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Systemic Barriers to Effective Music Education in Ghana: A Mixed-Methods Case Study of Basic Schools in the Achiase District

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Abstract
This study investigates the systemic barriers to effective music education in Ghanaian basic schools, employing a mixed-methods case study design focused on the Achiase District. Despite the national curriculum mandating music as a core component of Creative Arts, a significant gap persists between policy intent and classroom practice. Data were collected from a sample of 12 teachers across three basic schools through surveys and semi-structured interviews, providing a dual perspective on institutional challenges and lived experiences. The findings reveal a convergence of critical impediments: a severe shortage of specialized music teachers, a profound inadequacy of teaching and learning resources, insufficient instructional time, and significant gaps in teacher subject knowledge exacerbated by a lack of professional development. These systemic deficiencies collectively demotivate educators and severely compromise program quality. A pivotal finding, however, is the persistent enthusiasm and active participation in musical activities among students, highlighting a stark contrast between institutional neglect and inherent student potential. In response, this study proposes a comprehensive reform framework, including the strategic allocation of resources, institutionalized continuous teacher training, the curricular restructuring of music as a standalone subject, and the establishment of dedicated music laboratories. These evidence-based recommendations aim to bridge the policy-practice gap and transform music education into an engaging and effective discipline within Ghana's basic education system, with implications for similar contexts internationally.

Keywords: *systemic barriers, curriculum implementation, music education Ghana, basic schools, Achiase District*

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I. Introduction

Music education is widely recognized as a vital component of holistic development, fostering unique cognitive, social, and emotional capacities that are difficult to cultivate through other disciplines (Reimer, 2004). Acknowledging this intrinsic value, the Ghanaian Ministry of Education has institutionalized the Creative Arts and Design (CAD) curriculum as a core element of its Standards-Based Curriculum. Developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), this curriculum positions Creative Arts, encompassing design, visual arts, music, and dance-drama as essential for cultural preservation and critical thinking. It specifically mandates engagement with indigenous music and encourages creative composition among learners (NaCCA, 2020).

However, a profound chasm exists between this robust policy framework and its execution in the classroom. Despite the official mandate, the systematic delivery of music education in Ghanaian basic schools remains largely ineffective. This failure is particularly detrimental given that early and consistent musical exposure is critical for both cognitive development and the internalization of cultural heritage (Otchere, 2015). When music is not taught, it effectively becomes a "null curriculum," systematically depriving students of its developmental benefits.

The evidence for this implementation gap is both empirical and observational. Anecdotal instances, such as the absence of completed music exercises in a student's Creative Arts workbook, point to a common pattern of neglect (Otchere, 2015). This is corroborated by research identifying key obstacles faced by teachers, including the perceived technical complexity of music, a fundamental lack of specialized training, and insufficient content knowledge (Atiemo, 2006). The problem is pervasive, with studies suggesting that the situation in many private schools is even more acute, often lacking any structured approach to music instruction (Demorest & Ní Chríodáin, 2017). These challenges are not isolated but are symptomatic of deeper, systemic issues, primarily a critical shortage of specialized music teachers, inadequate professional development, and a severe scarcity of teaching and learning resources (Demorest & Ní Chríodáin, 2017).

It is within this context of high curricular ambition and stark operational reality that the present study is situated. The consequences of this disconnect are significant, denying learners the very opportunities the curriculum is designed to provide. Therefore, this research aims to systematically investigate the specific barriers impeding effective music education in Ghanaian basic schools, using the Achiase District as a focused case study. By examining the current state of instruction, its impact on learners, and identifying both systemic obstacles and potential enablers, this study seeks to generate evidence-based insights that can inform policy and bridge the gap between intention and practice in Ghanaian music education.

II. Review of Related Literature

2.1 History of Music Education in Ghana

Formal education in Ghana, crucial for national development, was initiated during the colonial period by European merchants and missionaries, including the Danes, Dutch, and English (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). Within this educational framework, music education found its place. As Haynes (2010) notes, there is no known human culture without music, and wherever music exists, music learning occurs. In Ghana, formal music education was pioneered by Christian missionaries who used hymnody to attract converts and facilitate worship (Akrofi & Flolu, 2007; Flolu, 2004). While written records from these early mission schools are scarce, evidence suggests that the initial music lessons focused on singing, taught in a manner akin to European practices of the time (Demorest & Ní Chríodáin, 2017).

The institutionalization of music training began with the establishment of teacher training colleges. The Basel Mission founded a college at Akropong-Akuapim in 1848, followed by the Methodist Grammar School (now Mfantsipim) and similar institutions by the Anglican and Bremen Missions across the country (Demorest & Ní Chríodáin, 2017). Although these schools primarily trained teachers, catechists, and church workers, they produced the first generation of formally trained music scholars. Recognizing the musical enthusiasm of the people of the Gold Coast, missionaries began importing Western instruments by the early twentieth century, leading to the production of competent organists and the formation of school brass and fife bands in numerous towns and villages (Demorest & Ní Chríodáin, 2017).

As music education evolved, it expanded beyond singing to include the rudiments and theory of Western music, which was necessary for performing the repertoire. This progress fostered the emergence of native composers. Notable figures included Rev. J. Anaman, who published a collection of Fante hymns, *Nkwagye Ho Ndwom*, in 1893; Rev. G. Stern, compiler of the *Seminary Tune* in 1907; and Ephraim Amu, whose twenty-five Ewe songs were published in 1933 (Flolu, 2004).

Despite these developments, a common music curriculum was absent until the mid-twentieth century. Instruction was left to the initiative of individual teachers and varied significantly from school to school, often following contemporary English trends (Demorest & Ní Chríodáin, 2017). Progressive teachers experimented with methods like the movable ‘doh’ system and music appreciation using gramophone records, while the syllabus of the Royal Schools of Music in Great Britain guided instruction in teacher training colleges (Flolu, 2004).

A pivotal moment came with the founding of Achimota School in 1927 by Governor Guggisberg. There, Ephraim Amu was tasked with teaching African songs, primarily using his own compositions. Alongside him, colonial historian W.E.F. Ward advocated for the inclusion of African music in the school curriculum (Flolu, 2004). In 1949, a three-year teacher training program in music was established at Achimota, with Amu at its helm. The curriculum, on his initiative, included the theory of music alongside practical courses in African drumming and piping (Flolu, 2004). This program was relocated to Kumasi in 1951 and then to Winneba in 1958 to form part of the Advanced Teacher Training College. It was later expanded into the National Academy of Music on a

separate campus in Winneba, which ultimately became the Department of Music Education of the University of Education, Winneba, in 1992, solidifying music as a dedicated academic discipline in Ghana (1994).

Despite the historical establishment of music teacher training, the practical reality of music in public schools has often lagged behind. As Flolu (2004) note, alongside these developments, classroom music remained largely stagnant, primarily consisting of singing lessons (Atiemo, 2006). This weakness was formally identified as early as 1959 by the panel drafting Ghana's first primary school music syllabus, which sought to broaden instruction to include theory, rhythmic movement, and appreciation. More recently, music has been integrated as a component of the Creative Arts and Design subject in the new Standards-Based Curriculum, described as a "multifaceted discipline" (NaCCA, 2020). However, the effective implementation of this comprehensive vision remains a central challenge, with instruction often failing to move beyond its historical roots in rote singing, a tradition perpetuated in part by annual choral festivals that maintain a focus on vocal performance (Demorest & Ní Chríodáin, 2017).

The imperative to address this implementation gap is underscored by the profound and multi-faceted impact of music education on the learner. At its core, music systematically develops intelligence, offering unique cognitive experiences unavailable elsewhere (Reimer, 2004). Its purpose in general education is dual: to develop innate musical responsiveness in all individuals and to provide a foundation for those with specific talent (Houlahan & Tacka, 2012). A substantial body of transfer studies confirms that skills cultivated in music education extend to other domains. Research has linked music education to short- and long-term increases in IQ (Schellenberg, 2004; 2006), enhanced literacy and foreign language acquisition (Moreno et al., 2009; Slevc & Miyake, 2006), improved selective attention (Dege´ et al., 2011), and greater sensitivity to emotional speech (Thompson & Husain, 2004). Furthermore, music fosters crucial social-emotional skills; the act of making music together, which requires synchronisation, has been shown to increase social affiliation, cooperation, and helpful behaviour (Hove & Risen, 2009; Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010). Ultimately, a music-rich experience integrates multiple skill sets, providing a significant benefit as children progress into formal learning by engaging ears, eyes, and muscles simultaneously.

To realize these benefits, music education in basic schools must embrace pedagogical best practices that are developmentally appropriate and engaging. A foundational approach is Critical Pedagogy, which seeks to empower students by connecting school music to the music they hear and love outside the classroom (Abrahams, 2007). Effective instruction recognizes that musical development is a sequential process, where certain foundational skills must become familiar before more complex ones are mastered (Kostelnik et al., 2021). This development can be supported through chanting and rhythmic speaking to strengthen language skills (Mizener, 2008) and through interactive instrument exploration. Before introducing formal instruments, teachers can use body percussion, such as clapping and stomping, to develop rhythmic understanding (Miller, 2024). The use of simple rhythm instruments in a classroom music center is also vital, as it encourages participation, especially for children reluctant to sing (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2014).

Movement is another critical component, forming the core of the Dalcroze approach (eurhythmics), which posits that rhythm originates in the body and can be expressed through walking, skipping, and running (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2014). The accuracy of such movement to a beat is age-dependent, developing with experience (Edwards, 2013). For successful implementation, music-making should be a daily, predictable routine. As Kostelnik et al (2021) suggests, songs and rhymes should be repeated frequently to build mastery. Furthermore, music can be seamlessly integrated across the curriculum, aligning with holistic, constructivist approaches that connect multiple content areas (Kostelnik et al., 2021) and honor diverse learning styles through experiential learning (Demorest & Ní Chríodáin, 2017).

2.2 Challenges and Prospects for Music Education in Ghanaian Basic Schools

Despite the documented benefits and established best practices, the implementation of music education in Ghanaian basic schools faces profound and systemic challenges. The teaching of music is hampered by a critical shortage of specialized teachers (Abrahams, 2007), inadequate teaching-learning resources, negative perceptions among stakeholders, and low levels of teacher confidence and competence, all of which contribute to the subject's marginalization (Obeng, 2019). A significant structural issue is its status as a compulsory yet 'non-examinable' subject within the Creative Arts curriculum, which means learner progress is not officially assessed or monitored, thereby reducing its perceived importance (Obeng, 2019).

Further complicating the landscape is the persistent curricular dichotomy between Western and African music. Historically, pedagogy has relied heavily on Western pieces (Abrahams, 2007), often at the expense of local folk songs that would be more culturally relevant and comprehensible to students (Flolu, 2004). This imposition, as Otchere (2015) critically observes, forces the child into an "ordeal of accommodating the new scale system," potentially resulting in an adult who "grows into an adult neither knowing their culture well nor accepting completely, the imposed one."

Compounding these issues is a demotivating environment for teachers. The success of any educational program hinges on its human resources, and motivation is a central pillar for performance (Forson et al., 2021). However, music teachers in Ghana often work under challenging and unsupportive conditions, which negatively impacts both their well-being and student outcomes (Nyarko et al., 2014). This is exacerbated by the reliance on generalist teachers, who, despite arguments for their central role (Henley, 2017). frequently report low self-efficacy in music and a desire to be relieved of the responsibility (Barnes & Shinn-Taylor, 1988).

To overcome these challenges and align practice with the potential of music education, a multi-faceted approach is essential. A foundational step is to decolonize the curriculum by centering instruction on indigenous folk songs, making learning more relevant and engaging (Nketia, 1974). This pedagogical shift must be supported by strengthening teacher training at the Colleges of Education, as the quality of teachers directly influences the strength of elementary and secondary education (Manfor, 1983). Furthermore, granting music examinable status in core assessments like the BECE would incentivize greater seriousness and accountability in its teaching (Obeng, 2018). Finally, in an increasingly digital world, the integration of music technology is crucial for modernizing instruction and learning processes (Mawusee et al., 2020).

Ultimately, the success of any reform hinges on a fundamental shift in perception. As Hoffer (2017) asserts, the entire enterprise of music education is in trouble unless it is seen as valuable. For teachers to be motivated to ensure every child acquires musical knowledge and skills, the subject must be recognized as a vital component of a holistic education (Henley, 2017). It is within this context of significant challenges and promising avenues for improvement that the present study is situated, seeking to investigate the specific realities and potential pathways for enhancing music education in the Achiase District and contributing to this vital national discourse.

III. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a convergent mixed-methods research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) to provide a comprehensive analysis of the state of music education in the Achiase District. This approach was deemed most appropriate as it allows for the collection of both quantitative data (e.g., to quantify resource availability and teacher confidence) and qualitative data (e.g., to explore lived experiences and contextual challenges), with the intention of comparing and integrating the two datasets to gain a more complete understanding than either approach could offer alone (Ivankova et al., 2006). An instrumental case study design (Stake, 1995) was employed, framing the Achiase District as a case that provides insight into the broader phenomenon of music education implementation in Ghanaian basic schools. This design facilitates an in-depth, contextual exploration of the complex realities within the selected schools.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The study population was drawn from three basic schools in the Achiase District, totaling 1,365 individuals, comprising 1,320 pupils, 38 classroom teachers, six headteachers, and one school principal. A total sample of 120 participants was selected, representing a cross-section of this population.

Pupils (n=108): A stratified random sampling technique was used to select pupils. The population was first stratified by school and class level, after which random samples were drawn from each stratum. This ensured proportional representation across different grades and schools, enhancing the generalizability of the findings within the case (Cohen et al., 2017).

Teachers (n=12): A hybrid sampling strategy was utilized for teachers. A purposive sampling method (Etikan et al., 2016) was used to select all three Junior High School (JHS) Creative Arts and Design teachers, as their specific expertise was critical to the study's focus. For the remaining nine primary school teachers, a convenience sampling approach was employed based on their availability and willingness to participate. While convenience sampling has limitations regarding representativeness, it provided access to information-rich cases from generalist teachers who are typically responsible for music instruction at the primary level (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

3.3 Data Collection and Instrumentation

Data were collected using two distinct survey questionnaires: one for teachers and one for pupils. The teacher questionnaire contained a mix of closed-ended (Likert-scale and multiple-choice) and open-ended questions, facilitating the collection of both quantitative trends and qualitative insights. The pupil questionnaire primarily consisted of closed-ended questions appropriate for their age and designed to gauge their attitudes and experiences. The questionnaires were administered electronically to improve efficiency and data accuracy, with responses collected and recorded digitally.

3.4 Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the closed-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and visualized through charts, graphs, and tables. This data visualization approach was crucial for effectively interpreting and communicating patterns related to resource availability, instructional time, and pupil engagement (Kirk, 2016). The qualitative data from open-ended responses were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) to identify, analyze, and report recurring patterns and themes. The integration of these quantitative and qualitative findings occurred during the interpretation phase, where the statistical trends were elaborated upon and contextualized by the teachers' narrative explanations.

IV. Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The study collected data from 12 teachers across the selected basic schools. The demographic profile of the respondents is presented below.

4.1 Demographic Data

Question 1. On gender determination

Table 1. *Gender Distribution of Respondents*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	5	41.67%
Female	7	58,33%
Total	12	100%

As detailed in Table 1, female teachers (58.3%, n=7) constituted a slight majority of the survey respondents compared to their male counterparts (41.7%, n=5). This gender distribution provides a representative perspective from both groups on the state of music education.

Question 2. On Teacher level distribution

Table 2. *Level Distribution Respondents*

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary	9	75%
JHS	3	25%

The distribution of respondents, detailed in Table 2, indicates that the sample was predominantly composed of primary school teachers, who constituted 75% (n=9) of the total. JHS teachers represented a smaller portion of the sample, at 25% (n=3).

The following tables, graphs and charts shows the response of the survey. The data is grouped according to the questions that were answered.

Question 3. Teacher specialty

Table 3. *Specialised Music Teacher or a Generalised Teacher*

Type of Teachers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Generalised Teachers	11	91.67%
Specialised Music Teachers	1	8.33%

Table 3 reveals a critical shortage of specialized music teachers, with only one respondent (8.33%) identified as a specialist. The overwhelming majority, 11 teachers (91.67%), were generalists.

Question 4. On Music Training

Table 4. *Distribution of Teachers by Music Training Background*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	8	66.67%
No	4	33.33%

As presented in Table 4, the majority of respondents (66.67%, n=8) reported having received professional training in music education, while a significant minority (33.33%, n=4) had received no such training.

Question 6: Have you ever skipped a music topic because you didn't understand it?

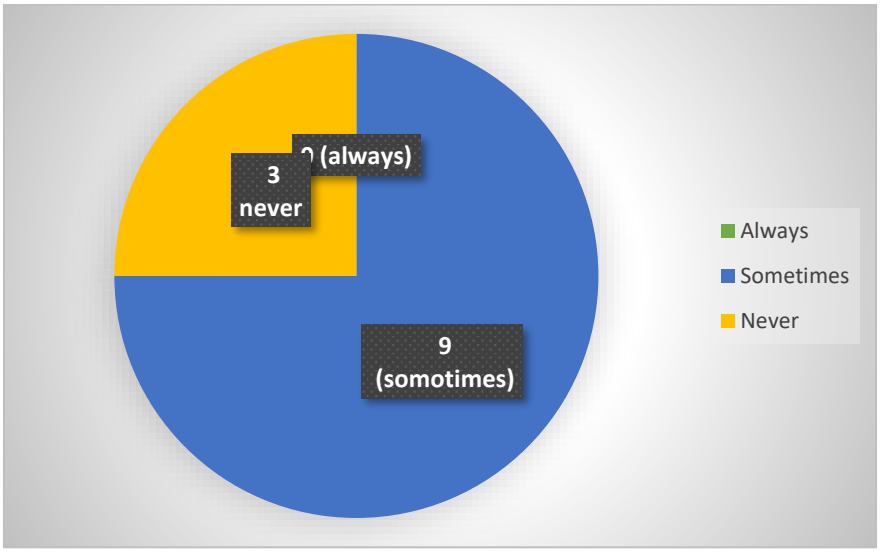

Figure 1: Pie chart showing the response to question 6

Figure 1. illustrates that while the vast majority of teachers (75%, n=9) occasionally skip some music topics during instruction, a minority (25%, n=3) report never omitting curriculum content. It is noteworthy that no teacher reported always skipping music topics.

Question 7. What is the frequency of organized professional training for music teachers in your district?

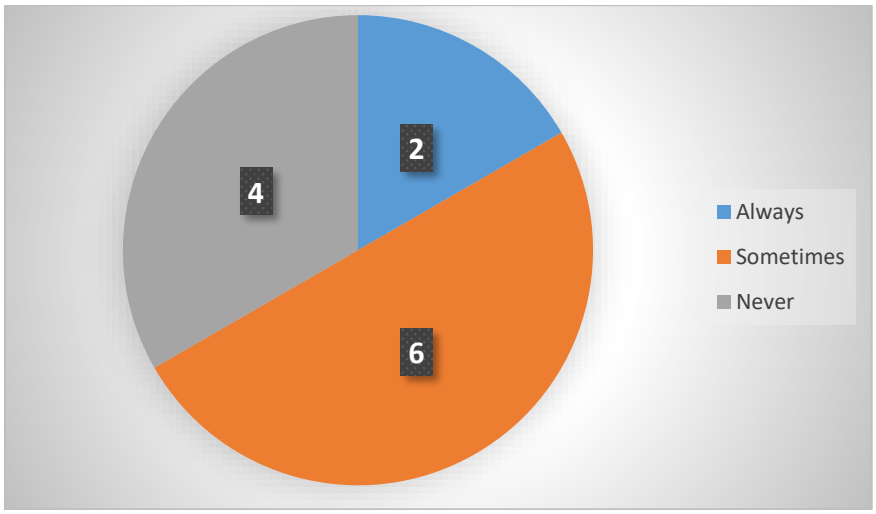

Figure 2: Pie chart for question 7

As revealed in Figure 2, the frequency of organized professional training for music teachers is highly inconsistent. While half of the respondents (50%, n=6) reported that training is only offered "sometimes," a significant proportion (33%, n=4) stated it is "never" provided. Only a small minority of teachers (17%, n=2) indicated that such professional development is "always" available in the district.

Table 5. Weekly Frequency of Music Instruction

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Periods per Week		
1 Period	7	58.33%
2 Periods	2	16.67%
3 Periods	1	8.33%
4 Periods	1	8.33%
Occasionally	1	8.33%

As detailed in Table 5, the allocation of instructional time for music is predominantly limited. A majority of teachers (58.33%, n=7) reported teaching music only once per week. Far fewer teachers reported two periods (16.67%, n=2), three periods (8.33%, n=1), or four periods (8.33%, n=1). One teacher (8.33%) indicated that music is taught only occasionally, further underscoring the inconsistent scheduling of the subject.

Table 6. Teacher Assessment of Allocated Time for Music Curriculum Implementation

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	2	16.67%
No	10	83.33%

When asked if the curriculum-implemented time for music was sufficient, the response was overwhelmingly negative. As presented in Table 6, 83.33% (n=10) of teachers reported that the allocated time is not enough, highlighting a significant discrepancy between policy and practical implementation.

Question 8: On a scale of 1 to 5 how available, are resources for Music Education in your school?

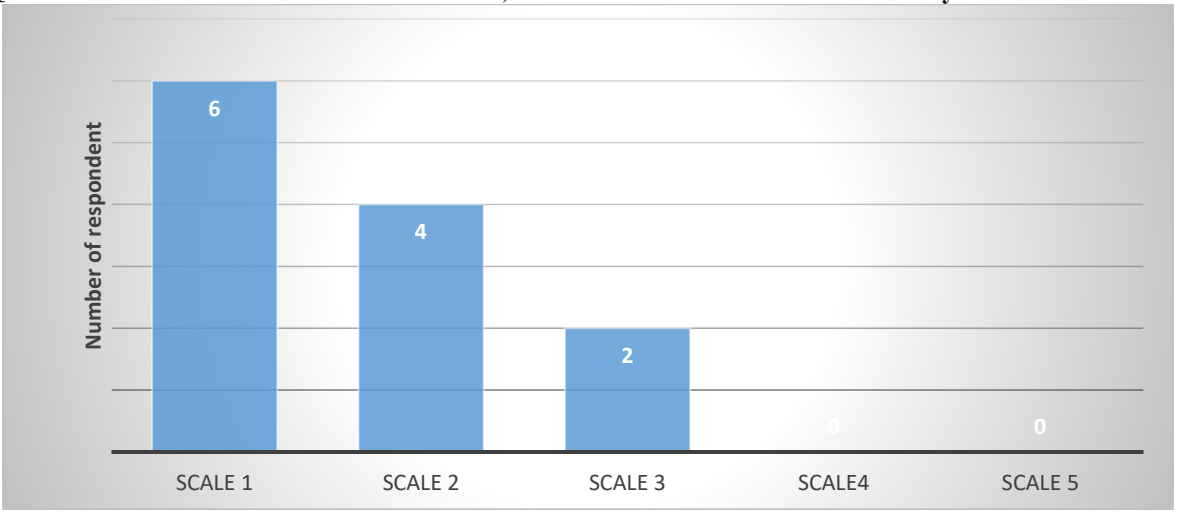

Figure 3: Bar graph showing the response to question 10.

As illustrated in Figure 3, teachers assessed the availability of resources for music education in their schools as critically low. Half of the respondents (50%, n=6) gave the lowest possible rating (1) on a 5-point scale. A further 33.3% (n=4) rated availability as a 2, and 16.67% (n=2) as a 3. Notably, no respondents rated resource availability as a 4 or 5, indicating a unanimous perception of severe resource scarcity.

Question 8: on the scale of 1 to 5 how do you think music education has impacted on the cognitive, social and emotional life of your learners?

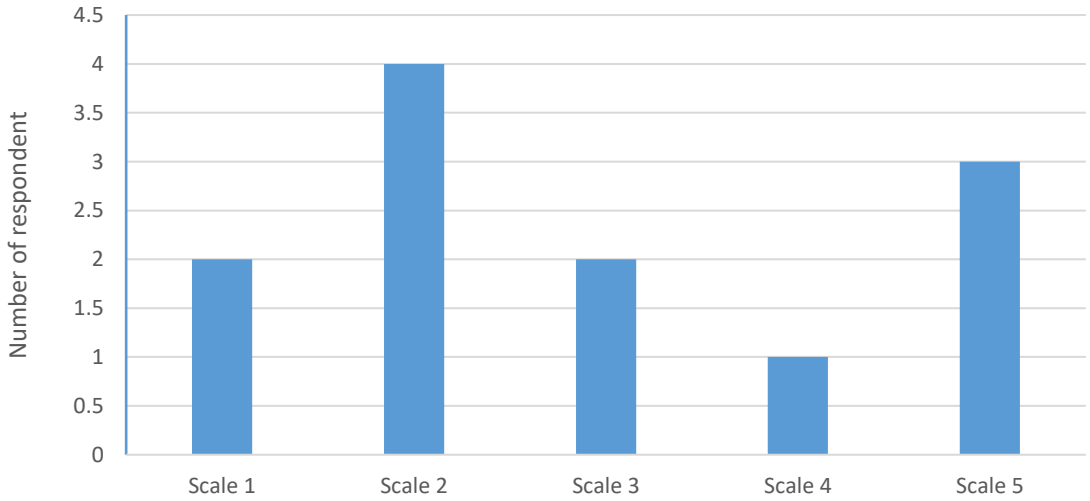

Figure 4: Bar Graph Showing Perceived Impact of Music Education on Learner Development

When asked to rate the impact of music education on learners' cognitive, social, and emotional development on a scale of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high), teacher responses revealed a generally positive perception, though with notable variation.

As illustrated in Figure 4, the responses were distributed across the scale. A significant share of teachers (25%, n=3) assigned the highest possible rating (5), while 8.3% (n=1) rated the impact as a 4. A moderate rating of 3 was given by 16.7% (n=2) of respondents. However, a substantial portion of teachers perceived a lower impact, with 33.3% (n=4) rating it a 2 and 16.7% (n=2) giving the lowest rating of 1.

This distribution indicates that while a combined 33.3% of teachers view the impact as high, a larger combined 50% perceive it as low, suggesting that the full potential of music education is not being realized for all learners.

Question 7: How active are your learners in musical activities in the music class?

Table 7. Student Participation Levels in Musical Activities

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Active	6	50%
Average	6	50%
Not Active	0	0%

Table 7, shows that 6 respondent thinks their learner participate fully in musical activities whiles 6 also thinks learners' participation in music lesson is average.

Question 10: What is the state of music education in your school?

Table 8. Focus on Perceived Quality

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Good	2	16.67%
Average	8	66.67%
Poor	2	16.67%

As detailed in Table 8, the majority of teachers (66.67%, n=8) perceive the state of music education in their schools as "Average." An equal minority of respondents (16.67%, n=2 for each group) rated it as either "Good" or "Poor." This distribution indicates a prevailing sentiment that music education is adequate but not thriving, with a notable absence of strongly positive evaluations.

Perceived Overall Effectiveness of Music Education

When asked to evaluate the overall effectiveness of music education in Ghanaian basic schools, the majority of teacher respondents expressed a negative assessment.

Table 9. Teacher Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Music Education

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	3	25%
No	9	75%
Total	12	100%

As illustrated in Table 9, a significant majority of teachers (75%, n=9) perceive music education as ineffective. Only a quarter of the respondents (25%, n=3) believe it is being delivered effectively. This overwhelming consensus indicates a profound systemic challenge, reinforcing the specific issues related to resources, training, and time allocation identified elsewhere in this study.

Question 11. Analysis of Challenges in Teaching Music at the Basic School Level

In response to an open-ended question regarding the challenges faced in teaching music, respondents identified several key impediments. A thematic analysis of their responses reveals three central categories of challenges: (1) Deficits in Teacher Preparedness and Confidence, (2) Inadequate Logistical and Resource Support, and (3) Structural and Curricular Constraints.

Table 10. *Thematic Analysis of Challenges in Teaching Music*

Thematic Area	Specific Challenges Identified	Representative Direct Quote
1. Teacher Preparedness & Confidence	• Limited knowledge and understanding of the music subject matter. • Lack of prior musical knowledge or training. • Low self-confidence, particularly in teaching music theory. • Difficulty understanding and teaching specific musical topics. • A complete absence of targeted training for teachers.	*"We do not have the confidence in teaching the course because we do not understand the theory of music."*
2. Logistical & Resource Support	• A critical lack of teaching and learning resources (TLMs).	*"Lack of teaching and learning resources for teaching music."*
3. Structural & Curricular Constraints	• Insufficient instructional time allocated for music on the school timetable. • The overwhelming breadth of the Creative Arts subject, making it difficult for a single teacher to handle all components effectively.	*"The Creative Art subject is too broad for one person to handle."*

The analysis indicates that the challenges are interconnected and systemic. The most frequently cited issues revolve around Teacher Preparedness and Confidence, with respondents explicitly linking a lack of training and subject knowledge to low self-efficacy in the classroom.

This internal challenge is compounded by external factors. Respondents highlighted a severe Inadequate Logistical and Resource Support, noting a fundamental lack of the tools needed for practical music instruction.

Finally, Structural and Curricular Constraints form a significant barrier. Teachers reported that the limited time allocated to music, combined with the extensive scope of the Creative Arts curriculum, makes it impossible to deliver the subject with the depth and focus it requires.

Question 12. Analysis of Respondent Suggestions for Improving Music Education

In response to an open-ended question on improving music education at the basic school level, participants provided a range of suggestions. These responses have been analyzed and categorized into three primary thematic areas: (1) Teacher Development and Support, (2) Provision of Resources and Infrastructure, and (3) Structural and Policy Reforms.

Table 11. Thematic Analysis of Respondent Suggestions for Improvement

Thematic Area	Specific Suggestions from Respondents	Representative Direct Quote
1. Teacher Development & Support	• Organize regular workshops and in-service training. • Provide more training to enhance teacher knowledge. • Appoint resource persons at the district level to assist teachers.	*"The cultural coordinators and directors of education should organise many workshops for teachers... to boost the confidence level of teachers."*
2. Provision of Resources & Infrastructure	• Supply adequate teaching and learning materials (TLMs). • Employ well-equipped and skilled facilitators.	*"There should be provision of some teaching and learning materials to help in teaching music."*
3. Structural & Policy Reforms	• Employ more specialized music teachers. • Make Music a standalone subject, separate from Creative Arts.	*"Music should be a subject on its own and not as an aspect of Creative Arts."*

The analysis in Table 11. reveals that respondents perceive the path to improvement as multi-faceted. The most prominent theme was Teacher Development and Support, with a strong emphasis on the need for continuous professional development through workshops and accessible expert support. This aligns directly with findings on low teacher confidence.

Secondly, respondents highlighted the critical need for Provision of Resources and Infrastructure, citing a lack of basic teaching materials and the need for skilled personnel as a major barrier to effective instruction.

Finally, participants called for systemic Structural and Policy Reforms, specifically advocating for the hiring of specialist teachers and a fundamental change in curriculum design to grant music the status of an independent subject, thereby ensuring it receives dedicated time and focus.

V. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the state and effectiveness of music education in basic schools within the Achiase District. The findings present a clear and consistent picture: despite its recognized value and the inherent enthusiasm of learners, music education is severely underperforming and faces systemic challenges that hinder its delivery.

The core impediments identified are multifaceted. Foremost is a critical deficit in specialized human resources, with only a small minority of music teachers possessing professional training. This is compounded by a near-total absence of continuous professional development, leaving teachers with low confidence and inadequate subject-matter knowledge. Furthermore, the study confirms a severe scarcity of teaching and learning resources, rendering practical, engaging instruction nearly impossible. The structural constraint of insufficient instructional time, with music allocated only a single period, further curtails meaningful learning experiences.

These challenges collectively result in an ineffective music program. This is unequivocally reflected in the data, with an overwhelming majority of teachers (83%) rating the state of music education as average or below average, and 75% explicitly affirming its ineffectiveness. Consequently, the omission of curriculum topics is a common occurrence.

In essence, the study concludes that the significant gap between the potential of music education and its current reality in the Achiase District is directly attributable to inadequacies in teacher specialization, resource provision, and curricular prioritization. Addressing these foundational issues is imperative to harness the subject's full potential for learner development. Also adding music to the Creative Arts curriculum create a difficulty for the teachers who have no idea on music theory and its practical components.

VI. Recommendations

To effectively address the systemic failures identified in this study, a coordinated and multi-level strategy is essential. The transformation of music education in the Achiase District, and by extension Ghana, hinges on decisive action in three critical areas.

First, a fundamental restructuring of the curriculum is imperative. Music must be re-established as an independent and core subject, with its own dedicated instructional time and clear learning objectives, rather than remaining a diluted component within the broad Creative Arts and Design ensemble. Parallel to this, there must be a concerted investment in physical infrastructure, beginning with the establishment of properly equipped music laboratories in basic schools to provide the necessary space and tools for practical, hands-on musical engagement.

Second, sustainable improvement is impossible without significant investment in human capital and teaching resources. It is crucial that the government and educational authorities allocate sufficient funding for the procurement of essential teaching and learning materials, including both traditional indigenous instruments and modern resources. Furthermore, the implementation of mandatory, continuous, and subject-specific professional development programs is non-negotiable for building the pedagogical confidence and content knowledge of both current and prospective teachers.

Finally, to ensure these initiatives translate into lasting change, oversight and accountability must be strengthened. We strongly recommend that the Achiase District Education Office appoints a dedicated Music Education Supervisor. This designated specialist would be responsible for providing ongoing pedagogical support, monitoring implementation fidelity in schools, and serving as a powerful advocate for the subject's needs at the district level. This role is pivotal for driving continuous improvement and ensuring that music education receives the professional attention it warrants.

By implementing these targeted recommendations, stakeholders can transform music education from a marginalized subject into a vibrant and effective component of the basic school curriculum, thereby unlocking its profound benefits for the cognitive, cultural, and social-emotional development of every child. The study proposes comprehensive improvements including allocating sufficient resources, providing regular teacher training, restructuring music as an independent subject rather than part of Creative Arts, and establishing properly equipped music laboratories. These recommendations aim to transform music education into an engaging and effective component of Ghana's basic education system, with implications for similar contexts internationally.

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