



Structural and Pedagogical Challenges of Violin Education in Selected Secondary Schools in Lagos State

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Abstract

This study examines the structural and pedagogical barriers affecting effective violin instruction in junior secondary schools in Ikorodu Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. Although music is included in the national curriculum, orchestral string instruments remain largely absent, limiting students' practical learning opportunities. Guided by Constructivist Theory, the study employed a quantitative design to identify challenges hindering violin teaching and learning. A stratified random sample of 100 music students and 20 music teachers participated. Data were collected through a validated four-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings showed that inadequate access to violins, a shortage of qualified instructors, limited institutional support, insufficient practice time, and poor maintenance of available instruments were the most significant obstacles. These structural deficiencies restrict learners' active engagement, collaboration, and meaningful knowledge construction, consistent with constructivist principles. The study recommends targeted policy action, improved provision of instructional resources, specialised teacher training, and stronger community involvement to enhance violin education. Overall, the research provides empirical insight into systemic barriers affecting violin pedagogy and underscores the need for reforms that support sustainable, constructivist-aligned music learning environments in Nigerian junior secondary schools.

Keywords: Lagos State, Pedagogical Challenges, Secondary Schools, Violin Education



Introduction

Students at the junior secondary school level, like all learners, deserve access to quality education. At this stage of development, they possess the capacity to acquire both the creative and technical competencies necessary for playing the violin (Piaget, 1972; Hallam, 2006). The violin is a member of the string family, the largest group of musical instruments, and typically consists of four strings (Campbell, 2004). Sound is produced either by drawing a bow across the strings or by plucking them with the fingers. Various types of violins exist, including treble, soprano, alto, and bass; however, the bass violin, closely related to the double bass is seldom taught in schools due to its large size (Galamian, 1999). As a result, instructional focus is usually placed on the treble violin and occasionally the soprano violin. In Nigeria, the violin forms part of music education from the primary level through junior secondary school, where it serves as an important tool for introducing students to musical concepts and performance (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

At the secondary level, learning the violin contributes meaningfully to students' academic growth, complementing subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, and the Sciences (Hallam, 2010). Violin performance incorporates logical thinking, coordination, and creativity, positioning it as both an artistic and scientific discipline. It also provides opportunities for composition and improvisation, enabling students to express and interpret ideas across different areas of learning. Historically, the violin has played a central role in classical music and has significantly influenced the development of musical notation and performance practices (Stowell, 2001). Its expressive depth, technical flexibility, and ornamental richness make it an appealing and versatile instrument for learners. Outside the classroom, the violin functions as both a solo and ensemble instrument in diverse settings, including religious services, orchestral concerts, traditional Nigerian music, highlife, and jazz (Nketia, 1974). Its relevance spans informal and formal environments, from community gatherings to prestigious events held in places such as palaces and government institutions. Achieving proficiency on the violin requires commitment, discipline, and perseverance, qualities that contribute to the overall personal development of students (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993).

Music education itself is an essential aspect of a balanced curriculum, fostering intellectual, emotional, and social development (Elliott, 1995). In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education includes music within the Cultural and Creative Arts curriculum at the junior secondary level (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Nevertheless, the practical implementation of music education, particularly in relation to Western classical instruments like the violin remains inadequate in many schools (Okafor, 2005).

As a key orchestral instrument, the violin requires a high degree of technical skill and expressive control. Learning to play it helps develop focus, discipline, and fine motor coordination (Suzuki, 1983). Despite these advantages, violin instruction is often insufficiently supported in Nigerian junior secondary schools due to a range of structural, institutional, and cultural constraints (Omibiyi-Obidike, 2001).



In Ikorodu Local Government Area of Lagos State, a rapidly expanding region with diverse socio-economic conditions, this situation reflects wider national challenges. Many schools lack adequate access to functional musical instruments, especially violins. Additionally, there is a notable shortage of trained music teachers with expertise in violin instruction. Other issues include limited funding, overcrowded classrooms, low levels of parental support, and the perception that classical music is less relevant in contemporary Nigerian society (Adeogun, 2006).

This study aims to investigate the specific difficulties faced by students learning the violin in selected junior secondary schools in Ikorodu. Although music is part of the school curriculum, the practical study of the violin remains limited and underdeveloped. Students who express interest in the instrument frequently encounter obstacles that impede their learning progress.

Key challenges identified include the scarcity of violins and instructional resources, the absence of qualified violin instructors, and weak institutional support for music education. In many cases, schools are unable to provide suitable learning environments, thereby reducing the effectiveness of teaching. Additionally, societal attitudes that place less emphasis on classical music further discourage both learners and institutions from investing in violin education (Okafor, 2005).

Consequently, many students find it difficult to attain even basic proficiency, which can lead to frustration, loss of interest, and eventual withdrawal from music studies altogether. This situation not only affects students' individual growth but also hinders the development of a vibrant and diverse musical culture in Nigeria.

In response, this study seeks to examine the challenges associated with violin education in junior secondary schools in Ikorodu Local Government Area, with the aim of identifying their root causes and suggesting practical strategies to enhance the teaching and learning of the violin within the Nigerian educational system.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Constructivist Theory, principally developed by Jean Piaget (1972) and Lev Vygotsky (1978), which posits that learners actively construct knowledge through experience, reflection, and social interaction rather than passively receiving information. Piaget (1972) argued that learners develop cognitive structures by interacting with their environment, while Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that learning is socially mediated and occurs most effectively through interaction with more knowledgeable others within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Through guided instruction, dialogue, and collaboration, learners gradually become independent as instructional support, or scaffolding, is systematically reduced.



Constructivist principles are particularly relevant to music education because musical knowledge and performance skills are acquired through active participation, repeated practice, guided feedback, and collaborative learning rather than through theoretical instruction alone. Contemporary music education scholars have further argued that constructivist learning environments encourage creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and reflective practice by engaging learners in authentic musical experiences (Bautista, Tan, Ponnusamy, & Yau, 2021; Burnard, 2012). In violin education, students develop technical proficiency through experiential learning, demonstration, imitation, continuous practice, peer interaction, ensemble performance, and constructive feedback from experienced instructors. These learning experiences enable students to progressively refine both their cognitive understanding of music and their psychomotor performance skills.

The theory provides an appropriate analytical lens for examining the challenges affecting violin instruction in junior secondary schools in Ikorodu Local Government Area of Lagos State. Effective constructivist learning depends on the availability of adequate instructional resources, qualified teachers, supportive learning environments, and sufficient opportunities for guided practice. However, structural and pedagogical challenges identified in this study—including inadequate availability of violins, shortage of qualified violin instructors, overcrowded classrooms, poor maintenance of instruments, limited practice time, and insufficient institutional support—significantly disrupt these essential constructivist processes. For example, the shortage of trained teachers limits effective scaffolding and individualized guidance, while inadequate instructional resources and overcrowded classrooms reduce opportunities for experiential learning, collaborative practice, and meaningful teacher-student interaction within learners' Zone of Proximal Development. Consequently, students are unable to engage fully in the active construction of musical knowledge and technical competence required for successful violin performance.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design using a quantitative approach to examine the structural and pedagogical challenges affecting violin education in selected junior secondary schools in Ikorodu Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The study population comprised junior secondary school music students and music teachers in schools offering music as part of the Cultural and Creative Arts curriculum. A total of 120 respondents, consisting of 100 music students and 20 music teachers, participated in the study. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select participants, students and teachers, ensuring adequate representation of both groups

Historical Context of Violin Education in Nigeria

Violin education has had a chequered history in Nigeria. When the missionaries arrived in Nigeria, they brought with them the violin. After the establishment of a Western-style education system in Nigeria, a few Roman Catholic schools began teaching Western musical instruments (including the violin), while



the other religious groups fast adopted the practice. Early music students and educators were mostly catechists who taught basic skills on the violin to pupils and choir members. This passed for formal education on the violin at the time. Other schools, especially Anglican cathedrals, which were associated with the Church Missionary Society in Lagos, Benin, and Calabar, also had this educational pattern with some deviations regarding the instructor's relationship with the schools. With the colonial government's introduction of Western music into the school system, more schools started to focus on the violin.

Several foreign-trained Nigerians returned home during this period to re-establish violin foundations across the country. A few state governments, including Lagos and Delta, have over the years included music education in their cultural heritage initiatives. With this trend, however, only little success appears to have been attained, as the music curricula adopted by the schools follow Western models, which become greater impediments to teaching exercises and lessons. Among other things, there is a general neglect of indigenous instruments and teaching methods by music educators (Stetler, 1950). As violin performances gained ground, it began to receive local and international media coverage. This caught the attention of the Christian Association of Nigeria. Upon seeing this, the government began to involve itself in the annual violin festivals.

The growing success of the violin prompted more denominations to embrace violin education. The resulting interest among parents sparked a significant demand for tutors who found it increasingly difficult to meet. Consequently, non-professionals and charlatans began offering tuition, preying on students' ignorance about criteria for choosing a quality educator. To further these attempts, a demand for locally made violins increased, yet the manufacturers could not meet the rising demand. Similarly, the few string shops in Lagos could not provide enough violins and accessories. As a result, many students' requests for violins could not be granted because of the scarcity. Other students waited years to acquire violins. Overall, this paper undertakes an investigation into the problem, historical context, and suggestions of a pilot study of instrument construction as it relates to recruitment and retention in the public school violin program.

The Importance of Music Education

The first formal establishment of music education in Nigeria was in 1854 when Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman introduced it with the establishment of the first choir and school by the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Badagry, near Lagos. The periodic training that Choir Masters received in concert and singing techniques mutually complemented the choir school. Churches became the only institutions of music education in Nigeria until 1924, when formal music instruction began at CMS Grammar School, Lagos. The importance of a music school in Lagos led to the establishment of the Ebute-Metta School of Music with the sole appraisal of examiners from the United Kingdom. By 1940, Nigerian musicians and composers were producing music for students to perform. The fledgling musicologists began documenting the music of the various ethnic groups, while in 1946, a national music festival was organized on the



recommendation of a music education committee of the central government. Other events followed closely, including the founding of the Music Society of Nigeria (MUSON), the National Association of Music Educators (NAME), and the establishment of the Nigerian music laboratory (MOLAB) (Nnamani, 2017).

Every individual in society must learn music education for many reasons. The impact and growth of the Nigerian musical environment, on the one hand, touches everyone. This is the effect of music on human beings, which everyone cannot escape. Music and mental growth form an inseparable association. Music clears the mind, clarifies thoughts, and brings forward ideas. Music affects the mind's domain of knowledge in different ways, such as mnemonically, representationally, and affectively. Music education develops people's ability to think conceptually and solve problems. Listening attentively to music can elevate the entire iron of sensory, aesthetic, and motivational experiences.

Challenges in Music Education

Music education continues to face numerous challenges, many of which hinder its effective implementation and continue to evolve (Okafor, 2005; Nnamani, 2017). While some of these issues may vary in relevance, the problem of inadequate or outdated teaching facilities remains widespread and is not limited to any region, as many schools across Nigeria experience similar difficulties (Nnamani, 2017). In the Ojo Local Government Area, for instance, most public schools lack appropriate music-teaching resources, making effective instruction difficult to achieve. A typical example is Ojo Secondary School, Ilaje, where available facilities are either insufficient or poorly maintained.

In many cases, the few existing facilities are obsolete, non-functional, or difficult to operate, thereby depriving students of meaningful learning opportunities (Adeogun, 2006). Even when such equipment is available, efforts to repair or replace missing components are often inadequate. Both teachers and students sometimes lack the necessary skills to operate these facilities effectively, and there have been instances where equipment returned from servicing remains unusable. The availability of functional teaching resources plays a critical role in enhancing instructional delivery, while their absence significantly undermines effective classroom practice (Elliott, 1995). Just as a damaged tool cannot perform efficiently, teaching standards decline when there are limited or non-functional instruments. Therefore, the proper provision and utilization of musical instruments are essential for effective teaching and learning.

The responsibility for managing music education often lies with schools and religious institutions, particularly churches, which sometimes collaborate in providing musical training (Omibiyi–Obidike, 2001). In addition, several private music training centres operate within and around Ojo, many of which focus primarily on instrumental instruction. However, some of these centres charge high fees despite offering substandard or unqualified teaching (Okafor, 2005). Furthermore, many providers prioritize superficial



outcomes, such as preparing students for examinations or performance-based assessments, rather than building a solid theoretical and practical foundation in music.

As a result, individuals interested in formal music training often face significant barriers. High costs make lessons inaccessible to many, and even where opportunities exist, there may be a shortage of qualified instructors or insufficient time allocated for proper teaching (Adeogun, 2006). The situation is further complicated for learners who lack prior exposure or natural aptitude for music, as they may struggle to fully engage with or understand musical concepts without adequate guidance and support (Hallam, 2006).

Overall, these challenges collectively impede the development of effective music education, limiting students' ability to acquire essential musical skills and reducing the overall quality of music learning outcomes.

Improving Resource Allocation

Music is a language of beauty, peace, and happiness, the sound of which is recognized comfortably in every corner of the globe. Music, like the other intangible educational domains, is taught and studied in schools as a subject on par with Science and Arts. Each state in Nigeria has at least one musical school where different instruments are taught, including the Violin. The Violin, with a good orchestral sound, is one of the string instruments commonly used throughout the world. It is taught and studied as a secondary school instrument in some schools in Nigeria, specifically in Lagos State, hence the motivation for the study.

However, the teaching and study of the Violin in Junior Secondary schools still face lots of problems and challenges. Those who teach these instruments in schools graduate from schools and faculties of music as Educators/performers. Generally, they are musicians who have extensive knowledge of music theory and history. The problem, then, is that the school graduates who are employed as violin experts to teach these schools usually know it is possible to play their instrument but lack adequate theoretical knowledge of it. Hence, it becomes merely the performance of music with little or no regard to the explanation of symbols on scores (Lee Bell, 1970). The school violin curriculum as outlined by the Lagos State Government Ministry of Education, though not in detail, is also intended to broaden the students' knowledge of music and explore the instrument traditionally.

In most Orchestral countries like Russia and China, from where the old violin schools of thought were borrowed, students are taught their instruments from the age of three. By the end of their secondary education, graduates are well trained and ready to advance their careers by either furthering their education in music schools or embarking on orchestra performances (Oruonye, 2014). Sadly, it is not so in Lagos State Junior Secondary schools. It is a term for the study of the violin, and even practically, classes



are either held in large groups of up to fifty students at once or, sadder still, in only ten minutes once a week per student!

If class structures, flow charts, rehearsals, and recitals are followed, it is unlikely that teachers will be able to get students to play properly within such a short period, let alone adequately explain the instrument and its traditions. The problem is further compounded by the fact that the instrument is not at all common throughout the nation. Availability, cost, and class limitations limit the purchase of student violins. Consequently, only two or three students per school own or have personal access to a violin, leading to the impossibility of rehearsals in or out of class. Hence, it is difficult and often impossible for the students to even attempt the written assignment, let alone record a successful performance to show possible dedication and talents.

The in-depth comprehension of why such a useful subject with wonderful music programming continues to lose its appeal in the educational curriculum is complex. As such, a theory similar to that of "theory of constraints" can be applied. On the positive side, it is crucial to know that it is relatively easy to establish what problems teachers of the Violin encounter in schools if asked. On the reverse side, a rather drawn-out process of trials, tests, attempts, and sometimes variables must be analysed to better understand the underlying cause of the problems.

Student Engagement with the Violin

Research in music education has generated extensive findings across areas such as listening skills, participation in ensembles like bands and orchestras, and the learning of various instruments, including percussion, keyboard, string, wind instruments, as well as vocal training. Stetler (1950) notes that much of this body of research focuses on students' attitudes toward musical activities and the ways in which such experiences contribute to the holistic development of a well-rounded personality. Similarly, Elliott (1995) emphasizes that music education is not merely performance-based but also a reflective and experiential process that develops critical thinking and artistic understanding in learners.

Music education, however, extends beyond the development of listening abilities or technical proficiency on instruments. In relation to violin students, interviews have been conducted to examine how engagement with the instrument influences learners' interest in music and their continued pursuit of violin studies. It is argued that factors such as the selection, design, and availability of violins in public schools may significantly affect students' motivation and learning progress (Hallam, 2006).

At the centre of the educational process are the learners themselves, whose interests ultimately shape the effectiveness of instruction. Students' engagement is therefore considered fundamental, as it influences every aspect of the teaching and learning experience. Understanding what motivates learners and how these influences operate requires a careful examination of their attitudes and interests.



Interest is a complex and multifaceted concept that may be described as a feeling that stimulates curiosity, intensifies thinking, and encourages both mental and physical engagement. It is widely regarded as a key determinant of effective learning, as it can be developed, sustained, or diminished depending on environmental and instructional conditions. Interest is closely linked with attention; while attention may direct focus, interest often generates and sustains that focus. In most cases, where attention is observed, interest is present, and where interest exists, attention is likely to follow.

A wide range of factors influence students in educational settings. These include institutional factors such as curriculum content, teaching resources, instructional methods, and assessment systems; societal factors such as cultural norms, belief systems, educational expectations, and political structures; as well as economic factors such as income levels, poverty, and access to resources. In addition, individual factors such as emotions, personal interests, maturity, motivation, temperament, and prior experiences also play a significant role in shaping learner behaviour and achievement (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Beyond the learner, the teacher represents another crucial element in the educational environment. Teachers also exert multidimensional influence through their training, experience, instructional strategies, and professional competence, all of which significantly affect students' learning outcomes (Shulman, 1987).

Presentation of Music Students' Response Data

Table 1. *Distribution of Music Students' Responses on the Structural and Pedagogical Challenges of Violin Education*

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	%
1	There are enough violins for all students in my class.	9%	21%	47%	23%	100
2	I have enough practice time allocated for learning the violin.	7%	28%	50%	15%	100
3	The violins in my school are in good condition and usable.	12%	18%	60%	10%	100
4	Learning the violin is difficult for me because of a lack of instruments.	37%	33%	24%	6%	100
5	I feel my music teacher does not have enough time to focus on violin lessons.	22%	38%	30%	10%	100
6	The violin lessons in my school are too difficult for my level.	15%	25%	40%	20%	100
7	I do not receive enough encouragement from my parents to learn the violin.	10%	20%	43%	27%	100
8	I am interested in learning the violin because I want to pursue a music career.	32%	38%	20%	10%	100
9	I feel motivated to practice the violin outside of school hours.	12%	25%	40%	23%	100
10	The violin is my favorite instrument to play in music class.	35%	45%	15%	5%	100
11	I find it hard to focus on learning the violin due to other academic subjects.	30%	40%	22%	8%	100
12	The violin lessons are helpful for my overall musical development.	25%	50%	15%	10%	100
13	I would prefer to learn other musical instruments over the violin.	22%	23%	40%	15%	100
14	I often feel frustrated because I cannot play the violin as well as I would like to.	35%	40%	15%	10%	100
15	My classmates are supportive of my efforts to learn the violin.	26%	44%	19%	11%	100



A significant proportion of students indicated a shortage of violins (Item 1: 47% disagreed, 23 % strongly disagreed) and reported that many instruments are not in good condition (Item 3: 60 % disagreed). Consequently, learning the violin is difficult for many students due to lack of instruments (Item 4: 37% strongly agreed, 33% agreed), showing that resource limitations remain a major barrier. Students expressed concern over insufficient practice time (Item 2: 50% disagreed) and felt that teachers do not have enough time to focus on violin lessons (Item 5: 30% disagreed, 10 strongly disagreed). Some students also found lessons too difficult for their level (Item 6: 40% disagreed, 20% strongly disagreed), and many reported low motivations to practice outside school (Item 9: 40 %disagreed, 23% strongly disagreed), indicating that both instruction and independent practice are constrained. Responses showed limited parental encouragement (Item 7: 43% disagreed, 27% strongly disagreed), which could affect motivation. However, most students felt supported by classmates (Item 15: 44 %agreed, 26% strongly agreed), suggesting peer support is a positive influence in learning.

Despite challenges, students demonstrated strong interest in learning the violin, particularly for career purposes (Item 8: 38% agreed, 32% strongly agreed), and considered it their favorite instrument in class (Item 10: 45 % agreed, 35% strongly agreed). This shows that student engagement and personal motivation remain high.

In item 11 and 14, many students reported difficulty focusing on violin lessons due to other academic subjects (Item 11: 40% agreed, 30% strongly agreed) and felt frustrated about not being able to play as well as they would like (Item 14: 40% agreed, 35% strongly agreed), highlighting the emotional and cognitive challenges they face in balancing music with academics. Most students acknowledged that violin lessons contribute to their overall musical development (Item 12: 50% agreed, 25% strongly agreed) as seen in item 6. However, some expressed a preference for learning other instruments (Item 13: 40% disagreed, 15% strongly disagreed), indicating mixed perceptions of the violin's appeal.

Table 2. *Distribution of Music Teachers' Responses on the Structural and Pedagogical Challenges of Violin Education*

Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD	%
1. There are enough violins for all students.	2/10%	3/15%	10/50%	5/25%	100
2. The violins available are in good working condition.	1/5%	4/20%	10/50%	5/25%	100 %
3. Students have regular and adequate practice time.	3/15%	4/20%	9/45%	4/20%	100%
4. Students show high interest in learning the violin.	2/10%	5/25%	9/45%	4/20%	100%
5. Students receive support from parents for violin learning.	1/5%	3/15%	12/60%	4/20%	100%
6. There is enough time in the timetable for violin lessons.	2/10%	4/20%	10/50%	4/20%	100%
7. My school has a dedicated music room or studio.	3/15%	5/25%	8/40%	4/20%	100%
8. Violin lessons are adapted to students' skill levels.	2/10%	6/30%	9/45%	3/15%	100%
9. Students are able to take violins home for practice.	0/0%	2/10%	10/50%	8/40%	100%
10. Other academic subjects interfere with violin learning.	8/40%	7/35%	3/15%	2/10%	100%



Discussion

According to item 1, only 10% of teachers strongly agreed that there are enough violins for all students, while 50% agreed and 25% disagreed. This indicates a moderate availability of instruments, but with clear limitations in larger classes or schools with growing music programs. The insufficiency of instruments may negatively impact students' ability to practice and progress effectively. In item 2, regarding instrument quality, only 5% strongly agreed that the violins were in good working condition, 50% agreed, and 25% disagreed. This suggests that many instruments require maintenance or replacement, which could affect both the quality of lessons and student engagement.

In item 3, 45% of teachers agreed that students have regular and adequate practice time, though 20% strongly disagreed. This implies that while some students have sufficient practice opportunities, others may be limited due to scheduling constraints or competing demands in the school timetable. Item 4 showed that 45% agreed and 10% strongly agreed that students show high interest in learning the violin, while 20% strongly disagreed. This indicates generally positive student motivation, though interest levels vary across schools, likely influenced by resource availability and teaching conditions.

In item 5, most teachers (60% disagreed) noted that students receive inadequate support from parents, with only 5% strongly agreeing. This lack of parental involvement may limit reinforcement of practice at home and overall encouragement for music learning. 50% of teachers disagreed that there is enough time for violin lessons in the school timetable, while 10% strongly agreed in item 6. This demonstrates that time constraints are a major challenge, restricting consistent and effective learning. Only 15% strongly agreed that their school has a dedicated music room, while 40% disagreed in item 7. This suggests that proper facilities are not universally available, which may affect both teaching quality and student performance.

In item 8, 10% strongly agreed, and 30% agreed, while 45% disagreed. This indicates that violin instruction is not always tailored to students' abilities, which may hinder the development of beginners or advanced learners. A majority (50% disagreed and 40% strongly disagreed) indicated that students are generally unable to take violins home for practice in item 9. This lack of access restricts independent practice, slowing skill acquisition and limiting students' ability to reinforce lessons outside school hours. Teachers reported that other academic subjects significantly interfere with violin learning, with 40% strongly agreeing and 35% agreeing in item 10. This highlights the challenge of balancing music education with core academic priorities, often resulting in reduced practice time and inconsistent learning.

The findings reveal that the major barriers to effective violin education in the selected junior secondary schools are structural rather than motivational. Teachers consistently identified inadequate instructional resources, limited practice opportunities, insufficient institutional support, and curriculum constraints as the primary factors affecting students' learning. These findings suggest that although many



students demonstrate an interest in learning the violin, the educational environment does not adequately support the development of practical performance skills.

A prominent finding is the inadequate availability and poor condition of violins. Although some teachers reported that instruments were available, a substantial proportion indicated that schools lacked sufficient functional violins for all learners. This shortage inevitably restricts students' opportunities for regular hands-on practice, which is fundamental to instrumental learning. The finding supports previous studies that identified inadequate facilities and instructional resources as persistent challenges confronting music education in Nigerian secondary schools (Adeogun, 2006; Nnamani, 2017; Okafor, 2005). From a constructivist perspective, meaningful learning occurs through active engagement with learning materials (Piaget, 1972). Therefore, inadequate access to violins limits experiential learning and reduces students' opportunities to construct practical musical knowledge through repeated performance.

The findings also indicate that insufficient instructional time, limited practice opportunities, and the absence of dedicated music facilities significantly constrain effective violin instruction. Teachers reported that students rarely have enough time for practical lessons, while many schools lack specialised music rooms where rehearsals and demonstrations can be conducted effectively. These conditions are inconsistent with established principles of instrumental pedagogy, which emphasise sustained practice and continuous teacher feedback as essential for developing technical proficiency (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993; Galamian, 1999). Within Constructivist Theory, learning develops through guided practice and scaffolding provided by knowledgeable instructors (Vygotsky, 1978). Consequently, inadequate instructional time and poor learning environments weaken the scaffolded learning experiences required for progressive skill acquisition.

Another significant finding concerns the quality of instructional support. Teachers acknowledged that violin lessons are not always adapted to students' varying levels of ability, suggesting limitations in differentiated instruction. Effective violin teaching requires teachers to provide individualized guidance that matches learners' developmental stages and gradually extends their competence. The inability to differentiate instruction may therefore reduce learning effectiveness, particularly for beginners who require closer guidance. This finding aligns with Hallam (2006), who argues that successful instrumental learning depends on appropriate instructional strategies, regular feedback, and learner-centred teaching approaches. It also reflects Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, where learners achieve greater competence through appropriate scaffolding from more knowledgeable instructors.

The study further found that parental support for violin learning remains limited, while competing academic demands interfere considerably with students' music education. Teachers overwhelmingly reported that students receive little encouragement from parents and that other academic subjects frequently reduce the time available for violin practice. These findings suggest that music education continues to receive lower priority than core academic subjects, despite evidence demonstrating its



contribution to students' cognitive, social, and creative development (Hallam, 2010; Elliott, 1995). Limited parental involvement further reduces opportunities for practice outside school and weakens the collaborative support system that enhances students' motivation and persistence in learning. Despite these challenges, teachers generally recognised that many students remain interested in learning the violin. This finding is particularly important because it suggests that poor learning outcomes are not primarily attributable to a lack of student motivation but rather to systemic deficiencies within the educational environment. Students' sustained interest provides evidence that improving access to instruments, instructional resources, qualified teachers, and adequate practice opportunities could substantially enhance learning outcomes. This observation supports Constructivist Theory, which maintains that learners are more likely to develop meaningful knowledge when they participate actively in supportive and resource-rich learning environments (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that structural and pedagogical constraints operate simultaneously to limit effective violin education in the selected schools. The shortage of instruments, inadequate facilities, insufficient instructional time, lack of differentiated teaching, and weak parental and institutional support collectively undermine the active, collaborative, and experiential learning processes central to Constructivist Theory. Addressing these interconnected challenges therefore requires not only increased investment in instructional resources but also curriculum reforms, professional development for music teachers, and stronger institutional commitment to practical music education.

Conclusion

This study investigated the structural and pedagogical challenges affecting violin education in selected junior secondary schools in Ikorodu Local Government Area of Lagos State. The findings demonstrate that the major constraints to effective violin instruction are predominantly systemic rather than learner-related. Both students and teachers identified inadequate availability of violins, poor condition of existing instruments, insufficient instructional time, lack of dedicated music facilities, limited opportunities for independent practice, inadequate parental support, and the competing demands of other academic subjects as significant barriers to effective learning. Despite these challenges, students generally expressed strong interest in learning the violin and recognised its value for their musical development, indicating that low achievement is largely attributable to deficiencies in the learning environment rather than a lack of motivation.

These findings reinforce the Constructivist Theory underpinning the study, which emphasises that meaningful learning occurs through active engagement, guided practice, and supportive learning environments (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978). The absence of adequate instructional resources, qualified support, and sufficient opportunities for practice limits students' ability to develop the technical and expressive competencies required for successful violin performance. Consequently, improving violin education requires addressing both structural and pedagogical deficiencies simultaneously.



Based on these findings, the study recommends that government agencies, school administrators, and educational stakeholders increase investment in music education by providing sufficient violins, maintaining existing instruments, and establishing well-equipped music rooms to facilitate practical instruction. Schools should also allocate adequate time within the curriculum for practical violin lessons so that students can engage in sustained practice and receive continuous teacher feedback, which are essential for developing instrumental proficiency (Ericsson et al., 1993; Galamian, 1999).

Furthermore, education authorities should provide targeted professional development programmes that strengthen teachers' competence in violin pedagogy, learner-centered instruction, and differentiated teaching strategies. As emphasised by Tomlinson (2001), differentiated instruction enables teachers to accommodate learners' varying abilities and improve learning outcomes. Teachers should also employ formative assessment and continuous feedback to adapt instruction to students' individual developmental needs.

Given the limited parental support reported by both teachers and students, schools should strengthen home-school partnerships through parent education programmes, workshops, and regular communication that emphasise the educational value of music and the importance of supporting students' practice at home (Creech & Hallam, 2003). In addition, because the findings showed that most students are unable to take violins home for practice, schools should consider establishing supervised instrument loan schemes or take-home programmes with appropriate accountability measures. Such initiatives would provide learners with greater opportunities for independent practice and reinforce classroom instruction. Finally, school policies should promote a more balanced curriculum that recognises music education as an integral component of holistic student development rather than a peripheral subject. Providing equitable curricular attention to music, alongside adequate institutional support, will contribute to improved learning outcomes and greater student engagement (Savage, 2011).

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on music education in Nigeria by providing empirical evidence on the interconnected structural and pedagogical factors affecting violin education at the junior secondary school level. Its findings underscore the need for coordinated policy reforms, increased investment in instructional resources, and strengthened pedagogical practices to create supportive learning environments in which students can fully develop their musical potential. Addressing these challenges will not only improve violin pedagogy but also strengthen the quality of practical music education and foster a more vibrant musical culture within Nigerian secondary schools.



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