Recontextualization of Music Cultures: Possible and Impossible

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ABSTRACT

Ethnomusicologists have undergone several types of research of music cultures of the world. These studies had led to myriads of findings that have given shape to the ethnographic study in field of music and allied disciplines. As much as findings revealed various components of music cultures of many ethnic descents, much is yet to be discovered about the determination of how the recontextualization process affects the transfer of various elements of the music cultures. This paper through historical analysis of existing literature assists to investigate and suggest elements of music culture that cannot evade possible transfer and those thoughts of as unnecessary in the process of recontextualization. The discourse also gives explicit definition to music as found in culture as well as music as culture itself. To conclude the discussion, the paper positions the fact that every music culture has critical elements and these if compromised during recontextualization endanger the music culture identity and leads to the chaotic perceptual definition in the original context.

Keywords: recontextualization, music-culture, possible, impossible, immigrant, host, critical, *soundscape*, *biophony*, transnationalism, bi-musicality, enculturation, culturalism

INTRODUCTION

To understand the term 'music culture', one must explore separately the meanings of the two words 'music' and 'culture'. Over several decades, musicologists and ethnomusicologists conceded that the better place to understand the meaning of music is the culture in which music is situated. To start with, Herndon and McLeod, 1979:12) state "the distinction between music and noise is never an absolute one, but rather, a matter of cultural conditioning, personal idiosyncrasies, and group identity. What is accepted as music by one group or generation may be ignored or dismissed by another? As a human activity, then, music is culturally defined". Merriam, (1960:109), indicates "In other words, I believe that music can be studied not only from the standpoint of musicians and humanists, but from that of social scientists as well, and that, further, it is at the moment from the field of cultural anthropology that our primary stimulation is coming for the study of music as a universal aspect of man's activities." This alludes to the fact that music makes well-meaning in culture as a culture. According to Titon (2009), music is universal but its meaning differs due to the diversity of cultures. This diversity came as a result of learning and transmitting cultural heritage from one generation to the other. The cultural inheritance according to Titon informs the people in understanding their situations and responding to such situations. "Culture is a set of shared and enduring meanings, values, and beliefs that characterize national, ethnic, and other groups and orient their behaviour" (Faure & Sjostedt 1993:3). Culture in general is a way of life of a group of people. This way of life involving music and all its associated beliefs are known as **music culture.** A music culture can refer to a single human's culture of a transnational group. So then, family, community, region or a nation even religious groups can form a musical culture. Within the music culture, can be found sub-music-culture that can be identified based on genres. For example, Borborbor music-culture, Adowa music-culture, Kpanlogo music-culture and so on (Titon, 2009:2-3).

According to Boyce (1979), culture and music are reciprocal in that culture affects musical behaviour and music on the other hand influences the culture in which it is fashioned. Similarly, Titon's position on understanding music cultures is that one must not have the preconceived mind to comprehend a particular music culture. So, to understand music cultures outside one's domain, there is the need to "get out" of one's cultural terms completely. In other words, one may be ethnocentric judging a piece of music as bad when the standard of another is used. In defining music then, Titon, therefore, explains that not all music cultures have an idea of music; some music cultures have no words for it while others have a word that roughly translates into English as "music". Understanding and making meaning of music may depend on our terms (Titon, 2009:3). Corroborating the stand of Titon, Trehub, Becker and Morley (2015:2) indicate "many languages, including most North American Indian languages and several languages in Africa such as that of the Basongye of Zaire or the Tiv of Nigeria, have names for individual genres of music but do not have a cover term that includes all of their musical genres". Barton (2018), states "to deeply explore the notion of how culture and society are reflected in music one needs to understand the meanings associated with it". Again Clarke, DeNora, and Vuoskoski (2015:12) suggest "If music can effect change, and speak across barriers, it can also offer a means of intercultural understanding and identity work". Therefore, Cook (1998: 129) was of the view that: "If both music and musicology are ways of creating meaning rather than just of representing it, then we can see music as a means of gaining insight into the cultural or historical other"

However, there is a need to establish a global understanding of music. In this vein, we look at what all music cultures have in common as a general phenomenon. This may involve perception differences between music and non-music. These perception differences may be considered as rudiments such as rhythm, melody, harmony, meter, repetition, variations etc. (Titon, 2009). He further explains that people in music cultures organize sounds into musical patterns which vary across cultures and these patterns of sound are called **music.** Understanding the guiding principles (rudiments) in music depends on our understanding of how music-cultures worldwide practice these organizing principles. In other words, music performance moves along based on agreed-on rules and procedures. And this defines music in performance as meaningful organized sound (Titon. 2009:16). Therefore, performance is situated in the community as people's music-culture and the relationship between the community and the music makers affects music-culture adversely or otherwise. Again, the past, present and future history of the community reflects changes in the rules governing music thereby affecting music and its human relations. Historians, music critics and the digital revolution also alter the effect of music by influencing the stock of ideas about music (Titon, 2009:17-18).

The dichotomy of 'music in culture' and 'music as culture'

In search for the comprehensive meaning of ethnomusicology, Alan P. Merriam postulates a tripartite guiding principle as concept, behaviour and sound which meet the demand of modern ethnographic research (Merriam, 1960:109). In understanding the phenomenon further, Merriam defines ethnomusicology as the study of music in culture: "It is considerations such as these, then, which lead me to a proposal of a definition of ethnomusicology, not as the study of extra-European music, but as "the study of music in culture." Aigul, Zhanat, Aizhan, Aizhan , Roza and Saule (2016:5172), state "If to consider culture as an extensive semiotic system, then music and musical culture can be interpreted as a certain musical concept sphere, reflecting the peculiarities of consciousness, perception, reproduction and transmission of musical information in the culture".

It is observed that music in culture is an embodiment of musical beliefs, practices and performances in one or groups of genres as an entity within a cultural setting; examples such as 'atsyiagbekor' ensemble, 'gabada' ensemble, 'sekyi' ensemble, 'akpi' ensemble etc. are types of genres performed within diverse cultures. The extent to which performance practices of a genre is perceived in a particular culture may depend upon the message communicated and its socio-cultural functions. To be more precise, my observation leads to the fact that any musical culture (beliefs, practices, performances and perception) or

scene (the totality of the act of music) either practiced by individuals or groups located within a specific cultural context is said to be music in the culture. "Because musical performances are socially and culturally situated, they come to be ethically saturated as well. Our deepest values may be implied by participation in a particular genre of music…" (Trehub, Becker & Morley, 2015:2). To this end, the scope of perception of this phenomenon (music in culture) could further be magnified to cover ethnic, national, religious, and economic paradigms to reflect the higher level of cultural imagination. For instance, I perceive that in the culture of specific religion such as Christianity, one can mention *gospel music*, in the culture of a nation like Ghana, *highlife music* is indicative and ethnic culture such as the Ewe, the *borborbor dance* for example are the best to explain the connection between music and culture.

Music as culture presumably contains definite characteristics that define the culture in perspective and indicative embodiment of music-culture. This explains the embodiment of cultural elements in the music that reflects the very foundation of the cultural identity. The question is what are the elements of culture that permeate music to reflect cultural identity? I draw on the definition of culture by the anthropologist, Tylor (1871) that states that *culture "is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."* Music is a way culture expresses itself therefore a complex phenomenon. *The basic elements of culture applicable to this paper involve: values, beliefs, norms, symbols and language that are clear embodiments of music. According to Schafer (1977:7), the musical environment of a society is an indicator of the social condition of the evolution of such a society. Schafer states "for some time I have also believed that the general acoustic environment of a society can be read as an indicator of social conditions which produce it and may tell us much about the trending and evolution of that society". In his assertion, the music reflects the developmental process of society as a cultural rendition. Describing the phenomenon, one could vividly link the dichotomy between music and culture to the statement in the Bible attributed to the Jesus of Nazareth-"I and the Father are one" (John 10:30, ASV). Furthermore, this discourse perceives 'music in culture' revealing and assuming the attributes of culture and as culture. In my opinion, culture creates music, music makes culture and the two are inseparable and indispensable.*

*In addition to the above, the two perspectives of culture; material and non-material are also reflective in Murray Schafer's concept of **soundscape;** characteristic of sounds of a particular place as both human and non-human, a process of describing how musical sounds is organized. Music culture can therefore be perceived as material and non-material in terms of the material culture of music and sound production by participants. The combination of these material cultures and multiple sounds as ascribed to Bernie Kraus's concept of **biophony** (combined voices of living things) reveal the complexity of this discourse and the possible interchangeability of music and culture to the consideration of the 21ˢᵗ century. Ethnomusicologists.*

The four components of music-culture by Titon; the idea about music (how people conceptualized music in terms of history, belief, context, and aesthetics), activities involving music (on what occasion is music performed, e.g. incidental, occasional, recreational), repertoires of music (available musical genres, styles, text, composition, transmission and movements) and the materials culture of music (tangible things such as costumes, types of instruments, etc.) not only reflect the elements of culture but also perform the cultural roles in the society (Titon, 2009:18-19). Language as a major cultural identity element upon which music transmit clear messages in terms of social controls, regulating social norms as well as inculcating acceptable societal values attest to its ability to represent a culture to an alien. Above all, music as a way of life cannot be perceived in totality as a culture but as part of the whole; without music, culture is incomplete. In any case one may ask, could they be any society with culture without music?

In the discourse of music-culture, one may look at the dynamic nature of culture vis-à-vis music as a universal language as asserted by Higgins (2012) and cited in Cochrane (2015). This implies that one music culture can be influenced and affected by another. Across the world, music cultures are diffused and

enculturated by others through propelling agents of *transnationalism* (Azcona, 2005). The possible factors that account for these foreign exchanges include: media, migration, modernization and westernization and their resultant effects are interculturalism, fluidity of culture, blurring of cultures and globalization. According to Mantle Hood, this process of adding other music cultures to one's original culture hybridizes the default culture and gives it a transformed mode. Hood calls this add-on process *bi-musicality* (Hood, 1960).

TRANSFERABLE AND NON-TRANSFERABLE

The Merriam Webster Online Dictionary defines recontextualization as "to place (something, such as a literary or artistic work) in a different context". Oxford Reference online Dictionary further explains the term as 'taking something from its usual context and resituating it in an unfamiliar context". In other words, it is a process of resituating a phenomenon in an unfamiliar context outside the original. It reveals the reinvention of the original phenomenon or reimagining; in this case music in a contrasting context. Wikipedia (the free encyclopedia online) states "recontextualization is a process that extracts text, signs or meaning from its original context (contextualization) and reuses it in another context. Since the meaning of texts, signs and content is dependent on its context, recontextualization implies a change of meaning and redefinition". Theoretically, Hanninen (2003:61) says

"Listening to this passage is pleasantly peculiar, the shifting nuances and delicate vanishings of its figures intriguing. While I can abstract from the musical surface to recognize the individual repetitions as repetitions, as a listener I am rather drawn into their subtle and persistent phenomenal transformation. This is the kind of aural experience I am interested in—one that revels in the misfit between repetition as a concept and how, on certain occasions, a "repetition" may be effectively transformed by a change in a musical context. To give this kind of experience (and our subject) a name, I offer the term recontextualization.

Hanninen's perception about the definition of the term *recontextualization* provides a ground for ethnographic study accepting the fact that the term connotes repetition of a sort. This repetition experiences a change or transformation. The change or the transformation is concomitant to the cultural context of the phenomenon, and this corroborates the definition stated by Wikipedia. The implication is clear in the sense that recontextualization could be a translation of a complete or part of the elemental block of music culture phenomenon from a similar to dissimilar context. In support of the above, Hanninen (2003:61) reiterates "It is a strange kind of repetition—better, an estranged repetition, in which repetition doesn't sound (primarily) like repetition". By this, I ask, what constitutes this strange kind of repetition-better an estranged repetition and what necessitates the strange or estrangement?

In the case of music culture translation as well as its transformation, I observe that it provides a mind-boggling discourse that is eminent for ethnomusicologists' engagement to decipher elements that cannot evade complete transfer from those thoughts as unnecessary. Recontextualization does not mean loss of identity and originality of the phenomena; neither does it engage the process of mutilating nor disregarding the values and beliefs but seeks reimagining and reinstating the musical culture 'outside home'. Like many others, recontextualization fall largely to subjectivity only if all agree that cultural experiences vary across different domains (ethnic, religious, political, economic etc.) and that exactly is the case. However, I hold this opinion irrespective of any other assertions by other authorities that, the process is not completely devoid of structural hurly-burlies. Another important discourse that may ensue for the engagement of ethnomusicologists bothers on the methodology for the determination of these essential possible music culture elements since culture is considered as "an extensive semiotic system" (Aigul, Zhanat, Aizhan, Aizhan , Roza & Saule (2016:5172) and perceived differently across the globe.

In identifying what is possible and impossible for repeating or transferring, another kind of cultural revival

is possible that may shake the foundation of the existing structures of the historical or traditional and socio-cultural context of the phenomenon. Hill and Bithell (2014:2), argue, "revival agents usually have agendas specific to their socio-cultural or political contexts, and in this sense may also be regarded as activists. Second, identifying musical elements and practices as old, historical, or traditional, and determining their value, often involves selecting from or reinterpreting history and establishing new or revised historical narratives". This paper does not seek to reflect revival as perceived by Hill and Bithell (2014:2), "………an effort to perform and promote music that is valued as old or historical and is usually perceived to be threatened or moribund" but a "….. phenomenal transformation of repetition prompted by a change in context" (Hanninen, 2003:64). Hanninen further explains "If a quotation is simply set down in a new context rather than more actively transplanted, there is no recontextualization" (p.64). In other words, determining the possible transferable music culture elements to dissimilar contexts, the new environment must be ready and actively involved. Conditions capable of precipitating recontextualization must properly be examined to avoid a prolonged system and structural resistance from the host context as Hill and Bithell (2014) put it 'the elements of activism and recontextualization inherent in revivals necessitate the establishment of legitimacy, to persuade others to accept the musical and cultural changes being promoted and to allow the appropriating group to be perceived as legitimate culture-bearers". To the appropriating group in the new context, the phenomenon is completely alien but to the culture custodians 'we are doing our thing in the new place we find ourselves'.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Music culture is said to have embedded musical elements. In any case, the absence of these embedded elements is likely to render the music culture unidentifiable. As indicated earlier referring to the four components of music culture outlined by Titon (2009): the idea about music, activities involving music, repertoires of music and the materials culture of music, the embedded elements of each component may be important. How does the music make meaning and give the real identity to the bearer of the culture in the new environment? Is there any musical elements that the bearers of the culture may deem very necessary, I refer to as **critical elements** that cannot evade transfer during recontextualization in providing clear identity and meaning? There seemed to be little or no documentation clearly defining what these essential or non-essential elements are, if there is any. This discourse sought to investigate elements that are perceived as crucial and cannot be evaded (**impossible)** and those that are thought of as not critical and can escape transfer (**possible)** during the process of recontextualization**.**

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The study sought to interrogate the process of recontextualization in the context of music culture to find out musical elements that are essential for transfer and those that might not be necessary in making meaning and identity to the bearers of the culture and also to document the findings.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology for the study was qualitative modes of inquiry. These include; fieldwork and historical analysis of existing literature. The fieldwork provided the opportunity to observe indigenous music performances of students of various ethnic groups such as the Konkomba, Dagomba, Akan and Ewe at Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education, Bimbilla and face to face interactions with some selected indigenes of these ethnic groups in the Nanumba Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana. The existing scholarly literature analysis comparatively engaged various views opined on the recontextualization of similar indigenous music cultures not only in Ghana but also across the world.

The study not focusing on objectivity of results and findings therefore, provided subjective analysis of the

observations and interactions alongside the historical analysis to make case for the final findings and conclusions.

FINDINGS

The participant observation corroborated by the analysis of similar historical accounts on musical culture transmission processes indicated that;

1. *The observed ethnic groups have perception of certain musical elements such as context perception, performance perception and physical embodiment as critical to the process of recontextualization that cannot evade transfer since they give significant indication for meaning and identity.*
2. *Secondly, material mode and sense of belongingness are seemed not playing significant role in the meaning and identity of the bearer of the culture, therefore might not necessarily meet critical considerations.*
3. *Analysis of other related literature works also revealed that the above findings do not only apply to the groups under study but also create similar sense of meaning and identity across other music cultures of the world.*

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

1. ***Critical Elements that cannot evade transfer during recontextualization (Impossible)***

Context perception

This idea resonates with almost all music cultures of the world. The concept of perception cut across and engraved the most important cultural traits referred to as **belief** at the back of music culture. It answers the question of what, why, how of the existence of a piece of music in a particular community. In other words, the identity of a specific culture resides in the beliefs of the inhabitants. "The seed of recontextualization per se lies in the result of this continual renegotiation of borderline cases that is the idea" Hanninen, 2003:72). Again, she emphasizes that "the experience of recontextualization is inherently related to one's definition of the idea: how, whether, a "thing" (idea) sounds transformed by a change of context depends, of course, on what one considers the "thing" to be" (p.72). Recontextualizing a music culture, the idea underpinning the creation of the genre is a critical element upon which the entire phenomenon revolves therefore cannot be discarded. "For, a community performance is merely a representation of the ideal or reality-state stored in collective memory and manifested on a level of 'sensory experience' (Anku, 2007:2). For instance, the idea of good and bad music cannot be downplayed in many cultures of the world. According to Barroso (2013:509), "Human perception is more than just the ability to operate using the stimuli received by the brain. Although these stimuli are the origin of the construction of perception, the ability to assign meaning (approximate or precise) to those stimuli is learned throughout the life of every human and constitutes an emergent property in which an individual's 'domain knowledge' is based". What seems bad to one community may be overlooked by another and therefore, understanding the idea behind the music culture promotes effective collaboration between the 'immigrant' and 'host' in context; "because meaning or significance is essentially a cultural construct, what music means is determined by its cultures of production, distribution and reception" says Marc (2015:5).

Performance perception

It is observed that cultures all over the world create regulatory structures and indicators that link the societies to their heritage through music performance. Within a music culture, certain genres are reserved and associated with religious, political and economic activities. For instance, among the Ewes of Ghana, *avihawo*

(dirges) is a preserve for the dead and cannot be performed at any other function; so shall it be received in recontextualization dispensation. The type of music and occasion music is performed are synonymous and inseparable among many ethnic groups in Ghana such as the Dagomba, Konkomba, Akan and Ewe. This position was better explained when Agawu states "just as the rites accompanying birth, puberty, and marriage are performed in and through music, so death occasions some of the most distinctive forms of musical expression among the Akpafu" (Agawu, 1988:75). Ampomah (2014:117) corroborated Agawu's assertion and opines that "Adzewa, on the other hand, is an occasional music and dance of the Fanti-Akan and Guan people of the Central Region of Ghana performed mainly during traditional festivals and funerals." Performance perception also consists not only of the type and occasion but the text and its interpretation in context. Magnusson proposes that "as cultural phenomena (language), they are necessarily dependent on the medium through which they are expressed, the musical instruments and technologies" (Magnusson, 2021:179). In situating or reimagining one music culture in another, text as used in associated songs and instruments (e.g. drum-language) identifies and distinguishes one culture from the other. **Borborbor** will always remain *borborbor* if performed among the Yoruba of Nigeria despite being a popular music type of Ewes of Ghana; because of its specific structure of rhythmic language. Rhythm, therefore, is the transporter of song and instrumental text interpretation giving real meaning to the genre in the new context. This, Anku (2007:3) explains explicitly in his discourse on 'Inside the Master drummer's Mind' indicating "Events of the performance (which may include multiple instruments, a body of songs and dances) are all organized around this structural matrix, making it possible for performers to go in and out of the performance without much inhibition". In the new context, any slight change that may occur in the regulative beat or the timeline of the performance structure amounts to rejection and non-appreciation within the context of origin. Again, Anku (2007:2) reemphasizes this point when he states "interjecting a wide degree of tolerance in this communal performance process ultimately compensates for the obvious disparities, which may compromise manifestation of the ideal".

Physical embodiments

These critical elements are a non-human component of the music culture. In other words, some scholars together with Titon (2003) refer to this as the material culture of music. Magnusson (2021) discloses that music is grounded in materiality and embedded in history and tradition and the function and meaning of musical instruments change over time in the diverse musical cultures of the world. In his discourse Grame and Westrup (2020:1) assert that "whatever their origin, the further development of the enormously varied instruments of the world has been dependent on the interplay of four factors: available material, technological skills, mythic and symbolic preoccupations, and patterns of trade and migration". In any case, all the material cultures of music are not critically transferable elements. There are certain instruments associated with specific music types that are hard to ignore. For instance, it is impossible to substitute talking drums with *guitar* or *kora* in recontextualizing *fontomfrom* drums (atumpan) of Akan descent among the Wolof ethnic group of Senegal. Talking drums (atumpan) must sound to define *fontomfrom* else it will provide the chaotic and meaningless clue for identification as Grame and Westrup (2020:2) reveal that "the sound produced by an instrument can be affected by many factors, including the material from which the instrument is made, its size and shape, and the way that it is played". The identity and process of preservation paradigm of the recontextualization are endangered should the dominant element of the music culture be compromised; in this case, the drum is an example. The appearance of the instrument may differ by size or make-up but the sound and the language produced by the alternative instruments must reveal the true nature of its perception in the original context.

1. *Non-Critical Elements that cannot evade transfer during recontextualization (Impossible)*

Material mode

Diversity in musical instruments across cultures compensates for the substitution of one instrument for

another. Indeed if recontextualization is to ride at the back of improvisation, then material substitution such as drums and costumes is possible irrespective of its physical outlook. Improvisation in this case not only means creating and using without preparation but also phenomenal inventiveness of the material mode in the dissimilar context. According to Magnusson (2021:179), "Instruments are material objects that travel geographical distances quickly and easily. They are adopted and adapted to new musical cultures, but those cultures, in turn, change because of the new musical object". The possible implication will mean imitated sound produced by a seemingly different or similar model of instrument. It is possible for *Borborbor* drum to substitute *Agbadza* drums such as *sogo and kagan*. This is to say that no matter the substitution, the sound produced is likely to have a minimum degree of discrimination of its identity. For this to work, the substitute material must be in a similar model to the substituted to avoid deep consequences on the repetition process during recontextualization. Magnusson (2021:179), "Through transmission and migration, an instrument thus enters a new ergo dynamic context, with ergomimesis being the process in which an existing pattern of practice, whether material (the design implemented in parts of the instrument) or immaterial (the motor memory of embodied training) is aligned to a new cultural context". For example, in the substitution process in the new context, the membranophone substitutes membranophone, idiophone for idiophone, and chordophone for chordophone. E.g.

Borborbor drum (*wuga*)   *Agbadza* drum (*atimewu*)

Fig. 1.

Substitute   substituted
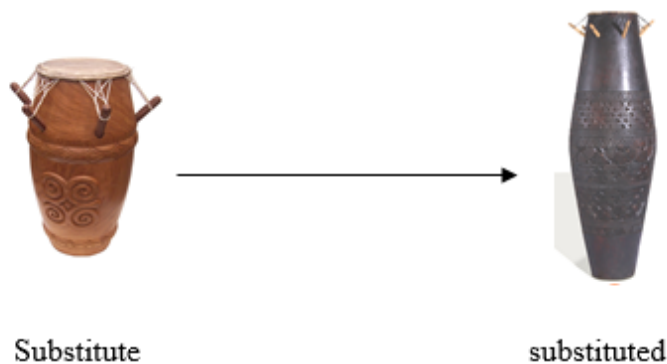
The above shows how possible it is to evade the transfer of *atimewu* in recontextualizing *the Agbadza* ensemble of the *Anglos* in the *Ewedome* context.

Typical Cameroonian double bell   typical *gakogui* among Ewes of Ghana

Fig. 2.

Substitute   Substituted

Recontextualizing *borborbor* or *agbada* of Ewes of Ghana among *Bantus* of Cameroon.

Consequently, technological inventions have changed over the years and therefore challenged the 'impossible' through electronic synthesizers. There are prerecorded drum kits available to generate drum

tones however, one critical aspect of music culture transfer, the technique of performance eludes its acceptance of the reality.

Sense of belongingness

One of the factors necessitating recontextualization of music culture results from migration. In every cultural setting membership identity is judged by one's level of participation which is an element of the music cultures of Africa. Usually, the participation is based on the willingness of the individual whereas, in some other cultures, participation may be compulsory depending upon the individual's beliefs or religious inclinations. However, through migration, the recontextualization of music culture is reflected through people of the same ethnicity 'performing their own thing in the new context' amidst all environmental exigencies. The sense of belongingness on the part of the people of the new culture is not forced not until the recontextualised culture gains ground and appeals to them. According to Cherry (2021:2), people seek belongingness because they share certain points of commonality. This commonality is factored in by popular culture interests, religious beliefs, shared goals and socioeconomic status. Once the concept of belongingness is not coercion and as part of non-material, this phenomenon is possible to be evaded at the early stage because its effect may be insignificant.

Acceptability of performance in the dissimilar context may greatly depend on interest. Cherry notes that "people also spend a great deal of time comparing themselves to other members of the group to determine how well they fit in. This social comparison might lead an individual to adopt some of the same behaviours and attitudes of the most prominent members of the group to conform and gain greater acceptance" (Cherry, 2021:2). For instance, cultures that appropriate stage performance such as the west initially may be culturally indignant with cultures of communal dispensations over time.

CONCLUSION

Ethnomusicologists have focused on appropriate ways of studying music in various cultures across the world. Phenomenologists are of the view that the best understanding of various cultures is embedded in human experiences and the way they present themselves (Sokolowski 2000). These human experiences as culture can be transferred and transformed through the process of recontextualization which seeks to reinstate or reimagine one music culture in another of dissimilar context. It is impossible to define music without its relation to the culture in which the music is situated. Therefore, music and culture are inseparable. The concern to any ethnomusicologists is the role music play as an element in culture and its representative role as culture.

Music is contextual; meaning the understanding of music is embodied in the culture. It can therefore be perceived by diverse cultures from a different cultural perspective. What makes meaning as music to one culture may not be the same with another. Therefore, the ethnography of music is best situated in the context of culture. In studying music, it must be considered as a human activity of the culture (music in culture) as well as culture itself (music as culture). As cultural activity and culture itself, it is practiced by individuals or groups situated in a specific cultural context. Culture affects musical behaviour and music in turn influences the culture in which it is created.

Recontextualizing music culture, there are bound to be slight changes or transformations in the original context. The transfer process is likely not to involve all the elements of the transferring context. The phenomenon calls for investigation of the possible transferable elements that cannot be evaded which when happened, renders the identity of the original context unacceptable. To ascertain these possible and impossible, ethnographic study must investigate necessary factors that underpin the recontextualization paradigm.

This paper concludes that recontextualization must consider the identity and process of preservation in order not to endanger the phenomenon should the dominant element of the music culture be compromised. In other words, the slightest change that may occur in the regulative beat or the timeline of the performance structure of the original context amounts to rejection and non-appreciation of the music culture by its originators. In substituting music materials, they must be in a similar model to the substituted to avoid deep consequences on the repetition process during recontextualization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is recommended for curriculum planners, tutors and practioners of indigenous music in schools and colleges towards teaching and appreciating indigenous music in the context of culture. To the ethnomusicologists, changes in technology has challenged the transfer of dominant music culture elements in terms of prerecorded drum kits that generate drum tones. However, the issue of critical aspect of music culture transfer and the technique of performance is still a bother to the acceptance of reality by the culture bearer. This study therefore, recommends further study in the area of the impact of technology on the recontextualization of indigenous music.

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