

**ACQUIRING MUSICAL SKILLS THROUGH PRACTICAL MUSIC EDUCATION: A STUDY OF
SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA**

Joy Ogochukwu Nwobu

Postgraduate Student, Department of Music, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email:ogochukwujoy157@gmail.com

&

Ikedimma Okeke (Phd)

Department of Music, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: in.okeke@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

This study examined how practical music education could engender skill acquisition in children. The idea was borne out of the need to make music more engaging, interesting, and fulfilling to pupils against the backdrop of prevalent disinterest in music in schools occasioned by dysfunctional music education. Eight primary schools in Awka metropolis were studied which included forty pupils and eight music teachers. Primary data for the research were sourced through Questionnaires and interviews. Pertinent issues examined included, the status of music education in some primary schools of Anambra state, and how practical music education could foster musical skills in children. Findings show that music studies as encapsulated in Cultural & Creative Arts(CCA) curriculum for primary schools is deficient, there are not enough music teachers in the primary schools, skills acquired through music can easily be transferred to other beneficial skills later in life. It is recommended that music be extricated from the shackles of CCA in order to place it in proper perspective to foster a fulfilling music experience for children. More music teachers should be employed to curb the threat of extinction of music in primary schools, and finally the curriculum of music studies of primary schools should be restructured to integrate more practical music in order to yield more skill acquisition for children.

Introduction

The concept of skills arises from many disciplines or sub-disciplines. Skill is the distinguishing factor between peers or allies in the same field of endeavor, be it in music, theatre arts, medicine, etc. What separates practitioners in any field is the degree of skills anyone of them has acquired in that specific profession. Skill cannot be harnessed without education. According to Okafor (2005) "Education is designed to equip the individual not only to earn a living but also for life itself, through the encouragement of socially desirable knowledge, attitude and skills". Skill cannot be separated from education as education is the vehicle that propels skill. It cannot be overstated that without skillfulness, no meaningful advancement would have been attained in the world today. Every single invention, every scientific, artistic, sociological and technological breakthrough that has been seen is the product of some level of skill on the part of the individual or individuals involved in its realization. These individuals needed to be educated whether formally or informally to be able to apply this skill. The development of any nation cannot be separated from its educational system. Ibekwe (2009) supported this thus "education is regarded as the key to nation building (p.13).

Skill is a pattern to grasp as far as life and work is concerned. Every human endeavour requires skill. Skill is required for any kind of profession or occupation that exists in our world. A country without a skilled workforce would barely attain its developmental goals and aspirations. No matter how well articulated and well planned a country's policy may be, without an articulate and skilled manpower to realize its objectives, the country is headed for doom. One of the major challenges facing Nigeria as observed by many researchers is the lack of skilled graduates.

From the foregoing, we cannot disconnect skill acquisition as the basis of social, political and economic development of any country. The educational sector is the primary place where skills can be acquired and where there is a failure in this respect, the country's capacity to turn around its socio-economic will be almost impossible. Skill is so obvious that it distinguishes individuals, states, nations from among their contemporaries. Countries that have enjoyed growth and development are countries that have developed the skills and competences of its people. It is on this premise that this paper sought out various ways on how children can acquire musical skills through practical music education. The acquisition of musical skills by children such as singing, composing music, dancing, or playing musical instruments can transform the lives of the young learners and become formidable tools in their hands in transforming the society at large.

Statement of the Problem

It was observed by the researcher that the music curriculum of Nigerian primary schools lacks the element of skill acquisition; i.e. it has no provision for the learning of musical skills. The curricula are mostly based on the theoretical aspect of music and have little or no plan in helping pupils in the acquisition of musical skills. Moreover, the little plan in the curricula for pupils to acquire musical skills is attacked by the problem of teaching strategies. There is little or no understanding about how individual pupils are and how differently they can learn. Teaching of musical skills is done in a particular method which favors pupils that understand the method and leaving pupils that do not understand the method behind. More so, very few primary schools offer music; most of the primary schools that offer music have no musical instrument; and most of the primary schools have Cultural and Creative Arts teachers instead of music teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The general aim of this study is to explore the relevance of music education in skill acquisition for children. To achieve this, the researcher intends to explore the following objectives:

1. Unveil the status of music education in primary schools of Anambra state
2. Reveal the competence of the available music teachers in handling the subject.
3. The scope of the music curriculum in fostering musical skills.
4. Find out ways of sustaining creativity in music education and fostering skill acquisition in children.

The Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this research will impact positively on the primary school music teachers whose responsibility is to teach the pupils practical music, the pupils themselves, educational policy makers, and curriculum planners.

- The pupils should through this study realize the need for them to acquire musical skills that will foster self-expression, self-reliance and creativity.

- This study will create awareness in music teachers on the importance of a child having a musical skill.
- Curriculum planners will gain insight on the various factors involved in curriculum implementation, especially when it involves acquiring musical skills.
- The educational policy makers will see the need for consultation before adopting any educational policy.

Research Questions

These questions guided the research:

1. What is the status of music education in primary schools of Anambra state?
2. How competent are the music teachers in schools?
3. To what extent can music curriculum help to instill creativity in primary schools?
4. In what ways can music education instill creativity and enable skill acquisition in the primary schools?
5. What suggestions can bring solutions to the problems?

The Scope of the Study

This study examined the situation of music education, particularly practical music, in eight (8) primary schools that are offering music in Awka, Awka South Local Government Area at the time of study. The schools that will be covered will include; Grace Court International School Awka, Unizik Nursery/Primary School Awka, Blossom Fount Nursery/Primary School Awka, Ridge Valley Nursery/Primary School Awka, Grand Hermano Nursery/Primary School Awka, Police Children School Awka, Assured Tender Nursery/Primary School Awka, and Handmaids Infant Jesus Nursery/Primary School Awka.

Review of Relevant Literature

Conceptual Framework

Relevant concepts appertaining to this study are outlined and explained in detail in this section.

Skill

Skill is the ability to do something well, usually gained through training or experience (Encarta Dictionaries, 2009). The skill referred to in this study is music skill such as the skill to play musical instruments like piano-keyboard, harmonica, recorder, guitar, oja, etc.

Skill Acquisition

Since skill is the ability in engaging well in an endeavor seen across disciplines and human endeavors, it is therefore, acquirable. Skill acquisition is the "the art of learning to do something in order to earn a living and or to survive" (Wikipedia,2023). Skill acquisition is not limited to the technical careers and professions; music has a place in skill acquisition also. Skill acquisition in music is the mastery of music related activities. This can be the mastery of playing a musical instrument, singing, performing or dancing. In this study, skill acquisition for children through the learning of musical instruments was pursued.

Skill and Content Learning Sequence in Music

Gordon (1980) expatiates on this double concept thus:

Though each functions according to separate guidelines, skill learning sequence and content learning sequence are combined and are more mutually dependent in the learning process. One

cannot learn a given skill without a given music content, and one cannot learn a given music content without the use of a given skill (Pg.130).

The point here is that the pursuit of musical instrument playing skill is inseparable from the general learning content such as tone, pitch, or rhythm associated with the entire lesson. For example, one does not learn to play the recorder and avoid learning also about tone, pitch, or rhythm associated with the instrument.

Skills in Productive Thinking

The relevance of skill goes beyond mere accumulation of virtue but for productive thinking. Kirk & Gallagher (1983) captured this idea succinctly:

It is not just the accumulation of knowledge that is important but also how that knowledge is used to generate new ideas and solutions. The ability to generate new information through the internal processing of available information is one of the most impressive and valuable skills of mankind.... It is the ability to recombine the bits of this information into new meanings that sets mankind apart from the animals. It is the ability to perform these thinking processes well that sets the gifted student apart from the student with average ability(Pg.97).

Education

Education is a process of human growth by which an individual gains greater understanding and control over himself and this world. According to Nwadiani (1997) "Education is a catholic social service, its meaning varies from time to time, from people to people and from place to place" (p.5). Mbanugo (1999) also defines education as "A multi-faceted concept which simply refers to learning or intellectual attainment" (P.236). This means that education is diverse as so many things can be involved when it comes to learning. Education is also a way to navigate our intellectual ability to its next level. Education involves our minds, our bodies and our relationship with the people; and the world around us. Onyeji (2008) writes that "education is generally perceived to be the process of discipline through training and studying in the acquisition of skills and knowledge" (p.150). Nothing is known and no skill is acquired without education. Education is at the root of everything that is known and every skill that is acquired. Without education the world will never grow and innovations would be at a standstill. According to Okafor (2005) "Education is designed to equip the individual not only to earn a living but also for life itself, through the encouragement of socially desirable knowledge, attitude and skills" (p.190). Education is not only geared towards making daily ends meet but also structured for the improvement of our lives. This is achieved through principles, values and morals that are passed to us through the society we live in. These principles, values and morals include; discipline, patience, love, kindness et cetera.

Nosiri (2010) defines education as "A process of harmonizing the individual within a given environment in such a manner as to enable him develops all his capacities for the overall interest and welfare of all (p.72). In other words, education means the modification of human behavioral patterns to complete themselves into the existing code of conduct as integral part of the total system of ideas, knowledge, law, and philosophy values, moral and belief that constitute the cultural content of the society they belong to. According to Nnamani in Yekini-Ajenifuja (2009) "Education is a process of transformation through which the individual is helped to attain the development of his or her potentialities and their maximum activation and when necessary according to right reason and to achieve thereby his perfect

self-fulfillment" (p.65). The development of any nation cannot be separated from its educational system. Ibekwe (2009) supports this thus "Education is regarded as the key to nation building (p.13). To build a nation, the human components must be built. There is a popular adage; 'build a man and the nation is built'. This is where music teacher's education has a role to play in the process of building the nation. Teacher's education must continue to be given a major emphasis in all educational planning because teachers are to implement what has been built into the programme. Opadokun in Ajewole (2010) states that "There is the need for majority, if not all citizens to be educated at least to a certain level". For a nation to move forward, she must equip her citizens with education, which is the key to development. Adande in Ajewole (2010) states that education is the cornerstone to development. Agu (2006) states that "Education in Nigeria is no more a private enterprise but a huge government venture that has witnessed a progressive evolution of government's complete and dynamic intervention and active participation". The Nigeria government has adopted education as an instrument of excellence for effecting national development.

Education remains a potent and salient factor that enhances the change of the individual to contribute maximally to his/her society.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning in Perspective

Blooms' taxonomy of teaching/learning models have given insight into the dimensions of learning which have serious implications for teaching. The strategies involved are geared towards the influence of three basic human domains which he labelled, cognitive - the intellect, psychomotor- physical, and affective- emotions.

Child (2004) captures this clearly: "One outcome of developments in cognitive psychology has been the elaboration of 'models' of instruction or teaching. Of these, the most useful has been Bloom's (1976)" (Pg.395).

Engaging children in learning musical instruments invariably influences these three domains of learning in them for example, in playing the guitar; notes are learnt (cognitive development); they move their fingers in playing notes on the strings of the instrument (psychomotor development); they also enjoy the music they make with the instrument (affective development).

Exceptional Children

Hallahan and Kauffman in Campbell and Scott-Kassner Campbel (2010) define exceptional children as "those who require special education and related services if they are to realize their full human potential. The challenge has been to determine the nature of programs to support the varied and unique needs of these children and to fund such programs". Although the focus of this paper is not the education of exceptional children but it is necessary at his point of the paper to understand that an experimental research of this nature would surely encounter exceptional learners in the field.

Rote learning versus Meaningful (Practical learning)

Rote learning is learning by memorization. The learner memorizes numbers, symbols, and patterns that will form the basis of meaningful leaning later. Child (2004) explains that "Some of the demands we make of children require rote learning. Any symbolic form new to the child will require rote memorization. For example, the letters of the alphabet, numbers, musical notation and chemical symbols have to be learned 'by heart'." (p.135).

Rote learning is relevant in learning musical instruments because the basics of notes and their values, for example, need to be memorized first before the actual interpretation on the instrument.

Meaningful learning takes place when the ideas that have been memorized come into play in practical demonstration or realization, for example, playing memorized notes accurately on the instrument makes meaning to the learner and also gives meaning to the abstract notes already memorized.

Schematic Learning

Schematic learning has been defined as using organizations of past actions which become the seed-bed for interpretation and development in future learning (Child, 2004). This type of learning was explored in this study as it affected skill acquisition in children.

Music Education

Music education has been defined by many musicologist and scholars. For Okafor (1988) 'Music education is universal, touching all domains of learning; it is a fundamental component of human culture'. To buttress the above, Yudkin (2008) writes that:

music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music. It touches all domains of learning, including the psychomotor domain (the development of skill); the cognitive domain (acquisition of knowledge) and in particular and significant ways, the effective domain, including music appreciation and sensitivity. The incorporation of music training from pre-school to post school education is common in most nations because involvement in music is considered a fundamental component of human culture and behaviour. Music and language are accomplishments that distinguish us as humans (p.4).

While music education will normally reflect the place of music in a society, it must above all be the education of the human being. Onyeji (2001) defines music education as a systematic instruction given to an individual or group on the usefulness of music and technical know-how on music making and individual relevance in the society (p.5). Similarly, Joel (2001) portrays music education as the:

Various ways of teaching and learning of various aspects of music with the aim of developing the learners vocationally, intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially, a vibrant tool that leads to socialization, enculturation and transmission of what is worthwhile to those committed to it (p.5).

In other words, Adeogun (2006) declares that "Music education is a discipline that helps prepare personnel that are technically competent in music making and capable of managing and mediating interaction between man, music, and society (p.105). Concurring, Anya-Njoku (2007) describes music education as one educational process that entails the acquisition of knowledge skill and attitude in music that will foster the interest and ability of the learner to be useful to himself and his society musically (p.56).

From the above definitions, we can deduce that music education is the programme through which a learner is equipped through carefully planned principles, processes and practices to recognize and develop his or her musical potentials to the highest possible level. A system that prepares citizen who could make music a relevant part of man's experience as it relates to the society in which he or she lives. Anya-Njoku (2007), states that "A programme and its potentials and success can only blossom when the profession accepts its societal responsibility and assists the musical growth of all people in the society" (p.57). The need for music education in schools and most especially at the primary school level is correctly captured in this submission by Regelski (1981:

Music education does not necessarily seek to prepare professional musicians or critics or even dilettantes. Music education seeks to discover and nurture potential musical talents but above all, seeks to bring music to all people as an engaging and rewarding activity worthwhile for its own sake. In a sense, music education seeks to make a rewarding, lifelong "hobby" for everyone (p.32).

The 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. The reality of life in most countries, especially Nigeria, is that this must be seen in the context of the development of the society. The development and changes required in human habits through music education can be harnessed with a realistic musical instruction. This realistic musical instruction should give children opportunities to listen to know or learn how to attain a value - enriched life through musical practices.

The major aim of music education therefore is to provide a varied, significant and cumulative musical experience for every child. In other words, the purpose of the programme should be to recognize, groom, and release to the society trained musicians who would release music from the confines of the school and colonialism and make it relevant part of man's experience as it relates to the society in which he/she must live. The aim of music education is to inculcate in the learner musical skills, understanding and attitudes that will enable him/her gain full grip on the total art and its societal functions. Some of the benefits of music education in primary schools include: the promotion of music experience in the classroom, the emotional, intellectual, and physical development of the child. It also has been noted that music can help to enliven other subjects, and it can help the child to understand different aspects of his or her own culture and to appreciate aspects of other cultures. With all these aims and benefits, the outcome should be to produce pupils who will with enthusiasm carry the joy of music from the classroom to the society and earn a living through music.

Practical Music Education

Practical music education is preoccupied with engaging learners with various musical activities geared towards developing their innate abilities and skills such as singing, dancing, or playing musical instruments. Campbell and Scott-Kassner(2010) explained this concept in detail using musical instruments pedagogy as example:

For some children, making music is equivalent to playing musical instruments. The appeal of tapping, striking, shaking, blowing, and strumming musical instruments is one of the great joys in their lives. Because musical instruments are extensions of the musical self, when children play they are often demonstrating what they know and express musically. To play a musical instrument is to deliver to others ideas that are not easily expressed verbally(Pg.218).

Music appreciation versus Music understanding

Music apprecia

tion and music understanding are two musical concepts that have been confused amongst music educators for quite a long time and it is imperative that they are clarified here because of their relevance to the present study. Gordon (1980) argues that:

Appreciation and understanding are concepts which have particular relevance to the psychology of music learning. The former has been largely associated with music education in the past, whereas the latter, because of enlightened educational theory, commands current

attention.... The purpose of music education is to provide one with the understanding so that he can express himself aesthetically to the extent his attitudes will allow, with both his body and abstractions.... Music understanding as the primary goal of music education is gaining acceptance, and music appreciation is being placed in its proper perspective.... Through music understanding, one learns music; through music appreciation, one learns about music (Pg. 1-2). The whole point of Gordon's argument is that, even though both concepts have their respective places in music education, but it is necessary to guide learners towards basic understanding of music and not just appreciation. For instance, a child can dance happily to a folk tune without understanding the meaning and the musical idioms of the music. The music teacher should move from the level of appreciation to understanding by employing the same appreciated folk music to teach some musical elements embedded in the song. The same way should children be guided towards practical music understanding and performance using familiar tunes hence the point of this study research: "Skill Acquisition through practical music".

Transfer of Learning

Transfer of learning is simply the extension of learned behavior in solving other problems. Kirk and Gallagher (1983) reveal this:

Thus, another major instructional goal for the educator of the gifted is to enhance those thinking skills that allow the child to be creative; that is, to produce a unique product (from the child's point of view) from the available data or information. One manifest special education goal is to help gifted children develop those skills that will eventually make them autonomous thinkers, not dependent on adults or teachers, but possessing the tools and ability to seek knowledge on their own (p.97).

This idea is pertinent to this study because the skill a child acquires through learning a given musical instrument, for example, the recorder, is transferrable in learning and playing the saxophone.

Music Curriculum

According to Nwankpa (1999), "Curriculum is derived from a Latin word, "currere" which may be interpreted as running a course (p.28). Curriculum refers to the course or programme which pupils have to run in a school or an institution. The three components of the curriculum are the programme of studies, the programme of activities and the programme of guidance. In Onyiuke (2006). Tyler defines curriculum as:

concerned with all the learning of students, which is planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals. It embraces educational objectives, all planned learning experiences including extra - class and learning activities at home in so far as they are planned and directed by the school and finally the appraisal of students learning (p.33).

According to Olisaeke (2019), curriculum can be broadly defined as sum total of all the experiences a learner undergoes under the guidance of the school or institution. According to Adeyinka (1988), it can be concluded from the various definitions that the purpose of all curriculum planning is to provide opportunities to the learners to benefit maximally from participation in selected learning activities and appraisal of learner's learning. This participation of learners and teachers is known as instruction. Instruction is thus the implementation of curriculum plan. The curriculum plan suggests or specifies activities to be carried out by learners as well as materials to be used. The teacher who implements such plan also carries out pre-instructional plan, which includes selection of teaching materials and activities.

The term "curriculum" is often used to describe only the goals, objectives or plans, something distinct from the methods, materials and assessment. Yet, since each of these components are essential for effective learning and since each includes hidden barriers that master learner's curriculum design should consider each of them. The guideline which is the curriculum when applied to the general education, should meet the educational needs of most students including those with disabilities. The curriculum can help to guide the design of expectations, contents, methods and outcomes across differing classrooms in each school system. Curriculum is a planning course or subject by the curriculum designer in education sector for all school levels to achieve their educational goals and can be developed and interpreted by each school curriculum team. Curriculum is the outline of the skills, attitudes, performances and values, pupils are expected to learn from schools, it includes statements of desired pupil's outcomes, descriptions of materials and planned sequence that will be used to help pupils attain outcome. The curriculum planners should consider the numerous and unresolved problems to be included in the school curriculum. In other words, curriculum should be able to meet the objectives of the educational policy in all angles.

Theoretical Framework

The theories that form the backbone of this research shall be reviewed in this section with the view of assaying their ramifications that affect the study.

The bulk of theories and methodologies on music education are inexhaustible ranging from the works of Thorndike, Skinner, Vygotsky, Piaget, Bandura, Asubel, Bruner, Gagne, Gordon, Kodaly, Orff, Suzuki, etc. Campbell, P. S. and Scott-Kassner, C. (2010) explain that:

Theories of learning, teaching, and instruction are embedded in nearly every musical experience. Jeremy and Bryan playfully explore the music making possibilities of spoons, cups, and pans: Bruner (1966), Vygotsky (1978), and Jonassen (1991) have developed theories to explain this behavior.... Theories about how children learn and how teachers can help maximize this learning are at the heart of every practical musical experience that teachers provide for children(Pg.16).

For the present study, two theories have been drawn as the theoretical framework owing to their relevance to the research. They are Adedeji's theory of 'Transformative Musicology' (Adedeji, 2010) and Okeke's theory of 'Adaptive Musicology'(Okeke, 2020).

Transformative Musicology

The theory of Transformative Musicology proposed by Prof. Femi Adedeji posits that "musicology should be geared towards the transformation of the individual and the society. It encompasses all musical activities that focus on transformative purposes. Transformative musicology is the musicology that aims at the transformation of our environment and our world at large" (Adedeji, 2010).

Pupils and young learners should be made to understand that music is not just for entertainment but also a tool for positive change or transformation. Problems and challenges invading the society can actually be addressed and tackled through music. The fact that music reaches more people proves that it can effect more change to the ills and challenges of the society. Pupils should be taught and encouraged to write and compose songs that address and offer solutions to societal challenges and shortcomings. This way, transforming them into change agents for knowledge, truth, integrity, justice and equity, etc.

The import of this theory to this study is so remarkable for the fact that engaging children in practical music education engenders not only skill acquisition but transforms them into artists, aestheticians, music makers, peacemakers, educators, etc.

Children become transformed also into problem solvers in society because mastering musical instruments is akin to problem solving.

This theory also is a push for the transformation of the inert curriculum of music studies in the primary schools into a practical, demonstrative, and transformative one. The state of the curriculum will take music in the primary tiers of learning into extinction if it is not revamped to capture the necessities and imperatives of skill acquisition through practical music education which is the thrust of this paper.

All that have been pursued in this research: experimentations with musical instruments, field work, educational methodologies, and classroom engagement with the pupils have all gained the support of this theory.

The Theory of 'Adaptive Musicology'

The theory of 'Adaptive Musicology' by Okeke (2020) posits that:

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).

This theory provides another formidable framework on which this study rests. The import of the theory is that in learning music generally, or in teaching musical instruments specifically, care should be taken not to foist musical instruments on learners by rule of thumb. Adaptability tests should be administered on each learner to ascertain their adaptability for several instruments to be learned. Children for instance should be examined to find out their capabilities, possible health challenges, physical defects and dispositions before engaging them in learning any musical instrument. If this procedure is not brought into focus before the actual learning, the whole musical exercise would be futile.

For pupils to acquire musical skills, this theory should be brought into perspective 'By the virtue of our varied giftedness and build (adaptive features) some people excel in certain areas of musicology while others prevail in another' Okeke (2020). This encourages ease in skill acquisition in music because pupils acquire music related skill based on musical activities/instruments their biological builds naturally flow with.

Some methods of teaching music portray some traits of adaptive musicology. When pupils are encouraged to dance to music, clap to rhythm, or swing their arms to tunes, they are actually engaging in the tuning of their body parts to adapt to complex musical engagement awaiting them in the future such as singing or playing of musical instruments. Some of these methods like *Dalcroze's Eurythmics* which emphasizes early activation and sensitization of the body parts is quite relevant to this present

discussion. This argument is based on the premise that weak limbs and muscle control are usually induced by muscular inactivity in childhood as vividly portrayed by Campbell and Scott-Kassner (2010), 'as his eurhythmics approach evolved, students develop the muscular rhythm and nervous sensibility that would allow them to discriminate among even the slight graduations of duration, time, intensity and phrasing' (p.45). When pupils are taught from early ages how to move in time to the tune of music, it makes it easier for them to engage in dance activities, playing of musical instruments, and even singing as they advance in age. This is because their bodies have 'adapted' to such activities owing to their engagements in them while they were younger.

Empirical Review

Findings by several scholars relevant to this work were reviewed and presented here

Pragmatism in Music Education.

Music educators have increasingly discovered that it is not every theory or procedure works in the field of music teaching. Even the principles and methodologies that are functional in a particular setting may not be feasible and relevant in another environment. Okeke (2013) found out that the reactivation of recorder playing in primary school education helped revive music in the schools:

Reactivating recorder playing in schools would foster the development of aural sensitivity, pitch awareness, and general musicianship among the learners. Teaching children to play recorder would also guide them into a successful instrumental experience, which they really enjoy, and this offers them a means for self-expression and self-worth. Also giving children a foundation in recorder playing enhances basic fingering techniques which relate directly to the techniques of wind instruments and which can prove very vital in playing such instruments later in life (Pg.115).

Okeke's push above is to engage pupils with the recorder for music learning which is affordable, durable, and easy to learn instead of waiting in futility for the government to provide state-of-the-art musical instrument for learning. This study, drawing from the finding above, employed recorders also in the research with commendable results.

Aninwene (2009) discovered that the state and future of music education in primary schools in Nigeria was bleak and suggested therefore that:

To achieve the future, grounds should be prepared for the teachers and students in terms of adequate facilities, instructional materials and relevant curriculum. Music in the primary schools should not be passive, but rather involving. These are the ideals for a better future for music education (pg.48).

Aninwene's regret that music has become passive in the primary schools is also one of the problems this study pursued to solve.

The problem of Cultural and Creative arts (CCA) and music teacher-incompetency in the primary schools was aptly captured by Ekwueme (2009):

Implementation of Music as part of Cultural and Creative Arts, as a subject in the school system has been a problem. The role of music teachers and the attitudes of administrators toward the subject have not been encouraging.... An essential feature that can guarantee a successful music education programme is the supply of good quality teachers to support the scheme (Pg33).

It is worrisome that after over a decade of Ekwueme's plea, that government has refused to heed the call as CCA is still constricting and suffocating music education in primary schools. This study shall find a way around the problem by engaging pupils actively in practical music within the umbrella of music.

In another interesting study regarding the curriculum of music studies in primary school, Okeke (2015) found out that:

There exists a disparity between what pupils are programmed to learn as stipulated in the curriculum and what is obtainable in actual classroom situation as regards music.... The current curriculum was found to be insensitive to the learning behavior of children, as it does not create room for a playful learning atmosphere; it is Western oriented, neglecting traditional, folk, and recreational songs that would be more meaningful to pupils. It also gave music an imprisoned status by embedding it into other subjects as Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) which was handled by every other teacher(Pg.202).

Unfortunately, the recommendations of the research above have not been implemented despite the imperatives raised.

Part of the focus of the present paper shall be towards the review of the music curriculum to reposition it for adequacy.

Teaching Strategies of Music Teachers

The rainbow is beautiful because of its diverse colours and teaching will be interesting if it has diverse methods. "The music teacher must provide alternative learning strategies, that is, more than one way to attain a goal. Children should be allowed to explore different path ways and if necessary pause along the way if they find a more relevant goal", Oguoma (2009). Diversity in teaching creates room for effective learning and pupils should not be tied to attaining mastery in any musical skill without them exploring other skills. Exploration can lead them to a skill they flow naturally with and this will enliven their spirits and quicken the joy and passion they have for learning a musical skill. The music teacher is expected to be diversified in his or her method of teaching. This would make the learner have more interest in the teaching. This diversity should not be random but systematic. It should be formed in such a way that it is geared toward the growth and development of pupils. "Instruction in music must be systematically arranged to elicit specific development and growth in the behaviour of learners" Ikediashi (2009). The music teacher should equally seek self-improvement as growth will never cease especially in learning regardless of age this is because "the music teacher is the key resource person in the teaching and learning of music. He or she is a vital factor in motivating and maintaining student's interest in the classroom" Ugochukwu (2010). Qualities such as patience for pupils who are slow in the comprehension of what is taught, orderliness in teaching, care for challenged pupils (mentally or physically), and mastery of the subject matter should be coveted by a music teacher. "A good music teacher must possess and exhibit important qualities, mastery of the subject matter, orderliness, care and patience" Egereonu (2011). Such good qualities of the teacher according to Egereonu, would usually yield the attitude of "being interested, enthusiastic and responsive to the teaching - learning process" (p.228) from the pupils.

Collaborative Teaching and Learning Style

Collaborative teaching and learning style allows for the contribution of pupils during learning. A teacher whose mind is open to the pupils can learn how to teach the pupils better from the pupils. Collaborative teaching and learning also involves the use of evaluation and assessment to get feedback

from pupils. These feedbacks narrow the teacher's teaching techniques to his/her present pupils. In musical studies, particularly in practical music studies evaluation is often accused of being too harsh and too biased, but if it is well done, it is "the most appropriate way to make intelligent judgment in music pedagogy" (Onuora - Oguno, 2007).

Schematic Learning

Schematic learning has been defined as using organizations of past actions which become the seed-bed for interpretation and development in future learning (Child, 2004).

In an interesting study, Skemp (1962, and 1986) in Child(2004) found out that:

The importance of schematic learning was underrated. In an intriguing experiment using a set of symbols he had invented to represent attributes capable of being combined to give more complex forms ..., he showed that schemata were absolutely essential, even in relatively straightforward learning tasks, because of the meaning they gave to the learning in hand. In any new field the schemata first formulated have a lasting consequence on future learning in that field. Therefore, the first and most important task for any teacher is to discover and carefully define the elementary schemata required to enable the most productive assimilation. He or she should proceed from a familiar framework to unfamiliar knowledge (Pp.134-135).

The import of this finding to the present study is that practical music teachers should draw from practical musical experiences of children and connect them to the present for a fulfilling learning. For instance, pupils who have had some experience practicing with the recorder should be encouraged and engaged in more practice for advancement on the instrument or other instruments. The schemata here being experience in learning through practicing on a musical instrument.

Music as a Career Education

Music is also a career education in the primary and post primary education. According to Nnamani(2007), career education has been conceived as a way of reducing high rate of unemployment particularly among the youth. It further stresses the need to prevent pupils from leaving school without marketable skills or clear personal goals and helps them to examine the range of post-secondary options including those of technical and vocational jobs.

Summary of Review

Skill acquisition in music for primary school learners is important and possible. It can be achieved through understanding that as animals have adaptive features, pupils also have inborn abilities that can cause them to excel without much difficulty in learning a particular musical skill. These inborn abilities can be sharpened by music education which is geared at understanding these innate abilities through organized and goal-oriented teaching.

Skill acquisition in music cannot be achieved if the curriculum does not aim at equipping pupils with musical skills. The curriculum should be structured in such a way that it promises at least a musical skill to a pupil who sits for music classes.

Music teachers should also understand that humans vary and so how they learn. This calls for diversity in teaching as the music teacher must provide alternative learning strategies, that is, more than one way to attain a goal. The music teacher should also allow children to explore different path ways and if necessary pause along the way if they find a more relevant goal.

Assessment and evaluation should also be put in place as they serve as effective feedback after pupils are taught. For sometimes teachers think that pupils have a perfect comprehension of what has been taught till assessments and evaluations are given. Musical skill acquisition is important and should be the goal of every primary school.

The literature reviewed so far has helped in revealing the bulk of scholarly works and energy expended by scholars in reinvigorating music education in the primary schools. These scholarly works and empirical studies have also given a robust and solid support to this research but the research has delved deeper into the domain of musical skills that are acquirable by children through music.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design employed is the survey research design. "Survey research is a specific type of field study that involves the collection of data from a sample of element drawn from a well-defined population through the use of questionnaire. Survey research design seeks to gather information through the use of questionnaires, interviews, et cetera. The researcher made use of questionnaires and interviews for data collection.

Area of Study

This research was carried out in Awka, town of Anambra State. The academic area of study is domiciled in the field of music pedagogy.

Population of the study

The population of this research study is made up of both the teachers and the pupils of all the primary schools in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.

Sample and sampling technique

The sample of this study was drawn from all the teachers and pupils in Awka metropolis that offer music as a single subject. In Awka town which is the study area of this research work, all the public primary schools and some private schools offer cultural and creative arts, music being part of it. The researcher selected eight non-government primary schools which offer music as a subject for data collection. The eight schools are; Grand Hermano Nursery/Primary School Awka, Grace Court International School, Awka, Unizik Nursery/Primary School Awka, Blossom Fount Nursery/Primary School, Awka, Ridge Valley Nursery/Primary School, Awka, Police Children School, Awka, Assured Tender Nursery/Primary School, Awka, and Handmaids Infant Jesus Nursery/Primary School, Awka. Since the population is small, the researcher made use of all the schools. In the schools, the whole music teachers from every school were included in the sample but five (5) pupils were selected from each of the schools. The researcher made use of random sampling to select from each of the schools two (2) male pupils and three (3) female pupils, totaling five (5) pupils for each school, making the total number of pupils forty (40) respondents. Each of the school has only one (1) music teacher and so all the music teachers from the eight (8) schools were used for the study, giving a total number of eight (8) music teachers. In other words, the total number of respondents for the study were forty-eight (48).

Instrument for Data collection:

The researcher employed both questionnaire and oral interview in collecting the data. In the eight selected primary schools, questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and they were allowed to fill it.

Method of Data Analysis

Simple percentage and item analysis in analyzing the data.

The bar chart was also employed in sequencing and analyzing the data.

Discussion of the findings

Primary school Music has helped pupils to know about musical instruments

One of the purposes for introducing music in the primary school was to help pupils to know about music and musical instruments. This present research shows that 62.5% of the music teachers strongly agreed that learning music from primary school helps the pupils to know about musical instruments, while 37.5% agreed. No teacher disagreed. The implication is that early music education fosters the knowledge of musical instruments.

Music in primary school education fosters skill acquisition

Most of the music teachers in primary schools saw music as a skill acquisition in primary schools as a good idea. 50% of the teachers strongly agreed that music should be made one of the subject in primary curriculum for the future of the pupils. 37.5% agreed while 12.5% disagreed. The import of this is that music education in primary schools enhances skill acquisition.

Teaching music in primary schools have helped the children to have positive values for the development of their country

50% of the music teachers strongly agreed that teaching music in primary schools will help the children to have positive value for development of their country and while 50% of the teachers agreed with the fact that when the pupils learn music especially instrumental part of it, they do better in future, they are helping to add value not causing problem to the country.

Summary of the Study

Despite the effort of Nigerian education commission to make educational system favorable everybody, both the young and the old. There were some challenges that were still drawing using music as skills acquisition in primary schools back. Regarding the pupils' questionnaire almost 50 percent of the pupils confided in the researcher about not having music laboratory where musical instruments are kept. All the schools the researchers visited around Awka and its environs they discovered that, most of the primary schools both private and public schools do not offer music as a subject. Some offer cultural and creative arts while some do not offer at all. That was the reason the researchers chose only eight primary school mostly private for the research work. The researchers observed that there is insufficient music teacher in primary school education. Some pupils do not have access to the musical instruments in their schools, because 85 percent strongly agreed that they participate in learning musical instruments while 15 percent do not participate.

Conclusion Drawn from the findings

The researchers observed that the music teachers are comfortable with making music compulsory in primary school education. If that is the case, government should work on the primary school curriculum to add music as a compulsory subject in the curriculum. Primary school should build music laboratory where musical instrument will be keeping and also that they should post music teachers to primary school to teach the pupils both theoretical and practical aspect of music. With this, the researchers are of the opinion that the government should bring back music as a subject in primary schools to be used as skill acquisition and through practical music it can be achieved.

Recommendations

- There is serious need for curriculum of the primary school education to be reform and give way for music in it.
- Provision of opportunities for music teachers to be posted to primary school to teach the pupils the real music with practical demonstrations.
- Government should fund primary school and also help them to build music labs for better performance of the pupils.
- The music teachers should allow all the pupils to participate during music practical so as to enable them learn the instruments well.
- Schools should make provision of period for practical music.
- School should show enough interests in music as in other subject of the school curriculum.
- Schools should provide all the necessary facilities for the subject.

References

- Adedeji, F. (2010). Transformative Musicology: Recontextualizing art music composition for societal transformation in Nigeria. *Revista electronica de musicologia*. Vol.14.
- Adeogun, A.O. (2006). Qualification of available music teachers in colleges of education in Enugu, Imo, Kogi and Rivers state: An examination. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*. 4, 1 - 15
- Agu, C.C. (2006). The Nigeria policy on education: its impact on music education and delivery in Nigeria. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*. 3, 1-8
- Ajewole, J.O. (2010). The role of music teacher education in the achievement of (UBE). *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*. 7, 222-233
- Aninwene, E.O. (2003). Curriculum imperative for music education in Nigeria secondary school. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*.
- Aninwene, E. O. (2009). The state and future of music education in primary schools in Nigeria: A case for teacher preparation. *Interlink: A Journal of Research in Music*, 4, 48-62.
- Campbell, P. S. and Scott-Kassner, C. (2010). *Music in Childhood*. USA : Schirmer.
- Child, D. (2004). *Psychology and the teacher*. (7th ed.). London: Continuum.
- Egereonu, N.O. (2011). Good teaching and good student: A case study of Amu and Nayo of Ghana as exemplified in Agordoh 2004. In Y.S. Onyiuke, I.O. Idamoyibo and D.C.C. Agu (Eds.). *Mekism and Knowledge Sharing of the Art of Africa. A Book of General Reading in Honour of Professor Meki Nzewi*, (pp. 227 - 233). Nimo, Nigeria: Rex Charles & Patrick.
- Ekwueme, L.U. (2009). Competency - based teacher education in music/cultural and creative arts: A suggested approach for the universal basic education (UBE) programme. *Interlink: A Journal of Research in Music*, 4, 33-47.
- Gordon, E. E. (1984b). *Learning sequences in music: skill, content, and patterns*. Chicago: GIA Publications Inc.
- Ibekwe, E.U. (2009) Performing arts and nation building - the role of music: *Interlink: A journal of research in music*. 4, 11-19
- Ikediashi, N. (2009). Factors affecting the teaching and learning of music in primary schools in Nigeria. *Alvan Journal of Music and Humanities*. 1, 42- 53
- Kirk, S. & Gallagher, J. (1983). *Educating exceptional children*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Mbanugo, C.E. (1999). Toward a philosophy of music education. *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*. 1, 234-242

Microsoft © 2009. Encarta Dictionaries.

Nnamani, S.N. (2007). Problems and prospects of using field trips in the teaching of music in Nigerian schools. *Awka journal of research in music and the arts*. 4, 121-128

Nosiri, H.U. (2010). Language, music education and national development. *Awka journal of research in music and the arts*. 7, 75-82

Nwadiani, M. (1997). *Education in foreign countries: lessons for policy planning and practice*. Benin city: Monoso Amalgamates.

Nwankpa, N.O. (1999). *Curriculum studies*. Onitsha: Emba publishers

Oguoma, P.U. (2009). Towards a theory of teaching exceptional children with reference to music. *Awka journal of research in music and the arts*. 7, 136-153

Okafor, F.C. (1988). *Philosophy of education and third world perspective*. Virginia: Brunswick Publishing

Okafor, F.C. (2005). *Music in Nigerian society: New generation books*

Okeke, I.N. (2012). Introducing recorder playing for effective music teaching/learning in Anambra State primary schools. *Awka Journal of Music and the Arts (AJRMA)*, v.9.Pp.109-115.
<https://nigerianjournalonline.com/index.php/ajrma/article/view/1892>

Okeke, I.N. (2020). An empirical music curriculum: A panacea for pupils' dwindling interest in music in primary schools of Anambra State, Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of African Studies (NJAS)*. Vol.2, no.1. Pp202-207.
<https://nigerianjournalonline.com/index.php/NJAS/article/view/1348>

Okeke, I.N. (2020). On the theory of adaptive musicology. *HOFA: African Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*. vol.5, no. 1. Pp.86-110.
<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3976099>

Onuora-Oguno, N.C. (2007). Problems of evaluation in practical music in the tertiary level of Nigeria musical studies. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*. 4, 77-82

Onwuekwe, A.I. (2003). Music composition as indispensable instrument for political transition. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*. 3, 1-8

Onyeji, E. (2008). Culture and literary music education in contemporary Nigerians: A spotlight on solo folk song arrangement for studies in voice. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*.

Onyeji, E. & Adeogun, A.O. (2004). Collaboration and university music education: A study of the performance of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*. 2, 82-96

Onyiuke, Y. (2006). Music pedagogy in Nigeria: An appraisal of the primary schools' curriculum and its implications. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*. 3, 32-46

Ugochukwu, B.C. (2010). An investigation of the resources for music teachings and learning in selected schools in Port- Harcourt. *Journal of the Faculty of Humanities*. 8,242

Yekini-Ajanifuya, A.I. (2009). Indigenous music education in Nigeria: The bata drum ensemble experience. *Interlink: A Journal of Research in Music*, 63-71

Internet sources

Wikipedia. (2023). Skill Acquisition. [Sourced: July 2023]