

Comparative Analysis of The Differences Between Music Education in Kindergarten and Extra-Curricular Interest Classes.

Ziyu Bai *

Department of Music, Yunnan University, Kunming, 650091, China

* Corresponding Author Email: 032240127@mails.ccu.edu.cn

Abstract. Currently, most parents are interested in early childhood music enlightenment and want their children to learn music. In addition to the music initiation that is generally available in kindergartens, there are many extracurricular music classes. So, many parents enroll their young children in extracurricular music classes. This paper compares the educational models in kindergartens and extracurricular interest classes in the music enlightenment education of young children. This research can be used to better design music instruction that is better suited to the varying needs of young children. The methodology of this research is a case study. Through comparative analyses, it can be seen that the teaching modes of kindergarten teachers and private interest classes teachers are completely different, including teaching objectives, teaching atmosphere and parents' perception requirements, and so on. At the same time, this paper also puts forward some suggestions on the current teaching mode of early childhood music.

Keywords: Early childhood education; music education; comparative study.

1. Introduction

In the field of early childhood education, most parents choose music as one of the subjects they want their young children to learn. According to the results of the questionnaires collected by Bi from 280 parents of preschool children in 2010. The majority of parents are sufficiently aware of how music education works. According to 57.5% of parents, the primary goals of music instruction are to foster intelligence, cultivate attitudes, and foster interests. The majority of parents, or 69.3% of all parents, will encourage their kids to take music lessons [1]. Nowadays, in mainstream music education, the sources of education are mainly divided into music education in kindergartens and music education in extracurricular interest classes.

The question examined in this paper is a comparative analysis of the differences between music education in kindergarten and extra-curricular interest classes. This research can be used to better design music instruction that is better suited to the varying needs of young children. The subjects of the study include parents of young children, young children themselves, kindergarten music teachers, extracurricular music teachers, professionals, and school administrators. Questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and literature searches were the study methodologies used. Findings from the literature include a game design for young children's participation in music activities, the importance of rhythm to young children, parental attitudes towards music education for young children, the method of the Internet to early childhood initiation, and more. The paper is structured into four sections, including the current background, case study, recommendations, and conclusion.

2. Case Study

2.1. Case Description

The kindergarten as an example has many ways of teaching and appreciating music. It has designed its book, "Playing to Recognize Music", as well as some music picture book tutorials. This makes it easier for children to experience the joy of music in an easy-to-understand way and makes them enjoy it. The kindergarten also has a weekly music movement program. In addition to teaching the children to sing and dance daily, the kindergarten teachers also pay great attention to the physical movement

of the young children in music, and they have integrated the three international music pedagogies, namely the Orff Method, the Kodály Concept, and the Dalcroze Eurythmics, into the curriculum of music. They advocate the development of children's musical potential in play and the acquisition of musical ability in the process of playing music. They also believe that children can devote themselves more wholeheartedly to music and express themselves with their physical freedom in music in this way. The kindergarten attaches great importance to the use of the Orff Method. The Orff Method of teaching music is based on the development of the children themselves, guiding them to learn music in interesting games, so that they can have fun in the process of learning music and cultivate their exploratory skills. In addition, in interviews with parents of children enrolled in the kindergarten, parents indicated that the kindergarten incorporates a certain number of English songs in addition to teaching children ordinary singing and dancing. This is a great way to learn music and increase the children's familiarity with English at the same time.

In addition to music teaching in the class, the kindergarten also organizes music festivals, forest concerts, and other activities. The main purpose is to develop the children's appreciation of music, stimulate their imagination and appreciation, and help them develop an interest in music. Taking a forest concert in 2023 as an example, which was held in a small forest. Professional violin, cello, and guzheng players are invited to play solo or in ensembles for children. They mainly play some pieces of interest to young children or some worldwide famous songs, including the theme song of the Japanese animation "Castle in the Sky" and the song of the famous anime "My Neighbor Totoro", the Canon, and other pieces. The main purpose of this activity is to let the children enjoy various kinds of music while integrating into nature to improve their artistic appreciation and aesthetic level. In addition, it also enables children to experience the beauty of nature and life. This music activity was supported by parents. And a parent of a young child stated directly that she supported the children's participation in different musical activities and believed that there should be more various musical activities in the kindergarten.

The information on the music educational method for children outside of kindergarten, i.e., in extracurricular music classes, comes from the real teaching experience. The extracurricular music classes focus on teaching the basic music theory of the piano, as well as teaching piano playing using the Bastian Basic Piano Course as a textbook. The class aims to eventually enable young children to play simple pieces proficiently and independently, and to have a simple understanding of music theory. The teaching methods used were mainly verbal, drawing, and demonstration of playing the piano. In piano lessons, early childhood stages are generally characterized by shorter attention spans and lower comprehension. Therefore, the teaching method needs to be tailored to the needs of the child. Take the example of a piano lesson with a 5-year-old child in which a young child needs to learn to recognize different notes. Children of this age generally do not have enough ability of understanding. So, academic general ways of teaching music are useless in teaching young children. As a result, the teaching methodology used is an imaginative method. To impress upon children the difference between what a crotchet and a quaver look like, generally, the teacher began by asking the child for ideas about what the bass clef looks like. Then help the child memorize based on the results of the child's responses. However, in the lesson in the example, the toddler was introverted and failed to give a clear response. So the piano teacher told the child the method to memorize directly, that is, to see if there is "a flying flag" on the note. The tail of a quaver looks like a flying flag, while a crotchet has no tail, so this is a good and simple way to distinguish between them. This method of visualization is practical for most young children, as most children of this age are imaginative. Just as young children were once told to think of the sign of the bass clef as a "rounded ear" to memorize. This paper intends to give an example describing the teaching method and problems of music extracurricular classes.

2.2. Comparison and Analysis

Three aspects are analyzed in terms of the differences between music education for young children in and out of kindergarten in this paper. These aspects include the objectives of teaching, the music

learning environment, and parents' demands and perceptions of different music teachers. The following is a detailed description and comparison of these aspects.

2.2.1 The objectives of teaching

Teaching objectives not only enable teachers to teach more clearly in class but also better guide children to learn music. In extracurricular music classes, the teacher's teaching objectives are generally customized to the textbook, such as learning rhythms, identifying various notes, and playing pieces of varying difficulty. The objectives of teaching are clear and necessary. Based on interview surveys with parents and extracurricular music teachers, it seems to be a consensus that teachers of such music extracurricular classes, as exemplified by the piano teacher mentioned above, generally have teaching objectives. In extracurricular music classes, young children must learn something that they will not be taught in kindergarten. Because if they can't, the extra expense of extracurricular classes is pointless. Therefore, setting teaching objectives is important for teachers. One of the goals of that piano lesson in the example above was to correctly distinguish the difference between what a crotchet and a quaver look like. It is precisely because of the clarity of the objectives that music teachers can set the appropriate teaching methods in advance.

As for the music class within the kindergarten, which is used as an example in this paper, the teachers do not have very clear teaching goals. They focus more on fun ways of teaching and creating a happy atmosphere than on what specific things young children can learn. Through some interviews, it can be learned that there are two main ways of teaching music in kindergarten as a regular daily routine. One way is to sing and dance with the children, the purpose of this way is to create a relaxing environment and make the young children happy. The other way is one of this kindergarten's specialties, which is musical movement. The purpose of the musical movement is mainly to stimulate the children's imagination and creativity in music.

2.2.2 The music learning environment

The child in the example was characterized by a slightly weaker comprehension than the peers and was less interactive with the teacher. The method once used was to guide the student to distinguish different notes by imaging the tails of notes, which is a relaxed teaching environment. However, through some feedback from the parents, or the child's performance, it was evident that this child did not fully memorize. Therefore, for this student to be able to learn to recognize quavers and crotchets, a relaxed environment is not enough. The teacher then created a serious teaching environment and practiced the recognition with the child several times over. Repeated practice is very uninteresting and boring for young children. So, the atmosphere in the classroom was different from the atmosphere of music learning in kindergarten. Moreover, most of the extracurricular music lessons are one-to-one lessons, meaning that one music teacher teaches only one student at a time. That means the young child is not accompanied by other peer partners during that time. Perhaps it can make young children feel helpless and can be an unsettling teaching environment for young children.

As mentioned above in this paper, the main purpose of the kindergarten music teacher in teaching music is to provide a pleasant environment for the children and, if possible, to stimulate some of their abstract abilities. This kind of teaching goal certainly allows music teachers to freely use their agencies and try their best to create an environment that makes children happy. Moreover, in kindergarten, both lessons and games are conducted as a class or a group. This means that children are often together, which can create a sense of security for them. As a result, compared to the extracurricular music classes, the kindergarten education environment is relaxing and reassuring.

2.2.3 Parents' demands and perceptions of different music teachers

Music teachers for extracurricular music classes tend to be teachers of a private nature. Parents enroll in extracurricular classes for more reasons than just to cultivate their children's interest in music. They also want their children to be able to obtain the relevant certificates. Therefore, parents generally have higher expectations of music teachers than kindergarten teachers. In the example above, the parents had explicitly told the music teacher that their child was introverted and had little interaction

with the teacher. Therefore, it is hoped that the teacher will take the initiative to find ways to determine if the child can learn what the child is supposed to learn. And the parent had said that learning to play the piano was not only to cultivate the child's interest, but also hoped that the child could eventually get some certificates in music. According to this parent's perspective, parents generally have a more definite need for music teachers in music extracurricular classes.

On the contrary, in an interview survey once conducted with six parents of young children, two questions were asked, "Do you have any expectations of the kindergarten music teacher?" and "What do you think it means for your child to learn music in kindergarten?" In response to the first question, four parents said that they were not quite sure what exactly the music teachers would do in kindergarten, while the rest thought that kindergarten officials should organize more musical activities together with the music teacher. In the answers to the second question, all the parents agreed that learning music in kindergarten is to cultivate children's interest and also to make them happier. And, one parent had said that listening to music can make children smarter. Through the parents' responses, it was clear that the parents did not have any expectations or ideas about the kindergarten music teachers. They are more concerned with the surroundings and emotional state of their kids, and they typically view music as a positive influence on their kids' growth.

3. Suggestions

Teachers' professional skills are the foundation of music teaching. Strong subject matter expertise, agreement with the philosophy of music education, exceptional musical and instructional abilities, the ability to listen well, organization, friendliness, and professionalism are all characteristics of an effective music mentor [2]. According to the research, early childhood educators (ECEs) need to be aware of the important musical concepts of pitch, duration, intensity, and timbre. Along with these, play activities like making up songs and rhymes, soundscape stories, and accompaniments and melodies can be utilized to augment early childhood education methods. To support learning in other subjects, particularly early reading, and numeracy abilities, many practitioners believe that music education can be easily included in a multidisciplinary educational approach [3]. Musical elements are the soul and foundation of music and must be present throughout the musical activities of young children [4].

Teacher-to-teacher and child-to-child communication is needed to facilitate learning. By collaborating with other early childhood instructors in the school, music teachers can gain additional knowledge about the requirements of the young children. By brainstorming individually and with early childhood educators, similar learning environments can be created in the music classroom [5]. Have a performance day on which all the organizations have a joint concert so that all the children can watch each other's performances, exchange ideas, make new friends, and build up their confidence [6].

Digital education enables the use of computer technology and Internet technology to digitize music education resources, making them easier to store, manage and disseminate [7]. New technology can be used to support teaching, both within the kindergarten and in extracurricular classes. The digitization of sound and video as well as new, hand-held portable technologies have most likely transformed music education research methodologies in recent years by making it simple to record audio and video for data collecting, cataloging, analysis, and dissemination. With significant advantages to their knowledge and understanding of children's musical participation, music education practitioners researching early childhood music can now frequently collect and analyze video data "on the hoof". By swiftly turning audio and visual information into displays and providing measurements that can be modified to relatively subtle criteria, technology may help speed up the analysis process [8]. Children can be educated in a better quality based on this approach.

Music educators should work together with parents to promote music education, which is crucial in particular for music educators of after-school programs. Families have a subtle impact on the attitudes and musical tastes of early children. In addition, as opposed to music teachers, parents

usually have more time to spend with their children. Communication with parents about participating at home is crucial to ensure steady progress [9]. In addition, it is also beneficial for parents to take their children to public music activities, such as concerts, on their own. Parental participation in early childhood education activities can provide more learning opportunities for children and is conducive to the establishment of a good parent-child relationship [10]. Many of the parents in the completed surveys indicated that they would be willing to take their children to musical activities.

4. Conclusion

Based on the specific analyses of the above cases, the results of the comparison are broadly summarised in this paper as follows

Teaching in extra-curricular classes has clear teaching and learning objectives. Music teachers need to make sure that children learn something about music in every lesson, as most children take official tests and want to be certified. Kindergarten teachers do not have clear objectives and there are no music exams, so the music teachers in kindergartens are not as rigorous in their teaching.

Because of their teaching objectives, music teachers in after-school programs are strict in their lessons. So, they sometimes have difficulty constructing an enjoyable teaching environment. Music teachers in kindergarten, on the other hand, can often create a relaxed atmosphere. Because in the kindergarten, the main purpose of teaching music is to cultivate music appreciation and help young children become interested in music. And constructing different music education environments is also related to whether young children are accompanied by peers. Young children would have been together in the kindergarten both for lessons and play. In extracurricular music classes, however, children are often taught individually by the teacher. Children who are alone in the class are sometimes nervous and insecure, which makes the learning atmosphere more serious.

Based on the results of the interactions with other piano teacher-teachers, some parents have more requirements or suggestions for music teachers in extracurricular classes. For example, they focus on the teacher's attitude towards the child and how much knowledge they want the child to acquire in a lesson, etc. However, according to the interviews with five kindergarten parents, they did not have suggestions for music teachers. Besides that, they generally think that they want their children to be in a pleasant atmosphere more than learning knowledge.

In conclusion, this paper thinks that the aim of music teaching in kindergarten for young children is more focused on the cultivation of children's character and emotion, and the teaching method is mainly based on rhythm and appreciation. So, the teaching of professional knowledge is very limited, but it can ensure that children are always in an exciting and happy learning environment. Teachers of interest classes focus more on teaching practical knowledge to ensure that children can master a certain amount of knowledge, including theoretical knowledge and playing skills. However, the methods of kindergarten teachers and extracurricular music teachers are certainly applicable to young children.

This paper thinks that there are shortcomings in the previous investigation, such as not observing the real music teaching environment of children in kindergarten. So, there is no clear answer to the psychology and thoughts of children. Because children are not yet mature in their ability to express themselves and understand, practical observation can provide a more intuitive understanding of children's ideas. This allows for deeper analyses and comparisons of the way music education is taught inside and outside the kindergarten from the children's point of view.

References

- [1] Bi, Y. A Report of Survey on Conditions of Preschool Children's Family Music Education. *International Education Studies*, 2011, 4, 105-108.
- [2] Barrett, M. S., Zhukov, K., & Welch, G. F. Strengthening Music Provision in Early Childhood Education: A Collaborative Self-development Approach to Music Mentoring for Generalist Teachers. *Music Education Research*, 2019, 21(5), 529-548.

- [3] Bolduc, J., & Evrard, M. Music Education from Birth to Five: An Examination of Early Childhood Educators' Music Teaching Practices. *Research and issues in music education*, 2017, 13(1), 3.
- [4] Zhou, Q. On the Flexible and Effective Use of Musical Elements in Early Childhood Music Education. *Drama House*, 2021(08):102-103.
- [5] May, B. N. Public School Early Childhood Music Education: Challenges and Solutions. *General Music Today*, 2013, 27(1), 40-44.
- [6] Ho, I. C. Teacher, Musician, And Leader in Macau. *The Juilliard Journal*, 2014, 30 (2).
- [7] Wu, C. Y. Status Quo And Reform Trend of Early Childhood Music Education in The Background of The Internet. *Internet Weekly*, 2023, (12): 85-87.
- [8] Young, S. Early Childhood Music Education Research: An overview. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 2016, 38(1), 9–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X16640106>
- [9] Ho, I. C. Teaching Beginning Violin (Or Other Instruments) Group Lessons: What to Consider as a Novice Teacher. *American Strings Teacher*, 2018, 68(3), 2-4.
- [10] Lu, M. Ni. Exploration of The Important Role of Parents in Early Childhood Education. *The Road to Success*, 2018, (29):88.