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COMPARISON ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN
LEARNING MUSIC BETWEEN CHINA AND HONG KONG

MUF 655

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore whether there are comparisons between two countries, namely China and Hong Kong, on students and parents' perception towards learning music and the factors that affect students' motivation in learning music. Secondary data was used where articles, journals, books, and previous related researches became the source of information for this study. Findings suggest that students and parents' perception towards learning music between these two countries is more or less the same and the factors that affect students' motivation in learning music are generally the same and show not much of a difference.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Music accomplishments by Asian and Asian-American students have come to a worldwide attention. These students come from what is called the ‘Confucian zone’, which consists of Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China (Marginson, 2010). Due to their high achievements, many American and European music programs have developed recruiting strategies by sending representatives from the universities to hold the auditions in the East Asian countries (Huang, 2011). This achievement has encouraged the boost of confidence among East Asians because they realized that they can do anything as well as, if not better than, other cultures (Mahbubani, 1995, p.100). The *Independent* also announced that South Korea, Japan and China altogether, now make 90% of the world’s pianos (Becker, 2004, p. 39). This results show the increasing development of music in the East Asian countries.

Hao Jiang Tian, a bass soloist from New York Metropolitan Opera, observed over the past 19 years and found that there are now millions of children who are studying piano and violin and young people studying singing. He also said that he had seen more people becoming interested in classical music and that the future of classical music will be in China because there are many talented young people (Griffiths, 2005).

The Confucian doctrine has influenced Chinese, Koreans, Japanese and Taiwanese in different ways. Despite of their cultural differences, these East Asian countries share the same commitment to Western classical music (Huang, 2011).

A quote by Confucius in the book *Li Ji* (Book of Rites) says:

Music produces pleasure which human nature cannot be without. That pleasure must arise from the modulation of the sounds, and have its embodiment in the movements of the body – such is the rule of humanity. These modulations and movements are the changes required by nature, and they are found complete in music. (K’ung-fu Tzu, 1885/2008, p. 57)

Confucius lived during the era where the society has fallen into crises - such crises which our current global economic and politic are facing. Confucius believed that music education has a way of facing the social and political crises (Huang, 2011; Ji, 2008). He constantly asked his students to study the Songs because he believed it is the best way to awake the human spirit or human sentiments (Kim, 2006, p. 114). He also taught his students the 'six arts', also known as the basic knowledge and skills in ancient China. These six arts were ceremonies, music, shooting, driving, writing, and mathematics (Lee, 2000; Qian, 1988, p.17). Music was the second most significant art after ceremonies.

According to Kendra Cherry (2013), motivation is a process that begins, guides, and maintains the behavior towards achieving the goal. It is the cause of why we act on something. Cherry has given a couple of simple examples: (1) we drink a glass of water because we want to satisfy our thirst; (2) we read a book because we want to obtain knowledge or we want to know about something.

Cherry also provided the three major components of motivations which are activation, persistence and intensity. Activation is the process of making decision and initiating a move such as enrolling in a class. Persistence involves continuous efforts even when facing troubles and challenges such as taking extra class even though it means that one has to sacrifice in terms of time, energy, and money. Last but not least, intensity looks into the amount of effort put into achieving the goal. Others may put just the right and enough amount of effort and obtain satisfying good grades while some may put extra efforts by studying regularly and participate in more discussions as well as taking advantage in attending outside classes and then obtain more satisfying, excellent grades.

According to Davidson (2002), there are four types of motivations. They include: (a) *extrinsic motivation*, (b) *social motivation*, (c) *achievement motivation*, and (d) *intrinsic motivation*. Previous research has shown that the three external sources of motivation which are extrinsic, social, and achievement motivations, help in the development of intrinsic motivation which is required when a person want to have a long-term commitment with music.

People get extrinsic motivation when they do tasks out of expecting external rewards. External motivators include friends, family and teachers. Students often get trophies, money, social recognition or praise as extrinsic motivation.