



STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON MUSIC EDUCATION AND ITS TRANSFORMATIVE ROLE IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

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Cite this article:

E. F., Amparbin, E. O., Acquah, A. W., Appiah, P. K., Freitas (2026), Stakeholder Perspectives on Music Education and Its Transformative Role in Academic Achievement and Holistic Development in Ghana. *British Journal of Education, Learning and Development Psychology* 9(1), 150-163. DOI: 10.52589/BJELDP-FM5VVAMP

Manuscript History

Received: 20 Mar 2026

Accepted: 23 Apr 2026

Published: 11 Jun 2026

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ABSTRACT: *Despite growing global evidence that music education contributes significantly to learners' cognitive, socio-emotional, and academic development, it remains marginalised within Ghana's national education curriculum, particularly at the basic and senior high school levels. This marginalisation has resulted in a narrowed curriculum and limited opportunities for holistic learner development. This study examines the role of music education in fostering academic achievement and holistic development within the Ghanaian educational context, drawing on stakeholder perspectives to explore its educational value, curriculum integration, and the consequences of its neglect. Adopting a qualitative research approach, the study utilised focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of fifty-seven (57) key stakeholders, including music teachers, students, parents, school administrators, musicologists, and educational advisors in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Data were analysed thematically. Findings reveal a strong consensus among stakeholders that music education enhances cognitive abilities such as memory, creativity, and critical thinking, while also promoting socio-emotional skills including empathy, collaboration, and self-discipline. Participants further reported positive spill-over effects on students' performance in non-musical subjects. A significant majority (87%) of respondents advocated for music education to be designated as a mandatory core subject, particularly at the basic and senior high school levels. The continued neglect of music education was associated with reduced learner engagement, limited creative expression, and missed developmental opportunities. It concludes by recommending the policy-driven integration of music education as a core subject within Ghana's national curriculum, supported by sustained investment in teacher capacity development, culturally responsive pedagogical resources, and collaborative cross-sector policy implementation.*

KEYWORDS: Academic Achievement; Curriculum Integration; Educational Policy; Ghana; Holistic Development; Music Education.



INTRODUCTION

Music has proven to be one of the most potent universal tools that possesses many benefits across cultures, and has proved efficient in many spheres of life. Over the years, music has shifted from just the execution of traditional, stereotypical compositions to a more versatile, well-advanced practice. Allen, notes that it is “the most widely appreciated art in Africa”,¹ this is because of its ability to address a variety of issues in the world through its content and arrangement.²

Music as a sonic art type, applies several elements such as pitch, rhythm, timbre, texture, dynamic and markings to compose pieces that stimulate expressive reaction in the consumer. As a form of expression, music can be used to convey cultural, social, and personal ideas and experiences. The art of music is typically composed of melodic and harmonic structures, together with rhythmic patterns, that are arranged in a specific way to create a sense of unity and coherence. The study of music encompasses its history, theory, composition, performance, and reception, and it has been an essential part of human culture and society for ages.³ The musical meaning and its practical use emerge as two main topics when talking about the significance of music in education. While music is valued for its practical and useful qualities, Knlotman, notes that musical meaning is related to the definitional, philosophical construct.⁴ Knlotman further asserts that the assessment of cognitive outcomes is heavily prioritized in today's educational environment, at the expense of affective and psychomotor outcomes.

Musicologists and researchers continue to expand music with other disciplines of study, such as music and literature, music and history, music and politics, music and culture, music therapy, and music as an essential instrument in social education, among others, which are constantly adding to our understanding of the significance of music. Music in the socio-political space serves as an index where the youth identify and shape their perspectives of who they are and aspire to be, and also their culture. It is also an angle that “addresses social injustices, survival, and struggle, offering a powerful aesthetic musical expression against various forms of inequality in contemporary Ghanaian society (Bonsu, 2025:21). The field of education is also one of the most important areas of music that has been beneficial, but not to its full potential.

Studies have demonstrated that the benefits of practical music extend beyond the enhancement of various musical abilities in both adults and children. The development of auditory, visual, and motor capabilities through music classes has improved reading abilities.⁵ Kodaly's method of music education improves reading and arithmetic in children and there are shreds of evidence that this method of music education increases an individual's intelligence quotient whenever they engage in practical music.⁶ Researchers and practitioners have long argued for the creative, social, and cognitive benefits of music in the lives of young people, supporting the inclusion of music education in the curriculum. With such fervent advocacy from Yorke

¹ Allen, L. (2004). Music and politics in Africa. *Social Dynamics*, 30(2), 1-19.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02533950408628682>

² Yeboah, P.A.O., Sanka, C.G., and Bonku, L. (2023). Some Womanist Inscriptions in *Ebony Reigns' Song Maame Hwe: A Literary Approach*. *K@ta*, 25 (1),16-30

³ Merriam-Webster. Music. In Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (2022). Retrieved on 17th March 2024 from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/music>

⁴ Knlotman, R. H. "The School Music Administrator and Supervisor." (2014).

⁵ Thomas H. Y. Trotter, "The making of musicians." EC Schirmer music Company, (1930).

⁶ Alexis Kalivretenos, "The importance of music education." *The Humanist* 18 (2015).



Trotter, who was among the pioneers in advocating for participatory music learning with his mantra of "sound before symbol."⁷ According to Yorke Trotter's vision, a music-centered education will revolutionize society by empowering people to lead a creative and fulfilling lives.

The introduction of music in the curriculum of schools has been found to greatly enhance students' understanding and achievement, even in non-musical subjects. Integrating music into other subjects in the curriculum has been of immense interest to researchers (Colwell, 2008; Giles & Frego, 2004; Kelly, 1998; Saunders & Baker, 1991; Whitaker, 1996). A ten-year study, which was done by Kalivretenos (2015), tracked 25,000 middle and high school students and indicated that learners in music classes had received higher scores on standardized tests than the students with little to no musical involvement.⁸ This succinctly confirms the earlier assertion. As a result, Killian & Wayman, note that students who are actively being groomed to teach in the elementary classrooms in American Colleges and Universities take music classes as a requirement for their preparation.⁹ This further reveals the importance of prioritizing music in education. In most instances, music can be used to memorize details of an academic nature when students can creatively craft songs to help them remember what they have studied. Since people who engage in music constantly use their memory to perform, the skill of memorization can serve students well in their academics and beyond.

Indeed, Kalivretenos posits that in today's ever-changing world, the inclusion of music education in the curriculum ought to be the next academic priority. As he expounds on the subject, he asserts that music education should generally be a mandatory subject in the educational curriculum due to the academic, social, and personal benefits that it offers.¹⁰

However, for years, Ghanaian society has viewed music as the 'ugly duckling' of school curricula, not giving it the needed respect and attention it deserves as a highly beneficial tool that has the power to facilitate change and learning in our educational system. The limited and lack of attention

and ultimately the inconsequential treatment of music, especially indigenous Ghanaian music in the Ghanaian educational curriculum, has been explored in research works such as (Akrofi, 1987; Addo, 1990; Kwami, 1994). An increasing corpus of research backs up the claim that Ghanaian society has marginalized and neglected music education. For instance, research conducted by the University of Education, Winneba, discovered that music instruction was usually excluded from the curriculum and viewed as a non-essential topic in Ghanaian schools. In addition, Ghana Education Service research discovered that lack of facilities, qualified teachers, and resources frequently resulted in the neglect of music education in schools (GES,

⁷ Killian, Janice N., and John B. Wayman. "Music Student Teachers: Pre-Student Teaching Concerns and Post Student Teaching Perceptions Over a 5-year period." *Journal of Research in Music Education*, April 2013.

⁸ Martin F. Gardiner, Alan Fox, Faith Knowles, and Donna Jeffrey. "Learning improved by arts training." *Nature* 381, no. 6580 (1996)

⁹ Alexis Kalivretenos, "The importance of music education." *The Humanist* 18 (2015).

¹⁰ Sheila Douglas and Peter Willatts. "The relationship between musical ability and literacy skills." *Journal of Research in reading* 17, no. 2 (1994)



2018). Consequently, a small number of individuals have access to music education, resulting in the idea that music is not a worthwhile topic (programme of study).

Integrating music into the Ghanaian educational curriculum as early as from children's primary to tertiary education will go a long way to better develop areas of the brain related to language and reasoning. Thus, Cooper opines that the integration of music in the curriculum will strengthen the consciousness of identity of students.¹¹ It is against this background that this paper aims to explore the effects of music education on the social, emotional, and cognitive growth of students in Ghanaian schools and to suggest practical methods for integrating music into the curriculum to foster diverse and inclusive learning environments.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW CRITICAL THINKING AND MUSIC

Robert Sternberg explained, that critical thinking is the mental operations, approaches, and models people employ to resolve issues, reach judgments, and learn new concepts.¹² For many years, the prevailing opinion was that individual intellectual development and aptitude for thought could be adequately supported by studying specific domains of knowledge, or school topics. This conviction was initially questioned by Kokkidou, and other academics, who noted that any subject taught in the classroom can foster critical thinking if teachers ground their lessons in problems and areas requiring further research while promoting introspection.¹³

As part of preparing students to be responsible, conscientious citizens who can also handle the difficulties of the future, many scholars and education theorists these days emphasize the significance of critical thinking development for students. Ann Epstein (2003, 2008) draws parallels between critical thinking in children and the capacity for scientific research in adults, highlighting that child can gain that capacity when they are encouraged both to plan and to reflect on their activities.

In music education, listening to and creating music is taught, along with concepts related to harmony, tonality, musical forms, and structures.¹⁴ According to some educators and scholars, in addition to helping people enhance their musical abilities, music education can help people improve their social, cognitive, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, as well as their academic performance. (Hargreaves & North, 1999; Sloboda et al., 2001; Southgate & Roscigno, 2009; Holochwost et al., 2017; Guhn et al., 2020). Johnson, proposed that listening is a method of problem-solving for both learning and comprehending music.¹⁵ Numerous studies have been conducted to support this idea. One of these is a scientific study conducted by Zellner to investigate the relationship between critical thinking and instrumental music, which indicated that the instrumental music sample consistently outscored the non-

¹¹ Cooper, J. E. (2007). Strengthening the case for community-based learning in teacher education. *Journal of teacher education*, 58(3), 245-255.

¹² Robert J. Sternberg, "Critical Thinking: Its Nature, Measurement, and Improvement." (1986), p46

¹³ Kokkidou, May. "Critical Thinking and School Music Education: Literature Review, Research Findings, and Perspectives." *Journal for Learning through the Arts* 9, no. 1 (2013):

¹⁴ Topoğlu, Onur. "Critical thinking and music education." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 116 (2014): 2252-2256.

¹⁵ Johnson, Daniel Clinton. "The effect of critical thinking instruction in music listening on fifth-grade students' verbal descriptions of music." *PhD diss., The University of Arizona*, 2(003).



instrumental music sample when compared to the reading and mathematics skills of the samples.¹⁶

Literacy and Numeracy

Historically, it has long been believed that music, literacy, and numeracy are closely related. There is a strong correlation between phonological awareness and musical ability.¹⁷ These are linked to early reading skills in pupils.¹⁸ Tonal memory and reading age have also been found to have moderate associations.¹⁹

Butzlaff's meta-analysis of twenty-four (24) studies found a reliable relationship between musical instruction and standardized measures of reading ability. The studies demonstrate a positive impact of musical engagement on reading. Variations may be attributed to the kind of musical experiences with which the individuals were engaged and also their prior musical development. The link between music and numeracy has been of attention since the Pythagoreans deliberated over the connections between musical intervals and ratios. In everyday life, numerical cognition is essential for processing numbers and computations. It is always necessary for musicians who play from notation to use quasi-mathematical techniques to split beats and convert rhythmic notation into sound.²⁰ However, Hallam, claims that this kind of activity is limited to particular areas of mathematics. Only when the necessary abilities are "near" will the transfer most likely

happen. A recent study that compared students getting piano and singing lessons to those receiving instruction on rhythm instruments revealed that the former performed better on part-whole math problems.²¹

Mixed findings have come from research on the connections between mathematics and active musical engagement. For example, a study conducted in 1996 by Geoghegan and Mitchelmore examined the effect of a music program on pupils' math proficiency. Despite the possibility of confounding factors such as a musical background at home, the children who participated in musical activities scored higher than the control group on the mathematical achievement exam. Although the data generally point to the positive effects of active involvement with music on

¹⁶ Zellner, Ryan M. *A study of the relationship between instrumental music education and critical thinking in 8th and 11th-grade students*. Universal-Publishers, (2011).

¹⁷ Susan Hallam, "The power of music: Its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people" *International Journal of Music Education*, (2010)

¹⁸ Anvari, S. H., Trainor L. J., Woodside J., and Levy B. Z. Relations among musical skills, phonological processing, and early reading ability in preschool children. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 83, (2002), 111–130.

¹⁹ Barwick, J., Valentine, E., West, R., and Wilding, J. "Relations between reading and musical abilities", *The British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 59, (1989), 253–257.

²⁰ Butzlaff, R, "Can music be used to teach reading"? *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 34, (2000), 167–178.

Susan Hallam, "The power of music: Its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people" *International Journal of Music Education*, (2010)

²¹ *Ibid*



mathematics ability, little is known about the specifics of this relationship, including the types of musical training necessary to get the desired effects and the amount of time needed.

Socio-Emotional Development in Music Education

Socio-emotional development includes the capacity to recognize and control one's feelings, establish and sustain interpersonal connections, demonstrate understanding and compassion, and successfully negotiate social circumstances. It is an important component of total human development that shapes a person's personality, well-being, and capacity for achievement in a variety of spheres of life.

Amid its distinct aesthetic appeal, music as art follows the course of human history and satisfies the spiritual requirements of the human race. It is the art of evoking different emotional responses and sensations triggered by the human auditory organ and manifested over time, as influenced by the human auditory system.²² It can move the human mind with powerful, vivid, and profound emotions.²³ Music is the art of expressing emotion through sound.²⁴ It possesses the most important feature of evoking love and emotion in people. The musician Stravinsky, as referenced by Liu, opines that "emotion is the essence of music. Thus, without it, music cannot exist".²⁵ The movement mode of human emotions and the movement mode of music are isomorphic. Therefore, people may readily learn the emotional meanings associated with music. Indeed, organized sound in music stimulates the auditory sense, which is a means to convey human emotions through a range of vocal styles, a shifting rhythm with distinct lines, a floating pace, thrilling acceleration, and vibrant tones. It may simply generalize the power, mobility, and speed of emotional and mental activity, producing an amazing resonance in the process. This significantly affects human feelings on an emotional level.²⁶ Significantly, one of the best ways to support the emotional growth of children is via music instruction.

The 'Body Rhythm' philosophy was presented by the renowned Swiss educator Enile Jaques Dalcroze. He asserts that "music has the essence of people's reflection on emotion," and "music education has the fundamental purpose of aesthetic emotion education".²⁷ Dalcroze's overhaul of music education aims to give students an "experience of music and experience of emotion." According to his "body rhythm theory," children can awaken their innate musical inclination when they embrace music instruction.²⁸ The fundamental idea behind this approach is to enable individuals to mentally and physically accept the process by fusing music and rhythm with their bodies. Tension and relaxation in the muscles may be used to experience and express one's own emotions and sentiments.²⁹ Inner emotion is expressed in the physical world through

²² Ji Huijuan, "On Influence Approach of Music Education on Pre-school Children Aesthetic Education", *J. Chinese Out-of-school Education*, (2012), p.15-19.

²³ Liu, Lei. "On influence of music education on emotional development of pre-school children." In *International*

Conference on Education, Management, Commerce and Society (EMCS-15), Atlantis Press, 2015. pp. 747

²⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵ *Ibid*

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ Liu, Lei. "On influence of music education on emotional development of pre-school children." In *International Conference on Education, Management, Commerce and Society (EMCS-15)*, pp. 738-741. Atlantis Press, (2015).

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ Zhang Liang, "Influence of Music Education on Children Growth", *J. Success (Education)*, (2012), p38.



various gestures and bodily actions, so that individuals can experience shocking force and provoked emotions brought by works of music.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

This study employed a qualitative research design to examine stakeholder perspectives regarding the instrumentality of music education in promoting academic achievement and holistic development in Ghana, its integration into the national curriculum, and the implications of its neglect. A qualitative approach was appropriate for capturing in-depth insights into participants' experiences and perceptions within their educational contexts. The study was conducted in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, selected for its cultural diversity, strong musical traditions, and representation of Ghana's formal education system. Using purposive sampling, due to its ability to allow for attainment of in-depth information from participants, fifty-seven (57) participants with relevant experience in music education and curriculum implementation were selected in accordance to occupation, parenting and education (programme of study in schools). Participants were fundamentally approached at work places, educational units and homes. These included 12 music teachers, 21 students from basic and senior high schools, 9 parents, 5 school administrators, 5 educational advisors or curriculum officers, and 5 musicologists teaching at the tertiary level. This diverse stakeholder composition ensured a balanced representation of pedagogical, learner, parental, administrative, policy, and scholarly perspectives.

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). FGDs were conducted primarily with students and music teachers to encourage interactive dialogue and shared reflections, while individual interviews were held with parents, administrators, educational advisors, musicians, and musicologists. An interview guide structured around three thematic areas: (1) the impact of music education, (2) strategies for curriculum integration, and (3) the consequences of neglecting music education. These guided all data collection. All interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed using themes, involving familiarisation with the data, coding, identification of patterns, and development of themes aligned with the research objectives. Both inductive and deductive coding procedures were employed to capture emerging insights while relating findings to existing literature. Ethical principles were observed throughout the study. Participants provided informed consent, participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were assured. Data triangulation across stakeholder groups and methods enhanced the credibility of the findings.

The interview guide was organized into thematic categories, and questions were generated to pinpoint the study's subject. Below are the themes and questions generated for the study.

Impact of Music Education

1. How has music been beneficial in enhancing students' understanding and achievement in non-musical subjects?
2. How does music education impact the emotional growth of students in Ghanaian schools?



3. What are the social benefits of incorporating music learning in Ghanaian schools?

Integration of Music Education into the Curriculum:

4. Should music education be a mandatory subject at all levels of education in Ghana?
5. How can music education be effectively integrated into the Ghanaian educational curriculum system?

Impact of Neglecting Music Education:

6. How has the neglect of music education impacted students' overall academic performance in Ghana?

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study are organized into three dimensions.

Historical Context and Contemporary Views

Formal music education in Ghana began in the 19th century when European music teachers introduced singing to train Africans for church choirs.³⁰ Initially, indigenous music was considered unsuitable for church worship and school settings. However, efforts to diversify the repertoire gradually changed this perception.³¹ As Ghana's cultural landscape evolved, so did the perception of music education. Today, music education extends beyond religious contexts. It encompasses traditional Ghanaian music, Western music theory, and practical skills. The perception of music as a fundamental aspect of cultural identity has evolved positively. In response to the above statement, one interviewee asserted that "music teachers, musicians, parents, and educational advisors now recognize its value in nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and emotional expression," which speaks directly to how music education has evolved and taken critical space in both academic and non-academic circles.

Theme 1: Impact of Music Education on Academic and Holistic Development

Findings from the study indicate that music education plays a significant role in enhancing students' cognitive, socio-emotional, and social development. Across stakeholder groups, participants consistently described music as a powerful educational tool that supports learning beyond musical skills. For instance, participants highlighted improvements in concentration, memory, and learning in non-musical subjects as key outcomes of music education. During the Focus Group Discussion, a senior high school student explained:

Learning to play the guitar helped me concentrate better in class. I noticed that I could remember things more easily, especially when studying subjects like English and Social Studies.

Similarly, a music teacher noted the transferability of musical skills to academic performance:

³⁰ Nketia, J. H. Kwabena, "The Music of Africa." *W. W. Norton & Company*, 1974.

³¹ *Ibid*



When students are involved in music, they learn discipline and memory skills. These skills do not stay in the music room alone; they reflect in how they approach other subjects.

These accounts align with existing research that links music education to enhanced cognitive functioning and academic achievement (Chen et al., 2021; Welsh, 2021).

Socio-Emotional Development and Self-Expression

Music education was also described as a vital avenue for emotional expression and psychological well-being. One student shared a deeply personal reflection:

Music gave me a safe way to express my emotions. Whenever I felt stressed or sad, playing music helped me calm down and understand myself better.

A parent echoed this view, emphasizing music's role in emotional regulation:

I have seen my child become more confident and emotionally balanced since joining the school music group. Music helped him express feelings he could not put into words.

These findings support the view that music education contributes to emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and stress reduction.

Social Skills, Collaboration, and Inclusion

Participants further emphasised the social benefits of music education, particularly its ability to foster teamwork and interpersonal relationships. A music educator described a classroom experience:

I give my students group composition tasks. Through that, they learn how to listen to each other, compromise, and work as a team. Music teaches them empathy without preaching it.

Another student reflected on the social bonds formed through ensemble performance:

Joining the school orchestra helped me make friends. We learned to support each other, and it made school more enjoyable for me.

However, not all participants perceived the impact of music education uniformly. Approximately 27% of respondents noted that the effects of music vary among individuals. As one educational advisor explained:

Music does not affect everyone in the same way. Students have different interests and emotional responses, so the impact depends on how they engage with it.

This observation reflects the theory of individual differences in psychology, which recognises variability in learners' cognitive and emotional responses to educational experiences.

Theme 2: Inclusion of Music Education in the Ghanaian Curriculum

Comprehensively, the data gathered indicated that music education in Ghana should be made part of the educational curriculum. Furthermore, eighty-seven percent (87%) of the respondents were emphatic that the inclusiveness of music education should be compulsory (core subject) from basic to senior levels. They largely explained that, in most instances, music can be used



to memorize details of an academic nature when students can creatively craft songs to help them remember what they have studied. Fundamentally, because individuals who engage in music constantly use their memory to perform, the skill of memorization can serve them (students) well in their academics and beyond. Thus, integrating music into the Ghanaian educational curriculum as early as children's primary education will go a long way in developing areas of the brain related to language and reasoning. This is when children go through rapid cognitive development, hence, "a sensitive period of development and, therefore, an optimal time to implement music programs and activities" (Chen et al., 2021; Welsh, 2021).

At one of the interview sessions, a school administrator shared his opinion on the issue, expressing the fact that:

Not all students may choose to pursue music at the tertiary level, but by making music education mandatory in earlier stages of education, all students have the opportunity to benefit from the cognitive and academic advantages that music education offers.

Furthermore, respondents shared their thoughts on this issue, emphasizing that:

Basic and Senior High Schools provide a more structured and standardized education system, making it easier to implement and monitor the effectiveness of music education programs.

Respondents' strong endorsement clearly reflects a collective acknowledgment of the intrinsic value of music in fostering cultural appreciation and preservation, boosting emotional expression, injecting a sense of self-awareness and confidence, nurturing creativity, and promoting holistic development among students. Also, ensuring a balanced curriculum design that encompasses traditional Ghanaian music, Western music theory, and practical skills.

Effective Integration of Music Education in the Curriculum

Expansively, the findings of the study highlighted the importance of personnel development, which crucially involves teacher training aimed at enhancing the quality of skills in delivery. To adequately blend music teaching and learning with the educational curriculum, respondents reiterated the need to invest in teacher education programs that prioritize music education, which will empower educators to nurture students' musical talents and creativity.

Additionally, stakeholders, through the interview, accentuated the necessity of partnerships between music educators, policymakers, institutions, and philanthropists to build a formidable collaboration leading to solid inclusion of music education. They were categorical that:

Effective integration of music education requires a coordinated effort to align goals, resources, and strategies, creating a supportive environment that facilitates the seamless incorporation of music into the educational system.

Indeed, the importance of collaboration in the area of arts, including music to international development; has been one of the central focuses of policy experts. Accordingly, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has called for the effective use of arts to transform and move education from hard to soft goals. Where, the soft goals center on arts and culture compared to the economic and military focus of hard goals. UNESCO, therefore, declares that the arts can develop cultural understanding (Buck 2010). Petrie (2021) also confirms that:



Music and arts education help in developing cultural competency and the ability to understand and analyse the dynamics of global cultures and sociocultural change (226).

Theme 3: Impact of Neglecting Music Education

Technically, the fundamental issue under the section is directed at whether *Music Education is important or otherwise*. The findings of the study broadly portray the fact that music education is very instrumental in human emotional, social, cognitive, and psychomotor development. Notwithstanding, through interview and focus group discussion sessions, respondents provided that:

Music education is often seen as less important than other academic subjects. There is, therefore, a misconception that music is just a form of entertainment and not essential for students' overall development.

Alluding to the view that “other post-colonial African countries often struggle to support performing arts education due to colonial legacies privileging linguistic and logical mathematical knowledge” (Abraham 2002; Kavanagh 2006; UNESCO 2005; Younge 2011). Respondents further explained that:

Abandoning it will have a calamitous consequence on the steady progress of the learner and the educator alike, as, among other things, Academic performance is affected due to the absence of music-related brain stimulation, which is key in the attainment of holistic development.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the development of official music education in Ghana, following its origins from 19th-century European influence to its contemporary stage of blending Western theory and traditional Ghanaian music. The importance of music in promoting critical thinking, emotional expression, and creativity was recognized by the stakeholders. The study focused on how music influences cognitive, emotional, and social elements of development, highlighting how it improves memory, social skills, and communication abilities. The need for a balanced curriculum that incorporates both traditional and Western music was emphasized by the participants, who argued in favour of making music education in Ghanaian schools mandatory. Students have been found to suffer when music education is neglected since it is integral to their cognitive and social development. In support of mandated music education, the study's conclusion placed a strong emphasis on teacher preparation, student collaboration, and the transformative potential of music. The current study underscores the essence of integrating music education into Ghana's educational curriculum. By fostering collaboration, implementing effective integration strategies, and investing in teacher training programs, schools can provide students with equitable access to the transformative power of music. Recognizing the diverse benefits of music education in nurturing holistic development, Ghana has the opportunity to cultivate a vibrant music education landscape that enriches students' lives, promotes cultural preservation, and fosters creativity. Through inclusive practices and a holistic approach to education, the integration of music education can contribute to building a better world and empowering students for success in a dynamic society.



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