**NIGERIAN MUSIC CURRICULUM: CONTENTS AND THE SOCIAL CONFLICTS**

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**Abstract**

Curriculum development is regarded as an integral part of educational planning and therefore as subordinate to the overall planning objectives of the educational system. There has been a growing awareness among the Nigerian Music Educators of the importance of the relevance of the Music Curriculum contents to the societal aspirations. In view of this, this paper takes critical examinations of the music curriculum process and how it might best be directed and guided as a tool for musical educational changes in the society. The study adopted a qualitative descriptive and prescribed guideline in order to bridge the gap between the curriculum developer’s ideas and the reality of what happens in the school and the larger society. The paper concluded that changes in the curriculum need a more research, better organized study and participatory approach.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Educational system, Music Education, Objectives.

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**Introduction**

One of the most potent issues raised by music scholars over the years is the non-relevance and non-relativity of music curriculum contents to the aspirations of the Nigerian society. This ambitions, to a considerable extent was propelled by the hope that indigenization of music curriculum contents could help to pacify the yearnings, aspirations and sensibility of the masses musically. Hence, in this atomistic assumption that predominates in our commonsense thought, this paper takes a critical viewpoint.

The question is whether we have not too readily assumed that music curriculum can cope with wave after wave of changing in the ephemeral Nigerian society music. This paper does not underestimate the complexity of the curriculum processes which is not easy to isolate from social forces operating within and outside the school. However, the concern of this paper is the critical examinations of the music curriculum process and how it might best be directed and guided as a tool for music educational changes in the Nigerian society. In the context of this paper, music curriculum processes are the different stages the ‘materials’ (contents) meant to be included in the school curriculum must pass through before it eventual metamorphosis into the school programme.

Therefore, this paper critically examines what is presently being used in the Nigerian music scene and how relevant its contents could be brought to the classroom situation. In the review of relevant literatures some of the strong scholarly voices agitating for a reflection of societal music in the curriculum includes; Vidal (2008), Omibiyi (1983), Faseun (2008), Okafor (1998), Ekwueme (2002), Adedeji (2008), Adeogun (2001), Idolor (2001) and Kehinde (1995) just to mention a few. According to Adedeji and Ajewole (2008) ‘observed with dismay the imbalance in the current music curriculum of Nigerian tertiary institutions…these imbalances are responsible for the unemployment and redundancy of many of our music graduates’. The above provoked several questions in order to be able to solve the identified problems. Such questions include;

1. What is school music curriculum?
2. What is the relevance of societal music in the school curriculum?
3. What type of societal music may be included in the curriculum?
4. In what manner can it be reflected?
5. What contributions and benefits are to be derived in such an exercise?

**Theoretical Basis**

The theoretical framework for this study is hinged on the Aristotle’s theory of art as an imitation of life and nature. The theory interprets art as an attempt to provide an accurate representation of the object, social reality and experience. Therefore, the sociological view of art as representation of social reality is the theory that suits the visions of this study.

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive analysis and focused on the contextual analysis of few selected society music and examine the lyrics of some popular music that are currently making waves in Nigeria.

**The concept of curriculum**

In formal educational system, a curriculum is the set of courses and their contents offered at a school or university. As an idea, curriculum stems from the Latin word for ‘race course’, referring to the course of deeds and experiences through which children grow to become mature adults in the society. A curriculum may be prescriptive, based on a more general syllabus which merely specifies what topics must be understood and what level to achieve a particular grade or standard.

In the word of Bobbit, J.F (1918) curriculum as an idea has its roots in the Latin word for course race. This invariably denotes that it encompasses the entire scope of formative deed and experiences occurring in and out of school; experiences that are unplanned and undirected, and experiences intentionally directed for the purposeful formation of adult members of society.

The contemporary views of curriculum reject the features of Bobbits postulations, but retain the basis curriculum as the course of experiences that forms human beings into persons. Furthermore, a curriculum may be partly or entirely determined by an external authoritative body. In short curriculum means two things (i) the range of courses from which students choose what subject matters to study, and (ii) a specific learning programme. In the later case, the curriculum collectively described the teaching, learning, and assessment materials available for a given course of study**.**

**Music Curriculum and Social Conflict**

Music curriculum is a document that contained written items of what the teacher teaches in the school for the primary purpose of making changes in learner’s educational musical attitude. In the views of sociologists, education stands for the process of cultural transmission and renewal hence in the word of Nduka (1975) education is a process of cultural transmission and using culture to embrace the people’s art, music and literature.

The question that readily comes to mind is that do we still have an authentic or original Nigerian culture? If we are affected culturally, is there any hope of cultural or indigenization of music curriculum? Is our mode of educational instructions in foreign languages (teaching and learning languages), foreign mode of dressing, housing arrangement, food, moral instruction, educational institution and societal values are in the support of our yearning for authentic traditional music curriculum?. Will our present so-called sophisticated society of high-hill shoes, communicating in foreign dialect, globalization and immergence of internet, foreign mode of worship in the local churches and the mosques, high regard for a good speaker of English and low regard for traditional communicators, as well as endemic poverty in the society, will all these supports indigenization of music curriculum?

The lopsidedness and confusions in the Nigerian society, due to the adoptions of foreign life style, is so great to the extent that the entire society is in slavery even within our own country. Agitations for the indigenization of music curriculum have not provided an alternative to one being used presently. This is an indication of hypocritical request and an under value of our culture and languages. Most music scholars/teachers can neither communicate nor sing in their local dialects without the bastardization of the language.

The importance of language as a subject in the curriculum and as a medium of instruction in the school system cannot be over-stated, however, if English is used as a medium of instruction right from the start of schooling, can essential skills and traditional musical knowledge be imparted to young children? If the answer were in the affirmative, obviously, education in English, would lead, to cultural musical disorientation. As already pointed out by Fafunwa (1968) that education in foreign language is an aberration; it has the tendency of maiming the supposed beneficiaries from such educational experiences emotionally and intellectually. The formative period (0-12 years) constitutes a period when the child’s aptitudes, attitudes, emotional and psychological instincts come to the fore, hence, the mother tongue appears the more natural way of learning.

Societal songs, traditional instrumentation and dance steps required and preferred for indigenization of music curriculum have been affected. Most of the current musical albums in Nigeria nether belong to the English, neither folk nor traditional Nigerian setting. Mixed languages of meaningless connotation abound severally in the society. It is a fact that music is one of the potent agents of socialization. However, the present popular or societal music dwell mostly on immoral slang’s and un-culture or un-African languages. It naturally promotes such vices as moral laxity, drug abuse, nudity, sex among the teenagers and general decadence in the society.

Evidently, our daily living habits negate what we preach with our mouth musically. Traditional songs are tagged devilish, mother languages are no more valuable, traditional musical instruments are undervalue, conferences on traditional music are held using European languages, dances are composed in European styles and pronunciation of English words are given priority to the detriment of traditional pronunciation. Ironically, it is interesting to note that European countries like Germany and French uses their local dialects as a medium of instruction from their pre-primary education to the university levels.

Without mincing words, Nigerian music curriculum calls for a state of emergency of all the stakeholders of the education industry to review its contents to be geared towards the production of the desired citizenry.

**Popular Music and the Classroom**

Essentially, however, the present societal music must be censored before it is taken to the classroom. This is in conformity with the Greeks doctrine of ethos or the moral qualities or effects of music on the will and thus on the character and conduct of human beings. The particular music ones listen to imitates a certain passion and one become imbued with the same passion and over a considerable period, one’s character will be shaped by the same passion.

Melodies of expressive softness and indolence are to be avoided in the education of those who are being trained to become governors of the ideal states in the Greek doctrine of ethos. Hence, Dorian and Phrygian modes are to be included as these promotes the virtues of courage and temperance respectively. According to Aristotle, Greek philosopher (384-322 B.C), music directly imitates (i.e. represents) passion or state of the soul such as gentleness, anger, courage, temperance and their opposite qualities.

The above is a pointer to the importance of selectivity in the classroom music. Even traditionally in Yoruba context, there is a concept of ‘orin omoluabi’, songs for moral upright being ‘orin to dara’, ‘orin to ni eko’, ‘orin to see ko ni awujo’. In the context of the above stated traditional Yoruba philosophy, it is necessary to examine the lyrics of some popular music that are currently making waves Nigerian.

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| **Pop. Music Albums** | **Sample/Main lyrics** | **Interpretation of Themes** |
| 2 face | Enter the place | Having an affair |
| Kolabo | Oko ninu Obo | Human private parts |
| Psquard | Dome I do you | Referred to sex |
| DJZeez | Ori e foka sibe | Violent sex |
| Danfo driver | Jogodo | Smoking of Indian helm |
| Olu maintain | Yawuse | Internet fraud |
| General pipe | Fuck me hard | Immoral Acts |
| Da Grin | Wa gba kondo | Come and receive penis |
| Sound sultan | Ebami kigbe ole | Help me to shout ‘thief’ |
| Femi Kuti | Bang, bang, I just they go | Bang, bang, I just they go |
| 9nize | Gbamu, gbamu | Hold it, hold it |
| Wande Coal | Bonber to bonber | Penis to virginal |
| Konga | Ja si kanga, di kanga | Loosed private parts |
| Tony Tettula | Tu kiniyele | Let your penis rise |
| Ruggeddybaba | Baraje | Spoil your body |
| Ayuba | Wa gba gudigud …  Ko wa suusaya | Come and take sweet  Lie on my chest |
| Saint Janet | Toko bale laleju | If the penis is too strong |
| Zule zoo | Kerewa | Action on the bed |
| Pasuma Alabi | Importer and exporter | Penis and virginal |
| Kolington Ayinla | Awa lako je esu awe o  O dudu peri | We are the first that sleep with her, her virginal is dark |
| Ayinde Marchal | Olomoge meji …gbagi | Two homosexual girls |
| Seun Kuti | Banger | Immoral slang |
| Sunny Ade | Onitibi bami lalejo… ojo weliweli | The owner of the ‘thin’ visited me --- rain showers |
| Teny G | Free madness | Free madness |
| Jesse King | Omo je ka gbaskeske skelobo | Girl let us put it inside penis and virginal. |
| Remi Alumo | Eni kodi chair mu ti ma fi se tan | Let her hold on to the chair until I finish. |
| Sina Peters | Wokebe ikebe yi poju | Look at buttock |
| Orlando Owoh | Owolowo, eyin nle | Money in hand, back on ground |
| Obesere | Eyin boys emaa nawo lo | Boys continue to have sex |

Without mincing words, the above listed music’s is not fit for the Nigerian schools, because the philosophy of Nigerian education is specifically built on moral consciousness of the citizenry. Therefore, all the activities and curricular experiences planned for primary school children should be capable of making such pupils become socially and intellectually upright.

In Nigerian context, the above listed song lyrics is not good for neither classroom nor UBE music curriculum. The lyrics is practically against the aims and objectives of primary education of inculcating the right types of values and attitudes for improving the teaching of moral, respect, faith and self reliance. It is however, disheartening that all the immoral songs listed above constitutes a larger percentage of music’s in the Nigerian schools to the detriments of ‘songs of praise’ and traditional songs of wisdoms. Besides, the strenuous struggle between the societal music and the curriculum conflict was occasioned by lack of mission philosophy in the planning of the curriculum. In the word of Vidal,T (2008). ‘We cannot solve this problem by simply avoiding…mission philosophy…jump to curriculum and objectives…for curriculum, objectives and goals dichotomized from it’.

The existence of different groups in Nigerian society, with their different orientations and attitudes to the function of education makes curriculum design a complex problem. The main determinants of the curriculum may reveal different points of view. These determinants can be knowledge about the various societies, content of culture, knowledge about the pupils and the process of learning. The society-oriented curriculum must concentrates on content which is useful and necessary to the pupils as future members of society. The relationship between the curriculum and society is thus explicit, but not unproblematic. In answer to the question of what kind of information is useful and necessary to all individuals in society, we may say that it is knowledge which makes possible an easy adjustment to society or which produces solutions to social problems.

**Music Curriculum Design Process**

Curriculum development covers the process of analyzing and refining goals, aims and objectives together with the translation of these into the context of courses by formal methods. Ordinarily, those responsible for the planning and preparation of music curriculum and textbooks must necessarily be ‘experts’. It is an axiom that this is not the case in Nigeria. Experts and researchers have knowledge which makes it easier for them to plan the curriculum than for any non-professionals. The expert knowledge gives him power both at the planning level and at the level of implementation and is in the position to decide on suitable goals for the curriculum. The following are stages or three defining criteria for curriculum development:

1. It must be institutionalized, at least to some extent
2. It must be a process of change intended to lead to improvement and must include an element of feedback and evaluation
3. It must be capable of being described in relation to the actual practice of school and classroom.

**Suggestions and Recommendations**

Whatever limitations curriculum planning might have, the relationship between the society and the curriculum contents are very important, if logical development is to take place musically. Therefore, this paper strongly recommends the following itemized programme to solve the identified problems:

1. A special conference of music educators in Nigeria should be organised at the University of Ibadan or University of Nigerian.
2. The conference should formulate the Nigerian Music Mission Philosophy (Primary school to the University)
3. A powerful committee of unpolitical, non-religious members should be constituted to work on the existing curriculum.
4. Music departments throughout the country should contribute monies to kick-start the committees’ assignments.
5. The committee should prepared a good proposal on the relevant music curriculum and forward same to ETF to attract request and assess money from ETF.
6. The music curriculum committee (MCC) should work on the following:
7. Carry out researches on the indigenous music of Nigerians
8. Harness all the results of previous researches on Nigeria music (Masters and Ph.d’s)
9. Formulate aims and objectives of music education in all the educational institutions in Nigeria (Kindergarten to University).
10. Through the aims and objectives developed a relevant music curriculum for Nigeria.
11. The curriculum should focus on the periodization of Nigerian music, theory of Nigerian music, Nigerian music education, instrumentation, Nigerian music technology, notation of Nigerian music method, philosophy and aesthetic of Nigerian music, history of Nigerian music and Teaching methodology etc.
12. Organized workshops (compulsory for all music educators in Nigeria) on the new curriculum contents.
13. Another committee known as ‘Music Curriculum Textbooks (MCTC) should be constituted and should work on the following:
14. Forward the new music curriculum to ETF and solicit for fund for textbooks.
15. Invite music experts to produce draft of textbooks covering all the aspects of music education
16. Organized workshops for music educators on the textbooks and general briefings on the new curriculum.

**Conclusion**

The position of this paper is that changes in the curriculum are a long-term process, calling for careful preparation, experimentation, gradual application supported by teacher training, and the involvement of parents and children in the process of deciding what changes can and should be included. In other words, changes in the curriculum need a more careful research, better organized study and participatory approach.

Finally, for a vibrant Nigerian Music Curriculum, all hands must be on deck: the Government, Professors in the Universities, Teachers of Music, and Experts. Curriculum development is a complex and sensitive process of reconciling educational needs and values per-se with those of the society. It cannot and should not be a ‘technocratic process’ only, but with open and democratic decision-making process in all its spheres. The above itemized solutions and recommendations can only materialized when there is love, cooperation, honesty, love for the profession and individuals, dedication, sacrifice and possession of spirit of hard work by music educators in Nigeria.

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