

## **CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA: INDIGENOUS INSTRUMENTS AS PANACEA**

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### **Abstract**

*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 but 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. This paper is aimed at portraying the Nigerian indigenous instruments as a major strategy for buttressing the teaching and learning of music up till junior secondary school three. The paper argues that for Nigerian music education to be meaningful and empowering to the students, the teachers should deemphasize the use of Western musical instruments which are not even readily and sufficiently available and make do with our rich locally available instruments in the classroom implementation. The paper adopts survey and library sources as its methodology. It concludes by recommending that pedagogical tools for the teaching of music as an aspect of cultural and creative arts should be founded on authentic Nigerian musical instruments while accruing intercultural sensibilities that would enhance modern interaction.*

**Keywords: Cultural and creative arts, Indigenous Instruments, Pedagogical tool and classroom implementation.**

### **Introduction**

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, schools and churches, 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 the recent time, the modern society do not utilise the value of these instruments to the fullest especially in the Nigerian basic schools. African indigenous instruments are often been 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 materials that can be used in the basic classes until the pupils get to a certain maturational level before introducing Western musical instrument to them.

Africans possess large aggregate of instrumental resources. The instrumental resources of any African community are 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 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 that were attached to some of the indigenous instruments which 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 type 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).

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 a great deal that Nigerians seem not to appreciate their cultural heritage. Observation has shown that the average Nigerian secondary school leavers today could no longer think critically and creatively. In spite of the laudable objectives and structure of secondary school education as stated in the National Policy of 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 neither were unrelated to the local environment and local needs nor did they take cognizance of the students' 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 educational ladder not with a view to encourage independent reflection, creativity and innovativeness among students. As Nonyelu (2000) observes 'no attempt is made to invent or improve on our local products to satisfy our basic needs' (p. 123). In 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) regrets that 'the focus of the music education itself appears to be on Western music transplanted or introduced into the culture' (p. 214). The question postulated for this study therefore is:

- To what extent do teachers in the basic education level utilise the Nigerian indigenous musical instrument 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 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 inquires into the theoretical and practical areas, particularly as they affect the teaching of the arts in school (<http://www.ncconline.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 gives 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 vegetation and geographical zones. People harness their environment to a large extent in the 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 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 woody clappers. 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 and gourds. 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 exists 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 situation to supplement the 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 enlivens 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 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) infers 'learning music is better done by handling musical instruments, listening to musical items and by singing' (p. 99). 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. Cambell'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 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 the students' already know and proceed to know more difficult and complex areas' (Maduewesi, 1999:28).

### **Criteria for Selecting Instructional Materials**

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 needs 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 competent music 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.

### **Need for Proper Utilization of Nigerian Indigenous Instruments in the Classroom**

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. Local materials 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 students. 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 for transfer 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. It should be noted that some of the students see foreign or Western instruments for the first time on entering secondary school where these instruments exist and most students do not even see them at all except through the teachers' 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 happy to see them, feel them and make use of them in their places of learning. Students will grasp quickly any topic taught with their local instruments rather than with expensive foreign instruments which they are not even allowed to go near to where they are kept in their various schools for fear they might spoil them.

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 instruct



ional 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**

Employing the use of indigenous instruments as instructional material can go a long way in enhancing the students' interest in music for obvious reasons. Students see these indigenous instruments every day of their lives; some use them at home during morning and evening prayers, they see them at their various churches, festivals, ceremonies, etc. When these instruments are brought inside the classroom, mere presence of them will arouse the interests of the students. For music teachers to effectively achieve classroom control he/she must ensure that the indigenous instruments are maximally utilised through various ways such as:

- 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. They should be employed in teaching all most every topic such as rudimentary lessons like 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), *ogene* (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. Students 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 and gather in advance the type of materials needed to teach every topic to satisfaction. Seeing these materials in the classroom automatically raises the students' enthusiasm and sustains their interests because they are familiar with the instruments.
- The teacher should encourage students to touch, feel and play the local instruments as often as possible. A student that develops interest in a particular indigenous instrument should be encouraged to play it to proficiency.
- Practical classes should also involve encouraging the students to play any indigenous instrument as students' areas of speciality instead of majoring in Western or foreign instruments that scares many students. Even in the senior secondary school, Students should be instructed to major in any indigenous instrument of his/her choice up to SSCE. They should not be restricted to foreign instruments.

This study is not in any way condemning the use of foreign or Western instruments as instructional materials but it is advocating that more emphasis should be laid in the use of Nigerian indigenous materials especially at the level of Nigerian basic education classes while deemphasizing the use of foreign materials or they should be sparingly used.

### **Recommendation**

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 class.

- 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.

## **Conclusion**

This study was aimed at proffering the possibility of utilising the indigenous musical instruments as the major instructional materials in the Nigerian basic education, The basic school music education is the bedrock and spring board for the music academic 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 more recapitulation of facts emanating from the immediate environment of the students at the basic level of education. Teachers should recognize the need for increase utilization of sensory materials derived from the students' culture in the teaching and learning of music in order to stimulate the students' interests 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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