

# FEMINIZATION OF THE TEACHING CORPS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF SIX SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE (2007-2023)

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## **Abstract**

This paper examined the unprecedented predominance of women in the teaching profession known as the 'feminization of the teaching corps' and how it has affected music over the span of sixteen years in primary and secondary schools of Anambra state, Nigeria. Six schools were studied which comprised of four primary and two secondary schools within Onitsha metropolis of Anambra state. Data was sourced through interviews, questionnaires, and participant observations by the authors as music teachers in the respective schools. Findings showed that the taking over of the teaching profession by women has affected music studies in schools adversely due to the complicated and physically demanding nature of music studies which cannot be handled effectively by only the women. Such areas of musicology as raising a school parade band, raising a school orchestra, and the teaching of physically demanding musical instruments such as the trumpet, trombone, tuba, etc., have seriously being diminished. The paper advocates that a situation of emergency be declared in schools regarding music in order to resuscitate music. Also incentives should be engaged by government and schools to make the teaching profession lucrative in order to attract and sustain male music teachers in schools.

## **Introduction**

The need for a balance in the ratio of men and women in the teaching corps is pertinent towards a holistic and balanced education in schools. Music has suffered and survived the existential threat amid the so called subjects like English, mathematics, biology, etc. Music as a subject has also continued to strive for survival in a world that is scientifically and technologically driven. The clamour and glamour of the so called 'professional courses' such as medicine, nursing, pharmacy, engineering, computer science, Information technology, etc., have also driven music away, as it were, from the chart of trending courses and professions. The Nigerian society has also viewed music as an unserious and untoward subject of study and therefore has relegated it to the background for decades as no parent gets excited over their ward studying music in the university. The lifestyle

of most popular musicians around the world has also dealt a detrimental blow on the recuperating image of music with the concomitant drug abuse, illicit sex, violence, gansterism and brigandage, decadent lyrics, pervasive music, and sexually suggestive dance moves, etc.

When it appeared that music would survive these debilitating challenges, the problem of 'feminization of the teaching corps' took over. The increasing number of male teachers dropping out of the teaching profession in schools has become a serious concern not only to the so called core subjects but also to music. The ratio of men to women in the primary and secondary schools has been found to be 1:10 and this is worrisome due to the loss of equilibrium in manpower distribution.

#### **Review of pertinent concepts**

- **Feminization of the Teaching corps**

Feminization of the teaching corps refers to the predominance of the female folk in the teaching profession. This is evident in every school as male teachers have completely abandoned the teaching profession in pursuit of more lucrative jobs, ventures, and business.

- **Masculinization of the teaching corps**

This is the opposite of the other. This is the predominance of the teaching profession by the male folk. This concept is rarely observed now particularly with the growing pressure on men for better paying jobs around the world to shoulder responsibilities.

#### **Problem of study**

The ratio of women to men in the teaching corps of Anambra state primary school system has been found to be 10:1. This is problematic owing to the loss of the psychological balance and equilibrium that is achieved and sustained when the two genders are actively represented and distributed in the school workforce. The assurance and psychological balance pupils receive in a gender balanced school have been also lost. Certain subjects that are usually popular with the male teachers such as chemistry, physics, mathematics, further mathematics, health and physical education, and music have become jeopardized. Various extra curricula areas and trainings that require the attention of male teachers such as football, basketball, etc., have also become moribund in schools. Discipline in schools has now become problematic because pupils and students have found ways to resist the authority of female teachers. Music in schools has seriously suffered because of the predominance of the female folk. Some aspects of music training in schools are better handled by the men folk because of the high physical strength demanded such as band training, orchestra, and the playing of certain strenuous musical instruments such the trumpet, tuba, saxophone, bugle, drums, trombone, etc.

#### **Scholarly views on the issue of feminization of the teaching corps**

The issue of feminization of the teaching corps has attracted the interest of many scholars around the world with several contrasting views. Graffiths (2006) considers the effect of feminization on the practices of education a blessing and argues that:

...concerns about increasing number of women teachers are misplaced... masculine practices have a hegemonic form while feminized practices have developed in resistance to these, and ...hegemonic masculinity, not feminization, is the problem because it drives out diversity... the leaky, viscous practices of teaching would benefit from the increased diversity and decreased social stratification feminization brings to the profession(pg.1).

Griffiths' position is that the feminization of the teaching practice is not a problem but a good development which counters the problems created by the masculinization of the same corps. According to her 'hegemonic masculinity is the problem because it drives out diversity.' This position is salient in situations and educational environments where there still exist some male folks in teaching. Some parts of the world like Asia and Europe still have a commendable percentage of males in the teaching practice but presently in Africa, and in Nigeria our case study, the men have abandoned the teaching profession to the women in pursuit of better opportunities in business, trade, and other lucrative jobs. In a related study, Morgan (2023) worries that the disparity between female and male artists in the field of musical theatre is still in favour of men even till date. She even suggests that enough women have not been represented in the workforce around the world:

Approximately sixty years after the women's rights movement in America began that sparked debate on equal rights for women, especially in the workplace, there is still a distinguishable gap in the number of women in professional leadership in the theatre industry, and the number of men. There is also a distinguishable pay gap between the salaries of women and men. Some studies may link this to the time that the average woman takes away from work for caregiving (either children or otherwise) and others link this to the lack of opportunities for women to ascend to leadership throughout training as well as early levels of career(pg.1).

The position of the cited scholars above reveals a major underlying cause of the feminization of the teaching corps and that is the clamour for equity by women in a world dominated by men, as it were. Women in a bid for equity with men, have flooded the teaching corps and this has created a problem which this paper interrogates. It appears also that the men folk in a bid to strike a balance between the economic distress pervading the entire globe and the demands of survival, has abandoned the teaching field for women.

Therefore, these two factors: the striving for equity by the female folk with the male folk and the pursuit of greener pastures by the men folk; appear to have reshaped the teaching corps particularly at the primary /secondary school levels being studied.

**The implications for music at the primary/secondary school levels**

Four primary schools( Ezechima primary school, Onitsha; United Primary school, Nkpor; Springfield Academy, Onitsha; and Mount Olive Primary school Onitsha) and two secondary schools(Dennis Memorial Grammar School, Onitsha; and Supreme Knowledge Comprehensive Schools , Nkpor) in Anambra state were sampled and studied within the span of fifteen years (2007-2023) with the researchers actively engaged in the schools as music teachers and researchers and the following results were found:

- Very few schools offer music as a subject in the schools and the few that teach music are mostly private schools.
- Public schools have serious difficulty in employing music teachers because of the dearth of qualified music teachers
- The cost of maintaining a music program in the public schools is not sustainable because of the high cost of musical instruments and government's unwillingness towards sponsorship
- One of the public schools studied, United primary school Nkpor, has never had a music program since the inception of the school and the pupils were overwhelmed by the sight of piano-keyboard, harmonica, and recorders brought in to the school for the field work by the researchers.
- The few private schools that teach within Onitsha metropolis such as supreme knowledge Comprehensive schools, Nkpor-Agu; Mount Olive school, G.R.A., Onitsha, and Springfield Academy, G.R.A., Onitsha have the major challenge of retaining the few male music teachers available in the midst of thronging female staff employed for other subject areas.
- Between 2007 to date only very few male music teachers (Mr. kingdavid , Pst. Ikedi Okeke, and a few others) have been actively involved in music teaching in the primary and secondary schools within Onitsha metropolis with outstanding results.
- Few active male music teachers cannot sustain the art in the entire metropolis. How much more the entire state?
- The study revealed that amongst the numerous female teachers that applied for teaching in the schools studied only about 0.5% applied to teach music.
- Few schools that managed to source for female music teachers encountered the peculiar challenge of teaching and learning of musical instruments such as keyboard, drums, guitar, violin, recorder, flute, *Oja*, trumpet, saxophone, etc., because the female music teachers were only interested in singing which they felt more comfortable with.
- Although the female music teachers performed well in classroom rudimentary music teaching, but after sometime the entire music program collapsed because theory alone does not sustain the musical art
- The whole issue has resulted in serious difficulty in sustaining music in schools

### **The Issue of Gender Stereotyping in musicology**

Gender Stereotyping- the association of particular conceptions to particular genders- exists in virtually all human endeavors with no exception to music. Gender stereotyping manifests in music with regards to musical roles such as who leads or plays what roles in a musical group, choice of musical instruments, voice parts, career opportunities, and superiority syndrome. Gender stereotype in music has its advantages and disadvantages, for instance, the female gender naturally takes up the vocal roles of soprano and alto.

But one of the draw backs is manifest in choosing musical instruments where some instruments are tagged 'female instruments' while some others are tagged 'male instruments'. In a related development, 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.

Okeke (2023:79) clarified the problem emanating from this gender stereotyping regarding musical instruments: "The finding that some Western orchestral musical instruments generate some gender bias places the responsibility on the instrumental teachers to disabuse the minds of the students from such notions as 'feminine' or 'masculine' instruments".

In as much as the argument to regard and play all musical instruments without bias is tenable, however, there are still some issues regarding certain musical instruments and their suitability with the female folk with regards to their size, weight, technicalities of playing, and the demanding physical strength involved. Such instruments like the trumpet, cornet, saxophone, trombone, tuba, euphonium, etc., are physical too demanding for the female folks to easily adapt to. This reality has heavily impacted on music studies in schools so much that music studies has been reduced to school assembly and class singing only.

### **Present realities in schools**

School music studies in schools in Anambra state schools has been in a deplorable state despite concerted calls and efforts by scholars and stakeholders towards its resuscitation (Aninwene,2009; Ekwueme,2009; Mbanugo,2005; Okeke, 2023; Onyiuke,2005).

Worrisome has been the encapsulation of music into Cultural and Creative Arts(CCA), which has given music a relegated status in schools. Most worrisome presently is the complete takeover of the teaching profession by the female folk technically referred to as the feminization of the teaching corps and which is the thrust of this paper. Music, being a special subject, is now taught by classroom teachers or any available teacher in schools. It was observed in the research that classroom teachers just read up the music curriculum as haphazardly embedded in the CCA curriculum and teach as they deem fit. The result is that the intricacies, nuances, and pertinent ramifications of musicology are completely lost. This does not happen in such subject areas as mathematics, English, and the sciences where qualified teachers are usually assigned to those areas.

This has led to the bastardization of music education in schools and this accounts for the non-inclusion of music in most secondary school subjects and non-choice of music for university education amongst secondary school students.

It was also discovered in the study that amongst the plethora of female teachers employed in the primary/secondary schools none or only about 0.01% studied music. Even when a female trained music teacher is found amongst the teeming population of female teachers, the difficulty of attending to the demands of practical music such as choral and instrumental music becomes a problem because most of them are averse to the energy and dynamism of practical music.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this paper discussed from the foregoing, the following recommendations are proffered in order to break the hegemony of the feminization of the teaching corps which has created apparent problems for music studies in schools. The imprisoned status of music under Cultural and creative arts should be broken in order to give music an independent status. Music studies should be made attractive in schools and in the society by music educators, musicologists, and policy makers in education so that more enrollment for music be encouraged. Music units and departments in schools and universities should be properly equipped with gadgets, teaching aids for music, and musical instruments to capture the realities of a sustainable music program. The teaching profession should be generally made lucrative by the government, as a matter of urgency, in order to curb the abandonment of the profession for better paid ventures amongst male teachers.

### **Conclusion**

The problem of the feminization of the teaching corps as it affects music education in primary and secondary schools of Anambra state has been captured in this paper with the idea of finding solution to the problem. The teaching ratio of women to men in Anambra state primary/secondary school system was found to be lopsided to the scale of 10:1 and this ratio portends grave dangers for the survival of music studies in schools. Several aspects of music that require the peculiar attention of male teachers such as the teaching of some physically demanding musical instruments like the trumpet, trombone, tuba, percussions, etc., and raising an orchestra, school band, and parade band have been found to be adversely affected. The situation has continued to worsen as a result of non and very low subscription of male teachers to teaching owing to the global economic downturn and Nigeria's peculiar economic challenges which have forced the men folk into several pursuits for greener pastures.

It was suggested that music educators, musicologists and policy makers in education should work conscientiously towards making music an attractive subject of studies in schools even from the kindergarten so that young learners can discover the numerous benefits of music education. This can be achieved by extricating music from the bundle of Cultural and creative Arts(CCA) so that music can exist as an independent subject. Music departments in schools should be adequately equipped with man power and

paraphernalia for competent music studies. Generally, the teaching corps should be made lucrative to attract potential male teachers in to the system.

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