**EMERGING ISSUES IN MORALITY AND MUSIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

The idea that music might have moral implication and significance seems to be a persistent and enduring one. As a vehicle of expression, music inevitably weaves itself into the fabric of human thought and action. The belief that music can profoundly desensitize, influence, condition, and inspire audiences is not indebted to recent discoveries. Besides, theorists throughout history agreed that music could profoundly influence human character and shape morality. Therefore, this paper looks into the emerging issues in morality and music education in Nigeria knowing that moral knowledge and understanding are prerequisites for moral action. The paper adopted social cognitive theory of morality in an attempt to explain how moral thinking, in interaction with other psychosocial determinants, governs individual moral conduct. Several music education typologies were suggested for moral development in the Nigeria society.

**Keywords**: Cognitive, conduct, education, knowledge, moral, human character

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**Introduction**

The term morality derives from the Latin plural mores, meaning ‘manners’ or ‘morals’. Moral is the generally accepted code of conduct in a society, or within a sub-group of society. Thus, we speak of an individual as living a moral life, or a public-institution morality. But we also use the term, secondly, to mean the pursuit of the good life-and that is by no means necessarily the same as following the accepted social code. Indeed, moral code and it progress has always been made by individuals, academic disciple, group or nations. However, what constitutes education and inter-discipline morality is a subject of great controversy.

Therefore, this paper set out to dig deep into the concept and features of moral in music education. Dangana (1987) sees morality as a set of norms and principles help by a certain person or society according to which he or she regulates behavior to do well and shun evil. In addition, Bull (1974) posits that, morality is not only concerned with the purely personal; it has far wider, social concerns and is not made in a vacuum, hence, the idea of morality in music education as a field of specialization. It follows that no part of the total environment can be ignored, or opt out of moral responsibility, including music education. Certainly no parent or teacher of music education, or other adult in relationship with school age children, can deny moral influence. Even impersonal contacts play their part. We find, for example, that the ideals –if not idols – of many adolescents are the glamorous and successful young adults, known from the film, television screen and famous musicians, taking the place of ideals from literature and history of previous adolescent generations.

Yet it remains true that moral knowledge and understanding are prerequisites of moral action. No one can act upon a moral principle, or precept, or rule, unless he is first aware of it. He must, for example, have learnt respect for the property of others if he is to know that he should resist the temptation to take it when safe opportunity offers. No one can practice the golden rule of reciprocity unless he is aware of it – and, above all, has understanding of its application to concrete situations.

The objective of this paper is to examine the various emerging issues in morality vis-à-vis music education in Nigeria. The objective of this paper naturally exhumed thought provoking questions such as, what is the relevant of moral to music education. Is there corroboration in the general philosophy of Nigeria education and music education? What is then missing in the music education in Nigeria?

**Conceptual Clarifications**

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Etymologically, the word education is derived from the Latin ‘educatio’ (a breeding, a bringing up, a rearing) from educo (I educate, I train) which is related to the homonym educo (I lead forth, I take out; I rise up). Craft (1984) noted that there are two different roots of the English word ‘education’. They are ‘educare’, which means to train or to mold, and ‘educare’ meaning lead out. While the two meanings are quite different, they are both represented in the word ‘education. Therefore, education is more fostering understanding and an appreciation of emotions and feelings. It is concerned with changes on how people can act with understanding and sensitivity to improve their lives and those of others. Marx (1977) famously put it that, ‘all social life is practical…philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it’. Smith and Smith (2008) opined that developing an understanding of an experience or a situation is one thing, working to do something about it is quite another hence for appropriate action to occur there is needs to be committed.

Besides, music education is a process of facilitating teaching and learning of music or the acquisition of musical knowledge, skills values and attitudes. According to Adedeji (2013) music education deals with the technicalities of music pedagogy’, in this sense, music methods include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, and directed research. Music education can take place in formal or informal settings and any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks and feels. Generally, the methodology of teaching is called pedagogy.

Furthermore, moral education is the transfer of moral values, rules and regulations and generally enhances the development of good moral conduct. It also strengthens the idea of morality as an important foundation for healthy social order. This through it values and life styles are taught. If education is to achieve its objectives in the society, it must be imbued with morality in a very high degree. Any education devoid of morality is incomplete and useless; it is harmful to the individual who acquires it and the society in which he lives.

**Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is hinged to social cognitive theory of morality. The conceptual roots of social cognitive theory are found in Edwin Holt and Harold Chapman Browns in the 1931 book theorizing that all animal action is based on fulfilling the psychological needs of feelings, emotional and desire. The social cognitive theory of morality attempts to explain how moral thinking, in interaction with other psychosocial determinants, governs individual moral conduct. The social cognitive theory adopts an ‘interactions` perspective to the development of moral behavior. Personal factors of the individual, such as individual moral thought emotional reactions to behavior, personal moral conduct, and factors within their environment, all interact with, and effect each other. Social cognitive theory attempts to understand why an individual uses a lower level of moral reasoning when they are, theoretically, at a higher level. This theory also attempts to explain the way social interactions help to form new, as well as change existing, moral standard.

The influence of modeling and other such social factors are explored as moral functions of growth and development, such as moral development understood by considering a combination of social and cognitive factors, especially those involving self-control. In short, the position of social cognitive theory is that the socio-environment determines moral behavior of individual within such society. The social cognitive theory of morality argues that personal values and standards of conduct of each individual from many difference sources of influence and maintained by institution promotion. It also argues that a broad and dynamic society reality is what governs that adoption of personal values and standards of conduct.

**Emerging Issues in Social Morality**

It is disturbing when the normative system breaks down and predictably of behavior vanishes. Oyeneye, (2004; 128) states that, ‘norms breakdown occurs when there are conflicting sets of norms and when groups and societies change. There are several norms of breakdown of law and order and norms cease to be effective at controlling people’s behavior in the society. This also is a reflection of strange behavior of the students in academic institutions. In Nigeria context, moral values includes; respect for elders, tolerance and forgiveness, obedience to constituted authority, humility, harmonious living, honesty and maintenance of peace and order. Morality is the creation of the society and acts as a cohesive factor.

The crisis of moral values in Nigerian society is one of the most fundamental problems confronting us as a nation. The fundamental question is that, ‘at what point does Nigeria thrown away her moral values? In the word of Oyeneye (2004) if morals are removed, in any given society what would be left will be chaos. Currently, there are lawlessness and chaos in our streets, corruption pervade every nook and crannies of the society, lack of respect for each other, disobedience to parents and constituted authority, arm robbery, internet fraud, forgery dishonest attitudes, prostitution, wrong psyche, religious intolerance, favoritism, betrayal, sabotage, lack of security, kidnapping, irresponsible, stealing, cultism, and murder, drunkenness, lust infidelity, harshness, racism and many other ugly moral deficiencies.

In relating morality with religious, various views have been expressed. The traditional position holds that morality and religion are inseparable, the one flows from the other and morality has its sole basis and justification in religion. It follows that, if religion goes, morality goes with it; nothing but moral confusion and decay can be expected when men lose their hold on religion. But the challenges are that Nigerians are religious people, but their moral value or standard is zero, hence the confusion of our time. The danger of tying morality to religion has been long realized. This transcendental morality is, moreover, clearly inadequate and is inevitably conservative. In our present society, it is no longer adequate to quote Biblical or Quran texts as answering moral problems. Indeed, the very complexity of the problems raised by new knowledge and new attitudes rules out easy answers. Despite the apparent decay in religious faith in the western nation, their level of moral decay in the area of corruption, social justices, care and concern for the citizenry is, at least, adequate.

Therefore, the search for moral integrity in Nigerian nation is the preoccupation of this paper. Psychology studies the human being primarily as an individual. Sociology studies him primarily as one of a group. However, musicology studies human being primarily as an individual and as a member of a group. Therefore, both insights are essential to the study of development in moral judgment. In the moral sphere, therefore, there are two essential factors- the human being and his environment. In the republic, Plato assumed that music’s expressive character resembled certain aspects of the inner life and pointed to higher, spiritual realities. Plato acknowledged the innate psychological and spiritual nature of music, and concluded that because music could arouse and habituate particular emotions, it could also shape the character of its listener, hence our adoption of musical weapon in this analysis.

**Music Education and Moral**

Music is a moral discipline. Philosophers and sages throughout the ages have asserted the decisive influence music can have on the character and moral formation of the young and on the formation of a civilization and both can establish and destroy morality. The notion that music might have moral significance seems to be a persistent and enduring one. As a vehicle of expression, music inevitably weaves itself into the fabric of human thought and action. The belief that music can profoundly desensitize, influence, condition, and inspire audiences is not indebted to recent discoveries. Plato’s theories on music shaped the structure of Greek education. The significance attributed to the character forming quality of each individual harmoniai ensured that music played a paramount role in paideia. Paideia was the process of educating humans into their true form. In a sense, paideia was the complete pedagogical course of study necessary to produce a well-rounded, fully educated citizen (Whitfield). This educational program was devoted to the education of the inner being-of the shaping of virtue and character-and music was considered a primary vehicle of character formation because of its ethical power and ability to form the rational mind.

In the Nigerian society, however, we seem to have managed to create an erotic attachment to all the wrong things. Or more precisely parents and teachers have, by default, allowed the entertainment industry idiosyncrasies to dominate the lives of school children and adult in the society. Music education or musical environment is a large part of moral environment. Therefore, what kind of musical environment can help to create a good moral environment? Or in what direction does sanity lie? The society need to reclaim some territory for their children. Of course, the odds are very much against them. But at least one factor is in their favor. When children are young, they are still open to all kinds of music, and it is a good time to help them cultivate good taste in music. Therefore, the following are the music education typologies suggested for moral development in the Nigerian society.

**Music that tells a story:** Music has traditionally been linked to story. The Yoruba poems recount long and detailed stories; the Igbo traditional ballad tells brief and simple stories, and in short most African music’s are meaningful. African songs that tell a story have a natural attraction for us because they suggest that there is beauty in nature. The events of life or the story seem more ordered and less chaotic when they can be given musical expression. Life conceived as a comic opera is preferable to life experienced as a random collision of random events. This sense of meaning is essential to morality: morality does not thrive in a climate of nihilism.

Reasoning must play a part in moral development, as in every other part of the child’s growth. Therefore, reasonable music that is rooted in philosophical stories should be used in our schools. Moral concepts have their emotional loading which is present in folk or traditional music. There is also a cognitive aspect of moral; and folk-meaningful music evokes cognitive reasoning rather than emotionally-toned attitudes. It is an unfortunate mistake to think that moral formation consists simply in teaching children the Ten Commandments. Such instruction provides good and important intellectual formation, but it is not moral formation. Moral formation is the formation of the will and the emotions, accustoming them to delight in their proper objects. How can we teach our passions to rejoice in accord with right reason? Folk music is one of the most powerful weapons and means. Music has traditionally played an important role in African culture. It is essential in representing the strong African heritage and its importance can be seen in many aspects of the culture. Unlike many cultures today, ancient African-cultures encompassed into their everyday lives. Dance, story-telling and religious practices are all grounded on the music of the culture. Music is especially vital in African dance, so much that in many African cultures, there are no two words in the language used to distinguish between the two.

Essentially, when one uses the term music in reference to Africa culture, it should include the idea of moral dance. And unlike many western civilizations, in the African culture, music and dance means so much more than something done just to have a good time. It has a much greater purpose. For many cultures, a dance is commonly between two people. In the African culture, a dance is usually done by a community or group and for a specific purpose. The idea of utilitarianism suggests that the value of a thing depends on its use, and not its beauty. In many ways, African music is a utilitarian function used in vital aspects of life such as, a child’s naming ceremony, initiation rites, agricultural activities, national ceremonies, war times, religious ceremonies, and ceremonies for the dead.

**Music that has stood the test of time:** One of the characteristics of music education that shape moral is the music that has stood the test of time. The music that possesses such timeless quality are; sacred music, arts music, traditional music, hymns, chants, and meaningful popular music. This timeless quality is not confined to religious music or classical music; some of the popular music of the early periods seems to have this time-transcending quality. Regardless of the genre, immoral music do not stand the test of time, they are ephemeral.In the African content, the question of the moral character of music is complicated. The fact that must is appreciated in many different ways including dance does not make the music immoral. Africans happily dance to only meaningful music and condemn amoral types. The music generally accepted by a civilization, for timeless period, will profoundly determine its moral health, and ultimately its growth or demise.

Folk music is usually preserved through ‘griots’ in African continent. A ‘griot’ or praise singer is an historian, storyteller, poet and and/or musician that helped to preserved African folk music. The griot is a repository of African oral tradition and is often seen as a societal leader due to his or her traditional position as an adviser to royal personage. As a result of the former of these two functions, he or she is sometimes also called a bard and has to know many traditional songs without errors; he must also have the ability to extemporize on current events, chance incidents and the passing scene. His wit can be devastating and his knowledge of local history formidable. Although they are popularly known as ‘praise singers’, griots may be their vocal expertise for gossip, satire, or political comment. The word may be derive from the French transliteration ‘guiriot’ of the Portuguese word ‘criado’, or masculine singular term for ‘servant’. These story-tellers are more predominant in the northern portions of West Africa. According to Bebey (1977)

The West African griot is a troubadour, the counterpart of the medieval European minstrel. The griot knows everything that is going on…he is a living archive of the people’s traditions…The virtuoso talents of the griot command universal admiration. This virtuosity is the culmination of long years of study and hard work under the tuition of a teacher who is often a father or uncle. The profession is by no means a male prerogative. There are many women griots whose talents as singers and musicians are equally remarkable.

In African languages griots are referred to by a number of names; onilu or akorinta in Western Nigeria. Jeli in Northern Mande areas, Jali in Southern Mande areas, guewel in Wolof, gawlo in Pulaar, and Iggawen in Hassaniyan.

**Music that can be shared:** Africans are communal being. Therefore, music education for moral training should embrace music that can be shared in the community. Such music must bring families together in song: children songs, folk songs, ballads, parlor songs, carols, around-the-piano songs, story-telling songs, and songs that do not need amplification. Moonlight story songs are a cultural phenomenon created by people and enjoyed by every individual. Music is a pleasant cultural pursuit and a socializing force: an essential part of child’s growth and development. The nature of African work, trade and environment makes him want to sing and dance. Young ones are taught the moral values of the society through folk-songs, didactic songs, folk stories, lullabies, game songs and religious songs. Each young ones learn from the parents, elders, age groups, associations and other members of the society. Therefore, music that can be shared among the parents, elders and the young ones should be incorporated into formal music education.

Storytelling is one of the intrinsic components of many African cultures. Folktales are told not only for fun and amusement, but also to educate and teach values and morals in society. On nights when it is clear and there is good moonlight, the storytelling sessions may be prolonged and last well into the early hours of morning. The stories are often based upon various animal characters. In such, the animal character in question will assume multiple character traits of both animal and human. Animal characters frequently are wise, honest, cunning, treacherous, or foolish and behave in a manner. Stories are accompanied by songs, which add dimension to the telling and are often central to the stories plots. These folksongs are accompanied by traditional drums and other western instruments. Some notable stories in Yoruba culture are: *babalawo mo wa bebe, aja duro ranmi leru, mori keke kan, and omode meta nsere.*

**Music that channels emotions:** The basic appeal of music is an emotional one. Education is not a matter of denying emotions but of civilizing them of attaching them to fitting objects. This process of sublimation does not weaken emotions; rather, it gives them more power by giving them focus. And serious moral endeavors, whether individual or communal, need such channeling. Action parked music is used by the military during parade, also emotion music includes: hymns, spirituals or gospel music for spiritual growth; folksong may also be used to spur emotion during a burial to mourn the departed soul. Emotion music may also be useful during political campaign and even for peaceful protest.

Music that channel emotion is a powerful weapon in the hand of civil rights movement: a movement of great seriousness, dignity and human protection. The point is that in both public life and private, we need to be able on occasion to channel our feelings toward goals that go beyond immediate gratification. It was also necessary that such propelled powerful emotion music must be monitored and controlled. Therefore, for positive moral development of individual in the society and for a good moral environment, emotional packed music should be used in a positive manner. African American spirituals, usually with a Christian religious theme, were originally monophonic and acappella and were antecedents of the blues. The terms Negro spiritual, Black spiritual, and African-American spiritual, jubilee, and African-American folk songs are all synonymous. Spirituals sometimes provided comfort and eased the boredom of daily tasks. They were an expression of spiritual devotion and a yearning for freedom from bondage. Sometimes they were a means of releasing pent up emotions and expressing sorrow.

In song, lyrics about the Exodus were a metaphor for freedom from slavery. Songs like ‘Steal Away (to Jesus)’, or ‘Swing Low, Sweet Chariot’ rose unexpectedly in a dusty field, or sung softly in the dark of night, signaled that the coast was clear and the time to escape had come. The River Jordan became the Ohio River, or the Mississipi, or another body of water that had to be crossed on the journey to freedom. ‘Wade in the Water’ contained explicit instructions to fugitive slaves on how to avoid capture and the route to the successfully make their way to freedom. Leaving dry land and taking to the water was a common strategy to throw pursuing bloodhounds off ones trail. ‘The gospel Train’, and Swing Low’, Sweet Chariot’ all contained veiled references to the Underground Railroad, and ‘Follow the Drinking Gourd’ contained a coded map to the Underground Railroad. The title itself was an Africanized reference to the Big Dipper, which pointed the way to the North Star and freedom. (http://www.historyonthenet.com/authrntichistory/1600-1859/3-spirituals)

**Music that shapes the soul:** Morality is not simply about learning the rules of right and wrong, it is about a total alignment of humans. Because music moves our whole being, it plays a major role in setting that alignment. Folk music, chant, choral, spirituals, lullabies and hymns convey a sense of order, proportion, and harmony in the soul. There is an ancient belief that the stars, the moon, the planets, all of creation, move to a heavenly music. Music that shapes the soul transcends the composers’ personal and seems to originate from a higher source.The creation and practice of music is tightly wound with human emotion, character, and the overall tapestry of human experience. Music arouses sentiment, whether it evokes the intended sentiment or not. Thus, music cannot be underestimated as a powerful shaper of human virtue, character, and emotion. Musicians possess the ability to profoundly influence an audience. The nature of music and the manner in which musicians utilize it ensures innumerable ramification that cannot be ignored. Music is often overlooked as a therapeutic intervention: singing, listening, and creating music of any kind will provide immediate biological and psychological benefits for everyone. In fact, music can be a salvation and antidote to most psychological challenges: that’s why people sing in the shower and while driving the car, or simply listen to music that’s inspiring and distracting from emotional upset.

Many individuals who listen to music on a regular basis understand the power that it has in provoking emotions and thoughts. Music has the ability of altering ones experience so that their day can become magical to a level where it may even become spiritual. When an individual connects with the music that they are listening to it can release a selection of different sensations, as well as a feeling of release and solace. However, music also has a number of other influential factors and can even influence the genetic code within each one human being. It does this through our thoughts and through how we relate with one another. Sometimes it seems like there’s nothing that can lift that shadow weighing on your soul…until you hear that perfect song, whether it’s the lyrics, or tune, or combination of both, and the restorative benefits of music is astonishing. (at http://www.beliefnet.com/wellness/health/music-to-sooth-soul.aspx#8dmH5kEmIS15g.99)

**Music that has a focus:** Every form of music must take from the created order, elements that it imitates and arranges so as to articulate a feeling or conviction which the artist wishes to express to his fellow man. Music that has a focus may imitate or represent certain natural bodily motions which commonly accompany man’s feelings such as joy, anger, hope, sorrow, fear, despair, love, hate, and courage. Music is an art form, moves man to delight in the emotions and passions which the music evokes. The repeated listening to a certain kind of music becomes habitual in the strictest sense of the word: the emotions clothe themselves with a habit, either a virtue or a vice, according to the quality of the music one habitually listen to. Therefore, music that has a focus helps dispose man to the virtuous and honorable ordered life style and virtuous emotion.

**Summary and Conclusion**

Human society is in a state of flux. The culture and history of races of the world is that of transformation, regeneration, modification, change and development. In spite of modernization some of the traditional values of different races are still valid and adhered to. However, the direction of the development of Western civilization has been a source of concern to moralists. Albert Schweitzer, a German philosopher, declared that Western civilization is a disaster, due to the fact that its development followed a materialistic world-view from which ethical and spiritual dimensions were left out. Omoregbe (1989) quoted Albert that: a civilization that develops only on its material side and not in corresponding measure in the sphere of the spirit… heads for catastrophe.

Morality is simply the term used to describe living together in human society. All morality, therefore, has three constituent concerns-self, others, and the relationships between self and others. The process of moral education may, therefore, be broadly described as the socialization of the child, shaping him into a conforming member of the society. If, then, morality and society are co-terminus, so that social living is saturated with moral evaluations, it is clear that no moral education is given in a vacuum. Music thereby aids the development of moral maturity which is the hallmark of responsible citizenship in democratic society.

What, then, is the origin of this sense of moral obligation? To be universal, it must obviously be the result of natural processes – not of something imposed artificially from without. The child, then, is born without a conscience as such. He is neither moral nor immoral, but simply amoral. Any moral sense that he is to achieve must come from his society. However, the itemized environmental conditioning music may help the child to shape his character. To say that the child is born without a conscience is not, of course, to say that he is born without moral potential. But it is to realize that he does not come into the world with a ready-made set of moral concepts or principles. Growth is the law of life, and there must be moral as well as physical and mental growth.

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