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# RE - ENGINEERING MUSIC EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA FOR ACHIEVING SELF EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

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By

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## **Abstract**

*Qualitative tertiary education is a potent instrument for development, for actualization of economic development and growth, and for productivity. Hence quality education will not only eradicate poverty, but also act as the driving wheel for the acquisition of the required knowledge and skills. On the part of music, the impelling consciousness to promoting more relevant music education in Nigeria's tertiary institutions still remains doubtful and questionable. Much emphasis is laid on Segment A (SA) which is theory at the expense of Segment C (SC) practical which leads graduates to the required skills and knowledge. Hence the need for re-engineering the curricula. The few tertiary institutions which offer music courses do not have miniature music recording studios. Contemporary popular music study, African instrument technology and instrumental study do not feature significantly in the circular for degree and NCE programmes in the country. In the face of lack of facilities for productiveness among our graduates, let us re-visit the music education programmes more resolutely to achieve self-employment and productivity in Nigeria.*

Qualitative tertiary education is no doubt, a potent instrument for development, for actualization of economic development/growth and for productivity. It is also a potent instrument for increasing income distribution as well as the talent pool available to the society (Nwodo, 2011).

Hence quality education will not only eradicate poverty, untimely business failures and closures but also act as the driving wheel for the acquisition of the required knowledge and skills for social development and growth of the citizens.

Music education in Nigeria has a lot of role to play in the nation's quest to brood young men and women who will be able to fend for themselves and not depend on government for provision of jobs. Talking about education generally the standard of education in the country has become worrisome to eminent scholars and the Nigerian citizens in general. Certificates are no longer fair representation of knowledge yet emphasis is still very much laid on paper qualification rather than technical know-how and productive ability, knowledge and skill.

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The desperado among tertiary institutions' graduates to acquire these certificates by all means has resulted in the current spate of examination malpractice, examination leakages, and inducements (forceful or willful) by youths to scale through.

Okwuliseh (1999) stated that employers of labour in interviews find it difficult to pick competent candidates who could make correct sentences from an array of graduate applicants. Many of these graduates opt for banks, oil companies and other paid employment instead of their discipline. Among them are many without vocational élan, as there are others as hangers-on, vocational apostates and pirates. With politics as the current trend many who cannot practice their professions jump into politics to contest (or in most cases be imposed) for elective positions or for political appointments where they would become affluently rich within the shortest time ever.

On the part of music, the impelling consciousness to the promotion of a more relevant music education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria still remains doubtful and questionable. This paper seeks to discuss the present trend of affairs of music education in the tertiary institutions as well as proffer suggestions for self empowerment programmes to improve upon the situation.

### **Philosophy of Music Education in Tertiary Institutions**

Tertiary education according to the National Policy on Education (2004) is the education given after secondary education in Nigeria, college of education, polytechnics/monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence (or distant learning programme) courses. In other words, tertiary institutions constitute such institutions of learning.

The goals of tertiary education in the country are stated thus:

1. Contribute to national development through high level relevant man-power training.
2. Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society.
3. Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
4. Promote and encourage scholarship and community service (FGN, 2004:36).

Those goals which addressed the purpose of this paper were only selected.

Furthermore, the National Policy on Education, on University Education stated that university education shall make optimum contribution to national development thus:

- a. Intensifying and diversifying its programmes for the development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation;
- b. Making professional course content to reflect our national requirements;
- c. Making all students, as part of a general programme for all round improvement in university education, to offer general study courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism, (FGN, 2004:36).

The philosophy of music education in Nigeria, from the past to the present, has always shared a common dream with the general aim of education in the country, and in line with the national policy on education which also provides a guide. The policy identifies education as the greatest investment for the development of human and non-human resources for self-actualization which leads to self-reliance, national consciousness, unity, effective citizenship and national efficiency, cultural, economic, socio-political, scientific as well as technological advancement.(Idamoyibo, 2003). The policy further states that “education for higher professionals will aim at producing practical men (and women) and will reflect national needs”, (Taiwo, 1980 in Idamoyibo, 2003:3). Thus, in conformity and communality of purpose, the philosophy of music programme in Nigerian universities is summed up to involve serious studies that will lead to the development of students’ intellectual theoretically, analytically, creatively as well as performance abilities and skills, which will enable them to meet the musical needs of the society. All music programmes in the various universities in the country, where music studies were undertaken, embed this philosophy.

Congruous to the above, Idolor (2001) stated that the 1969 National Curriculum Conference which metamorphosed into the National University Commission established in 1989, has promoted the study of music in Nigeria with a view to fulfilling the general philosophy of education in Nigeria. In the same vein, the colleges of education which belong to tertiary institutions and which produce the middle level manpower in the country are not left out. The objectives of the music programme as contained in the “Minimum Standard”: a document formulated by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), established via decree No. 3 by the military government, states inter alia:

1. To offer courses in African and Western European Music.
2. To produce well qualified NCE teachers capable of teaching music at the primary and the junior secondary levels – the UBE system.
3. To produce teachers as well as personnel for the private sector such as churches, mosques, armed forces, media houses, advertising and music producing companies, etc.
4. To produce NCE teachers who are prepared and capable of benefiting from further education in music.
5. To promote cultural continuity; and
6. To make NCE teachers acquire skills in music (FGN, NCCE, 2009:39).

Items 2, 3 and 6 which addressed the topic of this discuss are geared towards production of quality personnel who could be self-employed, and capable of contributing meaningfully to national development. As we live in a changing society, programmes and ideologies must equally change. So also are activities if we actually mean to meet the contemporary challenges and needs of the society. What the Nigerian society requires most is how well one can play on local and western instruments: how well one can sing, act, dance or perform music. Though we are aware of the statutory review of the curricula conceived and developed from the above philosophy and

objectives, but the mind-boggling questions remain: to what extent have they met the contemporary needs of our nation? Have we achieved any reasonable and or remarkable balance between the content of Western and African music, and between theoretical and practical content? How much emphasis have we placed on traditional, gospel and popular music studies? It is pertinent, in the opinion of this writer, to point out that there is still too much emphasis on theories than practice.

### **Appraisal of the Music Programme in Tertiary Institutions**

In the colleges of education, music courses with a total of 75 hours are segmented into three. These are Segment A (SA) theory, 43 credit hours comprising theory of music, African music, history and literature of western music: music education (methods) and elementary technology of music. Segment B (SB) theory-cum practical 13 credit hours comprising aural, ear training and sight reading, music appreciation, conducting and ensemble management, elements of dance/dance performance practice, and keyboard harmony. Segment C (SC) practical 19 hours comprising applied music: piano, voice, ensemble study (Western and African ensemble: practices), and instrumentation. It is pertinent to point out that SC is the core area of practical music study leading students to the required skills and knowledge.

From the fore-going, it would be observed that much emphasis is laid on SA – theory (43 hours) at the detriment of SB and SC (32 hours) put together. The latter contains the content for the required practical knowledge and skills. Thus the programme does not provide opportunity for sustainable practical works nor does it provide work experience for students to acquire professional competence. The university music programme paints the same gloomy picture all the same. As is practiced in the universities, numerous practical activities are put together under one course with very insignificant credit units, compared to any theoretical course which has high credit unit. Basic harmony, tonal counterpoint or history of music each has 3 credit units: whereas ensemble studies which comprise two or three practical activities like Orchestra, African Instrumental Ensemble, Band, Opera, Dance and Choir has only 1 or 2 credit units. (Idamoyibo, 2003). This discourages practical development in the system. From experience, students pay more attention to high credit unit courses and give little attention to those courses that have low credit units. There is need for more inclination to practical application than theoretical knowledge. Hence Idamoyibo (2003) suggested that all music classes should be action-oriented through practical activities such as composing, improvising, listening, playing and dancing. By this, a good balance between theory and practice will be achieved. Corroborating with Idamoyibo, Harrod (2000), stated that acquiring the skills to play on instruments and read music scores is not sufficient for music education in the present era, but that myriad of other skills are needed to sustain a music career in the modern music industry where advanced computer programmes now exist. Harrod further gave an illustration of the sales of music products in South Africa thus: Classical music 5.5%: Jazz music 2.89%, contemporary (popular) music a whopping 89%. He also reveals that the University of Westminster in the United Kingdom has nine (9) recording studios on campus. One

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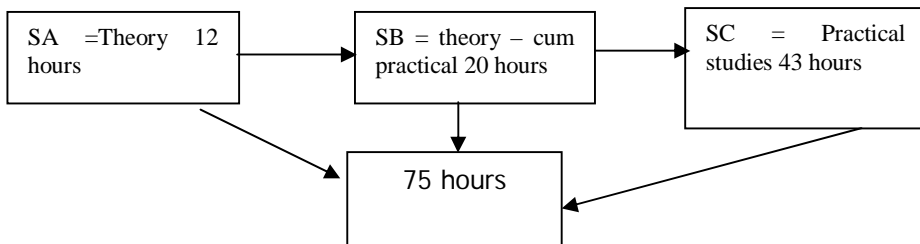
now wonders why the few tertiary institutions which offer courses in music do not have one single miniature music recording studio each. Again, one wonders why contemporary popular music study, African instrument technology and instrumental study do not feature significantly in the circular for degree and NCE programmes in the country. There is no music department in the country that has a functioning broadcasting studio, music performance theatre hall, nor listening and viewing studio. The space is not even provided, much more the facilities. Vidal (2001), buttressed that the average Nigerian (child) would rather drum, sing, dance and dramatize than study what he does. This is because African cultures emphasize performance practice, creativity and traditions as opposed to any systematic studies and theoretical abstractions. One may dare to say that the changes (review) and developments in the curricular have been gradual. But in the words of Prof. U. A. Igun, gradualism is the greatest enemy of change. In the face of lack of facilities for productiveness among our graduates, let us revisit the music education programmes more resolutely, in order to achieve self employment and productivity in Nigeria.

**Re-engineering Music Education for Self-Employment and Productivity**

Self-employment in the Nigerian context is for one to be able to create job for oneself without waiting for government or any employer of labour to provide employment. This implies that every music graduate, be it from the university or college of education should be able to fend for himself by going into professional practice to independently earn his living. From the dictionary definition, productivity is the rate at which goods are produced, when we talk about productivity in tertiary education, we must begin to look at the goals of tertiary education in the National Policy on Education earlier stated. What goods are then produced by the tertiary institutions? The goods are human beings. These according to Ocho (2006), are immature, unskilled/not fully developed human beings who are supposed to be fed into the system and after undergoing some processes, come out intellectually, culturally developed and equipped to hold their own in a competitive world.

The music programme as it is now, does not provide opportunity for sustainable practical work and experience for graduates to acquire professional competence. To achieve self-employment it should be re-engineered thus:

**Fig. 1: Proposed Programme for Re-engineering**



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In the re-engineering dispensation, SA should contain theory/harmony, history and literature of Western music, African musical forms and musicians and music education (methods). SB which is a combination of theory and semi practical courses include aural and ear training, sight reading/score reading, elementary technology/advanced instrument technology of music, with emphasis on improvisation of instructional materials; conducting and ensemble management, music listening and appreciation. SC which should form the core study should emphasise specialization on African traditional instruments (Nigerian instruments), Western instruments of individual choice such as piano, trumpet, violin, etc. Popular music study and practice should be enhanced with emphasis on copy write and performance of creative music. Traditional dance performance as well as folk operatic studies should be encouraged.

The programme (SC) should equally lay emphasis on music production/recording: studio music engineering (electronic/digital) equipment such as mixers, synthesizers, etc. Operations and maintenance should be enhanced. Apart from the above, infrastructural facilities should be aggressively improved upon. Tertiary institutions where music is offered should, as a matter of priority, establish recording studios, viewing and performing theatres for practical musical performance. There is need for the construction of special facilities such as special classrooms, sound-proof practice cubicles/laboratories; music libraries stocked with modern teaching materials such as power-point projectors, music programmes, microfilms, CD, DVDs, digital cameras, audio-visual gadgets and current reading texts on all aspects of music. Institutions designated to deliver music education services should be enriched with equipment and competent staff to guarantee a qualitative music programme since the principle behind music education is to encourage our children to experiment and explore the music scenes, they need to be challenged to the utmost. It is only by the provision of this needed basic infrastructure that the goals of tertiary music education on production of productive and self-employed graduates could be achieved.

### **Conclusion**

The needs of music departments are different from those of other departments in any institution of learning. And because many expensive instruments as well as other items of special equipment and structure are used, provisions of same are required because their presence create stimulating learning environment. These materials are pre-requisites for inculcating as well as encouraging the spirit of inquiry, wanting to know more and problem solving traits of music. At the NCE and degree levels, music programmes should be engineered and expanded to cater for the requirements of vocational, technical as well as commercial purposes. Finally, the issue of training for self reliance and productivity is something that has bearing with realization, self-conviction and self-will to resolve going in to the world of music performance business. If there is quick adjustment in the present curricula, there will be better hope for music graduates who will be self employed, productive and employers of labour in the country.

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