
**BEQUESTS AND VERACITIES OF AFRICAN INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE
SYSTEM AS A MEANS OF IMPROVING MUSIC EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT: *Each generation, since the beginning of human existence, has sought to pass on cultural and social values, traditions, ethics, religion and skills to the next generation. The passing on of culture - enculturation and the learning of social values and behaviours - socialization replicate and reverberate human history together with the history of knowledge, beliefs, skills and cultures of humanity. In Africa tradition, music is an integral part of life linked with the worldview of the society in which it is produced. It has social, ritual, and ceremonial functions as well as some purely recreational purposes. Furthermore, quite a few African musical activities are ritualized and intended to link the visible world with the invisible. Traditional art forms, including music, are rooted in mythology, legend, and folklore which are associated with gods, ancestors and heroes. The values left behind by the forefather should not be meddled with and should be properly guided and monitored such that its relevance and values would be thoroughly employed as a means of improving the teaching of music education in African educational setting. Library search were used to source for information. This paper concludes that there is need for a paradigm shift to indigenous based curriculum for identity and uniqueness.*

KEYWORDS: Indigenous knowledge, Music Education, Traditional Music Education, Music in the Curriculum, Bequests, Veracities, Procedures to Teaching and Learning of Music Education.

INTRODUCTION

Music is an auditory art comprised of meaningful arrangements of sounds with a relation to pitch, rhythm, and tonality. In another perspective, Music is a natural and intuitive phenomenon operating in the spheres of time, pitch, and energy, and under three distinct and interrelated organization structures of rhythm, harmony, and melody. Since music is natural, it can be produced in nature by various creatures; and since it is intuitive, humans can recognize their sounds as musical. Moreover, as music is intuitive, people can virtually perform and even hear music in their mind. These attributes are peculiar to music as momentous, extremely important and crucial of culture in Africa setting. Bequests and Veracities of Nigerian indigenous music knowledge with useful procedure to the teaching - learning of music education in contemporary Africa were the key motivators for this paper.

Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous knowledge in a broad sense is knowledge developed and held by the original inhabitants of an area and their use of it in daily life. It has to do with the beliefs, knowledge, arts and other forms of cultural expression handed down through the generations. Africa has a

relatively rich body of indigenous knowledge and related technologies. This is embodied in the continent's cultural and ecological diversities and has been used by the African people for thousands of years to solve specific developmental and environmental problems.

Music in Education

Art, whether visual or audio, is the only discipline, which facilitates the understanding of an aesthetic experience. Aesthetics is the study of the relationship of art to the human senses; therefore, music, and the other strands of art, "understands our feelings like science understands nature" It is important that students are exposed to music so that they may understand and communicate their own feelings. Aesthetics allows us an insight to our emotional self and fosters the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. These skills cannot be truly developed in any other faculty; and yet, they can be transferred to all other faculties. Music education should be available to all students, not just those few students who are a part of the performance groups. All students should experience music in the elementary schools and should be given the opportunity to further their musical studies in secondary schools.

In the elementary level, students should be required to participate in and experience the arts. In high school, music education should be an option which is available to students who are interested in a further understanding of music. Not all students will be willing to participate in ensembles or performance groups; therefore, general music program is more appropriate in the secondary level. A general music program will appeal to and be able to facilitate the ambitions of a larger percentage of students. Performance programs should also be available to music students but should be considered extra-curricular. The general music program should be activity-based in order to show students or allow the students to realize and acknowledge how music affects our lives. Simple composition activities would introduce the students to the complexities of musical theory, the elements of music, such as rhythm or harmony, and orchestration; simple performance activities would provide students with basic understanding of the preparation, pressures, and excitement, which is inherent in music performance. Through these types of activities the students will learn how music affects us as individuals and perhaps as a society.

Traditional Music Education

Music is one of the oldest valuable artistic forms in the traditions of Nigerian societies. In the homes, it is often believed that cultural transmission begins immediately after birth. As the child grows, he learns to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Music is also an aspect of the culture of the child, which he grows up with. In this way, the culture of the people is transmitted from one generation to the other. In line with this statement, Nketia (1974) explained that:

African mother sings to her child and introduces him to many aspects of his music right from the cradle.. This is true of the Nigerian culture where the mother trains the child to become aware of rhythm and movement by singing to him in nonsense syllables imitative of drum rhythms.

Nketia went on to explain that:

when the child is old enough to sing, he sings with his mother and learns to imitate drum rhythms by rote. As soon as he can control his arm, he is allowed to tap rhythms possibly on a toy drum.

Participation in children's games and stories enables him to learn to sing in the style of his culture just as he learns to speak his language. His experience at this early stage is not confined to children's songs, for Nigerian women often carry their children on their backs to public ceremonies, rites and traditional dance arenas, where they are exposed to music performed by adult groups. Sometimes, the mothers even dance with their children on their backs until the children are old enough to take part in the dancing themselves. Embracing the above view, Emeka (1994) pointed out that:

children grow up and play together; improving their language and number skills by running errands, playing musical and rhythmic games, listening to and participating in the telling of folk tales and in their recitation of rhymes. The child in the early stage of life is mostly passive, listens and absorbs sound and noises that constitute the music of his environment. Through this natural process of growth and development of musical consciousness in the child, his emotional and physical stability is reinforced and secured.

Natural sounds and more structured musical sounds impel bodily movement, rhythmic movement and singing in children. The child learns to respond even if poorly, by way of bodily movement, to music at a time he is virtually able to co-ordinate parts of the body. This traditional informal exposure is accessible to every Nigerian child. However these legacies should be properly incorporated into the school curriculum in order to preserve the values left behind by our forefathers.

Music Education in Nigeria

Music as one of the subjects was introduced into the schools with the western tradition, while African tradition was completely removed and rejected (Ogunrinade, et al 2012). In every Nigerian society, musicians are held in very high esteem, but it is unfortunate that in our modern society, the study of music is not given its pride of place. The reason for this is that in our present educational system, music curriculum is western-oriented instead it being indigenous. Confirming this Omibiyi Obidike (2008) states that:

The background of our colonial experience in which African music was removed from the curricula of colonial schools, having been considered unfit for educational purposes and was replaced with the teaching of western music

The problems of music as a school subject in Nigeria started with the curriculum. Curriculum which, is a formal system of learning experience and organised for the purpose of integrating the growing child into adult society is properly prepared (Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary 2005). Before independence, people became critical of the type of curriculum at that time, they stressed that the curriculum was foreign oriented. They wanted the local history and geography to replace foreign one. It was after the independence that curriculum was geared towards the need of the society. The setting up of the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) is a major contribution towards curriculum planning by the Federal Government in order that the curriculum in all primary and secondary schools could be improved. However, the Federal and State Ministries of

Education, the advisory committees on education and West African Examination Council (WAEC) are directly involved in developing curriculum in Nigeria. Since then several amendments have taken place in order to fine-tune and adjust our school curriculum to suit the need of Nigerian society.

The music curriculum for all levels of education after the independence continued to be western oriented. Vidal (1996), states that:

University of Nigeria, Nsukka was established in 1960 as the first university to offer music at the Baccalaureate level and that the Nsukka programme was patterned after the American system with bi-cultural focus. In 1969, attempts were again made through the national curriculum conference to emphasise Nigerian culture that of course included Nigerian folk music and literature.

The above statement is true in view of the fact that African components were not included in the curriculum at the inception of formal music study in Nigeria.

Music in the Curriculum

The philosophy and content of the music curriculum became more African since Nigeria's political independence on 1st October 1960. Between 1970 and 1972, the various levels of government in Nigeria acquired all educational institutions and dispensed with the service and policies of missionary proprietors in the administration of schools. This led to religious freedom that encouraged the use of African music culture and tradition as instructional resource materials in schools. The advent of 1981 National policy on Education that evolved from the First National Curriculum Conference which was held between 8th and 12th September 1981 brought a new dimension to the study of music. Cultural and creative arts subjects, which included music, were recommended for primary schools, while music became a core subject in the junior secondary school and elective subject in the senior secondary school class. This policy intensified efforts in the acquisition of instructional materials, production of manpower and appreciation of art music in the society. This policy gave enhanced academic status to music in the educational system more than ever before.

However, a look into the syllabus used in Nigerian primary, secondary and tertiary institutions shows a very powerful dominance of Western musical history, literature, and theory and harmonic concepts. Meanwhile, the purpose of education is to help students to achieve their potential musically. Talent which is one of the basic abilities that exist in every person can best be developed if study is continued in the type of music that students are already familiar with at the early stage of their life (traditional music) and continued through adolescence. Anyone whose musical potential remains undeveloped, which happens too often, with western tradition that dominates the formal music education in Nigerian schools is deprived of some of the most satisfying and rewarding experiences that life has to offer.

Opportunities should be given to the students to test the limit of their potential in indigenous music knowledge in system as many domains of human endeavour as possible. It is forlorn to discover that the above policy has not been allowed to improve the teaching and learning process of music education in Nigerian schools till today. Conversely, The objectives of music inclusion as a subject in the school curriculum should provide opportunity for each child to participate and grow in all aspects of music which includes singing, instrumental rhythmic, listening and creative, to provide experiences which are truly musical and maintain

integrity of the music, developing in a child the skill and understanding necessary for satisfying and rewarding experience both as a performer and as a listener, to stimulate interest in music as part of life and culture, instilling into children a genuine love of music, imparting the knowledge and appreciation of Nigerian traditional musical culture into the children, to develop musical literacy and to appreciate the music of other countries. All these can only be realised if the content of our curriculum is changed to reflect our true culture and ways of life.

Bequests and Veracity of Indigenous Music knowledge System (IMKS) in Nigeria

Education, which is known to be an instrument of change and development, is described by Oxford Dictionary (2006) as “a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools and colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills”. The word training, acquisition of knowledge and skill is in line with factual, genuine and serious practical aspect of education peculiar to music education that can be best acquired through indigenous music knowledge system (IMKS). Aboriginal knowledge system of African generally placed premium on the practical than theoretical aspect of education. Traditional knowledge in most cases is expressed through oral tradition, music, (vocal and instrumental) stories, legends, folklore, rituals, and the laws that govern a given society. Furthermore, Jowitt (1995) perceives education as “the effective organization of man’s experience so that his tendencies and power may be developed in a manner satisfactory to himself and to the community in which he lives by the growth of socially desirable knowledge, attitudes and skills”. Exclusively, Africa Indigenous Knowledge System, whether institutionalized or not, structured or unstructured, has specific insinuations for democratization, community empowerment and nation building. It also has inferences for sustainable development, capacity building and intellectual development especially in advancing the teaching and learning of music education in the 21st century. Below are the musical bequests and realities of traditional music education

Oral tradition

African people traditionally and in the modern day have a rich oral tradition that insures the passage of cultural practices from one generation to another. argue that oral literature and music are intimately connected in most parts of Africa and are often impossible to separate. Listening has been an important skill that has been perfected by oral traditional practices. A number of African musical songs and dances were and are still transmitted from one generation or group to another orally.

Dance

Dance, music, and story-telling are among the ancient art forms that have flourished for many centuries in Africa. Music and dance are terms that we use to denote musical practices of African people. Ancient African society did not separate their every day life activities from their music and other cultural experience. Dance is the movement of the body in a rhythmic way, usually to music and within a given space, for the purpose of expressing an idea or emotion, releasing energy, or simply taking delight in the movement itself (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2010). It is a powerful impulse, but the art of dance is that impulse channeled by skillful performers into something that becomes intensely expressive and that may delight spectators who feel no wish to dance themselves.

In African societies, dance serves a complex diversity of social purposes. Music and dance are activities that characterize an African musical expression and play an important part in the lives of the people. There are different types of dances in Africa. Some are for male only, mixed groups while some are for the children. Music and dance in Africa have served both utilitarian and aesthetic functions. The utilitarian function involves the use of music in everyday activities, including music at the child's naming ceremonies, child rearing practices, initiation rights, agricultural activities, national ceremonies, war times, religious ceremonies and those meant for the dead. In most ceremonies, even death ceremonies, music and dance go together.

Throughout the continent of Africa, music plays an important role in the social and religious life of the people. Music in Africa is used as a psychological tonic. For example, the nightly dancing in the village square provides the villagers with physical, psychological, social and spiritual renewal. Music and sound generally are also used as keys to the invisible world. Stoller (1989) pointed out that music is necessary to entice spirits to leave their domain and to travel to the social world. It is also true in many African cultures that mediums require musical accompaniment to induce trances that allow ancestral spirits to inhabit their bodies. To the Western eye, such lingering beliefs in ritual and magic seems antiquated and possibly harmful obstacles in the path of modern knowledge techniques and approaches. But the truth is that indigenous African system truly exists with developed indigenous forms of psychotherapy that can be said to be highly effective because they are woven into the social fabric of the African people.

Use of Proverbs in Music

Proverbs are essential ingredients for information dissemination. They are accumulated treasures of African philosophy through indigenous knowledge system. They contain the observations, knowledge and wisdom of African fore fathers who condensed what they would have put down in writing into short witty and humorous phrases that could be transferred from generation to generation (Makinde, 1986) The African proverbs as music wordings help in the social life of the community and in the practical education and guidance of children. It is a legacy that should be taught to the incoming generation. A traditional musician who employs proverbs in musical composition identifies and understands with the public, puts them on the spot for clarifications of issues and for self-fashioned solutions thereby acts as teacher, advocator, prophet as well as an entertainer.

Religion and the Supernatural

In many African religions, particularly the Yoruba's, of the Sought-West Nigerian, sound is thought to be one of the primary means by which deities and humans impose order on the universe. In West Africa, drummers play a crucial role in possession-trance ceremonies, in which the gods enter or "ride" the bodies of devotees. A competent drummer must know scores of specific rhythms for particular gods, and be responsible for regulating the flow of supernatural power in ritual contexts. In Zimbabwe, Shonambira musicians create a sonic environment, which encourages the ancestral spirit-possession, which is a necessary part of healing.

Encouragement and Motivation

Music plays a distinctive role when African is to organise work activities. Kpelle men in Liberia use a form of vocal hocketing to coordinate their machete blows while clearing dense brush for rice fields. In pygmy societies of the central rainforest, singing and vocal cries are used to coordinate the movements of hunters through the bush. In addition, in Southern Africa, herd boys use flutes and other instruments to control the movement of cattle. (Encyclopædia Britannica 2010)

The pulsating rhythms of drummers and musicians increase the work output of harvesters (Rouget, 1985), 'and on festive occasions, music incites merrymakers to unusual heights of enjoyment and Lavish spending which is otherwise not planned for.

Social Context and Extra-Musical Messages

In Yoruba music, social meaning is communicated when structural elements are interpreted within social situations in which they are performed. Even when they are not performed within specific social situations, musical performances in Yoruba land still arouse specific feelings and reinforce social values usually associated with their traditional contexts of performance. The Yoruba Bata music provides a typical example of the nature of musical communication in Yoruba land, it is a performance which is strongly tied to the worship of Sango, the Yoruba god of thunder, and what Bata drummers play usually constitutes instrumental abstractions of certain underlying texts. In other words, Bata drummers also "talk" with their instruments and members of the audience who are familiar with the textual and vocal basis of Bata music automatically decodes messages which operate beyond the musical. This is because the language texts which the drummers imitate on their drums have extra-musical, religious and social significances. Omojola (1994) succinctly paints the picture when he explains thus:

Music provides one of the important acculturation processes through which young members of traditional Nigerian societies were educated and initiated into the society. As an educational forum, music represented an important means through which member of traditional Nigeria acquire necessary skill and abilities to make them function effectively within the society.

In addition, Bata music, a Yoruba instrumental ensemble, communicates extensively through dance. Thus, Bata dancers compliment the communicative force of the music by transposing its message into culturally decodable body gestures. Even in a situation where Bata musicians performs in a modern stage of a modern concert hall to a "listening" rather than a "participating" audience the complementary role of the dancers often serves to underline the extra-musical messages of the performance as well as reinforce the ethno-aesthetic dimension of Bata through evocative references to the ritual origin of the music. In such cases musical communication is referential as patterns of sound textures are interpreted and appreciated in conjunction with relevant social or religious contexts, values and beliefs. In such situations, "the extra-musical social meaning is conveyed (not only) by the music itself (but also) by the direct association of sound patterns with specific social contexts".

Folk Music

This is a type of traditional and generally rural music that originally passed down through families and other small social groups. Typically, folk music, like folk literature, lives in oral

tradition; it is learned through hearing rather than reading. It is functional in the sense that it is associated with other activities, and it is primarily rural in origin. The usefulness of the concept varies from culture to culture. (Encyclopedia Britannica 2010) The central traditions of folk music are transmitted orally or aurally. Its music is more often associated with other activities, such as life-cycle rituals, work, games, enculturation, and folk religion; folk music is also participatory than presentational.

Traditionally, folk music performers were amateurs, and some folk songs were literally known to all members of a community; but specialists—instrumentalists and singers of narratives were important to folk communities. The general characteristic of folk music is that its origin is rarely known to its community, and thus the anonymity of the creative process was once considered a major criterion of folk music identification. It has become clear however that those folk songs and other pieces are the result of individual creation, either by villagers or by professional musicians whose work is somehow taken up in the folk culture. The usefulness of the concept varies from culture to culture. The repertory of a folk community probably always included songs of very diverse origins. The teaching of this aspect of indigenous music knowledge system is of paramount importance to the advancement of music education in all levels of Nigerian educational system. Though students are familiar with such music within their localities before coming to the school, yet the methods of learning it in the school will give it a formal outlook. It will also aid and affirm the documentation of these songs.

Musical Instruments

Africa has abundant musical instruments available to various ethnic groups that constituted the continent. African music is extremely vibrant and lively. African culture is completely multi-ethnic; for example, Nigerian musical instruments as one of the countries in Africa continent is influenced by a lot of traditions of different tribes. However the most important thing to note here is that, musical instruments have got their roots in the tradition. Akpabot (1986) wittily paints the image:

An African musical instrument probably presents the most diversified source of information on the artistic values, religious beliefs; family life and the general social structure of a society: for every standardized procedure in an ethnic group is an element of its culture.

There are various legends and myths about the origin of musical instruments among ethnic groups. In the Yoruba ethnic group, musical origin centers around a personality named Ayan. He taught the Yoruba families the art of drumming. The Ijaw of the Rivers State have musical instruments associated with their mermaid dances. They believe humans did not invent the instruments, but they were copied by ancestors who spied on the gods, goddesses, and mermaid of the sea. Musical instruments play an important role in the lives of Nigerians. Singing and dancing accompanies the musical instruments at social festivities such as weddings and funerals. Traditional musical instruments announce the opening of a war or festival. They may also accompany the arrival and departure of a visitor to and from a royal palace. It also plays an important role in religious ceremonies. All these actualities and realities are worthy, creditable and admirable of Indigenous Music Knowledge of African that must not be allowed to disperse and evaporate into oblivion.

An extra important aspect of traditional musical instruments is that they reproduce the tonal sounds and tonal inflection of the player's tongue. A typical example is double-membrane, hourglass-shaped drum of the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria. It is capable of imitating the tones and glides of the spoken language which can be employed by a skilled musician to render ritual praise poetry to a deity or king. With African position, musician is evaluated on how poetic his playing is rather than the melody or rhythm. Traditional musical instruments give more happiness than the human voice alone. At times, obscure decorations may be made on the musical instruments such ornamentations have symbolic figures and meaning related to gods of the land.

The first class of indigenous Nigerian musical instruments is the Membranophones. These are instruments, which make sounds when they are struck with the hands, stick, or leather thongs. A membrane material is stretched over a frame and it is attached through pegs or hides strips. Drums are the most common instrument and most popular instruments in Nigeria. Sizes of drums vary from very small ones to ones that reach 12 feet. Shapes vary from cylindrical, barrel like, and hourglass. Wood is the most common material used for the frame, but pottery and gourds are also used. Some drums are covered on one end while others are covered on both ends. The position of playing drums depends on size and shape. Some of the drums are placed on the ground, on a stand, between the knees, or slung over the shoulder of the player. The talking drum is the most famous in Nigeria. This is well known among the Yorubas and Igbos. It is named the talking drum because it is to be used to imitate speech and send messages, which recite history and sing, to the chiefs.

Recommended Procedures to Teaching and Learning of Music Education

Start With Questions about Nature

Sound teaching usually begins with questions and phenomena that are interesting and familiar to students, not with abstractions or phenomena outside their range of perception, understanding, or knowledge. Students need to get acquainted with the things around them—including devices, organisms, materials, shapes, and numbers and to observe them, collect them, handle them, describe them, become puzzled by them, ask questions about them, argue about them, and then to try to find answers to their questions.

Engage Students Actively

Students need to have many and varied opportunities for singing, dancing, playing, collecting, sorting, observing, note taking and sketching; interviewing, polling, surveying, and other common exercise that encourages learning situation. They should explore and systematically observe the traditional music of their tribe and country.

Provide Historical Perspectives

During their school years, students should encounter many indigenous knowledge ideas presented in historical context. Students can develop a sense of how indigenous knowledge system really happens by learning something of the growth of indigenous knowledge ideas, of the twists and turns on the way to our current understanding of such ideas, of the roles played by different investigators and commentators, and of the interplay between evidence and theory over time.

History is important for the effective teaching of indigenous music knowledge system, because it can lead to social perspectives, the influence of society on the development of indigenous music knowledge system, and the impact of the knowledge on society. It is important, for example, for students to become aware that women and minorities have made significant contributions in spite of the barriers put in their way by society; that the roots of indigenous music knowledge system is from African cultures; and that it brings to their work the values and prejudices of the cultures in which they live.

Insist on Clear Expression

Effective oral and written communication is so important in every facet of life that teachers of every subject and at every level should place a high priority on it for all students. In addition, indigenous music teachers should emphasize clear expression, because the role of evidence and the unambiguous replication of evidence cannot be understood without some struggle to express one's own procedures, findings, and ideas rigorously, and to decode the accounts of others.

Use a Team Approach

The collaborative nature of indigenous music knowledge system work should be strongly reinforced by frequent group activity in the classroom. Indigenous music knowledge system work mostly in groups and less often as isolated investigators. Similarly, students should gain experience sharing responsibility for learning with each other. In the process of coming to common understandings, students in a group must frequently inform each other about procedures and meanings, argue over findings, and assess how the task is progressing. In the context of team responsibility, feedback and communication become more realistic and of a character very different from the usual individualistic textbook-homework-recitation approach.

Synthesis of Western and African Tradition

Western tradition of music knowledge should not be thrown out. Just as it serves as the basis of formal music teaching in Nigerian schools. The combination of both the western and the African will enrich the promotion and advancement of Music education in all levels of Nigerian educational system and thereby egg on the teaching and learning of indigenous music knowledge system

CONCLUSION

The study traced the genesis of teaching music in Nigeria, and its curriculum which has passed through a systemic metamorphosis of Western-European educational idioms and its effects on national developments. While the study did not call for total eradication of Western based music curriculum, it called for a paradigm shift to indigenous based curriculum that would give an identity and uniqueness among the comity of nations.

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