

Research on the History of Chinese Pre-school Music Education (1949-2022)

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Abstract

The development and evolution of the history of pre-school music education in China is influenced by many factors such as politics, economy, culture and historical tradition at that time, and has an intricate relationship. This paper takes the historical development as the main line, and combs, analyses and researches it according to five different periods. It reviews the history of the development of pre-school music education in China and summarises the experience of pre-school music education in China. Through sorting out and analysing the history, thus further enabling us to understand the current reform and development trend of pre-school music education. Adjust, innovate, develop new ideas, and seek to establish a road suitable for the development of pre-school music education in China.

The history of pre-school music education is only one part of a cross-section of research, compared to the vast amount of research in the fields of history of education and history of music, as well as the many types and dimensions it encompasses. A comprehensive understanding and analysis of the historical development of pre-school music education is certainly much more than what is discussed in this paper, and the researcher sincerely hopes that this paper will serve as a catalyst for more researchers to pay attention to this study.

Keywords: Pre-school music education; History of music education; Musicology

Introduction

Pre-school education, also known as early childhood education, is for children aged 3 to 6. It refers to the planned education of pre-primary children by institutions implementing early childhood education in accordance with certain training objectives and the physical and mental characteristics of young children. Its main task is to enable children to achieve harmonious physical and mental development and to prepare them for primary school. Institutions implementing pre-school education include nurseries, kindergartens, pre-school classes attached to primary schools, etc., and the duration of study ranges from one to three years.

In pre-school education, music education is an important part of it. Pre-school music education is an integral part of pre-school children's overall development. With the deepening of the reform of early childhood education, people have become more and more aware of the important role of music education in pre-school education and the significant impact of music education on the future development of children in all aspects and even their whole life.

The quantitative analysis of 25 master's theses and 58 journal literatures on music education for pre-school children on CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) and Wan Fang Database in 2010 shows that: in terms of author distribution, nearly 3/4 of these are from students majoring in musicology, and slightly more than 1/4 are from students majoring in pre-school education; The authors of the journals are mainly from Beijing, Jiangsu and other

* Received: February 11, 2024; Revised: February 27, 2024; Accepted: February 29, 2024

provinces and cities. As far as the research content is concerned, the research content of pre-school pedagogy students is all about kindergarten music education, and the research content of musicology students is all about music education of pre-school children in other institutions. The research content of periodical literature is basically confined to the category of kindergarten music teaching. In terms of research quality, nearly half of the 25 theses are of good quality, and the research quality of periodical literature is generally better than that of teaching plans (Wang, 2012).

Through the data statistics in the literature, we can see that the historical research on pre-school education and pre-school music education is very weak. There is still a situation that the research field pays more attention to teaching than to theory, and the theoretical research is the basis of supporting the development and research of the subject.

There are few works and journals at home and abroad on the historical research of Chinese pre-school music education. Most of these studies focus on teaching, curriculum, assessment, teachers, etc. The research on history is quite weak, and there is basically no relevant research at home and abroad. Due to the lack of these documents and the involvement of multiple disciplines, it is more difficult to study, and a large amount of information needs to be consulted, so the research results are very few.

With the development of society, the country pays more and more attention to pre-school education, so we need to make continuous progress in combing history and planning for future development. While achieving so many excellent achievements, we should pay more attention to and review the history of educational development, and sort out the history. Discover the law, find the problem, for better development in the future.

From the foregoing, the researcher is aware of the problems: historical research on pre-school music education in China is lacking. So will study History of pre-school music education in China and improve the development of this subject area. The researcher hopes that the results will lead to a solution problem and may be able to continue to apply to others research.

Main Contents

The author collects and collates relevant literature and interviews relevant experts. According to the historical phasing, an attempt is made to discuss the history of the development of pre-school music education in China (1949-2022).

1. Pre-school music education before 1949.

Early pre-school music education in China. (1) Focused on the purpose of supplementing family education. In terms of policy: for example, the Qing government's Zao Ding Meng Yang Yuan Statute and Family Education Law Statute reflected this understanding of the role of pre-school education. After a period of practice, around 1920, educators had a more comprehensive understanding of the role of pre-school education. (2) The State attached great importance to pre-school music education. Singing or musical songs were included in the curriculum items of the early mongyang or kindergartens established. Among them, Hunan Mongyang proposed that singing can "cultivate the sense of beauty, purify the mood, and cultivate the emotional nature", and believed that if the school did not set up music and song classes, it was an imperfect education. (3) The role of music in pre-school education. In the 1920s, the educator Chen Heqin proposed that music education is mainly to cultivate children's ability to engage in spiritual

activities from the inside, and that music education should cultivate and develop children's creativity. (4) Comprehensive education. It is different from the teaching mode of separate subjects in primary school and above. Many kindergartens have created new teaching methods. For example, the kindergarten attached to the Nanjing Higher Normal School used the "liaison teaching material" teaching method. (5) Determination of kindergarten as a school level. In 1922, the Ministry of Education of the National Government promulgated the School System Reform Programme, which formally listed kindergartens as one of the grades of the school system, i.e., the most basic grade of the school system. This established the status of pre-school education in the overall school education.

Pre-school music education in revolutionary bases (1927-1945). (1) Establishment of kindergartens. Because of the needs of the revolutionary cause and the need to serve the working people, the governments and pre-school educators in the revolutionary base areas, starting from the actual conditions and absorbing the experience of pre-school education in other parts of the country, created pre-school education institutions such as full-time and boarding nurseries, child-care centres and kindergartens. (2) Cultivation Objectives. The pre-school educational institutions in the revolutionary bases "educate children in the spirit of the nation and knowledge of life" and "exercise children's revolutionary outlook and style of work", so that the cause of pre-school education becomes an integral part of the cultural and educational endeavours of the New Democracy. (3) Teaching. In the teaching process, pre-school educators in the revolutionary bases attached importance to the role of music education. The use of musical works expressing the revolutionary spirit as teaching materials and the extensive use of folk music played a good role in fostering the national spirit and educating people on ideology and morality. Such teaching measures have become a distinctive feature of pre-school music education in the revolutionary base areas.

2. Pre-school music education in the 17 years the founding of China. (1949-1966)

(1) National education policy.

The promulgation of The Provisional Regulations for Kindergartens (Draft) and The Provisional Kindergarten Teaching Program (Draft). (1952) It proposes: the principle of education for all-round development. The Music Curriculum. The goals of "love of beauty and interest" and musical listening. The creation of an artistic environment. Guarantee of music lessons (China Pre-school Education Research Association, 2019)

The promulgation of The Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Preliminary Draft) in 1957 suggests that aesthetic education is an integral part of communist education. A play-led approach to upbringing.

The promulgation of the above policies has established the important status of aesthetic education. It gives people a clear understanding of the important role of aesthetic education, and enables them to make scientific and operable systematic guidance on the goals and principles of music education for young children, as well as on the content, requirements and methods of teaching, in accordance with the physical and mental characteristics and level of development of young children. It has an important guiding significance in guiding the concrete implementation of pre-school music education work, and has an important position in the history of pre-school music education in China.

(2) Educational thought.

Chen Heqin's theory of "living education". He proposed: nature and the larger society are all living teaching materials. In 1923, Chen Heqin founded the Nanjing Gulou Kindergarten. This was the first experimental kindergarten in China, and a model for modern pre-school education experiments in China. In 1926, Chen Heqin mentioned in his summer school lectures that young children have an innate affinity for music, and that music should be included in kindergarten programmes, and fully affirmed the value of music education for young children. He advocated, "Early childhood music education should adopt Chinese music teaching materials and Chinese ethnic musical instruments." He also pointed out: kindergartens should have half an hour of music class time every morning, which contains activities such as singing, music rhythms, dancing, small bands and music games.

Introduction of Soviet educational theory and practice. In 1950, a Chinese translation of Kerov's *Pedagogy* was published in China. At the same time, there were also Soviet books such as *Guidelines for the Work of Kindergarten Teaching and Raising Staff* and *My Experience of Working in Children's Education*. These numbers were designated as study reference books for kindergarten teachers at that time. Learning educational theory and practice from the USSR gave Chinese kindergarten teachers concrete help in teaching and learning, making work plans, and so on, and achieved remarkable results.

However, Soviet education overemphasis unity and attached importance to collectivity and planning. It emphasis the absolute status of the teacher, the dominant role of the teacher, and neglected the subjective position of the young child. These problems have had some not good effects on future development.

(3) Training programs

In the early years of the founding of the country, under the Soviet Union, political tasks were emphasized. Laying the foundation for cultivating talents for the construction of communism, it emphasized the social value orientation of educating people. Adopting the education model of teaching different subjects, pre-school music education emphasized the subject-oriented approach, focusing on musical knowledge and skills, while at the same time valuing the cultivation of character and habits. *The Provisional Regulations for Kindergartens (Draft)*, and good qualities and habits such as honesty, bravery, solidarity, fraternity, discipline and courtesy." At the same time, *The Provisional Kindergarten Teaching Program (Draft)* also emphasizes the need to focus on the cultivation of public morals such as love for the motherland and the people in young children.

(4) Pre-school music curriculum and teaching.

Curriculum. In the music teaching activities are very standardised, the nature of the programme is compulsory and optional, and also pay attention to the teaching of students according to their aptitude. Music teaching is integrated into life. In the 1950s, pre-school music education was not only a separate class, but also extended to the day-to-day life and outdoor activities. In addition to the classroom, we should also pay attention to nature, capture the sounds of life, and infiltrate auditory training into the life experience of young children.

Teaching content. The music curriculum includes singing, expression singing, listening to music, instrument performance, music games and dance. The focus is on the acquisition of systematic knowledge and the development of musicality.

Teaching methods. The organisation of teaching defines the six kindergarten programmes of correctional activities, and a detailed syllabus is drawn up for each subject, with the adoption of a subject-specific mode of teaching. Emphasis is placed on the role of the classroom, which is teacher-centred (Gansu Provincial Department of Education, 1960).

(5) Textbooks for pre-school music education.

The teaching materials are easy for young children to understand and comprehend, and apply the vocabulary that has appeared many times in young children's lives. *The Provisional Kindergarten Teaching Program (Draft)* is the first music teaching material for pre-school education in China. It contains three parts: singing, musical games and dances, and listening to music.

(6) Teacher Training in Pre-school Music Education.

Curriculum. *The Provisional Regulations of Normal Schools (1952)* states, "Those that train kindergarten teachers are known as Early Childhood Teacher Training Schools." The required courses included music and pedagogy. At that time, the Department of Pre-school Education at Nanjing Normal University was one of the first colleges and universities in New China to establish a pre-school education programme. *The Teaching Plan for Pre-school Normal Schools (1956)* included Music and Music Pedagogy as a compulsory course, with 30 to 45 minutes of extracurricular instrumental practice time per week per student. The music programme accounts for 7.8% of the total number of hours.

Training methods. Teacher education is based on short-term training to address the shortage of kindergarten teachers. *The Joint Notice on Several Issues Concerning Nurseries and Kindergartens (1956)* states, training methods have been increased to include evening classes, correspondence courses, business lectures, pre-school education research meetings and mutual observation. From this we can see that the multi-channel and multi-method training greatly alleviated the shortage of kindergarten teachers in the early years of the founding of the nation.

3. Pre-school music education in the Cultural Revolution. (1966-1978)

In general music education, during the Cultural Revolution, when classes were suspended for the revolution, music classes were turned into revolutionary literature and art classes, and the main content of their teaching was to learn and sing revolutionary songs and Peking opera samples. Its main teaching content was to learn to sing revolutionary songs and Peking Opera operas, such as Chairman Mao's discourse songs and anti-war songs. These songs are single in style and poor in content, and cannot be fully used as musical materials for aesthetic education.

The promotion of "revolutionary model operas" has led to the popularisation of Peking Opera music, which has enabled children to become aware of folk music to a certain extent. In addition, the development of children's singing activities was also fuelled by the widespread development of mass singing in society, and the inter-school singing competitions that were often held in various places during large-scale festivals such as the May Day and the Eleventh Day of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference were designed to publicise the Cultural Revolutionary Movement. At the same time, however, they play a role in fostering collectivist ideas of unity and solidarity among children and adolescents.

4. Pre-school music education in the Reform and Opening Up. (1978-2000)

Since the reform and opening up of China, the music world has undergone tremendous changes. Music is no longer just a tool to serve politics or an appendage to politics; it should respect the laws of its own development so that it can develop independently.

(1) National education policy.

The rise of quality-oriented education. It promotes the all-round development of students and ensures the personalised development of each young child. As a brand new educational concept, it also promotes the pace of change in pre-school music education. At the same time, some excellent foreign music teaching method gradually attracts people's attention and introduction to learn. For example, the German Orff music teaching method, the American Manhattanville music programme and so on. The exchange of music curriculum and teaching method promotes the progress of pre-school music education.

The restoration of aesthetic education. The fact that aesthetic education has been formally rewritten into the education policy means that it will become more popular and its status will be elevated in school education in the future. It is no longer subordinate to moral education and can give play to its unique value (Jiang, 1999).

The promulgation of *The Outline of Kindergarten Education (Trial Draft) (1981)* . Goals of Arts Education. Content of the Music Curriculum. Educational pathways. Clarification of the number of assessment indicators for the music programme (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 1981)

The promulgation of *The Kindergarten Management Regulations* and *The Kindergarten Work Regulations (Trial) (1989)* . The goal of comprehensive and harmonious development. The Aesthetic Value of Music.

The promulgation of "the Kindergarten Work Regulations". (1996) Aesthetic Education Goals. Integration between different disciplines. Respecting the Laws of Early Childhood Development. Silent aesthetic education.

(2) Changes in training objectives.

Putting Children First. In August 1990, the Chinese Government signed the United Nations Convention on *The Rights of the Child*, and the protection of the rights of young children reached a new level. *The Regulations on the Administration of Kindergartens* and *The Regulations on the Work of Kindergartens (1996)* were promulgated one after another, emphasising respect for young children and attention to individual differences. These regulations and treaties have given effect to and implemented the concept of child development as the basis for the development of young children.

Aesthetic Regression. The establishment of the National Council for Education in the Arts in December 1986 ensured that arts education, as the main means of aesthetic education, was regulated in schools. Pre-school music education thus pays more attention to stimulating young children's interest and emotional experience, increasing their sensitivity to beauty, and stimulating their expressiveness and creativity through aesthetic experience. Music education that returns to aesthetics gives music its own value (Wang, 2012)

(3) Pre-school music curriculum and teaching.

Curriculum reform. Music education has moved from being taught in separate subjects to being integrated (Pang, 2009). Kindergarten Educational Activities (1994) was the first set of kindergarten curriculum guide books in China to be divided into "fields", which embodied the idea of comprehensively promoting the all-round development of young children's bodies and minds in various fields. The Kindergarten Curriculum Guidance Series, published in 1996, divides the kindergarten curriculum into five fields, forming the five fields of pre-school education and constructing the basic structure of the pre-school education curriculum. The book also mentioned that different modes of curriculum, such as subdiscipline, integrated or combined, could be adopted according to the characteristics of each kindergarten. After the 1990s, a variety of curriculum models such as domain curriculum, theme curriculum and integrated curriculum emerged. The field of music not only focuses on strengthening links between internal subjects, but also integrates with the curricula of other fields.

Teaching methods. During this period, the teaching methods of pre-school music education became more varied, as shown in the combination of "explanation, demonstration, tutorial practice, guidance for creativity, guidance for exploration, and so on (Xu & Kong, 1997). Xu Zhuoya mentioned the use of multi-channel participation methods, the optimal combination of various areas of activity experience, mobilising children's enthusiasm, and strengthening the content of the lesson. At the same time, a variety of materials should be used flexibly, adapted to local conditions, and learnt to make their own materials to stimulate children's interest. Outside the music classroom, we should also promote multi-dimensional and multi-space music education in daily life.

(4) Pre-school music textbooks.

In the 1980s, the system of teaching materials for pre-school music education gradually matured. For example, the 1982 National Kindergarten Textbook Writing Group's "Music" was the first set of nationally compiled kindergarten textbooks after the founding of New China. The diversification of teaching materials is gradually meeting the needs of teachers and providing practical assistance for teaching and teacher growth. However, there are still shortcomings in terms of how to use the materials flexibly and how to teach with them.

(5) Pre-school music Teachers.

Beginning in the 1980s, there was a steady increase in the number of kindergarten teachers trained, providing a steady flow of talent to kindergartens and a basic guarantee for kindergarten teaching. In 1980, the Ministry of Education issued the *Teaching Programme for Early Childhood Teacher Training Schools* (Trial Draft), with a curriculum that included music and music pedagogy, dance, and mastery of one or two musical instruments. The number of hours devoted to music and dance amounted to 17.28 percent, which was much higher than before. This shows the importance of music teaching skills in the training of teacher-training students, and reflects the importance that the State attaches to strengthening the quality of teachers, so that the quality of kindergarten education can be rapidly improved.

5. Pre-school music education in the 21st Century. (2000-2022)

(1) National education policies

The promulgation of *The Guines for Kindergarten Education (Trial Implementation) (2001)* proposes five main areas, health, social, language, arts and science. Goals for arts education. Respect for the development of the child's personality. The policy emphasises the integration and linkages between the domains in the 21st century with a holistic view of the life of the young child and the development of the young child.

The promulgation of *The Learning and Development Guidelines for Children aged 3-6 years. (2012)* Refinement of the developmental goals in the five domains. Classified and tiered guidance programmes. The policy reflects scientific guidance to kindergartens and families in implementing kindergarten education and promoting the all-round development of young children. It is a refined guide for translating the National Programme for Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020) into practice, and has become a guiding document for teaching and learning in pre-school education in China in the following decade. Developed by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2012).

The promulgation of *The Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools. (2015)* The policy refers to the following areas: a modernised aesthetic education system with Chinese characteristics. Aesthetic Education Curriculum System. Aesthetic education teachers. After the promulgation of the document, the concept of " Educating people with Aesthetic " became more deeply rooted in people's minds, and pre-school teaching institutions had clearer and more standardised guidelines for carrying out aesthetic education (Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council, 2015).

The enforcement of *The Regulations on the Work of Kindergartens. (2016)* The policy include: importance of play. Young children's autonomy. The policy places greater emphasis on the ability of young children at different ages to make their own choices and creations according to their own interests, so that their personalities and abilities can be enhanced (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2016).

(2) Pre-school music curriculum and teaching

Young children's subjectivity. During this period, the subjective status of young children is increasingly being paid attention to. Emphasis is placed on affirming young children, respecting them and encouraging their own creativity and ideas. Emphasis is placed on young children's emotional experience and personalised expression, and young children's participation in classroom construction is realised in the teaching process.

Integration of the five domains

Since the 21st century, the integration and penetration of the five domains has increased. The Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (for Trial Implementation) states, "The contents of each domain should be organically linked and interpenetrate each other." Comprehensive thematic activities are becoming more and more common in kindergartens.

Transmission of traditional culture

The inheritance and development of traditional culture is the focus of attention of all sectors of society today, which requires teachers to provide children with the opportunity to participate in traditional folk art and to inherit and promote traditional culture. Traditional music has become the first choice of teachers when selecting materials for music teaching, and some kindergartens have also created local garden-based teaching materials, which are very much characterised by local features.

Innovations in educational technology

Since the 21st century, online platforms and various mobile phone apps have added new ways to the form of music teaching for young children (Chen, 2018). Kindergarten teaching equipment, percussion instruments, pianos, folk instruments and other basic equipment have been gradually enriched, leading to a variety of innovative teaching methods. The game-based teaching has been further explored, specifically in the form of game-based singing, rhythm, music appreciation and percussion teaching. Musical games are concretised in each activity, and can be interspersed at the beginning, middle or end of a musical activity, or throughout the entire musical activity.

(4) Faculty Enhancement

Several Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Standardising the Development of Pre-school Education (2018) proposes to "vigorously strengthen the construction of kindergarten teachers". On the one hand, it improves the training system for kindergarten teachers and strengthens the multi-level training of specialist and undergraduate kindergarten teachers. On the other hand, the degree of teacher training has been improved, so that in-service teachers can receive regular training outside the classroom, and the professionalism of in-service teachers has been effectively improved.

The Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools (2015) emphasized the need to improve the overall quality of teachers in aesthetic education. For kindergarten teachers on the job to strengthen training, and set up regular skills visits every semester to test or compete on piano and vocal skills, and urge pre-school teachers to practice music skills on weekdays. Strengthen regional music education lectures or training for kindergarten teachers, and constantly upgrade the professionalism of kindergarten teachers, so as to improve the quality of education and teaching.

Conclusion

This paper seeks to present the history of pre-school music education in China in a realistic manner by sorting out the history. According to the time of historical development (vertical), the study is carried out in several aspects (horizontal), such as pre-school music education policy, educational thought, curriculum and teaching, and teachers' qualifications. Interweaving the vertical and horizontal to form a multi-dimensional perspective, we present the historical facts of the historical development as comprehensively and synthetically as possible.

The 17 years the founding of China. (1949-1966) The goal of kindergarten education was to lay the foundation for training people to build communism. The status of aesthetic education was established, but with strong political colours. In classroom teaching, the aesthetic sense and perceptual ability of young children were developed through appreciating music, teaching songs, and playing music games. Cultivate young children's love for the country and the nation. Promote the development of character and behavioural habits in young children. At that time, due to the influence of the Soviet Union, pre-school music education was based on a sub-specialty model. Teaching purposes, teaching content and teaching methods were all unified and clearly defined. The dominant position of the teacher was emphasised, but the teacher's autonomy in teaching was strictly limited, and he or she did not have a certain degree of autonomy in choosing the content of the teaching. Due to the limited level of teachers at that time, the teaching methods were relatively single, and the use of the game method was not

skilful. The subjectivity of young children was not sufficiently reflected.

The Cultural Revolution. (1966-1978) The stagnation in the development of pre-school education during this period was due to the one-sidedness of the understanding of the relationship between educational work and socialist construction.

The Reform and Opening Up (1978-2000) With the advancement of reform, the aesthetic value of music education returned, the status of aesthetic education was restored, and the subjective status of young children was gradually emphasised, and the concept of teacher-led and child-led was advocated. The content of the pre-school music curriculum also gradually emphasises the combination of life and experience with young children. The emphasis on the organic combination of morality, intelligence, physicality, and aesthetics also promotes the interconnection and mutual penetration of music and other fields, and the integrated curriculum has come into people's view. At the same time, the organisation and methods of pre-school music teaching have become more diversified, and the use of games in music teaching has become more mature. The number and quality of teachers have also improved.

The 21st Century (2000-2022) Pre-school music education has entered a systematic and standardised development track. New educational ideas and advanced educational concepts are emerging. The subjective status of young children has been effectively implemented, there has been organic integration between the various fields, penetration of national cultural content, greater standardisation of education and teaching, universal implementation of the game method, innovation in teaching methods and approaches, and a steady improvement in the quality of teachers. The quality of pre-school music education has improved markedly.

The study of the history of pre-school music education is ultimately concerned with human growth and how the development of pre-school music education has been an important element in the growth of individuals in the face of social change. How pre-school music education can fulfil its special and influential educational role in a given era and have an impact on human growth. Therefore, both teachers, educational administrators and educational reformers should have a critical and creative understanding and thinking about the history and current situation of pre-school music education. Through the phenomenon, study the essence. Through practice, study the law. Through thinking, find innovation. In other words, the old Chinese saying goes, "Use the past for the present"!

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