
Assessment of the Prevalent Challenges in Music Education

BY

Thomas N. NELSON, *Ph.D*
Department of Music
University of California
Oakland, California

ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the prevalent challenges in music education. The richness and the abundance of both human and material resources are expected to have caused the stability and the emergence of the Nigeria twenty first century challenges in music education. It is therefore to this end that one should be concerned about the trend and the growth of Music Education in Nigeria. The study however argues among others that as music education in Nigeria is with its challenges, there is no discipline that does not have its own challenge, operational system, and occupational hazards. No matter how poor the perception of parents about music education, people continues to study music, due to its relevance to the society. Also, for music education to meet its goals realistically in Nigeria much still need to be done in overhauling the curriculum to meet specific goals of the society. The paper recommended out of many others that adequate awareness be created for the possible job opportunities that a music graduate can benefit from after the successful completion of his/her training; this can be facilitated by creating a general course for music students.

KEYWORDS: Music Education and Prevalent Challenges.

Introduction

Music education contributes to man's all-round development as a useful member of the family, community or nation in which one belongs. It embraces the development of affective domain, music appreciation and sensitivity and seeks to develop the whole person. Music is a natural and important part of young children's growth and development. In fact, early interaction with music positively affects the quality of all areas of children lives. Music education is a human behaviour that is acquired directly and learnt the same natural way a child learns language. To corroborate this, Okafor (2006) asserted that music and education are both cultural expression. In Nigeria, people have access to music education based on two levels, traditional music education and formal music education through school system. Traditionally, music is conceived as an object of aesthetic contemplation as well as a socio-cultural phenomenon which its importance transcends musical values. Musical performances often reflect general values of the society beginning from day to day human activities to fundamental thoughts and beliefs crucial to the derivation of a people's culture. Music is a multi-disciplinary art. It has a very wide tentacle that embraces almost every subject of the academia. It is both science and humanity. It is a science of sounds (physics), calculus/mathematics and acoustics. It is an aesthetic art. It has bias for history, tracing the past with a view to understanding the present; it equally deals with emotions (human psychology). It is a subject that soothes the mind and charts its graph in the

progressive direction, growth wise. According to Juvonen et. al. (2012), propounded that the usefulness of music education has also been explored during recent decades and the results have been different, depending on the point of view of the researcher. The speculation about the genuine essence of music education leads us, in any case, to the deepest levels of being human beings: knowing, feeling, understanding significances and meanings, thinking, learning and teaching, acting and believing. All this takes place in successful music education. It is easy to see that music education is closely connected to human life on an individual level, a public cultural life level, but also the professional level of the music teachers and students.

Concept of Music

The concept music has been seen or defined by different scholars, but what impresses most, is that music is seen generally as an organized sound that is pleasant to the ear. This simply means that any sound that is arranged in a haphazard and incoherent way or manner is regarded as a bundle or of nonsense or noise. Music is the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity. It is a vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion. Also, it is one of the universal cultural aspects of all human societies (Houghton 2021). Throughout the history, music has been present in one way or the other, a fact that can be verified through the pictures and writings of old civilizations. The meaning of music has also changed according to historical development, but it has always been significant for people and culture. The meanings of music are of course different when we discuss about primitive societies or highly developed cultures. In any case, musical interest has been wide and deep, and each individual has some relationship with music. Music conceptions are multiple and partly overlapping, depending on the basic philosophy behind the thinking. In many cases, these conceptions are talking about the same substance, but they also concepts differ somehow from each other, because of different points of view (Juvonen et. al. 2012). Adeogun (2012), states that music is a product of people and societies. Musical knowledge is a transmittable constellation of enduring socio-musical traits which codify, articulate and validate the unique practice of human group. It is a central phenomenon which is present in every society and is experienced by every person. Music is what gives life and identity to the human society. It is a cultural expression which is determined, coloured and moulded by the cultural environment of a people (Okafor, 2005)

Concept of Music Education

Music education is a field of practice in which educators are trained for careers as elementary or secondary music teachers, school or music conservatory ensemble directors. Music education simply means the whole processes involved in the inculcation and dissemination of musical skills and knowledge in an individual or group of individuals. Music education scholars publish their findings in peer-reviewed journals, and teach undergraduate and graduate education students at university education or music schools, who are training to become music teachers. For well over a century, writers on music education have been making powerful claims for the benefits of including music in a rounded, creative curriculum (Rainbow & Cox, 2006). Music education touches on all learning domains, including the psychomotor domain (the development of skills), the cognitive domain (the acquisition of knowledge), and, in particular and the affective domain (the learner's willingness to receive, internalize, and share what is learned), including music appreciation and sensitivity. Many music education curriculums incorporate the

usage of mathematical skills as well fluid usage and understanding of a secondary language or culture (Wikipedia, 2021). The consistency of practicing these skills has been shown to benefit students in a multitude of other academic areas as well as improving performance on standardized tests such as the ACT and SAT. Music training from preschool through post-secondary education is common because involvement with music is considered a fundamental component of human culture and behaviour. The purpose of music education are more widely, however, reveals a much stronger evidence base, seen everywhere (but not always noticed) in the uses of music amongst the general population (UK Music 2015). Cultures from around the world have different approaches to music education, largely due to the varying histories and politics. Studies show that teaching music from other cultures can help students perceive unfamiliar sounds more comfortably, and they also show that musical preference is related to the language spoken by the listener and the other sounds they are exposed to within their own culture. The Power of Music (Hallam, 2014), Susan Hallam brings together several decades of research evidence that supports the case for music enhancing psychological well-being, school engagement, creativity, empathy, language and literacy, spatial awareness and numerous other skills and qualities. The role of music education (Bugaj & Brenner, 2011; Costa-Giomi, 2004; Schellenberg, 2006), but as Hallam is careful to point out, the effects of music teaching are not guaranteed to be positive: when teaching is poor, there may be no benefits and negative outcome. According to Regelski (2008), music education aims to offer more musical experiences and widen the musical experiences which a child receives at home and in society. Music expresses something essential from life; it makes us sense, think and recognize it. Music learning is always a phenomenon controlled by society, where children are socialized to the surrounding music through growing up in their families. These enculturation and learning processes are partly implicit, spontaneous and subconscious and take place through growth and socialization processes in the same way as does language learning. Regelski (2008) sees that the possibility to have an effect on pupils through music education is based on the natural interest that children and youngsters have towards music. He sees music as a very personal phenomenon that does not contain the possibility of failure. Regelski underlines that any music is good but varies on individual perception about music, as people learn and create music all over the world. He does not see any hierarchies of different musical styles, but rather highlights the importance and significance of music making and music education. Such education might lead pupils to think that music can be a hobby producing enjoyment for the whole lifetime. This point of view offers music teachers a healthy starting point to many different music cultures. It leans strongly to autonomic music conception, which is quite suitable because it does not put music styles in a hierarchic ranking.

Concept of Music Challenges

The problems in today's music education have been caused by the quick development of music culture, its genres and conventions: the products and multiple distribution channels have made traditional methods and principles of music teaching old-fashioned and impractical. The aesthetic backbone of traditional music education has also lost its importance as the genres of music have exponentially widened. New starting points are needed to replace the traditional ways of thinking, and they should be more comprehensive and wide-ranging so that they are ready and competent to deal with all kinds of music styles and genres, not considering any style better than another on the basis of more or less abstract historic developmental, aesthetic or other invisible values.

Commitment and Interest: Many students would like to be able to play a musical instrument but truly lack to the commitment needed to do so. Many hours of practice are required every week to be able to master rhythms, technique and repertoire. Students see their teacher or other artists performing with ease and fail to understand the depth of the commitment that was needed to achieve this standard of excellence. Musical mastery requires a regular commitment to building skills over a long period of time. In some senses this is a concept that runs across the grain of aspects of popular culture, where short time spans, quick satisfaction and frequent change is promoted. However as was evident at Speech Night, a prolonged commitment to performing arts involvement can provide a wonderful sense of achievement and lasting personal satisfaction (Arnold 2021).

Priority: So often music education is not seen as a priority but instead a luxury item. When someone understands the long reaching benefits that music education has to all forms of learning, it becomes a priority to involve their child. Education systems also often fail to see the arts as being necessary or beneficial, totally disregarding the effects that learning music can have on Maths and cognitive reasoning as well as social issues such as self-esteem and confidence.

Financial backup: This is the biggest challenge in music education. Many music teachers have trained for many, many years on their instrument to master the technique and become proficient. You can never convert all of this commitment into financial value otherwise no one would be able to afford to pay what a teacher is worth. On the other hand, many people fail to see the value in an excellent teacher and would like to pay next to nothing to receive expert tuition. In the end, a great teacher is worth every penny

Adaptation for Student Needs: Consistency and communication between home practice and school facilitate a successful music education. Joining the class for field trips and other activities can also boost your child's strengths in music. Practicing together with other children to develop different ways to eliminate difficulties in learning such as: create an environment that encourages learning, plan activities that compliment their learning, and be active in helping your child solve problems

Motivating Students: A motivated student will go far. Even students with moderate talent can succeed with motivation and the drive to practice and improve. You really can't encourage motivation in a student when they just don't want to play or practice. This is often due to the parent wanting the lessons, not actually the student. Motivation is best encouraged by improvement and this in turn by practice which requires motivation in the first place.

Assessing Progress: Progress is subjective and can only be measured incorporating effort, the amount of practice achieved and the improvements gained over a specific amount of time. Comparing one student to another is a recipe for disaster as everyone has different capability, talent, and learning abilities. The best gauge of progress is a measure of improvement over effort by the individual student.

Remedies to Challenges in Music Education

- Music Education beginning from the traditional level must be sustained at all levels of a child training and growth, this will give more recognition to the social and

cultural value of music in the society. As music education is one of the medium through which the continuity and change in the society can be sustained.

- Education generally in Nigeria has for too long been seen as mainly a classroom affair. As earlier observed, the fluid transaction of formal education into traditional education cannot be easily appreciated by mentality framed by rigid regimentation and compartmentalization of life, attitudes, procedures, and responses as exemplified in classroom education. More attention to education through traditional mediums and de-emphasis on the acquisition of certificates are ways through which the goals of music education in Nigeria can be achieved. This will afford a proper integration of the art of music into human existence.
- Adequate awareness should be created for the possible job opportunities that a music graduate can benefit from after the successful completion of his training. This can be facilitated by creating a general course for music students
- A reappraisal of the goals and benefits of music education to the Nigeria society need to be sought, and proper reorientation in the educational system is required for the betterment of music education in Nigeria
- The following submission of Okwonkwo (2007:9) on strategies towards the progress of music education in Nigeria are also worthy of note: Music educators should seek opportunities to advance music education by accessing the communities and by working cooperatively with other individuals and groups such as professional musicians, the music industry, art organizations and educational organizations. A National Music Association should include all music educators as stake holders or associations formed at each level of education to address pressing issues in music education
- Accrediting bodies in Nigeria should make sure they carry out more thorough job when they visit institutions offering music for the purpose of accreditation especially in the area of instructional facilities.

Effect of Music Challenges on Music Education

Consequence of these challenges to the provision of effective music education has various initiatives to improve the quality of pre- and in-service teacher (and Teaching Assistant) preparation. The intention has been to ensure that teachers have at least a basic, foundational knowledge concerning appropriate musical activities and pedagogical approaches in music with young children. In England, the Government initiated a National Plan for Music (DFE,2011) for all children and young people (and due to be published in revised form in 2020). A key to the success of this national policy was to ensure that increasing numbers of Primary teachers were capable of teaching music (however, the Plan did not cover children under the age of five years, the statutory age for the commencement of children's formal education. Accordingly, 'Music for Change' brought together a speech and language therapist (SLT), funded the local National Health Service (NHS), and a specialist early years' musician to work collaboratively alongside each other in local community nursery settings, primarily for a period of ten weeks. The two specialists led a weekly, action research cycle that enabled them to support the resident nursery practitioners in musical activities that included language and communication foci.

Conclusion

The study concluded that music education is a field of practice in which educators are trained for careers as elementary or secondary music teachers, school or music conservatory ensemble directors. It is aimed at offering more musical experiences and widens the musical experiences which a child receives at home and in society. Also that aesthetic backbone of traditional music education has also lost its importance as the genres of music have exponentially widened.

Recommendations

1. Adequate awareness should be created for the possible job opportunities that a music graduate can benefit from after the successful completion of his training.
2. Music educators should seek opportunities to advance music education by accessing the communities and by working cooperatively with other individuals and groups such as professional musicians, the music industry, art organizations and educational organizations.
3. Accrediting bodies in Nigeria should make sure they carry out more thorough job when they visit institutions offering music for the purpose of accreditation, especially in the area of institutional facilities.

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