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## PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES AND CULTURAL VALUES IN NNWONKORO

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### Abstract

*Nnwonkoro, a traditional female choral musical type among the Ashanti of Ghana, serves as artistic expression and an educational tool for transmitting cultural values, ethics, and historical narratives. Despite its cultural significance, scholarly engagement with its pedagogical dimensions remains limited, with most existing research focusing on its performance traditions. This has left a gap in understanding the instructional methods and social values embedded in vocal traditions such as Nnwonkoro. This study addresses this gap by exploring the pedagogical approaches inherent in Nnwonkoro music and how they contribute to knowledge transmission within Ashanti communities. Using an ethnographic research design—including participant observation, interviews with practitioners, as well as discographic engagement—the study examines various pedagogical dimensions of Nnwonkoro that can inform music teaching and learning in Ghanaian schools. Additionally, it highlights cultural values embedded in Nnwonkoro performance, such as social cohesion, respect for elders, and the reinforcement of gender roles. Findings suggest that Nnwonkoro is not merely an artistic performance but a vital pedagogical tool that integrates music with social and moral instruction. The study contributes to broader discourses on indigenous African music education and offers practical insights into how traditional musical type like Nnwonkoro can be adapted into contemporary educational frameworks, particularly through culturally responsive curriculum design and community-based pedagogies.*

**Keywords:** Nnwonkoro, Ashanti, pedagogy, Oral tradition, indigenous music, education, cultural values

### 1. Introduction

*Nnwonkoro* is a traditional female choral musical genre among the Ashanti people of Ghana. Rooted in oral tradition, it functions as both an artistic and social medium for storytelling, historical documentation, and the reinforcement of moral and ethical values. Just like the Dynamics of Music Making in Dagbon Society as described by Phyfferoen (2022), *Nnwonkoro* provides a communal platform to address social justice, gender roles, and community life. Its musical structure—characterised by call-and-response singing, rhythmic handclapping, and occasional percussive accompaniment—creates an engaging, participatory performance experience. Historically, *Nnwonkoro*

has been an integral component of Ashanti socio-cultural life as Ampene (1999) indicates. It is performed at festivals, funerals, social gatherings and other communal events. Through performance, messages of wisdom, social commentary, and historical memory are transmitted intergenerationally. While ethnomusicologists and creative ethnographers have studied *Nnwonkoro* as a musical oral tradition, its pedagogical significance remains underexplored, particularly within the context of music education scholarship.

In many African societies, music serves not only as artistic expression but also as a powerful tool for education and cultural continuity (Agordoh, 2005). Pedagogical approaches embedded in traditional musical practices shape how such music is learnt, sustained, and socially understood. Yet, these indigenous methods are often marginalised in formal educational systems that privilege Western paradigms of music instruction. This gap limits our understanding of how vocal traditions like *Nnwonkoro* function as educational systems in their own right. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the pedagogical approaches inherent in *Nnwonkoro* and their role in transmitting cultural values within Ashanti communities. It aims to show that *Nnwonkoro* is not merely a musical performance, but a dynamic instructional tool for social and moral education. The research contributes to the growing discourse on indigenous African music education and provides insights into how such traditions can be meaningfully integrated into contemporary educational frameworks.

According to Grossman (2009), pedagogy refers to the art, science, and method of teaching, including curriculum design, instructional methods, assessment, and student engagement (Shah & Campus, 2021). In the context of *Nnwonkoro*, pedagogy encompasses the ways in which knowledge of the genre is transmitted, learnt, and preserved. Cultural values, as defined by Khan (2023), are shared beliefs, norms, and principles that shape a community's behavior, traditions, and identity. Within *Nnwonkoro*, these values include social cohesion, respect for elders, gender roles, and moral instruction. In this regard, this paper examines how *Nnwonkoro* embodies these values and transmits them through indigenous pedagogical methods. The study then offers practical insights into how it can inform music curriculum design and support the inclusion of Ghanaian traditional music in both formal and informal learning settings.

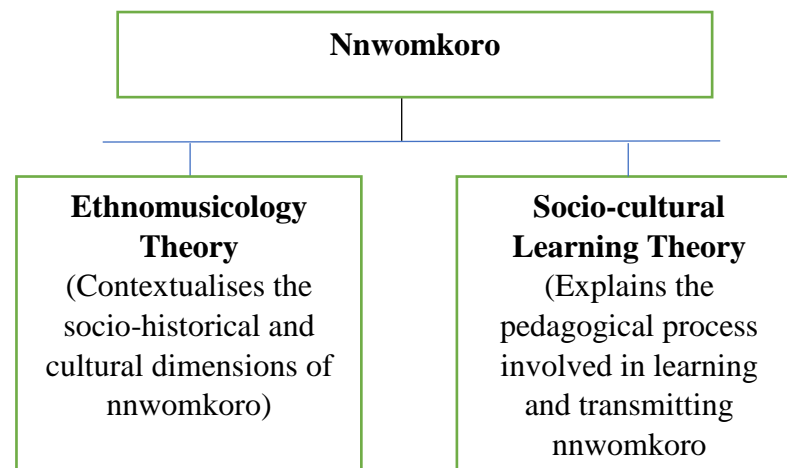
## **2. Theoretical Perspectives**

This study is underpinned by two key theoretical frameworks: Ethnomusicology Theory (Nettl, 2005) and Sociocultural Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978). These perspectives provide a comprehensive lens for examining both the pedagogical and cultural dimensions of *Nnwonkoro* within Ashanti society. Ethnomusicology Theory, as advanced by Nettl (2005), views music as not merely an artistic product but a social and cultural phenomenon. It emphasises the role of music in communication, social organisation, identity formation, and cultural continuity. In the case of *Nnwonkoro*, this framework is particularly relevant as the genre is deeply embedded in the historical and communal life of the Ashanti people. *Nnwonkoro* serves as a medium for expressing communal values, preserving oral histories, and promoting moral instruction. The study draws on ethnomusicological principles to analyse how this genre functions as a tool for intergenerational knowledge transmission, especially in contexts where formal notation is absent and learning occurs through oral tradition and participatory performance.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Learning Theory (1978) complements this by focusing on how learning occurs through social interaction and cultural engagement. According to Vygotsky, cognitive development is mediated by cultural tools such as language, symbols, and shared practices. Applied to *Nnwonkoro*, this theory helps explain how knowledge of the genre is acquired through communal rehearsal, mentorship, observation, imitation, and peer collaboration. Instruction is deeply embedded in performance practices and everyday interactions, reflecting indigenous pedagogical strategies. Together, these theories allow for a holistic analysis of *Nnwonkoro* as both a cultural artefact and an

educational practice. Ethnomusicology situates the genre within its socio-historical context, while Sociocultural Learning Theory clarifies the mechanisms through which musical knowledge and cultural values are transmitted. This integrated framework strengthens understanding of *Nnwonkoro* as a genre that simultaneously educates, socialises and preserves cultural identity. The theoretical framework is illustrated below.

### 3. Theoretical Framework



From the diagram, it is explained that the study is anchored in two interrelated theoretical perspectives: Ethnomusicology Theory as articulated by Nettl (2005) and Sociocultural Learning Theory by Vygotsky (1978). Ethnomusicology provides the cultural lens through which *Nnwonkoro* is understood not only as a musical tradition but as a medium of social organisation, communication, and identity construction. From this perspective, *Nnwonkoro* is examined as a cultural repository—transmitting historical narratives, reinforcing gender roles, and promoting moral instruction through communal performance practices. Simultaneously, Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Learning Theory offers insight into how knowledge of *Nnwonkoro* is transmitted through observation, imitation, and social interaction. It emphasises learning as a mediated, culturally situated process—one that is embodied in the oral, participatory, and intergenerational nature of *Nnwonkoro* pedagogy. Together, these theories support the study’s dual focus: to explore the pedagogical approaches inherent in *Nnwonkoro* and to identify the cultural values encoded in its performance. The theoretical framework highlights *Nnwonkoro*’s relevance as both a pedagogical tool and a cultural expression, offering valuable implications for integrating traditional knowledge systems into Ghana’s contemporary educational frameworks.

### 4. Review of Related Literature

The review of existing literature on the pedagogical approaches and cultural values in Ghanaian indigenous music, particularly *Nnwonkoro*, provides insights into its significance as both an artistic and educational tool. This section examines scholarship on indigenous African music education, oral traditions in musical transmission, and the socio-cultural functions of *Nnwonkoro* within the Ashanti community.

#### **4.1 Indigenous African Music as an Educational Tool**

Indigenous African music has long served as a powerful educational tool, transmitting knowledge, values, history and cultural identity across generations. Rooted in oral traditions, music in African societies is more than just an artistic expression; it is a functional medium for teaching and learning various aspects of life, including ethics, history, social structures and practical skills. African societies have historically relied on oral traditions for the preservation and dissemination of knowledge. Indigenous music, often embedded with proverbs, folktales, and historical narratives, functions as a repository of communal wisdom. Many other scholars have given exposure to emphasise that indigenous African music serves as a dynamic means of communication, passing down ancestral knowledge and societal norms (Dogara et al., 2021; Gbolonyo, 2009; Nzewi et al., 2008). This educational function has been laid by these scholars in genres such as Anlo-Ewe drum poetry, Akan dirges, and Yoruba praise songs, which encapsulate historical events and philosophical reflections.

Again, indigenous African music plays a crucial role in moral and ethical instruction. Through songs, children and young adults learn values such as respect, honesty, responsibility, and communal cooperation. Lullabies and children's play songs, for instance, carry subtle messages about acceptable behaviour, while initiation songs used in rites of passage ceremonies reinforce societal expectations. This is why Nketia (1992) notes that African societies use music to instruct young people on the virtues of patience, endurance and social responsibility. For instance, when it comes to language acquisition and literacy skills, they are facilitated through indigenous African music (Mukela, 2014). Many African songs involve call-and-response structures, which enhance listening skills, memory retention, and verbal dexterity (Adongo, 2020). In various communities, indigenous music serves as a foundational tool for learning indigenous languages, ensuring linguistic continuity (Prest & Goble, 2021). The rhythmic nature of traditional songs further aids in pronunciation, vocabulary development, and comprehension, making music a vital component of indigenous language education (Finnegan, 2012).

Beyond moral and linguistic education, indigenous African music supports vocational training. Occupational songs among fisher folk, farmers and hunters provide practical instructions on traditional trades and crafts. These work songs help learners internalise key processes and techniques while fostering teamwork and discipline. Among the Hausa of Nigeria, for instance, blacksmithing songs teach apprentices the rhythmic coordination required for metalwork, while among the Sefwi of Ghana, farming songs reinforce agricultural knowledge and techniques (Mode & Zaki, 2025).

In this regard, education in Africa is not solely about individual development but also about fostering communal harmony. Indigenous African music promotes social cohesion by instilling a sense of belonging and reinforcing collective identity (Enwere, 2024). Again, festivals, communal dances, and group performances provide avenues for younger generations to understand their cultural heritage (Gómez-Ullate & Saraiva, 2024). Through participatory music-making, individuals learn cooperation, leadership and conflict resolution, all of which are essential for social stability (Chernoff, 1979).

Furthermore, in modern educational settings, indigenous African music continues to be relevant, consequently, a number of schools in Africa have incorporated traditional musical forms into their curricula to enhance cultural appreciation and creative learning. Ethnomusicologists advocate for the integration of indigenous musical elements into formal education, arguing that it promotes cognitive development and critical thinking (Nzewi, 2023). Additionally, initiatives such as drumming workshops, storytelling through music, and indigenous music ensembles in schools provide students with experiential learning opportunities that bridge tradition and modernity (Agawu, 2003).

In essence, indigenous African music remains a vital educational tool, shaping individuals and communities through knowledge transmission, moral instruction, language development, vocational training and social integration. Indeed, while modern educational systems largely prioritise Western pedagogies, incorporating indigenous African musical traditions into formal learning structures can enrich educational experiences and preserve cultural heritage. Educators can foster holistic learning that aligns with both traditional and contemporary African contexts.

#### **4.2 Cultural Values in Traditional Music**

Traditional music serves as a vital repository of cultural values, embodying the social norms, ethical principles, and historical narratives of a community. Traditional music plays a crucial role in fostering social unity and reinforcing a sense of belonging within a community. Scholars such as Liu et al. (2024) highlight how African traditional music functions as a collective experience that strengthens group identity. Through communal drumming, singing, and dancing, members of a society internalise values such as cooperation, respect, and social harmony. Similarly, Blacking (1973) explains that traditional music in many societies is structured to encourage participation, promoting inclusivity and group solidarity. Certainly, music has long been used as a tool for imparting moral values and ethical lessons. In many traditional societies, songs contain proverbs, allegories and didactic narratives that teach desirable virtues such as honesty, patience, humility and hard work. Finnegan (2012) notes that oral traditions embedded in music provide a non-formal education system where younger generations learn societal expectations through performance and storytelling. For instance, among the Akan of Ghana, folk songs often address themes of communal responsibility and the consequences of unethical behaviour.

Factually, traditional music serves as an archive of historical events, transmitting knowledge about ancestry, lineage and past societal experiences. This is accentuated by numerous cultures employing music as an oral historical record, preserving stories of wars, migrations, and governance structures. Agawu (2003) explains that music functions as a "living history book" that ensures cultural continuity by keeping historical narratives alive. In indigenous African societies, for example, griots and praise singers play a critical role in recounting historical events through musical performances, ensuring that cultural heritage is passed down through generations.

Correspondingly, traditional music is deeply intertwined with spiritual and religious practices which spans across different cultures, where music is an integral part of rituals, ceremonies, and worship. Nketia (1992) discusses how indigenous African music serves as a bridge between the physical and spiritual realms, reinforcing values related to faith, reverence and sacredness. In many African, Asian, and Indigenous American traditions, specific musical forms are reserved for religious observances, often believed to invoke divine presence or ancestral spirits. Truly, while traditional music remains a stronghold of cultural values, globalisation and modernisation have introduced challenges and transformations. Scholars such as Turino (2008) examine how cultural values embedded in traditional music are being preserved, adapted, or reinterpreted in contemporary contexts. The incorporation of traditional elements into popular and fusion genres reflects efforts to maintain cultural heritage while embracing modern influences.

Certainly, cultural values are deeply implanted in traditional music, serving as a medium for social interconnection, moral education, historical continuity, and spiritual connection. As societies evolve, traditional music continues to adapt while preserving its core values. Understanding the role of traditional music in shaping cultural identity is essential for both preserving heritage and fostering intercultural dialogue.

### **4.3 Oral Tradition and Knowledge Transmission**

Oral tradition has been a primary mode of knowledge transmission in many societies, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Indigenous cultures across the world. It encompasses spoken words, folklore, storytelling, proverbs, music and other verbal expressions used to pass down history, customs, values and beliefs from one generation to another. Despite the rise of written and digital communication, oral tradition remains an essential cultural and educational tool. It also takes various forms, including myths, legends, epics, proverbs, folktales and songs. In the words of Finnegan (2012), oral tradition is not merely a passive means of storytelling but a dynamic process where knowledge is adapted and contextualised to suit changing times. Nketia (1992) emphasises that oral traditions are inherently performative, often involving music, dance and ritual elements that enhance memorisation and engagement. The transmission of knowledge through oral tradition occurs in structured and unstructured ways. Structured forms include rites of passage, formalised apprenticeship systems, and communal ceremonies, where elders or specialists pass on historical knowledge, ethical values and practical skills. Unstructured transmission occurs in daily interactions, where stories, proverbs and songs are shared informally within families and communities. Ong (1982) highlights that oral societies rely on repetition and mnemonic devices to ensure the accuracy and retention of knowledge over generations.

The advent and advancement of literacy, mass media, and digital technologies, has resulted in comprehensively little reliance on oral tradition in numerous societies. However, scholars like Ong (1982) argue that oral culture continues to influence modern communication, particularly in storytelling, mass media and music. Digital platforms, radio and film have become new avenues for preserving and disseminating oral traditions, allowing them to adapt while maintaining their essence. Fundamentally, oral tradition remains a crucial mechanism for knowledge transmission, holding a pivotal position in preserving history, culture and moral values. Though it faces challenges in contemporary society, its adaptability through modern technology ensures its continued relevance.

## **5. Method and Process**

This study adopted a qualitative research paradigm, employing an ethnographic research design to explore the pedagogical approaches and cultural values rooted in the Nnwonkoro musical genre among the Ashanti of Ghana. Ethnography was chosen for its capacity to provide in-depth insight into the lived experiences, instructional methods, and cultural significance of Nnwonkoro, a traditional female choral music type. Participants comprised members of the Manhyia Tete Nnwonkoro group and cultural educators in Kumasi Center for National Culture. A judgmental (purposive) sampling technique was employed to select individuals with substantial experience and cultural knowledge of the genre. This sampling ensured the inclusion of practitioners and educators who could provide rich, relevant data on both musical performance and pedagogical practices. The study utilised multiple data collection techniques to ensure triangulation and enhance the reliability and depth of the findings. Researchers actively attended rehearsals and live performances of the Manhyia Tete Nnwonkoro group. They engaged as both observers and participants, noting musical structures, performance practices, improvisational elements, and social interactions. Detailed field notes were recorded on vocal delivery, teaching cues, audience engagement, and the overall performance context. Again, interviews were conducted with group leaders and two cultural educators. The questions explored how Nnwonkoro is learnt and taught, the intergenerational transmission of musical knowledge, and the specific cultural values expressed in lyrics and performance practices. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and subjected to analysis.

Furthermore, existing video recordings of Nnwonkoro performances and relevant museum archives were reviewed to provide historical and visual context. This step helped to corroborate findings from live observation and interviews. Prior scholarly works on Nnwonkoro were also consulted to supplement the ethnographic data. Similarly, a collection of ten songs was compiled from field recordings and archival sources. From these, four songs were purposively selected for textual and cultural analysis. The selection was based on their thematic richness and frequency of performance. The lyrics were analysed for embedded cultural values, such as respect for elders, moral instruction, and social critique.

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was secured. The research team engaged community leaders and cultural custodians to explain the purpose of the study and to seek permission. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring understanding of their rights to confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary withdrawal from the study. Data gathered from observations, interviews, and song analysis were subjected to thematic analysis. Using inductive coding techniques, the researchers identified recurring themes related to:

1. Pedagogical practices (e.g., oral transmission, repetition, mentoring, communal reinforcement)
2. Performance-based learning and Cultural values (e.g., moral instruction, gender identity, social cohesion).

Patterns emerging from the data were organised into thematic categories and interpreted within the context of the study's theoretical framework: Ethnomusicology Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Learning Theory.

## 6. Discussion of Findings

The study's findings highlight the pedagogical approaches and cultural values implanted in **Nnwonkoro**, revealing its significance as both artistic expression and an informal educational tool among the Ashanti. We present three of nnwomkoro songs of Manhyia Nnwomkoro group – text translation and transcription of the musical scores.

### Song 1: Adee Mmra (Grant our needs)

#### Asante Twi Text

*Mesu frɛ Agya Katakɔyie*  
*Mesu frɛ Agya Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu*  
*Su nkwa ma adeɛ mmra o*  
*Adeɛ mmra oo ee ee*  
*Adeɛ mmra oo ee ee*  
*Su nkwa ma adeɛ mmra o*

#### English Translation

I cry unto the Great Father  
 I cry unto Great Father Osei Tutu  
 Sunkwa, grant us our needs  
 Grant our needs ee ee  
 Grant our needs ee ee  
 Sunkwa, grant us our needs

### *Musical Score for Song 1: Adee Mmmra*

Lead

Me su fre'A-gya Ka-ta- kye\_\_\_\_\_ me su-fre'A gya'O- tum - fo' Sei

Chorus

4

Tu-Tu'e sun-kwa ma'- de: mmra o yee'O - tum - fo' Sei Tu -

Yee a - de: mmra o yee

7

Tu'e Na'A - fia Ko-bi baa Na'A-san - te hen.

yee a - de: mmra o yee sun-kwa ma' de: mmra

## Song 2: Amankwaa Tia (Name)

### Asante Twi Text

*Amankwaa Tia nye wo na waye bribi oo*  
*Ohia na ede adwendwen ba oo*  
*Nye wo na waye bribi oo*  
*Amankwaa tia ee*  
*Nye wo na waye bribi oo*

### English Translation

Amankwaa Tia, it is not your fault  
 It is poverty that brings thinking  
 It is not your fault  
 Amankwa Tia ee  
 It is not your fault



### Musical Score for Song 2: Amankwaa Tia

Lead

A - man-kwa tiae nnye'w na'w ye bri-bia, o hia n'ede adwen-dwen bao nnye'w

Chorus

na'w ye bri - bia o

A - man - kwa - tiae nnye'w na'w ye bri - bia

n'ede wɛɛ hoɔbao nnye'w na'w ye bri-bia o

A - man-kwa-tiae nnye'w na'w ye bri-bia

### Song 3: Sei Kutu (Very Huge)

*Sei kutuu, sei bam ee, nye mo deɛ no bi*

*Sei kutuu, sei bam*

*Wei'ye Asante akadeɛ*

*Sei kutuu, sei bam*

*Ye deɛ no no*

*Sei kutuu, sei bam*

*W'akyi gu ho*

*Sei kutuu, sei bam*

*Rose Gold besee,*

*Nana w'adaworom ma*

*Sei kutuu, sei bam*

*Wodeɛ atɔ nsuo mu*

*Sei kutuu, sei bam*

*Nye mode no bi e*

*Kobi Serwaah*

*Agorɔ nye mode no bie*

*Wei'ye Asante akadeɛ*

Very huge, very loud, not of your kind

Very huge, very loud

This is a thing for the Ashanti

Very huge, very loud

That is ours

Very huge, very loud

Your back is showing

Very huge, very loud

Rose used to say,

Nana, with all due respect

Very huge, very loud

Yours has fallen into river

Very huge, very loud

This is not of your kind

Kobi Sɛwaa,

The game is not of your kind

This is a thing for the Ashanti

*Musical Score for Song 3: Sei Kutuu*

Lead

Yee sei ku-tuu sei bam ee\_\_\_\_ nnye'W deɛ.no bia yee

Chorus

sei ku-tuu sei bam

4

sei ku-tuu sei bam ee\_\_\_\_ nnye'W deɛ.no bia wei deɛ'e'A-san-te a-aka- deɛ

sei ku-tuu sei bam

8

yee-yee ye.na ye.no no yee\_\_\_\_ w'a-kyi gu ho

sei ku-tuu sei bam

sei ku-tuu sei bam

12

Rose Gold be sei Na-na w'a-daa-ma yee.

sei ku-tuu sei bam

15

— wo de: a- to nsuom' yee... nnye 'W de: no bie a- yee kabi sa

sei ku-tuu sei bam

19

— w'a- gor nnye 'w de: no bie... wei de: 'A- san te' a- ka- de: o... sei ku-tuu sei bam

sei ku-tuu sei bam

The results were categorised under the following key themes:

### Pedagogical Approaches in Nnwonkoro

The pedagogical approaches in Nnwomkoro encompasses both formal and informal learning processes, often integrating oral tradition, apprenticeship models and participatory methods. A significant aspect of the pedagogy is oral transmission, where knowledge is passed down from one generation to the next through listening, observation and repetition. One of the participants for instance had this to say:

*We do not use books to teach Nnwonkoro. You listen, you watch and then you join.  
This is how we learnt it from our mothers and grandmothers.*

Nketia (1974) emphasise that music in traditional African societies is learnt through immersion rather than written notation. Another respondent commented on how the young ones learn their songs:

*When the young girls sing with us during rehearsals, they begin to understand the rhythm and the response patterns naturally. It is by doing that they learn.*

This is to say that in the Nnwomkoro performance context, the young ones participate in the singing and dancing, which facilitate an intuitive understanding of rhythm, melody and structure.

The study found that oral transmission remains the dominant method of teaching and learning Nnwomkoro. Knowledge is passed from experienced performers to younger generations through listening, imitation, and repetition rather than written notation. Performers internalise melodies, rhythms, and lyrics by participating in rehearsals and live performances. The call-and-response structure facilitates learning by engaging both the lead singer (cantor) and chorus in an interactive process. Regarding this, a participant intimated:

*Before you can become a good drummer or singer, you must follow a master for years. They will show you, correct you, and sometimes you just have to watch silently until you catch it.*

Thus, the apprenticeship system is another fundamental pedagogical approach in Nnwomkoro music performance. Aspiring musicians and drummers undergo rigorous training under the guidance of master musicians.



Figure 1: Manhyia Nnwomkoro Group rehearsing



Figure 2: Manhyia Nnwomkoro group performing

This hands-on learning process ensures that learners acquire not only technical skills but also the deeper cultural and philosophical meanings entrenched in the music. Like one of the participant said:

*In Nnwomkoro, we do not just teach songs — we teach values, history, and how to respond to life. As you sing with the elders, you learn how to think with the music.*

Agawu (2003) highlights how drumming apprenticeships among the Ashanti involve a gradual, scaffolded learning process, where learners start with basic rhythms before progressing to complex polyrhythms.

Basically, nnwomkoro is a participatory art form, and its learning process is well-established in collective social experiences. Younger performers observe, absorb and gradually participate under the guidance of senior singers. The setting of the group fosters peer learning where novices develop confidence through interaction with experienced performers. Furthermore, lead singers often modify melodies, rhythms, and lyrics based on the performance context, reinforcing spontaneity and adaptability. This approach allows performers to address current social issues, moral teachings, and historical events, making each performance unique.

### ***Call-and-Response Technique***

Call-and-response is a prominent teaching strategy in *Nnwomkoro*, fostering active participation and communal learning. This is why one respondent indicated:

*When the leader sings, we must be ready to respond — it sharpens your ears and keeps you alert. That is how we learn to sing together.*

Again, the respondent continued to say this:

*Call-and-response is how we train our minds. The more you answer, the more you remember. It is like the music teaches you as you sing it.*

This interactive method encourages learners to develop listening skills, coordination, and group cohesion. According to Chernoff (1979), the call-and-response structure serves as both a performance technique and a didactic tool that reinforces memorisation and musical fluency.

### ***Mnemonic and Symbolic Notation***

Although traditional *Nnwomkoro* music is primarily transmitted orally, some pedagogical approaches incorporate mnemonic syllables to aid in drum pattern memorisation. As one respondent indicated:

*Before you touch the drum, you must learn to speak its rhythm. We say the sounds with our mouth first — that's how the beat enters your head.*

These mnemonics function as symbolic notation, helping learners internalise rhythms before actual performance. Nketia (1992) discusses how these verbalised patterns provide a bridge between oral learning and cognitive retention, enhancing musical comprehension among students.

### ***Cultural Values Embedded in Nnwomkoro***

It was revealed that the communal nature of *Nnwomkoro* fosters social bonding among performers and audiences. This is why one of the respondents said this:

*When we sing together, we become one. It is in the chorus that we remember who we are as a people.*

Singing together strengthens a sense of belonging and reinforces collective identity within the performers and the audience. Again, the genre provides a platform for women to express themselves and contribute to community discourse. It was also found out that hierarchical respect is maintained within *Nnwomkoro* groups. Younger performers sought guidance from senior singers, who acted as custodians of tradition. Again the lyrics of *Nnwomkoro* songs often emphasised values such as obedience, respect for elders, and moral responsibility. The study also confirmed scholarly writings that *Nnwomkoro* is predominantly performed by women to reinforcing their role as cultural storytellers and moral educators. The performances usually addressed themes such as family values, marriage, and community ethics, shaping societal expectations for women. One respondent intimated:

*Our songs are not just for dancing; they teach the young ones how to live right — to respect elders, to marry well, and to keep our traditions.*

The analysis indicated that many *Nnwomkoro* songs preserve the Ashanti history, recounting events, proverbs, and wisdom passed down through generations. These performances function as oral history lessons, educating younger generations on their cultural heritage.

## Integration with Cultural Practices

Nnwomkoro performance is deeply intertwined with social and ritual practices. Learners acquire musical knowledge within the context of festivals, ceremonies, and communal gatherings.

One respondent indicated that:

*We do not just teach the songs, we teach them during festivals, funerals and special occasions. That is how the meaning enters their hearts.*

Again another respondent indicated this:

*When the girls learn the songs during the festivals, they learn more than music—they learn who they are in the community*

This contextualised approach ensures that music is not taught in isolation but as part of broader cultural expressions. The works of Finnegan (2012) illustrate how such integration fosters a holistic learning experience, where students grasp both the technical and symbolic aspects of the music.

## Conclusion

This study has examined the pedagogical dimensions and cultural values impressed in the Nnwonkoro musical tradition of the Ashanti. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, participant observation, interviews, and textual analysis, the research highlights how Nnwonkoro functions as both a musical and educational practice. The findings reveal that oral transmission, apprenticeship learning, participatory performance, and mnemonic aids serve as core instructional strategies within the tradition. Additionally, the genre fosters moral development, promotes social cohesion, and serves as a vehicle for preserving cultural knowledge and identity. The communal nature of its transmission and performance reflects Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, while its integration within Ashanti customs affirms the ethnomusicological view that music is inseparable from its cultural context. The study recommends that music educators and curriculum developers in Ghana and beyond consider the inclusion of indigenous forms like Nnwonkoro in formal education. Doing so would not only preserve cultural heritage but also enrich pedagogical strategies by bridging traditional and contemporary learning approaches. In conclusion, Nnwonkoro is more than a musical genre; it is a living educational system that communicates values, builds community, and cultivates intergenerational knowledge through artistic engagement. Future research could explore its adaptation in classroom contexts or compare its pedagogical effectiveness with other indigenous musical forms in Africa.

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