

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND UBE MUSIC: EXTENT OF PROGRESSION OR RETROGRESSION

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Abstract

The primary motivation of this study came as a result of the deficiency of educational policy of the Nigerian government and its impact on the UBE music education. The study first gave a historical overview of Nigerian educational policies which enabled the positioning of music in upper basic education. It highlighted specific issues on the disparity between educational policy and the implementation in the context of the wider socio-economic and political development processes as it concerns music. The recent policy has a prominent positive factor which is making CCA compulsory for all students as it allowed students to learn something in music. However, there are a lot of deficiencies which were not taken care of in the policy. The policy is not true to one of its set objectives which are to properly equip young Nigerians with manipulative skills which will make them self-reliant job creators. Similarly, a change in educational policy as the one that pertains to music should incorporate and seriously embrace and treat music as a serious aspect of our rich cultural heritage in Nigeria. The peculiarities of music, when merged with other subjects, should be taken care of especially as it concerns the implementation. In fact, there is actually a retrogression instead of the desired or expected progression in the matter of policymaking and implementation with regards to the music curriculum in UBE. It is expected that a review taking into cognizance these deficiencies will arrest the situation.

Keywords: Educational policy, UBE, Music, Implementation, Curriculum

Concepts of Educational Policy and Music Education

One form of government or the other exists in every society with the primary purpose of rendering service to the needs of the members of the society, thereby improving the quality of their lives. To effectively render this service, the government sets up bodies or agencies capable of formulating workable policy and implementing the same. Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2003) defines policy as "a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that have been agreed officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government or a political party" (p. 958). This point is logically linked with the definition given by Roberts & Edwards (1991). They define policy as "a set of decisions taken by political actors or group, concerning the selection of goals and the methods of attaining them relating to a specified situation" (p.7). Simply put, the policy is a course of action in solving a societal problem, chosen and pursued by the government or authorized body which guides the action of every person concerned with the realization of intentions using available resources. These resources include human resources (e.g. people with the requisite knowledge, skills and competence) and non-human resources (e.g. money and materials).

Having defined policy, educational policy refers to the collection of laws and rules that

govern the operation of an education system (Bolaji, Gary & Campbell-Evans, 2015). It is a policy made for educational purposes. Okonkwo (1992) captured it well when he defined educational policy as:

a statement of intents designed to guide future education action and stated in a manner to contain the basic philosophy, goals, principles and values which a society cherishes. It represents a course of action in educational issues adopted and pursued by the government. (p. 11)

Hence, educational policy forms a framework of the direction government or similar body intends the education sector to take with the view to enhancing the efficiency and productivity of its human resources in order to achieve the society's educational development. Arop, Owan & Ekpan (2018) stated that it is a fact that the UBE policy just like every other policy of Education contained in the National Policy on Education was well-drafted and clearly stated. If such policies are followed appropriately as stated, the Nigerian Education sphere will witness a dramatic rise in terms of quality and the attainment of the Nation's educational objectives.

The term music education includes all deliberate efforts to educate people in music as a specialization regardless of the area of emphasis (Okafor, 1988:2). Music education is universal, touching all domains of learning and it is a fundamental component of human culture. To buttress the above, Yudkin (2008) wrote:

Music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music. It touches on all domains of learning, including the psychomotor domain (the development of skills), the cognitive domain (the acquisition of knowledge), and, in particular and significant ways, the affective domain, including music appreciation and sensitivity. The incorporation of music training from preschool to postsecondary education is common in most nations because involvement in music is considered a fundamental component of human culture and behaviour. Music, like language, is an accomplishment that distinguishes us as humans. (p.4)

While music education will normally reflect the place of music in a society, it must above all be “the education of the human being” (Suchomlinsky in Kabalevsky, 1988). To educate the human being in music is to empower the individual in making sense of universal ideas through the music itself. Green in Adeogun (2006) rightly pointed out that music education in schools and colleges is “a cultural mechanism designed to educate people about music” (p. 18). Hence, music education should serve the purpose of the preservation of the musical heritage of the people. Music education contributes significantly to traditional education and the integration of Nigerian children into society. This might have prompted Onyiuke (1997) to assert that “whether music education is acquired through the formal or informal way, its importance to the individual cannot be underestimated” (p. 90). Indeed, music has grown in history and application, in this regard, Okafor (2005) wrote: “Music education has come a long way from the colonial times ... now music has become a subject (p. 210).

Having looked holistically at the concept of music education, Elliot (1995) gave a vivid

explanation of music education thus:

Any term taking the form "x education" has at least four basic meanings; (1) education in x; (2) education about x; (3) education for x; and (4) education employing x. By replacing x with "music," we arrive at four basic senses of the term music education. (p.12)

He then assigned four basic senses for the term music education: Education *in* music involves the teaching and learning of music-making and music listening; Education *about* music involves teaching and learning formal knowledge about music (e.g. music-making, music history and music theory); Education *for* music may be taken in two ways; either teaching and learning as preparation for beginning to do music or teaching and learning as preparation for a career as performer, composer, historian, critic, researcher or teacher; Education *utilizing* music overlaps with the first three senses since each can be carried out in direct or indirect relation to set goals. These four senses explain the nature of music education, primary values of teaching, and the learning process of music education. This study takes into account all four meanings listed above.

Review of Nigerian National Policy on Education

Educational policy in Nigeria has witnessed a progressive evolution of the Government's complete dynamic intervention and active participation. Before the British conquest of Nigeria and the subsequent establishment of Colonial Government, most of the Northern and Western parts comprised empires, kingdoms and some chiefdoms, while in the central parts and South-Eastern parts there were small chiefdoms with some semi-autonomous communities. This was the scenario in 1842 when the Christian missionaries arrived in the coastal area of the Southern part of Nigeria and introduced Western education (Eya, 2001).

The first colonial policy on education was in 1925 with some review in the policy in 1935, and 1945 with emphasis on adult education. The colonial educational policy centred on the production of literate nationals who were required to man positions, which would strengthen the colonial administration. Thus our educational institutions, few as they were then remained factories for producing clerks, interpreters, forest guards and sanitary inspectors as no special professional nor entrepreneurial skill was envisaged in the educational system (Akinyemi, 1987).

The creation of three regions (Eastern, Western and Northern) in the country, led to the promulgation of the 1952 Education Ordinance which empowered each of the regions to develop its educational policies and systems (Taiwo, 1980; Fafunwa, 2004) and the Colonial Education Board was abolished. The outcome was the promulgation of the Education Law in January 1955 in the Western Region, the Education Laws in February 1957 in the Eastern and Northern Regions and the Lagos Education Ordinance in January 1957 was done (Amanze, 2008; Fabunmi, 2005). There were some variations in the definition of components of the educational systems in the regions. Nevertheless, they comprised three stages: primary, post-primary and further education. (Sasnett & Sepmeyer, 1967, p. 463).

In Nigeria, the educational policy at independence was mostly concerned with using schools to develop manpower for economic development and Africanisation of the civil service (Woolman, 2001). In September 1976, due to a substantially improved revenue position brought about by the oil boom, the Federal Government of Nigeria embarked on the very ambitious programme by launching the Universal Free Primary Education (UPE) programme, expanded access into tertiary education and increased the number of unity schools in the country. The most significant change of the period was the takeover of schools from the missionaries by the government resulting in a unified educational system.

The overall policy approach of government which was geared towards the development of an educational policy blueprint culminated in the 1977 National Policy on Education which was Nigeria's first educational policy. The policy introduced the 6-3-3-4 educational system modelled after the American system of 6 years of primary education, 3 years of junior secondary school, 3 years of senior secondary school, and 4 years of university education (Nwagwu, 2007). Although primary education was free, it was not compulsory and the policy sought to make universal primary education (UPE) free and compulsory for all children as soon as it is practicable. Furthermore, for the first half of the post-primary education (i.e. junior secondary school), any student who cannot pursue pure academic work to the second half tends to learn a trade.

The 1979 Constitution culminated in the first revised National Policy on Education and the 2nd edition (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981). In the revised educational policy of 1981, it was yet again proposed that the government would make the UPE compulsory as soon as possible. The UPE policy which eliminated school fees in 1976 aimed to have a comparatively limited impact on primary school enrolments in the educationally developed states, while having large effects in the educationally less developed states. However, the UPE ended in September 1981. Thus with reduced funding for primary education and school fees reintroduction in the 1980s, primary enrolments fell or stagnated in some states (Osili, 2005). The National Policy on Education was again revised in 1998 and 2004 to make it relevant to the development needs of the country. The revised National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria (1998)) prescribed a Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. This edition of the policy prescribed the First School leaving Certificate and the universal basic education (UBE) programme, the 9-3-4 system of education, comprising of nine years of universal compulsory schooling to be given as six years of primary education, and three years of junior secondary education, three years of senior secondary education and four years of university education. Consequently, in September 1999, the Federal Government of Nigeria flagged the UBE programme as a means of achieving equal educational opportunities and eradicating illiteracy. However, even though the policy prescribed a compulsory UBE, it was not enforced. The Federal Government had adopted the National Policy on Education as 'an instrument par excellence for effecting national development' (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1998). Thus, in the 3rd edition of the policy, the minimum standard for entry into the teaching profession was raised from Teacher Grade II Certificate to the National Certificate of Education (NCE).

Policy implementation is the administration of the laws, guidelines and procedures in which various actors, organizations, procedures and techniques work together to put adopted policies into effect in an effort to attain policy or programme goals (Viennet & Pont 2017). The unsatisfactory state of education in Nigeria is the resultant consequence of a lack of proper implementation of the national education policy and the funding crises. The findings of the educational sector analysis (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2006) confirmed the poor state of education in Nigeria. Amongst the findings of the education sector analysis reported by Igbuzor (2006) are a national literacy rate of 57 per cent, 49 per cent unqualified teachers in the schools, and acute shortages of infrastructure and facilities at all levels. Many of the teachers were also incompetent and therefore not able to effectively carry out the functions which were anticipated from them (Muftahu and Hazri 2015). Furthermore, there are wide disparities in educational standards and learning achievements at all levels of education, because the system emphasizes theoretical knowledge at the expense of skills acquisition. In the submission of Arop, Owan & Akan (2018):

UBE implementation plans that efforts were going to be made in order to ensure that the quality of teaching provided is practical, exploratory, and experimental. The proper implementation of this strategy will have ensured that learning is made more concrete and real as opposed to the abstract concepts currently thought. It can be said that this is the most unfortunate policy strategy of the UBE programme because it is in reality very rare to see any public primary or secondary school teacher delivering lessons with such teaching.

In 2004, the National Policy on Education was once more revised. This is the latest revised educational policy and 4th edition. Generally, the National Policy on Education in Nigeria is based on the dynamic model of formulating educational policies, which is adaptive to changes and most appropriate for a developing country and multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria. The 2004 policy gave a comprehensive structure of the educational system and laid the foundation for the 9-3-4 system of education in Nigeria (i.e. 9 years comprising six and three years of lower and upper basic education, respectively, three years senior secondary school and four years university education).

Position of Music in the Educational Policy at Upper Basic Education

At the upper basic education level, twelve (12) subjects were made compulsory while four (4) electives (where pupils must offer two (2) but not more than three (3) subjects) are available. The core compulsory subjects are English Studies, One major Nigerian Language (either Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba), Mathematics, Basic Science, Social Studies, Civic Education, Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA), Religious Studies (depending on the faith of pupils' parents), Physical and Health Education, French Language, Basic Language and Computer Studies. The electives are Agriculture, Home Economics, Arabic Language and Business Studies. The pupils must offer two (2) but not more than three (3) subjects. In summary, a student in upper basic education must offer a minimum of fourteen (14) subjects and a maximum of fifteen (15) subjects.

At the end of the nine years of basic education, in the final class of the junior secondary school, all pupils sit for an external examination and certification. The assessment is by a combination of 40 per cent continuous assessment and 60 per cent performance in the examination. Pupils' performance in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) determines whether they go on to the senior secondary school level or not.

This review of educational policy development in Nigeria provides a platform for appraisal of the introduction of the cultural and creative arts as it affects music which this study focuses on. It must be noted that the merged and restructured visual arts, music and drama into cultural and creative arts (CCA) subject form one (1) out of the fourteen (14) or fifteen (15) subjects to be taken in the upper basic education. In giving the rationale for the review of the curriculum, the Director of National Educational Research and Development Council, Obioma (2007) stated thus:

Following the decision of the Federal Government to introduce the 9-Year Basic programme and the need to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and the critical targets of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), which can be summarized as value reorientation, poverty eradication, job creation, wealth generation and using education to empower people, it becomes imperative that the existing curricula for primary and junior secondary school (JSS) should be reviewed, restructured and realigned to fit into a 9-Year Basic education programme (p.ii).

Specifically, (Obioma, 2007) had noted that what gave rise to Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) for basic education in Nigeria were as a result of the following needs:

1. The need to achieve Universal Basic Education in the training of future generations of Nigerians;
2. the need to encourage partnership among Nigerians in promoting our rich cultural heritage and creativity;
3. the need to infuse certain emergent issues such as gender sensitivity, world globalization, health issues, etc into the curricula;
4. the need to re-orientate Nigerians to have positive values for the enhancement and development of the Nigerian Society;
5. the need to properly equip young Nigerians with manipulative skills which will make them self-reliant job creators.

First of all, the issue of merging Fine Arts, Drama and Music into one subject called Cultural and Creative Arts has one prominent positive factor. That factor is that the CCA introduction offers all students the opportunity to learn something about music. Responding to the above Ugoo-Okonkwo (2013) superbly puts it thus:

One may be tempted to question the rationale of involving the entire students in the subject, bearing in mind that they may not study music or visual arts in the senior classes. However, contrary to the view of taking just those who for one reason or the other indicated interest on it initially, it is good to widen the base of learning effort so

that from that wide base, a more competitive effort will spring out. This is in line with the natural law of nature which makes it that the broader the base, the higher the apex. (p. 34)

Hence, the current CCA has given equal opportunities for exposure to all students for the acquisition of the fundamental skills of music. It is only thereafter that meaningful choice can be made by the students. Based on the results of such a compulsory policy, this can be achieved.

Any organization or institution that is planning to use education to propel its developmental programmes must ensure that their curriculum encapsulates the totality of the body of knowledge, competencies, skills, attitudes and values as well as the basic needs of the people for whom the curriculum has been designed (Ugoo-Okonkwo 2014). With regard to the problems facing the implementation of the creative arts curriculum, Iriwieri (2009) stated thus:

This situation becomes evident from students inability to procure basic Art materials, as a result of some parents nonchalant attitude to providing the basic Music and Art materials for their children/wards. The situation is even worse where parents prevent their children/wards from doing Art in preference for science-oriented subjects. (p.350)

Government's undue emphasis on its educational policy on science and technology to the detriment of the arts is clearly visible as clearly reflected in the allocation of funds. The school administrators are not left out as they fail to give the required support to cultural and creative arts of which music is a part. On this, Iriwieri (2009) wrote: "the teachers do not get co-operation from the principals in terms of getting some basic equipment and materials which will help in promoting art and cultural activities within the school". (p. 350)

The negative attitude the society, government, school administrators and parents have also made the students themselves to develop a negative attitude towards the study of music. This can be logically linked to the assertion made by Iriwieri (2009) when he said that "the teacher is faced with some students' negative responses to lessons, such that we have students who run out of class the moment they have Arts or Music on the timetable" (p. 350). Over time, you discover that the student has developed a mindset which is very difficult to change. In buttressing this fact, Faseun (2001) following research he carried out stated that:

The general populace has a negative attitude to music as a subject in schools today. 23.9% of the population is of the view that the attitude of Nigerians is positive to the school subject, 61.9% viewed that the general public has a negative impression of the subject and would always choose other subjects for their wards if given the opportunity. (p. 90)

Another issue which showcases the negative attitude of stakeholders is in the time allocated to music in the timetable. In many schools, insufficient time is allocated on the timetable for

CCA of which music is a part. Reacting on this issue, Iriwieri (2009) submitted that “inadequate time and ill-timing of Fine Arts and Music periods on the timetable of some of the schools result in the non-completion of the curriculum contents by the teacher” (p. 350). Similarly, Ogunrinade, Adeyemi and Oluniyi (2012) concurred on this inadequate time on the time table. (p. 395)

The relevance of Music Contents in the Curriculum

For a curriculum to be functional, it must be relevant. Ango (1984) noted that “a functional curriculum must be both child-centred as well as socially oriented; aimed at achieving and developing the learners' personal interests and need as well as leading a society to progress, success and survival” (p. 84). In this line as it concerns music in our schools, Aninwene (2003) observed from his study in music education in secondary schools that:

The contents of the music curriculum seem too alien and difficult for the students. For instance, history and literature of music focused on western composers and musical periods, including the romantic and the 20th-century atonality which even the university students do not find easy. (p. 48)

Buttressing this point further, Okafor in Aninwene (2009) painted a picture of what music used to be in schools during the colonial era thus:

Children (pupils) learnt and sang more English songs even more than the English themselves and sang about the Queen of England without knowing the location of England on the map. Music education was peripheral – only singing for morning assemblies and for waiting for closing time. Music was placed toward the close of school on the time table in some schools, whereas in others it was an extracurricular activity. Musical insularism was not advocated, as the root of our music education and its relevance to our cultural environment and heritage were utterly neglected. (p. 51-52).

It must be noted that the predominant emphasis on Western, rather than an African system of music education in Nigerian secondary schools has not changed significantly.

An effective curriculum must be arranged in such a way that it is led from the known to the unknown. Garretson (1976) indicates that “the study of any unit of work should begin with what children know from their own experience, thus the acceptable order of learning proceeds from the *here, now and known* to the *there, far away, and unknown*” (p. 8). Omibiyi-Obidike (1987) observes that “the contents of musical instructions in our primary schools were mainly organized around western musical concepts with an occasional addition of Nigerian concept” (p. 15). This implies that the music curriculum at this level is grossly deficient in terms of relevance. The situation is so because the government failed to recognize the critical need for strong music education in the nation's primary school. The situation is also applicable to the upper basic education that is currently being reviewed.

On a similar note, Ekwueme (2009) pointed out that “there is a large disparity between the existing curriculum and the practical needs of teachers” (p. 37) while Aninwene (2003)

expresses fear on the inadequate and irrelevant contents of the music curriculum in our secondary schools (p. 41). Supporting this point further, Ogunrinade et al. (2012) pointed out that:

music curriculum of secondary schools pays more attention to examination requirements rather than developing the musical talents of the students. A look into the syllabus used in Nigerian primary, secondary and tertiary institution shows a very powerful dominance of Western musical history, literature, and theory and harmonic concepts. (p.395)

It must be understood that the purpose of education is to help students to achieve their potential musically. Talent is one of the basic abilities that exist in every person. It can best be developed if a study is begun at an early age and continued through adolescence. Hence, anyone whose musical potential remains undeveloped, which happens too often, is deprived of some of the most satisfying and rewarding experiences of life.

Conclusion

The launching of the UBE scheme by the Federal Government of Nigeria would suggest that after the failure of the earlier programme (UPE scheme), and after a careful analysis of the factors that brought about the failure of the earlier schemes, more careful planning would have taken place. In this regard, the area that should be of primary importance is the curriculum itself. The peculiarities already pointed out above should be well taken care of by relevant professionals and incorporated in the scheme. This will enable proper documentation of the procedures and effective implementation of the laudable scheme to achieve the set out objectives.

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