schools.

For effective learning and behavioural changes to take place in a child, learning must first begin at the child's immediate environment. Environment affects the child's ability to learn effectively since he has the opportunity to learn directly from his close relations and learn those things that he has been seeing since he was born. A transfer of his cultural practices to classroom will not only make learning real but would bring about continuity of such cultural practices.

Writing on the influence of parents and environment on child's musical development Aninwene (2003) points out thus:

> The success of their musical experience largely depends on the musical nurturing they received right from their early childhood. If they do not receive the right musical education, they become deficient in that aspect and this would definitely affect their adulthood. Our children in primary schools do not receive proper early music education and that has reflected in the society (p. 51).

Ekwueme (2002) said this: "if we deny a child the musical aspect of intelligence, we have denied him a balanced education" (p. 41). In fact we have denied the child the opportunity of developing his musical talents, capabilities and musical intelligence, thus causing that part of his brain to remain dormant and undeveloped throughout his lifetime.

The Role of Music Educators/Teachers in Sustaining the Practice of Traditional Music Pedagogy in the Primary Schools

It would be astonishing to find out any society that does not possess its own peculiar kind of music. Many societies of the world have music for virtually all the activities associated with everyday life of individuals. These activities that emanate from their culture need to be transferred to the younger generations. Traditional music is important to Nigerians in a variety of ways. It serves social/cultural, religious, educational, political and economical needs of the Nigerian society. Odogbor (2008) rightly points out a number of ways music educators can sustain the practice of traditional music education in our primary schools thus:

> Many Nigerian children enter the formal school system without having any knowledge of their own traditional music and the same is true of the curricular offerings of schools at the primary and secondary schools levels, with the exception of few privately-owned schools, that do not encourage proper teaching and learning of traditional music (p.15).

In the face of all these, *vis-à-vis* the immense benefits derivable from the knowledge and practice of traditional music to the learner, his community and overall

national growth, what role should the music educator play to encourage the sustainability of traditional music in schools?

Bandura's Social Learning/Child Development Theory

The theoretical framework of this study hinges on Albert Bandura's social learning theory propounded by a renowned psychologist. Albert Bandura in the early 1960s affirms that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment and behaviours. Albert Bandura's social learning and child development theory suggests that behaviors can also be learned through observation and modeling (Agawu, 2003). By observing the actions of others, including parents and peers, children develop new skills and acquire new information. The theory is therefore employed in the study because it arrives to interrogate the level of pedagogical impact on African traditional music on Primary School students in the selected Primary Schools in Ogbaland.

Research Design

The researcher used survey method which entails collection and analysis of data from a part of the population considered to be representative of the entire population of study. The study adopts survey analysis research of the quantitative research methodology. It also made use of primary and secondary sources. The primary source includes materials gotten from the selected Primary Schools in Ogbaland, while the secondary source includes library materials such as text books, journals, google scholars, etc.

Question: Is there African music pedagogy instruction in the primary school music education curriculum?

Answers: It was discovered that the educational planners never involve traditional music experts during curriculum design to contribute their quotas to the development of the subject. Therefore, resulting in the inadequacy of the music education curriculum in the coverage of African traditional music education both in theory and practice. Music education curriculum is not balanced in terms of providing for traditional music teaching and learning. And relevant textbooks are equally not available thereby making it very difficult for both the teachers and pupils to perform as expected in the subject.

Hypothesis

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the opinions of music teachers and Head teachers concerning the availability of African music studies and facilities of teaching and learning materials for traditional music education in primary schools in Ogbaland of Rivers State.

Table: Summary of t-test in the opinions of music teachers and Head teachers concerning the availability of African music studies and facilities of teaching and learning materials for Traditional Music Education in Primary schools in Ogbaland of Rivers State.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. t	Crit. t	P<0.05
Music teachers	120	3.00	1.60	154	0.432	1.960	NS
Head teachers	36	2.87	1.60				

The result Table 4.8 above shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 154 degrees of freedom (df), that the calculated t value (0.432) is less than the critical t value (1.960). Therefore, we reject the alternative hypothesis and retained the null hypothesis which suggests that there is no significant difference in the opinions of music teachers and Head teachers concerning the availability of African music studies and facilities of teaching and learning materials for traditional music education in primary schools in Ogbaland of Rivers State.

Summary of the Findings

After the analysis, the following major findings were made: The study reveals that 46 respondents representing about 29.5% of the sample are males while about 74.4% of both sexes said they have first degree and above as their highest level of education. It was also discovered that about 67.3% of the sample have worked as teachers for 11 years and above.

Some issues relating to traditional music education delivery and situations were identified and assessed by music education teachers and the head teachers. These issues were inadequacy of the primary school music curriculum which was found not to be balanced in terms of coverage in the area of African traditional music

education, inadequate supervision of pupils by teachers, insufficient time allocation to music education generally in the time table, preference for foreign music as reflected in the curriculum design, neglect of use of local instruments in training the pupils even when the instruments are available. Others are dearth of relevant textbooks on traditional music, insufficient knowledge of traditional music education by both the teachers and the pupils, lack of regular evaluation exercise for the pupils to assess rate of understanding of the art, lack of opportunities to expose the pupils to concerts and traditional musical festivals to enrich the children with the knowledge of the art.

Finally, there are also no professionals who ought to be regulating standards and finally, no opportunities are given for pupils to give traditional music recitals which could have been increasing the performance ability of the pupils. Even at that, about six situations were identified by the respondents as likely consequences of not taking traditional music education of the pupils seriously. They included the denial of the enriching cultural values in traditional music, the tendency to imbibe more of the western culture as very visible where access to local culture is limited or totally absent, the children are likely to be led astray through the neglect of traditional music and the consequences could be to imbibe the readily available western culture full of immoral behaviour as manifested in indecent dressings and the likes this days. Others are that the cultural heritage as a way of life could go into extinction; and as carrier of the people's history and tradition in inculcation of cultural values; nonchalant attitude towards it could be very dangerous.

Conclusion

This section discusses the result of the analysis as obtained from both the research question and the hypothesis. The results showed that African music studies and traditional musical instruments/materials were available in many primary schools across the LGA but there is a problem in their usage. The necessary skills needed for effective usage of the instruments were found to be lacking in both the teachers and the pupils, hence teaching and learning could not take place effectively.

The inadequate nature of the curriculum as well as poor attitude of the pupils towards traditional music were found to be some of the factors responsible for the observed poor showing of interest of this aspect of music education in the primary

schools. Besides this, the opportunity to participate in any form of traditional music concerts and festivals was never provided; therefore practical knowledge which would have aided quick understanding of the rudiments of the subject was not available.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proffered:

- ✓ Since African music studies and a lot of African musical instruments/materials were available in the primary schools, it is not enough to have them but learn how to use them to acquire skills/knowledge in all the aspects of traditional music.
- ✓ There should be deep knowledge and understanding of the musical heritage of Nigerian society by its citizens if individuals are to function effectively within society and help in upholding its identity.
- ✓ The child should be well equipped from home to appreciate musical trainings in school, especially with traditional music.
- ✓ The government and nongovernmental organizations should create sensitization programmes on the benefits of African traditional music on primary schools in Nigeria. This will ultimately enhance the application of African traditional music on the pedagology of the children.

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