**CRITIQUE OF EMERGING CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ARTS CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIAN MUSIC EDUCATION**

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**Abstract**

A basic fact about education is that it is aimed at effecting development of a nation. On this premise, the current Cultural and Creative Arts Curriculum is aim at developing cultural and creative arts in Nigeria. However, the paper observed deficiencies in the implementation of this curriculum in the Nigerian schools and the lopsidedness of music, fine art and theater is a subject for concern. Therefore, this paper employs the analytical approach as its method of explaining issues and raises vital questions over the newly introduced Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) curriculum. A critical examination of the music contents in the curriculum within the general or broad contexts was also examined. The paper provides useful suggestions on how to ameliorate the deficiencies, as well as how stakeholders should address inherent challenges. It concludes by calling for proper planning and effective implementation of CCA curriculum in the Nigerian schools.

**Keywords:** cultural, creative arts, curriculum, music contents, CCA

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Introduction

The development of a curriculum is usually brought about by emerging issues in the education of a nation, that is, emerging issues which do not conform to required standard or which fall short of expectation of a society. This is why a curriculum, which is a cyclic process usually, begins with situational analysis, followed by objectives, selection of contents, methods and evaluation. As soon as a curriculum becomes operative, it is customary to embark on its regular evaluation in order to ensure that it fulfills its purpose. Such an exercise, according to Ojelade (2004) is the one that provides the necessary feedback to both the government and the planners about the effectiveness or inadequacies of the curriculum, hence the focus of this paper. It is therefore imperative that critical review of Cultural and Creative Arts Curriculum recently introduced in Nigeria (henceforth CCA) be given as an emerging trend in educational institutions in Nigeria. On this, Moronkola (2002) disclosed that, evaluation is a series of processes which entails a systematic process of looking analytically into educational policies. In the same vein, Saylor and Alexander (1974) suggested that, in carrying out the evaluation of a curriculum, the relevant questions are;

* Is the curriculum fulfilling the purposes for which it is developed?
* Are the purposes themselves valid?
* Is the curriculum appropriate for the particular group of students for which it is being operated?
* Are the instructional modes selected the best choices in regard to the goals set?
* Are the contents of the best that may be selected?
* Are the materials recommended for the instructional purposes appropriate and the best available for the desired purposes?

These questions are, no doubt, in consonance with the purpose of this critique. Curriculum is a structural series of intended learning experiences and it embraces purposeful experiences provided and directed by educational institutions to achieve predetermined goals. Willgoose (1974) defines curriculum as work schedule or a particular body of courses and generally link with orderly plan and progression. However, curriculum is structured into definite parts or sections: the objectives selected tools in the form of subject-matter, the method employed to achieve the set objectives and some means of evaluating the endeavor. In the word of Moronkola (2002) in Ojelade (2004) curriculum involves all the learning planned and guided by the school whether it is carried out in groups or individually inside or outside the school system. In fact, it includes the total environment in which education takes place. It involves the child, the teacher, the subject, the content, the method of teaching and evaluation as well as the physical and conducive environment.

The emergence of Cultural and Creative Arts subject have significantly modified or out rightly diminished the growth of musicological studies in secondary schools in Nigeria. After the development of a curriculum, the next stage is the implementation and this mainly involves putting the curriculum to work in all the schools for which is designed. However, the way and manner in which the CCA curriculum is being implemented calls for scrutiny, some of which border on inadequate supervision (Ojelade, 1998), inadequate funding (Sofolahan, 1998) and acute shortage of CCA textbooks (Owolabi, 2014) just to mention a few of the problems militating against the smooth running of the new curriculum.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of education is a central theme in educational systems. The quality of education is increasingly judged by focusing on pupil performance, what pupils actually learn, and how well they learn it. A number of studies have been conducted with the purpose of understanding how quality in education is achieved. Gravwe and Varghese (2002) focus on the textbook as the key factor for improving quality in education rather than on teacher competence, but in some of the literatures, teachers competence is singled out as the key factor (Westera, 2001). However, this study will highlight the importance of the relationship between curriculum contents and its proper implementation in pupil performance particularly in a situation where resources are very limited and where many factors contribute to the inadequate performance of pupils.

Methodology of Research

The populations for this study are the field-practicing music teachers in Ogun State secondary schools. This group constitutes the professional music teachers, directly in-charge of the CCA curriculum in Ogun State. The main instrument used for the collection of data is the oral interview and discussion method. The validity of the research instrument was that a panel of 3 experts (3 Chief lecturers with specialization in curriculum design) drawn from the music department, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta participated in the oral discussion and helped to validate the instrument. More so, cross-examination of data from one school to the other during discussion also helps the validation of data in this study. The items used for this study were taken from Cultural and Creative Arts for Primary 1-3 and 4-6 published by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) 2006.

Research Questions

Two main questions direct this investigation:

1. Is the emerging CCA curriculum implementation currently in Nigerian schools following the visions of its founders?
2. What are the factors militating against the implementations of CCA curriculum?

Cultural and Creative Arts Preface

The review in the Universal Basic Education curriculum that led to formation of Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) as a subject was necessary in order to reconstruct it to fit into the 9-year basic educational system. Therefore, the curriculum merged the areas of fine arts, music, drama and crafts into a single subject. The topics are expected to be taught by specialists in the various components of the subject, and the subject is offered from lower to the upper basic education classes. According to the Federal Government of Nigeria, the 9 year basic education programme is to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s) in 2005. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDs) is also being propagated for poverty eradication, job creation, value reorientation, wealth generation as well as using education to empower people. Specifically, the project is to map out plans and strategies of impacting in Nigerians pupils the local technologies of making crafts and other social arts within their immediate culture. Therefore, there is a need for regular review and renewal of the curriculum to ensure relevance to dynamic human society, culture and global reforms.

The genesis of CCA in Nigeria dated as far back as January and March, 2006. In 2006, the National Educational Research and Development Council convened a meeting of experts and also organized several workshops resulted into the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum unlike what used to be practiced in the past when there were options between Fine Arts, Arts and Craft, Drama and Music, the present curriculum collate all these into a single subject which has to be taught as such. Specifically the following arrangements ensue:

**Lower Basic Education:** The curriculum is developed along four basic themes as follows: Arts and Craft; Entertainment (Music and Drama); Values; Customs and Traditions.

**Middle Basic Education:** The MBE curriculum is based on the following five themes: Arts and Craft; Music; Drama; Arts and culture; and Values.

**The Upper Basic Education:** The UBE curriculum is based on the following five broad themes: Fine Art; Music; Local Craft; Drama; and Art and Culture.

However, so many factors emerged which hindered the implementation of these curriculum and these issues constitute the focus of deliberation in this paper. Sedel, in Verspoor (2003:43) said that the challenge of basic education policy is not only a challenge of quality but also one of equality of equal opportunities to learn and achieve.

**Analysis of Cultural and Creative Arts Curriculum**

This analysis is based on data generated during a fact finding research general meeting of all the music teachers in Ogun State, working as syndicate in a group of teachers that work together to achieve something. The synopsis of the syndicate discussion constitutes data report in this study. However, it should be noted that the 76 music teachers that participated in the study came from different localities and schools across Ogun State. Therefore, the guiding questions are stated and the summary of the findings highlighted.

**Question 1:** Is the curriculum contents appropriate?

The CCA curriculum content is organized under the themes of the various components of the agglomerated subjects: Arts and Craft, Music, Drama, Values and Culture. Presented in tabular form, each topic is accompanied with performance objectives, contents, activities for teacher and pupils, teaching and learning materials and evaluation guide. The performance objectives are itemized serially as 1, 2… for each topic. However, observation shows that music constitute a very few topics and may be last option for the pupils. It is further noted that music has 3 pages while other art subjects have 7 pages or more, especially JS 1. Therefore, there was imbalance in the curriculum contents compare with other art subjects in the curriculum.

Furthermore, a glance of the curriculum reveals that the music topics were not sequentially arranged and many important topics were omitted. The basic rudiments of music were haphazardly arranged in the curriculum contents. The CCA for middle basic education (primaries 4-6) is as follows:

Primary Four Topics: 1. Introduction to Music

2. Musical Instruments and Sounds

Primary Five Topics: 1. Creating Music/Solfa Notation Values

2. Poem Writing/Setting poem to Solfa

3. Music Notes and their values

4. Forms of Music

Primary Six Topics: 1. Rhythms Pattern

2. Melody Making Choir

The analysis of the above shows that pupils are expected to be exposed only to seven topics as highlighted for 3 years of academic studies. Most importantly, a primary four pupil (as above) may not be able to write poem and setting such a poem to Solfa notation. Besides, rhythms patterns should have come before forms of music. Summarily, the CCA curriculum is anti-music judging from the little music contents in the curriculum and haphazardly arranged. The primaries four and six only have two topics each for the whole academic year of study in the two classes.

**Question 2:** Are the teaching and learning materials available in schools?

In accordance to the CCA curriculum, the instructional materials for the teaching/learning of the subjects in schools are as follows:

Primary One: Tape Recorder.

Primary Two: Drums

Primary Three: (**No music in primary three**)

Primary Four: Wooden clappers and charts

Primary Five: Manuscript, charts

Primary Six: Piano, manuscript, elementary music text.

The syndicate submitted that none of the above listed instructional materials are available for the teaching of CCA subjects in any of Ogun State schools. The instructional materials that will meet up the goal of inculcating and developing skills in the pupils are not available in schools. Therefore, the aims and objectives of UBE scheme is being represented on paper for lack of instructional materials. It was also observed that textbook for CCA curriculum is scanty and not available. The few available textbooks are horridly written and lack good qualities of a standard text and are only for profit making.

Moreover, music teachers also observed the lack of specialists CCA instructors in schools because the merger of music and other art teachers may not guarantee the effective teaching of the subject. Therefore, it is observed that lack of human and materials resources are currently hindering the purpose and goal of the subject. The analysis also shows that music is not available in JS 3 class. This is also a disservice to music as a profession, because JS 3 is a certificate class and music has been thrown out, making JS 1 and 2 acquired knowledge, in music at that level, a waste of time and resources.

**Question 3:** Are the socio-academic environment conducive for the CCA programmmes?

The syndicates also observed that many of the school administrators still have the notion of music as not a very serious academic subject. Therefore, Music teachers are being drafted to teach civil education, religious studies and even social studies in various schools in Ogun State. The preparation of time table in schools favored science subjects and the so-called core-subjects to the detriment of music and other CCA subjects.

**Question 4:** Are the purpose of CCA valid?

The primary purpose of Cultural and Creative Arts Curriculum is to train and provide professionals in what is regarded as total theatre. This was occasioned by wrong notions that there are no separations between the ARTS in African context. However, taken the Yoruba arts for example, there were separations between the arts families such as drum families (idile onilu), dance families (idile onijo), chanters families (idile asunrara) etc. Even at the level of performances, professionalism also entails. In view of these assertions, the CCA curriculum was conceived on a wrong theoretical notions and purposes.

**Question 4:** Is the curriculum fulfilling the purpose to which it is developed?

In the syndicate discussions, the teachers observed that the curriculum is not fulfilling the purpose to which it is developed. This observation is arrived at, because of lack of proper preparation, implementation and outright lack of equipments.

**Discussion of Findings**

These findings have some implications to the teaching/learning of cultural and creative arts in our schools. From the findings of this study the following summary could be drawn:

1. That the CCA curriculum is haphazardly arranged and the contents anti-music.
2. Human and materials resources are not enough and in some cases materials are not available.
3. The socio-academic environment is not conducive for teaching and learning of CCA.

Effective teaching is one of the central purposes of educational practice and research in improving learning. But behind the mastery of learning stands the mastery of teaching. Understanding teaching has presented a persistent and formidable challenge to those who have sought to improve the quality of teaching and learning over the years. Teachers are important and make a difference. The quality of teaching is a crucial factor in promoting effective learning in schools.

The quality of education is a central theme in educational systems. The quality of education is increasingly judged by focusing on pupil performance, what pupils actually learn, and how well they learn it. In the ear of ‘Education for All’ and the need to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to achieve a high quality of education is not an easy task. Therefore, in order to achieve educational goal, apart from the quantitative dimension, the qualitative dimension is also very important.

Many factors are involved in pupil performance and teacher competence, such as the pupil’s background, the condition of the school, the parents’ education, and the availability of textbooks to support the learning. The Federal Government of Nigeria and the National Education Research and Development Council (NERD) has introduced the CCA new curricula for schools without assessing the old ones, which means that policy is being implemented without an accurate and appropriate information base.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study critiques the emerged Cultural and Creative Arts curriculum implementation in our educational institutions. It was established that the motive and intention of the programme was good but it implementation was very bad. The critical targets of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) are as follows: Value orientation; Poverty eradication; Job creation; Wealth generation and using education to empower the people. The highlighted objectives, no doubt, are excellent, but it implementation is faulty. In view of the foregoing, it is therefore recommended that:

1. One of the objectives of teacher education in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) is to provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment. Therefore, for CCA curriculum to be effectively implemented, professional CCA-teachers must be adequately trained in the new subject. Consequently, a teacher’s performance and the students’ achievement are inextricably linked. How teachers are prepared for their professional work and how they should be prepared to do that work well is the foundation for any evaluation system for professional performance. Clearly, with the emphasis on links between teacher performance and student achievement, the preparation of teachers for their instructional and motivational roles is essential.
2. The challenge facing the educational system in Nigeria is not only lack of preparation of teachers but to improve school conditions and to provide and ensure the availability of human and materials resources, for quality education delivery. The Federal Government of Nigeria and the NERDC should publish CCA textbooks base on Art specialists’ suggestions. Art studio should also be available with various musical instruments both foreign and indigenous.
3. A critical assessment of the existing CCA is urgently needed. The syllabus should be properly arranged from simple to complex topic. Most importantly, the basic rudiment of music topics and the foundation topics should be included in the primary school curriculum.
4. The existence of Cultural and Creative arts as a school subject should be in pari-pasu with music. Music as a course of study should not be expunges or wipe out for CCA. This is in conformity with the like of existence of Biology, Chemistry and Physics in pari-pasu with Integrated Science which also is the agglomeration of the three sciences.

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