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## **Music and Dance Instruction in Basic Schools in Ghana: Implications for Girl - Child Education**

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### **Abstract:**

*The study investigated factors militating against the girl – child’s music and dance education in basic schools in Ghana. The Population were music and dance teachers in Ghanaian pre-tertiary institutions, while purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample that covered all the 2005 of the 400 level music students of the Music Education Department of the University of Education, Winneba. The instrument was a modified Anderson’s (2002) questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The findings revealed that equal opportunities were provided by the teachers studied for both the girl – child and the boy – child, based on the competencies of the teachers, to study music and dance. The study revealed further that many girl –child across the country does not participate at all or less participate in music and dance lessons, while shyness on the part of the girl- child poses a threat to girl’s education in music and dance. It was however recommended that the girl – child should be counselled on the effects of shyness and how to overcome it, this it is assumed would encourage more girls to participate fully in music and dance*

**Keywords:** Problems, Music, Dance, Instruction, Basic Schools, Girl- Child, Ghana

### **Introduction**

The music and dance programme is the integration of Music, Dance and Drama, all of which are components of the Arts-Music and Dance Syllabus (MDS,1999). The programme is an innovation meant to replace the Cultural Studies Programme after the Ministry of Education had reviewed the Educational Reform in 1995. Among other things, the Music and Dance Programme aims at inculcating skills in composition and performance; that is, creation and presentation, in the basic school child. It is hoped that these skills once acquired by the pupils, would enhance their creative abilities and aesthetic sensitivities (MDS, 1999).

Furthermore, the proponents of the Music and Dance Programme opine that a good educational programme in Music and Dance will help provide pupils with greater opportunities and experience that will promote the development of their creative skills. Garretson (1988)

and Sloboda (1985) intimate that one principal justification for the inclusion of Music in the school curriculum is its aesthetic values.

Following criticisms levelled against the Music and Dance Programme by the Ghana Music Teachers Association (GMTA, 2001), Anderson (2002) conducted a research in the Awutu, Effutu, Senya District among 475 students and 20 teacher respondents in 20 Basic schools and found that there are numerous problems militating against the successful implementation of the said programme. Findings from the research revealed that the implementation of the Music and Dance Programme was being hampered by many factors two of which were:

1. Lack of teaching/learning materials and
2. Lack of in-service training (P.157).

The finding confirmed earlier findings from a research conducted by Twumasi (2000) in the Kumasi Metropolis on the similar topic of the said programme. What necessitated this study was due to reports the panel members received from the 2003/2004 batch of post-internship students of the Music Education Department of the University of Education, Winneba post-internship seminar that in some of the communities where they practised, school girls were either not permitted to handle or play certain musical instruments or sing certain songs on religious or cultural grounds.

Daaku (1999) intimates that socio-cultural practices underlie the causes of gender inequality in educational access and participation. Anagbogu (1999) affirms that girls are constrained by cultural practices from acquiring certain types of education; and Eseonu (1999), giving the problem a sub regional dimension, adds that in Nigeria there are some dance music that only males participate in.

MacKinnon (1999) found that there is a gender bias in the curriculum, and Swainson (1995) reiterates that this problem of gender bias in schools is often found in subject streaming. Aside of this, the Ministry of Education seems to place much importance on certain subjects perceived as being more important than others so far as the education of the girl-child is concerned. A wortwi (1999) writes that the GirJs Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service Programme activities are meant to encourage the girl-child to opt for science programmes and also to sustain their interest in science-related subjects and motivate them to perform well in those subjects and stay with science. Thus, it is clear from this assertion that not only do religious and cultural practioes prevent the girl-child from learning Music and Dance in school but the subject is discriminated against by our educational policy makers.

Perhaps this discouragement of the girl-child from learning Music and Dance stems from the fact that the subject is non examinable at the Basic School level. However, both Kodaly 1973 and Manford (1996) argue that for its immense contribution to both the individual and the society, all children must be taught music. Depriving the girl-child of certain types of education has serious consequences as that will prevent her from acquiring the necessary skills that will enhance her productivity as well as her learning potential which will enable her

contribute to better economic performance and poverty alleviation (Herz, 2000). For instance, lack of music and dance education will render the girl-child deficient in the necessary skills that will enable her be both creator and consumer of quality music which can also improve her socio-economic status - composers of quality Gospel music are well off economically in the Ghanaian contemporary society.

Again, Manford (1996) contends that music education in schools helps correlate other subjects. Explaining Manford's assertion in relation to the girl-child, Maiga- Toure (2000) argues that when girls are given broad-based education, it enhances their academic success. Thus, as music helps in learning other subjects the girl-child stands at a disadvantage when she is denied music instruction in school. This study, therefore, was conducted to investigate factors that militate against the girl-child's Music and Dance Education in school.

### **Purpose of the Study**

In the light of the above mentioned problems which the girl-child is likely to face should she be denied Music and Dance instruction in school, the purpose of this study was to:

- a) Uncover the problems associated with educating the girl-child musically; and
- b) Suggest strategies that will enable the girl-child benefit from Music Education in school.

### **Research Questions**

To realize the purpose of the study, the following research questions were designed to guide the study:

- 1) What opportunities are there for both boys and girls in studying Music and Dance?
- 2) What factors inhibit the girl-child's learning of Music and Dance?

### **Methodology**

The study involved the collection and analysis of data to ascertain the sort of problems that confront teaching and learning of music and dance in Ghanaian schools with particular reference to the girl-child. Effective strategies necessary for the improvement of educating the girl-child musically were also explored.

### **Study Population**

The target population of the study comprised all Music and Dance teachers in Ghana. The accessible population involved all Music and Dance teachers in Ghanaian pre-tertiary institutions while the sample covered all 2005 level 400 Music students of the Music Education Department of the University of Education, Winneba.

### **Sampling**

The purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents for the study for the reason that they had just come from their internship programme and had fresh experiences of what was prevailing in the targeted schools in connection with music and dance instruction. Also, those groups of respondents were scattered throughout the entire nation during their internship and this formed a true representation of music and dance teachers needed for the

study as they also practised at all the levels of education considered in the study. They were 39 in all. (See Table I below).

**Table 1: Distribution of study population according to location of practice**

<b>Region</b>	<b>No. of Students</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Central	4	10.3
Greater Accra	8	20.5
Eastern	3	7.7
VOIta	10	25.6
Ashanti	3	7.7
Western	2	5.1
Brong Ahafo	2	5.1
Upper West	2	5.1
Upper East	2	5.1
Northern	3	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### **Instrumentation**

The research instrument was a questionnaire consisting of nineteen items modified from Anderson's (2002) questionnaire. The additions made were based on suggestions by Mwana (1992). The questionnaire was divided into three sections.

Items under the first section covered the demographic information of the respondents; the second section dealt with the availability or otherwise of teaching/learning materials and other facilities while the third section comprised items on techniques used in teaching/learning Music and Dance and the problems respondents faced in relation to the girl-child in that direction.

### **Validity and Reliability**

After constructing the questionnaire, it was content validated by the co-researchers who are both experienced lecturers in the field of Music and Dance Education and Research.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

The period for data collection lasted for three days. This was to enable the respondents enough time to make appropriate responses to the items. Each of the thirty-nine post-internship students of the Music Education Department, UEW was given a copy of the questionnaire after their permission had been sought to do the exercise. After explaining the purpose of the research to them they were given three days to submit them back. The returns rate was 100%.

**Data Analysis**

The statistical package for the social sciences window 10.1 (SPSS) was used for the data analysis. Descriptive statistics with simple frequency counts and percentages were used to ascertain the recurrence of each of the responses made by the respondents.

Table 2 provides relevant experiences for music and dance instruction for both boys and girls.

**Table 2: Provision of relevant experiences for Music and Dance instruction for both boys and girls**

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Do (%)</b>	<b>Do not (%)</b>
Used folk tunes to teach	27 (69.2)	12 (30.8)
Called resource persons	34 (69.2)	5 (12.8)
Organised excursion	39 (100)	-
Used teaching/learning material	36 (92.3)	3 (7.7)
Gave group assignment	32 (82.1)	7 (17.9)

Data in Table 2 reveal that the practicing teachers provided the needed experiences that would enhance teaching and learning of Music and Dance. Out of the 39 respondents, 27 (69.2%) indicated that they used folk tunes to teach music and dance. Both Kodaly (1973) and Mandford (1986) contend that the use of folk tunes in teaching music enhances musical learning.

From Table 2, the data also reveal that 34(87.2%) of the respondents called resource persons to assist in teaching certain aspects of music and dance that the practicing teachers were deficient in. Singer cited, in Begg (1964) argues that in such situations advantage is taken of the special capabilities of the resource persons to promote effective curriculum implementation. However, the 5 (12.8%) who did not make use of resource persons and their pupils may not have missed significant information as they may have had the needed information and skills to teach their students.

One important experience greatly advocated by the planners of the music and dance curriculum is the organisation of excursions for students to places where they would come into contact with musical performances (either live or recorded) and places of cultural interest (MDS, 1999). The data in Table 2 indicate that all the 39 (100%) practicing teachers organised excursions to one place of musical interest or the other- e.g. shrine, concert house, mosque, church.

Tamakloe (1996) opine that taking students out on excursions exposes them to the real world situation that are unmatched to other classroom teaching/learning situations. The implication, therefore, is that the students taught by the practising teachers came into contact with actual musical situations to give them more enlightenment on what they learnt in the classroom.

Furthermore, data in Table 2 reveal that 32 (82.1 %) of the practising teachers of the subject gave group assignment to their pupils to collect information from the community on one issue or the other in relation to music and dance. This practice is commendable as it fosters cooperation and unity among students and at the same time discourages the habit whereby the teacher always spoon feeds students. Reid (1989) and Tamakloe et al (1996) all intimate that when students work in groups it gives them immense benefits.

Music and Dance being a practical subject calls for the use of musical instruments in the teaching/learning process so that the desired end would be achieved. The data in Table 2 show that 36(92.3%) of the respondents used teaching/learning materials such as musical instruments to teach music and dance and the implication is that if other things went well, then learning was successful as the right atmosphere for learning the subject was created. Mortimore et al (1988) affirm that the availability of relevant materials in a lesson fosters learning among students. Thus, from Table 2, the main finding from the data is that throughout the country equal opportunity was being provided for both boys and girls in the schools for studying music and dance.

Table 3 presents data on the degree of participation by the girl-child during Music and Dance lessons.

**Table3: Participation by the girl-child in Music and Dance lessons**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Full participation (%)</b>	<b>Partial participation (%)</b>	<b>Non participation (%)</b>
Composition	16(41)	22(56.4)	1(2.6)
Performance	18(48.2)	19(48.7)	2(5.1)
Listening & observing	23(59.0)	13(33.3)	3(7.7)

From Table 3, the data reveal that during composition lessons, 16 (41 %) of the practicing students indicated that the girls in their class participated fully, 22 (56.4%) indicated that the girl-child exhibited partial participation whilst 1 (2.6%) of the respondents indicated that there was non participation by the girls in his class during composition lessons. Thus, the finding is that greater number of those studied 23(58%) responded that girls in the schools they practiced participated partially or not at all during composition lessons in music and dance. The situation is worrying as the learning of composition in music cannot be overlooked since it enhances musical growth and fosters creativity in learners (Webster, 1988).

Thus, these girls are missing the development of the creative potentials in them which would help them function better in their future lives as developers of the nation.

Secondly, as music correlates with other subjects, the learning of composition in music and dance will assist the learner perform well in other subjects like English Language, Art, and Home Economics which also have topics on composition. And the girl-child must not miss that opportunity.

Thirdly, Anagbogu (1999) found that education of girls leads to their commercial development. In Ghana now, the music industry is becoming more and more lucrative with many people either composing songs and performing by themselves or composing songs for artistes to buy. These girls with their lukewarm attitude towards composition during music and dance lessons may also be missing the opportunity of earning their living and thereby compounding the problem of unemployment in the country.

When the 23 respondents were asked to state reasons for partial or non participation by the girl-child, 9(%) attributed the cause to shyness, 1(%) attributed it to the class teacher's lack of knowledge on the concept composition; but the rest could not assign any reason as to why some girls in their class either did not participate in or showed partial participation during composition classes. Perhaps the issue of shyness as the reason of partial or non participation confirms Nchesi's (1999) assertion that girls assume passive learners because of the gender stereotypes.

As regards performance, data in Table 3 show that 18(46.2%) of the subjects responded that the girl-child in their class participated fully; 19(48.7%) indicated that their girl-child participated partially, and 2(5.1 %) responded their girl-child did not participate in performance lessons. Musical performance is the means through which ideas and feelings are brought to life in music; and may either be on an instrument or displaying some musical activities before an audience. The revelation, therefore, from the data in Table 3 that 21 (53.8%) of the respondents indicated that girls in their class either participated partially or did not take part in performance lessons leaves much to be desired. In the performance of most of our Ghanaian dances, women play the vital role of either singing and clapping their hands or dancing. With the enforcement of the capitation grant where every child of school going age is expected to be in school, if some students decide to neglect the learning of certain cultural content incorporated into the school curriculum, there will come a day when there would not be enough women performing their traditional role during the performance of our local dances.

Again, as musical performances are invariably done before an audience of some sort, and therefore, promotes self esteem, build confidence in oneself and help to overcome shyness in the individual participant, the girls in question are missing all these vital attributes of life. When quizzed as to why girls in their class either participated partially or not at all in performance lessons, three out of the 21 respondents stated shyness as the cause but the rest could not assign any reason to that conduct of the girls.



Finally, the data in table 3 reveal that 23(59%) of the respondents indicated that their girl-child participated fully during listening and observing lessons, 13(33.3%) responded that their girl-child showed partial participation and 3(7.7%) did not participate at all. The listening and observing lessons are meant to train students' aural and visual perceptions.

Even though the finding paints a favourable picture, the 16(41 %) respondents' response is far more than being significant. Mark (1986) writes that in such instances, the music student misses a vital aspect of learning which enable her to "attend to tonal elements or rhythmic elements without confusion" and also be able to "experience rote songs and other music holistically, but with new insight and greater precision" (p.155).

When asked to state reason for partial or non participation of the girl-child in listening and observing lessons, only one out of the 16 respondent stated lack of interest as the cause. The rest could not identify any reason for the girls' action.

**Table 4: Attitude to Girl-Child learning of Music and Dance**

Individuals	Very positive (%)	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Very Negative (%)
The Head	6(15.4)	27(69.2)	4( 10.3)	2(5.1)
Staff members	5(12.8)	17(43.6)	16(41.0)	1 (2.6)
Boys	13(33.3)	20(51.3)	5(12.8)	1 (2.6)
Parent (community)	6(15.4)	19(48.7)	13(33.3)	1 (2.6)

Table 4 sums up the attitude of various people in the school and the community towards the girl-child's learning of Music and Dance.

Blair (1968) intimate that in several ways the kind of attitude which teachers, students and the community have affects school work; the girl-child's academic work being no exception.

The data in Table 4 reveal that 33(84.6%) of the respondents indicated that their heads showed positive or very positive attitude towards the girl-child's studying music and dance while 6(15.4%) responded that their heads showed negative or very negative attitude. The implication is that as many of the heads are encouraging girls in their schools to learn the subject, others are doing the contrary.

The negative attitudes shown by those heads is rather unfortunate as, as heads they are expected to provide conducive atmosphere for the learning of all the prescribed subjects by the Ministry of Education by all students, especially, where there is no specialization.



Woolfolk (1987) contends that the relationship between attitude and performance is very strong. It is therefore, not far from the truth that the girlchild in these schools performs poorly in music and dance.

Data in Table 4, again, show that 22(66.4%) of the respondents indicated that the other teachers in their schools showed either positive or very positive attitude towards the learning of music and dance by the girl-child while 17(43.6%) responded that teachers in the schools they practiced showed either negative or very negative attitude along that line.

Teachers are supposed to guide students to learn; and are sometimes even expected to team teach certain subjects (Begg, 1964) to help facilitate learning among students. But the implication from this data is that many of the teachers in the schools studied rather do the contrary. If it is the girl-child only that is at the receiving end of this kind of attitude, then she is being segregated on gender basis as the findings of the status of children and women in Ghana, 2000 by UN reports.

Also, the data in Table 4 reveal that 33(84.6%) of the respondents indicated that boys in the schools they practiced showed either positive or very positive attitude towards the learning of music and dance by the girl-child as opposed to 6(15.4%) respondents who indicated otherwise.

Even though the data paints a brighter picture with the attitude of the boys towards girls in the study of music and dance, the situation is still threatening. This is because the learning of Music and Dance is in most cases done in group situations as learners meet together to sing, dance or perform musical games among others. It, therefore, stands to reason that the girl-child in schools where the boys showed either negative or very negative attitude towards girls in the learning of Music and Dance would not be achieving much in the subject as they might not feel comfortable engaging in musical activities with their boy counterparts. This might account for their partial or non participation in music and dance lessons as reported by some of the respondents earlier on in this study.

Finally, in Table 4, the data show that 25(64.1%) of the respondents indicated that parents (the community) of the students in the schools where they practiced showed either positive or very positive attitude towards the girls learning of Music and Dance while 14(35.9%) indicated otherwise. The implication is that even though some of the parents of the girls in the schools studied favoured their wards learning Music and Dance, quite a sizable number of them did not. The finding confirms Nassor's (1999) assertion that the girl-child can study any subject she wishes but it is unfortunate to note that most parents and others within the community still hold the attitude and belief systems which have negative impact on her to participate fully in certain subjects. And that attitude denies the nation of the contribution of such girls in the development of the nation. Pritchard, cited in Alhassan (2004) found that parental attitudes have made it possible every where for boys to go ahead of girls in education.

### **Summary of Major Findings**

The findings from the data analysis are summarised as follows:

- (1) Equal opportunities were provided by the teachers studied for both the girl-child and the boy-child, based on the competencies of the teachers, to study Music and Dance.
- (2) Many a girl-child across the country does not participate at all or participate less in Music and Dance lessons.
- (3) Shyness on the part of the girl-child poses a threat to girls' education in Music and Dance.
- (4) Many school heads, teachers, boys as well as parents (members of the community) across the country do not consent to the girl-child studying Music and Dance and therefore, show negative attitude towards it.

### **Recommendations**

The findings from the study have implications to the Music and Dance teacher, the Ministry of Education, and the Government. The following recommendations are, therefore, made:

- (1) Where no specialization is required, school authorities should ensure full participation in all subjects studied in the schools by all students.
- (2) The girl-child should be counselled on the effects of shyness and how to overcome it. This would encourage more girls to participate fully in Music and Dance lessons.
- (3) Again, counselling sessions should be organized to update school authorities (heads and other members of staff) and also parents through PTA meetings on the need to encourage the study of all subjects on the school time-table by all students. The reason is that, the study of all subjects by all students is the avenue through which every student's innate capabilities are identified and nurtured for national development.
- (4) The girl-child should be exposed to the prospects that await her in future as Music and Dance student and be encouraged to learn the subject (Music and Dance).
- (5) Where possible, female resource persons should be invited to assist in teaching Music and Dance to serve as models to the girl-child.
- (6) Music and Dance should be examinable at the BECE to serve as a motivation to all students to take their learning of the subject serious.
- (7) There should be regular organization of Music and Cultural activities in the schools with incentive packages given to participants to encourage girls to participate.
- (8) Superstitious beliefs bordering the handling and playing of certain musical instruments should be discarded to enable the girl-child participate fully in Music and Dance lessons.

### **Conclusion**

Conclusions drawn from the study point to the fact that both boys and girls are given equal opportunity to study Music and Dance in Ghanaian schools. However, the girl-child for reasons such as shyness and the negative attitude shown by some school Heads, teachers,

parents and boys towards her studying the subject, does not participate fully in Music and Dance lessons.

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