Overview of Music Education in Nigerian Secondary Schools: A Glimpse towards Vision 2030

By

John Ajewole, Ph.D.
Department of Creative Arts (Music Unit)
Faculty of Arts, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria
+2348034882948
pastorajewolejohn1@yahoo.com

Adetunji Taiwo Adesoji
Department of Creative Arts (Music Unit)
Faculty of Arts, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria
+2348121911128
yemi_taiwo2003@yahoo.co.uk
&
Professor Helen Paul
Helen Paul Theatre and Film Academy, USA.
2951 Farmstead Court, Grayson, 30017GA
enipaul@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study engaged in the Overview of Music Education in Nigerian Secondary Schools: A Glimpse Towards Vision 2030. It overviews secondary education in Nigeria, investigates the challenges of music education in Nigerian secondary schools, highlights the holistic approach to improving music education in Nigeria, and discusses the hypothetical vision for the future of music education in Nigerian secondary schools in 2030. Primary data was collected through schedules and structured interviews with five music teachers in the selected schools. Five secondary schools were selected within Lagos State. The study made use of two private schools and three public schools. The library, internet, and archival materials served as secondary data sources. This study also relied solely on oral tradition, written documents, personal oral interviews for information, and experiential knowledge in its approach and methodology. This study makes use of published and unpublished library

and archive materials. This involved reading through printed materials relevant to this study in libraries and archives. Such materials include books, journal articles, newspaper reports and documentation, dictionaries, and encyclopedias, among others. These materials were consulted, reviewed, and analyzed for testing and validating the position of this study. The research outcome reveals that Nigerian secondary schools serve as pivotal institutions in the country's educational system, providing students with foundational knowledge, skills, and preparation for higher education or the workforce. Many secondary schools in Nigeria lack adequate resources for music education. This includes a shortage of musical instruments, teaching materials, and facilities such as music rooms or studios. Without proper resources, it becomes challenging for music teachers to provide engaging and comprehensive instruction to their students. The government can allocate more funding to support music education in Nigerian schools. This includes investing in musical instruments, teaching materials, facilities, and teacher training programs. Increased government support can help bridge the resource gap and enhance the quality of music education across the country. In conclusion, by 2030, Nigerian secondary schools should aim to have a comprehensive and inclusive music curriculum that reflects the country's diverse musical heritage. The curriculum should incorporate elements of indigenous music, traditional rhythms, contemporary Nigerian music genres, and global music traditions.

Keynotes*:* Overview, Music, Secondary, Schools, Vision 2030.

Introduction

Music is a profoundly human expression that communicates through sound, rhythm, melody, and harmony. At its core, it's a form of art that taps into our emotions, intellect, and culture. Music starts with sound vibrations, which can be produced by instruments, the human voice, or even electronic means. These vibrations create audible waves that travel through the air or other mediums. Rhythm is the pattern of beats or time intervals in music. According to Nettl (2015: 36), it gives music its structure and provides a framework for movement and dance. Percussion instruments like drums play a crucial role in establishing a rhythm, but they're present in all elements of music. Melody refers to a sequence of musical notes played in succession. It's the "tune," or the recognizable series of

pitches that form the main musical idea in a piece. Melodies can be simple or complex, and they often evoke emotions and convey narrative or expressive content. Harmony is the combination of simultaneous musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions. It adds depth and richness to music, shaping its mood and texture. Harmony provides the backdrop against which melodies unfold, and it can greatly influence the emotional impact of a piece. Texture refers to how the different musical elements—melody, harmony, and rhythm—interact to create the overall sound of a piece. Kraft (2012: 40) remarks that music can have a thick, dense texture with many layers of sound, or it can be sparse and transparent with few elements. Form relates to the structure of a musical composition—the way its various sections are organized and how they relate to each other. Common musical forms include verse-chorus, A-B-A (ternary), and theme and variations. The form gives the music coherence and helps guide the listener through the piece. McPherson (2012:21) notes that music is a powerful means of expression, capable of conveying a wide range of emotions, from joy and celebration to sadness and introspection. It can also express cultural identity, political messages, and personal experiences, making it a versatile medium for communication and connection. Music is deeply intertwined with culture, reflecting the values, traditions, and beliefs of a society or community. Different cultures have their own musical traditions, instruments, and styles, each contributing to the rich tapestry of global musical heritage.

Emeh (2019:7) asserts that music education in Nigeria encompasses diverse approaches, influenced by the country's rich cultural heritage, colonial history, and modern educational practices. Nigeria is home to hundreds of ethnic groups, each with its own musical traditions, instruments, and styles. Music education often begins at a young age within these communities, where children learn through oral tradition, participating in cultural events, and observing elders. This informal education lays the foundation for a deep appreciation of music's cultural significance. Nigeria's education system has been shaped by its colonial history, particularly British influence. Western music education, including classical music theory and notation, was introduced through missionary schools and colonial institutions. This legacy persists in modern Nigerian music education, where elements of Western music theory and practice are integrated with indigenous traditions.

Odekunle (2018:7) remarks that in formal education settings, music is typically taught as part of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools. However, the extent and quality of music education vary widely across different regions and schools. Some schools have dedicated music teachers and well-equipped facilities, while others may lack resources and prioritize other subjects. Beyond formal education, extracurricular activities play a crucial role in music education. Many schools have music clubs, choirs, and bands where students can further develop their musical skills and interests. These activities provide opportunities for collaboration, performance, and creative expression outside the classroom.

Omosekejimi (2020:11) notes that Nigerian universities and colleges offer music programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, covering a wide range of disciplines such as music performance, composition, musicology, and music education. These programs provide specialized training for aspiring musicians, educators, researchers, and industry professionals. With the advancement of technology, music education in Nigeria is increasingly incorporating digital tools and resources. This includes the use of computers, software applications, and online platforms for music composition, production, and learning. Technology enables greater access to educational materials and facilitates remote learning opportunities, particularly in underserved areas.

Akintayo, M. O. (2019:9), remarks that despite its rich musical heritage, music education in Nigeria faces various challenges, including inadequate funding, limited resources, and a lack of trained music educators. Additionally, there is a need for greater recognition and support for indigenous musical traditions within formal education systems. However, there are also opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and advocacy to enhance the quality and accessibility of music education nationwide.

According to Igben (2017:9), music education in Nigerian schools encompasses a blend of indigenous musical traditions and Western pedagogical approaches. Here's an overview of how music education is typically structured in Nigerian schools: Music education often begins at the primary school level, where students are introduced to basic musical concepts through singing, rhythmic activities, and simple percussion instruments. Teachers may incorporate traditional Nigerian

songs, chants, and dances into the curriculum to instill cultural awareness and appreciation. In primary schools, music is usually integrated into the general curriculum rather than taught as a separate subject. It may be included in subjects like fine arts or cultural studies, allowing students to explore music alongside other forms of artistic expression.

Ogundeji (2018) believes that, alongside formal classroom instruction, students may also engage in informal music learning experiences within their communities. This could involve participating in cultural events, festivals, and religious ceremonies where music plays a central role. Informal learning reinforces cultural identity and fosters a deeper connection to traditional musical practices. At the secondary school level, music education becomes more structured, with dedicated music classes and specialized teachers. Students continue to develop their musical skills through activities such as singing, playing instruments, music theory, and composition. They may also study the history of music, exploring both Nigerian and global musical traditions.

Many secondary schools offer extracurricular music programs, including choirs, bands, and orchestras. These activities provide opportunities for students to further develop their talents, collaborate with peers, and showcase their musical abilities through performances at school events and competitions. Adeyanju (2019:9) notes that students interested in pursuing music as a career or higher education may take music examinations offered by external bodies such as the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) or Trinity College London. These examinations assess proficiency in areas such as music theory, performance, and sight-reading and provide internationally recognized certifications.

Training programs for music teachers are available at universities and colleges across Nigeria. These programs equip aspiring educators with the knowledge and skills needed to teach music effectively in schools. Teacher training may include coursework in music pedagogy, curriculum development, and classroom management, as well as practical experience through teaching placements. Despite the value of music education, Nigerian schools face challenges such as limited resources, insufficient training for music teachers, and competing priorities within

the curriculum. However, there are also opportunities for innovation and collaboration to improve the quality and accessibility of music education, including leveraging technology, community partnerships, and advocacy for greater investment in the arts.

This study, in its objectives, is set up to:

1. Overview of Secondary Education in Nigeria
2. Investigate the challenges of music education in Nigerian secondary schools.
3. highlight the holistic approach to improving music education in Nigeria, and
4. Discuss the hypothetical vision for the future of music education in Nigerian secondary schools in 2030.

Methodology

This research endeavours to explore the Overview of Music Education in Nigerian Secondary Schools: A Glimpse Towards Vision 2030. Primary data was collected through schedules and structured interviews with five music teachers in the selected schools. Five secondary schools were selected within Lagos State. The study made use of two private schools and three public schools. The library, internet, and archival materials served as secondary data sources. This study also relied solely on oral tradition, written documents, personal oral interviews for information, and experiential knowledge in its approach and methodology. This study makes use of published and unpublished library and archive materials. This involved reading through printed materials relevant to this study in libraries and archives. Such materials include books, journal articles, newspaper reports and documentation, dictionaries, and encyclopedias, among others. These materials were consulted, reviewed, and analyzed for testing and validating the position of this study.

Discussion of the Findings

The discussion of the findings in this study is in line with the stated objectives of this study.

Objective 1: An Overview of Secondary Education in Nigeria

Nigerian secondary schools serve as pivotal institutions in the country's educational system, providing students with foundational knowledge, skills, and preparation for higher education or the workforce. Secondary education in Nigeria typically consists of six years, divided into junior secondary school (JSS) and senior secondary school (SSS). JSS spans three years (JSS1 to JSS3), while SSS covers the remaining three years (SSS1 to SSS3). The curriculum is designed to provide a broad-based education while allowing students to specialize in specific subjects as they progress.

According to Olojede (2018:9), the Nigerian secondary school curriculum encompasses a wide range of subjects, including core subjects such as English language, mathematics, and the sciences, as well as elective subjects like social studies, vocational studies, and arts and music. The curriculum is overseen by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) and is periodically reviewed to ensure relevance and alignment with national goals. At the end of each stage (JSS3 and SSS3), students take national examinations administered by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) or the National Examinations Council (NECO). These examinations, such as the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSCE) and the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE), assess students' mastery of the curriculum and serve as a basis for progression to higher education or entry into the workforce.

In SSS, students have the option to follow either the science, arts, or commercial track, depending on their interests and career aspirations. Each track emphasizes specific subjects relevant to the chosen field, such as physics, chemistry, and biology for the science track, or literature, history, and government for the arts track. Nigerian secondary schools may be either boarding schools, where students reside on campus during the academic term, or day schools, where students commute from home. Boarding schools provide a structured environment for learning and offer extracurricular activities, while day schools allow students to remain connected to their families and communities.

Ogundele (2017:14) remarks that secondary education in Nigeria is provided by both private and public schools. Private schools often offer smaller class sizes,

more resources, and a wider range of extracurricular activities, but they may also be more expensive. Public schools, on the other hand, are government-funded and generally more accessible to the broader population but may face challenges such as overcrowding and resource constraints. Nigerian secondary schools face various challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, teacher shortages, and disparities in quality between urban and rural schools. Efforts to address these challenges include government reforms aimed at improving infrastructure, teacher training, curriculum development, and access to education for marginalized populations.

Objective 2: To investigate the challenges of music education in Nigerian secondary schools

Music education in Nigerian secondary schools faces several challenges that hinder its effectiveness and impact. These challenges include: Many secondary schools in Nigeria lack adequate resources for music education. This includes a shortage of musical instruments, teaching materials, and facilities such as music rooms or studios. Without proper resources, it becomes challenging for music teachers to provide engaging and comprehensive instruction to their students. Adeniyi (2016:14) asserts that another significant challenge is the shortage of qualified music teachers. While some schools may have dedicated music educators, many others rely on generalist teachers who may not have specialized training in music education. This can lead to inconsistent quality of instruction and limited opportunities for students to develop their musical talents.

The Nigerian educational system places a strong emphasis on standardized examinations such as the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) or the National Examination Council (NECO) exams. As a result, subjects that are not included in these examinations, such as music, may receive less attention in school curricula. This pressure to prioritize examinable subjects can marginalize music education and limit its scope within secondary schools. Despite Nigeria's rich musical heritage, music education in secondary schools often neglects indigenous musical traditions in favour of Western music theory and practice. This disconnect between the curriculum and students' cultural backgrounds can reduce students' engagement with music education and undermine the promotion of Nigeria's diverse musical heritage.

According to Emeh (2019:7), many secondary schools in Nigeria lack adequate infrastructure and facilities for music education. This includes the absence of dedicated music rooms, insufficient equipment, and poor acoustics. Without proper facilities, students may not have the opportunity to practice and perform music in a conducive environment, limiting their musical development. There are significant disparities in access to quality music education between urban and rural areas, as well as between public and private schools. Private schools often have better resources and infrastructure for music education, while public schools, especially those in rural areas, may struggle with limited funding and resources.
Despite the importance of music education, there is a lack of comprehensive policies and initiatives to support its development in Nigerian secondary schools. The absence of clear guidelines and funding mechanisms hampers efforts to improve music education and integrate it more effectively into the curriculum.

Objective 3: To highlight the holistic approach to improving secondary music education in Nigeria.

Improving music education in Nigerian secondary schools requires a holistic approach to address the various aspects of the challenge. The government can allocate more funding to support music education in Nigerian schools. This includes investing in musical instruments, teaching materials, facilities, and teacher training programs. Odekunle (2018:7) remarks that increased government support can help bridge the resource gap and enhance the quality of music education across the country. There is a need to review and update the music curriculum to make it more inclusive and culturally relevant. This involves incorporating elements of Nigeria's diverse musical traditions, including indigenous music, into the curriculum. Additionally, the curriculum should emphasize practical skill development alongside theoretical knowledge.

Providing specialized training and professional development opportunities for music teachers is crucial for improving the quality of music education. Teacher training programs should cover pedagogical techniques, music theory, performance skills, and cultural diversity in music. Continuous support and mentorship for music educators can enhance their effectiveness in the classroom. Omosekejimi and Akhidenor (2020:11) note that engaging local communities and cultural institutions can enrich music education programs and promote cultural

exchange. Collaborations with musicians, artists, and traditional performers can provide students with opportunities to learn from experts and experience live music performances. Community involvement can also help schools access resources and support for music education initiatives.

Investing in infrastructure and facilities for music education, such as dedicated music rooms, studios, and performance spaces, is essential for creating conducive learning environments. Schools should prioritize the development of well-equipped music facilities to enable students to practice, perform, and collaborate effectively. Leveraging technology can enhance music education by providing access to digital resources, interactive learning platforms, and virtual instruction. Schools can use software applications, online tutorials, and multimedia tools to supplement traditional teaching methods and engage students in music learning. Raising awareness about the importance of music education and advocating for its inclusion in school curricula is essential for driving positive change. Stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, parents, and the wider community, should advocate for the value of music education in fostering creativity, cultural appreciation, and holistic development among students.

Objective 4: To discuss the hypothetical vision for the future of music education in Nigerian secondary schools in 2030.

The hypothetical vision for the future of music education in Nigerian secondary schools can be considered through the potential goals and strategies that align with the broader educational and cultural development objectives of music education in Nigeria. By 2030, Nigerian secondary schools aim to have a comprehensive and inclusive music curriculum that reflects the country's diverse musical heritage. The curriculum incorporates elements of indigenous music, traditional rhythms, contemporary Nigerian music genres, and global music traditions. It emphasizes both theoretical knowledge and practical skill development, including music performance, composition, and music technology. To ensure high-quality music education, there will be a focus on recruiting, training, and retaining qualified music educators. By 2030, all secondary schools will have access to trained music teachers who possess the necessary pedagogical skills, musical proficiency, and cultural awareness to effectively teach music to students of diverse backgrounds. Nigerian secondary schools aim to provide

equitable access to music education for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background or geographic location. By 2030, schools will have adequate resources, including musical instruments, teaching materials, and facilities, to support robust music programs. Efforts will be made to address disparities between urban and rural schools and between public and private institutions.

By 2030, technology will be integrated into music education to enhance teaching and learning experiences. Schools will leverage digital tools, online resources, and multimedia platforms to supplement traditional instruction, facilitate remote learning, and expand access to music education beyond the classroom. Nigerian secondary schools aim to foster cultural preservation and innovation through music education. By 2030, students will have opportunities to explore and celebrate Nigeria's rich musical heritage while also engaging with contemporary musical trends and global influences. Schools will encourage creativity, experimentation, and cross-cultural collaboration in music-making.

To enrich music education programs, schools will actively engage with local communities, cultural institutions, and music industry stakeholders. By 2030, schools will collaborate with musicians, artists, and traditional performers to provide students with authentic learning experiences, mentorship opportunities, and exposure to live music performances and cultural events. By 2030, Nigerian secondary schools will develop appropriate assessment methods to measure students' progress and achievement in music education. Assessment will encompass a range of skills and competencies, including musical performance, composition, improvisation, music theory, and critical listening. Schools will use assessment data to inform instruction, track student growth, and ensure accountability.

Conclusion

Music is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses a broad spectrum of styles, genres, and traditions, yet it remains a universal language that transcends boundaries and speaks to the human experience. Music education in Nigeria is a dynamic field that reflects the country's cultural diversity, historical legacy, and contemporary developments. While facing challenges, it also presents opportunities for promoting cultural preservation, artistic excellence, and

inclusive learning experiences for future generations. Music education in Nigerian schools plays a vital role in nurturing creativity, cultural heritage, and musical talent among students, while also contributing to their overall academic and personal development.

Nigerian secondary schools play a crucial role in shaping the future of the country by providing students with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach involving government support, investment in infrastructure and teacher training, curriculum reform to include more culturally relevant content, and advocacy for the importance of music education in fostering creativity, cultural identity, and holistic development among students.

By implementing these solutions in a coordinated manner, Nigeria can overcome the challenges facing music education and create more opportunities for students to engage with music, develop their talents, and contribute to the vibrant cultural landscape of the country. This hypothetical vision for music education in Nigerian secondary schools aligns with the broader goals of educational excellence, cultural enrichment, and social inclusion. By working towards these objectives, Nigeria can create a vibrant and inclusive music education ecosystem that empowers students, nurtures talent, and fosters a lifelong appreciation for music.

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