

FEMALE STUDENTS' DISINTEREST IN LEARNING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS: THE NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

OKEKE, IKEDIMMA NWABUFO (PhD)
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC, NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA
in.okeke@unizik.edu.ng
+23480838562309

ABSTRACT

Undergraduate students of music are required to master one orchestral musical instrument as a prerequisite for graduating irrespective of gender, culture, orientation, or personal conviction but engaging majority of the female students to learn or master any musical instrument has remained a persistent problem. The lecturers and several students of the Department were interviewed over the span of four academic sessions (2015-2019) with the aim of soliciting for their responses regarding the problem. Findings traced the root of the disinterest to the prevalent 'active/dominant' and 'passive/submissive' roles assigned to the males and females respectively by the society; women as the 'weaker sex syndrome', forced admission, lack of motivation from instrument tutors, female gender idiosyncrasies, social media addiction, lack of role modelling from the female lecturers, etc. These 'assigned roles' and 'weaker sex syndrome' with the concomitant bias are manifest in career choices, commerce, business, marriage, and also music where the womenfolk easily accept docile roles. In most ensembles, females are predominantly the dancers while the males take up instrumentation. This paper therefore has sought for the solution to the indifference as it affects female students in learning and mastering musical instruments. Giving the female students orientation towards unlearning this disinterest and motivating them towards a fulfilling instrumental musical experience in the University are amongst the recommendations of the paper.

keywords: female music students, disinterest, mastering musical instruments, assigned roles, weaker sex syndrome

Introduction

The gains of mastering a musical instrument are inexhaustible. More so, is the fulfilment that comes from enthralling and entertaining people with the sound of music effusing from one's musical instrument. Okeke (2015), highlights some of the gains of playing musical instruments:

Among the proven gains of participating in instrumental/orchestral music are: discipline, Aesthetic fulfilment, Cognitive and psycho-motor enhancement, self-confidence, sense of belonging, social/peer recognition and relevance for accomplishments as performers, transfer of training/experience to other musical or life challenges, means of economic sustenance, group co-operation, career opportunities, etc.(Pg.6).

The powers of musical instruments have also been explored and exploited throughout cultures across the world. Kamien (1986) intimates that:

Instruments provide entertainment and accompany singing, dancing, religious rites, and drama. But they have served other functions, too. In some cultures, instruments are thought to have magic powers. Bells are worn to guard against harm, and rattles are witch doctors' tools. In parts of Africa, drums are so sacred that religious rites are not performed without them...(Pg.13).

Mastering a musical instrument is one of the marks of an educated or accomplished person right from the Renaissance era even to the post-modern era. Kamien(1986) also reports that:

Musical instruments have even been status symbols. During the nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries, the piano was a fixture in any home that aspired to be middle class. “Proper” young ladies were expected to learn the piano as one of many “accomplishments.” Such ideals lost their currency when women began to move more freely in the world (around the time of World war I), and when the radio and phonograph began to replace the piano as a source of home entertainment(Pp.13-15).

The numerous benefits of learning and mastering musical instruments have led educators to incorporate it in the curricula of music studies even from kindergarten. The place of instrumental music from childhood has been clearly captured by Campbell and Scott-Kassner, (2010) thus:

Children’s abilities to play musical instruments are closely related to their physical developments. An example of this relationship might be seen in the playing of maracas or gourd rattles found in much African and Latin American music. Infants in their fourth and fifth months master the task of grasping toys and other objects, including their own baby rattles, and are already on their way to making music. By the time children are three years old, they have usually developed the muscle control that goes with playing and silencing the rattle at will.... The pedagogy of Shinichi Suzuki has been widely recognized for the manner in which it develops listening skills and performance techniques at early stage (Pg.192).

Instrumental music pedagogy is also sustainable through the primary, secondary, and tertiary tiers of learning as part of the general music education which some schools and tertiary institutions have been doing in Nigeria for quite some time now. But one recurrent problem in this lofty endeavour is that female undergraduate students have taken an apathetic stance towards learning musical instruments hence the crux of this paper.

Statement of problems

Music Departments of higher institutions of learning usually set out, as part of their goals, to provide holistic formal music education for their students as embodied in the curriculum of studies. The Department of music, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka has, since inception, been actively engaging all her students in learning and mastering musical instruments from year one to final year and even to postgraduate levels. Presently the Department has reviewed its curriculum of music studies in tandem with the National University’s Commission proposed curricula review called Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS) in which the mastery of musical instruments is one of the specialties.

The problem with these lofty ideals is that majority of the female students have developed a negative attitude towards learning musical instruments even though it is a prerequisite for graduating. There is a pervading fright for playing musical instruments amongst them. Some perceive it as unfeminine and unwomanly to carry musical instruments around to practice. The perception that the musical role of the female folk is domiciled in singing and dancing to the instrumentation of the males is a serious issue. So many of the female students admitted to study music have dropped out at the instance of encountering musical instruments. It has been a usual scenario to witness female students crying during practical exams which usually involve playing musical instruments. Since mastering a musical instrument is part of the graduation criteria, how then can these female students graduate without recourse to their musical instruments? If they ever graduate without mastering a musical instrument, how relevant would they be in the society as musicologists after graduating? Or should the Department drop instrumental studies just to suit the sentiments of some of the female students who have developed apathy towards musical instruments? These are the pertinent issues and questions this paper has undertaken to interrogate.

Relevant Literature

Gender issues regarding the learning and playing of musical instruments has caught the attention of so many scholars. The finding that some Western orchestral instruments attract gender bias is consistent with the results from the work of Hal (2009). He sought to examine gender associations across three decades to determine if changes in the sex stereotyping of musical instruments has occurred. He also investigated difference in sex-by-instruments distribution and found out that girls play predominantly flutes, violins, and clarinets, and most boys play drums, trumpets and trombones. Also, there were some evidences that in band settings, girls were likely to play non-conforming gender instruments than were boys.

Interestingly, the finding of the cited study reveals societal environment as a pertinent factor in gender associations towards musical instruments. The research was carried out in a community where little or no ‘role assignments’, or gender restrictions are placed on the female folk, Columbia, which is a suburb of the town of Washington in England. Female students boldly making choices of musical instruments to learn is a manifestation of liberation from cultural restrictions and shackles placed on the female folk in several societies of the world. Obviously cultural practices affect education.

In a related study, O’Neill and Boultona (2009) found in their study of the extent to which boys’ and girls’ preferences are based on the gender stereotyped associations that girls showed a significant stronger preference for piano, flute and violin than boys, whereas boys expressed a stronger preference for the guitar, drums and trumpet than girls. The study found further from the log-linear analyses that boys and girls have similar ideas about which instruments should be played by members of each sex.

Gender restrictions pervading most African cultures where females are barred from certain societal positions and aspirations have come to bear heavily on learning, particularly on the learning of musical instruments. That ‘the woman belongs to the man’ (property of the man); that ‘the place of the woman is at home and in the kitchen’, ‘bearing and nurturing children at the service of the man’ are negative notions and conditionings that have stuck on the psyche of most African females, thereby incubating and breeding apathy towards virtually every aspiration in life.

Individual Performance Studies(IPS)

Individual Performance Studies(IPS) is a series of practical studies designed to guide the students through the skills of musical performance. It integrates training and practices in vocal performance, composing and arranging musical works for performance, and mastering a musical instrument. The series is designed to run from first year through final year with the idea that a music graduate should be able to perform music with ease wherever they find themselves. This is in tandem with the ethos of holistic music education as embedded in the curricula of music education studies. Mbanugo(2006:41) observes, “previous investigations have noted that the Nigerian populace only understands music as a practical phenomenon. Consequently, high practical music competence is expected of the products of Nigerian music education programmes”.

Mbanugo (2006) explaining the ethos of IPS as pursued by the Music Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka averred that:

The Music Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka has the avowed objective of providing her students with adequate knowledge, skill and understanding of music. To the effect of achieving this, a major course titled Individual Performance Studies(IPS) is offered. The course is progressively graded in accordance with academic level and growth, and is compulsorily offered every semester throughout the duration of each

academic programme: Diploma, Degree, and Masters. The study materials are packaged in modules per semester (Pg. 43).

Some of the musical instruments involved are, but not limited to the, piano-keyboard, guitar, violin, trumpet, trombone, saxophone, cornet, euphonium, cello, double bass, tuba etc. The description of first year first semester IPS course Mus143 runs thus: “Progressive individual lessons on primary instruments-keyboard and voice.... Emphasis is on African and Western classical pieces, contemporary songs, exercises for instruments of choice and voice” (Department of Music Handbook, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, 2022).

The ideals of IPS can never be overstated as it guides the students through and towards a fulfilling musical experience. More so, students learn skills that would benefit them throughout life such as the skill of playing musical instruments in performance. But these ideals are defeated when students, particularly the female students refuse to get involved in learning these instrument for their IPS. This places the department in dilemma always because when these female students show dispassion towards their instruments they finally fail their IPs exams, and when about eighty percent of them fails on account of IPS, it puts the department in bad light because the evaluation of the IPS exercise would show it is not successful.

Mbanugo (2006) further bemoaned the state of IPS in the Department despite the efforts to train the students holistically:

The IPS approach as practiced in the Department of Music, Nnamdi azikiwe University, Awka, has a high potential for producing competent practical musicians who may be better able to fill some of the vacuums in Nigerian music education. However, some observed loop-holes in the approach must be addressed: lack of enough practice by students, lack of enough and adequately furnished practice cubicles for students, proper monitoring of supervisor-student contacts, and development of valid and reliable evaluation instruments for performances of students in IPS (Pg.51).

This report reveals that even when every other conditions for successful learning are met, if students do not practice, the ideals of the IPS programme becomes futile. This indifference to practice has also been found to be common amongst the female students because of the various youthful exuberances and distractions surrounding them.

One of the observations made in the course of this research is that majority of these female students develop performance anxiety during IPS exams because of the fright of appearing before a panel of adjudicators to perform. Several cases of their weeping before the panel of music lecturers who serve as adjudicators to these IPs exams abound. In 2020, the writer witnessed the incident of a female student in first year who had panic attack and almost died of asphyxiation save for being rushed to the hospital without delay. The attack came immediately it was her turn to play the piano-keyboard in one of the practical exams.

This situation usually deteriorates into many of the female students leaving the music department in to other available disciplines to avoid encountering musical instruments again. This development was captured by Okeke(2023) in what he called ‘The Migratory Syndrome.’

The increasing disinterest for music has grown to a worrisome dimension, creating a situation where twenty percent of second year music students request to leave the department for other departments every session. It has even become a tradition for many of them to migrate to theatre and film studies department which is a sister and closer department to music in the same faculty and sharing similar curricula with regards to performance. This poses some existential threats to music and puts the department under

tremendous pressure to survive each session: losing about twenty percent of students to a sister department every year is quite disturbing knowing that the existence and survival of departments are tied to their student population ratio. The problem with the migratory syndrome exhibited by students is that those ‘migratory students’ have never excelled nor demonstrated competency in their new departments. This reveals that the issue is not about changing departments but the preparedness of the student to study. This revelation also absolves the department of music of some alleged educational maladjustments but rather points to the fact that no discipline is too hard nor easy; what the learner requires is focus and hard work (Pg.10).

These are some of the various challenges and existential threats bedeviling the department for years. If these students continue to leave the department, it becomes difficult to sustain music studies in the department. More so, the hope of sustaining music education by the coming generations becomes glaringly bleak.

“Male versus female Musical instruments”

Some scholars have attempted to group some musical instruments as ‘male’ such as drums, saxophone, trumpet and trombones while flute, violin, clarinet and cello are considered ‘female’ musical instruments. The problem with this taxonomy is the missing empirical criteria that supports the grouping. Apparently it is based on subjective perception of the seeming relative complexity of some musical instruments over others. Crowe (2010:2) studied sex-stereotyping of instruments (the perception that certain instruments are more ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ than others) and found out that “there is a strong preference of flute and clarinet and a strong avoidance of tuba for females, and a moderate to strong preference of trumpet and percussion and a strong avoidance of flute for males.”

Although some instruments are more tasking and demanding than others for instance, the trumpet. The trumpet demands strong lung power to push air streams from the lungs through the mouth and finally to the instrument like every other blown musical instruments. But this does not in any way suggest that it is hard for females to learn. There are accomplished female trumpet, tuba, and even euphonium players around the world.

In another interesting study, Okeke(2020) found out that the haphazard assigning of musical instruments to learners without recourse to adaptability checks to ascertain if the learner can naturally adapt to the instrument is one of the major causes of frustrations people encounter in learning musical instruments:

...the potentiality to excel in a given musical instrument is traceable to the individual’s adaptive features. That is, the capability to adapt successfully to the learning and mastery of a given musical instrument is native to the individual. Because every musical instrument poses peculiar challenges in learning, it becomes necessary for the learner to be prepared for such peculiar demands and to choose the musical instrument/s that he or she can naturally adapt to. The piano demands long, thin, and strong fingers and learners with shallow and short breaths, under-bite, and cleft tongue should be guided away from the brasses and woodwinds because of their demands for good breathing, tonguing, and embouchure (Pg.86).

The implication of this is that the musical instrument teacher must as a matter of necessity identify the choice of his/her student in Western orchestral musical instrument first before the assignment to the students followed by a general physical check, drill or adaptability test to ascertain the student’s compatibility with the chosen instrument. This would facilitate quick and easy learning of the musical instrument by the student.

The problem of ‘societal gender role assignment’

Stark (2000:617) defines role as “a set of expectations governing the behaviour of persons holding a particular position in society; a set of norms that defines how persons in a particular position should behave”. Goffman (1986) in Stark (2000) points out regarding social roles as it affects individuals in society that:

...while roles do greatly shape our behaviour, we rarely act only according to the script. Perhaps there are times when an individual does march up and down like a wooden soldier, tightly rolled up in a particular role. But most of the time we are not wholly confined by a role. Instead, we constantly display glimpses of ourselves, or the individual “behind” or “inside” the role (pg.156).

The point averred by Goffman in Stark above is that there is a social placing of everyone to respective roles of operation either as children, parents, fathers, mothers, mayor, etc. by the society. The notion of being ‘confined by a role’ relates to the adherence to the norms, behaviour and the expectations of a given role. It is already stipulated and encoded within the ethics and etiquettes of a given society what are expected of the members as behaviour with regards to their age, sex, education, and experience. In some societies, women are not expected to share the same roles, level of education, careers, and aspirations with the men. Generally, across several societies in the world, women are relegated to the background in almost all endeavours. They have been conditioned, as it were, to believe that they are inferior to men and this explains why the ratio of men to women in leadership, positions, politics, business, entrepreneurship, etc. is lopsided.

The learning of musical instruments has been put in perspective in this study and evidences from observation and data garnered from interviews granted to the students show that the influence of societal role assignment to the female folk is one of the major causes of their reluctance to learning musical instruments which they presume is basically the domain of males.

Idiosyncrasies of the female Gender

Investigations in the course of this study observed that female undergraduate music students, by virtue of their nature, gender, age, environment, and pop culture surrounding them, find it very difficult to concentrate in their studies in the university. The stages of puberty, adolescence, and the pluming into adulthood are usually highly critical stages for the female gender because of the rapid transformations in sexuality, maturity, self-discovery, biological and hormonal changes, psychological turbulence, peer pressure, etc. which push them into certain idiosyncrasies that are inimical to learning.

Women go through recurrent biological and hormonal transformations periodically which disrupt their emotional, psychological, and cognitive balance. This natural phenomenon adversely affects them in so many complicated ways that are not so comprehensible even to them. One needs some appreciable level of psychological, biological, emotional, and mental balance before engaging in any kind of learning, how much more, the learning of musical instruments. Musical instrument instructors should take cognizance of this fact concerning the female students and employ tact and forbearance so that instrument learning sessions would not be abhorred particularly if the given learner is in some kind of emotional turmoil.

Observations from the study also showed that the female youthful exuberance emanating from the pluming beauty of adolescence, attractiveness to the male students, sexual appeal, and pride of blossoming physical features hardly allow these female students to concentrate on their studies as they are always with their phones taking selfies and posting even while in class. Learning requires concentration and it has become difficult for several of them to remain focused with all

the distractions emanating from their youthfulness.

The peer pressure and pop-culture of the university environment has also impeded heavily on their active engagement with their musical instruments. Investigations from the research further revealed that eighty percent of the female music students are active on social media with multiple accounts on Facebook, WhatsApp, Tik-tok, Instagram, Tweeter, YouTube, and currently on **Threads**, which is a trending social media application launched in July, 2023, with over three hundred million active subscribers (Wikipedia, 2023).

Social media platforms deliver communication, integration, educational, social, business, health, and several other benefits but its drawback of addiction has become a problem particularly in education where youths get glued to these platforms at the expense of their studies. Sixty percent of the female music students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University were found to be obsessed with their social media accounts where they get involved in several beauty shows, movies, skits, and comedies etc., without regards to their studies.

Okeke (2023) regretted this development:

The social media is currently a bizarre world of its own now with the concomitant pop culture, showmanship, body positivity, post-modern ideologies, individualism, etc. It bears such enormous influence on the youths that it has become a problem for them to concentrate on any other thing. No student can stay one minute without their android phones which enables them to get glued to social media the whole of the day eating up their productive hours. Students would rather sleep on Facebook, Instagram, Tik-Tok, WhatsApp, snapchat, etc., than engage in their studies (Pg.11).

The female students have been found to be culprits of this struggle where they waste precious hours on snapchats instead of engaging meaningfully on their instruments.

The 'Weaker sex' Syndrome

It is not the focus of this paper to join issues with the age long controversy of 'gender disparity' even though current research findings showed that women are stronger than men when it comes to longevity, surviving illness and coping with trauma(Saini,2017). The interest of the present study is that the tag 'women as the weaker sex' has stuck in the minds of most societies, women, and female teenagers creating a mind-set that approaches several tasks and endeavour with indifference. Interactions with the female students of the Nnamdi azikiwe University over the span of this research have revealed their insistence on avoiding some practical involvements in the Department regarding music performance such as conveying and setting musical equipment, performing musical instruments on stage, playing lead roles in ensemble groups, etc. Their explanation to this behaviour is that 'they do not have the strength to sustain all that'.

Although women should be guided away from heavily tasking engagements because of their apparent natural softness and tenderness with regards to physical strength, but there is nothing physically so tasking in performing in an ensemble as the lead instrumentalist. But they rather prefer to join from the background as accompanists, dancers, and sometimes working behind the scenes. This problem syndrome emanated from the notion of 'women as weaker sex'.

The issue of 'critical period' in learning

The notion of the 'critical period' as observed by Piaget was found to be a contributing factor to female students' indifference to musical instruments in school. Okeke(2019) in an empirical study of Nigerian primary, secondary, and undergraduate students of music reveals that:

Piaget's notion of the 'critical period' posits that every normal person is imbued with the potentiality of forming, organizing, processing, and interpreting concepts starting from infancy through sensitive stages of their development (0-11yrs) and beyond this 'sensitive or critical' stage, cognitive development could be seriously hampered. Piaget's

discovery, doubtless, has immensely influenced modern educational ideology, policy. Formal education and curricula are now designed to commence as early as possible and to pace such factors as age, mental capability, and adaptability of the learner. Unfortunately, the Nigerian situation is such that most learners become formally involved in music when they must have passed through primary or secondary schools...evidence of the critical period was discovered as a major cause of their musical challenges. In fact, most students who enrol for music in the Department of Music of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka had no music education in their primary nor secondary schools. Many also have enrolled for music as a last resort to admission problems and thus complicating issues for both the learner and the teacher(Pg.45).

This finding raised several grave implications, one of them is that learning should commence as early as possible in order to avail the opportunity of the 'sensitive' or 'critical period'. Starting to learn music at the university level is problematic because of the basic foundations of the subject which were supposed to have been laid in the learner from cradle. This portends even more danger for learning musical instruments which requires serious grasp with the basics of music such as pitch, rhythm, melody, tuning, sight reading, etc. How then does one cope with the rudiments? How could the female students navigate through this basic challenge to learn their instruments?

The problem of 'forced admission'

Most of the students admitted to study music in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka came in by 'default' arrangement and not by 'design' and this has created several problems both for the students and the lecturers. By 'default' means that they found themselves in the department by some kind of admission happenstance going on in Nigerian universities now. By 'design' means personal desire and request to study music. The reasons behind these 'forced admissions' is traceable to the problem of extinction which several disciplines are facing now and then in a bid to survive, students who have not been to qualify to study their desired courses are pushed to the departments that are in dire need of students to survive. Okeke(2023) captures this problem clearly:

The admission process in Nigerian Universities has been operating on a faulty philosophy for long: that 'any candidate who falls below the benchmark of their choice course can study any other available course'. This ideology has created too many problems for the university education system. Because the most sought after courses like medicine, law, pharmacy and Engineering require relatively very high cut off marks, unsuccessful candidates veer into other available courses out of frustration. The university management, in a bid to mop up the fall out of unsuccessful students in their choice courses, resort to foisting every other courses on the unfortunate students thereby creating more confusion. Music Department, for instance, receives more students who were forced to study music than those who actually applied for music. So we have the situation of students who were admitted into the department by 'default' and those who were admitted by 'design'. The popular slogan amongst the 'default' students of music is that, 'music chose them' (pg.10).

It is very challenging to engage and guide students with this kind of issues into successful learning.

The problem of motivation

The bulk of students' response through questionnaire and interviews showed that motivation from the lecturers is seriously undermined. Sixty percent 60% of the interviewed students mentioned that they hardly have appointments with their respective instrument tutors because majority of the tutors are hardly available for that. Observation made in the course of this research shows

that students are assigned to lecturers for instrumental and general performance coaching called Individual performance studies(IPS) but most of the lecturers have not been responsive to this procedure.

Lingering societal bias to female musicians

There is another discovered problem which has been impeding female students' passion for musical instruments in the Department and that is societal spite on female musicians. Besides confining women to submissive roles, the typical African society also has gone further in frowning at the idea of women musicians, perceiving them as wayward. The general understanding is that a woman should be at home attending to domestic issues rather 'wandering' with music shows. Although several women musicians have broken this shackle and forged a niche for themselves in the world of music such as Miriam Makeba, Brenda Fassie, Theresa Onuorah, Onyeka Onwenu, etc; the rest of the other musically gifted women have never been able to break through this societal barrier and some others have died and buried with their musical talents. If there is no formidable and conducive platform for a fruiting and fruitful instrumental musical experience after graduating, why should the female music students ever venture into learning any instrument at all? Encouraging young girls to learn musical instruments in a clime shackled by this kind of embargo is futile because the line is already drawn against their aspirations in life.

'Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard' (CCMAS)

'Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard' in the Nigerian University System (2022), CCMAS. CCAMS was introduced to reinvigorate and reposition Nigerian University education towards global relevance. All disciplines in the University have restructured their curricula to capture the ideals of CCMAS. The philosophy of CCMAS is succinctly captured here:

In keeping with its mandate of making university education in Nigeria more responsive to the needs of the society, the National Universities Commission commenced the journey to restructure the BMAS in 2018, introducing in its place, the **Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS)**, to reflect the 21st Century realities, in the existing and new disciplines and programmes in the Nigerian University System (pg.9).

Music is not exempt from the development, as the new curriculum of music studies in the university has been designed by music experts in the Department to capture these realities encapsulated in CCMAS. The main attraction in the new curricula is that some courses have been expunged, some updated, and some merged with others, while several new courses have been introduced as specialties such as Music business, Music Pedagogy, Historical Musicology, Composition and Theory, Ethnomusicology, Music Performance(voice/instrument), Studio music technology, Music therapy, Church music, Music in Special Education, etc.

The new curriculum has raised the hope of students who desire to specialize in respective areas of music. But the pertinent issue is that these areas of specialty are electives, the core courses such Individual Performance studies(IPS) which still involves the learning and mastery of musical instruments has not been tampered with because of its indispensability in holistic music education.

Recommendations

Female music students' indifference towards learning musical instruments raised in this paper is a serious issue that requires immediate attention in order to revamp music learning in the University and schools which is presently a threatened species. The following recommendations are proffered towards a solution to the problem:

- Proper orientation should be given to the students from first year on the merits of instrumental music education.
- The instrument tutors should employ motivation in drawing the students closer to their musical instruments
- Societal gender role assignment should be deconstructed to allow women aspire for and pursue loftier endeavors in society.
- The stereotyping of musical instruments as ‘male’ and female’ should be dropped because it creates and fuels the problem of female students’ bias for musical instruments.
- The ‘weaker sex syndrome’ should be erased from the mindset of the female students by demonstrating to them that women are not musically weaker than men through hosting music concerts with accomplished women musicians in the society as star performers.
- Students should not be forced into the Department of music, rather let their admission be by personal design and not by default
- Well-equipped and conducive practice rooms should be provided in the music department by the government so as to foster desire for regular practice by students.
- Female lecturers in the Department should rise to the clarion call with their musical instruments in performance as role models to the female music students.
- The female music students’ addiction to social media with their phones should be curbed by prohibiting the use of phones during lectures, practice, and rehearsal hours.

Conclusion

Several factors contributing to Nnamdi Azikiwe University female music students’ disinterest towards the learning of musical instruments were highlighted in this paper. Among the causes of the disinterest towards musical instruments discovered in the study are the ‘weaker sex syndrome’, lack of motivation from instrument tutors, female teenager/adolescence idiosyncrasies, addiction to social media, and societal gender role assignment. It was recommended that admission into the music Department should be by design and not by default; the female music lecturers should rise to duty with their musical instruments in performances as role models to the female students; government should provide instrument practice rooms which are well-equipped and conducive for learning and practicing musical instruments; musical instrument pedagogy should not be scrapped to appease the indifference manifested by most of the female students because that would undermine the holistic music education pursued in the Music Department.

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