

ADVOCATING FOR IMPROVED INCORPORATION OF INDIGENOUS INSTRUMENTS IN NIGERIAN CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAMME

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Introduction

In the predominantly Western-oriented academic circles, the Nigerian indigenous musical instruments are often ignored or suppressed as teaching tools. Cultural and creative arts (CCA) education has been a source of grave concern since its inception. Though the aim was to cater for varying talents of the children thereby boosting creativity, this has been a herculean task because the quality of the CCA curriculum in Nigeria has not derived from the theoretical content and performance principles of traditional arts education. Every culture in the traditional African community possesses its own indigenous musical instruments which are derived from their environment depending on their vegetation zone. In virtually every home, school and church, indigenous instruments abound. These instruments are fully utilised in the traditional African society since they serve various purposes other than music making for the community. In recent times, the modern society does not utilise these instruments to the fullest especially in Nigeria's basic schools. African indigenous instruments are often neglected or not fully harnessed in most formal schools in Nigeria. This paper is an attempt to establish that Nigerian musical instruments can serve as the major instructional material that can be used in the basic classes until the pupils get to a certain maturational level before Western musical instruments can be introduced to them. Africans possess a large aggregate of instrument-making resources. The instrumental resources of any African community is determined by environmental factors such as the life-style of the people and the materials at the disposal of that society, though, there may be influence of other musical cultures that come into contact with the people through trade, close proximity, and other activities as Nketia (1982) observes 'some instruments tend to be concentrated in areas of

intensive cultural interaction, in which societies living in close proximity borrow from each other' (p. 68). The indigenous instruments do not have equal distribution in all communities and the importance attached to a particular instrument also varies from place to place. A good observation is that some dos and don'ts which were attached to some of the indigenous instruments that prohibits certain age bracket, sex or group of people from handling certain indigenous instruments have been erased due to urbanization and acculturation as Okafor (2005) highlights: 'age-sex limitations on the use of musical instruments are found in many areas but due to acculturation and urbanization, some instruments formally regarded as male instruments are now played by women (p. 160). People within a particular geographical area rely chiefly on the materials available to them for their musical purposes. Some instrumental material may be more limited than others within any given community. Okafor (2013) notes that 'there are more membranophones among the Hausa and the Yoruba than the Igbo, while the Igbo have more of the wooden slit drums' (p. 222). The question postulated for this study is:

- To what extent do teachers in the basic education levels utilise the Nigerian indigenous musical instruments in the teaching of cultural and creative arts education?

It is hoped that the findings of this study will be of great benefit to Nigerian music teachers, students, curriculum planners and Nigerian musicologists.

The Conceptual Framework

The conceptualization of the keywords according to the sense in which they are used in this study is pertinent at this juncture.

Cultural and Creative Arts

The cultural and creative arts (CCA) education has been listed as one of the 'core basic subjects' by NERDC in the new 9-year basic education curriculum (FGN, 2007:7). It is aimed at developing the students' acquisition of cultural repertoire, aesthetic perception, artistic talents, creativity and expression. It is designed to stimulate interest and inquire into the theoretical and practical areas, particularly as they affect the teaching of the arts in school (<http://www.nceonline.org/.../Arts.../>). Cultural and creative arts education is the umbrella term which brings together the three arts subject areas; music, fine and

applied arts and drama/theatre. Though, these three subject areas 'have their own distinct characteristics which largely inform their particular and varied ways of working but within that work model, arguably, the creative aspect is fundamental' (<http://www.reading.ac.uk/a-z>). Creativity which is inherent in man has relevance in all the facts of life and it concerns everyone. Drama, music and fine arts constitute aesthetics that portray them as universal language and vital persistent aspects of human experience. They are essential elements of culture that give vibrancy and dept of meaning to life and their essence manifest through creative thinking and action (Okonkwo in Ojukwu & Esimone, 2014).

Indigenous Instruments

Indigenous instruments are the musical instruments found in Africa, South of the Sahara. They can equally be called African musical instruments. Africa is made up of many vegetations and geographical zones. People harness their environmental resources to a large extent in traditional African communities. According to Nketia (1982), indigenous instruments may be instruments believed to be of local origin, or instruments which have become integrated into the musical life of their communities from other areas (p. 67). Okafor (2013) further buttresses the above and writes,

Africans have learnt, through more than seven thousand years, to master their environments and the resources of those environments. They have made musical instruments from wood of local trees, iron, stone and clay, hides and skin. Guts, gourds, bamboo, bush ropes and animal horns (p. 222).

The African indigenous instruments as classified by Eric Von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs (1933) are grouped into four categories namely: idiophones, aerophones, membranophones and chordophones. These instruments are classified according to their sound generation and materials used in their construction. Okafor (2013) explains that the instruments whose bodies vibrate to produce sound are called idiophones, examples include; xylophone, slit drums, gongs, rattles thumb piano, percussion pots and woood clappers, etc. The membranophones are instruments that depend on membranes of animals fixed on wooden frames for their source of sound, examples include: all kinds of drums made within Africa. Aerophones are instruments of the flute family, made with a

natural bore, such as bamboo or the tip of a horn or gourd. Other examples include: flute, horns, reed pipe, trumpet, gourds, etc. The chordophones are instruments which depend on the agitation of strings for their sound production, examples include: musical bow, zither and lute of different kinds and sizes.

Nigeria is blessed with various kinds and shapes of indigenous musical instruments repertoire from which any good teacher can choose from depending on locality in which one resides and the topic under discussion.

Pedagogical Tools

Pedagogical tools are equipment that effectively supports instruction. They are the teaching facilities and the equipment used in teaching and learning situations to supplement written or spoken words in transmitting knowledge, attitude and ideas. They are indispensable instruments in the hands of a good professional teacher. Pedagogical tools and instructional materials can be used interchangeably. They can also be called teaching aids, teaching apparatus, etc. They are important tools that help the teacher to disseminate information. Competent teachers use instructional materials to make their points clearer to the students and for illustrations especially when topics which appear abstract are to be handled. Ezeani (1999) writes, 'the use of instructional materials make teachers' work simpler because by serving as illustrations for certain abstract concepts, they make teachers' lesson more understandable, nearer home and so, more meaningful' (p. 160). Ojukwu (2011) supports the above assertion and says 'It is indisputable to assert that learning has a lot to do with instructional materials' (p. 57). Ojukwu further buttresses that:

There are numerous benefits that could be derived from the use instructional materials by the classroom teacher. It reduces over verbalization, excessive use of words by the teacher in an attempt to explain certain concepts to the students. It will also enliven the teacher's lessons because the five senses of hearing, taste, smell, sight and feeling are all combined to facilitate teaching and learning (p. 57).

Music if well taught *vis-à-vis* the use of instructional materials promotes students' performance in the subject. Variety of these teaching aids should be employed by music teachers to enrich music instruction in the secondary schools.

Maduakonam (1998:15) upholding the effectiveness of instructional materials in the teaching and learning situation asserts 'learning depends on the nearness of stimulus and response...if we want a child to know that there is an object called 'table', rather than describe it we present a table'. The use of teaching aids is important to both the music teacher and the music students. In agreement with the above Ezeani (1999:161) emphatically says that 'instructional materials are a necessary tool in all teaching-learning encounters for effectiveness'. There is a common saying which says 'what I hear I forget, what I see I remember, but what I do I know or understand'. Music students should be allowed to see, touch, feel and handle musical instruments. Such real life experiences would help to sustain their interests in the subject. Buttressing the above point Ikibe (2002:99) writes 'learning music is better done by handling musical instruments, listening to musical items and by singing'. Instructional materials help to create a lasting understanding of the concept of music. The use of instructional materials in teaching and learning of music provides the students 'the opportunity to experience visual and/or aural variety other than what the person is/was doing' (Idolor, 2002:11). More challenging tasks and enriching materials should be provided for the learners to keep them busy and challenged. Inadequate teaching aids to a large extent hinder musical learning.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on the world music pedagogy developed by Patricia Shenhan Campbell (1960) which stressed the growth of cultural diversity within school age population. It tries to establish that the teacher should imbibe the use of instructional practices and materials deep rooted in music traditions. She designed and delivered the music curricular model to teachers of various levels. Campbell's model advocates the use of human resources such as culture and materials deep rooted in culture and experiences in musical training especially in the level of basic classes (<http://en.wikipedia.org>).

Suziki theory also favoured a learning system centred on indigenous knowledge with the use of materials around the learners' environment. Suziki is of the opinion that the environment created for learning music should be the same with that created for learning natural or native language. The central belief of Suziki's theory based on his language acquisition theme is that all people are

capable of learning from their environment. The essential theme of this method is based on the desire to create the right environment for learning music. He believes that the positive environment adorned with rich materials for teaching would help in building and sustaining musical enthusiasm and also help to foster character in students (<http://en.wikipedia.org>). The theories above give credence to this study in that it agrees with some principles of learning which states that the teacher that employs the use of indigenous materials in teaching should 'always start from known to unknown, from simple to complex, from simple steps which are closely related to what they already know and proceed to know more difficult and complex areas' (Maduewesi, 1999:28).

Non-Utilization of Instructionals Material in Classroom Situation

There has been an outcry of teachers over the lack of instructional materials for enhancing teaching and learning especially at the basic school level. The Western tradition has influenced Nigerian formal education to the extent that Nigerians seem not to appreciate their cultural heritage. Observations have shown that the average Nigerian secondary school leaver today can no longer think critically and creatively. In spite of the laudable objectives and structure of secondary school education as stated in the National Policy on Education, all indications point to the fact that the rate of educational failures in Nigerian secondary schools is on the increase. The music education and materials used in the educational system in any country should be selected in the context of the socio-cultural background of the learners and should aim at providing the learners with music that is based on their everyday life experiences.

In Nigerian curriculum, much of the music programme does not give the Nigerian child access to music that is indigenous in outlook to contribute to formal music education and thereby encourage creativity along the desired need of the child's community. Orji (2000:182) lamenting on the nature of Nigerian music curriculum writes, the 'curricular were neither unrelated to the local environment and local needs nor did they take cognizance of our individual differences, interests and needs. The schools were isolated from the culture and the society'. The music curriculum is expected to, at the end, produce people who are musically literate and competent both in theory and practice. Unfortunately, this goal seems to be a herculean task. Music is taught at various levels of the

educational ladder devoid of a view that encourages independent reflection, creativity and innovativeness among students. As Nonyelu (2000:123) observes 'no attempt is made to invent or improve on our local products to satisfy our basic needs'. In the Nigerian curriculum, much of the programme is Western oriented which does not give the Nigerian student access to music that is indigenous in outlook to contribute to formal music education and thereby encourage creativity along the desired need of the student's community. Okafor (2005:214) regrets that 'the focus of the music education itself appears to be on Western music transplanted or introduced into the culture.

Need for Proper Utilisation of Indigenous Instruments in Classroom

Methods and techniques of teaching are better selected based on the availability of instructional materials. Locally produced materials within the environment of the learner stand to be the best solution to the persistent problem of lack of teaching aids. Ogunsanju (1984) opines that 'in selecting materials the teacher will need to consider the age, the number of the learners in the class, learning abilities and in some occasions the gender of the learners' (p. 101). Akpabio (2002) buttresses the above assertion and points out that teachers should ensure that the selection and usage of instructional materials suit the learners' age, abilities, characteristics and culture. Other criteria to be considered in the selection of the materials appropriately include availability, cost, interest, clarity, economic, relevance, suitability. Considering all the above mentioned indices for selection of the instructional materials, it becomes obvious that the indigenous instructional materials stand to be most appropriate, and can also be easily improvised. A good teacher can easily gather even with the help of the students cheaply available materials from their environment that can be useful for teaching and learning. Akpabio further suggests that teachers should be initiative and creative in using the available local resources, natural and man-made as instructional materials for music teaching and learning.

It should be noted that some of the students see these foreign or Western instruments for the first time on entering secondary school and most students do not even see them at all but only perceive it through the teacher's description and picture representations of the instruments. Students live with the indigenous instruments, they are very familiar with them, they see them every day of their

lives so, they will be more fulfilled to see them, feel them and make use of them in their places of learning. Students will grasp quickly any topic thought with their local instruments rather than expensive foreign instruments which they are not even allowed to go near to for fear they might spoil them.

The use of adequate local instructional materials in the classroom situation is very crucial to both the teacher and the learner. It strengthens the pedagogical strategies of the teacher, increases his/her capability and reduces stress. To the learner, the value is enormous. It helps in arresting and sustaining learners' attention, encourages participatory learning, provides opportunity for exploration, and enhances learning and retention of skills. This supports Edem (1987) argument that 'where the materials and facilities for teaching are absent, the skills of teachers and other instructors may be killed and this can go a long way to reduce output, develop negative work attitude and possibly lead to job dissatisfaction' (15).

Learning depends on the nearness of stimulus and response. Use of appropriate local materials in teaching is very essential. They are easily available at the disposal of the teacher and so, make his/her work easier; if a teacher wants a student to know what a metal gong is, rather than describe it, it is better to present a metal gong to the student. Furthermore, in classification, if a student is expected to distinguish between idiophone instruments and aerophone instruments, the objects must be presented at the same time as learning is taking place (Ojukwu, 2011). Nye & Nye (1970:78) asserts that 'children learn best when they see meaning and have a part in establishing their purposes'. Music teachers should strive to teach by aiding the students make use of their natural heritage. The extent of transfer of any academic subject depends on the teaching method and the ability of the teacher in driving the teaching home through the available natural resources (Hilgard, Atkinson & Atkinson 1975).

The use of mainly foreign instructional materials in the basic schools are inadequate, they are in very short supply and in some cases not available at all. Teachers need to make do with improvised materials which are readily available within the environment and are also economical. Improvisation of instructional materials is a very crucial skill in the hands of a good music teacher since it

enables the teacher to generate or originate the instructional materials by self. This also stimulates students' creative talents and abilities since they will be involved in the collection of materials for their studies. According to Nwankwo (2006) improvisation is a 'substitute for the readymade or manufactured type which we usually import' (p. 19). Eshiet (1996) buttresses that the environment is 'the largest laboratory and learning system ever imagined' (p. 49).

Classroom Implementation

For a music teacher to effectively achieve classroom control, he/she must ensure that the indigenous instruments are maximally utilised in the following ways:

1. Use them in teaching almost every topic;
2. Play these instruments and allow the students to play;
3. Give the students projects to construct indigenous instruments;
4. Instruct the students to bring materials for the construction of these instruments from their localities; demonstrate before them how to construct certain instruments and allow them to imitate the teacher. Where the teacher cannot do it, resource person can be invited to help;
5. Organise students' musical groups that perform with the indigenous instruments;
6. Bring professionals of different indigenous instruments to perform for the school; and
7. Take them to excursions where these instruments are utilised in performance.

Enhancing Students' Enthusiasm Using Indigenous Materials

Employing the use of indigenous instruments as instructional material can go a long way in enhancing the students' interest in music for obvious reasons:

- The students see these instruments every day of their lives; some use them at home during morning and evening prayers, they see them at their different churches, festivals, ceremonies, etc. When these instruments are brought into the classroom, their mere presence will arouse the interest of the students.
- They can be used to teach various rudimentary lessons such as scale, time signature, key signature, classification etc.

- Melodic or melo rhythmic instruments can be used to teach certain topics which may involve the use of keyboard. Examples of such instruments are: ubo aka (thumb piano), ubo akwara (zither), oja (notch flute), une (musical bow), ngegegwu (xylophone), ogenephone (metalgong), Kaakaki (trumpet), odu enyi (elephant tusk), iya ilu (talking drum) etc Likewise, where rhythmic instruments are involved, the indigenous rhythmic instruments such as igba (drums), ichaka, oyo, ekpiri (shakers), udu (musical pot), ekwe, ufie okpokoro, ikoro (wooden drums), ogene, alo (metal gongs), etc can be used effectively.
- Most of the projects given to the students can involve collection of materials and construction of local instruments. It will be more meaningful to the students when they are involved in the construction of their local instruments or improvise the materials for the construction of the indigenous instruments.
- Experience has shown that students derived more joy and also show sustained interests when they are asked to do things that involve their personal experience. For instance, a student may be asked to construct instruments such as oja (notch flute), ekwe (wooden drum), ogene (metal gong), ichaka, ekpiri, oyo (rattles), udu (pot drum), igba (membrane drums), etc rather than asking them to draw piano, trumpet, saxophone, violin, guitar, clarinet, tuba etc which they are not conversant with.
- The teacher should study the scheme of work properly in order to find out the type of materials to be supplied for every topic. Seeing these materials in the class automatically raises the students' enthusiasm and sustains their interest because they are familiar with the instruments.
- The teacher should encourage the students to pick up any instrument of their choice; allow the students to touch, feel and play the instruments as often as possible.
- Practical classes should also involve encouraging the students to play any indigenous instrument as his/her major instrument instead of majoring in one Western or foreign instrument that scare many students. Even in the senior secondary school, Students should be instructed to major in any indigenous instrument of their choice up to SSCE. They should not be restricted to foreign instruments.
- Many melodic, melo-rhythmic and purely rhythmic indigenous instruments derived from the four classes of African musical instruments abound within the

locality of the students. A student that develops interest in a particular indigenous instrument should be encouraged to play it to proficiency.

This study is not in any way condemning the use of foreign or Western instruments as instructional materials but is advocating that more emphasis should be laid in the use of Nigerian indigenous materials especially in Nigerian basic education classes. It also deemphasizes the use of foreign materials; they should be sparingly used. It should be noted here that the Western oriented music education was useful for the African indigenous music education because without the knowledge of these fundamentals of music theory, the composition and preservation of African indigenous music would not have been what it is today since Africa is yet to establish a system of notation. Africans still depend on the Western system of notation for their composition (Ojukwu, 2011).

Recommendations

It is necessary to propose certain recommendations that will facilitate the enhancement of indigenous musical instruments as the major instructional materials used in the Nigerian basic classes.

- The school authorities and other stakeholders should equip the music departments of their schools with the indigenous instruments or provide funds for their procurement since they are affordable.
- There is need to engage the services of professional indigenous instrumental technologists to produce more instruments that will go round all the government basic schools in the country.
- Teachers should actively involve the students in the production of the local instruments and other instructional materials. This can be achieved by giving them projects on collection of materials for the construction of these instruments and supervising the construction.
- Workshops, seminars, exhibitions and conferences should be organised regularly for the teachers to get them acquainted on the proper utilization of these local materials in the classroom and their construction using local technology.
- The learning of African traditional musical instruments can also be enhanced by making sure that students are tested practically on musical instruments as part of their termly examination. This is in line with the fact that students in this

part of the world at least, tend to focus more on what they perceive as 'examination questions'.

Conclusion

This study was aimed at proffering increased utilization of the indigenous musical instrument and positions them as the major instructional materials in the Nigerian basic education; the basic school music education is the bedrock and spring board for the musical take-off of the young child. It is therefore, necessary that much attention is paid to the improvement of the quality of music education in the Nigerian basic education. Music being practical-oriented in nature cannot be successfully taught through conventional talk and chalk method. The teaching of music should go beyond mere recapitulation of facts emanating from the immediate environment of the students at the basic level of education. Teachers should recognize the need for increased utilization of sensory materials derived from the students' culture in the teaching and learning of music in order to stimulate the students' interest and motivation towards participation in their learning situation. Emphasising the foreign instruments or other foreign instructional materials to the detriment of local instructional materials make it difficult for much to be achieved since no meaningful achievement can be made without involving sufficient and appropriate instruments and other materials derived from the students' immediate culture.

This study cannot be said to have exhausted all avenues of exploring indigenous instruments in the music education of Nigeria considering the time frame and the scope of this study. I therefore encourage other researchers to carry out more detailed study towards harnessing the rich instrumental resources our country Nigeria is endowed with.

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