

The Influence of Music Preferences on Classroom Concentration among Preschoolers: An Empirical Study Conducted at C Kindergarten in Meizhou

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Abstract:

This study examines the impact of children's music preferences on their concentration during music class. The research involved 35 children from the middle class at C Kindergarten in Meizhou, with data collected through observational and testing methods. The findings indicate that children's preferences for different music genres vary, with pleasant music being the most favored and sad music the least preferred. Additionally, there are no significant gender differences in children's music preferences. However, observational results reveal that children's attention tends to wane while listening to music, and there are gender differences in the expression of emotions through body movements. Notably, there is no statistically significant correlation between music preference and classroom concentration. The study also highlights the crucial role of music education in fostering children's emotional and cognitive development. Therefore, teachers should consider children's music preferences when designing teaching activities to promote their overall physical and mental well-being.

Keywords:

Music Education, Music Preferences, Classroom Concentration

1. Introduction

Early childhood is a critical stage for the development of concentration. The level of concentration not only influences children's current learning outcomes but also has a profound impact on their subsequent cognitive development [1]. Music preference refers to an individual's inclination toward specific types of music. This inclination exhibits a degree of stability and universality, manifesting in various contexts, particularly in how certain musical segments or styles evoke feelings of happiness or well-being in individuals.

Existing studies indicate that the concentration of children aged 3 to 6 gradually increases with age, exhibiting distinct developmental characteristics. For preschool children (4 to 5 years old), the duration of intentional attention is approximately 10 to 15 minutes, primarily manifested through active exploration of materials and accompanying verbal expression [2]. The formation and development of children's attention are influenced by numerous factors that are interconnected and interact with one another. On one hand, environmental factors play a crucial role in shaping children's attention. For instance, an immersive activity environment—such as the organized arrangement of Montessori teaching aids—can provide children with a stable and orderly learning space, facilitating their ability to concentrate. Additionally, challenging tasks can stimulate children's desire to explore and extend their focus duration [1,2].

Existing research clearly demonstrates that musical activities play a significant role in enhancing children's attention. This influence is primarily manifested through physiological arousal, emotional regulation, social development, and cognitive growth. From the standpoint of physiological arousal and emotional regulation, fast-paced music can effectively elevate children's emotional arousal levels, thereby enhancing their ability to switch tasks [3]. In Montessori's "echo" teaching method, imitation and interaction significantly improve children's auditory concentration and understanding of rules. This evidence indicates that musical activities provide substantial support for the development of children's attention at both physiological and emotional levels.

Secondly, regarding social and cognitive development, music activities demonstrate distinct advantages. For instance, percussion activities not only enhance children's ability to cooperate but also improve their self-control through multisensory coordination involving hearing, vision, and movement [4]. Furthermore, music education can foster the development of children's speech abilities and creativity [5]. These studies indicate that the positive impact of music activities on children's attention is multidimensional and comprehensive.

Further analysis has revealed that the lyrics of music play a significant role in influencing children's concentration. Research indicates that fast-paced background music without lyrics positively impacts children's working memory and task-switching abilities [3]. However, when music contains lyrics, its effect on children's concentration depends on the familiarity of those lyrics. Familiar lyrics may enhance children's engagement through emotional connections, while unfamiliar lyrics may not have a significant negative impact [6]. This distinction highlights the variability in how music lyrics affect children's attention in different contexts, which educators should consider. Additionally, the relationship between children's attention and music preference may be influenced by individual differences. For instance, boys tend to be more susceptible to external distractions than girls, while girls often perform better in language-related tasks [2]. Therefore, when examining the correlation between music preference and focus, it is essential to take individual differences into account to ensure the accuracy and applicability of research findings.

In light of the analysis presented above, this paper aims to conduct an in-depth study on the issue from the unique perspective of "the impact of children's music preferences on concentration in the music classroom". Specifically, the primary research question of this paper is: In the context of the middle class at C Kindergarten in Meizhou City, how do children's music preferences influence their focus and

performance in the music classroom? To address this core issue, the paper is further divided into two sub-questions: First, is there a significant correlation between the types of children's music preferences and their classroom focus performance? Second, which teaching methods can effectively enhance children's concentration in the music classroom? Based on the research findings, this paper will design a preference-based music teaching intervention program, such as incorporating children's favorite rhythms into teaching activities, to enhance their participation and concentration, thereby providing a valuable reference for optimizing music teaching practices.

2. Research Objectives and Methodology

2.1. Research Purpose

This paper aims to investigate the music preferences of middle-class children. By analyzing the overall characteristics of their musical tastes and examining the preferences of children across different genders, this study provides valuable insights for future observations of children's engagement in the music classroom. The objective is to understand the musical preferences of middle school students in relation to their attentiveness during music lessons. This understanding will facilitate the development of recommendations for adjusting music teaching strategies, enhancing students' focus in the classroom, and promoting the holistic development of children's abilities.

2.2. Research Object

This study focuses on 35 middle-class children at C Kindergarten in Meizhou. The children in this group possess some musical experience and understanding, which enables them to express their thoughts more authentically and accurately. They demonstrate independent thinking and judgment, thereby enhancing the credibility of the survey results.

2.3. Research Methods

2.3.1. Observation Method

To collect data objectively, non-participatory observation was employed in this study. The observation took place in a music class for middle-class children at C Kindergarten in Meizhou City. Data were gathered through audio recordings and video reviews [7]. An observation form specifically designed for children's music instruction was utilized to document classroom activities. This observation form is structured around three key dimensions: children's listening experiences, teachers' instructional melodies, and children's feedback during their free time. It establishes representative event observation standards and categorizes these three dimensions into three levels: Yes, No, and General, to effectively assess children's engagement in the music class.

2.3.2. Test Method

This study utilizes the music preference questionnaire developed by Zhong Yan [8] to investigate children's music preferences. First, we categorize the music according to the four track types outlined in the music preference checklist. In selecting audio resources that align with the research, we strictly adhere to the track order specified in the questionnaire. We carefully edit the chosen songs to ensure that each track's

playback time is approximately 20 seconds, allowing for a comprehensive display of their musical characteristics while maintaining the study's conciseness. During the formal testing phase, we will play the music in the predetermined order and observe the children's preferences for the presented songs. We will primarily record their preference types and document them in the questionnaire. Subsequently, we will conduct a descriptive statistical analysis of the survey data.

3. Research Results

3.1. Results of the Music Preference Test

Based on Zhong Yan's four dimensions of music, an evaluation of the music preferences of middle-class children categorizes these preferences into four categories: calm, happy, sad, and radical. Utilizing a five-point scoring method, a questionnaire assessing the music preferences of 35 children was analyzed using SPSS 25.0. The average score for each child's music preference across the four dimensions was calculated (see Table 1). The data were processed with SPSS 25.0 software. The results indicate that children's preferences for different types of music vary in degree. The average preference for various music styles, ranked from highest to lowest, is as follows: happy > calm > radical > sad. The highest preference is for happy music, which gradually decreases to calm music, while sad music receives the lowest preference. This suggests that children are more inclined toward happy music and less inclined toward sad music.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Children's Music Preference (N=35).

Type of Music	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
Calm Music	3.77	0.75	4.00
Cheerful Music	3.89	0.88	4.00
Sad Music	3.69	1.07	4.25
Exciting Music	3.74	1.02	4.25

Combined with the follow-up observation results, an independent samples t-test was conducted to explore the differences in music preferences between male and female middle school students (Table 2).

Table 2. Independent Sample T-Test Results of Music Preference Scores by Gender in Preschool Children.

Type of Music	Boys (N=18)	Girls (N=17)	t-value	p-value
Calm Music	3.74±0.88	3.81±0.60	-0.28	0.78
Cheerful Music	3.76±0.92	4.01±0.83	-0.84	0.41
Sad Music	3.68±1.01	3.69±1.15	-0.03	0.98
Exciting Music	3.51±1.12	3.9±0.88	-1.33	0.19

Four musical dimensions—calmness, pleasure, sadness, and radicalization—were analyzed as variables in the independent samples t-test. The results indicated no significant gender differences across these four musical dimensions ($p > 0.05$). This may be attributed to the fact that, during early childhood, an individual's music preferences are more influenced by factors such as personal emotional experiences and the characteristics of musical styles, while the impact of gender on shaping music preferences is relatively minimal at this stage. This finding offers valuable insights for tailoring music education to meet the individual needs of children. Specifically, in the process of music instruction, it is unnecessary to overemphasize gender differences; instead, educators should focus more on the emotional characteristics and musical

interests of children to better guide them in experiencing and appreciating various types of music (Figure 1).

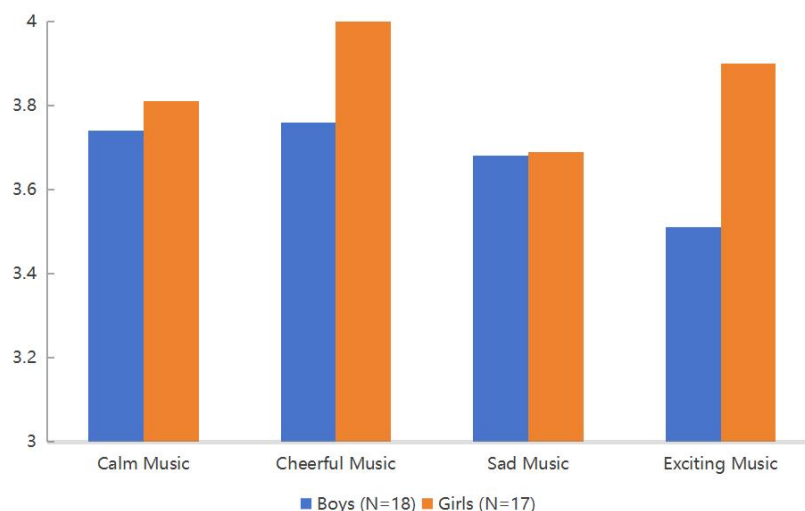


Figure 1. The average differences in music preferences between boys and girls.

3.2. Results of Observations on Children's Classroom Concentration

First, children's attention spans are often inadequate when listening to music. Due to their musical preferences, children frequently become distracted while enjoying it. Specifically, when listening, they may look around, whisper to their peers, or engage in activities unrelated to the lesson. However, when they hear their favorite songs, they become excited, dancing and laughing. This demonstrates that children have distinct musical preferences, which can elicit significantly different reactions based on various elements of the music.

Second, children of different genders exhibit emotional differences in how they use their bodies to express their appreciation for music. When children encounter their favorite songs, such as Eason Chan's popular track, which features a fast tempo, is relatively short, and contains powerful, repetitive sections, boys, in particular, tend to display expressive body language. They may stand up excitedly, engage face-to-face with their peers, or dance. This response reflects a natural sense of rhythm and an inherent inclination toward lively physical expression.

3.3. Correlation Analysis of Music Preference and Classroom Concentration

There is no correlation between music preferences and classroom concentration among middle school students. The correlation analysis indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the concentration performance of students in music class based on their musical preferences ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that there is no relationship between the music preferences of middle school students and their focus during music class.

4. Summary of Results

Through the use of SPSS version 25.0 to analyze the differences and statistics of the collected data, the following results were obtained: middle school children demonstrate a preference for happy music and exhibit the lowest preference for sad music. There is no significant gender difference in the questionnaire results regarding

the four types of music; however, emotional differences were observed in the use of body language to express appreciation for music during follow-up observations. In this context, we speculate that the four types of tracks corresponding to the music preference questionnaire do not effectively distinguish the popularity of the tracks. Since pop music is generally more relatable to personal experiences, the popularity of the repertoire may influence the emotional expression of children across different genders.

5. Conclusions

This study examines the impact of music preferences on classroom concentration among middle-class children. Focusing on children from Meizhou C Kindergarten as the research subjects, the analysis and discussion of the research data reveal that there is no significant correlation between music preferences and classroom concentration in this demographic. The specific conclusions are as follows:

(1) Gender factors do not significantly influence children's choice of music genres. Children are more likely to be attracted to music that evokes feelings of peace and pleasure, while they generally show less interest in sad and melancholic styles. This preference may be closely related to the developmental stage of children's brains. At this stage, music can serve as a tool for emotional regulation, helping to promote emotional balance and stability. It is clear that children, regardless of gender, have a distinct inclination toward harmony and happiness in their musical preferences.

(2) The persistence and concentration of young children's attention are often inadequate. When immersed in music, they find it challenging to focus on the music itself for extended periods, which can be attributed to their developing brains and limited capacity to manage complex sensory experiences. Simultaneously, while listening to music, children frequently engage in unconscious body movements, such as waving, swinging, or simple dancing, to synchronize with the rhythm and emotional expression of the music. Although these movements may seem trivial, they significantly impact children's cognitive development and enhance their understanding of rhythm and the overall atmosphere of music.

In the field of early childhood education, music education transcends mere skill training and serves as a vital avenue for emotional and cognitive development. By integrating music education into daily life, it becomes evident that children exhibit a natural preference for specific genres of music. Therefore, teachers should strive to gain a deep understanding of children's musical preferences and implement creative music teaching activities in the classroom. Additionally, through continuous observation and analysis of children's emotional responses during music performances, along with timely feedback and guidance, teachers can assist children in expressing their emotions through music activities, thereby fostering their holistic and healthy development. This teaching approach positions music as an essential component of children's lives, providing them with ample opportunities to explore their identities, express their feelings, and engage socially.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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