
GENDER ISSUES IN MUSIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA SCHOOLS**Ezugwu Scholastica Ifeoma¹ & Adaora Echezona Unoma²**¹Department of Arts Education, University of Nigeria scholastica.ezugwu@unn.edu.ng²Department of Music, University of Nigeria, adaora.echezona@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper explains and discusses the role of gender in music education. Especially in the teaching and learning of music in secondary schools. It does so by first outlining the debates about what 'gender' is and how it operates through power imbalances and differences that are social and cultural. The main results were described from research about gender in music education schools in Nigeria through three themes: Gender and music, gender in music education, and the gendering of professional roles. Thereafter, the paper problematizes gender as an analytical category through an intersectional lens and discusses the problem of sexual harassment, sexism, and other harassment in music education institutions. The paper also discusses how to challenge gender issues in music education in schools.

Introduction

Music is one of the oldest of the arts and can be said to be as old as man. They traced their evidence of this to records of music during antiquity, archaeological surveys which revealed that musical instruments were used more than twenty-five thousand years ago by the people that lived during the Stone Age; Iconography of music with evidence in pictures of musical instruments and music manuscripts found in tombs. They also pronounced that the beginning of music could be traced to the primitive man trying to imitate the noise from birds, waterfalls, lightning/ thunder and other sources. The development of music went through different stages to a level where it could be written down on a manuscript (Notation). It went through different periods with the events of these different periods i.e. social, economic political, cultural and philosophical development of these periods influencing music. From antiquity to the middle ages, to the Renaissance period – the Baroque period to the classical era, the Romantic era to twentieth-century music date. Formal education began in Nigeria through the activities of European missionaries around 1842. The first formal educational institution was founded in 1843 by Methodist missionaries in Badagry, Lagos. Right from the beginning, music was part of the syllabus of the Nigerian educational system. It gradually developed from one stage to another, until it reached a level where it is now recognized as a course of study in schools at every stage in the Nigerian educational system. Music is in the programme of study of schools at the basic educational level, and secondary school level and many tertiary institutions in Nigeria have music in their programmes. There are male and female students

in these schools. In the secondary schools in Nigeria, there are different areas of music taught. Universal Basic Education in Nigeria currently offers free education to all (both males and females). Through this system of education, opportunity is given to every Nigerian citizen to be educated. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2005:5) states that "the Universal Basic Education Act is a government strategy to fight illiteracy". One expects that with this government policy, illiteracy would have been drastically reduced or almost completely eradicated for every member to contribute meaningfully to the growth of the society. Despite the available opportunity for everyone in Nigerian society to be educated, records show that some Nigerians especially females are yet to key into it, while some have very little education. Ugwuoke (2016) states that forty percent (40%) of children aged 6-11 years in Nigeria are not in any education programme. The Northern part of the country has the lowest percentage of children's education, especially for females. Ugwuoke states further that a wide gap exists between the population of boys and girls in schools, with boys having a higher population rate. Irrespective of government policy and available opportunities in the country, the individuals' understanding of education which can be influenced by environmental factors will always have a great role to play in the choices they make. Those that will utilize the opportunities provided by the government are the ones that attach importance to education. The student population at such times will depend on the number that attaches value to their children/wards' education, especially females. The environmental factors mentioned above include the people's exposure and their cultural belief. Nigerians have norms and values in their various communities. These norms extend to roles played by men and women in the community (gender roles). Before education came to Nigeria, people had skills they learnt either through their parents or specialists. These skills include pottery, farming, trading, animal husbandry, blacksmithing, tailoring, shoe making, music making and other occupations. When formal education was introduced to them, not everybody embraced it. Some saw education as a waste of time. When education started in Nigeria, some families did not send all their children to school. They left some of the males to help them with farm work, and the females to help their mothers with house chores.

The effort of the educated ones and the government has helped to inform the Nigerian populace to get to this level where many families now place value on the education of their children, irrespective of gender. Even at this level of civilization in Nigeria, some parents are still not well informed. They do not know the worth of education. Some individuals in this category of illiterate and half-educated ones still hold to the old cultural practice of not believing so much in education, especially females' education. The majority of school-age children not in any education programme come from this category of individuals in society, while others come from poor family backgrounds with nobody to cater for their fees. For decades now, issues have been raised concerning gender and its effects on the lives of individuals. This is the effect of civilization, that makes provision for the census to be taken from time to time on the development made in every endeavour of life and how each sex progresses. Different countries have records of advancements made in every area including education. In Nigeria for instance, there have been census on the total population in the country, population of men, women and children. The population of people in different careers, the number of males and females in these careers, and the population of children including the number of

boys and girls in schools at different levels from kindergarten to university level are known. From these records, countries know the progress being made. The country's population is also known. If the records show that the nation is not making the desired progress, those in authority find out where the problem lies and how to solve it and forge ahead. Sometimes, the information above is got through research studies. Research studies not only reveal such information but also proffer solutions to the problems.

Through the avenues discussed above, countries and different bodies have come to know the population of males and females, the number of each sex that is educated and the number not educated, the number of each sex in the workforce and the unemployed number, the kind of jobs they do and even the amount they earn. From such records, the imbalances in any area of living among the people are revealed. Different countries can discuss issues affecting them with the availability of these records. For instance, Nannen (2017) observed that men dominated public singing activities in America with little or no participation by the female folk. Nnenna also observed that after a while, the scenario changed and females came on board. With records, Nannen was able to know the imbalance in public music activities. Layade (2018), affirms that modern civilisation is gradually influencing Africans to be gender-conscious, hence sexual description is becoming a decisive and perceptive concern in the expression of historical data. The issue of gender often has to do with the views society holds about each sex, the roles each sex plays and the opportunities available to each sex. Both genders grew up in their various societies and communities to understand their roles and fit into them. This restricts each sex to some sets of roles. Have these assigned roles helped individuals, society and humanity? Has it helped to develop the females and the males? And how far has it affected people positively and negatively in other areas of life's endeavours? The consciousness to have data on every issue has been awakened in individuals and nations. Data on every sphere of life are now taken and kept for different purposes including academic discourses. In this study, the researcher found out the student's enrolment in secondary schools in the areas covered, the performances of both genders in theoretical and practical lessons and from the data gathered, find out whether gender affects the study of music.

Music has been one of the subjects taught in schools since the inception of formal education in Nigeria in the early 19th century. Music has been a course of study in tertiary institutions since the 1960s with Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. In every course of study and profession, it is essential to use the available records to generalize whether there are more males or females in the schools where music is taught. The population of both sexes in the secondary schools where it is studied, which sex performs better in the subject and so on. On average, male musicians tend to tilt towards instruments in the brass family while females are more in the wind family. The research finds out whether gender affects the choice of musical instruments. At the moment, there is no sure means of making such general statements about music as a subject in Idemili North Local Government of Anambra State, Nigeria. It is on this premise that this topic was chosen in furtherance of global interest in gender studies.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to find out if gender influences the study of music. Specifically to:

1. the choice of music as a subject;
2. students' performance in theoretical music lessons offered in secondary schools;
3. students' performance in practical music lessons;
4. students' choice of musical instruments;
5. why gender influences the choice of music as a subject; and
6. students' performance in music lessons.

This study would help to expose the general population of students in secondary schools that like Music, the population of males, and females and their performances generally in practical and theoretical music lessons. The study would serve as a reservoir and a means of getting information on whether gender influences the choice of music as a subject, students' performance in both practical and theoretical lessons in music and students' choice of musical instruments. It would also aid scholars while discussing or writing on gender issues.

Theoretical framework

This study, therefore, hinges on the functionalist and stand theories. According to Tischler, Whitten and Hunter (1986), structural functionalists believe that society comprises an entity with interrelated parts that need to work together to maintain an efficient functioning of society. They used society and family as illustrations. The society comprises communities and families, which also comprise human beings of different age ranges, who are males and females. The functionalist theory states that for the different members of society to work together amicably, there should be assigned roles. If every member of the family and society has roles assigned to him/her and each person plays his/her role well, the family or society will work together effectively. In this context, the man plays the leadership role which includes providing for and protecting his family while the woman plays the submissive and caring roles. This extends to the larger society where males still play the leadership role. This results in effectiveness and peace in families and society.

The theory believes in assigning roles to both genders to avoid role conflict that can lead to chaos and anarchy. Gender norms assign roles to male and female members of every society. These roles which may become part of them over the years affect them in going to school, choosing a career, academic involvement (level of seriousness with academic work while in school), music performance and choice of musical instruments to play. This assumption emanates from societal expectations of the two genders which they are already playing at different stages in life (gender roles). It may not be easy for them to go outside the normal roles they have been used to. They may begin to take life from their standpoint and experiences they have had over time in their everyday life in society. They may also see it as anomalous to go outside such roles. In this study, the researcher hopes to find out if gender influences the study of music in secondary schools in Idemili North of Anambra State, Nigeria as a case study. Gender norms from the functionalist theory assign roles to both male and female members of society. These roles may become part of them over time and affect the choices they make. This is because the assigned roles have placed them somewhere that is a certain class in the family and larger society. It can affect their choice of career, level of academic involvement (their level of seriousness in academic work, while in school and even the choice of whether to go to school or not). Academic

performance and choice of musical instruments to play and the kind of musical activities to get themselves involved in.

Gender inequality

Gender has been discussed at different points earlier in the study. Inequality means imbalance which shows that one side is heavier or carries more weight than the other. Inequality here means that one sex occupies a higher or more important position than the other. Gender inequality is a situation where one sex is accorded more respect or given a higher position than the other. According to Abubakar (2013), gender inequality is a condition where there is systemic discrimination, and differential or unbalanced treatment, often rationalized by tradition, institutional and administrative laws, based on sex. The inequality that exists between men and women places men in a more important position. The differences between males and females have been looked into at different times. Such differences will be discussed below under different sub-headings:

Natural differences in gender

The natural differences that exist between men and women are based on biological and anatomic factors which can be seen in the difference in reproductive roles of men and women, chromosomes and hormonal differences. Researchers have, in the past tried to describe the differences that exist between men and women through test results, research reports, and observation of behaviour exhibited by both sexes and others. (2014) states that gender gaps are examined in cognitive performance, based largely on data from meta-analyses. (e.g. mathematics performances, personality and social behaviours), and psychological well-being. According to Hyde, both humans have the same set of chromosomes except for the sex chromosomes – The Karyotype of a human male has 46xy chromosomes, that of female has (46xx) chromosomes while that of males contains 46 XY, that of females contains 46XX. The findings of Hyde's research revealed that there are distinctions between males and females. They both have the same chromosome number, but while the males have x and y chromosomes, females have xx chromosomes this difference in the type of chromosomes each sex has defined their reproductive roles. This natural way of defining productive roles for both sexes extends to caring for the child by the female after birth.

Gender inequality in African music

In Nigeria, Music is part of the culture. There are different kinds of music for different occasions and purposes. Nketia, (2019:35) states that music participation may be a voluntary activity or a duty enforced by one's membership in a social group in Nigerian societies. The people either come together to make music out of their own interest/volition or out of compulsion imposed on them by the social group they belong to in the community. Such music groups may be a descent group or any group based on the wider societal classifications of age, sex, interest or occupation. The music groups in Nigerian communities can be made up of a group of people who trace their origin to the same family, social stratification (grouping) made by the community according to age, sex, interest or occupation. There is music for different age groups, females, males, female

youths, male youths, and children, some are presented by adults from different occupations like farmers, hunters and others occupations. There are music performances for different occasions. Music to celebrate the arrival of babies into the families/ communities, during naming ceremonies, and music meant for occasions when members of the communities pass from one stage of life to another including marriage, festivals and so on.

There are songs performed by women during ceremonies and rituals that are strictly for women. There are also occasions when only children perform music. For the different ceremonies that involve music in Nigerian communities, there are occasions where both males and females perform together. There are also occasions where either males or only females perform. In the performance of music in the different ethnic groups in Nigeria, gender inequality is exhibited. Women have been recognized as contributors during festival musical performances with men. They unite with their male colleagues in choral singing and dancing performed by diverse spectators of both sexes as they perform and march in and out of the shrine at the commencement of the festival celebration. The same order applies when they assemble in places like the market, village square, and the house of a shrine priest. Aside from general roles during performances, they also have specific roles carried out by only a type of gender (Mokwunyei, 2018).

In mixed performances, there is an extent that women can go. They are not allowed to participate in some aspects of the performance. At that point, they either leave or wait for the men to finish the remaining part of the performance. There are places they cannot enter, there are some aspects of the music performance that cultural norms do not permit women to see. Violation of such laws might mean death for women. In some of such musical performances, only women who have passed childbearing age are allowed to participate.

Cultural norms that lead to gender roles also control musical performances in Nigeria. According to Akperi (2018), the role of lead singers, dancers or participants of a chorus in the life cycle, ritual and socio-religious ceremonies by Nigerian women were coherent with culturally recommended authorization binding such performances. Cultural norms control the role women play in mixed performances and even in all-female music groups. In all-female music group performances, men are made to be members to regulate the activities of women and to help in playing musical instruments that cultural norms prohibit women from playing.

The law that regulates music performance in Nigeria also extends to the playing of instruments. There are musical instruments that women are not allowed to play. Men are assigned to women's music groups to play such instruments when needed. Mokwunyei (2018) went on to list some of the instruments women are allowed to play in Idemili North Local Government Area in Anambra State which include udu (clay pot), ogene (metal gong) ekwe (wooden clappers) and alo (very large metal gong). Gender norm prohibits women from playing other musical instruments in that area.

Gender norm also prevents women from inheriting their family music profession. Women who hail from families that are known as professional musicians are not allowed to become professional musicians. Mokwunyei says all boys from the house of Ayan receive training to prepare them as professionals. Talented children outside the designated professional families may also be admitted into the profession based on outstanding potential as long as they are males. The female gender is however traditionally excluded

from this privilege. Talented children outside designated professional families can be admitted into the music profession but female children from such families cannot inherit the family profession. This is because as females, they do not have the right to acquire property from their father's house. In other words, they do not have the same right as male children in the family.

Gender and the study of music

Music was introduced into the school curriculum at the onset of formal education in Nigeria in the 19th century. Idolor (2021) states that formal approaches to musical studies in Nigeria date back to the establishment of mission schools in 1843. Music in the Nigerian educational system went through different stages of development where interested students took private lessons, and foreign examinations and obtained their degrees outside the country before it was recognized as a course of study in tertiary institutions in 1960 with the first department of music at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. (Idolor, 2001).

Today, some secondary schools in Nigeria have music teachers. These departments have produced many students who offer music as a subject in West Africa Examination Council Examinations, and many have risen to a professorial cadre in Nigeria. There are different areas of specialization in music. They include ethnomusicology, performance, theory and composition, music technology, sound engineering etc. According to Adetunji (2018), the number of males who have risen to doctorate and professorial cadre in Nigeria is more than twice the number of females. Nwobu (2018), Akere et al (2018), Ewulu (2018), Nnam and Ozoaghuta (2018), Udoh (2018) and Ofunani (2018) state that there are more men than women in the music profession.

The masculinity and femininity nature, societal beliefs and gender roles influence boys and girls in choosing their areas of specialization. Areas like performance, theory and composition, music technology, sound engineering, and music recording can be tasking for girls because of their demands. Recording, for instance, requires staying in the studio for hours sometimes far into the night. Females with their gender roles may not find it easy to cope with this area especially when they have families to take off. The performance also keeps those in that area for hours especially when they are preparing for an outing. It also requires teaching different instruments some of which have been tagged masculine. Technology and sound engineering require lifting heavy equipment and setting them. Many females may not want to major in these areas because they require energy to lift the equipment. Career is synonymous with the profession and they are conjunctly viewed as a long-term or lifelong pursuit. It further implies that the person in question must be active and competent in his or her career pursuit before they can be acknowledged and identified as a professional. Regrettably, nature and some cultural practices have categorized some careers based on gender, hence placing sex group barriers on them (Ofunani, 2018). Females are not able to do as much as males in many areas of music. Gender roles restrict them to certain areas. Gender stereotype influences every sphere of life. That is what it is meant to achieve – to control every area of life of individual members of the society so that there will be assigned roles and hierarchy, which will lead to orderliness, peace and finally, a functional society that is free from anarchy and chaos.

Conclusion

This study of music and gender was to find out whether there is a balance or imbalance in the performance of male and female students in music. Gender norms as explained by many experts, is a phenomenon that has been built into the human system in society. They are taught directly or indirectly and members of the society imbibe and exhibit them consciously or unconsciously. Males having more physical strength than females and being favoured by gender norms no doubt give them an advantage in life endeavours, especially in having the confidence to handle tasks. Reports of earlier studies by Norgaard (2016), Allanana (2013), Ugwuoke (2016) and others revealed that females do not have the same opportunities as males have for education. Poverty is one of the factors that have encouraged gender norms in society. Sometimes, it is when the means to educate all the children in a family is not available that the option of educating only the males is taken. The different efforts and strategies adopted by the Nigerian government to close the gap between male and female enrollment in schools have helped a great deal. Choice also affects the population of both genders in subject areas. Salami et al (2014), stated that the choices made by males and females differ. Males and females are different in their likes and dislikes. This influences the choices they make including the choice of course of study and the instruments they play.

Another factor that may influence the choice of music as a school subject is the way society rates a particular subject. One of the reasons some of the teachers interviewed in the qualitative part of the study gave as responsible for the low female students population in their choice of music as a school subject is that society views music as a course for unrefined and drug addicts. This notion the society holds about the subject can scare females from choosing it as a school subject, so as not to be influenced by the rough ones already there as students and dent their image.

In the area of academic achievement, it is assumed that the performance of learners in a test or examination after they have been exposed to the same learning experiences, under the same condition will reveal their level of intelligence (aptitude). Education experts will say that other factors affect learners' performance. The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (O.E.C.D 2015) observed from the result of their research titled The ABC of gender equality in Education that factors like the socioeconomic status of learners' families, parents' expectations of their children, teaching methods and level of gender equality in the society affect learners' achievement in school. They further stated that many high-achieving girls do not fully realize their potential. Many people believe that gender inequality has prevented a large number of females from realizing their full potential and their inability to realize their potentials affect their achievements in academics and other life endeavours.

The result of the analysis done with the scores of the male and female students used for the research work revealed that there is an imbalance to an extent in the performance of the male and female students used for the study in both theoretical and practical lessons in music. The males outperformed the females in both areas (theory and practical). In their choices of musical instruments which they played during their study especially the ones they majored in, the result also revealed that their interests and abilities differ. In conclusion, the result of this research work shows that there is a gender

imbalance in the performance of students used for the study in theory and practical courses in music and gender influences the choice of musical instruments to an extent.

It has shown that males have a higher population in choosing music as a school subject. In other words, more males chose music as an examination subject than females. It has been established that males perform better than females in theoretical and practical lessons in music. It has confirmed the earlier opinion held by people that gender influences the choice of musical instruments. The result of this study will be useful as a reference while discussing gender issues in music.

Recommendations

This research work recommends the following:

1. Female students in secondary schools should be encouraged to choose music as a school subject.
2. Ministry of Education should organize seminars on gender issues to erase the wrong notion already formed about gender.
3. Group work in music classes should have both male and female students in all the groups to make them know that no aspect of music is reserved for any particular sex.
4. There should be a means of keeping a record of instruments that students major in during their music lessons in secondary schools.

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