

## MUSIC EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A TOOL FOR JOB CREATION.

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the concept of music education and child development in Nigeria, and the availability of job through music education using the children as a case study. It is true that music education is given a very mild attention in the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This problem has made music education to be seen as a trivial subject among most children in Nigeria. But this paper has carefully examined the different stages of child's develop and how music lesson can help them academically. The paper also examines job opportunity for academic musicians in the government establishments and also those that are self employed. It also examines its relevance to the economy.

### **Introduction**

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 of nonsense or noise.

Blacking (1969) perceived music as an "organized sound into a socially

acceptable pattern." Blacking (1973) also saw music as "humanly organized sound".

This simply means that music is ubiquitous and it centres around human activities. This paper is geared to examine Music Education and human development in Nigeria with strong emphasis on the children. Before this happens, it is imperative and also of paramount importance to look at Music Education and

human development separately before narrowing or delineating it to children.

Education is the total learning experience which is meant for the all round development of the child morally, socially, academically, spiritually, physiologically, psychologically and mentally. This definition corroborates the fact that education covers all spheres of life. Okafor (2005), perceived education as “a process of discipline though training and study in the acquisition of skills and knowledge”. Ukeje (1986), viewed education in three dimensions namely: as a process, a product and as a discipline. As a process, he saw education as “a process of inculcating a way of life in the mind of a newly born child, which is like a blank table on which experience writes ideas. As a “product” education means change of “behaviour” and as a “discipline “education is body of organized knowledge dealing with the following questions and responses.

- i. What should be taught
- ii. Why should it be taught
- iii. How should it be taught and
- iv. Whom should it be taught

Jowitt (1958) in *Principles of Education for Africa* Teachers defined education as “the effective organization of (Man’s) experiences so that his tendencies and powers may develop in a manner satisfactory to himself and to the community in which he lives by the growth of socially desirable knowledge, attitudes and skills. From these various definitions, it is a fact that education brings about total development of an individual or group of individuals.

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.

Development as the name implies, means to grow, to improve to escalate in terms of knowledge acquisition, to adjust to environment etc. According to Learner (1965),” development is the process of social transformations through which the community is made to accept, acquire and imbibe the characteristics of a modern, industrial society and enhanced living condition. Also, to Lindery (1989), development is “a process which aims at achieving self-reliance and improved conditions for the under-privileged majority of the people”.

According Susu, (1997), “growth and development of behaviour are related to each other. The body must develop to make possible the changes in behaviour that are the characteristics of different ages. Maturation is the attainment of a particular level of functional ability which makes possible the achievement of a certain pattern of behaviour”. This goes a long way to show that the knowledge of these growth, development and maturation of children will contribute to the effective teaching and understanding of music by the children.

Children categorically speaking, fall between the age of 1 and 15. The adolescent stage marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood. So for the purpose of this paper, emphasis is going to be placed on the different developmental stages and personality

development among children and their different level of participation in and actualization of music.

### **Personality Development**

Personality according to Alport (1988) is the “unique qualities of the individual and the integration of physical, mental, moral, emotional and social qualities as manifested by ‘individual to other people’”. In Nigeria, when one talks of social personality, music is a functional art is not secluded because Blacking (1973) succinctly stated that music is a humanly and socially organized sound, and music is also used to imbue moral values in children by incorporating some salient aspects of values in their music lessons.

A renowned psycho-analyst-Sigmund Freud, recognized three (3) main components of human personality (i) id (ii) ego (iii) super ego. Each to these components has its own function, but the three interact to govern behaviour i.e, they are inter dependent.

The id is the original source of personality and from it, the other two components developed. The id cannot tolerate tension, it seeks for immediate gratification or pleasure. The id is unconscious and it is completely out of touch with the outside world. From the way Freud explained the id, this stage of personality may not be versatile to receive any formal or informal lesson since it is out of touch with the outside world. But, it's still strongly believe that since, it seeks for gratification and pleasure, music still has a lot to do because music is a tension- reliever. Even

babies or children in the womb (Foetus) dance to music.

The second component of human development is the “ego”. It grows gradually through contact with realities. The Ego is the only rational element in the personality. The ego also maintains a balance between the id and the super ego. It also provides realistic and logical thinking. At this stage of personality development, the child can respond to music and even react to sound that are not musical (noise).

The last aspect of personality is the super ego. It contains the moral aim of personality. It has to do with families, culture, ethic, and moral. At this stage, children can think of something, construct, and differentiate between things. At this stage, music education becomes very significant because one can identify good music, sing good music, dance to music and even play some musical instruments. It is true that children learn through imitation and observation. Music education at this state is necessary.

### **Cognitive Development**

By cognitive development, we mean how the child develops knowledge in knowing more about his environment. It equally means the mental process by which knowledge is acquired and utilized. For music education to be effective among children, it is more than necessary to work at the various stages of cognitive development and the possible musical lesson or knowledge that suits each of the stages in child's life to enhance his or her musical development.

**Sensori-Motor Stage**

This is the development that occurs from birth to 2 years. The child in this stage learns by means of its senses and manipulation of objects like sucking, clapping of hand, sneezing and grasping of foot and other body activities. Children at this stage, because of their low mentally, enjoy music such as lullaby which generally lures them to sleep. But the most important thing is that they can differentiate between music and noise that is why it can make them feel relaxed and lure them to sleep.

**Pre-Operation Period**

This the second stage of cognitive development. It is the development that occurs between the age of 2-7. At this stage, the child sees things from their own point of view (ego centric). They can differentiate between right and left. They lack intellectual ability or they cannot reason very fast. For instance, if you fill a bottle of coke with water, and pour the same quantity of water in to star beer bottle, the child at this stage will prefer to carry the one inside the coke bottle because he/she believes that it is more in quantity. So to impact knowledge on children at this stage, especially music lesson, one should select the aspects of music lesson that can suit their mental capacity. That is to say that serious of technical learning materials should be avoided as the children at this stage are merely kindergarten or at most, primary 1-2 (for those under the age or 6-7). So, the teacher should try to set most of the things they are going to learn to songs. This will

enhance their learning capacity and improve their retentive capability. They should be introduced to simple rhymes and rhythms, (hand clapping). It is believe that children learn faster when their learning materials are set to songs. For instance, if a child is asked at this stage to state or mention the different rivers in Africa, the months of the year, the number of days in a week, month, year etc, or state capitals in Nigeria, this child will be dumbfounded and nonplused because to him or her, they are difficult, but when you ask him or her to sing them, it will be observed that the child will conveniently execute the assignment without any vigour or stress. So Music at this stage is vital, enhances learning among children, and develops their cognitive domain briskly.

**Concrete Operational Period**

This is the third stage of cognitive development. This development occurs from 7-11 years, and children at this stage are to do something more than those at the pre-operational period or stage.

The child can think, reason fast and will be able to differentiate between good and bad. This time, the child can now adapt himself to his environment. At this stage, since the mental ability of the child is gradually developing, the child should now be introduced to more difficult music lessons. But rhymes and simple rhythm should not be left out. The child can learn to sing simple hymns, dance to musical accompaniment and recite poems. At this stage, playing of musical instruments may not be necessary because he/she is still physically weak. In fact, the music teacher

should introduce the child to music practical rather than theory. This will create intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic because the child at this stage is still in the primary school.

### **Formal Operational Period**

This is the fourth stage of cognitive development. This development occurs from 11-15 years. This time, the child has acquired enough problem-solving skills that will enable him or her manipulate objects in the environment. He or she is mentally alert to dismantle some test that may pose some challenges to him or her. The child at this stage is already in the Junior and probably first or second year in the Senior Secondary as the case may be. So, music lesson at this stage should be more technical and comprehensive. This child should be introduced to musical instruments of any kind depending on their choice. Rudiments of music, African music, Solfa and Staff notation and important aspect of the curriculum should be taught to enable the child acquaint his/her self with enough music knowledge. At this stage, rhyme and simple rhythm should be totally discarded because milk they say is for babies while solid food is for adults. At this stage, the child is strong enough to form college orchestra, using some simple instruments like strings, recorder, piano and other brass instruments. It is important however to point out here, that trumpet may not be too encouraging because of their physical nature.

Finally, the adolescent stage is the stage that marks the end of childhood and

the beginning of adult hood. This stage is characterized by a lot of stress, challenges and changes. During this period, the child undergoes a lot of temptation because of his new status. This period is usually between the ages of 15-18. In terms of music education, the child at this stage can also be involved in every aspect of music lesson just like the operational stage but the teacher should be ready to tolerate their idiosyncrasies.

Conclusively, most children learn by observation and imitation. Therefore, the music teacher should try as much as possible to possess good personality and live by example, so that the children will take after him. Personality is that inner person in you.

### **Self Employment Opportunities**

Music today, is one to the most lucrative occupations and professions in Nigeria. Therefore, the need to carry the children in the society along musically becomes imperative. It is believed that when these children are introduced to music at their early ages, they will become musically groomed and practically sagacious. This will increase their opportunity of becoming practicing musicians in future even when the society is clamoring for job. In return, financial remuneration is eminent.

In addition, most people in Nigeria today cherish musicians because of their fame and riches. This golden opportunity in this present dispensation where there are no white collars jobs can be more strengthened when children are introduced to music in their elementary classes. This

will make them exceptionally good and prepare for future challenges. This Bible says, teach a child the way he should go, so that when he grows, he will not depart from it.

However, adequate knowledge of Music education will afford the youths the following self employment opportunities: Band leader, Choir Master, Conductor and Organist etc.

1. Band Leader: A band leader is that person who leads a band, or in some case, manages it for another person. As a band leader, one gets substantial amount of money after each performance. This creates job for him and also enhances him financially.
2. Choir Master: This is another job opportunity for music scholars. Today, there are proliferations of churches with large choir. And for effective and efficient management of the choir, the assistance of a choir master is needed. This provides an ardent opportunity for job as the choir master is paid at the end of every month. Today, there is hardly any church that does not have a choir master.
3. Conductor: A conductor is that person that conducts or directs an ensemble (vocal or instrumental). A large orchestral or choir needs and experienced and knowledgeable conductor to succeed. This is also a lucrative job that music education can create for the youths

4. Organist: The organist is that person that plays the organ, piano, keyboard etc. In our society today, both the secular and sacred music is accompanied with the organ or keyboard. This affords the youths the opportunity to get job as organist are respected and well paid musicians.

Finally, the children will grow and definitely become the future leaders of tomorrow. This can only be actualized when they are actively involved in the development of Nigeria economy. With music, the constraint of job creation is mitigated and the financial remuneration can be geared towards the development of the citizens and the country at large. In a nut shell, when the youths are involved in musical performances, there is bound to be financial remuneration. This will help develop the economy, crimes and other sharp practices will be eradicated.

#### **Job Opportunities for Academic Musicians**

Lo-Bamijore (1990), stated that “music is a discipline with various areas of specialization”. She argued that while musicologists are devoted to research in various musical aspects, technical contents, analysis of terms, and all matters of critical appraisals, the performing musician is a master of music presentation who plays music for audience satisfaction and professional delight. A performer may work in the church, night clubs, or in orchestra, as instrumentalist, conductor or director. To become a good musician and a concert performer, one needs to study music and this study is always more

effective when one starts at a very tender age.

Through the knowledge of music education one can become a music technologist, thus, engaging in the designing, fabrication, repairs and maintenance of musical instruments. When the aspect of music scholarship is introduced to the children at early state, it will make them to be exceptionally good and versatile. Another job opportunity is to be a music librarian. According to Gerardi (1985), a music Librarian must love music and enjoy working with libraries. A music librarian may work in the libraries, publishing companies, radio and television station. To learn the craft of music librarianship, Fritsch (1972), stated that you learn by doing the job. A music librarian at a radio station, according to Garadi (1985) is responsible for cataloging and sometimes, works with the program director in selecting music for various shows. This training can be best achieved when it is started at a tender age.

There are more than one thousand and one Nigerians who are teaching music either in the primary, secondary, colleges of education and the universities. This is also job creation. These pedagogic skills can be effective when one starts early because children learn faster and become more sensitive to new concepts.

### **Conclusion**

Music education develops the child in all ramifications. The inculcation of musical skills in the children will enhance them academically and also

provide opportunities for future employment.

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