



Integrated Approaches to Learning: Music Education as a Viable Tool for Effective Teaching and Learning in Primary School

By

Ugwude, Doris I., Ph.D, Bosah, Ifeoma P., Ph.D, Enemuo, Joy O., Ph.D

Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, *Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka*
+23408035648221

Abstract

This study examined integrated approaches to learning: music education as a viable tool for effective teaching and learning in primary school in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority in Enugu State. Survey research design was used with three research questions. The population consisted of all the primary school teachers in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority. Simple random sampling by balloting was used to select a sample of 240 respondents. Data was collected using 25 item questionnaire tagged Music Education as a Viable Tool for Effective Teaching and Learning in Primary School Questionnaire (MEVTETLPSQ). A reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha method. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions. Findings of this study revealed that the benefits of music education in primary schools are dancing to music helps children build motor skills, music helps to strengthening children's memory skills and music can play an important part in enhancing human development in the early years among others. Also, findings of this study revealed that lack of competent music teacher, inadequate teaching and learning resources, financial constraints, parents view of music and government policy among others are the challenges facing music education in primary schools. Furthermore, findings revealed that the ways of curbing the challenges facing music education in primary school among others includes employing competent music teachers and books and other material including musical instruments should be made available. It was recommended among others that Music should be taught as a sole subject and not merging with other subjects. It should also appear on the school time table alone just like other subjects.

Key words: Music, Music Education, Primary School, Teachers, Pupils

Introduction

Music is a developmental activity in the cultivation of the senses and of expressions. It is the most effective vehicle for child growth and development. Music in early childhood creates a foundation upon which future learning is built (National Association for Music Education 2012). Music plays an important role in the life of a child. Early interaction with music positively affects the quality of all children's lives. Successful experiences in music help all children bond emotionally and intellectually with others through creative expression in song, rhythmic movement and listening experiences. Music therefore contributes to the general development of children.

Music can be defined as an art of creating and making pleasant and organized sound with the human voice or other musical instruments (Obicheta, 2005). According to Ekong (2008) music is a universal language of expression hence it is humanly conceived and practiced and used to express human emotions, culture, feelings, ideas and events. The author further asserted that music is what gives a society life and cultural identify. People the world over value music as part of their culture. Its transmission starts from the home and its continuity is propagated by the larger society. Music is simple, easy and best way to teach children. In the pursuit of music in the primary education of the child, the Nigerian government accepted to develop pupils' cultural arts embedded in performance experiences such as music, dance and drama practices in her educational institutions.

Music education is found in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) under the cultural and creative arts subject. This was formalized as one of the curriculum in the primary education and so music was recognized as one of the subjects to be taught at the primary school level. Music education is an important aspect of education that help pupils to attain maturity and full nationhood. Music education is a vital aspect of education, which develops personally, creates a sense of belonging, promotes unity among children and enables them to achieve a set of goal. Music education is an important aspect of children's education that must not be neglected by any nation. According to Gammon (2003), music education was something that passed itself off as the learning of facts about music rather than something resulting from musical engagement. This then makes it necessary for music education at the primary school level.

Primary school is a gate way to whatever individuals can achieve through education. Primary education according to the NPE (FRN, 2004) is the education given in an institution for children aged 6-11 years plus which constitutes the bedrock upon which the entire education system is built. Primary education is the key to the success or failure of the whole system of education as the rest of the education needs greater attention in terms of finance, trained teachers, content pedagogy, strategies and techniques among others that should be employed in teaching at this level. The NPE (FRN, 2004) stipulated the goals of primary education among others to include; giving the child opportunity for developing manipulative skills that enable him functions effectively and provide the child with the basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality. And one of the techniques to use in other to achieve the above is music.



Music contributes to the physical, intellectual, emotional, aesthetic and social development of the child. It provides enjoyment and the opportunity to express feelings, to relieve physical tension and to bring emotional release. Learning through music can also promote and add enjoyment to the learning of skills necessary for the understanding of all the other school subjects. Music is an important part of young children's growth & development. Abrahams (2005) averred that music is as important as life hence it empowers and instills all the necessary qualities an individual needs, to explore the world around him. Music making is a basic skill in life and as a result has so much to do with man's emotions, moods, feeling, attitudes and opinions. It is desirable therefore for children, to experience its full benefit especially in their social, psychological and spiritual lives. According to Oladipo (2013a) musical activities have contributed greatly to the development of pupils psychologically and mentally. Music education is a vital aspect of education, which develops personality, creates a sense of belonging, promotes unity among children and enables them to achieve a set of goal. Children exposed to music education at tender ages develop mental capacity to perform better in other subjects than their peers (Oladipo, 2013b). Child Magazines (2016) outlined the benefits of music to children which includes: speech and vocabulary, brainpower and memory, listening skills, movement and coordination, social interaction, self- expression and it is a special way for parents to nurture a special bond with their children.

According to Gari (2012) music nourish the brain while affecting all areas of development, strengthen listening, motor skills, language, problem solving, spatial- temporal performance and literacy, help develop critical listening skills and creating space for emotional well-being. Other benefits include providing opportunities to practice social skills, support phonemic awareness, instill acts of kindness and cooperation, calm and focus of mind and encourages interaction in non-threatening ways. With the benefits of music education, primary education is faced with a lot of challenges in teaching music at this level.

The problem of teaching music at the primary school level has been most unsatisfactory because primary school teachers are generalist and teaching of music is still centered on singing, recitation of rhymes. On the other hand, the government did not pay due much attention about music teaching in schools because most of the teachers posted to the primary schools are challenged with the obligation of teaching all the entire subjects in the primary school curriculum. At the primary school levels, music is still merged with Art and Drama to form Creative Art syllabus thereby making music education to remain a mere window dressing. The school systems deride and degenerate music, singing is used towards the close of school to wait for closing time. Music is not evaluated at the end of the school terms like other subjects such as Mathematics, English, Social studies among others. Music is regarded as a pastime. Worst still hardly can one find a teacher who read music in our primary schools, rather only those who show interest in music are assigned to organize musical groups to dance, sing and perform at school ceremonies.

Children are no longer taught utility songs, folktale songs which reflect our myth and

mythologies, songs reflecting nature, morals and values of our tradition primary school children are neither taught songs for acting/dramatization nor songs with rhythmic body movements. Children are not morally introduced to local and western instrumentation and choral art songs to develop musical aesthetics in them. Our rich traditional music culture is fast decaying, thus, making music education to lag behind other school subjects of academic study in our schools. According to Ekweme, (2000), the government and policy makers are not ready to provide necessary materials and facilities to make music education possible. The administrators in the Ministry of Education have shown a negative attitude towards formal music education in schools. The government and policy makers are not ready to provide necessary materials and facilities to make music education attractive. Music education in primary school is faced with the challenge of lack of music books and musical instruments. The government provides free education, free exercise books and textbooks in other subjects they feel are important except music.

In line with the above, Olaipo (2011) posits that for an effective teaching of the music, curriculum instructional materials such as keyboard, tape recorder, internet facility and equipped music room must be available. In using these instructional materials. A music teacher who is knowledgeable in the area of music education is required. Unfortunately, it is another challenge on its own. Teachers are not adequately experienced and trained in handling music education. The teacher is a key factor in learning and must be well equipped before going to classes. The teacher of music must have a thorough knowledge of the subject and must be able to deliver effectively (Oladipo &Owoaja, 2013c). A teacher of music must have a thorough knowledge of the rudiments and theory of music such as scales, time and signature, musical notes and so on. The teachers must be sound in reading musical notes and be able to transpose music from one key to another. According to Okafor (2005) the teacher of music must be a master of his own field and competent to discharge his duties. Again, music education in Nigeria is not funded adequately and as a result schools are not well equipped with necessary teaching aids and materials, musical instruments among others for the effective teaching of music are lacking. It is against this background that the researchers embark on this study on music education as an effective approach to learning in early childhood education. The researchers also looked at some of the challenges and way forward for music education in primary education.

Statement of the Problem

Music has not been given a serious consideration in teaching children in primary education. This is because music is view as a subject that is not really compulsory for it to stand alone as a subject and also music is not viewed as important as other subjects taught at this level. In Nigeria today, most people do not understand the importance of music education in the general development of a child and so it has not been given a serious thought on how to inculcate it in the education of young children. Teaching music in primary school is faced with a lot of challenges, which include; inadequate instructional materials, lack of teachers, poor financing, government lack of interest among others.



Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the challenges and way forward for music education in primary school. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the benefits of music education in primary schools.
2. Ascertain the challenges facing music education in primary schools.
3. Determine the way forward for curbing the challenges facing music education in primary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the benefits of music education in primary school?
2. What are the challenges facing music education in primary schools?
3. What ways can be used to curb these challenges?

Methods

The study adopted the survey design to determine how music education is a viable tool for effective teaching and learning in primary school. The area of the study was Nsukka Local Government Education Authority. Three research questions guided the study. The population consisted of all the primary school teachers in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority. Simple random sampling by balloting was used to select a sample of 240 respondents. Data was collected using 25 item questionnaire tagged Music Education as a Viable Tool for Effective Teaching and Learning in Primary School Questionnaire (MEVTETLPSQ). The instrument was face validated by three experts, two in childhood education and one in measurement and evaluation all from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. A reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha method. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions. The response options are: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with numerical value of 4, 3, 2, and 1. A mean cut-off point of 2.50 was chosen for decision-making. Thus, a questionnaire item that had a mean score of 2.50 and above were accepted while any item that had a mean score of less than 2.50 were rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the benefits of music education in primary schools?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the respondents on the benefits of music education in primary schools.

S/NO	ITEMS	X	SD	DECISION
1	Dancing to music helps children build motor skills	3.66	0.81	Agree
2	Music helps to strengthening children's memory skills	3.08	0.80	Agree
3	Music can play an important part in enhancing human development in the early years	3.28	0.94	Agree
4	Children learn cultural education with the study of music	3.05	0.83	Agree
5	Music encourages good social relations	3.55	0.74	Agree
6	With music education children learn cooperation, sharing, creativity and concentration skills	3.13	0.77	Agree
7	Music activities develops children psychologically and mentally	3.09	0.83	Agree

Result from table 1 above shows that all the items are benefits of music education in primary schools. The items have mean score above 2.50.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges facing music education in primary schools.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the respondents on the challenges facing music education in primary schools.

S/NO	ITEMS	X	SD	DECISION
8	Lack of competent music teacher	3.10	0.56	Agree
9	Inadequate teaching & learning resources	3.10	0.56	Agree
10	Financial constraints	3.21	0.88	Agree
11	Parents view of music	3.43	0.78	Agree
12	Government policy	3.31	0.69	Agree
13	Inculcating music in the cultural and creative arts curriculum	2.73	0.93	Agree
14	Method of teaching music in the primary school	3.01	0.91	Agree
15	Inadequate use of computers in teaching music education	2.25	0.95	Disagree
16	Inadequate teacher's salary	2.00	0.76	Disagree

Table 2 above shows that all the items except items number 15 and 16 are the challenges facing music education in primary school.

Research Question 3: What ways can be used to curb these challenges?



Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of the respondents on the ways to curb these challenges

S/NO	ITEMS	X	SD	DECISION
17	Employing competent music teachers	3.24	0.87	Agree
18	Books and other material including musical instruments should be made available	3.10	0.87	Agree
19	Adequate fund should be made available to provide the necessary materials and facilities to make music education attractive	3.32	0.85	Agree
20	Changing attitude of government towards music education	3.09	0.29	Agree
21	Experts in music should handle the supervision of music education in primary schools	2.91	0.73	Agree
22	In planning the curriculum music education needs to stand alone as a subject	3.72	0.91	Agree
23	Parents encouraging their children to study courses they are good at	2.89	0.61	Agree
24	Demonstration method could be used to teach music education	2.94	0.55	Agree
25	Using computers in teaching music education in primary schools	2.47	0.95	Disagree

Table 3 above shows that all the items are ways can be used to curb these challenges except item number 25 with mean score below 2.50

Discussion

Findings in table 1 above reveals that the benefits of music education in primary schools are dancing to music helps children build motor skills, music helps to strengthening children's memory skills and music can play an important part in enhancing human development in the early years among others. In line with the above, Child Magazines (2016) outlined the benefits of music to children which includes: speech and vocabulary, brainpower and memory, listening skills, movement and coordination, social interaction, self- expression, and it is a special way for parents to nurture a special bond with their child. In support of the above, Oladipo (2013) posits that musical activities have contributed greatly to the development of pupils psychologically and mentally. Music education is a vital aspect of education, which develops personality, creates a sense of belonging, promotes unity among children and enables them to achieve a set of goal. In support of the above, Abrahams (2005) posits that exposures of children to a good music education programme will develop in them, improved problem solving skills, the long term enhancement of spatial and temporal reasoning skills, improved language skills, improved outcomes in mathematical abilities, increase in short and long term memory, greater social skills and social awareness, enhanced creative intelligence and developed logical brain functions and enhance ability to think, comprehend and understand.

Results in table 2 above reveals that lack of competent music teacher, inadequate teaching and learning resources, financial constraints, parents view of music and government policy among others are the challenges facing music education in primary schools. This is in line with Oladipo (2014) who posits that the problem of teaching & learning music in Nigeria includes; the cultural and creative arts curriculum, stigmatization of music students, lack of competent music teachers, attitude of some students towards the subject, societal and parental view, poor funding, attitude of government toward music education and atmosphere of learning. In line with the above, Ekweme, (2000) posits that the government and policy makers are not ready to provide necessary materials and facilities to make music education possible.

In table 3 above, the ways of curbing the challenges facing music education in primary school among others includes employing competent music teachers and books and other material including musical instruments should be made available. This is in line with Oladipo (2013c) who posits that the teacher of music must have a thorough knowledge of the subject and must be able to deliver effectively. Also, in agreement with the above Oladipo, (2011) posits that for effective teaching of the music curriculum, instructional materials such as; keyboard, tape recorder, internet facility and equipped music room must be available.

Conclusion

Music education has not gained adequate recognition in the curriculum of primary school. Though it is recognize by the National Policy on Education and taught under Cultural and Creative art. Music Education should be recognized as a separate subject and not merged into another subject. Music plays an important role in the life of the child and should not be neglected at any level of education. Music is a developmental activity in the cultivation of senses and of expressions. It is the most effective vehicle for child growth and development. Despite the benefits of music education in the lives of children, it is faced with a lot of challenges and these challenges have affected teaching and learning music at the primary school level.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Music should be taught as a sole subject and not merging with other subjects. It should also appear on the school time table alone just like other subjects.
2. Competent and qualified teachers should be employed by the government to teach music at the primary schools.
3. The government and school administrators should buy necessary music instruments and instructional materials for effective teaching of music in schools.
4. Parents should be enlightened about the importance of students in career choice and the dangers of forcing their children to study courses they are not good at. Effort should be made at exposing parents on the gains and benefits their children could accrue through the study of music.
5. The Ministry of Education and its agencies should try and improve the quality of music



teacher education in various college of education and universities that offer music teacher programmes. This will help to improve the quality of music education at the primary level of education.

6. Music in primary education should transcend recitation of songs. It should include methodology of impacting the pupils with appropriate knowledge and music.

References

- Abrahams, F. (2005). Transforming classroom music instruction with ideas from critical pedagogy. *Music Educator's Journal*, 92, 62.
- Child Magazine (2016). Eight benefits of music in early childhood retrieved from www.childmags.com.au.
- Ekong, G.E. (2008). Recreating music for self-reliance and patriotism. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Art*, 5, 16- 25.
- Ekweme, L.U. (2000). Strategies for effective teaching of music in schools and teachers colleges. *Journal of Nigerian Music Education* 1(1) 4-17.
- Gammon, V. (2003). The subject general knowledge of secondary music PGCE applicants. *British Journal of Music Education*, 20(1), 83-99.
- Gari, S. (2012). *The benefits of using music with young children*. Retrieved from www.songsforteaching.com>teachingtips
- Okafor, R. (2005). *Music in Nigerian society*. Enugu: generation Books.
- Oladipo .O. T. (2011). Music in the Curriculum of Oyo state. Secondary schools. *M.A. Thesis*, Institute of African studies, university of Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Oladipo. O.T (2013a) “*Integrating African music into Nigerian schools for national development and unity*”. Paper presented at Africa Berlin, Conference, Humboldt University, Berlin. August, 25-30.
- Oladipo O.T. (2013b). Music classes: Catalyst for intelligence quotient. Conference of the *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*. P 117-120.
- Oladipo O.T &Owoaja T.O. (2013c). “An assessment of music in cultural and creative arts curriculum. Implications on music education in Nigeria. *Journal of Nigerian Music Education*, 4 (161-172).
- Oladipo O.T. (2014). Problems militating against the teaching of music in Nigerian secondary schools. Way forward. *Journal of Teaching and Education*, 3(2), 75-80.