Music education technology, a tool for enhancing national development in Nigeria

Ojukwu, Ebele V.* and Ibekwe, Eunice U.
Music Department Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

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Technology is a very important tool for music education and national development, since with improved technology music education reaches all spheres of development. Music serves as the people’s culture indicator and more dependable mass communication machinery which integrates in the individual the appreciation of the practical application of basic ideas. This paper attempts to highlight the areas in which modern technologies can be extensively explored through the teaching and learning of music in order to enhance national development in Nigeria. It recommends strategies which can induce constant enthusiasm and inspire teaching in the music educators for the enhancement of national development, through the use of technologies for the growth and improvement of people’s livelihood and welfare.

Key words: Music education, National development, Technology, Indigenous materials and Cultural relevance

INTRODUCTION

Every society exists with one form of government or the other, the principal purpose of which is to serve a people’s needs. The needs are individual, social, political, economical, cultural, technological, humanistic and musical and tailored towards improving the quality of life of the people. To meet these needs, each government sets up organs or agents capable of formulating workable policy decisions and responsive implementation structure. Presently, the National Policy on Education (NPE) gives a view of government relationship to Education in Nigeria. Education has been adopted as an instrument for effecting national development. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004):

Education is the greatest force that can be used to

*Corresponding author. Email: ev.ojukwu@unizik.edu.ng, drebeleojukwu@yahoo.com
realize rapid development of any nation's economic, political, sociological, technological, and human resources. There is a need for improved human and material resources and failure to realize this can lead to a constant questioning of the relevance of various educational theories and practices. This is because as these theories are put into practice, it ought to reflect in the upward growth of the nation thereby bringing about national development. In agreement with the aforementioned, Orji (2000) wrote:

When the times and circumstances of a nation metamorphose in an upward trend, the necessity grows for a corresponding calibre of men and women to operate at that particular level. The educational machinery upon which societal growth and development rest immediately becomes suspect as its results and products are automatically looked upon (P.180)

**MUSIC EDUCATION**

Music education has been discovered to be a powerful instrument for all round development of a learner both intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially (Onwuekwe, 1997). Music is an integral part of African life and it is a supreme motivator. In African context, music has been regarded as indispensable in infusing patriotism, challenges, dynamism and animation. It is an integral part of African life and a long educational system. Music education reflects the place of music in any society. To educate any human being in music is to empower the individual in making sense of universal ideas through music itself. As Swanwick in Adeogun (2006) wrote, music education in schools and colleges is ‘a vital element of the cultural process ... helping us and our cultures to become renewed, and transformed’ (p.18). Since music education has a renewing and transforming influence, programme of music education is what helps learners come to grip with socio-musical values and establish for them worth-while musical values in accordance with the changing time and circumstances.

Music education serves dual purposes. One is the preservation of the musical heritage of the society and the other is the transformation of that heritage. It is a means through which a society knows and learns about itself and others and creates knowledge of music culture, tradition and identity, providing a foundation on which to negotiate other music cultures and recognize, reflect or incorporate their ideas. Music education empowers a nation or human beings with the capacity to assess what they have musically learnt and what they ought to learn musically in future.

**THE CONCEPT OF TECHNOLOGY**

Technology is ‘the branch of knowledge that deals with the creation and use of technical means and their interrelation with life, society, and the environment, drawing upon such subjects as industrial arts, engineering, applied science, and pure science’ (P.49). In line with the aforementioned, the incorporation of technology into Nigerian traditional musical instruments to attain a desired standard. This will improve the quality and standard of Nigerian local musical instruments and will also accord our music industry recognition and acceptability all over the world. In other words, attention should be drawn to our traditional musical instrument technology geared towards utilizing technology in achieving musical knowledge in Nigerian schools with particular reference to: using musical instruments and other musical facilities in improving classroom instruction; developing local musical instruments for classroom use; and stressing the relevance of instrumental technology in the Nigerian educational system by involving the students in the construction of musical instruments. This is in agreement with Maison (1987) that music education should aim at providing means for developing ‘the various talents with which they are endowed and so enrich the inheritance of the country whose citizens they are’ (p.4). For music education to achieve the aforementioned view point, due regards must be paid to the three-fold nature of experience which according to Maison (1987) include:

- Cognitive domain – faculty of knowing or development of intellectual abilities or skills; affective domain – faculty of feeling, changes in interest, attitudes and values, including development e.g. appreciation; and psychomotor domain – faculty of manipulation or motor skills. (P. 5)

The curriculum content must become tools for attaining fuller living, and not merely mind training expedients. The conception of education as mind training or a form of mental exercise should be replaced by a kind which
embraces the three ‘H’s – head, heart and hands. Nigerian music teachers should harness our environment as much as possible by making effective use of local materials around us to manufacture or improvise musical instruments and instructional materials for classroom use.

DEVELOPMENT

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2007) defined development as ‘the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced, stronger...’ (p.400). Chukwuka (1998) defined development as ‘an evolution of a system of growth and improvement of a people’s livelihood and welfare who incidentally have come together to live in a common affinity’ (p.90). Development can also be seen as a process of social transformation through which a traditional community is made to accept, acquire and imbibe the characteristics of a modern society and enhanced their living condition. All human societies develop at varying stages of their educational institutions; structures and technology which they need to change their visions of enhanced quality of life into reality. Development aims at achieving self-reliance and improved conditions of living for the majority of the citizens of a nation. It also aimed at achieving the happiness of the people in the society. It is never static. In the light of the above, let us look at the relevance of music education technology to national development.

THE RELEVANCE OF MUSIC EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Relevance could mean purpose, usefulness, importance or relatedness. When relevance of music education to national development is being discussed, one is talking about the usefulness or purpose of music education towards the development of a nation. Music in various ethnic cultures contributes immensely to the integration of the Nigerian societies. Music in Nigerian culture is not only a social phenomenon but also plays vital cultural and religious roles. Nzewi (1980) described the musical tradition of the Nigerian culture as something that has latent psychological, psychical and spiritualizing essence in all its elements and applications. Upholding Nzewi’s view, Agu (1992) wrote that ‘the musical culture of the Nigerian tribes is quite rich and varied. It is directly associated with the socio-cultural, religious and political systems and preserved by tradition’ (p.8). Nigerians create and perform music to enrich every activity, ranging from birth to death. All musical creations serve specific purposes and all performances are carefully chosen to suit specified functions and activities appropriately. In this respect Blacking in Agu (2000a) inferred:

Music making is not simply an exercise in the organization of sound. It is symbolic expression of social and cultural organization, which reflects the values, and the past and present ways of life of the human being who creates it. (p.79)

Music education ought to be a viable part of the school curriculum and should be designed to meet the needs of the students and the society in particular. For it to achieve this objective, music education must combine traditional skills with modern technologies. Most of the instructional aids used in the teaching and learning of music emanates from the technological innovations. Technology has been part of music education, and for a long time, it has been an important aid in the teaching and learning of music. The musical instruments both local and Western and other musical equipments indicate that music education is not a stranger to technology. In developed countries like Europe and America, computer technology is inevitable in their music education because of its powers of efficiency in music teaching and music making. In Nigeria, the use of computer in music education has not developed to a reasonable level. This is due to, as Olorunsogo (2008) wrote ‘wide gap on educational plans and socio economic development plans’ (p.33). Since this is the case, Nigerian music education cannot depend so much on computer assisted learning. We should also look inward. The stance of this paper is that music education technology should not be restricted only to the use of computer and other electronic devices. Our attention should also be drawn to our local musical instrument technology. This will go a long way in enhancing the entire system of music education for better and more productive teaching and learning experience. Nigeria is blessed with varied vegetation zones which help them to create the varying instruments used by different tribes and culture. Agu (2000b) Stressed on the importance of Nigerian local musical instrument technology and noted:

Nigerians are great lovers of music. As they create and perform music, so do they manufacture musical instruments. The production of the variety of musical instruments by Nigerian was made possible by ability to harness their environment as much as possible, making effective use of local materials around them with good results. (p.89)

Numerous benefits can be derived from utilizing the technology in music education which will in turn bring about National development. Taylor (1980) believed in the philosophy of learning by doing as found in the
theories of Dewey, Montessori, and Piaget that children learn by doing and by thinking about what they do. Exposing our music students to Nigerian local musical instrument technology will not only broaden their experience in musical knowledge but will also enhance the development of Nigerian musical instrument technology.

i. With the involvement of traditional musical instrument technology in music education, students’ concentration, cooperative learning and level of creative thinking is enhanced especially when they perform as a group; It will go a long way in sustaining the interest of music students thereby improving their concentration level, changing their general attitude to learning;

iii. Students’ level of comprehension of musical concepts is enhanced owing to the involvement of students in the instrumental production and performance; and

iv. Advancement of the standard of Nigerian music education technology will not only be beneficial to ‘Nigerian composers but also to music students, music teachers and performers at various levels’ (Nwamara, 2007)

FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST MUSIC EDUCATION

Music education is one of the mediums for achieving educational goals. But it appears that it has been relegated to the background in our schools especially in primary and secondary schools. As a result, students who are naturally gifted in music are denied the opportunity to develop their talents and as a result cannot contribute effectively to the musical growth of the nation and in turn hindering national development. Many problems militate against music education technology as an instrument for national development.

The music curriculum is expected to, at the end, to 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) observed ‘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) regretted that ‘the focus of the music education itself appears to be on Western music transplanted or introduced into the culture (p.214). Most Nigerians look at teaching and learning of music from a negative perspective. There is a lot of misconception about music as a subject of study. Nzebuiro (1993) observed that ‘people who are ignorant of what music entails often react negatively towards anybody offering music as a course and can go to any length to discourage their wards from studying music (p.37).

The government also contributed to a large extent to this problem because they have not given enough attention to the subject in the area of work force and instructional materials. Most of the schools are not adequately staffed for musical studies. Speaking on the government’s neglect, Onwuka (1997) commented:

The government is not willing to employ enough qualified music personnel that should match the existing workload. Musical studies in particular are very poorly handled in terms of course content. The teachers and the taught are greatly dampened by such factors … lack of motivation and the insufficiencies of instructional material (p.87).

Poor funding resulting to dearth of musical instruments and other facilities also militate against music education. Music by its very nature as a theoretical as well as a performing art involves a broad scope of educational resources. A school that has music in its programme finds that the subject is more demanding of fund than some other subjects. The government and school authorities find it difficult to meet up with the educational cost; they prefer purchasing equipment in other subjects that cost lesser fund than music or spend money on those subjects they felt that have more prospects to the nation more than music. This resulted in many schools being in serious shortage of musical instruments and other instructional materials for music teaching and learning. Buttressing on this issue, Mbanugo (1991) asserted. ‘In the face of rising costs and dwindling educational fund, music education in Nigerian secondary schools has become very badly hit’ (p.105). Shortage of instructional materials to a large extent hinders the effective teaching and learning of music. Okafor (2009) also agreed with the aforementioned and wrote ‘the apparatus for teaching is either in short supply or decrepit’ (p.18). Music is basic to education and investment on the instructional materials for proper teaching and learning ought to be the concern of the government.

Poor curriculum has also been partly responsible for a chain of problems in the sector. For instance on the new 9-year basic education cultural and creative arts curriculum, music is seriously marginalised. It is discovered that most of the themes in the curriculum are dramatic arts, fine and applied arts with little music. No workshop
or seminar was organized to get the music teachers abreast with the new development in the curriculum, thereby putting the teachers in total confusion. The students who are naturally talented in music are denied the opportunity to develop their talent and as a result cannot contribute effectively to the musical growth of the nation. Music specialists are subjected to the trauma of teaching what they did not study and non music specialists are forced to teach music and handle the musical instruments they know nothing about thereby making nonsense of the subject and hindering national development.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purpose of music education programme of any country should be to develop the aesthetic potentials of its citizens to its highest level. In the light of the above discussions, the following recommendations are made for effective use of technology in enhancing music education for upward national development in Nigeria.

- Reassessment of the present cultural and creative arts curriculum with an attempt to bridge the imbalance in the curriculum in the area of music and bring it to bear with the needs of Nigerians at the present in order that music education will be a means of transmitting musical knowledge for achieving functional and utilitarian music in Nigeria;
- Review of the present music curriculum in Nigeria in order to incorporate innovations in the area of technology, such as incorporating master musicians into the musical academy to enable students gain from their expertise and become more proficient in the area of music technology. Attention of the students should be drawn to our traditional musical instrument technology in order to engage them in the production of simple local musical instruments.
- The government should take up the full responsibility of funding music programmes in the school system to ensure availability of musical instruments and other music facilities.
- Workshops and seminars should be organized for music teachers and music educators from time to time to get them abreast with the latest development in music; and
- There should be proper maintenance of musical instruments, equipments and other music facilities regularly in Nigerian schools.

**CONCLUSION**

This paper cannot claim to have exhausted all sectors in which technology through music education has fostered national development in Nigeria but it has tried to establish that music education is an indispensable tool for national development and that teaching and learning of music is enhanced by incorporating technology in the educational system of Nigeria. Music education has come a long way in the life of man. It plays a vital role in the shaping and reshaping of man in his developmental stages. Music education should aim at producing an all round individual, physically fit and emotionally balanced individual who can contribute meaningfully to national development. If sincere efforts are made by all and sundry to give a positive consideration to music education while providing the necessary instructional materials and infrastructure to facilitate musical studies, continued national development will be ensured.

**REFERENCES**


