

**GENDER AND ATTITUDINAL FACTORS: TOWARDS INDIVIDUALIZED
PIANO PERFORMANCE STUDIES IN FEDERAL COLLEGES OF
EDUCATION IN NORTH-CENTRAL, NIGERIA**

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.28191.89765

Abstract

The study was designed to examine Gender and attitudinal factors towards Individualized piano performance studies in Federal Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria. Individualized piano performance studies constitute part of the Applied Music Performance Studies which involves skills, principles, knowledge and strategies. It is seen as the actual interpretations of musical theories and compositions for the listening pleasure and enjoyment of the common man and the elites. It is also one of the compulsory courses which a student must pass at each level of the studies before graduation. The aim of this study was to identify factors that militate against Individualized piano performance studies in the two Colleges that result in their poor academic performances as observed over the past five (5) years (2012-2016). Other variables considered include the extent to which the identified factors deter their interest and motivation; strategies that could make Individualized piano performance effective; comparison across gender, and the two institutions. Two related literature were reviewed for the study. A descriptive survey approach was employed for the study with a population sample of 148 out of 220 music students in the two Federal Colleges of Education. Two sampling approaches used include enumeration for FCE, Okene in Kogi State due to their fewness in number and a simple random sampling was adopted for FCE, Pankshin in Plateau State. This represented 67.27% of the entire music students in the two institutions. A questionnaire titled "Gender and Attitudinal Factors towards Individualized Piano Performance Studies" (GAFIPPS) was constructed, validated and used by the researcher to collect pertinent data for the study. The data collected were analyzed using frequency and descriptive statistics, (mean, standard deviation and t-test). The major findings revealed that instructional approach and insufficient number of

piano teachers/instructors in addition to inadequate instructional materials affect Individualized piano performance studies in these two institutions to a great extent. Two main findings from the hypotheses revealed that there is significant difference between male and female students in their attitude towards piano on one hand, and between institutions of study on the other hand. In conclusion, the researcher therefore, recommends that qualified music teachers (lecturers/instructors) should be employed in adequate ratio of 1:10 students. Government and music philanthropists should fund the music programme properly by providing adequate facilities and equipment needed for the study. Besides, lecturers should critically review their methods of teaching applied music by fostering a growth mindset and by giving great considerations to instructional drills, individualized coaching and group strategies etc.

Keywords: Gender, Attitudinal factors, Piano, North-Central Nigeria, Education

Introduction

Individualized piano performance studies are one of the integral aspects of applied music performance studies offered at the Colleges of Education programme in Nigeria. The study of piano involves skills, principles, knowledge and strategies which the practitioner needs to acquire. Key skills required for individualized piano performance studies are generally considered as the end products of music theories and compositions. To achieve this attitudinal approach matters a lot. However, most music graduates from Colleges of Education in Nigeria are deficient in this area coupled with the issue of gender, background, culture, religion, age, peer influence etc which appear to play some part on students' attitude to applied music performance studies (piano inclusive).

Piano is one of the universally accepted instruments in music Education based in terms of playing music, gaining skills of listening and reading, understanding music, forming musical knowledge (composition) and the basis to other musical endeavours by music trainers (Buchanan, 1964) in Umazdas (2015:9). Piano studies project a wide range of musical components essential for the development of a deep and responsive experience capable of controlling the general musical activities and growth of individual child and the society (Mbanugo, 2006). The success or failure of any student aspiring to excel as a professional music teacher (Music Educator) or a performer depends to a large extent on his/her attitudinal approach to applied music studies.

In recognizing this, Olusoji (2006: 62) emphasizes that "Applied music studies at the colleges of Education programme consists of vocal and instrumental studies which could be group or solo studies comprising indigenous and western

ensemble studies. According to him, these form the core courses to be taken by students as part the requirements for the award of Certificates. Li (2012:87) also noted that piano is considered to be one of the most popular pre-service school teaching instruments categorized as indispensable tool in the teaching and learning of music at all levels of music Education nowadays. However, this assertion does not seem to tarry with music education in Nigeria where most music students and teachers often cry of its inadequacy in virtually all schools in Nigeria. The goal of piano skills is to lay basic foundation for the acquisition of music knowledge and skills required for pre-school teaching activities (Sun, 2010b). Therefore, employing teachers with good knowledge of piano would definitely be of great interest to both students and the society whom they are to serve after their career training.

Egilmez and Engur (2017) studies on Students' Self-efficacy and motivation in piano revealed that male students can overcome stage fright more than female students. This implies that a good number of music students in Colleges of Education (especially in the two Federal Colleges under study), must aspire to understand the basic skills and competence in piano and other instruments to be able to function effectively as lack of this knowledge might result to stage fright and failure in their career. Furthermore, Hallam (1997) presented a broader view on the piano practice by stating that "effective practice is that which achieves the desired end-products in as short a time as possible without interfering negatively with the long term goals". Umuzdas (2015: 9) in a research study on Development of an Instrument to measure Students' Attitudes towards piano practice", pointed out 'Time', 'Significance', and 'Awareness' as key concepts in piano practice". According to him, it is not important how much time is spent on piano practice but how well that time is spent. This means that time efficiency is paramount and is determined by the interest/commitment a student gives to piano practice. On this note, Ozmentes (2013:32) emphasizes that teachers need to get students to adopt habits of serious practices to ensure performance effectiveness on the instrument (piano).

Consequently, students' attitude towards learning matters a lot if they are to achieve success in their respective field of endeavours Attitude as defined by Eagly and Chaiken (1998: 273) is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavor. Strauss and Corbin (1996: 180) opine that "an attitude is a process of individual consciousness which determines real or possible activity of the individual in the social world". It is the social action of the individual that reflects his attitudinal

enduring systems of positive or negative characteristics, emotional feelings, pro or active tendencies with respect to social objects. (Retrieved June 1, 2019).

At times, students' attitude to study can emanate from gender perspectives. Gender according to Gberevbie (2014: 165), "is not synonymous with female affairs alone in any society in that it refers to culturally based expectations of roles and behaviour of male and female". It varies from society to society or in professions and can be changed with time. Schilling (2011) cited in Wahyuningsih (2018) elaborates that gender does not simply refer to a biological or psychological sex. It is more to do with matters such as social and economic roles, relations, and conceptualizations of masculinity/femininity as well as sexual orientations and sexual identity. This implies that gender is used to exemplify the attributes that a society or culture constitute in terms of masculine or feminine and how they are expected to act in accordance with the societal rules and norms.

As every culture seem to have gender specifics in various life endeavours, the nature and extent of this differentiation has varied between cultures and within them; depending on other factors such as social class, politics, academics, occupational activities, trade and religious beliefs. It is very glaring in some aspects of musical programmes which are perceived as appropriate for male and females and parallel with the gender stereotype of particular instruments (Unger and Crawford, 1997).

Statement of the Problem

Music education should be continuously stressed with regard to how effective the programme address the practical needs of the classroom teachers and keep pace with the ever-changing societal needs. A reflection over the years revealed that several researchers including Mbanugo (2006), Ekpo (2008), Adedeji and Ajewole (2008), and Okonkwo (2013) have at one point or the other, commented on students' attitudes to music as a career. In Music Departments of Federal College of Education (FCE) such as Okene and Pankshin in the North-Central of Nigeria, it is quite disheartening to note that a lot of students offering music seem to lack interest and motivation towards Individualized Piano Performance studies (IPPS). This is often exhibited through truancy and absenteeism during practice and even in examinations. This conduct has posed serious problem to these Departments for a period of five (5) years (2012-2016).

Consequently, majority of the students often fall below average of 'C' and are found within the grade of 'D' and 'E' (usually referred to as "Let my people go") while those with 'F' for total failure, sometimes change discipline (Course of study) or withdraw entirely from the College. This poor academic performance coupled with gender factors in the choice of instruments have been of serious concern and might lead to a total collapse of the College music programme if it is not addressed. It is on this basis that this study is being carried out with the intention of proffering possible solutions to it.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study includes to:

- i. identify factors militating against Individualized piano performance studies in the two Federal Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria.
- ii. find out how the identified factors deter Music students' interest and motivation towards Individualized piano performance studies in the two Colleges under study.
- iii. find out strategies that could enhance the ability of the students in the learning of Individualized piano performance in the two Colleges of Education, and
- iv. compare male and female students' attitudinal profile towards Individualized piano performance studies in these two Federal Colleges of Education under study.

Research Questions

The following research questions were framed in line with the purpose of the study:

- i. What are the identified problems militating against Individualized piano performance studies in the two Federal Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent do the identified problems deter Music students' interest and motivation towards Individualized piano performance studies in the two Colleges of Education under study?
- iii. What are the learning strategies that could enhance students' abilities in the Individualized piano performance studies in these two Colleges of Education?

- iv. How do male and female Music students differ in their attitudinal opinions towards Individualized piano performance studies in the two Federal Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

Two research null hypotheses were made and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between male and female Music students in their attitude towards Individualized piano performance studies in the two Colleges.
2. There is no significant difference between Music students in the two Federal Colleges of Education as regards their attitude towards Individualized piano performance studies in the two Colleges.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study covered Federal College of Education, Okene in Kogi State and Federal College of Education, Pankshin in Plateau State respectively. These two Colleges are the only Federal College of Education currently offering music programme in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. A population sample of 148 out of 220 Music students in the two Federal Colleges were used for the study. The study also adopted both enumeration and simple random sampling techniques in obtaining a representative sample of the population for the study. At FCE Okene, enumeration of all the 74 Music students was employed due to their fewness in population size. At FCE Pankshin with a population of 146 students, simple random sampling was used to select 74 of the students drawn by odd number balloting method. This brought the total sample size to 148 Music students which represented 67.27% considered to be adequate and equal representation. The research adopted a questionnaire titled "Gender and Attitudinal Factors towards Individualized Piano Performance Studies" (GAFIPPS) constructed by the researcher, validated and used to collect pertinent data for the study. This consisted of 46 item questions drawn from the materials in the literature reviewed as well as the opinion responses of the Music students used for the study. The collected data were analyzed using frequency and descriptive statistics.

Results

The results of this study are presented in tables 1 to 6 as follows:

Research Question 1

What are the identified problems militating against Individualized piano performance studies in the Federal Colleges of Education in North-Central, Nigeria?

The data collected for answering this question were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, and chi-square test of goodness of fit, and the result is in table 4.1

Table 4.1 Problems identified as militating against Individualized piano performance studies (N=148).

Problems/Factors	Indicated (%)	Not indicated (%)	X ²	Rank
A Prior musical background	82.4	17.6	62.27 *	Sig
B Peer influence	64.9	35.1	13.08 *	Sig
C Access to Power	54.1	45.9	0.97	NS
D Instructional/Teaching Approach	73.0	27.0	31.24 *	Sig
E Financial Constraints (personal)	52.0	48.0	0.24	NS
F Time for practice	65.5	34.5	14.30 *	Sig
G Availability of Instruments (piano)	73.0	27.0	31.24 *	Sig
H Class size (large)	71.6	28.4	27.68 *	Sig
I Insufficient number piano teachers	64.9	35.1	13.08 *	Sig

Table 4. 1 above shows the list of the problems, the percentage of the students that identified each as factor militating against Individualized piano performance studies and the chi-square value (to determine the balance or otherwise of opinion) and the corresponding remarks. The table reveals that a larger and significant percentage of the students identified prior musical background (82.4%), ineffective teaching approach (73.0%), availability of instruments (piano) (73.0%), large class size (71.6%), time for practice (65.5%), peer influence (negative) (64.9%), and insufficient number of piano teachers (64.9%) in that order as the major factors militating against the effective Individualized piano performance studies in the two Federal Colleges of Education in North-Central Zone of Nigeria. The table however, shows that problems of students' personal financial constraints (52.0%) and access to power (54.1%) are minor problems in the teaching of Individualized piano performance studies. Thus, only two of the outlined problems are considered in the view of the students as minor.

Research Question 2

To what extent do the identified factors deter Music students' interest and motivation towards Individualized piano performance studies in the two Federal Colleges of Education under study?

To answer this question, the relevant data to this research question was analyzed using descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 4.2 as follows.

Table 4.2. Mean rating of the extent to which identified factors militate against Applied music performance studies (N=148).

Problems/Factors	\bar{X}	S	Interpretation
A Prior musical background	2.20	0.53	SE
B Peer influence (negative)	3.34	0.66	ME
C Access to Power	2.36	0.75	SE
D Instructional/Teaching Approach	3.57	0.56	GE
E Financial Constraints (personal)	3.17	0.75	ME
F Time for practice	2.46	0.64	ME
G Availability of Instruments (piano)	3.22	0.68	ME

H	Class size (large)	3.19	0.70	ME
I	Insufficient number of piano teachers	3.51	0.55	GE

Table 4. 2. Shows the computed mean, standard deviation and the interpretation of mean rating obtained from the respondents. The Table indicates that the problems of instructional and teaching approach (\bar{x} = 3.57) and insufficient number of piano teachers (\bar{x} = 3.51) affect music students in the study of Individualized piano performance studies to a great extent (GE). While, the factors of peer influence (\bar{x} = 3.34), financial constraints personal (\bar{x} = 3.17), time for practice and rehearsals (\bar{x} = 2.46) availability of instruments (piano) (\bar{x} = 3.22), and large class size (\bar{x} = 3.19) are indicated as affecting Musicstudents' study of Individualized piano performance studies to a moderate extent. The result also reveals that prior musical background (\bar{x} = 2.20) and access to power (\bar{x} = 2.36) affect students learning in this area to only a small (little) extent.

Research Question 3

What are the learning strategies that could enhance students' abilities in applied music performance studies in the two Federal Colleges of Education in the North Central Nigeria?

The results of the analysis of the pertinent data to the research question are presented in Table 4.3. as follows.

	Strategies of Learning	Indicate d (%)	Not indicated (%)	X ²	Ran k
A	Learning skills by observation	73.0	27.0	31.24*	4
B	Drills and practical engagements	79.7	20.3	52.32*	1
C	Imitation (copying)	72.3	27.7	29.43*	5
D	Group coaching/ learning	74.3	25.7	35.03*	3
E	Individualized coaching/ practicing	75.0	25.0	37.00*	2
F	Use of technology resources	60.8	39.2	6.92*	7
G	Use of variety of tasks	69.6	30.4	7.30*	6

**Significant at 0.05*

The result in table 4.3 reveals that a significant percentage of the respondents indicate that all the outlined learning strategies can enhance students' ability in Individualized piano performance studies. From the result, the students indicate that drills and practical engagements (79.7%), individualized coaching and practicing (75.0%), group coaching and learning (74.3%), acquisition of musical skills by observation (73.0%) in that order could be topmost effective learning strategies in enhancing their abilities towards piano studies in the two Federal colleges. Next to the above listed strategies are imitation or copying (72.3%), use of variety of tasks (69.6%), and use of technology resources (60.8%).

Research Question 4

How do male and female music students differ in their attitudes towards Individualized piano performance studies in the two Federal Colleges of Education in the North Central Zone under study?

The descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were employed to analyze the data collected for this question. The result is in Table 4.4 as follows.

Table 4. 4. Male and female music students' attitude towards Individualized piano performance studies (N=148).

Individualized /Gender	Piano N	\bar{X}	S	Interpretation
Male	80	24.55	6.11	Less Negative
Female	68	21.66	4.65	Negative

Table 4.4 indicates that even though male and female NCE students have a negative attitude towards playing piano, it is less so for male music students with a mean of 24.55 compared to a mean of 21.66 for female. For singing, female music students have a slightly positive attitude towards singing (\bar{X} = 27.57) than male music students with a mean of 23.83. This indicates that male music students are less unfavourable towards studying piano than female, while female music students are more favourable towards singing than their male counterparts.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between male and female music students in their attitude towards Individualized piano performance studies. This hypothesis was tested by analyzing the relevant data with t-test ($P \leq 0.05$).

The Table 4. 5. t-test analysis of the comparison of the attitude of male and female music students towards piano performance studies.

Individualized piano /Gender	N	\bar{X}	S	t-value	Sig. level	Conclusion
Male	80	24.55	6.11			
Female	68	21.66	4.65	3.188	0.002	Sig.

$P < 0.05$

The result in Table 4.5 shows that the obtained t-value of 3.188 is significant at the 0.002 level. Since this level of significance is less than the fixed 0.05 alpha level for the test, the null hypothesis was rejected and it was concluded that there is a significant difference between the mean attitude score of male students ($\bar{X} = 24.55$) and mean attitude score of female students ($\bar{X} = 21.66$). This therefore implies that the mean attitude score for male ($\bar{X} = 23.83$) and the mean attitude score for female ($\bar{X} = 27.57$) are significantly different from each other.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the music students of the two Federal Colleges of Education as regards their attitudinal disposition towards Individualized performance studies.

This hypothesis was tested by analyzing the data collected with t-test at the 0.05 alpha level. Table 4.6 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 4.6. t-test analysis of the comparison of the attitude of music students of the two Federal Colleges of Education towards Individualized piano performance.

Individualized Piano	N	\bar{X}	S	t-value	Sig.	Conclusion
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/College	level					
FCE, Okene	74	24.41	5.71			
FCE, Pankshin	74	22.04	5.39	2.590	0.011	Sig.

P < 0.05

Table 4.6 indicates that the obtained t-value of 2.590 is significant at the 0.011 level. Since this level of significance is less than the fixed alpha level of 0.05 for the test, it implies that mean scores of 24.41 and 22.04 for Federal College of Education, Okene and Federal College of Education, Pankshin respectively on their attitude towards piano playing are significantly different and this also indicates that the null hypothesis was rejected with the conclusion that there is a significant difference between the mean attitude score of music students of Federal College of Education, Okene and that of Federal College of Education, Pankshin mean attitude.

Discussion of the Results

The result in Table 4.1 reveals from the students' view, that lack of prior musical experience or exposure, ineffective teaching methods, unavailability of musical instruments (pianos) and large class size are the first set or group of major factors militating against the study of Individualized piano performance studies in the two Federal Colleges of Education studied. It also shows other critical factors which include inadequacy of time for practice, negative peer influence, and insufficient number of piano teachers / instructors. It equally shows that factors such as lack of access to power and students' personal financial constraints are not serious problems.

These results in table 4.1 agree largely with the findings of Mbanugo (2006), and Okonkwo (2013) on Individualized pianoperformance studies and Appraisal of performance Education in music Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria respectively, which revealed some of the problems of implementing applied music studies to include inadequate time for study and rehearsals, poor musical background, and inadequate voice and piano teachers. There is no doubt that these factors will hinder students learning of learning piano at the tertiary level.

The result in Table 4.2 taking the survey of the identified problems militating against the teaching of piano further shows that ineffective teaching methods and inadequate teachers of piano affect Individualized piano performance studies in the two Federal Colleges in this zone. The table also reveals that

negative peer influence, time available for practice, unavailability of musical instruments (panos), and large class size affect the teaching of piano to a moderate extent while lack of prior musical exposure and lack of access to power only affect the learning of piano to a little extent. The significance of this aspect of the survey is that it has not only identified the problems militating against Individualized piano performance studies but has gone ahead to show how serious these problems are in these Colleges.

In students' own opinion in Table 4.3, the most effective methods or strategies for enhancing students' learning of piano and singing are the use of drills and practical engagements, individualized coaching practice, group and collaborative coaching, learning through observation in that order. Others are using imitation (copying), by observation, use of variety of tasks (singing, listening and playing the instrument). All these are effective strategies music teacher needs to employ for piano studies. This finding has highlighted the order in which a good music teacher/lecturer should engage and prioritize them for students to learn optimally. All the methods are important for learning piano, even though according some people believe that music abilities are natural endowment just as one does not teach the blacksmith's son his father's trade or an instrumentalists' son how to play instrument for which his father is well known or respected in traditional training perspective (Udensi, 1999).

However, a well laid systematic pattern and an organized written down method is necessary in a formal institutional learning setting. Thus, observation, slow absorption and active participation are not enough to learn in a formal setting. For effective learning to take place certain conditions such as the teacher's methods, the learning environment, and materials/equipment must be in place for the learning objectives to be achieved (Udensi, 2015).

Table 4.4 shows that both male and female NCE music students have a predominantly unfavourable attitude towards piano. This result reveals that differences in stage fright for male and female as found by Egilmez and Engar (2017) may depend on the aspect of musical performance concerned. Besides, one is likely to exhibit stage fright in an activity which he/she is not positively disposed.

On the other hand, Table 4.4 shows that though both male and female music students express fairly negative attitude towards playing piano, it is more so for females. Female students are more likely to exhibit more stage fright that would affect their performance than their male counterparts.

Table 4.5 indicates there is a significant difference in the attitude of male and female music students towards the learning of piano. The attitude of female students is significantly more negative to the study of piano. It is commonly believed that male students are more favourably disposed to activities that involve manipulation or dexterity than their female counterparts. For example, Brittin (1991) found that male students tend to be more committed to playing piano. This position perhaps accounts for why the male students' attitude to piano learning is significantly more positive than those of the female. The role stage fright plays in piano playing. What is however certain is that negative attitude limits performance and inhibits learning.

This study shows in table 4.6 that there is significant difference between the students of the two Federal Colleges of Education in their attitude to Individualized piano performance studies. Students of Federal College of Education (FCE), Okene tend to be more positively disposed to piano than those of Federal College of Education (FCE), Pankshin. Though the two institutions implement the same curriculum (NCCE, 2012) designed by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), those differences in attitude towards piano may be due to among others, the differences in the piano teaching approach, learning environment, staffing, student's body motivation and religious background. It may also suggest the difference in emphasis with respect to piano practice. Perhaps, these attitudinal differences explain why gender differences in musical activity selection (Hanley, 1998; Green, 1997; Hallam and Creech, 2008).

Conclusion

The study has indicated most critically that the students' attitude towards Individualized piano performance studies are largely negative across gender (sex), level of study, institution and even though with only slight differences in the two institutions. This psychological make-up of the students in terms of attitude, motivation, interest, etc in practical classes is often neglected. Attitude is very important in learning. It affects the students in many ways and can shape their learning experience. If the attitude of the students to a programme is positive, it is expected that all other things being equal, the implementation of the programme would be successful. On the other hand, a negative attitude would yield very little or no success.

The implication of this general negative attitude of the students toward the study of piano is that this attitudinal conduct could be a major obstacle in effective implementation of applied music performance studies in Colleges of Education music programme. Music lecturers and instructors need to be sensitized in this very important psychological factor in learning and be ready to ameliorate their adverse effects on applied music performance studies generally.

Two major findings have shown that there is a significant difference in the attitude towards piano between male and female on the one hand, and between institutions of study on the other. However, efforts aimed at effecting attitudinal change in music students to Individualized piano performance studies should take this into cognizance.

Recommendations

1. Adequate learning environment should be provided for the teaching and learning of Individualized piano performance studies in these colleges.
2. Qualified pianists, facilities and equipment should be made available in these Colleges for the objective of the programme to be achieved.
3. Individualized piano performance studies should be properly funded if the set objectives of the programme are to be realized.
4. Music students should undergo compulsory Pre-NCE music programme where attitudinal issues should be properly addressed.
5. Music Departments should review their methodology of teaching individual students in line with their effectiveness and areas of deficiencies.
6. Negative attitudes towards Individualized piano performance studies can also be changed through teachers building good relationship with students, handling relatively a small class size in a ratio of 1:10 students, adjusting the environment to students' needs by fostering a growth mindset in piano studies, and by involving them in Students' Industrial Work Experience scheme (SIWES) programme that would expose them to the practical realities in piano studies.

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