



## Art Music, Popular Music and Traditional Music in Contemporary Education: Advancing Musical Knowledge, Curriculum Balance, and Cultural Relevance in Nigeria.

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### ABSTRACT

*A very critical juncture has occurred in the history of music education in Nigeria where the inherited art music traditions, vigorous popular music practices and indigenous traditional music system need to be moved to a more balanced and meaningful relationship. The author of this article posits that this should no longer be the case with music education in Nigeria today, as music education does not have to be categorized into one domain at the neglect of the other, to be secondary, informal or just culture. Rather, art music, popular music, traditional music are complementary knowledge systems and can be pedagogically valued. The article draws on literature on Nigerian music education, decolonial music pedagogy, indigenous African music, popular music education, curriculum reform, technology-enhanced learning, and Africanization of music curricula, to discuss the historical development, existing tensions and prospects of music education in Nigeria. It suggests that art music fosters formal musicianship, notation, composition and analysis; that traditional music preserves culture and identity, embodied learning and traditional instruments; and popular music, youth culture, digital creativity, employability and the media industries of today. The article suggests a Tri-Musical Knowledge Integration Framework for Contemporary Nigerian Music Education and proposes the following recommendations: Curriculum reform, Teacher training, Integration of music technology, Community collaboration and Assessment reform. The article concludes that a culturally relevant and future-oriented music curriculum in Nigeria should not be dichotomized into these three.*

## Introduction

Amongst the principal locations in which societies construct legitimacy of musical knowledge is music education. Music education, as it is enacted through curriculum, teaching, assessment, performance and institutional practice, identifies sounds to be valued, skills to be rewarded, histories to be remembered and identities to be affirmed. In Nigeria, this is of particular relevance as the country is blessed with diverse musical traditions, a long history of formal art music education, as well as one of the most globally visible popular music cultures in Africa; but not all of these domains are necessarily covered in a balanced way in formal education.

Nigerian music education can be described as a cross over between three major musical fields namely, art music, popular music and traditional music. Art music encompasses Western classical music, African art music, choral music, art songs, piano music, notated music and institutionally taught traditions of art music theory. Traditional music consists of community-based traditions shared orally, apprentice-style, in festivals, ritual, family groups, with indigenous instruments, through dance and as community music. Afrobeats, gospel, hip-hop, highlife, juju, fuji, street-pop and other media-influenced genres of popular music that constitute the identity, entertainment, religious and creative economy of the youths are included.

## Preamble

The issue is the lack of balance between these three aspects of music education that has normally plagued music education in Nigeria. History reveals that the formal music education in Nigeria emerged from missionary, colonial, church and university systems focusing on high degree of emphases on western music literacy, tonic solfa, staff notation, harmony, choral singing and formal examination (Adeogun, 2018a, 2018b; Ogunrinade, 2013). These traditions had given a lot to the professional musicianship, but at the same time, caused hierarchies by which western art music was considered academically serious, traditional music considered as cultural material and popular music as entertainment instead of knowledge.

New research has led to a cry for reform. Adeogun (2015, 2021) calls for the reconceptualization and decolonization of Music teacher education in Nigeria, while Ayeyemi et al. (2024) calls for repositioning of Music education as a central subject to the Nigeria's Universal Basic Education curriculum. Lawal (2025)

emphasizes the importance of instructional culture in implementing curriculum and Modeme (2023) underlines the use of technology to improve musical arts education. This is demonstrated by the debates and the need for Nigerian music education to respond to the lived musical realities of students, cultural identity, digital transformation, and employability.

This article posits that the three forms of music (Art music, Popular music and Traditional music) should be used as complementary music knowledge system within today's education in Nigeria. The aim is not to eliminate art music, to romanticize the traditional music, or to uncritically promote the popular music. Instead, the goal is towards a more balanced curriculum that is culturally inclusive, creative, job-oriented and decolonized.

## Conceptual Clarification

Art music is a formally structured music that is often institutionally taught and is related to notation, theory, composition, analysis, choral writing, orchestration, instrumental training and formal performance practice. Art music in Nigeria is not only Western classical music but also African art music, particularly the music of Nigerian and African composers who blend Western compositional elements with African rhythmic, melodic, linguistic and cultural elements. Art music is still useful as it cultivates notation skills, harmonic awareness, analytical abilities, ensemble discipline and compositional skills.

Popular music is music that is created, distributed and enjoyed via mass media, commercial outlets, record companies, radio, television, streaming websites, churches, concerts, youth cultures, movies, and the internet. Popular music in Nigeria comprises of Afrobeats, Afro-pop, gospel, hip-hop, highlife, juju, fuji, street-pop and other hybrid music genres. Popular music is not only a means of entertainment, it is also a place of identity, technology, entrepreneurship, social comments, creativity, the use of language and cultural export. Some literature about popular music pedagogy demonstrate that popular music can be used to develop and foster twenty first century skills, informal learning, creativity, collaboration and employability (Groom, 2025; Quin, 2022; Smith & Brodie, 2024; Vasil, 2019; Vasil et al., 2018).

Traditional music is music that grows out of community and is passed on by oral transmission,

apprenticeship, ritual, festivals, family, religious observance, work, social gatherings and other forms of communal performance. It incorporates native instruments, songs/dances, praise poetry, chants, native drumming, call and response, and embodied learning. Traditional music is a knowledge system as it contains history, language, spirituality, ethics, identity and social memory (Carver, 2017; Isabirye, 2021; Walubo et al., 2025). Contemporary Education is an education that reacts to the current situation, such as cultural diversity, technology, student experience, employability, the relation of the global to the local and the social relevance. Balance in the curriculum is not giving one area of music more importance than another and is the fair inclusion of a variety of areas of the music.

### Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The article is based on decolonial theory, culturally relevant pedagogy, multiple musical knowledge system, constructivist learning, and creative economy perspective. Theory of Decoloniality is proposed as an explanation for formal music learning in Nigeria and other African contexts as this was shaped by colonial education. Western hymns, choral singing, tonic sol-fa, notation and European theories of harmony and form were introduced through the colonial and missionary systems. While these were not without value, they often were considered the standard by which all musical knowledge was measured. According to Adeogun (2021), there is a need for the decolonization of university music education in Nigeria as indigenous and African centric musical knowledge has been taken for granted in the formal education system. In South Africa, the need for curricular transformation with a view to incorporating African epistemologies and indigenous sound worlds is echoed by McConnachie (2021), Ngoma (2024), Ngoma and Fikelepi-Twani (2024), Yende and Xulu (2024), and Yende (2026).

Culturally relevant pedagogy is helpful because students learn more meaningfully when education is related to them (students) and their experiences, communities, languages, and music. It is in churches, mosques, festivals, social media, streaming sites, families, school assemblies, studio productions, dance culture and popular media that many students have their initial exposure to music in Nigeria. It is important that the curriculum reflects these musical worlds otherwise the curriculum can become far removed from students' lives.

Multiple musical knowledge systems are also key. Art music, popular and traditional music are epistemologies which are distinct from each other, but valid. In the field of art music, there is a tendency to value notation, formal analysis, harmony and written composition. Common characteristics of traditional music are a focus on memory, embodiment, oral transmission, community function, movement, improvisation, and ritual context. In popular music, there is an emphasis on technology, media, performance identity, entrepreneurship, collaboration, and engagement with audience. The ranking of these domains should not be thought of as hierarchical, but rather as alternative approaches to knowing and making music.

This approach of integrating is facilitated by constructivist learning theory as learning music is best achieved by the learners' active construction of knowledge from performance, listening, composing, improvising, producing, collaboration, reflecting and participating. Isabirye (2021) ponders on the question whether indigenous music learning process can be used to inform the contemporary learning in the classroom and his argument points into seeing learning beyond the classroom lecture and written examinations. In addition, integration is strengthened from the creative economy perspective. Music education needs to equip students to teach, perform, compose, produce, perform, manage, work in media, be cultural entrepreneurs, or practice community arts. Smith and Brodie (2024) reveal that popular music programmes are able to prepare students for music employment, Modeme (2023) posits that technology could improve instruction and learning in the arts education in Nigeria.

The historical development of Music education in Nigeria covers the period from pre-colonial era to the present.

In Nigerian societies, music learning was in the form of community-based learning before the formal education in the colonies. Children and young people learned through festivals, ceremonies, religious events, family events, age-grades, work songs, palace traditions and community events. The transmission of musical knowledge was achieved by observation, imitation, repetition, correction, apprenticeship, dancing, drumming, singing and storytelling. This "education" was not a theoretical one, knowledge

was not divorced from social role, it was not divorced from cultural involvement.

New approaches to learning music were brought in through colonial and missionary education. Through church music, Western hymns, tonic sol-fa, staff notation, choral discipline and European harmonic practices were introduced into Nigerian education to a great degree. Mission schools and churches significantly assisted in the development of literacy in Western music and assisted in the development of choral performance. These systems also changed the values of music because many of the indigenous forms were perceived as informal or not academic and many Western forms were formal and respected.

Adeogun (2018a) presents the history of music education in Nigeria up to the end of the twentieth century while Adeogun (2018b) gives the history of music education in Nigerian Universities. The findings of these studies reveal that negotiation between indigenous traditions, missionary influence, formal schooling and the postcolonial curriculum development have always been the factors influencing the development of music education in Nigeria. Further, Ogunrinade (2013) in analysing the curriculum of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (music), showed that teacher education curricula are indications of the philosophical options as to what knowledge is important.

African art music was an important link between formal structures of the West and musical materials of Africa. To capture African themes, languages, rhythms, and cultural identities, Nigerian composers and scholars took to writing chorally, art songs, piano pieces and other formal genres. The importance of this tradition is that it proves that art music in Nigeria is not necessarily European, but can be Africanized, localized and creatively adapted. Attempts were made to incorporate African musical materials into a music education that was considered postcolonial; however, the framework of assessment and of legitimacy was still often Western. Today, there is a triple tension in the field of music education in Nigeria: the importance of formal art music education, the need to sustain traditional music and the influence of popular music education on the everyday musical lives of the learners. All three must be addressed in a relevant curriculum.

### **Art Music in contemporary Nigerian Education**

Art music still holds a very good pedagogical value in the education of Nigeria. It builds skills in notation, sight-reading, harmony, counterpoint, composition, arrangement, formal analysis, choral performance, instrumental technique and ensemble discipline. These abilities are relevant in the context of music communication within different cultures, music studies at universities, organizing church music, composing, conducting, and professional musicianship. Removing art Music from the curriculum will weaken students' access to formal musical literacy; but Art music needs to be contextualized. In certain educational contexts, art music has been primarily engaged with compositional exercises, using European theory, and focusing on exam-based approaches using predominately western classical music. This can make students feel like their everyday musical experiences are not represented in traditional and popular music, which can make them feel alienated. The issue isn't art music per se, but rather that the Western art music is the most serious and highest form of musical knowledge.

African art music is a positive avenue for the future. It enables learners to learn formal composition/notation and to use African languages, rhythms, tones, stories and cultural elements. Students can observe how formal practices and local identities in music can interact in African art songs, choral music, music written for piano, and music written for this decade. This is useful in combating the artificial dichotomy between academic music and the expression of African culture.

Adeogun (2018b) and Ogisi (2022) also reveal in the history of music education in the Nigerian Universities that Art Music has contributed significantly to the establishment of departments, training of teachers and the development of scholars in music. The establishment of the Nsukka Music School (NMS) stands as one of the milestones in the history of formal music education in Nigeria, indicating the successes and challenges of formal education in music in the country (Ogisi, 2022). These histories should be maintained, and, in addition, should be enriched by a more inclusive curriculum.

Thus, Art music should not be excluded from the present day educational system in Nigeria, but it should not be the only music to dominate at the expense of traditional and popular music. It must be studied within the context of Nigerian realities,

African art music, indigenous musical aesthetics, indigenous languages and contemporary art music practice.

### **The Utilization of Traditional Music in Modern School Education in Nigeria.**

Traditional music should be an integral part of Nigerian music education as it is a repository of indigenous knowledge, cultural memory, language, morality, spirituality and community identity. It is used to educate students regarding the fact that music is not just sound, it is social action. Traditional music relates to festivals, rites of passage, religious observance, work, healing, storytelling, praise, mourning, dance and a sense of community.

Learning of indigenous music can be oral and embodied. Students are instructed to listen, repeat, imitate, move, call and respond, drum, dance and participate. This is in contrast to the classroom models that equate knowledge with written theory. According to Isabirye (2021), indigenous practices of music learning can contribute to contemporary education and Walubo et al. (2025) demonstrate the transmission of indigenous knowledge and skills in music. Dordzro (2025) also endorses indigenous methods of music teaching.

Traditional music can be used to educate students on the cultural diversity in Nigeria. Introducing indigenous musical instruments like talking drum, bata, gangan, ogene, ekwe, udu, shekere, kakaki, algaita, goje, flutes, rattles, slit drums and other indigenous instruments can introduce learners to the history and sound world of the region. It can also enhance appreciation for vernacular language, adages, dance, values, and folk lore. There are challenges when it comes to incorporating traditional music in to formal education curricular. Many schools are not equipped with the needed musical instruments, equipments, trained teachers, documentation, rehearsal space, community partnerships. Religious suspicion or lack of urban connections have an impact on some traditional practices. In other instances, traditional music is only performed on cultural days or at ceremonial events, and not considered as serious knowledge. This only partially enhances its educational value.

It is also in this light that the value of decolonial scholarship in Africa can be seen as a means to place indigenous music at the heart of education. Carver (2017) speaks about indigenous African music in the South African curriculum and Ngoma and Fikelepi-

Twani (2024) explore the teaching of indigenous Nguni instruments in higher education. Yende and Yende (2022) plead for the curricularisation of uMaskandi Zulu traditional music whilst Yende (2024) links curriculum with democratisation, Africanisation and Ubuntuogy. The value of the lessons learned from these studies for Nigeria is useful. Traditional music should thus be taught by means of performance, fieldwork, oral history, instrument playing, apprenticeship and interaction with the community musicians. Should not be viewed as an embellishment to the curriculum, but rather a complete knowledge system.

### **The Teaching of the Nigerian Traditional Arts: Traditional Arts Education in Nigeria and the West Indies**

Popular music is an integral part of students' life experience. Popular music in Nigeria is experienced by the students via streaming platforms, radio, TV, churches, social media, films, concerts, dance videos, campus events and everyday peer culture. Shaping identity, language, fashion, dance, aspiration, spirituality and social commentary are Afrobeats, gospel, hip-hop, highlife, juju, fuji, Afro-pop, street-pop, and other forms. One of the most powerful musical environments in which students live is not addressed in a curriculum that ignores popular music. Popular music is a very good educational tool. Can be applied to songwriting, arrangement, improvisation, rhythm and form, lyrical analysis, performance identity, recording practice, music production, audience engagement, marketing and music business. Vasil et al. (2018) explains the popular music pedagogies as a method for teaching twenty first century skills, while Vasil (2019) demonstrates ways of combining informal music learning practices and school music. The reviews of popular music pedagogy in music teacher education by Groon (2025) and in international school education by Quin (2022) are all popular. Based on these studies it is apparent that popular music has now become an area of serious music education study.

Nigeria, on the other hand, is seeing the value of popular music as an avenue for employability. Those who know how to produce, write songs, distribute digitally, brand themselves as performers, collaborate in the studio, engineer sound, and are an entrepreneur of the music industry may be better equipped for today's careers. Smith and Brodie (2024) state that the incorporation of popular music in higher education music (HEM) education can aid in

preparation for work in music. This is applicable to the budding creative economy and music industries in Nigeria which are youth dominated.

Another area to examine in terms of culture is in the realm of popular music. Traditional rhythms, languages, street idioms, religious themes, and global influences are common influences in Nigerian popular music. Ojebuyi and Fafowora (2021) is an analysis of hip-hop in Nigeria which demonstrates how popular music can engage with cultural imperialism through the processes of hybridisation and re-enactment of indigenous values. This indicates that popular music can serve as a vehicle to link today's young people's culture with the older culture. But there are dangers, too. Some teachers are concerned about commercialism, lyricism, moral dilemmas, commercial creativity, and a lack of theory. Exclusion should not be based on these concerns. Popular music should, rather, be taught critically. It should be analysed by students as to its art potential and social contradictions. Popular music education should not be about making music education an entertainment; it should strive to increase the students' awareness of music as culture, industry, technology, identity, and creativity.

### **Sociopolitical and Religious Issues in the Curriculum**

One of the challenges faced by the music education in Nigeria is the imbalance of curriculum. Art music can be considered serious and examinable, traditional music cultural heritage and popular music informal/commercial. This hierarchy hinders the provision of the curriculum that shows Nigerian musical realities. It also conveys a negative message to students that the music they are learning from their communities or in their daily lives is not as academically valuable.

Another issue is that they are not in touch with students' realities. In the classroom, students can be learning about music, while experiencing vastly different music outside of the classroom. If the curriculum is not related to students' musical experiences, the learning could be abstract, and students might be low on motivation. There is a need in today's music education to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Also there is a theory-practice gap. Some courses focus too much on written theory and exam and less on performance, composition, improvisation, production, fieldwork and community. Based on Ogunrinade's (2013) research on the NCE curriculum

and Adeogun's (2015) work on teacher education, it is recommended that there should be a better synchrony between the NCE curriculum and the realities of music.

There is not consistent use of technology. Modeme and Adeogun (2021) discover a gap between the music teachers and learners of secondary schools in Anambra State and Modeme (2023) proposes the use of technology for improving music teaching and learning in Nigeria musical arts education. These studies show that the use of digital technology in music education, including digital audio workstations, notation software, mobile recording devices, online archives and streaming platforms, can no longer be neglected in the context of contemporary music education.

Reform of assessment is also needed. Written theory assessment has the potential to miss out on the abilities of improvisation, oral memory, leadership of ensemble, studio production skills, community fieldwork skills, creativity, and skill in performance. Integrated assessment is needed in an integrated curriculum.

### **Music Curriculum and Assessment**

The Nigerian music curriculum should adopt the principle of complementarity if it is to be a more relevant curriculum. Art Music, Popular Music and Traditional Music should not be interpreted as being competing domains. Both have an important role to play. Art music enhances formal musicianship and analytical skills. Students are rooted in the traditional music, cultural identity, indigenous knowledge, and embodied learning. Popular music serves as a conduit between education and youth culture, technology, creativity and employability.

Content of the balanced curriculum shall encompass notation, harmony, music composition, African music, choral music, traditional music, popular music studies, indigenous musical instruments, oral tradition, music technology, entrepreneurship, fieldwork, performance, and cultural analysis. This kind of balance would enable students to flow between various musical genres.

It is also a need to have integrated teaching methods. A blend of lectures, rehearsals, studio practice, community immersion, group composition, improvisation workshops, oral history projects, listening analysis, digital production and practitioners' collaboration should be used by teachers. Students can, for instance, analyse Afrobeats rhythms in comparison with traditional

drum rhythms, transcribe folk tunes for choir, write art songs in Nigerian languages or write form studies based on popular songs, or experiment with mixing traditional instruments with contemporary ensembles (Okunbor and Alordiah, 2025b).

It's important to properly prepare teachers. It is important for music teachers to become aware of the importance of notation, oral tradition, technology, improvisation, performing and music industry skills. Adeogun (2015) suggests the need to reconceptualise music teacher education in Nigerian colleges of education and Addo (2025) proposes the need to have a voice for Africans in musical arts education discourse. These arguments are used to argue for culturally based and pedagogically flexible approaches to teacher educator.

It is also important that an integrated curriculum is student centred. Every effort should be made to involve in the classroom what students bring from their musical experience. They should write, act, make, record, evaluate and review (Okunbor and Alordiah, 2025a). The classroom should be the place where musical knowledge is expanded and not be removed from life.

### **Music Technology, Digital Learning and Contemporary Relevance**

The use of music technology in education today plays a key part in the education system. Music Learning can be enriched by the use of Digital Audio Workstations, Notation Software, Mobile Apps, Recording Devices, Online Archives, Streamed Music, Podcasts, YouTube and Virtual Collaboration Tools. However, the application of technology in

Nigeria should be cognizant of unequal access, lack of infrastructure and teacher readiness.

Popular music production can be used as an effective pedagogical tool. Studio based learning can educate the student in the elements of rhythm, texture, arrangement, mixing, songwriting, collaboration, critical listening and digital creativity. It may also be used to link classroom learning to production, sound engineering, music industry and media careers. Cai (2023), Imiti and Liu (2024), Nyamwaka (2025), and Zhai (2025) reflect on the use of technology, artificial intelligence and traditional music in music education outside of Africa and in Africa, providing valuable comparisons.

Traditional music preservation can also be aided by technology. Students have the opportunity to record local songs, interview local musicians, record instruments, develop digital archives and analyse performance contexts. This links education and heritage conservation. But digital preservation has to be done in an ethical way. Not all sacred or community-owned performances are meant to be freely shared on the Internet.

Hybrid learning environments are to be encouraged. The education of today's music should link classrooms, studios, communities, festivals, archives, churches, cultural centres and the Internet. These areas mirror the practice of music in society.

Nevertheless, technology should not be a replacement for cultural richness. Digital tools can pose a threat of superficial interaction with tradition or a dependence on platform work. Technology should not take the place of embodied learning, community involvement, and cultural context, but must be used to support musical understanding.

## Proposed Conceptual Framework

## Tri-Musical Knowledge Integration Framework for Music Education in Contemporary Nigeria

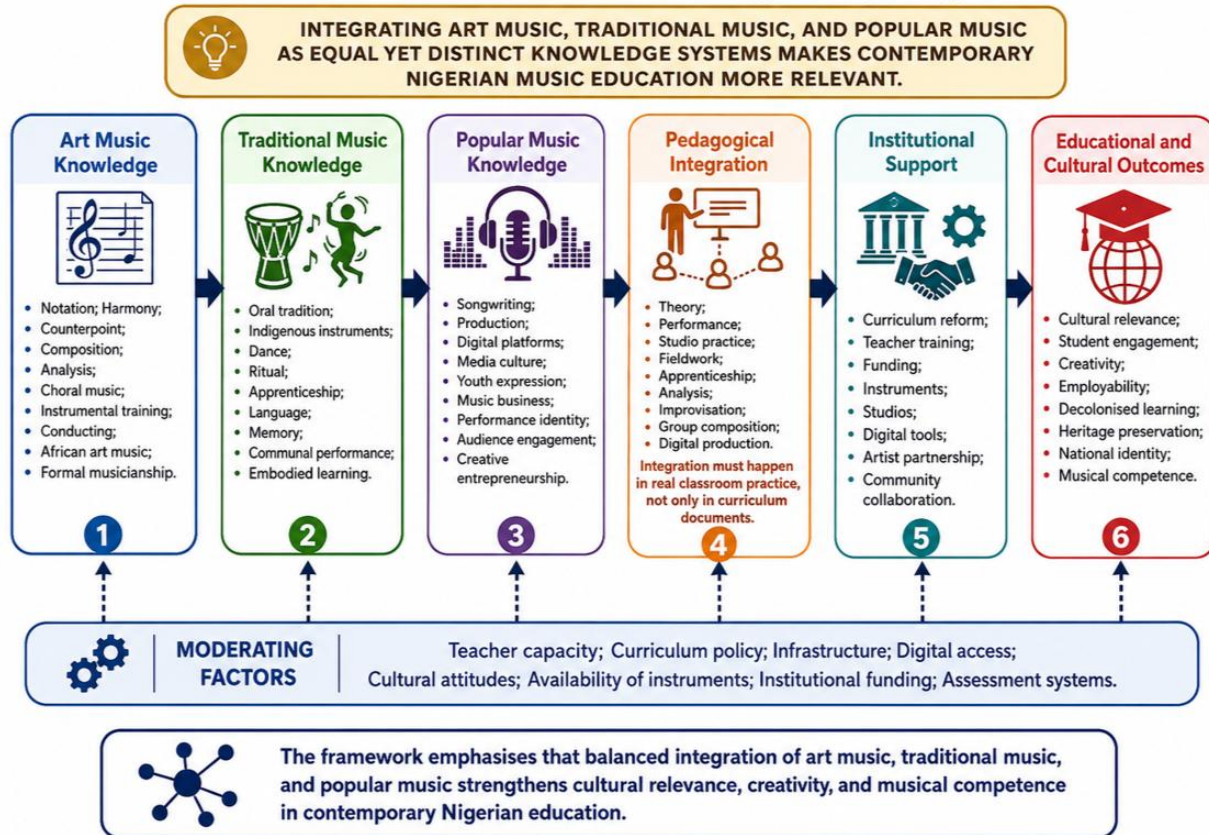


Figure 1. The proposed Framework

This article recommends a Tri-Musical Knowledge Integration Framework for Music Education in the contemporary Nigeria (Figure 1). The framework is comprised of six distinct elements that are interrelated: art music knowledge, traditional music knowledge, popular music knowledge, pedagogical integration, institutional support, and educational-cultural outcomes.

The 1st is knowledge of the art music. These comprise of notation, harmony, counterpoint, composition, analysis, choral music, instrumental training, conducting, African art music, and formal musicianship. It gives students a framework of theoretical and composing devices.

The second is the knowledge of traditional music. This involves the oral tradition, indigenous instruments, dance, ritual, apprenticeship, language, memory, communal performance and embodied learning. It enhances cultural foundations and native ways of knowing.

The third is knowledge of popular music. This involves Song Writing, Production, Digital Platforms,

Media Culture, Youth Expression, Music Business, Performance Identity, Audience Engagement and Creative Entrepreneurship. It relates music education to today's society and the workplace.

Pedagogical integration is the fourth element. This includes teaching techniques across the following areas: theory, performance, studio practice, fieldwork, apprenticeship, analysis, improvisation, group composition and digital production. Integration needs to take place in real classroom situation; it cannot be done in curriculum documents only.

The 5th element is institutional support. This is necessary for implementation, curriculum reform, teacher training, funding, instruments, studios, digital tools and artist partnership. Community collaboration is also required. As long as there is no institutional support, integration is an idea, not a practice.

The 6th part is Educational and Cultural Outcomes. These involve cultural relevance, student engagement, creativity, employability, decolonized learning,

heritage preservation, national identity and musical competence.

Teacher capacity, curriculum policy, infrastructure, digital access, cultural attitudes, instruments, institutional funding and assessment system are the moderators of the framework. This has as its central theme that the integration of art music, popular music and traditional music as equal yet distinct knowledge systems makes the music education of the present day Nigeria relevant.

### **Policy and Practical Implications**

Implications of the article are for curriculum planners, departments of music, teachers, government, communities and creative industry actors. The curriculum planners are expected to create music curricula that will provide a balance between art music, popular music and traditional music. This is not necessarily equal time across courses, but it is "meaningful representation" across programmes.

There is need for departments of music to be extended to incorporate studios with indigenous instruments, popular music studies, field work, community-based learning, and African art music. Teacher training institutions should produce music teachers who are able to teach music notation, oral tradition, performance, improvisation, music technology and skills in the creative industry.

Government should invest in instruments, studios, music laboratories, digital tools, teacher education and training, cultural archives, and curriculum changes. Music must not be a 'sideline' subject, particularly at basic and secondary education levels. Ayeyemi et al (2024) noted that it ought to be a core subject in the curriculum of Nigeria's Universal Basic Education, and Nnamani (2017) points out the challenges in implementing the curriculum that are calling for the attention of policy makers.

Schools and universities can collaborate with Master musicians, Popular artists, Producers, Church musicians, composers and cultural institutions. This collaboration would help to narrow the difference between what is learned in the classroom and what is actually done in music.

### **Contributions, Limitations and Future Research**

This article makes a contribution by suggesting a balance approach to the integration of art music, popular music and traditional music in Nigerian educational system today. It calls into question hierarchical perspectives of musical knowledge, and proposes a curriculum that is culturally relevant,

technologically responsive, decolonial and employability-oriented.

The article has a positional and conceptual nature that it is limited by. It does not provide primary data from interviews, classroom observation, curricular analysis or student surveys. It is an argument that draws on the literature and is a synthesis of concepts.

It is recommended that future studies look at the present modes of teaching art music, popular music and traditional music in Nigerian schools and universities. Research could be empirical to examine students' reactions to integrated curricula; teachers' willingness to embrace music technology; the role of indigenous musicians in formal education; and the role of popular music pedagogy in employability. Comparative studies among African countries would also help to augment the knowledge of curriculum balance and cultural relevance.

### **Conclusion**

Nigerian music education needs to take a more balanced, culturally appropriate and reality oriented approach. Art music, popular music and traditional music provide valuable sources of musical knowledge. Art music consolidates and builds formal musicianship, composition/analysis, and notation literacy skills. Traditional music is the passing on of culture, indigenous knowledge, oral pedagogy and community memory. Popular music is a way of linking education to youth culture, technology, creativity and the contemporary music economies.

Integration is the way to go and not replacement if music education is to be a reality in Nigeria. A good curriculum should not have one domain as the 'best' or value others less. Instead, it should establish connections between formal theory and indigenous knowledge, digital creativity, and lived musical experience that are meaningful. The use of art music, popular music and traditional music as mutually complementary knowledge systems in music education enables the education of a learner who is musically competent, culturally grounded, creatively confident and prepared for the present day music life in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

- Music curriculum agencies should revise Nigerian music curricula to include balanced content from art music, popular music, and traditional music.
- Universities and colleges should develop or strengthen courses in African art music,

indigenous music performance, popular music studies, music production, music technology, and music entrepreneurship.

- Government should provide music studios, indigenous instruments, digital tools, libraries, rehearsal spaces, and performance venues in educational institutions.
- Music departments should invite traditional musicians, popular artists, producers, composers, and church musicians as guest teachers, artists-in-residence, and community partners.
- Teacher-training institutions should equip music teachers with skills in notation, oral tradition, technology, performance, improvisation, composition, and creative industry practice.
- Educational institutions should reform assessment systems to include practical performance, composition, production, fieldwork, oral presentation, community-based projects, and reflective portfolios.
- Schools should use technology to document traditional music, analyse popular music, support creative music-making, and develop digital music archives.
- Policy makers should recognize music education as central to cultural identity, creativity, employability, heritage preservation, and national development.

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