Afro-Brazilian Music Education: An Investigation of the Ijexá as a Decolonizing Educational Tool

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Abstract

In the last decades, the music field has been going through significant changes due to discussions related to colonialism, ownership and representativeness. By questioning traditional music-related values and incorporating debates from diverse social and human sciences, researchers with different backgrounds have become attentive to the function of music education in promoting social justice. Focusing on the Ijexá rhythm, the following article has as its main aim to discuss the applications and implications of music education’s approaches that carry intrinsic decolonial purposes. Strongly influenced by the critical paradigm’s perspective, this paper presents four specific aims: 1) to examine the intentions and effects of traditional Eurocentric approaches to music education; 2) to present the main sociological, ethnomusicological and religious features of Ijexá rhythm; 3) to present and analyze the published literature which uses the Ijexá to develop studying materials; and 4) to analyze the possible social, political and educational impacts of the application of a decolonization-oriented approach to music education which is based on the Ijexá rhythm.

Sustained by the aforementioned goals, this research employs the qualitative documental analysis as its methodological approach to examine different sources of written and audiovisual materials, to gather the data, to acquire the information and to develop the knowledge that support and guide the presented discussions. Its critically oriented reflections intend to contribute to the ongoing scientific debate by investigating the application of an educational approach’s strand that is supported by African-based music and African-based traditions.

Keywords: African-heritage Music; Critical Paradigm; Critical Pedagogy; Ethnomusicology; Postcolonial theories