

## CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

# NIGERIAN CONTEMPORARY POP MUSIC IN CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ARTS CURRICULUM: IMPLICATIONS, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Ebele V. Ojukwu (PhD) & Echezona Adaora Unoma

### **Abstract**

The Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) curriculum has for several times and reasons concerned itself with the inclusion of Nigerian folk and art music in teaching and learning. While the efforts made by curriculum planners so far have achieved significant results, there is a need to make the learners relate more with the prevalent music of their time. Learning with the genre of music different from what the learners are exposed to daily may hamper cooperation, mutual communication and comprehension between the teachers and learners in the CCA learning process. This paper, therefore, intends to advocate for giving more place to more recent musicians and their music genre in CCA as the learners will relate to them better. This study recommends that musicologists should redirect their efforts towards the study of popular music even in higher institutions where the CCA teachers are churned out from.

Keywords: Nigerian contemporary pop music, musicologists, Cultural and Creative Arts curriculum.

### **Introduction**

In Cultural and Creative Arts taught as part of Nigerian basic education, learners are exposed to making arts and crafts, dances, drama, music and cultural values. Before now, music and fine arts were separate subjects. Merging all these parts into one necessitated that many topics were jettisoned from the individual parts. Long after the end of colonialism, the Nigerian educational system still holds dear the ideals handed over by the Europeans. Though efforts have been made to mitigate this, there is still a lot more to be done. This has restricted the progress of developing a unique structure that suits the unique situation, needs and demands of our Nigerian society. Nigerian Contemporary music, a largely consumed art, is relegated to the background when it comes to teaching and learning in Cultural and Creative Arts. Judging by the potency of Nigerian contemporary music to create jobs, entertainment, inculcate moral values and so on, this paper emphasizes obstacles on the route to enthroning popular music, how we can remedy this situation and what the country at large stands to gain should it be adhered to.

### **Contemporary Nigerian pop music**

Okoli & Atelhe, G. (2018) stated that “popular music is the genre of music that appeals to a mass audience within a contemporaneous time and space.” Nigerian pop contemporary music as used in this paper refers to recent Nigerian popular songs by current musicians such as Burna Boy, Wizkid, Rema, Fela and others. It covers the day-to-day music released which trend on social media, television and radio platforms and the internet. This music wraps around most of the social activities children are exposed to such as birthdays, funerals, parties, and even school social activities. According to Onyeji (2002), pop music is seen as “a genre of music,

encompassing several styles, that is readily comprehensible to a large proportion of the population; its appreciation requires little or no knowledge of musical theory or technique” (p.24).

Pop music is viewed by many as unofficial and urban. It is usually directed to the masses, especially the young people and has no language barrier. Pop music normally dwells on a topic dealing with everyday life, politics, love, sex, social issues and so on. This makes it appeal naturally to a large audience. Pop music employs a large number of persons including music producers, music promoters, performers etc. Many who are not even talented with music give it a try by manipulating technology to create something musical. Sometimes, it is the lyrics or the social issue in the music that drives the consumers beyond the music. Aluede&Ibekwe (2017) asserted that “pop music is strictly guided by audience taste and choice.” Several million nairasis generated from the pop music industry in Nigeria annually. Inyabri (2008) agreed that “this genre of popular music emerged in the early 1990s and was pioneered by artists like DadyShowkey, Baba Fryo, ZakiAzeez, and other young artists, especially in the megacity of Lagos where this brand of popular music was born”. (p. 166) Furthermore, Inyabri (2013) added that:

It was the enterprising efforts of young urban entrepreneurs such as Ken Ogungbe, proprietor of Kennis Music Studio that brought sophistication to the genre by introducing emerging digital technologies to the young but flourishing hip-hop music industry in Nigeria. By introducing digital technologies into what was essentially a modest and crude artistic effort by ambitious youth, Young entrepreneurs like Ogungbe and his cohorts opened the path for experimentation, improvement and commercial success for the young hip-hop composers, songwriters, musicians, and producers in the Nigerian pop music industry, many of whom drew on experiences gained from exposure to the American music industry (p.3).

Pop music in Nigeria enjoys a variety of sub-genres such as *hip-hop*, *juju*, *highlife*, *waka*, *ikwokirikwo*, *egedege*, *nkwa*, afrobeat etc. Pop musicians have always been very quick to exploit the possibilities of electronic equipment which include different types of guitars, synthesizers, drums and rhythm composers; computers (in recent times), amplifiers, sound effect generators, sound modifiers, sequencers, electronic keyboards with different functions, sound modifiers, etc. Pop music also utilizes non-electronic instruments such as trumpet with and without mutes, saxophones, acoustic guitars, jazz drum sets, trombone, flutes, clarinets, violins and different percussive instruments. (p.26)

### **Concept of Cultural and Creative Arts**

Cultural and Creative Arts is a subject at the basic level in the first nine years of the 9-3-4 system of education. It covers music, arts and crafts, dance, drama and cultural values. The learners by it were supposed to have a well-rounded view of Arts and culture. It was also fashioned to equip the students with skills, creativity, team spirit and cultural values. Ojukwu and Onyiuke (2014), stated that CCA is an “umbrella term which brings together the three art subject areas: music, fine and applied arts and drama/theatre” (p. 77).

### **Concept of curriculum**

Ogunrinade (2013) described the curriculum as, “the specific and formal knowledge and skills that the learners or managers will acquire from a course or programme”. A curriculum is a set of organized instructions in line with some educational objectives of a particular subject to be taught in schools. The curriculum embodies the plan that governs how the various themes,

focuses, topics and educational goals of the subjects are arranged, structured, broken down and prioritized.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Bandura's theory of social learning as cited by Edtick.com explains that children's learning process is highly influenced by their environment and their interactions with it. The imitations and mimicking done by children is as a result of their encounter with the things around them. Five basic steps of the learning process are observation, attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. ([www.edtick.com/en/news/social-learning-bandura-s-5-keys-of-the-learning-process](http://www.edtick.com/en/news/social-learning-bandura-s-5-keys-of-the-learning-process))

Bandura emphasized that learning is not limited to what's happening within the mind of a child but also the external happenings. In fact, the external occurrences precede the internal impression before a final reaction. This implies that a teacher must be conscious of the environment of the child being taught to draw upon such environment to ignite a learning process or create such an environment that will enable favourable learning experiences.

### **Let us look individually at the five steps vis-à-vis music learning as part of CCA.**

Observation, Attention, Retention, Reproduction and Motivation are important tools for learning in CCA. Contemporary music in Nigeria inundates the learners from every angle namely television, radio, phones, laptops, and so on. These children grow up observing and imbibing the ubiquitous pop sound. It forms part of their social lives in churches, schools, clubs, and other various social gatherings. Coming to school to meet different music is enough to turn the children off. Since the children draw from their environmental experiences into their learning process, the music they hear most of the time will likely make a deeper impression on them. This is not to say that art music and folk music (which forms most of the basis for teaching CCA) can't be found in the learner's environment. Some of them attend orthodox churches where they are exposed to art music. However, the exposure and observation of contemporary Nigerian pop music is far higher and thus, creates more impression in their minds.

Inability to present that which the children observe more repeatedly in their daily life amounts to poor attention from them. The preponderance of Nigerian pop music makes it easier to relate to. This is because children are more influenced by what they encounter more often. Hence, Nigerian pop music will sustain their attention more.

The result of proper observation and attention becomes retention. The children can easily remember lessons learnt because it has a relationship with their everyday experiences. They can relate musical examples given in class to the music they are constantly exposed to, thereby enhancing remembrance. Hearing a track play on the street can easily make a child regurgitate the learning experience had with the teacher. Idamoyibo (2003) asserted that "knowledge gained through music stays in memory for so long, till life terminates". This indicates that the music which the learners store up into their memory most of the time should be a veritable educational tool. When observation, attention and retention have taken place, the learners can comfortably provide successful feedback. This they will do with joy and a motivated heart.

### **Inhibitions to the use of popular music in CCA**

Popular music according to Green (2002) first gained entrance into formal education through jazz music in the United States of America (USA) in the 1960s and by the 1980s; it appeared firmly in the curriculum of many countries. (p. 4). However, Emielu (2013) asserted that:

Despite its popularity, the academic study of popular music is still in its infancy in most parts of Africa. The need to bring popular music within the mainstream of music [remain pertinent]...In the African continent, popular music is still a latecomer in the academic programmes of schools, colleges and universities. The need to develop specific pedagogical approaches for African popular music and musicians is therefore justified and significant for African music education.

The reason he stated for, this included the lack of a suitable pedagogical approach which the curriculum planners need to infuse contemporary Nigerian pop music into CCA. According to him, 'the major issue in popular music pedagogy is the clash of perspectives between informal learning which is the major domain of acquiring knowledge and skills in popular music and the application of 'classical music' pedagogy to teaching popular music in the classroom. Pop music would require an informal approach against the established formal structure. The formal approach most times, does not take into cognisance the intrinsic motivation of the student before his enrolment for music programmes, neither is the student given a creative latitude to grow his skills, knowledge, style and choice of music as well as personal assessment (Emielu, 2013). Efforts have been made by several scholars to push for the ascendancy of Nigerian Contemporary pop music in our educational system. This is yet to recommend tremendous success because the educational curriculum planners and the teachers were trained using the western educational system where art music gains prominence. They have been made to believe that art music is superior and more suitable for the learners. Bach is elevated above BurnaBoy, Wolfgang Mozart is revered above Wizkid and so on. The constant rise and fall of older artists in favour of newer artists will also require constant review of the curriculum when compared to celebrating the already obvious Western art composers.

The truth remains that it is the quest to uphold western educational ideals and the fears emanating from those whose teaching approaches are strongly limited to it that has obstructed the growth of pop music in our educational system. The truth remains that sticking to prior approaches will not only disfavour educational growth but also cripple the proposed future of the learners who are to benefit from what they are being denied. Another detriment is that academia will not have much influence on the popular music content and musicianship which happens to be a viable means of reaching the youth of this generation and providing jobs, entertainment, socialization and moral value inculcation; since they shy away from it.

One thing is clear, popular music has come to stay in Africa and we in academia cannot continue to shy away from bringing popular music into the classroom. It has become a major voice for society and a new form of youth empowerment (Emielu, 2013). According to Ojukwu (2017) pop musicians are 'still grappling from the bad name given to early popular musicians who were looked down on as the wayward, lazy, school dropout, etc. in the society (p.503)' Meanwhile, Onyeji (2002) indicated that:

Pop musicians are often associated with hotels, excessive drinking, prostitution, polygamous and unstable family life, nightlife, radicalism, street gangs, broken homes and relationships, early deaths, late marriages, or no marriage at all, drugs, excessive smoking, disrespect to authorities and parents, lack of trust, and seriousness. They have also been accused of enticing vibrant youth and children out of school and more serious professions. (p. 34)

However, these impressionistic views about pop musicians are part of the reasons why pop music inclusion in CCA is a herculean task. Onyeji (2002) asserted that "Pop musicians are not as morally bad as have been portrayed by the public" (p. 36). Though some pop musicians promote immorality and theft, many of them are committed to inculcating good social values to the younger ones. They serve as role models to many of them.

The ascendancy of popular music will necessarily require beginning from tertiary institutions where the CCA teachers are churned out from. It will be fruitless creating a curriculum and there are no teachers groomed adequately enough to teach the learners. The tertiary institutions will require firstly, a reorientation from the long celebrated western culture and infrastructural upgrade to meet up with the demands of teaching popular music. Hitherto, many departments of music in Nigeria do not have music recording studios or a standard one, and even a music listening centre/room. They do not give preference to purchasing and performing popular music. This has to be put in place for the study of popular music to truly begin. It is only when popular music is fully grasped, understood, analysed and fully appreciated at the tertiary education level, that we can have teachers at the CCA level in basic education who can fully instruct the learners on popular music. At the basic education level, speakers, audio music facility, laptop/desktop computers and an internet facility will be required in the learning process.

### **The Possible Remedies**

The preference for the need of the learners would go a long way to mitigate the challenge of pop music inclusion in the CCA teaching and learning process. Trying to impose Western musical culture on the children by placing Handel, Mozart and Beethoven as musical models (if not superior ones) against Nigerian pop artists such as 2face Idibia, Tiwa Savage and Wizkid who are already role models to the children, will only create confusion in them.

Nzewi (2006) suggested orality as a suitable pedagogical approach to CCA. According to him, 'Orality inculcates creative spontaneity. The learner is involved as a producer as well as a consumer of knowledge in the context of cultural norms and interpersonal stimulation. In the musical arts field of knowledge, in particular, orality, which compels practical-intellectual participation, is of the essence in the classroom in Africa (p.52). Jeffreys (1971) opined that "teaching is never all-giving and learning is never all-receiving...the teacher is bound to learn something from his pupils" (p. 58). Emielu added, 'Undoubtedly, a lot can be achieved in music education if teachers take into consideration the intrinsic motivation of the student before enrolment for the course, his prior learning experiences if any, his area of interest in music as well as his latent capabilities and perceived weaknesses as a learner. One of the problems of teaching popular music in schools is the teacher-student relationship. The tenacious hold on the 'reputation' of formal education stands in the way of the educational progress of CCA. This idealistic approach will only lead to following rules and maintaining the status quo as against focusing on the contemporary relevance, utility and applicability of what our children are being taught in schools. Pop music imbues great advantages socially and educationally which will elude us if the pride of the so-called 'formal education' hinders it.

Ojukwu, Obielozie and Esimone extensively stated the efficacy of the Nigerian contemporary popular music in promoting Nigerian cultural values, job creation, mass mobilization and integration as well as national development (p.115). Teaching with Nigerian pop music must be adhered to, for 'it is expected that every learner who has successfully completed the nine years of continuous basic education schooling should have acquired appropriate levels of literacy, manipulative and life-long skills as well as ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long musical learning' (Nwachukwu, 2012).

Ogunrinade (2013) recommended that:

Music education should emphasize more on the non-cognitive domains and the socialization of the Nigerian child into a true citizen. If the well-intended lofty goals of Music education must be accomplished, Nigerian's local and contemporary music, the history of Nigerian music heroes should be included in the content because they need to be properly comprehended by the students.

Also, the concentration on pop music amongst learners who equally imbibe good moral values from CCA will also lead to producing future pop musicians who would promote music with high moral standards as well as quality musicianship. Furthermore, pop music is a veritable tool for promoting folk music, preserving history and enhancing socialization among young people.

In line with this assertion, Okoli and Atelhe (2018) consented that “African ethnomusicological heritage find copious and profound expression in the prevailing genres” (p.100). They added that “African pop music artists are utilizing the platform and opportunities offered by globalization to promote and project African contents through their songs and performances” (p.108).

The rise of popular music in CCA will also increase the number of aspirants in the study of music in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Many of the persons who want to study music indicate so because they have seen rich popular musicians on display on television and social media, and also crave their fame. They get disappointed after enrolment when most of that they get exposed to in school revolves around Bach, Beethoven and Bartok. Emielu (2013) narrated that at the university level, he studied the theory of music but he hated the aspect of harmony because of its too many rules. He also loathed choral classes because the songs were not interesting to him. The pop songs they played and sang in their band in the university made more sense to him than classical singing along European models. Pop music needs to be brought into the curriculum as the main part of teaching and learning. This is the path to progress and national development in numerous ramifications.

### **Conclusions**

With the increasing progress of Nigerian contemporary pop music even beyond the shores of Africa, promoting the African culture, heritage and artistic creativity, deeper inclusion in Nigerian schools becomes overdue. We cannot fold our arms and watch an industry that thrives in billions of naira, provides numerous job opportunities, churns out unique creativity, influence the morality of the child-learner, go by without consciously infusing it into our curriculum. Failure to do so is not only a disservice to the learners but also poses limitations to the educational goals and objectives that CCA was set out to fulfill. The five points in Bandura learning theory—observation, attention, retention, reproduction and motivation—will remain a mere theory as far as the teaching of music in CCA is concerned if the music learners are exposed to most times in their lives are pushed aside in favour of the less encountered and imparting art music. Also, with proof that Nigerian contemporary pop music has aided the revival of African folk music and values, its deeper inclusion into the CCA teaching and learning process will be of tremendous cultural benefit.

### **Recommendation**

It is suggested that the Ministry of Education and Nigerian Education Commission (NERDC) look into the pop music industry more deeply to harness its huge potential for growth and development of the Nigerian educational and cultural system. With respect to CCA and music

education, in particular, Pop music should be emphasized in the teaching and learning process. This will not only be of benefit in creating job opportunities in the large music industry but also help in using the didactic tool for learners.

Teachers and Curriculum Planners are advised to embrace Pop music as an educational tool in the learning process. Learners should be exposed to the recording studio and Pop performances as part of their excursions. Pop musicians who exhibit positive cultural lifestyles should be highlighted to the learners. Higher institutions where the CCA teachers are groomed should take Pop music more seriously so that they can produce the kind of teachers that can teach and perform Pop music. This will serve as extra sources of income for them.

## References

- Aluede, C. & Ibekwe, E. (2017). Popular music culture and urban experiences. In *Nigeria IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities* Vol. 3 No 3, April 2017. ISSN: 2488-9210(Online)
- Bandura, A. Social Learning: 5 keys of the Learning Process. [www.edtick.com/en/news/social-learning-bandura-s-5-keys-of-the-learning-process](http://www.edtick.com/en/news/social-learning-bandura-s-5-keys-of-the-learning-process)
- Emielu, A. (2013). From The Classroom to Stage': Developing an African popular music pedagogy. *Ejotmas: Ekpoma Journal of Theatre and Media Arts* Vol. 4 No. 1-2(2013) [www.ajol.info](http://www.ajol.info)
- Green, L. (2002). How popular musicians learn: A way ahead for music education. London: Ashgate
- Idamoyibo, I. (2003). Interaction between music and culture in relation to human development in Nigeria". *Nigeria Music Review*, 4. Ile-Ife: Department of Music, Obafemi University. 53 – 63.
- Inyabri, I. (2008). Orality, subjectivity and communality in contemporary Nigerian pop music. *A Journal of Research in Nigerian English and Literature. (JONEL)* 7: 163-75.
- Jayeola, F. (2021). Professional music practice: the Nigeria example. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* Vol - 6, Issue - 3 ; <https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijels.63.18112>
- Jeffreys, M.V.C. (1971). Education: Its nature and purpose. London: George Allen and Unwin
- Nwachukwu, O. P. (2012). Understanding the new revised basic education curriculum. Awka: NERDC.
- Nzewi, M. (2006). Growing in musical arts knowledge versus the role of the ignorant expert. In Mans M. (Ed). *Centring on African Practice in Musical Arts Education*. Pan-African Society of Musical Arts Education: African Minds
- Okoli C. & Atelhe, G. (2018). Globalization and 'Africanization' of Contemporary Pop Music: Implications for history and theory. *Covenant University Journal of Politics & International Affairs*, 6(1),.
- Ogunrinade, D. (2013). Philosophy of music education in Nigeria: Content analysis of music curriculum for Nigeria certificate in education (NCE). *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion*, 1.
- Ojukwu, E. V. (2017). Music education: a vehicle for fostering positive youth development. *UJAH: Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities, Special Edition*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v18i2.28>
- Ojukwu, E. V., Obielozie, E. O. & Esimone, C. C. (2016). Nigerian values and contemporary popular music: A new look. *Ogirisi: A New Journal of African Studies*, 12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/og.v12i1.s1.7>
- Onyeji, C. (2002). Popular Music: Facts about the music and musicians. In Idolor (Ed.) *Music In Africa, Fact and Illusions*. Ibadan: Stirling – Horden