

The Adoption of Music Education as a Vocational Pathway: A Study of Selected Secondary Schools in Ngabwe District, Zambia

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to find out the effects of the career pathway on the choice of music education in the selected secondary schools in the Ngabwe district. The study was guided by the following specific research objectives: to establish the status for adopting music education as a vocational pathway in secondary schools and to determine factors that contribute to the non-adoption of music education in secondary schools. The study employed both the qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect, integrate and analyze data. The study utilized descriptive research design. The target population of the study were all head teachers, deputy head teachers, heads of departments and music subject teachers in the selected secondary schools. The research instruments used in the study were questionnaires and interview guides. Data was collected through questionnaire and interview methods. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic method in order to generate themes. SPSS software version 25 was used to generate descriptive statistics in the form of frequency tables and bar graphs in order to give clear explanations, presentation and interpretation of the research results. The study shows that schools had no intention of adopting and implementing music education as a subject. Various factors that hinders the adoption of music education in schools were brought out and these includes, lack of trained music teachers, lack of musical classroom, lack of musical instruments, lack of course and reference books and negative attitude by teachers towards music. Measures on motivating the adoption of music education were as well suggested, these includes, make music compulsory subject, procurement of musical instruments, establishment of musical classroom, procurement of course and reference books and the orientation of the school management on the relevance of music education to learners and the society at large.

Keywords: Effects, music education, career pathway, musical instruments, musical classrooms, non-adoption.

DOI: 10.7176/JEP/13-14-02

Publication date: May 31st 2022

Background to the study

The Zambian curriculum framework underpinned the importance of teaching vocational subjects in schools to equip learners with survival skills and become self-reliant. Since the Vocational Subjects will provide sufficient practical skills to prepare learners for subsequent training or entry into the world of work, the curriculum should provide learners with opportunities for hands-on practical experience which is the essence for all the Vocational Subjects, MOGE (2013: 20). The vocational curriculum was intended to meet the national educational goal whose aim is to achieve an all-round development of the learner through self-reliance of an individual. The greatest problem that Zambia and other developing countries are facing is the provision of meaningful education to citizen. Meaningful education is regarded as an essential requirement in any country. This may expose learners to opportunities in life aimed at the preparation of the individual for the challenges and roles waiting as a member of the immediate environment. Education plays great roles in national development; it is not only welfare indicator but also a key determinant of earnings and an important exit route from poverty.

According to Mumpuka (2009:35) music education is an umbrella term that refers to formal and informal music learning at all ages. In the Zambian education system, it is a subject referred to as music and is learned formally. The aim of music education is to equip learners with adequate musical knowledge and skills and attitudes conducive to self-employment and continuing education. One of the goals of education is to produce a learner appreciates Zambia's ethnic cultures, customs and traditions, and uphold national pride, sovereignty, peace, freedom and independence (MOE, 1996: 20). This signifies the importance that the government through

the Ministry of General Education in Zambia attaches to indigenous music in helping in the formation of a truly Zambian child able to fit in the traditional society and use the music to solve related problems.

Recent advances in the study of the brain have enabled to enhance our understanding of the way that active engagement with music influences other development. Although our knowledge of the way the brain works is still in its infancy some of the fundamental processes involved in learning have been established. The human brain contains approximately 100 billion neurons a considerable proportion of which are active simultaneously. Information processing is undertaken largely through interactions between them, each having approximately a thousand connections with other neurons. When we learn there are changes in the growth of axons and dendrites and the number of synapses connecting neurons, a process known as synaptogenesis. When an event is important enough or is repeated sufficiently often synapses and neurons fire repeatedly indicating that this event is worth remembering, (Fields, 2012: 45). In this way changes in the efficacy of existing connections are made. As learning continues and particular activities are engaged with over time myelinisation takes place. This involves an increase in the coating of the axon of each neuron which improves insulation and makes the established connections more efficient.

Several studies have found no difference in reading between children receiving musical training and controls. Kemmerer (2003: 107) indicated a positive impact of musical engagement on reading, differences that may be explained by the nature of the children's prior and current musical experiences and their already developed reading skills. If language skills are well developed already, musical activity may need to focus on reading musical notation for transfer benefits to occur in relation to reading. There may also be other factors which need to be taken into account.

The study by Kasebusha (2021:21) on the vocational uurriculum pathway implementation in Kapiri Mposhi district of Central province of Zambia reported that the implementation of the vocational pathway subjects failed to realize its intended objectives of preparing learners with knowledge and practical skills amid the limited infrastructural facilities, resource materials, equipment, tools and consumables. Such challenges in the implementation of vocational subjects hinder learners to smoothly acquire both knowledge and skills. There was a disparity between the skills the learners are expected to develop and the reality in school which constitute a major barrier to practical skills acquisition as it lack guidance for the curriculum to be implemented in an effective manner, schools should have the needed facilities to support it.

Statement of the problem

Music learning is focused on academic achievement. The current educational system is almost lacking on many of these issues, (Musakula, 2014). It has been noted that the majority of the Zambian secondary schools have focused much on the adoption of the academic and other vocational pathway subjects that have to be taught in schools. Music as an art subject has not been given much attention for it to be adopted and taught in schools despite its importance to social, cultural, economic and political sectors. There has been no study on the non-adoption of music subject in secondary schools in Zambia, hence the study was conducted to fill the gap.

Research Methodology

The study employed both the qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect, integrate and analyze data. The study utilized descriptive research design. The target population of the study were all head teachers, deputy head teachers, heads of departments and music subject teachers in the selected secondary schools. The research instruments used in the study were questionnaires and interview guides. Data was collected through questionnaire and interview methods. Qualitative data was analyzed by using thematic method in order to generate themes. SPSS software version 25 was used to generate descriptive statistics in the form of frequency tables, bar graph and pie charts in order to give clear explanations, presentation and interpretation of the research results

Results and discussion

The status for adopting music education as a vocational pathway.

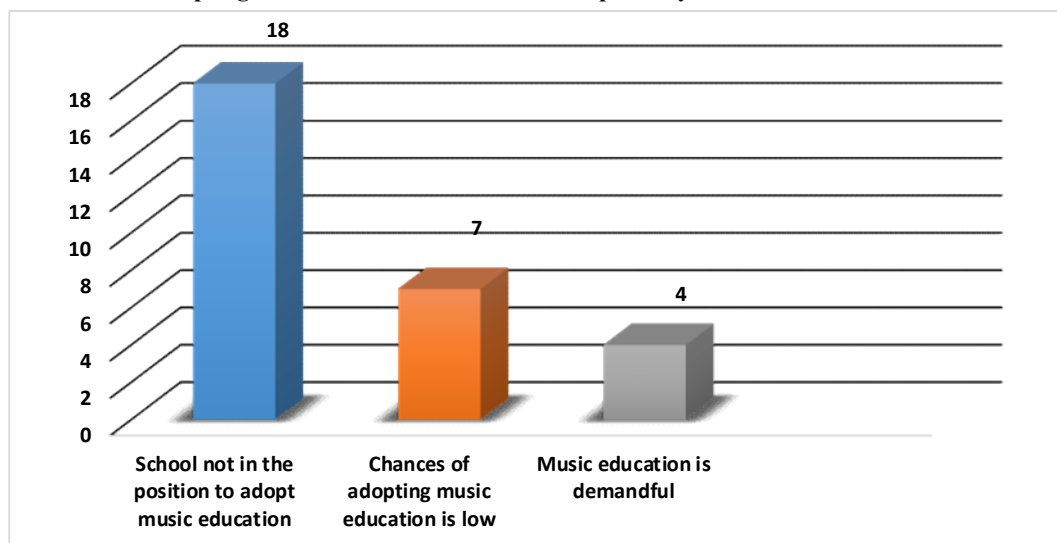


Figure 1: Status for adopting music education N = 29
 Source: Field Work, 2021

The study intended to find out the status for adopting music education as a vocational pathway. The school were not in the position of adopting music education, the chances of adopting music education in school was very low and music education as a subject demands a lot for it to be implemented in schools. Figure 1 shows that eighteen (18) out of twenty nine (29) representing 62.1 % of the respondents reported that the school was not in the position to adopt music education. The other seven (7) out of twenty nine (29) representing 24.1 % of the respondents revealed that the chances of adopting music education in school was very low and four (4) out of twenty nine (29) representing 13.8 % of the respondents indicated that music education as a subject is demandful for it to be implemented in schools.

Some of the factors to put into consideration in the adoption of music education as a subject are trained teachers to provide the needed human resource, musical classrooms and instruments. The study showed that the schools were not in the position of introducing music education because the subject requires special musical classroom, instruments and specialised teachers in the area. The choice for adopting music education entirely depends on the availability of musical classrooms and instruments needed in the teaching and learning process and not forgetting music subject teachers who are very cardinal in the implementation of the subject. The adoption of music education music education demands careful planning. The schools seem not to adopt music education as a subject because of the many requirements that have to be put in place before it is adopted and be implemented. The issue of human resource is very important to be put into consideration before making a choice for the adoption of music as a subject in school.

Factors that contribute to the non-adoption of music education.

Table 1: Non-adoption of music education

<i>Responses</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Percentage(%)</i>
<i>Lack of trained music teachers</i>	4	13.8
<i>Lack of musical classroom</i>	15	51.7
<i>Lack of musical instruments</i>	4	13.8
<i>Lack of course and reference books</i>	2	6.9
<i>Negative attitude by teachers towards music</i>	4	13.8
Total	29	100

Source: Field Work, 2021 N = 29

Table 1 shows that four (4) out of twenty nine (29) representing 13.8% of the respondents reported that the lack of trained music teachers in schools contribute to non-adoption of music education, the other fifteen (15) out of twenty nine (29) representing 51.7 % of the respondents revealed that the chances of adopting music education in school was very low because of the demand for the availability of musical classrooms, four (4) out of twenty nine (29) representing 13.8 % of the respondents indicated that it was not an easy thing to adopt and

implement music education in schools because of its demand for the necessary musical instruments, two (2) out of twenty nine (29) representing 6.9 % of the respondents lamented that lack of both resource and course books in schools contributes to the non-adoption of music education and four (4) out of twenty nine (29) representing 13.8 % of the respondents indicated that the negative attitude by teachers and learners towards music education contribute to the non-adoption of music education in secondary schools.

The study aimed at identifying the factors that contribute to the non-adoption of music education in secondary schools. The study revealed that lack of trained music teachers in schools contribute to non-adoption of music education, chances of adopting music education in school was very low because of the demand for the availability of musical classrooms, it was not an easy thing to adopt and implement music education in schools because of its demand for the necessary musical instruments, lack of both resource and course books in schools contributes to the non-adoption of music education and negative attitude by teachers and learners towards music education contribute to the non-adoption of music education in secondary schools. This study argued with Chipo (2015) whose study indicated that church influence, peer influence, family support and social benefits of music are significantly and positively related to students' participation in high school music programs

According to Akinpelu (1989) man learn by acting on the natural phenomena, transforming them while experiencing their influence, the experience is the criterion of truth. Music education as a vocational pathway subject should seek to integrate theory and practice. However the way the vocational career pathway subjects should be implemented is different from what the pragmatists emphasize because learners should not be denied the experiential type of learning. The learners have to be exposed to theory and practice rather than the theory part only.

The study findings supports Kasebusha (2021) whose study evaluated the implementation of the vocational pathway subjects in Kapiri Mposhi district and found that the adopted vocational pathway subjects were not effectively implemented due to lack and inadequacy of the needed human resource, instruments and tools and facilities to support the subjects. This is more reason why schools do not adopt practical subjects which includes music. It is also important to make mention that the determinant factor for the adoption of music education in school is the availability of specialised musical facilities which includes the musical classrooms. This means that the unavailability of musical classrooms contributes to the non-adoption of music education in schools. It is pointless to adopt music education as a subject in school when the needed human resource who are teachers are not available. If schools lack trained music teachers in schools, makes it impossible for the adoption of music education.

The findings of the study showed that the non-adoption of music education in schools was due to insufficient materials and physical facilities that could help learners acquire practical skills. The learners and teachers should see and touch what they are teaching or learning on. UNICEF (2016) indicated that the recent declared vocational career pathway is a good step in preparing youths with relevant knowledge and skills so that they become self-reliant. However, the adoption of music as a subject is uncertain in schools because of its demands, hence there is needs for careful planning before its adoption in order to ensure learners acquire knowledge, develop practical skills and change their attitudes towards music education.

Conclusion

Basing on the foregoing study objectives the following conclusions can be drawn: The schools were not in the position of adopting music education. Some of the factors to put into consideration in the adoption of music education as a subject are trained teachers to provide the needed human resource, musical classrooms and instruments. The subject needs special musical classroom, instruments and specialised teachers in the area. The choice for adopting music education entirely depends on the availability of musical classrooms and instrument needed in the teaching and learning process and not forgetting music subject teachers who are very cardinal for the implementation of the subject. The adoption of music education demands careful planning. The schools seem not to adopt music education as a subject because of many requirements that have to be put in place before it is adopted and implemented. The issue of human resource is very important to first be put into consideration before making a choice for the adoption it as a subject in school.

There are various factors for the non-adoption of music education. The chances of adopting music education in school is low because of the demand for the availability of musical classrooms, it was not an easy thing to adopt and implement music education in schools because of its demand for the necessary musical instruments, lack of both resource and course books in schools contributes to the non-adoption of music education and negative attitude by teachers and learners towards music education contribute to the non-adoption of music education in secondary schools. Making the subject compulsory gives commands for all schools to adopt and implement it in schools considering its benefits to learners and society for self-reliance which enables the acquisition of knowledge and development survival and long life skills before and after the completion of education. However, the adoption of music education in schools demands careful planning.

Recommendations

- i. The MOE should make music education a compulsory subject in all secondary schools
- ii. The MOE should procure music education instruments before the adoption of the subject
- iii. The government should establish musical classrooms in schools
- iv. The government should procure of music education course and reference books
- v. The MOE should orient the school management on the relevance of music education.

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