

**EFFECTS OF CAPITALISM AND MASS CULTURE ON THE DIMINUTION OF  
AFRICAN MUSIC PRACTICE AMONG THE KENYAN YOUTH**

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**ABSTRACT**

*After independence, African countries, Kenya included, have since adopted a capitalistic lifestyle which is gradually eroding the African identity of communalism. Though capitalism has some considerable positives, its adoption as a sole replacement of the otherwise pre-colonial communal culture in Africa has brought along a mass culture whose negative effects continue to disintegrate and threaten cohesiveness and unity, the hallmarks of African society. The education system continues to play a big role in the promotion of capitalistic ideals while discreetly disavowing most African cultural practices concomitant with African music practice. This paper seeks to analyze the negative effects of capitalism and mass culture on the African youths. It also highlights the attributes of African music practice and the place of education in promoting and restoring abandoned cultural value systems. The method that has been adopted for this study is a mixed method approach. This study espouses that African music practice can be used as a tool for promoting and restoring cultural values through the school and the society. It is a call for introspection by elite Africans regarding their identity and value systems.*

**Keywords:** Capitalism, Communalism, Pre-colonial, Value system, African music practice, Introspection

**INTRODUCTION**

The force and influence of capitalism and modernity has engulfed every aspect of the contemporary African society systematically eroding communal practices attributed to African traditional societies. From social, to financial, to spiritual and to educational institutions, none has been spared by the influence of modernization. The education system of any society directly affects its value system and a society's value system is as good as its education. The effects of capitalism on education which shapes and trains the African youth has churned out African elites detached from their past. In this context, Mbiti (1992) explains that all decisions about education, including those about the curriculum, must be made within the context of a given society and

that the best curriculum is one which is conceived within a cultural context. He contends that “the cultural values and aspirations of that society determines not only what manner of man exists but also, to some extent, what manner of man is needed in the society” (p.91). This assumption by Mbiti (1992) only confirms the relationship between the needs of a society, its value system and the cultural disposition upon which sound curriculum should be based.

The Kenyan music curriculum has been, over time now, a superimposition of an alien model introduced by the colonial masters. Nketia (1974) notes: “...because indigenous music could not be used, the substitution of Western music was vigorously pursued... the music curriculum of Western-style education introduced by those churches emphasized Western hymns, school music, and art music. This pattern of education reached its peak when the tradition of preparing African students for British examinations in music was established” (p.15). This remains the basis of our music curriculum today especially at the university level where Kenyan universities recognize qualification from these British examinations as one of the bases of admission for a music program.

The adoption of a capitalist-oriented curriculum in Kenya and the systematic diminution of African music practice within our school system have occasioned the popularization of the pop music culture, consequently affecting the value system of the Kenyan population. Eroticism and nudity by the youth has been propagated among other avenues through pop music and pop culture, the banning of some pop songs and films by the Kenya Film Classification Board (BBC, August, 2019) and the public petition by Citizen Go Africa on the banning of the erotic 10 over 10 music programs by citizen Television are just a few examples of the moral decay promoted by the pop culture in Kenya.

### **Negative Effects of Capitalism, Mass and Pop Culture**

The definition of capitalism used in this paper is derived from the Macmillan Dictionary of Modern Economics which states that capitalism is a political, social and economic system in which property, including capital assets, is owned and controlled for the most part by private persons. Consequently, the social-economic and political activities which encompass most if not all activities of modern society are therefore controlled by few individuals. A new society is born characterized by a lifestyle that is tailored towards individuality in contrast to the African communal lifestyle which propagates collective ownership and responsibility. Scott (2006) further elaborates capitalism as a system of indirect governance for economic relationships, where all markets exist within institutional frameworks that are provided by political authorities, i.e. governments. This is an observation that had earlier been made by Weisbord (1936) that capitalists advance by their ability to network with the political, social and spiritual control systems of the society for their own benefit.

Ingule (2011) notes that the change or transformation from an agriculturally based subsistence (home) economy to a market economy has drastically altered and radically changed our lifestyles. Technology rules every facet of our lives from entertainment to trade. The adoption of a culture of capitalism and mechanization with profits-at-all-costs is the driving force. Capitalism has also brought about a mass culture that emphasizes industrialization of everything. Johannsson (1998) defines mass culture as “the rise of mass production, mass marketing and mass media which has produced a new society in which the overwhelming spirit is the industrialization of everything, including modern man himself, who is forced into an advocacy of

technical and mechanical manipulation and who in turn becomes sub-human, a mere cog in a gigantic operation” (p.47). Man becomes a tool of production for the capitalists.

Though mass culture has numerous advantages, some of the negative effects are the concern for this paper. The focus of mass culture has been, to a great extent, the mechanization of everything, including man himself; manipulation of production for the benefit of a few. Individuality crushed and originality forsaken. Uniformity and conformity has replaced creativity while economic viability is the measure of existence. “...mass culture is totally success-oriented and that success is the goddess of our society to such an extent that often the only proof of something’s validity and value accepted by modern man is soaring sales. One cannot argue with success at the cash register,” (Johannsson, 1998, p.48). While this may sound brusque, a closer look at the inequality statistics in Kenya and other African countries can only disinter the magnitude of capitalism in our society. Mutava and Wanjala (2017), note that the gap between the richest and the poorest has reached extreme levels in Kenya with less than 0.1% of the population, owning more wealth than the bottom 99.9% with the richest 10% earning 23 times more than the poorest 10% (p.iv). Adorno and Horkheimer confess that the unprecedented increase in the forces of production in modern times had an effect opposite from that anticipated by Marx. Rather than being an explosive force conducive to revolution, the expansion of technology had culminated in barbarism, mass deception, and instinctual repression (Andrae, 1979).

Capitalism has changed and affected every sphere of life of the contemporary elite African, bringing to birth a new society that is individualist, materialistic and inconsiderate. Capitalism and mass culture being companionable with narcissism among other effects is incompatible with

the African culture of communalism. Narcissism – the inordinate fascination with oneself; excessive self-love; the erotic gratification derived from admiration of one's own physical or mental attributes – has dominated the youth with the addiction to mass media bringing about a culture that is alienated from itself, from its values and its culture. The rise of suicidal cases, moral decay, social and economic inequality and the rise in crime are manifestations of the depth of engrained capitalism in Kenya. On the effects of modernism and mass culture, Marcuse (1991) affirms that advanced industrial society create[s]...false needs, which integrate...individuals into the existing system of production and consumption via mass media, advertising, industrial management and contemporary modes of thought and because the advanced industrial society has become 'one- dimensional,' that is, uncritical of itself, these false needs appear to be true needs, a conflation which has devastating ramifications for the development of the individuals within such a society.

As such, Skinner (2005) explains that, "individuals are subjected to the production and marketing of objects, fashions and lifestyles – all of which create in the general population a form of mass ideology". Consequently, society learns to view life through the lenses of material possessions. In addition, as Marcuse holds, "the people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split level home, [and] kitchen equipment" (Marcuse, 1991). This concept of mass ideology and narcissism is further elaborated by Zdanow (2011):

...the rise of narcissism as a socio-cultural condition was a direct consequence of the post-World War II, economic boom of the late 1940s and early 1950s, in which the surplus wealth of an increasingly secular, affluent and capitalist society created the ideal conditions for the growth of such self-absorption... thus, analyzed in relation to 'consumer culture,' 'celebrity culture' and 'new media,' narcissism has been referred to as "the fastest developing social disease of the

peoples of the West,” with instances of vanity, self-aggrandizement and self-promotion evident in all aspects of cultural interaction... “Seen to be at the root of everything from the ill-fated romance with violent revolution, to the enthralled mass consumption of state-of-the-art products, and [infatuation with] the ‘lifestyles of the rich and the famous’, arguably, the most recent manifestation of this growth of narcissism has been society’s use of, and reliance upon, new media technologies... Social media, in particular, has been criticized for actively fostering the growth of narcissism, by encouraging an extreme fixation on the self, an exaggerated sense of self-importance, hyperbolic egotism, and pronounced feelings of entitlement (p.3).

Modernization is the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, and industrial society (Kumar, 2006) and has now become the model of political, economic, educational and social spheres of modern African societies. This transformation gradually paved way for the capitalistic form of living with mass aura concretizing itself in every aspect of life. The concept of communal integration in African music and culture was progressively and purposefully eroded to pave way to the new way of life. Cavazza (2012) illustrates that the rise of mass society was a protracted affair that passed through various phases and was manifested through various interacting phenomena. The concrete way modernism formed in nineteenth and twentieth century Europe involved the marginalization of traditional ties and the advancement of the individual’s assertion of this active status. The affirmation of individualism over the community principle did, however, entail a need to reckon with society’s mass dimension. Cavazza further notes that one feature of mass society was the birth of political communities in which individuals, acknowledged as such, tended to be organized into groups. Such groups, often branded as irrational crowds, tended to develop political awareness and disseminate their views through the channels of mass culture and mass society. Political organizations thus contributed to forming mass society through a multi-faceted relationship: via the consumer, and via networks associated with the culture industry.

Just like any other new phenomenon, mass culture has both positive and negative effects on the community. It is these negative effects on the contemporary African society that this paper interrogates. As Apuke (2018) contends, the most significant problem that mass culture has brought is the internet addiction that is associated with loss of control of the user. Concretizing this view, Busari (2016) observes that this overuse goes beyond an average amount of time spent on technological gadgets and extends to the compulsive use of the internet to the extent that it is given priority over all other responsibilities which affect the time and attention in school work, domestic responsibilities at home and teenagers' interaction. Consequently, mass media addiction has affected the normalcy of the contemporary and modernized society, Kenya included. Indeed, social media addiction is associated with numerous health and physical problems such as somatization, depression (Błachnio et al., 2015), anxiety (Gunduz, 2007), paranoid ideation, aggression, interpersonal sensitivity and obsessive-compulsive specifications among others. Kalekhan et al. (2016) reiterated that excessive use of social websites and online games are negatively associated with conscientiousness, honesty/humility and agreeableness and positively associated with neuroticism, narcissism and hostility.

In no other time like today has the access to internet and social media been obtainable to all ages. Because of their dynamism, democratization of modern parenting, advancement of technology, the handiness and affordability of mass media gadgets, the modern youth is gullible to media addiction more than any other age group. Their stage of development and the search for identity does not make things easier for them either. Depression and anxiety are among the most emphasized psychological and physical health effect of social media addiction (Goel et al., 2013) and depression and anxiety symptoms may worsen as an outcome of addiction (Baer et al., 2012). Furthermore, Arora et al. (2015) commented that other symptoms and effect of logging on

to social networking sites for a long time, mostly before going to sleep are sleep deprived, weakness, tiredness, and these cause harm to teens physical and mental wellness (Apuke, 2018)

Block (2008) discovered fatigue, feelings of anger and social isolation as other consequences for constant social media use. Moreover, Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010) associated the high comorbidity of social media addiction with psychiatric disorders, especially affective disorders (including depression), anxiety disorders (generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder), and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The same survey concluded that several factors are predictive of problematic social media usage, including personality traits, parenting and familial factors, alcohol usage, and social anxiety (Apuke, 2018).

The effect of mass media addiction in Kenya has become a national concern. The youth have fallen prey to this wave of mass culture and the results are clear. Astsa (2017) also notes that, Adolescents today are adopting new digital technologies almost as quickly as they are being introduced. They consider different forms of technologies such as mobile phones, internet and social media to be an integral and essential part of their lives (Consumer Electronics Association, 2008). The effects of mass media addiction in Kenya continue to manifest in all spheres of life. This has affected the health, education and morality of the Kenyan youths. Suicide among the youth for example has reached alarming proportions. Chomba (2019) fears that the official figures in Kenya are only the tip of the iceberg citing a report from the Kenyan Ministry of Health that four people die from suicide every day. Dr. Chitayi Marabula, a medical doctor and mental health advocate says, "It is not surprising that suicide is the second leading cause of death among youths aged 15-25 years. In July 2015, a report by Kenyatta National Hospital showed over 100 cases of attempted suicide among the youth between 18 and 25 years (mostly campus

students) within a span of two months. He continues today that even young children below the age of 15 have reported cases of suicide throughout the country (Okumu, 2019).

This is a global catastrophe with Wekesah (2019) quoting statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO) that about 800,000 people die from suicide each year majority of them aged 15-29 years. In Kenya, WHO data estimates that 1,408 people commit suicide yearly, or simply put, four deaths daily. Okumu (2019) additionally notes that more than 50% of this number constitutes the youth who are in higher levels of education, colleges and universities. This translates to a global mortality rate of 16% or one death every 40 seconds. This makes the number of deaths by suicide worldwide higher than the total number of deaths from war and homicide combined. Wekesah (2019) observes that a good number of these suicides happen impulsively in moments of crisis where individuals suffer breakdowns in the ability to deal with life catastrophes, such as financial crises, relationship break-up or chronic pain and illness, conflict, disaster, violence, abuse, or loss and a sense of isolation. Negative use of social media and cyber-bullying (sending or posting harmful and hurtful messages, pictures and videos by one person or group of people) are newer and modern risk factors for suicide among younger people. Chomba says one of the contributing factors to the psychological problems that many people are experiencing is social change and contends that the "disintegration of traditional culture has contributed to the rise in suicide rates." He believes that economic development has led to the demise of traditional norms and customs and that, social and cultural expectations — especially of men — have changed. He concludes that the African proverb "I am because we are" is losing its importance in modern African societies. Megan Vaughan, professor of African History and Health at University College London, shares the view that social upheaval is a reason for the high suicide rates: "Life is changing fast — in Africa as well. Urbanization is increasing at a

rapid pace. People no longer live in village structures and family ties," (Chomba, 2019). Morality has not been spared either. In the commentary by BBC (August, 2019), the writer notes that in general, Kenya has a traditional and socially conservative culture, but this has been challenged in recent years by some in the younger generation. The public petition by Citizen Go Africa on the banning of the erotic 10 over 10 music programs by citizen Television and the banning of several Kenyan pop songs is just a tip of the iceberg on how mass media and pop music have been used as vehicles for moral decay among the youth. Astsa's (2017) showed high prevalence for sexting among high school adolescents in Nairobi standing at 65% daily sexting, 25% weekly sexting, 8% rare sexting and 2% reported to never sexting.

### **Negative Effects of Capitalism, Mass and Pop Culture on Music**

Johansson (1998), notes that characteristics of mass culture stem from technology and affect our culture in very specific ways, tending to crush the individual, the unusual and the excellent. Opting for standardization, mass culture had no place for fingerprinting and quoting Sociologist Earnest van den Haag, he gives a concise listing of mass culture characteristics:

- a. Mass culture emphasizes the spectator and the vicarious experience.
- b. Standardization is a result of trying to please an average of tastes.
- c. Mass culture shows apathy toward true learning and aims at pleasure, thrill and escape.
- d. The marketplace is the most important factor in mass culture.
- e. Popular approval is the main moral and aesthetic standard.
- f. Excessive communication between people tends to weaken the bond between people as the sphere of communication grows larger.
- g. Mass media replaces the arts.
- h. Mass culture creates an addiction for prefabricated experience and deprives individuals of autonomous growth and enrichment.

Individual artistry has no place in mass culture because pre-determination of what ought to be has already been set and commercialization of the arts has lowered artistic standards,

encouraging musical tastelessness and promoted artistic inertia. People involved in commercial enterprise are not aware that there is a vast difference between true art and the commercialized product. Such a distinction is not particularly important in mass culture, because the technician and the mass communicator push the artist into the background with electronic gimmickry, broad exposure and quick success (Johansson, 1998).

Onwuegbuna (2013) asserts that often treated as an enterprise, the commercial value of popular music is ensured at the point of production where decisions about ideology, structure, aesthetics, packaging and presentation are guided by the marketability of the finished product. According to Frith (2001), popular music is “not driven by any significant ambition except profit and commercial reward” and it is “provided from on high (by record companies, radio programmers and concert promoters) rather than being made from below. Pop is not a do-it-yourself music but is professionally produced and packaged”. The stakeholders, wielding the aces in the music industry, tend to access technology, explore its potentials to the fullest, so as to guide public culture and dominate the commercial gains from the musical performances. In this way they define, dictate and guide popular culture, using both the live stage and electronic media.

The properties and elements employed by producers and performers of popular music in presentation of the art include costumes, stage props, stagecraft, language, masking, lighting, animation, digital manipulations, make-up, shouting and subdued colors, sex appeal, drama clips, epic settings, impressionistic, expressionistic and cubic art forms, and a host of others. In the application and manipulation of these properties and elements to present the musical activity to the target audience, the producers, over time, succeed in making a strong and enduring psychological imprint on the consumers of their art. This accounts for why the marketing of new

audio releases are preceded by promotional performances on live stages and video clips before the audio CDs are sold in the markets. Note the following:

Whether on a live stage or an electronic stage, one observes that the emotions expressed by popular music performers are not always felt by the artistes; sometimes they are feigned to create a contingent, a utilitarian, or an aesthetic value. The simulated emotions are constructively packaged by the producers to disguise the commercial intent, thereby succeeding in presenting the art as necessary, useful, or entertaining in itself. This creative marriage of natural and theatrical emotions helps to give authenticity to popular musical performance. However, the artistic and scientific manipulation of matter, energy, space and time in popular music productions and presentations sometimes strain the tolerance of the audience, thereby creating a moral panic. Obscenities, nudity, misogyny, vulgarity, chauvinism, among others are some of the issues that have been in contention regarding popular music productions and performances (Onwuegbuna, 2013).

### **African Music Practice**

In contrast with the production of pop music, music performance is the essence of African music. Akuno (2016) defines African traditional music as “music whose idioms are culture specific and can be identified as belonging to any of the country’s communities, whose text of its songs is also in a local dialect, addressing issues of communal concern. It employs musical instruments that are culturally significant to the practicing community. African music performance is an event whose inherent attributes can be espoused but can never be attained theoretically. It is a phenomenon of content in real time, a concept unique to itself. It is a process that incarnates the composer’s ideas through the performer to the audience. Ferris (1995) perfectly describes performance as a lively art that designates its performance as a ‘live’ presentation of sounds and movements in concerts, orchestras, operas, gigs, shows, recitals and dances to an active participant who shares in both the responsibilities and the rewards of the achievement of a great performance.

Eisman (1968), notes that for music to become alive there must be a composer, a performer and a listener. Unlike painting and literature, which communicate directly, music needs a middleman—the performer—to translate the printed page into sound and to interpret the intentions of the composer. The composer in some instances can also be the performer and in this case, incarnating his own ideas into reality. Without the performer, the composer’s ideas remain abstract. An outstanding violin performer Isaac Stern made this statement concerning his profession: “There’s nothing like the thrill and joy of being before an audience; to feel the give and take when they are moved. I always feel sorry for people who have never known the joy of music making... One should convey the ecstasy and exaltation of using the instrument to make music rather than using music just to play the instrument. I’ll never have an ulcer because I enjoy living” (Eisman, 1968).

The place of music performance as a vehicle of communication and the inculcation of contextual values cannot be overemphasized. It should be the goal of any music program and the objective of every performance; meaning, music performance is functional, active and inclusive in whatever context. The contextualization of African music performance affords a perfect exemplification of performance objectives. Its essence, form and practical context is functional, relevant and inclusive, making it an indispensable tool of cultural interaction and education. Akuno (2016), notes that performances of African music take place at social events and that the choice of songs reflect the mood and meaning of the event. Regarding this set up of African music Nketia (1974) writes:

Where an audience is present, there is usually not a wide gulf or a clear-cut boundary between them and the performers, except where the nature of performance requires this. When the performers group themselves at one end of the arena, they are flanked on their left and right by the spectators in a horseshoe

formation, taking care to leave enough space for the dance. Where instrumentalists and chorus take their places at the opposite ends of the arena, the spectators may line up on their left and right, forming a square but leaving an open space between the two groups for dancing. When the performers arrange themselves in a circle, the spectators similarly form a circle around them. The actual details of the seating or standing arrangements for the performers themselves vary in different societies. Whatever the formation, the atmosphere in the performance arena is usually informal, and spectators are free to move about or leave at any time they wish (p.34 ).

He notes that in the varying setting of African music, focus is on music making as a social activity, one that emphasizes artistic as well as social, political and religious values. Music may be performed for the sheer fun of it, for the message that it communicates, or for the outlet it provides for social interactions or the sharing of community sentiments; it may be performed as a tribute to an individual, an offering to a deity, or a service to a potentate. The approach to music making that links it to institutional life ensures spontaneous participation and identification with the musical life of a community (Nketia, 1974). Akuno (2014) affirms that music is also a cultural expression. As a phenomenon that is part of communal or cultural activities, it is an event that expresses and carries forward the action in the activity. The cultural activity's meaning is partly embodied in the music that is part of it. To this end, its study implies the study of the associated activities. Music performance, being a personal interaction between the art, the artist and the audience is an active art; it is fluid and intangible yet alive and real.

This is and has been true until modernity decontextualized African music. Nesbitt (2001) espouses that what was originally a participatory music was suddenly called upon to adapt itself to the Western stage. In our African villages [ . . . ] dances are [ . . . ] executed in the middle of a ring of spectators who also take part almost as much as the dancers and musicians. "On the stage new conditions have to be created by means of different devices in order, on the one hand, to retain the freshness and reality of the dance and, on the other, to destroy the monotony which is

quick to arise due to the nonactive participation of the audience. The contextualized rendition of African music has been eroded by the adaptation of a capitalized Western culture and modernity...the process of rationalization, the traditional circle of spectator-participants, a visual representation of cyclical, natural time, was broken into the teleological straight line of musicians spread out across a stage before the gaze of Western spectators. Rhythms and dances that traditionally would be performed in highly specific contexts and at times (baptism, marriage, initiation, etc.), were extracted from that milieu and choreographers brought them together in new, discrete combinations” (p.178-179). Although contextualized performances of African music still take place during traditional ceremonies and functions like the initiation ceremonies of the Nandi, Maasai and the Bukusu communities, the threat by modernism to these spotted activities is a force beyond measure.

This rationalization with regard to Mande music is a replica of what happens in Kenya through the Kenya National Music festivals, and the array of assorted so-called cultural groups spotted around the country performing Kenya traditional music for national occasions, tourists and other detached contexts. These performances have been decontextualized from their original settings to a more commercial setup that emphasizes a passive audience and a ‘forced’ performer whose participation is motivated by many aspects other than cultural signification. Our only hope is the revitalization of the education sector by inculcating a value system that is culturally sensitive and inclusive.

## **EDUCATION AND MASS CULTURE**

Education is requisite for everyone because of its importance in the overall development of any nation and its people (Zinkur, n.d). Learning being a life-long undertaking can be structured

either formally or informally. In both instances, it is a calling to all humanity and a process notwithstanding status and age. According to Peters (1979), “learning is the comprehensive activity in which we come to know ourselves and the world around us. It is a paradoxical activity; it is doing and submitting at the same time. Its achievements range from merely being aware, to what may be called understanding and being able to explain”. The concept that Peter calls, “*knowing ourselves and the world around us*”, is a cultural context while the paradoxical activity is a duality that is cognitive and at the same time practical - aspects inherent in African musical practice.

Ingule (2011) confesses that when we study human growth and development from childhood to adulthood, we note that human development is influenced by some internal and external factors and a combination of both. Despite the fact that the society and the school can do little to change the hereditary factors of learners, its impact and influence on maturation and the external factors of the general environment and specific leaning can be immense. Peters (1979) contends that in each of us, it begins at birth; it takes place not in some ideal abstract world, but in the local world we inhabit for the individual it terminates only in death, for a civilization it ends in the collapse of the characteristic manner of life, and for the race it is, in principle, interminable. Ingule (2011) asserts that both *nature* and *nurture* are essential in development and that the interaction between them is the crucial influence on any particular individual. He views development as the product of the interaction of the organism with its environment. The implication of this principle is that human development is a process which results from the interaction of an individual and his environment. In this case, the hereditary forces inherent in the genetic constitution of the individual coupled with the environmental factors influence the development of an individual.

From the above assertions, education can only take place in a cultural context for it to be meaningful. The environment enhances or acts as the basis for which hereditary traits are modified in time to fit in the cultural environment. As Mbiti (1992) contends, every human society has various types of needs which must be fulfilled in order for that society to function adequately. In as much as the school is a social agency for inducting the youth of that society into the life patterns of the group and for the renewal and perpetuation of its cultural values, the curriculum must reflect, in all aspects, the social-economic values and ideals which that society cherishes and upholds as vital to its prosperity. Below are the three fundamental roles of the curriculum of any school:

- (a) *The school curriculum must seek to preserve and transmit the cultural heritage of its society* – this means, in effect, that whatever is taught in the school should be based on clarification and determination of what, in the past, was important in order to ascertain what is needful in the present. Such values include inherited African views of man and society, the dignity of man and the moral law.
- (b) *The curriculum should serve as an instrument of change* – No society or nation can long remain ignorant and free. Society is always changing as its peoples' aspirations and needs increase. Thus, a school curriculum must as far as possible serve as a tool for directing various forces of change to desired goals. The curriculum must be designed to make the individual child a creative person so that he can, in turn, help in the renewal of his society in the light of new social and economic demands". One basic role of education in society should be to inculcate those basic habits and skills which can enable the individual to control his surroundings rather than merely submit to them.
- (c) *The school curriculum must seek to develop the individual pupil's potential abilities to their maximum* – The maximum development of a child's individual potential is the paramount aim in any school curriculum.

These three pillars of a school curriculum require a wholesome approach with societal support as exhibited in the African traditional society. Attributes of care, inclusivity, values and togetherness espoused in the Ubuntu philosophy are crucial aspects that can restore and implant a value system in the education system. Ingule (2011) rightly observes that a human infant cannot survive without the support of the community. The child rearing practices, the socialization

process and the conception of personality have been drawn from the parents' social background...the African child is born into the extended family of parents and relatives who have to bring it up and help it grow. As the infant grows and interacts with the relatives, it learns who is in the community and how far he should socialize with the members of the community. The experiences that the child is exposed to within the context of the extended family enables the child to develop confidence in itself and to venture out competently into the future. Through music and different cultural ceremonies, children are indoctrinated and conditioned to assimilate and appreciate their culture.

In reality, a capitalistic lifestyle has separated the children and the youth from their cultural inheritance and engrained an individualistic perspective on how they look and deal with life. Cultural activities that were intertwined with music are no longer practiced by the masses and have come to be labeled as retrogressive and backward. The role of the extended family and community that were custodians of traditional activities and value systems have been relegated to the uneducated and primitive in the rural areas. This changing lifestyle has affected immensely the traditional ways of even bringing up children including their education, with one of the most obvious changes being the dying out of the extended family and its replacement by the Western-style nuclear family. "The introduction of the Western culture into African societies has ushered in a process of change in respect to indigenous cultural values and practices within the African continent. One might view the process along a continuum, at one end of the continuum are those schooled African elites who have embraced western cultural values in their entirety while at the other end are those who still practice the traditional culture in its entirety. In between the two extremes are Africans who have adopted some western cultural values while retaining much of their own traditional values" (Ingule, 2011, p.30).

Akuno (2013/2016) contends that indigenous knowledge is part of a system that defines a form of existence. Its expressions, including the performing arts, are an avenue for education. Their content, context and processes confirm and lead to the realization of goals and objectives that define the worldview of their practitioners, experiencing them is a process of education” (p.52). Quoting Kodaly, Bartok and Kabalevsky she asserts that music education, like all art, is not merely an entertainment, or an extra of life that can be taken or ignored at will, but an important part of the life of every individual (Akuno, 2016).

## **CONCLUSION**

The adoption of capitalism and the propagation of mass culture have created an African society that is fighting for cohesion and direction. With the overwhelming effects of modernity and mass culture, the elite African has no choice but to revamp and overhaul his lifestyle by inculcating an integrated value system that is culturally sound and modern at the same time. This hybrid should be a result of critical analysis and introspection that will yield a contextualized identity that is relevant and functional.

The use of African music as an agent of culture propagation in our school system and the society at large is a valuable tool in the process of finding the African self. African musical attributes of inclusivity, artistry, relevance, respect, social control and communication can be exploited for the restoration the eroded value system among the youth. African music can also be used adhesively to cement these value systems within the context of modernity.

The education system being a primary agent of change should be enriched with culturally sound fundamentals that will add value and contextualize it. The curriculum should promote a value

system that works for the African youth and at the same time, coherent with positive innovative trends of modernity without berating the African ideal.

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