

ENHANCING HEALTHY AGEING THROUGH MUSIC

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Abstract

Ageing is a process that sets in at birth and continues through the different stages of life culminating in death. The transitional periods in life are not devoid of attendant health encumbrances. This study investigated the opinions of ageing-adults in 10 Federal Ministries located at the Federal Secretariat, Abak Road, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State on enhancing healthy ageing through music. Three research questions guided the study. The population consisted of 750 ageing-adults working in the 10 selected ministries with a sample of 150 of them selected through simple random sampling. A researchers-developed questionnaire (MHAQ) containing 27 items was used to collect relevant data. The results of data analysis, using simple percentages, revealed that listening to and participating in music and musical activities are strong strategies for enhancing healthy ageing in growing adults.. Consequently, the study recommends, among others, that ageing-adults should get involved in music and musical activities to offset attendant health problems; Efforts should be made by parents to create a musically active home for the

youth and adolescents to draw benefits from such even in their ageing periods.

Keywords: Music and musical activities, health, ageing, enhancing, ageing-adults.

Introduction

It has been noted that as people are ageing, they encounter various health hazards which, at times, defy medical solution. Boog and Burt-Perkins (2009) citing Cohen, Richter, and other authors posited that older adults are confronted with physical and cognitive deficits such as impaired vision and hearing, unstable movements, etc. Some of these deficits might be the aftermath of unduly engagement of persons in behaviours that constitute health risks to their well-being. Such behaviours, engaged in from childhood, continue as the people are ageing, and often lead to untimely death which leaves the relatives depressed, dejected, helpless, and prone to hardship. Contemporary conditions of life have had its toll on the health of persons, thereby affecting the quality of life. It is against this background that Park (2015:258) assert "Depression and psychological distress can be highly prevalent at advanced ages and they are more likely to elevate the risks of physical and mental health problems." Sloboda cited in Hays, Bright, and Minichiello (2002:166) observed that "the social aspect of life of humans seems to be the most affected by ageing." Also, threats to healthy living "largely arise from and are influenced by various structural arrangements in which individuals are embedded" (Pearlin, 1989:241).

There has been tremendous increase in advocacy for healthy ageing through participation in musical activities (Khan, 1999). The role of music and health had been illustrated in the Holy Scriptures in the case of Saul who derived some form of relief when a minstrel played on the harp. Most literatures have discussed the various roles music plays in the well-being of individuals such as “evoking emotional responses that improve quality of life” (Trappe, 2012:27), providing energy for work, promoting social well-being (Clayton, 2009), promoting cognitive processes, etc. Music therapists have, equally, reported progress in healing some ailments through the use of music ((Bernard et al, 2009). The acknowledged role of music in human development has given rise to the mounting of some educational programmes to help control some malaises associated with the ageing processes. These programmes include music geragogy for older adults and music agology for adult (Boog & Burt-Perkins, 2009). In a bid to achieve the aims of these programmes, the authors revealed that learning strategies called ‘andralogy’ have been designed which focuses, principally, on adults. Despite these attempts, incidences of health debility keeps increasing.

Today’s life demands subject ageing-adults to stressful conditions as they try to make ends meet. Attempts must be made continually to explore ways to help curb incidences of high blood pressure, stroke, and other health menaces associated with stress, depression, and distress. Incidences of these ailments which have left some families devastated are rather on the high side in contemporary times. Healthy ageing was declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO) at the

Second World Assembly in 2002 as vital for development (www.who.int/./en/). In line with this, the World Health Day held on 7th April 2012 concentrated mainly on activities and campaigns for creating awareness for the promotion of active and healthy ageing (WHO, 2012). This justified the authors' concern and, therefore, necessitated this study. This paper discusses ways of enhancing ageing, with its attendant nuances, through the medium of music. Opinions of ageing-adults were sought on how they manage the ageing processes, what they do to get some relief, and how often they use music as part of the strategies to enhance healthy ageing.

Literature Review

Ageing is a process that sets in at birth and continues through the different stages of life to death. It is growing older. Flatt (2012) citing Rose (1991) defined ageing as "a decline or loss (de-tuning) of adaptation with increasing age, caused by a time-progressive decline of Hamilton's forces of natural selection" and humans "go through transitional periods in life as... and reduced vigour in their own body and mind as a result of functional declines" (Park, 2015:258). Hamilton's forces of natural selection are "manipulable using experimental evolution, allowing the deceleration or acceleration of aging, and the shifting of the transition ages between development, aging, and late life" (Rose, Rauser, Benford, Matos, & Mueller, 2007: 1265). Ageing, therefore, includes all the changes in human growth "developing the appearance and characteristics of old age" (The Free Dictionary, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/ageing>) which can render the human active or inactive. There are

determinants of active ageing which Paul, Rebeiro, and Teixeira (2012) thought “should allow us to identify particular profiles that are more at risk or on the other hand are more favourable to age actively” (n. p.).

Music is a social product and has been defined as “human organised sound” (Blacking, 1973, p. 57); “a diverse human practice of constructing aural temporal patterns for primary values of enjoyment, self-growth, and self-knowledge” (Elliot, 1995, p. 128). Other definitions of music abound but the latter seems relevant to this discourse. In line with Elliot’s definition, Onyuike (2006) saw music as that phenomenon which has the potential to enhance human personality through complete involvement in it. It, therefore, confirms the fact that music has a vital role in the all-round development of a person, whether young or old.

Various studies had been undertaken to explore strategies that could help curb incidences of dementia and other health conditions. Findings reveal that music is a potent medium that promotes health and well-being even in older persons. Storr (1992), Clair and Hanser (1995) and Clair (1996) had attested to the fact that tremendous gain/improvement had been recorded in incapacitated older persons through music therapy or music intervention programmes. Similarly, the “importance of the role of music in physiological, psychological, and cognitive development” had been noted by Maranto (cited in Hays et al, 2002, p. 167) and McDermot, Orrell, and Ridder (2014). Hay et al citing Kendig posited that the use of music contributes to an older person’s quality of life.

As a person is ageing, he/she experiences some form of psychological stress or distress, fatigue, depression, and other health problems. Each transitional period comes with its attendant pressure and risks inimical to healthy ageing. It is obvious that vital steps need to be taken to counteract these excesses. On this note, Haslam, Haslam, Ysseldyk, Closkey, and Pfisterer (2014) conducted a study comparing novel forms of song-based reminiscences among three groups of older people as reported by Park, McDaid, Forsman, and Wahlbeck (2014). The findings showed that there was significant improvement in life satisfaction in the three groups (secular song group, religious song group, and story reminiscence group) after listening to music. General contributions of music to positive ageing have also been acknowledged (Hays et al, 2002). Music therapy interventions for older people include those reported by Bright (1972), Gibbons (1988), and Palmer (1989). Fu and Lin (2012) have presented a list of possible systems experienced by older people to include biological and psychosocial changes. The authors broke down the biological changes to include

- Decreased cognitive function (loss of brain volume);
- Risk for cardiovascular diseases (hardening vessels);
- Decreased many physiological function (eg. changes in respiratory system);
- Decreased sensory function (loss of neuron and neurotransmitters);
- Poor sleep quality; and
- Decreased mobility and physical function and Psychosocial changes which are

- Retirement;
- Loss of incomes;
- Loss of friends, families; and
- Decreased social interaction.

In a study conducted by Gembris (2008) to explore age-related restrictions of musical activities, which was one of the objectives of the study, and coping strategies with these restrictions, the findings indicated that the importance of music increases especially among people between the ages of 60 and 80. Lee, Chan, and Mok (2010) conducted an experimental study that sought to measure three mental health dimensions namely: vitality, social functioning, and emotional role of 65 community-dwelling older Chinese adults aged 65 to 90 years. Thirty-one subjects were exposed to listening to preferred music loaded to MP3 player while 35 subjects were assigned to control group without the music listening component. Findings revealed that there were significant improvements in quality of life of subjects in the experimental group. Other studies conducted using music as intervention measures to curb depression, anxiety, and other disorders have been reported (Ward, Kamp, & Newman, 1996; Skingley, Clift, Coulton, & Rodriguez, 2011; Chan, Wong, Onishi, & Thayala, 2012; Haslam et al, 2014).

The overview of literature presented in the preceding discourse show some evidence of the role of music in healthy ageing. It is worth noting that most of the studies were carried out in different countries outside the shores of Akwa Ibom State, specifically, and Nigeria, generally. Therefore, these researchers have not come across any study that had been conducted in this geographical area. It may well be said

that ageing conditions seem to be prevalent in this part of the world but with no empirical proofs of the use of music to offset these conditions. The purpose of this study was to determine whether music/musical activities can help ageing-adults to cope with health hazards. To this end, the following research questions were investigated:

1. What is the ageing-adults' disposition towards ageing and music?
2. Do ageing-adults use music as a strategy to enhance their health conditions?
3. Does music enhance healthy ageing in adults?

Methodology

Design: The study adopted the survey method where opinions of ageing-adults were sought to ascertain whether music can enhance healthy ageing.

Population and Sample: The target population for the study comprised 750 ageing adults working in 10 Federal Government Ministries located at the Federal Secretariat, Abak Road, Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The ages of the respondents varied between 45 to 60 years of age. Simple random sampling was adopted to select 150 subjects for participation in the study to ensure that each Ministry had an equal chance of being selected.

Instrument and Method for Data Collection: A researchers-developed questionnaire, Music and Healthy Ageing Questionnaire (MHAQ) was constructed, validated and adopted for the purpose of collecting data on the issue under discussion. The instrument had two sections: A and B. Section

A dealt with the respondents' personal data while Section B contained 26 items raised to answer the three research questions. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the overall reliability of the instrument which yielded a coefficient of .83. With the help of two research assistants, who were staff of the ministries located at the Federal Secretariat, the questionnaire forms were administered to the respondents. To enhance the rate of return of the questionnaire, on-the-spot administration and retrieval was adopted. 100% return was recorded.

Data Analysis: Data derived from the questionnaire items were analysed using simple percentages.

Presentation of Results and Findings

The results are presented below based on the research questions raised:

Research Question 1: What is the ageing-adults disposition towards ageing and music?

Table 1: Percentage Responses of Ageing-Adults on Disposition towards Ageing and Music

N=150

S/ N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	PERCENTAGE RESPONSES			
		YES	%	NO	%
	DISPOSITION TOWARDS AGEING AND MUSIC				
1.	Do you feel good	60	60.0	57	40.0

2.	about ageing?				
3.	Do you think	150	100.0	0	0.0
4.	growing older affects				
5.	your health?	78	52.0	72	48.0
6.	Do you wish you				
7.	were not ageing?	123	82.0	27	18.0
8.	Are you interested				
9.	in music generally?	98	65.3	52	34.7
10.	Do you have music				
11.	equipment at home?	110	73.3	40	26.7
12.	Do you attend				
	musical events?	110	73.3	40	26.7
	Do you derive				
	pleasure from				
	watching musical	101	67.3	49	32.7
	events?				
	Do you take part in	70	46.7	80	53.3
	musical activities?				
	Have you ever taken	38	25.3	112	74.7
	music lessons in				
	your life?	79	52.7	71	47.3
	Do you play any				
	musical instrument?	45	30.0	105	70.0
	Do you sing in a				
	choir?				
	Do you prefer doing				
	other things as a				
	source of relief to				
	listening to music?				

Results in Table 1 reveal that 60% of the respondents feel good about ageing; 100% think growing older affects their health; 52.5% wished they were not ageing. Respondents (82.0%) agreed that they are interested in music generally; 65.3% have music equipment at home; 61.3% attend musical events; 73.3% derive pleasure from watching musical events; and 67.3% take part in musical activities. Only 46.7% of the respondents have taken music lessons in their lives; 25.3% play musical instruments; 52.7% sing in choirs; while 30.0% prefer to do other things to listening to music as a source of relief.

Research Question 2: Do ageing-adults use music as a strategy to enhance their health conditions?

Table 2: Percentage Responses of Ageing-Adults on Use of Music as Coping Strategy

N=150

S/N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	PERCENTAGE RESPONSES			
		YES	%	NO	%
	USE OF MUSIC AS COPING STRATEGY				
13.	Do you listen to music as a way of you relieving you from stress?	120	80.0	30	20.0
14.	Do you spend valuable time at home listening to music after work?	100	66.7	50	33.3
15.		85	56.7	65	43.3
16.		30	20.0	120	80.0
17.		150	100.0	0	0.0
18.		150	100.0	0	0.0
19.		68	45.3	82	54.7

	<p>Do you listen to music while you are at work?</p> <p>Do you enjoy listening to classical music?</p> <p>Do you enjoy listening to popular music?</p> <p>Do you like listening to gospel music?</p> <p>Do you like listening to traditional music?</p>				
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Results in Table 2 indicate that 80.0% of the respondents listen to music to relieve stress; 66.7% spend valuable time listening to music after work; 56.7% enjoy listening to music while at work. 20.0% of the respondents enjoy listening to classical music; all the respondents enjoy listening to popular and traditional music (100.0% respectively) while 45.3% like listening to traditional music. The findings on research question 2 reveal that the respondents use music to cope with ailments associated with ageing.

Research Question 3: Does music enhance healthy ageing in adults?

Table 3: Percentage Responses of Ageing-Adults on Music as Health-Enhancer

N=150

S/N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	PERCENTAGE RESPONSES			
		YES	%	NO	%
	MUSIC AS AGEING-HEALTH ENHANCER				
20.	Do you think listening to music helps to delay ageing-related disability?	132	88.0	18	12.0
21.	When you are depressed, do you feel better when you listen to music?	141	94.0	9	6.0
22.	Do you think listening to music improves your general health?	139	92.7	11	7.3
23.	Do you think if you engaged in playing any musical instrument, your ageing-health process will improve?	66	44.0	84	56.0
24.	Does any kind of music help to bring relief to some ailments you experience?	83	55.3	67	44.7
25.	Do you derive some health benefits when you participate in musical activities?	101	67.3	49	32.7
26.	Does music motivate you to work the more?	122	81.3	28	18.7

As Table 3 indicates, 6 out of the 7 items received affirmative responses except Item 23 which reveals that 56.0% of the respondents do not think that their ageing-health process will be improved if they engage in playing any musical instrument. Despite this negative response on this item, the findings indicate that respondents see music as an ageing-health enhancer.

Discussion of Findings

The results on the disposition of the respondents toward ageing and music in Table 1 reveal that they have positive disposition. Respondents may see musical activities as a way of relieving them from stress and other health conditions. All the respondents agreed that growing older affects health generally. These findings is in consonant with Cohen and Richter's (cited in Boog & Burt-Perkins, 2009), Fu and Lin's (2012), and Park's (2015) assertion that ageing-adults experience health malaise. This result may have served as enough reason why 52.0% of the respondents wished they were not ageing (Table 1, Item 3).

From the findings, respondents listen to, attend, and participate in musical activities including the choir. These should be seen as a better way of managing ageing-related problems. These results corroborate with Lee et al's (2010) and Haslam et al's (2014) view that listening to music improves life satisfaction significantly. Though Lee et al's study concerned older adults aged 65 – 90 years, the findings, apparently, have implication for ageing-adults in the lower age level. Respondents listen to popular and gospel

music more than traditional music (45%) and classical music (20%). The reason for this finding could be attributed to technology which has brought recorded music through CDs, DVDs, Radio and Television houses to the masses and to every home. Classical and traditional music are rarely featured on broadcasting channels. Moreover, classical music is alien to a majority of the people, a type of music the people are not conversant with and does not attract general appeal. Traditional music performances are not regular features in the society and even on the Radio and TV channels. Besides, certain church doctrines, in contemporary times, condemn this type of music associating it with something demonic or devilish. This may have accounted for the results in Table 2, Item 18 where 100.0% respondents listen to Gospel music.

Findings in Table 3 revealed that respondents affirmed 6 of the 7 items, indicating their opinion on the efficacy of music in healthy ageing. These findings have been supported by various authors namely Storr (1992), Clair and Hanser (1995), Clair (1996), Ward et al (1996), Hay et al (2002), Clayton (2009), Bernard et al (2009), Skingley et al (2011), Trappe (2012), Chan et al (2012), and Haslam et al (2014). Respondents (56.0%) think if they are engaged in playing musical instruments their ageing-health process will not improve. These respondents may not have played any musical instrument in their lives, and, therefore, could not ascertain the ageing-health benefits of such engagements. Music, according to the findings, enhances healthy ageing in ageing-adults.

Conclusion

Modern day pursuits expose ageing-adults to health hazards which need to be checkmated. As the findings revealed, listening to and participating in music and musical activities are effective strategies to beat stress and other health risks. The study concludes that music enhances healthy ageing. It is important, therefore, that ageing adults get involved in music and musical activities to offset health problems that come with ageing. Efforts should be made to create opportunities for leisure through music for the development of healthy physiological, cognitive, psychological, social, and emotional well-being. Parents should endeavour to create a musically active home, encouraging their children and wards to take part in musical activities because, according to Gembris (2008), "Apparently, musical activities in childhood and adolescence are a very good investment with respect to old age" (p. 106). It is also advisable that ageing-adults keep listening to music of their preference to access positive benefits health-wise. Listening to and participating in musical activities attract minimal cost, therefore, musical activities should be, consciously, organised regularly to reach out to a wider spectrum of individuals in the society.

More studies are needed to determine the degree of significance that music could enhance healthy ageing in adults. A combination of approaches for more authentic results could be adopted by other researchers. This study could be replicated in other government parastatals in the State and in other States of the federation.

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