
The Influence of Parental Attitude on Children's Music Education: A Case Study of Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State

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Abstract

This study centred on the influence of parental attitude on children's music education in basic schools of Obio Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated and tested. Out of a population of 203, a sample size of 125 was used through a random sampling technique. The data collection instruments included a questionnaire, interview, and observation. Statistically weighted mean and percentages were used to answer the research questions while one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the null hypotheses. The analysis revealed that there is a significant difference in the effects of parental attitudes towards children's music learning in the study area. It was further deduced that there is a significant relationship between parents' attitudes and pupils' music learning in basic schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area. This further proved that there was a significant relationship between parents' attitudes towards music learning and their children's performance in music in the study area. Another strong negative factor was peer group influence and quality of teaching and learning on the children's music performance in basic schools in Obio Akpor. It was also observed that there is a significant relationship between the academic qualification of music teachers and children's music performance in the study area.

Based on these findings, the study concluded that improvement in music education in Obio Akpor Basic Schools is a necessity.

Keywords: Parental attitude, Psychological effect, Parental influence, Informal education and Basic schools.

Introduction

In the time past, various types of cultural heritage were passed on to the next generation through informal educational methods. Music was one of these heritages. This culture has remained largely informal in Nigeria from pre-independence years to this day in some communities of Africa. This method was transmitted through various traditional media such as traditional festivals, work songs, moonlight plays, lullabies and children's nursery rhymes, court music, apprenticeship under a well-known traditional musician and others (Andrew, 1998; Ekwueme, 1983; Euba, 1982; Nketia, 1974).

Music education in African countries, especially in Nigerian culture starts from the home. Stressing this, Nketia (1974) explains that: "the African mother sings to her child and introduces him or her to music right from the cradle. In the rural Nigerian environment children participate in peer-group traditional music learning" (p.23).

Stephen Olusoji (2003) while writing on the relevance of music education to the Nigerian educational system stated that the advent of Western education, came through the Christian missionaries in collaboration with the British colonial government, in the 1840s, he further explained that the curriculum of the missionaries was geared towards literary education as they focused on the arts

including, music, drama, and poetry, among others (p.2). In this way, awareness of formal music education was raised through the inclusion of music in the school curriculum. The media houses also helped to raise the importance of music education through various talks on the theory and historical values of music education. With the awareness brought about by Western education, Nigeria has been able to produce well-known music scholars like Professor Fela Sowande, Ayo Bankole, Lazarus Ekwueme, Akin Euba, and Akpabot Sam, including some musical artists like Sir Victor Efofa Uwaifo who has joined his ancestors.

In every modern society, it is believed that education is the key to national development and there is a need to maintain every level of education, especially the pre-primary stage because it is the bedrock upon which all other educational levels are built.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) in its *National Policy on Education* (FRN 1981), has included music as one of the core subjects in the school curriculum. This policy was devised to cultivate and develop an interest among primary school pupils in the cultural arts embedded in performance experiences such as music, dance and drama practices. Nzewi (2003) puts it more succinctly when he wrote: "In the African sense, learning is an interactive performance experience, while performance is a never-ending learning experience; knowledge acquisition in the musical arts is then qualitatively regenerative and quantitatively limitless for life" (p.14). In its support for the development of music education in Nigeria, The FRN *National Policy on Education* document (1981) highlights the following: "To encourage aesthetic, creative and musical activities, Government will make staff and facilities available for the teaching of creative arts and crafts and music in primary schools" (p.13). The purpose of this curriculum is to aid children to develop their cultural arts

embedded in performance experiences such as music, dance/drama and fine arts. The committee had good intentions but actual practices in the schools appear largely neglected. Greenberg (1979) opines that "music contributes in no small way to the development of the child. This can only be achieved through effective music teaching and learning, adopting the use of audio-visual learning aids and practical strategies" (p.9).

With deep concern for the sustenance of the above objectives as enshrined in the National Policy on Education, there is the need for parental support to encourage their children in learning music as the subject is imperative. Therefore, the study has deemed it necessary to delve into the Influence of Parental Attitude on Children's Music Education in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

As already pointed out, despite the laudable proclamations of principles in the *National Policy on Education* of 1981, 1998, 2004 and 2014 editions, there is still a general apathy towards music education in Nigerian schools. This is evidenced by the fact that most parents do not see music as a professional subject that can guarantee the future of their children. It has also been observed in primary schools in Nigeria that music is seldom taken as a serious subject in the school curriculum.

The critical problem now centres on the stigmatization placed on music as a course of study. Other perceived challenges are materials, methodology and curriculum that should be employed to help develop the child's interest in the cultural arts embedded in performance experiences such as music, dance and drama practices in childhood music education in Nigeria in general and Obio Akpor in particular.

Research Questions

1. What are the effects of parental attitudes towards pupils' music learning in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area?
2. What are other attitudinal-related effects on children's music learning in Basic Schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?
3. What are the common factors that contribute to poor music learning and or children's music performance in Basic Schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?

Scope of the Study

This study attempts a description of the Psychological Effects of Parental Attitudes Towards Children's Music Studies in Basic Schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. of Rivers State. It is limited mostly to primary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. with samples from ten schools, five private and five government.

The Concept of Music Education

Blacking (1974) defines music as 'humanly organized sounds' (p.17). Walker (1998) sees music as: "a living analogue of human knowing, feeling, sensibility, emotions, intellectual modus operandi and all other life-giving forces which affect human behaviour and knowing." (p.57). While Elliot (1995) gives a feeling of how music might be said to be a valued human activity when he describes it 'as the diverse human practice of constructing aural temporal patterns for the primary (but not necessarily the exclusive) values of enjoyment, self-growth and self-knowledge' (p.128). He reminds us that musical experience tends to be characterized by intense absorption and involvement and asserts that 'the primary values of music education are therefore the

primary values of music itself: self-growth, self-knowledge and optimal experience'. About music in Africa, Nzewi (1998) notes: Music in Africa is a philosophy of life; a transaction of meaning and processes of communal living... a process of conducting relationships, coordinating the societal systems, coping with the realities of human existence and probing the supernatural realm or forces (p1).

The Importance of Music Education in Early Childhood

There are various reasons why childhood music education should be encouraged. There are strong indications universally, that point to the fact that children assimilate musical experiences more than adults, and are more likely to excel in their musical skills if introduced to music at an early age. Some other reasons include [Position statement on early childhood education, www.menc.org/information/perk12/echild.html]: When children encounter music, they bring their creativity to the music-learning environment. This leads to the child taking away with it a bit of knowledge and skill that he or she is independently capable of understanding and developing.

Parental Roles in Involvement, Participation and Support for their Wards

Parental involvement can be as simple as reading a child bedtime stories or as complex as supporting a child's journey in mastering a musical instrument, and the society to which the parents belong affects what is seen as a 'good' level of involvement and guidance, McInerney & McInerney (2006). To many of those who are involved in education, parents and teachers alike, this matter has

seemed straightforward enough: parents, without much doubt, should be involved by taking an active role of participation in guiding and supporting their children. However, in some cases, the parents might acknowledge the value of education and identify parental participation as appropriate but do not involve themselves as a result of the lack of self-efficacy. Parental involvement might not necessarily involve active participation in the child's music learning process; a parent can be actively involved as a non-participating observer, Crozier (1999); Wolfendale (1983)

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975. According to the theory, the intention to behave in a certain manner and perform a favourable or non-favourable action goes through a formative procedure. The outcome of behaviour can be predicted and evaluated, not just only through the person's expression but also through effective actions. A person's behaviour and performance are influenced by internal and external factors. The internal factors, such as confidence and the external factors which include culture, ethnic background, parents, peers, teachers, and access to environmental resources work either way to support or to discourage pupils, Crawley & Coe 1990 as cited in Alsop (2005).

The theory of reasoned action concerning this study explains the linkage between parents and their children's attitudes with the exclusion of the cultural and social structure class factors. Perception can be transmitted to children. This theory highlights the barriers that children face starting from their indigenous culture and the social structure by which they are granted advantages or disadvantages related to academic success.

Methodology

The design of this study is a descriptive survey since it sought the opinion of a population via its representative sample using questionnaires and interviews. The population of this study consists of all the primary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State out of which ten (10) schools (five government own schools and five private schools) were chosen amongst all. These include the pupils, teaching, non-teaching staff and the parents of the pupils. A target population of one hundred and twenty-five (125) of 61.61 respondents was used to carry out this research work. Out of this figure, 25 (62.5%) were parents, 55 (56.1%) were pupils, 25 (75.8) were teachers and 20 (62.5) were the non-teaching staff. Samples of the questionnaire were given to some experts in the field (Head-teacher, Head of primary, Supervisors and some teachers) in Bereton Montessori Nursery and Primary School both in Stadium Road Campus and Old Government Residential Area for validation. Experts went through the instrument to effect necessary corrections on grammar tenses and structure. Finally, the instruments were modified and adopted for this work.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was tested with forty (40) pupils and teachers in Bereton Montessori school Port Harcourt (Stadium Road & Old Government Residential Area Campuses). The instrument is based on content and construct validity tests. After the pilot test, constructive criticism in terms of the content and structure of the questionnaire was made.

The data collected from the questionnaire was scored using five-point scales ranging from strongly agreed, which has the highest

scale (4), to undecided with the least scale (0). The research questions were analyzed with a simple central tendency of mean and percentages while Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses. Frequency and mean (\bar{x}) scores were also obtained during the analysis. The F-Ratio table was used to ascertain the critical values which eventually lead to acceptance or non-acceptance of the null hypothesis at a 0.05 significant level.

Research Question 1

What are the effects of parental attitudes towards pupils' music learning in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area? Data in table 1 below showed the effects of parents' attitudes towards pupils' music learning in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area. The analysis revealed that out of 125 respondents, about 92 (74.2%) persons responded positively to the questions. While about 28 (22%) responded otherwise. A total number of 6 (3.7%) respondents were undecided on the items. Furthermore, 90 (72%) respondents agreed that Music as a subject cannot help their children to become what they want to be future. While 95 (76%) accepted that children do not do well in music practicals because they don't have musical instruments to practice at home. Also, 90 (72%) respondents believe that schools in the study area are not well prepared to teach music as a subject. While 94 (75.2%) respondents agreed that they couldn't help their children in their music studies because they didn't do music as a subject in their school days. Furthermore, 95 (76%) respondents agreed that music is not a profession that can guarantee their children's future. In conclusion, negative parental attitudes towards music affect their children's music performance in Basic Schools in the study area.

Research Question 2

What are other attitudinal-related effects on children's music learning in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area? Data in table 2 below showed that parents' attitude towards their children's music studies in basic schools affects their performances in music in the study area. The study revealed that out of 125 respondents, about 94 (75.4%) respondents held a positive response. While about 26.2 (20.9%) responded negatively. A total number of 4 (3.5%) respondents declined their responses on the matter. In addition, 94 (75.2%) of the respondents accepted that parents don't always care to know their children's scores in music. While 95 (76%) think that musical instruments are too expensive these days, hence they cannot afford for their children to practice at home. Also, 94 (74.8%) respondents prefer a science lesson teacher for their children in place of a music lesson teacher which clearly shows their valued or preferred subject. Furthermore, 95 (76.2%) respondents agreed that they don't understand most of the terms in their children's music notes, hence, they are completely lost in the subject matter. In conclusion, the nonchalant attitude of parents and their ignorance of the importance of music education has greatly affected the performance of their children in music.

Research Question 3

What are the common factors that contribute to poor music learning and or children's music performance in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area?

Table 3 below showed the common factors that contributed to poor music learning and or children's music performance in Basic

Schools in the study area. The study revealed that out of 125 respondents, about 90 (72.2%) respondents held a positive response while about 31 (25.8%) responded negatively. A total number of 3 (2.4%) respondents declined their responses on the issue. Furthermore, 73 (58.4%) respondents agreed that studying music by children is a waste of resources and time. Meanwhile, 94 (75.2%) respondents agreed that buying a musical instrument for children in primary school is not necessary. Also, 94 (76%) thought that to become a musician, one must not study music in school. Furthermore, 93 (74.4%) respondents agreed that not all great musicians attended formal education. While 94 (76.8%) accepted that old musicians play better than present ones. In conclusion, the lack of necessary musical instruments and parents' lack of interest in music contributed to poor music learning and or children's music performance in Basic Schools in the study area.

Table 1: Percentage Analysis of the Effects of Parental Attitudes Towards Pupils' Music Learning in Basic Schools in Obio/Akporlocal Government Area.

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES					Total	% RESPONSES				
	SA	A	D	SD	UD		SA	A	D	SD	UD
Music as a subject cannot help my child to become what he/she wants to be.	50	40	20	12	3	125	40	32	16	9.6	2.5
My child does not have a musical instrument to practice at home.	55	40	20	5	5	125	44	32	16	4	4

I think the school is not well prepared to teach music as a subject.	50	40	20	10	5	125	40	32	16	8	4
I can't help my child in his music studies since I didn't do it in school.	50	44	16	10	5	125	40	35.2	12.8	8	4
Music is not a profession that can guarantee my child's future.	45	50	10	15	5	125	36	40	8	12	4
TOTAL	250	214	86	52	23	625	40	34.2	13.8	8.3	3.7

Table 2: Percentage Analysis of Attitudinal Related Effects on Children's Music Learning in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES					Total	% RESPONSES				
	SA	A	D	SD	UD		SA	A	D	SD	UD
I don't always know my child's score in music.	50	44	16	10	5	125	40	35.2	12.8	8	4
Musical instruments are too expensive these days.	45	50	10	15	5	125	36	40	8	12	4

Music is not a serious subject in the school curriculum.	50	44	16	10	5	125	40	35.2	12.8	8	4
I prefer a science lesson teacher for my child to music.	53	41	19	7	5	125	42	32.8	15.2	5.6	4
I don't understand most of the terms in my child's music note.	50	45	16	12	2	125	40	36.2	12.8	7.8	1.6
TOTAL	248	224	77	54	22	625	39.7	35.7	12.3	8.6	3.5

Table 3: Percentage Analysis of the Common Factors that Contribute to Poor Music Learning and / Or Children Music Performance in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES					Total	% RESPONSES				
	SA	A	D	SD	UD		SA	A	D	SD	UD
Studying music by children is a waste of resources and time.	39	34	27	22	3	125	31.2	27.2	21.6	17.6	2.4
Buying a musical instrument for children in primary school is not necessary.	50	44	16	10	5	125	40	35.2	12.8	8	4

To become a musician, one must not study it in school.	55	40	20	5	5	125	44	32	16	4	4
Not all great musicians attended formal education.	35	58	22	10	0	125	28	46.4	17.5	8	0
Old musicians play better than present ones.	52	44	21	6	2	125	41.6	35.2	16.8	6.4	1.6
TOTAL	231	220	106	53	15	625	37	35.2	17	8.8	2.4

Table 4: ANOVA Examines the Relationship Between Parents’ Attitude and Pupils’ Music Learning in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area.

Sources of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F-R	C.V
Between Group	6840.8	4	1710.2	123.8	2.87
Within Group	276.2	20	13.81		

Table 5: ANOVA Examining the Significant Relationship Between Peer Group Influence and Quality of Teaching/Learning on Children's Music Performance in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area

Sources of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F-R	C.V
Between Group	10021.6	4	2505.4	84.3	2.87
Within Group	594.4	20	29.72		

Table 6: ANOVA Examining the Relationship Between the Academic Qualification of Music Teachers and Children's Music Performance in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area.

Sources of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F-R	C.V
Between Group	7581.2	4	1895.3	43.73	2.87
Within Group	866.8	20	43.34		

Results and Discussion

The Federal government has put in place policies that maintain the inclusion of Nigerian culture in arts education and asked schools to promote the use of music in teaching Nigerian culture. This paper examined the influence of parental attitudes towards children's music studies in basic schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Tables 1 and 4 respectively revealed the negative influence of parental attitude towards children's music learning in Obio Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The findings showed that children's performance in music is below average because the parents don't always revise with their children before the music exam but prefer to revise other subjects with their children. The study showed that many parents did not learn music as a subject during their primary school days. This x-rayed the reason why parents are not willing to buy any musical instruments for their children to enhance their practical skills. These parents feel that music is not a profession that can guarantee their children's future careers. Leong (2008) while writing on parental attitudes towards their children's music studies identified the 'I'm too busy for music' parents. He emphasized that these parents who are less involved contrast with the parents who were actively participating in musical activities, parents who fall into this category would send their children for music lessons just because they observed other parents doing it, in other words, "keeping up with the Joneses". Concerning this, they would be less inclined to provide music lessons to nurture their children's musical ability since they did not feel that their child has significant musical ability. Parents who rated themselves as having no time for music also admitted that

they seldom listen to their children's musical practice, and would either be too busy or not interested in attending concerts and other music-related performances.

Some parents emphatically stated that music as a subject cannot help their children to become what they want to be in future. Most parents acknowledged that their children do not have any musical instruments to practice at home. The study also observed that the schools, especially government-owned schools, are not well prepared to teach music as a subject. While in private schools some parents complained that they can't help their children in their music studies since they didn't learn it in school. They concluded that music is not a profession that can guarantee their children's future. Several scholars are in support of this finding. Addison, (1990); Davidson, Howe, Moore, Sloboda & Zdzinski, (1996), highlighted in terms of the students' benefits gained from parental involvement, support and participation, their results from several studies indicated that parental involvement has positive influences in a child's early music learning experiences as well as the experiences gained later on and that a determined music student usually does not accomplish levels of proficiency in isolation. Their Studies showed that support by both teacher and parent would motivate preliminary music-making, and for those children who take music lessons and eventually give up, there is significantly less parental and teacher encouragement in their early musical experiences.

Table 2 revealed that there is a significant relationship between parents' attitudes towards music learning and their children's performance in music in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area. It revealed that so many parents don't know their children's examination scores in music. They also complained that Children's musical instruments are too expensive these days. Government-owned schools have the notion that music

is not a serious subject in the school curriculum; as some parents preferred a science lesson teacher for their child to a music teacher.

The studies of Crozier, (1999) Davidson & Borthwick, (2002); Davidson et al, (1996) supported that continuing music students have a distinctly different musical connection with their parents compared to those who gave up learning, and the original motivation for the persistent students was provided by parents. By investigating the role of parental influences in the development of their children's musical ability, it was found that parents who were the most highly involved in lessons and practice in the earliest stage of learning would have children who are most successful in their musical achievement. Likewise, successful music students often had parents who were involved in music in one way or another, suggesting that children who failed to continue with music lessons had parents who were less interested in music and did not change their levels of involvement in music throughout their child's learning.

Tables 3 and 5 respectively revealed that there is a significant relationship between peer group influence and quality of teaching/learning on the children's music performance in Basic Schools in Obio Akpor Local Government Area. Most parents in private schools believed that their children need the required energy during music performance to master the act and skills. They stated that children should be taught the right spirit to get the desired goal during the performance. Most parents in Bereton Montessori Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools believed that the confidence level of pupils should be strengthened during the performance. And that the pupils should be taught how to focus on their goal in music learning. They finally accepted that adequate

preparation is needed for better music performance in children. We observed that private schools are better equipped than public schools. The peer group influence in these private schools is on the positive side. Public schools in the study area have nothing to write home about, the peer group influence is very high.

Adeogun A. O (2006) cited the remarks of students, thus "I am studying music because I want to study it. I am a religious person, but that is by the way. I do not let it becloud my sense of being here to gain as much musical knowledge and skills as I can before I graduate. But, some religious extremists in my class will not dance or sing a song because they say their faith is against it. To me, that is absolute balderdash. Why haven't they chosen to study religion instead of music?"

Table 6 revealed that there is a significant relationship between the academic qualification of music teachers and children's music performance in Basic Schools in the Obio Akpor Local Government Area. They said that not all great musicians went to school for formal education arguing that old musicians played better meaningful music than the present ones. We observed that the public schools do not have qualified music teachers to handle the students. They also lack music studios and equipment. In support of this, Nzebuio (1993) and Onwuka (1997) stated that "the dearth of both traditional and foreign musical instruments, books, instructional aids and other facilities in the country militates seriously against effective music teaching and learning (p.86). The teacher's mastery of subject matter is an important issue that affects music teaching and learning in Nigerian primary schools. Subject matter competence is, without doubt, a prerequisite to effective teaching, and such knowledge is usually acquired through performance in achievement tests. When teachers do not know and understand their learners, they fail to find ways to bridge the gap

between the learner and the subject content. The student's learning progress is a measure of the teacher's subject matter competence.

Conclusion

The importance of music education cannot be over-emphasized. This study is encouraging parents to support their children in their music studies. Some of the benefits of music education have been highlighted: for example, the music experience in the classroom can promote the emotional, intellectual, and physical development of the child. The learning of music can help to uplift other subjects. These are only a few of the values of music in the classroom. This study also revealed the values of music (indigenous and modern) and the most important fact that experience in music can help the child to understand different aspects of his or her own culture and to appreciate aspects of other cultures. It is disheartening that music has been neglected by some schools despite its inclusion in the primary school syllabus. It has been also noted that Government's written commitment to ensuring that children receive music education has not been adequately fulfilled. Some of the factors contributing to this neglect of music education in Nigerian primary schools have been identified: the conviction that a subject like music is unimportant, while others are more relevant to today's technological needs; insufficient funding of music education programmes; lack of facilities for music education; inadequate materials for music instruction; scarcity of music teachers and parental lack of interest, hence negative attitude towards the subject.

Recommendations

Based on the survey of the literature and findings of the study, the following recommendations have been proffered for the development of music education in the study area in particular and the state/country at large.

1. The government should not only make policies to encourage the study of music education but should back them up with immediate actions to actualize its policy statements.
2. The school administrators, teachers, parents and pupils/students should be orientated on the importance of music education in our society.
3. Music undergraduates should be well trained and given adequate sensitization on the challenges music education is currently facing in our society. This will prepare their minds for the challenges ahead.

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