

Research on the Current Status and Countermeasures of Children's Piano Education in China

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Abstract: With the flourishing of China's social economy, there has been a significant surge in the public's desire for a more enriched cultural experience. The piano, renowned for its exquisite artistry as a Western musical instrument, has emerged as an especially popular choice. Consequently, the importance of piano education for children is gaining prominence. This study delves into the current state of children's piano education in China through field interviews, questionnaire surveys, and discussions with training institutions, revealing numerous challenges. The investigation encompasses the perspectives of piano education institutions, children, parents, and teachers, scrutinizing teaching methods, content, and the selection of instructional materials. Notably, a critical concern lies in the waning interest and enthusiasm among children in piano learning. This decline is predominantly influenced by external factors, particularly societal attitudes and prevailing utilitarian views. To address this issue, educators and parents must gain a clearer understanding of the purpose and values of children's piano education, bearing the responsibility of nurturing a sustained interest in the piano. This can be achieved by fostering a conducive environment that nurtures their innate curiosity and passion for music, thereby paving the way for a more vibrant and productive future for children's piano education in China.

Keywords: Children; Piano Education; Countermeasure; China.

1. Introduction

In the contemporary cultural landscape of Chinese society, children's piano education holds a pivotal position. With the sustained prosperity of the social economy and an increasing emphasis on diversified education for children within families, the piano, representing Western classical music, has gradually transitioned from professional music halls to ordinary households. It has become the artistic initiation path chosen by many parents for their children. However, along this seemingly glamorous path of artistic education, numerous problems and challenges lurk, directly or indirectly affecting children's learning experiences and long-term development [1-3].

From the perspective of teachers, traditional teaching methods and outdated educational ideologies often serve as primary obstacles to the development of children's piano education. Many teachers still adhere to mechanical and repetitive teaching approaches, lacking attention to individualized student needs and exploration of innovative teaching methods. This "one-size-fits-all" teaching model not only fails to ignite children's interest in learning but may also to some extent stifle their creativity and artistic perception abilities[4]. Parents play a crucial role in children's piano education. However, some parents overly pursue short-term results and utilitarian goals, overlooking their children's feelings and learning patterns. They often use piano grading as the sole criterion to measure their child's learning achievements, leading to the loss of love and enjoyment of music under pressure[5]. Additionally, due to a lack of musical literacy and effective guidance methods, some parents struggle to provide necessary support and guidance during their child's learning process[6]. Children, as the main subjects of piano learning, also undergo significant psychological experiences and emotional changes during the

learning process. Faced with monotonous practice and complex music theory, some children gradually lose interest and enthusiasm for the piano. As they grow older and academic demands increase, they may find it increasingly challenging to balance academic studies with piano practice, leading to a decline in learning effectiveness and an increase in feelings of frustration[7].

In response to the above problems, this article will explore corresponding solutions from the three dimensions of teachers, parents, and children. By improving teaching methods, updating educational concepts, enhancing parents' musical literacy and guidance abilities, and paying attention to children's psychological needs and emotional experiences, we aim to construct a more scientific, humanized, and effective piano education system for children. This system will focus more on cultivating children's comprehensive qualities and artistic accomplishments, enabling them to enjoy music while also achieving personal all-round development.

2. Current Status of Children's Piano Education in China

2.1. Outdated Educational Ideas and Methods Among Piano Teachers

2.1.1. Outdated Teaching Philosophies Struggling to Keep Pace

Some piano teachers in China adhere to traditional teaching models, emphasizing technical training and repertoire performance while neglecting the cultivation of children's interests and creativity. In the era of evolving music education, modern piano instruction focuses on holistic child development, including nurturing musical sensitivity, expressive capabilities, and creativity. Therefore, teachers

must continually update their teaching philosophies to meet contemporary demands [8].

2.1.2. Monotonous Teaching Methods Lacking Innovation

Children are naturally curious and energetic, drawn to novelty and engaging activities. Yet, some piano teachers employ monotonous teaching methods, such as mechanical repetition and tedious theory explanations, which fail to stimulate children's interest and enthusiasm. Teachers need to explore innovative methods that align with children's characteristics and interests, designing lively and interesting activities to capture their attention and enhance learning outcomes.

2.1.3. Rigid Evaluation Focusing Solely on Skill Assessment

In piano education, some teachers excessively prioritize skill assessments, using exam scores as the sole criterion for evaluating a child's learning. This rigid evaluation approach overlooks holistic development and individual differences among children. To address this, teachers should establish a comprehensive, objective evaluation system that emphasizes children's overall growth, encouraging them to express emotions and creativity through music.

2.2. Lack of Individualized Teaching: Failing to Cater to Students' Aptitudes

Personalized teaching is crucial in piano education, considering each child's unique personality, interests, learning styles, and pace. However, many piano teachers often adopt a "one-size-fits-all" approach due to time constraints or limitations in professional capabilities. This approach ignores individual differences among children. The lack of personalized teaching negatively impacts children's piano learning in various ways. It can lead to a loss of interest and hinder musical development. To address this issue, teachers should enhance their professional skills, recognize the importance of personalized teaching, communicate deeply with each child to understand their uniqueness, and design tailored teaching plans. Diversifying teaching methods and materials can also accommodate different learning needs.

2.3. Strained Teacher-Parent Cooperation in Children's Piano Education

Effective collaboration between parents and teachers is essential for a child's piano learning journey [9]. However, obstacles such as communication barriers and differing educational ideologies often impede fruitful collaboration. Both parties need to actively work towards better understanding and cooperation. To improve collaboration, parents should establish open communication channels with teachers, provide timely feedback, and respect the teacher's professionalism. Teachers, in turn, must proactively communicate with parents, understand their expectations, and offer necessary guidance and support. Building mutual understanding and accepting diverse opinions and suggestions are key elements for successful collaboration.

2.4. Erosion of Patience and Interest: Challenges in Sustaining Long-Term Piano Education.

Learning the piano is not just about acquiring artistic skills; it is a comprehensive process of personal development for children. Many children face motivational and sustainability

challenges during their piano learning journey. Motivation, as the driving force for learning, needs to be clear and positive. Some children may learn the piano due to parental expectations rather than genuine interest, leading to a lack of sustained motivation. Sustainability is crucial for continuous engagement, but children, due to their immature development, can easily be distracted or influenced by external factors.

Parents and teachers must guide children to establish correct learning motivations, emphasizing the value of piano learning and fostering genuine interest. Establishing clear learning plans, goals, and providing encouragement can contribute to sustained motivation. Additionally, introducing innovative teaching methods and organizing enjoyable activities can enhance children's interest and motivation.

2.5. Issues in Extracurricular Piano Education Institutions

2.5.1. Inadequate Teaching Equipment

Extracurricular piano education institutions may suffer from insufficient teaching equipment, including poor-quality pianos and uncomfortable classroom environments. These issues can impact teaching quality and children's learning experiences, leading to subpar learning outcomes. Institutions should prioritize the improvement and maintenance of teaching equipment to ensure a comfortable and safe learning environment.

2.5.2. Varied Quality and Lack of Stability in Teaching Staff

Disparities in the quality of teaching staff and insufficient stability in the teaching team can affect the continuity and effectiveness of instruction. This may result in children facing challenges when adapting to new teachers or teaching methods. Institutions should focus on building and managing a high-quality and stable teaching team, selecting excellent teachers, and providing systematic training and support to ensure stability and teaching quality.

2.5.3. Imbalanced Teacher-Student Ratios

Imbalanced teacher-student ratios in extracurricular piano education institutions can lead to teachers managing multiple students simultaneously, hindering personalized teaching and deep interaction. To address this, institutions should allocate teacher-student ratios sensibly, ensuring that each child receives sufficient attention and guidance, fostering personalized teaching and meaningful interaction.

2.5.4. Lack of Innovation in Teaching Content and Methods

Extracurricular piano education institutions must continuously update teaching content and methods to meet evolving societal demands and changing learning needs. Some institutions, however, lack innovation, sticking to traditional teaching models and methods that hinder effective instruction. Institutions should prioritize innovative teaching content and methods, tailoring them to children's ages, interests, and proficiency levels, thereby improving teaching effectiveness and sustaining children's interest in learning.

3. Countermeasures to Enhance Children's Piano Education in China

3.1. Teacher-Level Countermeasures

3.1.1. Adopting Progressive Teaching Philosophies

In the face of evolving childhood education environments, piano teachers must consistently update their educational

perspectives. Understanding that piano education involves more than just imparting technical skills, teachers should focus on nurturing children's overall qualities. This includes paying attention to their physical and mental development, emphasizing the cultivation of musical sensitivity, aesthetic abilities, and creativity. Teachers should prioritize the joy of music in the learning process, creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for children to truly fall in love with music.

3.1.2. Tailoring Instruction to Individual Students

Piano education should always revolve around the individual student, recognizing each student's unique learning abilities, interests, backgrounds, and goals. To truly tailor instruction, teachers need to delve into each student's personal circumstances, considering their musical foundation, learning capabilities, personality traits, and family environment. Only with a comprehensive understanding of students can teachers formulate teaching plans that genuinely meet their needs. In the teaching process, teachers should flexibly adjust content and methods based on students' progress and abilities.

3.1.3. Diversifying Teaching Methods

To spark children's interest and enthusiasm for piano learning, teachers should employ diverse and engaging teaching methods. These methods should be both enjoyable and effective, capturing children's attention and promoting their comprehensive development [10]. Gamification is a popular approach, combining piano learning with games to make the acquisition of knowledge and skills enjoyable. Situation-based teaching is also effective, simulating real music scenarios to help students better understand and feel music. Additionally, multimedia and online resources can be utilized to enrich teaching content, providing students with a broader perspective on various music styles and genres.

3.2. Parent-Level Countermeasures

3.2.1. Effective Communication and Positive Interest Cultivation

Parents play a crucial role in guiding children to develop a positive interest in piano learning. Building a good communication relationship with children requires patient listening to their thoughts and feelings, understanding the difficulties and challenges they face in the learning process, and providing positive encouragement and support. Parents should also guide children to discover the beauty of music, sharing enjoyable experiences and encouraging self-expression through activities like singing and dancing.

3.2.2. Creating a Conducive Learning Atmosphere

A conducive learning atmosphere is vital for children's piano education. Parents should provide a quiet, tidy practice environment, ensuring children can focus on piano practice [11]. Regularly accompanying children during practice, offering encouragement and support, helps children feel the care and support of their parents. Additionally, participating in musical events such as concerts and competitions together broadens children's musical horizons and social circles, enhancing their confidence and performance skills.

3.3. Child-Level Countermeasures

3.3.1. Cultivating and Maintaining a Positive Learning Attitude

A child's learning attitude significantly influences the effectiveness of piano education. Children need to recognize the meaning and value of learning the piano, maintaining a

positive learning mindset and facing challenges with courage. Learning self-motivation and emotional regulation are also crucial to maintaining a stable learning state. By cultivating a positive learning attitude, children can engage more effectively in piano learning, achieving better results.

3.3.2. Developing Good Learning Habits

Good learning habits are crucial for the success of children's piano education. Regular practice, attentive listening, active thinking, and effective summarization and reflection are essential habits. These habits not only improve learning efficiency and quality but also foster self-discipline and independent thinking. Developing good learning habits helps children better grasp piano skills and music knowledge, laying a solid foundation for future learning and development.

4. Conclusion

After a thorough examination of the status of children's piano education, we can draw a comprehensive conclusion. As teachers, being the core of piano education, must continually update their educational perspectives, ensuring that teaching methods are in line with contemporary practices. They should not only focus on students' technical proficiency but also emphasize holistic development and the cultivation of musical aesthetic abilities. By tailoring teaching to individual needs and employing diverse instructional methods, teachers can better stimulate students' interest in learning and help them establish a solid musical foundation. As Parents play a crucial role in their children's piano learning process. Establishing effective communication with their children, understanding their learning needs and challenges, and providing timely guidance and answers are essential. Moreover, parents should clarify the goals of piano learning, avoiding utilitarian mindsets that may unnecessarily stress their children. By creating a positive learning environment and actively participating in their children's musical activities, parents can effectively enhance their children's motivation and confidence in learning. The last but not least, the efforts and attitude of children themselves are key determinants of piano learning effectiveness. They need to cultivate a positive learning mindset, face challenges and difficulties courageously, and develop good study habits with regular self-reflection. Through these practices, children can continually improve their learning efficiency and quality, gradually advancing towards higher levels of musical proficiency.

So, the close collaboration and collective efforts of teachers, parents, and children are crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of children's piano education. Only when all three aspects receive adequate attention and contribution can we truly nurture outstanding children's pianists who possess both a solid musical foundation and a genuine love for music.

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