

Representation of Yoruba Tonal and Compositional Principles in the Music Composition Curricula of Southwest Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

This article compares the inclusion of Yoruba tonal and compositional principles in the music composition curricula of three universities in Southwest Nigeria, using a comparative document analysis approach. Selected for their differing backgrounds and emphases were three universities: Ajayi Crowther University, Obafemi Awolowo University and Olabisi Onabanjo University. The analysis of all three curricula involved categorising the titles of the individual courses into the following: Western, general African, Yoruba or Oyo-based and composition-designated. The study subsequently analyses the structural relationship between the courses that specifically reference the Yoruba tradition and the formal Composition sequence within each of the three institutions. In finding that there is minimal or zero mention of Yoruba-specific material within any of the three music composition programmes at all, the article argues, against the background of the goals of the article and within the general literature on curriculum decolonisation in Nigerian universities' music education programmes, that the question of the study's aims needs re-evaluation. Finally, the article offers recommendations and suggests further research areas within the course descriptions.

Keywords: music pedagogy, Yoruba tonal systems, composition curriculum, Southwest Nigerian universities, curriculum document analysis, decolonisation

Introduction

Two compositional traditions shape the landscape of composition in universities in Southwest Nigeria. The first is the Western classical composition tradition, which has remained the dominant teaching approach since its imposition through colonial policy as the normative practice (Adeogun, 2018). The second is the Yoruba indigenous music system, defined by the structurally developed concepts in Yoruba oral and performance practice, which includes structures for composing, melodic composing principles and methods of musical training delivered orally (Nketia, 1974; Okafor, 2005). The duality of these traditions has been a problem for composition departments in universities in Southwest Nigeria for many years. Despite the apparent presence of the Yoruba indigenous music system in curricula documents, the practice at universities in Southwest Nigeria is heavily based on Western systems of harmonic progression, counterpoint, and form analysis, which derive from Europe (Adeogun, 2021).

According to Adeogun (2021), since 1961, when the first music education policy that favoured the widespread and total dominance of the Euro-American classical music tradition was introduced, it has never come up for question nationally, and this applies to universities in Southwest Nigeria as well. In this situation, there has been very little application of Yoruba tonality and its effects on melody, the rhythmic and melodic characteristics of the *dundun* drumming tradition of Yoruba music and the principles of pentatonic and hexatonic tonal structures in Yoruba oral music traditions, into composition teaching (Omojola, 1995; Akpabot, 1998). As a result, the student who is trained exclusively in the Western approach to composition lacks the skills needed to handle the knowledge implicitly embodied in the indigenous Yoruba music system in his composition studies. There is a significant disparity between the subject matter that composition departments teach their students and the compositional knowledge that Yoruba society possesses. This paper explores how Yoruba tonality and related practices have been incorporated into the real curriculum documents of universities in Southwest Nigeria by analysing the course structures of three selected universities.

Problem Statement and Justification

The problem is that music students at universities in SW Nigeria are educated in a system that prioritises compositional ideas rooted in the Western tonal idiom. At the same time, the locale in which they work and study preserves a viable theoretical compositional tradition grounded in indigenous resources. Paradoxically, these indigenous ideas provide the conceptual underpinning for the aesthetic and economic viability of the two largest indigenous genres in Yoruba popular music (and thus by implication Nigerian popular music) (Waterman, 1990; Omojola, 2012), but there appears to be little emphasis on indigenous compositional paradigms in composition departments across SW Nigeria. On a scholarly level, much of the research by ethnomusicologists in Nigeria has highlighted the presence of indigenous theoretical and compositional ideas within Nigerian musical traditions, which are of analytical and pedagogical value (Agawu, 2016; Nketia, 1974).

Adeogun (2018) mapped the historical processes that led to the structure of music education at Nigerian universities and identified the continued absence of indigenous musical underpinning as a national trait. Okafor (2005) observed a consensus about the predominance of Western approaches to analysis and pedagogy in composition teaching at Nigerian universities, despite variations between institutions. This article explores this national picture by scrutinising the curriculum documents from three universities in South-west Nigeria. It should be noted that the current benchmark regulation in Nigeria, known as the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) framework, allows individual institutions up to thirty per cent local curriculum content, meaning that the presence or absence of Yoruba compositional systems in university music curricula is likely to be an issue of institutional policy, rather than one of regulatory restriction.

Literature Review

Contemporary music education scholarship has become an important subject of discourse in the place of indigenous music knowledge within African universities. The discourse transcends the curriculum's subject matter, raising questions about knowledge creation, cultural identity, educational philosophy, and the validity of African intellectual traditions in formal schooling. Most African universities retain a curricular framework that follows a colonial approach to music education from the late 19th and 20th centuries; one that prioritises European theory of harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, analysis and composition, while indigenous music systems are accorded minimal attention. In most institutions, African music studies are concentrated in ethnomusicology, music appreciation, or cultural studies programmes. In contrast, the teaching of practical composition, which provides foundational theories for creating music, is largely based on Western principles.

Consequently, university music students may become accomplished Western composers, yet receive inadequate instruction in the theoretical organisation of their indigenous music traditions. A foundational piece of this discourse is Nketia's (1974) seminal contribution, which argued for the intellectual grounding of African-centred music education. His thesis was that the foundation of African music education should be derived from African musical thought rather than from Western pedagogical systems. This position challenged the notion of Western music theory as a universal language of music applicable to all music traditions. Instead, he explained how African music traditions are fully formed systems of knowledge, complete in their aesthetic principles, performance practices, compositional strategies and pedagogical methods.

For Nketia, they embody cultural memory, linguistic structures, historical experiences, and philosophic values; thus, their presence in the curriculum, especially at the university level, is necessitated by their capacity to support the intellectual foundations for teaching, performing and writing music and the critical inquiry and research of music and music traditions of Africa and the African world. His work accordingly shifted scholarly interest away from merely documenting African music as folklore to recognising it as a legitimate academic subject fully

capable of supporting higher-level learning in composition, analysis, performance, research, teaching, and professional practice. Implications of Nketia's thesis for university teaching of composition are immense.

Composition is probably the most theory-intensive component of music education, as it draws on students' understanding of principles of melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre, texture, form, development, etc. If the organisational principles of African musical systems are coherent and comparable to those of Western music, then an exclusion of these traditions from the study of composition necessarily limits the theoretical discourse to the framework of only one music system. Such exclusion perpetuates the myth that European modes of compositional thought are the only acceptable frame of reference for any musical production.

Accordingly, a curriculum centred on the study of harmony and counterpoint in the Western tradition provides a distorted representation of the full scope of music theory available within an African educational system. Nketia's research has indeed provided a crucial justification for educators to consider African systems of composition on an equal footing with their Western counterparts. A later critical voice that echoed and expanded on this critique of the Western gaze on African music is Agawu (2003). In his influential work titled *Representing African Music*, Agawu questioned the epistemological underpinnings of much ethnomusicological discourse. In his words, the bulk of ethnomusicological writings on African music tend to approach it through anthropology, sociology, or the study of religion or ritual, to the relative neglect of its organisation. The attention paid to its cultural meanings and symbolic associations, to the social contexts of performance, to its role in public ritual or private ceremony, or to the communal aspect of participation, leaves the actual musical contours largely unexplored, its harmonic, rhythmic, tonemic, structural and compositional principles treated, if they are treated at all, almost as if they were by-products of its social function or its participation in other forms of activity.

According to Agawu, such a focus has led to viewing African music primarily as a form of cultural performance or entertainment, rather than as a mature artistic form guided by rational aesthetic, theoretical, and compositional principles. This outlook tends to justify a system in which African music is peripheral to university music programmes. Agawu (2016) went further to demonstrate, in his groundbreaking book *The African Imagination in Music*, that African musical traditions contain a robust framework for coherent organisation of melodic relationships, rhythmic structures, tonal systems, phrase designs, and large-scale form.

He was advocating not abandoning music analysis per se, but developing and applying analytical methods informed by the particular characteristics of African music itself, thereby moving beyond mere descriptions of performance and culture and providing an analytical treatment of the underlying compositional structures that characterise African musical creations. Agawu's distinction between African music as an ethnographic phenomenon and African music as a compositional system

provides an important theoretical backdrop for the present study. In many Nigerian university music programmes, students' engagement with the study of Yoruba music, for example, may involve descriptions of traditional festivals, musical instruments, the historical background of Yoruba musical practices, and their roles in different social settings. These approaches to engaging Yoruba music can serve as introductory contexts. However, they are qualitatively different from providing instruction that enables students to compose music using their theoretical knowledge of Yoruba musical structures.

Learning to compose music means developing a systematic knowledge of tone organisation, rhythmic construction, form building, melodic shape, contour relations, stylistic conventions, and so forth. The confinement of Yoruba music within descriptive or narrative modes of discourse, therefore, provides very limited exposure to its compositional system for music students. An explanation for this Western-centric curricular landscape may lie in the history of music education in Nigeria. According to Adeogun (2018), the initial establishment of music departments in Nigerian universities closely mirrored the curricula models of conservatoires and universities in Britain and the United States, from where they borrowed extensively at independence and even during colonial rule. The curricula are structured around learning and performance skills, including Western notation, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, music theory, music history, and analysis.

This arrangement reflects the aims and objectives of colonial governments and mission schools to inculcate a culture of appreciation for Western music, which they perceived as of higher artistic value. Following independence, some Nigerian universities, no doubt, introduced the study of indigenous African music, but this was usually in discrete courses within degree programmes, whose overall organisation remained largely informed by Western harmonic and analytical structures as the basis for professional musicianship. The colonial influence highlighted by Adeogun (2018) goes beyond course content to permeate philosophical frameworks, criteria for musical success and standards of professionalism.

Nigerian music graduates are often evaluated based on their ability to read, write, and perform using staff notation; to analyse Western musical forms, harmonic progressions, and counterpoint; and to compose music in accordance with conventional Western practices. The recognition accorded to indigenous music learning tends to be confined to specific courses, where it can be integrated with other academic studies, rather than forming a foundational basis for professional musical training, where Western music theory dominates and is given prominence in student assessment. Such a historical trajectory reflects a broader pattern of learning in which Western knowledge and forms were privileged over local epistemologies in colonial institutions of learning. Adeogun (2021) also argues, and correctly, I believe, that meaningful curriculum reform needs not just to be about 'tackling' specific indigenous content within the existing structures of Western models.

In a post-colonial framework, it entails rethinking the very nature of knowledge itself, the objectives, organisation, assessment, pedagogies, theoretical content, and indeed the structure of the whole field of music study within Nigerian higher education. For Adeogun, “Afrocentricism does not imply... an exclusion or total rejection of Western theoretical practices” but rather “a shift from viewing African music practices merely as an object of study to seeing them as subjects capable of producing the academic theories upon which the entire curriculum is founded.” African musical systems, then, should take centre stage in framing the academic study and practice of music in Nigeria and be allowed to define how their indigenous systems of logic, aesthetics, performance, and composition can constitute fundamental knowledge for the discipline.

There has been a body of Nigerian scholarly writing that explored compositional possibilities within Yoruba musical practices. For instance, Omojola (1995) posited that Yoruba music is characterised by a rich melodic, rhythmic, tonal, and linguistic structure, and that this would serve as an excellent springboard for the Contemporary Composer, who should not view indigenous musical forms merely as items for posterity. Omojola established that Yoruba music illustrates a symbiotic relationship between language, rhythm, melody, and performance, creating a set of compositional resources that diverge from the European tonal idiom. The researcher further stated that Nigerian Composers would do well to draw on these indigenous resources, since they are the closest reflection of their artistic and cultural world and, as such, represent indigenous theoretical principles.

Omojola (2012) elaborated on the use of the Yoruba language and melody, emphasising the role of speech tone in melody formation. As Yoruba is a tonal language in which tone contributes to the semantic content of utterances, failing to take tonality into account would alter or distort meaning. This is an aspect of Yoruba music that distinguishes it from many European music composition schools, where melodic movement is less directly linked to speech tones.

The researcher indicated that for effective and musical use of Yoruba, writers and composers must take into account not only the melody but also tone, phrase structure, word order, and the natural rhythms and stresses of the spoken word. This again reinforces the argument of inherent and teachable theoretical structures in Yoruba Music.

This relationship between speech tone and melodic practice has not remained merely theoretical but has been empirically explored. The work of Owoaje and Adegbola (2022) investigated the appropriateness of the tones of Western musical melodies for Yoruba hymn texts. They found that, because the melodic direction in Western tonal music did not necessarily correspond to the tones in utterances, the tones of Yoruba utterances were distorted in missionary texts. This finding raises a major concern for music composition in a multilingual environment like Africa, where universities still predominantly teach Western Music Theory, especially if learners are not conversant

with the tonality of the indigenous language, as well as the European tonality of Western music.

In an exhaustive investigation, Owoaje (2020) documented indigenous compositional procedures in Yoruba Native Airs, with reference to various methods of transmission, including speech-surrogate singing, drum language, folk-song adaptation, the application of Indigenous tonality, and traditional melodic formation. Owoaje showed that Yoruba music is not an amorphous practice, but one governed by logical processes or procedures that can be learned in an educational context. The ‘speech surrogate’ approach highlights the intricate connection between instrumental performance and speech. Drum language provides examples of the encoded linguistic messages carried by drum tones and rhythms, as well as a sophisticated indigenous musical system for conveying complex meaning. ‘Folk song adaptation’ offers an illustration of the traditional process by which native Yoruba Airs are transformed and expanded into new musical pieces, whilst maintaining their indigenous musical identity. These findings suggest that Yoruba music exhibits systematic, teachable theoretical frameworks comparable to those of Western musical pedagogy.

Other countries on the continent also offer experiences in curricular reform, where the struggle has not necessarily been a lack of indigenous musical theoretical knowledge, but rather the establishment of effective processes for its inclusion in higher education curricula. Yende and Yende (2022) highlighted challenges in integrating the uMaskandi genre into higher education curricula in South Africa, where established evaluation metrics, academic policies, intended outcomes and pedagogical approaches continued to rely on a European model of assessment despite efforts to indigenise the curriculum. Their work demonstrates the need for deeper institutional transformation to move beyond symbolic inclusion of African cultural material and effect a substantial restructuring of educational philosophies, pedagogical methods and assessment criteria.

Expanding on the South African case, Yende (2024) conceptualised ubuntu-gogy as a pedagogical framework for Africanising higher education. Rooted in the philosophy of Ubuntu, ubuntu-gogy is grounded in the collective nature of African knowledge, community involvement, oral traditions, cooperative creativity, and a holistic approach to education that honours the traditions of learning inherent in African societies. Applied to music, ubuntu-gogy focuses on embodied forms of learning, including performance, imitation, participation, and collective musical engagement, as complements and, at times, substitutes for highly individualistic conservatory models derived from European pedagogy. Though framed within the South African context, ubuntu-gogy provides relevant conceptual underpinnings for curricular transformation in Nigerian universities, offering an alternative paradigm grounded in African philosophical traditions rather than imported Western pedagogical principles.

While the studies reviewed here have laid significant theoretical groundwork, significant gaps remain. Much of the existing scholarship is theoretical or philosophically oriented, focusing on isolated case studies. While many researchers

advocate for curriculum reform and recognise the sophisticated nature of indigenous theory, there is still insufficient empirical research that systematically analyses the structures and contents of university music composition curricula across multiple institutions, particularly within Nigeria. The comparative analysis of official curriculum documents across institutions is lacking. Therefore, there is insufficient empirical evidence regarding the extent to which the theoretical and compositional frameworks of indigenous Yoruba music have been successfully incorporated into university music composition education as central components. The current study seeks to fill this gap by examining the content of university composition curricula from three universities in Southwestern Nigeria and by comparing how indigenous Yoruba compositional principles are implemented, if at all, in these programs.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is based on the Ethnomusicological Decolonial approach that treats indigenous Yoruba music Knowledge as a self-sufficient epistemic knowledge equal in standing with Western music Composition practice in university music programs. This perspective stems from the work of Nketia (1974), Agawu (2016), and Adeogun (2021), who call for the inclusion of African music systems as full knowledge bodies rather than as supplementary to cultural information. The framework serves as the standard of measure to the current practice in the Finding section of this study that compositional curricula should expose students to indigenous tonal organisation, rhythms, formal principles, improvisational practices and other composing ways and integrate them into Composition practical in a sequence of Composition, and not limit it as the exclusive subject area of musicology, ethnomusicology, and Appreciation courses.

Research Objectives

Two objectives guide this study:

- i. To critically examine the extent to which Yoruba tonal and compositional principles are represented in the music composition curricula of selected universities in Southwest Nigeria.
- ii. To evaluate the adequacy of existing music composition curricula in promoting indigenous Yoruba tonal and compositional knowledge for contemporary composition training in selected universities in Southwest Nigeria.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative document analysis. The document under consideration was the curriculum documentation of university music departments in Southwestern Nigeria, in particular, the coding of course titles and credit units that make up the structure of a given institution's B.A. Mus degree. The target population of the study is public and private universities in Southwestern Nigeria offering an accredited B.A Mus (with Composition component) degree. This study lays no claim to an exact number for this population, as verification checks of these institutions against current National Universities Commission accreditation documents would be required and were beyond the purview of the document analysis in this research study.

The researchers used three institutions: Ajayi Crowther University, Obafemi Awolowo University, and Olabisi Onabanjo University. The samples for the three institutions were selected purposively. The sample size was selected based on the ease of obtaining documents for analysis; hence, it was not a probability sample drawn from the target population described above. A limitation of this study is elaborated upon later; as a result, the researchers' findings constitute a comparative review of three specific institutions and are not generalisable to Nigerian Universities in South-Western Nigeria. For Ajayi Crowther University, the curriculum documentation reviewed was the courses offered by the Department of Performing Arts and Music (with specific reference to the full-time B.A. Mus regular programme. For Obafemi Awolowo University, the research document reviewed was the B.A. Music student's handbook (covering the full-time single major programme and combined honours B.A. Music/Yoruba programme. For Olabisi Onabanjo University, the departmental course listing furnished by the department on request (including course titles, codes and unit allocation for all levels of the four-year B.A. The Music degree program was utilised.

Each course title from the three curricula documents analysed was categorised into one of four groups: Western-oriented (where a particular course title specifically denoted a Western practice, theory, repertoire, genre, or historical period). African or Indigenous oriented (where a course title refers to Africa or African music without a specificity to any ethnic culture), Yoruba or Oyo-oriented (where a course title refers specifically to Yoruba or Oyo material) and Composition designated (a course identified as a composition component either through its title, an analysis of its content within the body of its description and a general understanding that it involves compositional technique - it covers orchestrating, arranging music). Each identified composition course was then scanned for intersections with Yoruba- or Oyo-oriented courses to determine whether the two courses co-occur. None of the identified documents included any course descriptions or a list of readings or assessments that would have allowed for a detailed examination of course content at that level, rendering this a limitation for this study, which is detailed below as one of several areas requiring further research.

Findings

This section reports the contents of the three curriculum documents, organised by the themes used in the documents. No author is named; in fact, this section describes the content of the three curriculum document texts directly.

Yoruba-Specific Course Representation across the Three Institutions

At Ajayi Crowther University, two courses across the entire program title explicitly use Yoruba or Oyo material: 'Oyo Traditional Music (Theoretical Studies)' (level 300) and 'Contemporary African Music: Oyo Court Music' (level 400), which the program document identifies as an 'innovative course'. They fall into the broad 'African/Musicology' content area of the program, rather than the 'Composition sequence'. At Obafemi Awolowo University, none of the Music Department's

courses identified by their departmental codes includes Yoruba in their titles. Yoruba content is available only in the B.A.

Music/Yoruba Combined Honours program, where it is entirely conveyed in the Department of Linguistics and African Languages' YOR codes. The course titles are: Yoruba language, Yoruba oral literature, Yoruba poetry, Yoruba grammar, Yoruba syntax, Yoruba social institutions and the Ifa literary corpus. The content of the Music element of these combined honours degrees, including the Music 'composition sequence', is identical in content to the content of the stand-alone B.A. Music program. At Olabisi Onabanjo University, no title in any of the four levels contains the name Yoruba.

The indigenous content in this curriculum is all labelled as 'African' courses: African Music I, African Music II, African Instrumental and Dance Ensemble, African Dance and Opera, African Musicology and a course referred to sometimes as Afro-American Music and at other times African American Music.

The Relationship between Indigenous Content and the Composition Sequence

Within each institution's Composition course sequence, no titled course mentions Yoruba tonal or compositional procedures. None of the listed Composition I and II and 20th-Century Compositional Techniques courses at Ajayi Crowther University has an African or Yoruba connection. Likewise, Composition I and II, 20th-Century Compositional Techniques, and Orchestration II courses, as separate and combined honours courses at Obafemi Awolowo University, do not have African or Yoruba title designations. Lastly, none of the 400-level composition courses listed at Olabisi Onabanjo University includes an African or Yoruba element in their titles.

Institution	Yoruba/Oyo-specific course titles	General African/indigenous course titles	Composition-designated courses naming Yoruba content
Ajayi Crowther University	2 (Oyo Traditional Music, Theoretical Studies; Contemporary African Music: Oyo Court Music)	Several (African Music II, African Music in Schools I/II, Ethnomusicology I/II)	0 of 4
Obafemi Awolowo University	0 within Music course codes (Yoruba content exists only as Linguistics-coded YOR courses in the combined honours pathway)	Several (African Music I/II, African Music Theory I/II, Theory and Analysis of African Music, African Musicology)	0 of 5
Olabisi Onabanjo University	0	Several (African Music I/II, African Instrumental and Dance Ensemble, African Dance and Opera, African Musicology)	0 of 2

Table 1: Comparative Coding of Yoruba-Specific and General African Course Titles Across Three Southwest Nigerian University Music Curricula

Discussion

These results are now discussed in the light of the study's two objectives and drawing upon the literature review above. In relation to the first objective, the presence of Yoruba tonal and compositional principles is low across the three music curricula. The highest nominal presence is at Ajayi Crowther University, where two courses are explicitly titled 'Oyo material,' reflecting Adeogun's (2018) characterisation of indigenous content as primarily persisting as additive features of a curriculum rather than embedded within its structure.

Obafemi Awolowo University displays a clearly distinct institutional path for engagement with Yoruba content, through a Music/Yoruba Combined Honours degree. However, the Yoruba content offered in that path is language and literature, rather than music theory, an institutional practice that extends beyond Adeogun (2018, 2021) and Agawu's (2016) predictions, and a finding unique to this study. Olabisi Onabanjo University demonstrates the least differentiation of the three, lumping all indigenous content under the broad label of "African" without specific mention of Yoruba, and is therefore aligned with Okafor's (2005) generalisation of the assimilation of indigenous content into broad regional categories.

In relation to the second objective, the adequacy of these curricula for fostering indigenous Yoruba tonal and compositional knowledge in composition training per se is poor across all three institutions, based on title-level data. The musicology/ethnographic vs music-compositional theory dichotomy identified by Agawu (2016) is directly reflected in the Findings: where Yoruba or African content exists in the curriculum, it is located in courses listed under musicology, appreciation, or ensemble performance. It is not found in any Composition course. This is the same placement where a formal engagement with Owoaje's (2020) Yoruba compositional technique would need to be located, should it be offered as composition theory rather than as ethnomusicological background. Because the Yoruba tonal aspect is absent from the composition curriculum at any of the three universities, the data indicate that a composition graduate from any programme in these three universities may complete the degree without any instruction in Yoruba tonal or compositional principles throughout their designated composition training sequence.

A specific comment on the Olabisi Onabanjo finding is in order here. A Music/Yoruba combined honours degree, on the surface, would indicate a stronger intention towards engagement with Yoruba content than at either other university in this study. The fact that the Yoruba portion of this degree consists of language and literature suggests that institutional commitment to Yoruba content alone is insufficient to encourage the inclusion of Yoruba tonal or compositional principles in composition pedagogy. It reinforces Yende and Yende's (2022) thesis that the

curricularisation of indigenous knowledge requires dedicated pedagogical commitment and the reformation of assessment criteria.

It is important to situate these Findings in light of the limitations of the present study. Due to the purposive sampling methodology used, the results pertain only to the three universities studied and cannot be generalised to Southwest Nigerian universities as a whole. Given that the analysis was based solely on document titles and that the courses listed in the documents lacked detailed descriptions, the present study has identified where Yoruba content is located in the curricula, but cannot determine what is taught in those courses. A course labelled "Composition I" could potentially include Yoruba tonal material and still not bear this in the title. A course description or interview analysis with the composition lecturers for these courses is the logical next step to verify or refute this initial title-level finding.

Conclusion

This investigation explored the extent to which Yoruba tonal and compositional principles are embedded in the music Composition curricula at Ajayi Crowther University, Obafemi Awolowo University, and Olabisi Onabanjo University in Southwest Nigeria, using document analysis (i.e., examination of published curriculum structures) at each institution. It concludes that Yoruba-specific module names were infrequent, found only at Ajayi Crowther University, and that none of the three institutions explicitly places Yoruba compositional or tonal materials in their main, single-honours Composition sequence. Where a programme makes specific arrangements for interaction with Yoruba material, for example, the OAU combined honours, such arrangements were made by offering language and literary, rather than theory or compositional courses and the structure of the single honours Composition sequence at OAU remained unaltered from its position in a single honours music programme.

Based on the evidence from the three curricula analysed here, none had adequate capacity to teach Yoruba tonal and compositional knowledge within its current programme for contemporary composition. The recommendation arising from this study is that all such institutions in the region should review their 100, 200, 300 and 400 level Composition module descriptions in order to search out and explicitly include Yoruba tone, rhythmic and formal material as actual subject matter within the curriculum as opposed to merely being an area of specialisation within a musicology or ensemble context. Secondly, where any institution introduces pathways such as OAU's dual focus on music and the language and literature of Yoruba, they should also compare the content of any Composition modules offered within these pathways with that of the single-honours programmes. If any variation or absence occurs, they should address this specifically.

The scope of this research was restricted by its purposeful sampling of just three institutions, and its examination was limited by the use of module titles alone without recourse to any associated module descriptions. Subsequent research should focus on expanding this to a broader sample, preferably a more systematic one, and on gaining

access to module descriptions or conducting interviews with lecturers to learn about actual pedagogical practice in module content where module names are ambiguous.

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