
Article · June 2012
DOI: 10.15845/voices.v12i2.667

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By Charles Onomudo Aluede

Abstract

This study is essentially a referential guide which explores simply, the titles of doctoral degrees in music acquired by Nigerians in the last two decades. It presents a diary of the areas of specialisations of their holders. To this effect, doctorate degree titles in music were collected. The study revealed that there are more ethnomusicologists than music educators, composers, performers, popular music studies, music media and music therapy practitioners presently in Nigeria based on the titles of the theses collected. In reaction to this, it is suggested, among other things, that stake holders should explore other avenues such as workshops and master classes to serve as an initial proactive forum where these palpable lapses will be redressed.

Introduction

Nigeria is believed to have a population of over one hundred and forty million people living in thirty-six states and Abuja, the federal capital territory. Nigeria has over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups and five hundred languages. These groups have separate cultural identities; these elements are noticeable in their dress code, language, food and music. Although new in formal context, music in Nigeria predates even the naming of the country as every ethnic group within Nigeria had formed themselves into different polities with peculiar or distinct musical cultures long before the pre-colonial era. However, Idolor (2001) indicates that formal approach to musical studies in Nigeria is more recent and dates back to the establishment of mission schools in 1843. Scholars leaving Nigeria to study music formally was not uncommon, as Idolor indicates:

Some ambitious music scholars who were opportune had to travel to the united states, Britain, Ireland, Canada and other foreign countries to actualize their desires. Pioneering personalities in this category are A. Coker, Fela Sowande, W.W.C. Echezona, Dayo Dedeke, Olaolu Omideyi, T.K.E. Phillips and a host of others. These people later became foundation art musicians, broadcasters and academics of repute in the educational system, the entertainment scene and the religious life of the Nigerian society (Idolor, 2001, p. 138).
As the need for higher education arose, several institutions were established and added music programmes as they developed. Others, like the University of Nigeria Nsukka, which was established in 1960 offered music as a degree option from the onset, which set a precedent for establishing other tertiary institutions and consequent music study either as certificate or degree options. While some of these degree awarding institutions have metamorphosed into the award of higher degrees, some of the Colleges of Education have been upgraded to the status of Universities. Consequently, over the years a corpus of doctoral theses has been submitted to postgraduate schools in these Universities. These doctoral degrees awarded by Nigerian Universities along with those received by Nigerians from institutions outside Nigeria are the focus of the present study.

Delimitations

Efforts were made to locate information on as many doctoral degrees in music defended and presented to the examining and awarding institutions in Nigeria and other foreign institutions by Nigerian musicologists as possible. However, because some institutions are yet to be fully abreast with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) even in this epoch when it is said that the world has shrunk into a global village; it is still a tedious task to obtain information from individuals and institutions. Nevertheless, even with these challenges, about forty entries are recorded in this work, exemplifying a good foundation for researchers and students interested in musicological studies in Nigeria. I am left with little doubt that this bibliography will be a treasured asset to researchers and students keenly interested in career work in music.

Rationale

This study is based on the following.

To Reduce Undue Duplication in Research

The rate at which project titles and their full contents are being duplicated all over institutions of higher learning is becoming alarming. Even within the same department, supervisors get to know for the first time that what they thought was scrupulously examined by them are in duplicates and triplicates as the cases may be while packaging them for external vetting. Sometimes the departmental board of studies is told of this embarrassing truth by their external examiners. This trend is becoming endemic today because even those who should be the torch bearers are allegedly guilty of it.

In recent times, a lot of mechanisms have been put in place to checkmate what may be termed here as project recycling. Some of them are: Proposal presentation; presentation of books used by supervisees, encouraging practical projects, and presentation of non-book materials where necessary and arrangement of authentication field trips between supervisees and supervisors to visit the locale where data are derived. Presently in Nigeria, The National Universities Commission (NUC) and the various Universities do not have a clearly established database on titles and abstracts of theses undertaken in the various areas of scholarship within Nigerian Universities. The University of Ibadan and a few other institutions annually publish the titles of theses in their graduation brochure. However, absent in such brochures are the theses’ abstracts and online versions, which of course inhibits the dissemination of the information and the usefulness of the documents. Nigerian universities could undertake the process using their own publishing
houses to publish doctoral theses for the overall benefit of all classes of researchers.

In basic harmony classes for music students, they are usually taught musically progressive motions which may be contrary, oblique or parallel. It is also quickly added that parallel motions should not be condoned in a musical exercise than aesthetically necessary. By parallelism in research, we mean a situation where the major kernel of a research topic is seen to have somewhat semblance of an existing one. For example, studies on the Problems of teaching chemistry in Y local Government of Edo State or Problems of teaching Physics in X local Government of Edo State or Problems of teaching chemistry in Z local Government of Edo State may have almost the same findings. All these Local Government Areas are in the same State perhaps outside the State capital and may be beset with similar problems of under funding leading to non-provision of chemicals and regents and rural to urban drift, which may cause science teachers to go for urban schools. To situate this discussion in our field, everyone will agree with me that “The problems of teaching music and the Role of music in festivals” have assumed a tautologious, if not an over flogged status. When a data base is on the ground to fall back upon, a potential investigator is quickly able to know what has been done, how it was done, what is left to be done or why what was done could be revisited perhaps because of lapses in the presentation of facts or poor methodological approach.

To Re-Introduce the Culture of Proper Record Keeping

The apparent poor record keeping practices which is evident in the nation’s civil service is also evident in the academic institutions. Sometimes, there are problems with even minor requests of viewing the theses of students. Some of the noticeable problems range from borrowing and not returning the theses, to the incapability of schedule desk officers to ensure the security of the works. When a record of the sort in this article is put in place, persistent requests for such hard copies will make all the necessary organs in the establishment to sit up because the onus will be on them to provide the materials given that there is a recorded account of their existence. Besides, when such records are available in electronic forms, the cumbersome tasks of running through bookshelves and catalogue boxes will ebb away in favour of technological advancement.

To Establish Information Sources

A review of related literature and the establishment of a theoretical framework are major components of capstone projects and researches. Most researchers are tempted to hastily conclude that they are carrying out a pilot study or weave novelty around their researches not because the topics are truly novel but because of seeming lack of related information after a considerable but unfruitful search for relevant materials.

In appreciation of these myriad of issues, there is no gainsaying that this work is timely in that it provides a list of thesis titles in music in Nigerian universities as well as a few from non-Nigerian universities between 1990 and 2010. It includes information about the Universities they were submitted to and the present locations of the theses here being indexed. In the same vein, the present affiliation of the theses writers are also given to encourage interaction should the need arise. This work is intentionally billed to be published in an online journal so as to have wider accessibility and save researchers of the numerous challenges in scholarship as have been identified earlier.

To Enhance Networking and Progressive Research
It may sound strange to say that in this twenty-first century within academic circles in Nigeria, little is still known of the use of computer applications in music education as observed from an assessment of music technology programmes in selected Nigerian Universities.\[2\] On the use of computer technology in music education, Adedeji (2004) laments that it is a sign of academic imbecility for scholars in the same department to undertake research within the same areas without progressive reference to one another’s works indicating lack of technology which “makes us work in circles.” He opines further that Musicological Society of Nigeria (now Association of Nigerian Musicologists) should spearhead the move towards computerizing and networking music education in Nigerian tertiary institutions since different shades of computer-based learning such as Web education, tele-learning, e-learning and tele-tutoring are now the order of the day. However, most academic departments in Nigerian Universities do not have electronic databases; this in itself makes information retrieval difficult. Computer training programmes or workshops for music scholars are a necessity for tapping into this modern age digital music. Although some progress may be noticeable, they still remain a far cry from what seems to be the global benchmark.

Adedeji further suggests that such computerized networking will result in awareness, which in turn will help bridge the wide gap between the high standard of older generation of musicologists and the lesser standards of the new generations through inter-connectivity between the two ends. He further provides dossiers of music software and relevant websites, which the Nigerian music educator could tap into. This again brings to the fore the need for Nigerian music educators to also try and publish in avenues that have hard and electronic journal components to disseminate research to as broad an audience as possible. Musicological colleagues should endeavour to publish their research findings with journals that are linked to African Journals Online (AJOL), New Journals and Newsletters on the Internet (NEWJOUR) and Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ).\[3\] The coverage, accessibility and portability of such journals are unsurpassed towards a proactive approach to research dissemination.

The Scope of the Project

This seminal and pilot study has a compilation of forty doctoral theses which are not annotated but preliminarily discussed based on their titles in strict sense. The bibliography covers all doctoral-degree theses in music undertaken by Nigerians within and outside Nigeria. Not included in this study are masters’ theses and post-graduate diploma projects.

Materials and Methods of Compilation

In compiling this bibliography over the course of a year, the researcher did an initial search beginning with libraries in the various Nigerian doctoral-degree-granting institutions. He followed this with a series of email messages to individuals and institutions including the Association of Nigerian Musicologists, who were contacted to send fliers to all members about this project. As a further follow-up, personal contacts were made through telephone and above all, certain individuals opted and furnished the researcher with comprehensive lists of doctoral degree awardees from the eastern and western zones of Nigeria (these individuals are gratefully acknowledged under the acknowledgement caption). The following annotated list and subsequent discussion are the result of this investigation.
Thesis Titles

This bibliography of doctoral thesis titles is alphabetized using authors’ surnames, year of certification, theses titles, the degree-awarding University and the author’s present place of work or affiliation.


submitted to the Department of Music Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. Affiliation: Department of Music, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Nigeria.


A Survey of the Titles

This study focused on the compilation of doctoral-degree thesis titles in music by Nigerians—within Nigerian Universities or elsewhere—in the last two decades. Upon collecting the titles, they were broadly classified into three areas: ethnomusicology, music pedagogy/music education and music theory and composition. Out of the 40 titles gathered, 31 titles (77.5%) were in ethnomusicology, 4 titles (10 %) were in music education/pedagogy and 5 titles (12.5%) were in music theory and composition. This idea is graphically captured in the diagram below.
Flowing from the broad classification as stated above is the need for specifics in this discourse. Within the general ambit of Ethnomusicology are other subdivisions which are: Christian Church Music, Music from Traditional Nigerian Standpoint, Music Education / History of Traditional Nigerian Instruments, Nigerian Dance, Popular Music, Gender Topics, Court Music, Military Music, Islamic Music, Composition and Music Therapy. On the distribution of theses in specific areas, this study further revealed that out of the forty thesis titles documented in this work, one each fell under Traditional Nigerian Instruments, Gender Topics, Military Music and Music Therapy. This statistically formed 2.5% each which summed up to 10% of the thesis titles. Two theses each fell under Nigerian Dance, Court Music and Islamic Music which formed 15% of the data collected. Six theses each were classified under Music Education/History and Popular Music. These collectively formed 25% of the theses under review. While four theses were on Composition forming 10% of the data, seven theses addressed Christian Church Music in Nigeria, this amounted to 17.5% titles. Music from Traditional Nigerian standpoint ranks highest. Nine theses came under this classification and they formed 22.5% of the forty theses. Below is a graphic representation of this analysis.
Discussion of Findings

Arising from this preliminary survey, it will be a great thing to do if position papers are made intimating governing councils and policy makers in the Nigerian Universities of the bad omen that this development portends for music scholarship in Nigeria. It may be argued that some of these scholars presently clustering in one department may go elsewhere when new institutions are created. Even at that, such scholars are going to produce people within their areas of competences. The danger in having 77.5% of ethnomusicologists in the last two decades can be interpreted to mean that there are some music departments without teachers of music theory and composition and music education. This further means that:

i. There are associated challenges in most Nigerian Universities where music theory and composition and music education are taught, in terms of human resources to teach the courses.
ii. There are music departments without a lecturer in music theory and composition of doctorate degree status.
iii. There are music departments without a lecturer in music education of doctorate degree status.
iv. There may be few music lecturers who studied music theory and composition or music education at the masters’ level who now presently cover such courses up to doctorate levels in their various Universities.
v. There may be very few lecturers of doctoral-degree status in music theory and composition and music education in our Universities who are by the virtue of their old age in the verge of retirement or may have retired without proper replacement.

One will not be chagrined if these myriads of issues raised in this paper are answered in question forms thus:

- What is wrong if an ethnomusicologist who has over the years developed himself in an adjacent area supervises a candidate in such an area?
- When the Universities of Ghana, Legon and Ibadan, Nigeria were established in 1948, were their first vice chancellors not first degree holders and did they not performed creditably well or that “Professor Wole Soyinka, the world’s literary icon blazed the trail with just a first degree?

We should not be unmindful of the fact that while William Shakespeare, George Frederick Handel, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart or Franz Joseph Haydn may not have read to a masters degree level, their works are today being studied at doctoral levels. This epoch is that of studying concepts in great details and training to do so can no longer rely on the residue of knowledge acquired by trainers during their undergraduate days.

Some Suggestions

Sometimes a very hungry person will pick up a discarded piece of sugarcane from which
Someone else has sucked out the sugary juice, and chews the already chewed pulp in an effort to get some sweet taste. This is called “chewing the chewed"
If our present state of musical scholarship is not to be likened to chewing the chewed then certain mechanisms need to be put in place. The Association of Nigerian Musicologists should take bold steps at filling the palpable gaps in qualifications and to plan futuristically for the nation. The gaps could be filled by embracing any or all of the following suggestions.

Young and promising first degree holders should be assisted to secure scholarship programmes abroad to study these stress areas where every department is deficient after which they come back to strengthen the staffing positions of their alma mater. Young doctorate degree holders should work assiduously to attract post doctorate and fellowship programmes to further enhance their knowledge. Nigerian government should endeavour to balance inequalities in wages and ensure security of lives and property so that Nigerian musicologists in the Diaspora will feel the need to come home and contribute their quota to their motherland.

At the undergraduate and master’s levels, candidates are made to choose primary and subsidiary musical instruments and to carry out a performance using their chosen mediums. This to a high degree goes to re-enforce instrument playing at that level. However, the Association of Nigerian Musicologists could further form a national association of brass wind players, woodwind players, string players, percussion players and singers. There could also be a composers’ forum where key Nigerian musicologists within the country and abroad could be invited to give master classes, performances and workshops to broaden the horizon of others keenly interested in other strands of music. For example there is a European String Teachers’ Association (ESTA), International Trumpeters’ Guild, USA (ITG) and International Trombone Association, USA [4] (ITA). We cannot afford to lag behind in musical development any longer as this further delay may spell doom for proper music scholarship in Nigeria.

Above all, the Association of Nigerian Musicologists is old enough now to explore other areas. Her conferences should not be limited to paper presentations but to the organization of concerts, workshops and master classes so that new entrants into this field will be challenged to contribute more by thinking of the system more than oneself.

Conclusion

Doctoral theses are primary literature. They are valuable contributions to the discourse in every field of inquiry and to the culture of all creativity[5] hence the need for their documentation and study. This paper examined the research trends in music scholarship in Nigeria within the last two decades. It was observed that music therapy appears to be a faint voice. Readers might observe that music therapy as an area was not adequately represented. Is it that there is no clear use of music in indigenous healing practices in Nigeria? Aluede (2009) annotated professional works in music therapy and works from ethnomusicology and other disciplines that present various aspects of how music is used in indigenous healing ceremonies in Nigeria. Even at that, there are within some quarters some major issues which need to be harmonized. Pavlicevic (2001, p. 1) reports an interaction with the Nigerian Meki where he says that: “Music in Africa is healing and what is music therapy other than some colonial import? Why is music therapy separate from music-making?” I think Meki has reasons for this kind of position. I think the reason for this is not far from the fact that wherever and however music is performed in Africa and indeed Nigeria, its healing attributes goes along with it. As upheld by Nzewi (2002) and
subsequently by Aluede (2009), there is either no need for a new term to qualify one of
the general attributes of African music or that there is a need to carve out a more realistic
name for music healing and healing activities with music in Africa. The reasons for such
opinions are not far from the fact that the concept, form and context of music healing in
Africa needs to be fully distinguished from music therapy as it is yet conceived in the West
because the concept of illness and disease causation are different. That line of
distinctions is currently being drawn between the healing effects of music in the West and
Africa is indicative of upward move to unveiling the African realities about music and
healing in Africa. As we all know, theory and philosophy are the precursors of practice. As
we speak, the Music Therapy Association (MUTAN) has just been registered in Nigeria. It
has as its president, Professor Anthony E. Mereni. This to me is a welcome development
that will chart the course of music therapy in Nigeria. It is hoped this seminal work will
help to reduce the paucity of materials in music scholarship in Nigeria, re-introduce the
culture of record keeping and verification, enhance networking and progressive research
because when a researcher knows that the opinion being canvassed is a common
knowledge already held by his predecessors, the urge to re-echo such thoughts will be
reduced. This paper does not pride itself to have the panacea to the challenges of music
scholarship in Nigeria but if as a result of this work, other windows are opened towards
the enhancement of musical arts education in Nigeria, then one of its aims would have
been achieved.

Acknowledgements

Gratefully acknowledged in this segment are: Dr. Femi Adedeji who posted my request on
the internet using the Association of Nigerian Musicologists’ Newsletter and further
supplied me with a list of several researchers and their theses titles;

Professor E.G. Idolor who gave me the title of his thesis and who first indicated his place
of work which he called “my base” an idea which further made this author to find out the
places of work of the theses owners cited in this paper; Professor Dan. C.C. Agu, who
encouraged me throughout the duration of the study from its initial stages.

Notes


[2] This is Femi Adedji’s observation in his work: Computerizing and Networking Music
Education in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. See reference for details.

[3] Presently, I am aware that Nigerian Music Review at the Obafemi Awolowo University
of Ife is abstracted in African Journals Online (AJOL) (http://www.ajol.info/) and that the
Ekpoma Journal of Theatre and Media Studies (EJOTAMAS) published at Ambrose Alli
University also has online versions of their volumes (http://www.aauekpoma.edu.ng/
/content/view/86/26/).

[4] This author has been a member of this body since 2005.


References


