

CHAPTER 21

THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA: A SURVEY OF EARLY YEAR CLASSES

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Abstract

Music has passed through many stages of development and has become an important tool in the development of a child through music education. It is a gift from God, hence every personality in this world especially children love music, its influence is powerful and appeals to the emotions and interest of children. Over the years, children's music has been centred on traditional songs, storytelling and culture, children learn different norms and values through the use of music to build and develop them in diverse ways, but its effects in the 70s '80s and 90s have changed from the ways it is now. The developmental age of children using music to learn in this contemporary Nigerian has gone technologically to enable them to learn on their own without being taught through the use of youtube, educational music Apps, social media, visual and audio with the aim of easy learning and quick understanding. It is in this context that the paper seeks to investigate the importance of music in teaching and learning in a child's development in contemporary Nigeria in some selected Nursery schools in Abuja. The research adopted participant observer as its methodology and the use of questionnaires and interviews in gathering data. Findings from the research revealed that children have developmental learning needs while rapid expansion of activity filled music is increasingly being investigated in its broader context as an influence on the cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social aspects of children's lives as a support or entry point into other topics of learning and as an aid to personal development. It is therefore recommended that more emphasis should be made on the use of music during teaching and learning to enhance their growth in the contemporary world.

Keywords: Music education, Early childhood, Child development, Contemporary Nigeria.

Introduction

Throughout human history and across all cultures individuals have produced and enjoyed music, music can be linked to various curricula and instruction models to increase learning. Music plays an important role in our lives, hence is a gift from God which has a powerful influence that appeals to the emotions and interests of children. From birth parents instinctively use music to calm and

soothe children to express love and joy to engage and interact with their children, through music children can acquire an appreciation of differences among them and enjoy the commonalities they share. Child development occurs from birth to adolescence, although people change throughout their lives and developmental changes are dramatic because, during this period, a dependent vulnerable newborn grows into a capable young person who has mastered the language, think and reason with sophistication. The importance of music education in child development in contemporary Nigeria is immense and highly beneficial to the student, music positively impacts a child's academic performance assists in developing social skills and provides an outlet for creativity that is crucial to a child's development. It is a developmentally appropriate and socially engaging way to learn because it engages children effectively and it is a natural and enjoyable part of their everyday lives, they create songs and music naturally during play with others, and some children entering an early childhood program come with some experience in music and sometimes do have well-defined preferences.

Music plays an important role in meeting a child's educational development and needs as it provides a means of self-expression giving the child an outlet for feelings and emotions. Suth, (2017). Assert that Music, aside from being a source of enjoyment, is a means of communication with others, it can expose the child to challenges and multi-sensory experiences which enhance learning abilities and encourage cognitive development. (p.23). In particular, music in contemporary Nigeria can also engage cognitive functions such as planning, working, memory, inhabitation and flexibility. According to Trost, (2014). Found that musical training in childhood has a positive impact on many cognitive functions which is associated with neuroplasticity changes in brain structure. Music goes way beyond academic achievements, it encompasses all the facets of child development and lays the foundation upon which a future music career is built as it sparks all areas of child development such as language, social, emotional, intellectual and at the same time imparts the skills for school readiness. According to Biasutti (2013), music education was something that passed itself off as the learning of facts about music rather than something resulting from musical engagement. This message needed to be delivered with absolute clarity unencumbered by doubts or reservations. In helping the child to learn effectively and enjoy a balanced musical development, there is a need to study his characteristics at different ages, interests, feelings, emotions, understanding and values.

According to Reimer (1997), music is universally sought and cherished by all humans irrespective of race for the value it adds to life: such values according to the author are as follows.

- Music is powerful at the individual level because it induces multiple responses, physiological movements, emotional mood, cognitive and behavioural.
- .Music is powerful at the level of the social group because it facilitates communication which goes beyond words, induces shared emotional reactions and supports the development of the child.
- Music can influence our behaviour in ways which are beyond our conscious awareness,

knowledge of these effects can be used to manipulate their work and behaviour.

- . Music can play an important part in enhancing development in the early
- . Active involvement in music-making in children may increase self-esteem and promote the development of a range of social and transferable skills.

Music Education

Music education is a powerful instrument for manpower development because of its intellectual, social, physical and spiritual values which benefit man. Music education is a human behaviour that is acquired directly and learnt the same natural way a child learns languages

Ezeugwu (2016) states

Music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music. The study of music seeks to develop the whole person. It is a basic life skill just like walking or talking. It has so much to do with a person's moods, emotions, feelings, attitudes and opinions. Hence, it is considered a fundamental component of human culture and behaviour. Every normal child naturally is endowed with the basics of musical activities which include singing, dancing and playing musical instruments. Again, music education aims to develop the child's knowledge and skills in music and the arts to be useful in the environment. This means that the process of continuity from what is obtainable in the child's environment should be made available in the school environment (p.1).

Music education also means- the all-around inculcating of musical practices by an expert into his amateur/learner to equip him musically in his environment and to face his life challenges musically. Okechukwu (2017) defines music education as "the art or process of teaching, training, and learning music which can be formal or informal because education originally starts from conception; as such, music education starts in the home informally as traditional folk or indigenous music of one's society" (p. 141). In addition, music education is made up of two words just like teaching and learning that also go together and are very relevant in terms of knowledge exhibition and acquisition. Onyeji (2012) asserts that: Music education could be defined as a process of training and study in the acquisition of skills and knowledge in music for effective functioning in society. It encompasses broad training for the acquisition of skill and knowledge of theory, practice, creativity, education, appreciation and performance of music in diverse cultural and stylistic forms (p.148). According to Obiesie and Nwamara (2018), music education:

Touches every aspect of learning/educational taxonomy. These include the cognitive domain (the acquisition of knowledge), the affective domain (the learner's willingness to receive, internalize, and

share what is learned), and the psychomotor domain (the development of skills). Music education has often been defined by various Nigerian music scholars to be the total of all skills, knowledge, principles, and strategies which a music practitioner needs to acquire to be effective and efficient in his/her job as a professional (p.207).

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education is a branch of education theory that relates to the teaching of children formally and informally from birth up to the age of eight, early childhood education is also known as nursery education, this is the most critical time for positive intervention children's development during this stage is strongly affected by their environment and that effect continues to exert a strong influence on the rest of their lives. During this stage, children learn and develop the ability to learn language from their environment. The ability to learn in any field is not only inherited but is also the product of their environment. Suzuki (1969) asserts that every child can learn music as he or she can learn how to speak. (p.6). Supporting Suzuki's idea Kendall (1996) notes that just as the home environment is pivotal in learning every language at an early age, a child may also be crucial to learning the music of any historical period or any cultural tradition. (p. 43). Music in the early years of a child acts as a foundation upon which future learning rests, the early interaction of a child through music education influences the positive life of a child and prepares the child to bond intellectually, physically and emotionally.

Child Development.

Child development refers to the sequence of physical, language, thought and emotional changes that occur in a child from birth to the beginning of adulthood. During this process, a child progresses from dependency on their parents/guardians to increasing independence. Child development is strongly influenced by genetic factors (genes passed on from their parents) and events during prenatal life. It is also influenced by environmental facts and the child's learning capacity. Child development refers to the process through which human beings typically grow and mature from infancy through adulthood. The different aspects of growth and development that are measured include physical growth, cognitive growth, and social growth. Child development focuses on the changes that take place in humans as they mature from birth to about age 17. Child development can be actively enhanced through targeted therapeutic intervention. Child development covers the full scope of skills that a child masters over their life span including development in:

1. Cognition
2. Social interaction and emotional regulation

3. Speech and Language
4. Physical skills
5. Sensory awareness

The Benefits of Music Education in Child's Development in the Contemporary Age

Music education has long been a significant part of early childhood education, the knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and educational strategies as it provides quality education to children. According to Esimone (2012), she asserts that early childhood is the most critical time for positive intervention for children's growth and needs the use of pedagogical practices to cover all methods that will foster the overall development of the children through classroom interaction. Children's development during this stage is strongly affected by their environment and that effect continues to expect a strong influence on the rest of their lives. Research has found that learning other subjects enhances skills that children inevitably use in other areas. Luke, (2012). Assert that a music-rich experience for children as they progress into more formal learning a child learning about music has to tap into multiple skill sets often simultaneously. (p.46). The benefits of music education in a child's development cannot be over-emphasized when you look at children ages two to nine, one of the breakthroughs in that area is music's benefit for language development, which is so important at that stage.

Swanson, (2010) Also asserts that those inborn capacities need to be reinforced, practised, and celebrated which can be done at home or in a more formal music education setting. (p.40). According to the children's music work, the effect of music education on language development can be seen in the brain. Recent studies have indicated that musical training physically develops the part of the left side of the brain known to be involved with processing language and can wire the brain's circuits in specific ways. The relationship between music and language development is also socially advantageous to young children. Breadecamp (1986) asserts that "The development of language over time tends to enhance parts of the brain that help process music. Language competence is at the root of social competence that strengthens musical experience with the capacity to be verbally competent. (P.52).

Research indicates that the brain of a musician even a young one works differently than that of a non-musician, the students in the study who had received music instruction improved in sound discrimination and fine motor tasks and brain imaging showed changes to the networks in the brain associated with those abilities. Research has also found a causal link between music and spatial intelligence which means that understanding music can help children visualize various elements that should go together like they would do when solving mathematics problems.

Music education involves a high level of memorization students read music by sight, play the proper note on their instrument or recall lyrics. This process benefits the overall memory centre of the brain because music is easily stored in the memory to enable a child to remember what he has

been taught. According to young, (2016) explains that music education is an important aspect of providing children with a well-rounded education, when allowed to work in harmony with some other subjects and arrears of study, music helps children grow in self-esteem build essential skills and prepare them for bright futures (p.10). Furthermore, one of the most useful benefits of music education in a child's development is that it increases the ability to process situations and find solutions mentally and it fosters great work ethic and discipline in children because students learn from an early age that hard work, determination and a positive mindset improve musical skills.

Research strongly suggests that early musical experiences in music education in contemporary Nigeria can be a positive force in all aspects of a child's life because it is an art of developmental activity and the goal at the elementary stage of life should be towards academic growth of a child. The child is changing, as he develops new feelings and attitudes, new habits and skills and new knowledge and understanding, these form his behaviour pattern interest, success and satisfaction which are essential factors in determining the direction of growth behaviour change is one evidence of growth that has taken place within the child. Literacy is of vital importance to all children, and researchers have made strong arguments on how music can contribute to literacy skills. Townsend (2011) asserts that a music-integrated literacy environment nurtures auditory and visual discrimination, language reception, vocabulary development and phonemic awareness of a growing child because it facilitates the development of a child's reading ability through musical rhythmic patterns, phonetic word usage and aural perceptions. The teachers are realizing more that music education offers many tangible benefits to early years, children, early childhood music education deserves special attention, especially in light of emerging research suggesting that children's early years are a key time for musical growth as well as overall growth through music education, because music is available at any time and is a powerful triggers the memories of many types.

Developmental Stages of Early Childhood

Human development is a universal phenomenon, characterized by various stages. These stages differ from one culture to the other; furthermore, each developmental stage tends to bring about expectations that are by a particular culture. Development as the name implies means to grow, to improve to escalate in terms of knowledge acquisition to adjust to the environment. According to Learner (1965), development is the “process of social transformations through which the community is made to accept, acquire and imbibe the characteristics of modern, industrial society and enhanced living conditions” (p.65). Children categorically speaking, fall between the ages of 1 and 15. The adolescent stage marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood. For this paper, emphasis is going to be placed on the importance of music in the contemporary age and its developmental stages among children and their different levels of participation in the actualization of music.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive development refers to long-term changes, in this process psychologist named Jean Piaget, created and studied an account of how children and youth gradually become able to think logically, it is the process by which human beings acquire, organize, and learn to use knowledge. in knowing more about his environment. It equally means the mental process by which knowledge is acquired and utilized. For music education to be effective among children, it is more than necessary to work at the various stages of cognitive development and the possible musical lesson or knowledge that suits each of the stages in a child's life to enhance his or her musical development.

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

Pre-Operation Period -This is the second stage of cognitive development. It is the development that occurs between the age of 2-7. At this stage, the child sees things from their point of view, They can differentiate between right and left. They lack the intellectual ability or they cannot reason very fast. They should be introduced to simple rhymes and rhythms, (hand clapping). It is believed that children learn faster when their learning materials are set to any vigour or stress. So Music at this stage is vital, enhances learning among children, and develops their cognitive domain briskly.

Concrete Operational Period- This is the third stage of cognitive development. This development occurs from 7-11 years, and children at this stage are to do something more than those at the pre-operational period or stage. The child can think, and reasonably fast and will be able to differentiate between good and bad. This time, the child can now adapt himself to his environment. At this stage, since the mental ability of the child is gradually developing, the child should now be introduced to more difficult music lessons. But rhymes and simple rhythms should not be left out. The child can learn to sing simple hymns, dance to musical accompaniment and recite poems.

Literature Review

This study is based on Bandura's social cognitive theory. Bandura defined human behaviour as a three-way interaction of personal factors, behaviours, and the environment. This theory upholds the behaviourist view that the individual's assessment of the event can mediate the occurrence of a

behaviour. However, social cognitive theory adds that one's mind is an active force that influences actions. The contributions of social cognitive theory put that personal factors, behaviours, and environment differ based on the individual, what behaviours are in the individual's repertoire, and the situation in which the behaviour occurs.

According to Bandura's (1986) theoretical model, this research: outlined changes in early childhood teachers' efficacy beliefs for using music skills in teaching and learning processes; and examined the influence of enactive mastery experience, vicarious observations and affective states of early childhood teachers' perceived self-efficacy for teaching music as a tool in children learning. Music is a meaningful tool in creating a rich environment for child development and should therefore be emphasized in teaching and learning processes.

Studies have demonstrated that children try to find and initiate musical interactions with adults and objects in their learning environments. This is achieved through paying better attention and preferring the musical qualities of infant-directed speech to adult-directed speech. Music performances have been varying according to children's levels of development. First, they perform music on their own, and then perform and sing with others. This implies that as children grow up, they explore thoughts, movements, and emotions alone or by using music. This theory is very important in that it has helped us to outline what makes our children learn and grow best, thus as parents and teachers, we have to observe how our children sing and we have also to consider what skills they acquire as they grow. When children reflect on social and cultural issues, they feel that their learning through music is supported by a meaningful and real-life experience, so they can perceive and understand the importance of learning in their classes. Thus, practising listening to songs gives them experience and tools to understand more details in the teaching and learning process.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the importance of music and developmental stages in early childhood education, Music education develops the child in all ramifications. The inculcation of music skills in early childhood education amongst children will help enhance their academics by providing and instilling knowledge of the world around them. In all sphere of the developmental stages of a child, music helps to play a vital role in the learning process helping them to build the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual aspect of their lives which has helped to expand and assists to develop crucial language skills, the multiplier effect on reasoning skills, especially on spatial reasoning.

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