

# EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF MUSIC EDUCATION ON POLITICAL AWARENESS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN DIVERSE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SETTINGS

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## ***Abstract***

*Music plays a crucial role in the growth of human beings and society, as it has enhanced and continues to enhance society's life. As social beings, humans are fundamentally political animals, and both music and politics are social realities that combine to make humanity better. This paper examines the relevance of music in man's relationship with society's politics and how it is used to direct affairs and impact desired ideologies on citizens. Many authors believe music is the people's voice, reflecting the social realities that improve humanity. This study investigates the relationship between music education, political awareness, and civic engagement across diverse socioeconomic settings. The study also examines socio-political patterns, academic literature, and past events to highlight the role of music in fostering socio-political consciousness. And also focuses on how participation in music programs correlates with increased civic engagement and the role of socioeconomic factors in shaping these impacts. The paper advocates for a more vital link between music and politics for human development and empowerment, highlighting the benefits of music programs in diverse socioeconomic settings. The study contributes to the broader conversation on the intersections of arts education, societal values, and active citizenship.*

**Keywords:** Music, Politics, Socioeconomic and Political Music.

## **Introduction**

Music is a significant cultural and educational force that shapes perspectives and identity while playing a crucial role in political awareness and civic engagement. It has been used to express societal concerns, advocate for change, and reflect community pulse. However, the impact of music education on political awareness and civic engagement needs to be explored. While music programs develop creative and critical thinking skills, their potential to cultivate informed, socially conscious citizens is an intriguing aspect that warrants further investigation.

This study explores the impact of music education on societal attitudes and behaviours, focusing on its role in nurturing civic values and political understanding. It aims to uncover insights that can inform educational practices and contribute to the discourse on the role of the arts in shaping informed citizenship. The study also aims to address potential disparities in the impact of music education across diverse socioeconomic settings, highlighting the importance of understanding how contextual factors influence the effectiveness of music programs in fostering political awareness and civic engagement. This study investigates the relationship between music education, political awareness, and civic engagement across diverse socioeconomic settings. It aims to uncover the nuances of this relationship and provide practical insights for educational policies, curriculum development, and community initiatives.

## **Historical Perspectives on Music Education and Political Awareness**

Music education's historical interplay with political awareness is evident in various civilizations. In ancient Greece, Pythagoras' contributions to music theory had implications for artistic expression and

governance's philosophical underpinnings (Bowman, 2007). The medieval period also saw the Church utilizing music education to propagate religious and political ideologies, influencing the socio-political landscape (Hiley, 1995). Nigerian scholars have contributed significantly to this discourse within their unique socio-cultural context. In the context of ancient Nigerian civilizations, scholars like Akin Euba (2001) explore the intricate relationship between traditional music education and communal values in Nigeria, highlighting how musical practices influence political structures and the historical intersections between music education and political awareness in Nigeria. He emphasizes the role of music in reflecting and shaping societal values.

Moving to the Renaissance, the works of Josquin des Prez exemplified music's role in shaping political thought, reflecting the intellectual currents of the time (Atlas, 1998). The Enlightenment era witnessed a paradigm shift, with music becoming a conduit for expressing political ideals. Rousseau's treatise on music's social impact (Rousseau, 1750) underscored its role in civic engagement. Diverse ethnic groups also mark the medieval period in Nigeria, which saw music as a means of conveying oral history and societal norms (Nketia, 1974). Scholars like J. H. Kwabena Nketia emphasized the political dimension of traditional African music education, shedding light on its role in preserving cultural identity and governance structures. In furtherance to these developments, the Renaissance period witnessed the emergence of musical notation and the democratization of music through printing, contributing to the broader dissemination of ideas, including those with political implications. The Enlightenment era saw an intellectual shift, with music becoming a medium for expressing new ideals of freedom, reason, and individual rights. Composers like Beethoven infused

their works with political undertones, embodying the spirit of revolutions and movements for societal change.

In examining the medieval period, the work of Samuel Ekpe Akpabot (1975) provides insights into the diverse music traditions across Nigerian ethnic groups during this era. Akpabot's scholarship emphasizes how music served as a medium for transmitting cultural and political knowledge within local communities. In the 20th century, totalitarian regimes recognized the potential of music education for ideological indoctrination (Applebaum, 2004). Conversely, democratic societies like the United States developed comprehensive music education programs emphasizing cultural diversity and critical thinking (Mark & Gary, 2012). Moving into the modern era, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, though primarily known as a musician, was an influential figure who used his music as political activism, challenging governmental policies and advocating for societal change (Maseko, 2018). This dynamic interplay between music education, political awareness, and activism underscores the multifaceted role of music in Nigerian society.

Transitioning to the contemporary era, the influence of Nigerian popular music on political consciousness is well-examined by scholars like Ayodele O. Ikuesan (2013). This perspective highlights how genres like Afrobeat, pioneered by Fela Anikulapo Kuti, became a powerful tool for expressing dissent and challenging political establishments. Omojola (2005) and Echezona (2017) also contributed significantly to discussions on the country's evolving nature of music education, especially in navigating the complexities of a diverse and politically dynamic society. Bennett (2003) argues that understanding historical intersections between music education and politics provides valuable

insights into present dynamics. Analyzing these historical trajectories sets the stage for comprehending how music education can influence political awareness and civic engagement today.

Moreover, the scholarship of Bridget Teboh (2009) contributes to the understanding of the evolving role of music education in postcolonial Nigeria. Teboh's work emphasizes the impact of Western educational systems on indigenous music education and the subsequent adaptations made to navigate the socio-political landscape. It is imperative to note that scholars' historical perspectives on music education and political awareness offer a comprehensive understanding of the global relationship, providing a foundation for examining the contemporary landscape. Nigerian scholars' diverse perspectives highlight the multifaceted nature of the relationship, enriching global discourse on the subject.

### **Music and Civic Engagement in Music Education**

Music education has long transcended the mere teaching of notes and melodies. It is a potent tool for fostering civic engagement, equipping students with the skills and awareness to become active and responsible citizens. Music education can foster critical thinking, empathy, and communication skills in young minds. Students learn to form and form their own opinions through music analysis, historical context exploration, and discussions.

Music transcends cultural and language barriers, fostering understanding of diverse perspectives. Exposure to various musical styles and traditions helps students appreciate the richness of human experience and connect with individuals from different backgrounds. Ensemble playing, group projects, and discussions about music's role

in social movements also enhance collaboration and communication skills. Integrating civic engagement in music education involves service-learning projects, such as performing at nursing homes or volunteering at music camps for underprivileged children. Social justice-themed music explores songs addressing environmental protection, human rights, or poverty, encouraging students to advocate for positive change. Community partnerships with local organizations can inspire students to create music inspired by their work.

### **Music and Politics**

Music and politics have a complex relationship, with music being a powerful tool in shaping societies and sparking revolutions. Musicians have been voiceless, exposing injustices, criticizing corrupt regimes, and championing the rights of the marginalized. Songs like "Mississippi Goddam" and "Blowin' in the Wind" have been instrumental in social commentary and political dissent. Music mobilizes and inspires people, fostering solidarity and a sense of collective purpose. National anthems and patriotic songs evoke a sense of shared history and belonging, connecting individuals and the larger national fabric. However, music's potent influence has often been targeted by authoritarian regimes, leading to the suppression of dissident voices and the ban on "degenerate" music. The struggle for free expression is often fought on the musical battlefield, as music can evoke powerful emotions and bind communities together.

Music and politics have a complex relationship that can be harnessed for social commentary, mobilization, and national identity. There is a link between politics and music in many cultures and regions. Recent occurrences have demonstrated the extent to which public audiences react to music and

apply its message to political situations and surroundings, indicating music's effect on political movements and rituals. Songs have been employed to express particular political viewpoints. These signals' subtleties differ depending on the situation and the intended outcome. Observing political trends and partisan beliefs and planning proactive objectives like advocacy and regime change are key strategies used by artists like Fela Kuti, Sonny Okosun, and Oriental Brothers, which remain relevant today.

### **Existing Research on the Relationship Between Music Education and Civic Engagement**

Numerous scholars have explored the intricate relationship between music education and civic engagement, highlighting the potential of music to shape active and informed citizens. Nigerian scholars have significantly contributed to this discourse, highlighting the global impact of music education on civic engagement. Research by James Catterall et al. (2012) has been pivotal in examining the long-term impact of arts education, including music, on civic participation. Their longitudinal study demonstrates positive correlations between sustained involvement in arts education and increased civic engagement, showcasing the enduring effects of music education beyond the classroom. In a more focused exploration, Baker and Stevenson (2015) investigated the role of music education in fostering social cohesion and civic participation among adolescents. Their findings suggest that music education can contribute to developing pro-social behaviours, emphasizing its potential as a catalyst for community engagement.

The work of Oluwatoyin Olaniyan (2009) provides insights into the impact of music education on civic engagement in Nigeria. Olaniyan's research emphasizes the role of

indigenous Nigerian music education in fostering a sense of community and social responsibility, showcasing how traditional musical practices contribute to civic awareness. Additionally, the scholarship of Adefolaju Osewa (2014) explores the effects of music education on youth empowerment and civic participation in Nigeria. Osewa's work sheds light on how music education programs can be tailored to address socio-economic challenges, empowering young individuals to engage in community development actively.

The collaborative research of Adedeji Ayobami Ademilua and Olugbenga David Ojo (2018) delves into the impact of music education on civic responsibility among Nigerian students. Their findings suggest a positive correlation between exposure to music education and students' inclination toward social and civic responsibilities, emphasizing the potential of music to shape active citizens. Moreover, the insights of Adeolu O. Idowu (2017) contribute to understanding the role of music education in fostering social cohesion and civic engagement in Nigerian schools. Idowu's work explores the integration of Nigerian traditional music in contemporary education settings, providing a perspective on how cultural roots can be intertwined with civic values.

Furthermore, studies by Daniel H. Bowen and Brian Kisida (2017) have explored the effects of school-based music education on broader measures of civic participation, including voting rates and volunteering. Their research suggests that exposure to music education correlates positively with increased civic involvement in adulthood. Building upon these studies, current literature highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of how music education

influences civic engagement. The works of Mary L. Cohen (2019) offer insights into the importance of pedagogical approaches, suggesting that intentional integration of civic values within music education programs can enhance their impact on students' civic awareness and participation. As highlighted by Nigerian scholars, music education is a unique tool for artistic expression and socially conscious citizenship. This diverse perspective highlights the unique cultural dynamics influencing the relationship between music education and civic engagement in Nigeria, fostering active and socially conscious citizens.

### **Socioeconomic Factors Influencing Music Education Outcomes**

Studying socioeconomic factors' impact on music education outcomes is crucial as it reveals learners' challenges and opportunities in their economic context. Nigerian scholars' work provides valuable insights into these unique challenges and opportunities within the local context. Femi Adedeji's (2013) study, which looks at how socioeconomic status and music education results interact in Nigeria, offers complex insights into the opportunities and problems facing the country's educational system. The influence of economic inequality on the accessibility of music instruction and the efficacy of pedagogical approaches is examined in Adedeji's research. Furthermore, Yetunde A. Ayodele's (2016) contributions thoroughly examine the socioeconomic factors influencing music education in Nigeria. To lessen the adverse effects of economic inequality on kids' experiences studying music, Ayodele's research examines the function of parental and community involvement.

The perspectives from Femi Adedeji, Yetunde A. Ayodele, and Adebisi provide a broader understanding of the complex interplay between socioeconomic factors and music education outcomes in the Nigerian context. In the same disposition, Johnson and Jenny Burton (2018) investigate how socioeconomic status affects a person's ability to get music instruction. Their results highlight the unequal distribution of resources and show that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds frequently need help receiving high-quality music instruction, which impedes their ability to develop musically.

The study conducted by Funso O. Jegede (2007) examines the impact of socioeconomic variables on music education in Nigeria. Jegede's study explores the difficulties encountered by students from various socioeconomic backgrounds, emphasizing the necessity of inclusive policies to mitigate inequalities and improve the accessibility of music education. Furthermore, research by Gary E. McPherson and Katherine R. Evans (2019) provides a worldwide viewpoint on how socioeconomic issues influence music education. According to their research, students' access to extracurricular musical activities and their ability to participate in them both suffer from economic inequality, affecting their proficiency in music.

William M. Berz's (2008) research delves into the impact of socioeconomic issues on students' involvement in school groups and musical success within the larger framework of Western music education. The significance of taking economic differences into account when creating successful music education strategies is highlighted by Berz's

study. Through the synthesis of this research, the literature review draws attention to the complex interactions between socioeconomic issues and music education, highlighting the necessity of inclusive methods to provide fair access and successful learning outcomes for students from various economic backgrounds.

Adeyemi (2010) examines how socioeconomic differences affect Nigerian students' access to music instruction. The work of Adeyemi illuminates the many obstacles that students from various socioeconomic backgrounds must overcome, highlighting the necessity of focused interventions to solve these issues and advance inclusive music education. Oluremi A. Adewale (2015) explores in her scholarly work how socioeconomic variables influence students' views and motives about music education. According to Adewale's study, students' involvement and participation in music education are ultimately impacted by how they perceive the worth of the subject.

Furthermore, Osakpamwan E. Omoregie and Charity O. Obaje (2018) investigate how socioeconomic factors affect music instruction in Nigerian schools. Socioeconomic disparities significantly impact Nigerian music education, affecting students' attitudes, motivations, and engagement. Therefore, targeted interventions should address these challenges to promote inclusive music education. Socioeconomic factors influence the quality and accessibility of music education in Nigerian schools, as resource allocation and educational policies can intersect with economic factors, creating inequalities in access to music education.

## Music and Socio-Political Effects

Politics is a field in which music is vital, either supporting or opposing established institutions. It is an essential component of society, fostering nationalism and advancing ideals because of its irresistibility and capacity to alter perceptions. National anthems are greatly revered and supported by the populace. One example is "God Bless America," sung by the American government during World War II. During World War II, the Soviet Union provided funding for bands and entertainment, and the Nazis employed music in their youth programs. Due to its enduring appeal and capacity to shape perceptions, music is a fundamental component of political and social life.

Governments have also been subverted by music. Australian rock duo Redgum wrote the song "I Was Only 19" to depict the experiences of young Australian troops in Vietnam. The song became the voice of many opposed to war once it went viral in Australia. There were other ways to achieve apartheid rule in South Africa and mobilize local and worldwide humiliation for the Imperial or colonial Powers who preyed on African and Asian countries inside their borders. However, music was one of the main tools used. Many musicians went too far in their role as societal critics. Okafor and Okafor (2009) captured the situation perfectly when they wrote:

"Like the poet that he (musician) is, he looks critically at what happens in his society - at the conduct and foibles of men, at the persons behind the personalities and creates a song with the objective of social control...in many instances, he is the true voice of

the people for he says what everybody is thinking about." (P.38)

These are all excellent instances of how music may support a viewpoint or a stance. It is reasonable to conclude from the preceding that music influences socio-political trajectories in a significant way.

## Correlation Between Socioeconomic Status and Political Awareness Through Music Education

- **Curricular Integration:** Integrating political awareness components into music curriculums is scrutinized, focusing on lessons, themes, and projects that explicitly address political issues or historical contexts.
- **Teacher Practices:** Investigate the teaching strategies used by music educators to boost students' political awareness, focusing on incorporating discussions, readings, and assignments that encourage critical thinking.
- **Student Perspectives:** Collect and compare student perspectives on the relationship between music education and political awareness (Ayodele, 2016; Adedeji, 2013). Explore how students perceive the incorporation of political themes within music programs and its impact on their awareness and understanding.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** Evaluate the role of music programs in promoting civic engagement through extracurricular activities, such as community performances, collaborations, or outreach initiatives (Ayodele, 2016; Adedeji, 2013).

- **Access to Diverse Perspectives:** Investigate how students from different socioeconomic backgrounds encounter diverse musical genres and cultural perspectives in their music education. Analyze the correlation between exposure to diverse perspectives in music education and students' political awareness (Idowu, 2017; Ayodele, 2016).

### **Findings and Discussion**

The interpretation of Data and Connections between Music Education, Politics, and Civic Engagement.

- **Disparities in resource allocation and program structures** were evident across diverse socioeconomic settings. Schools with higher socioeconomic status tended to have better-funded music programs with more extensive resources.
- **Curricular Variations:** Variations in curricular diversity were observed, with schools in higher-income settings often offering a broader range of musical genres and cultural influences. This diversity was limited in lower-income settings, impacting students' exposure to diverse musical perspectives.
- **Community Engagement Impact:** Community integration played a crucial role, with higher community involvement positively influencing the sustainability and support for music programs. Schools with active community participation

- **Parental Involvement and Influence:** Examine the role of parental involvement in music education and its impact on students' political awareness. Investigate whether students from varying socioeconomic backgrounds experience differences in parental encouragement and support for politically oriented musical learning (Ayodele, 2016; Adedeji, 2013).

demonstrated more robust music education initiatives.

- **Political Awareness Components:** The integration of political awareness components within music education varied. Schools that consciously incorporated political themes into their curriculum positively correlated with heightened political awareness among students.
- **Teacher Practices and Student Perspectives:** The teaching strategies employed by educators influenced students' perspectives on the intersection of music education, politics, and civic engagement. Students who reported engaging in discussions about political and social issues within their music classes demonstrated higher levels of political awareness.
- **Civic Engagement Outcomes:** Extracurricular activities within music programs played a vital role in fostering civic engagement. Schools with well-established extracurricular music initiatives reported higher student involvement in community service and civic activities.



## **Implications for Policy and Practice in Music**

**Addressing Resource Disparities:** Policymakers should focus on addressing resource disparities in music education, ensuring that schools in lower socioeconomic settings receive adequate funding and support. Implementing equitable resource allocation can contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive music education experience.

**Curricular Development:** Education policies should encourage the development of diverse and inclusive music curricula that reflect the community's cultural richness. This can be achieved by incorporating local music traditions and various musical genres to broaden students' cultural and political perspectives.

**Community Engagement Initiatives:** Recognizing the positive impact of community engagement, educational policies should support initiatives that foster collaboration between schools, communities, and local organizations. Encouraging community participation in music education programs can enhance their sustainability and effectiveness.

**Professional Development for Educators:** Policies should prioritize professional development opportunities for music educators, emphasizing strategies to integrate political awareness components into music education. This may involve workshops, training programs, and resources that empower educators to enhance students' civic engagement through music.

**Promoting Extracurricular Activities:** Schools and policymakers should recognize the value of extracurricular activities within music programs. Creating a supportive environment for community performances,

collaborations, and outreach initiatives can contribute to developing students' civic engagement skills and a sense of social responsibility.

## **In Conclusion**

The study provides a comprehensive overview of the study's findings. The study reveals a significant impact of socioeconomic factors on civic engagement, highlighting structural disparities in music programs, curricular diversity, and the influence of community engagement on program sustainability. Integrating political awareness components in music education also varies, affecting students' perspectives and outcomes. Future Research on the intersection of music education, politics, and civic engagement is crucial. Longitudinal studies can provide insights into the long-term impact of music education on political awareness and civic engagement. Global comparative analysis can help understand the universal and context-specific relationship between music education, politics, and civic engagement in different cultural and national contexts.

## **Recommendations**

Encourage the development of innovative curricular approaches that explicitly integrate political and social issues within music education. This can include creating modules, projects, or lessons exploring the intersection of music and politics.

Establish professional development programs for music educators focused on enhancing their ability to incorporate political awareness components into their teaching. Workshops, seminars, and collaborative initiatives can empower educators to navigate these interdisciplinary connections effectively.

Promote collaboration between music educators and educators in other disciplines, such as social studies or political science. Interdisciplinary projects can give students a more holistic understanding of the connections between music, politics, and civic engagement.

Encourage music programs to initiate community engagement projects that involve students in addressing local social and political issues through music. This could include performances, awareness campaigns,

or collaborations with community organizations.

Promote collaboration between music policymakers and educators towards improving the impact of music education on political awareness and civic engagement, thereby promoting a more equitable and enriching educational experience for students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. This would lead to a more inclusive and effective education system.

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