

PERSONAL BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS MUSIC TRAINING FOR YOUNG
CHILDREN: PERSPECTIVES OF CHINESE PARENTS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

This study was designed to describe the background and musical experiences of Chinese parents who send their children to private music lessons, the extent of Chinese parents' support and involvement in their children's music learning and to investigate the factors that influenced Chinese parents' support for music education and their perceptions on the benefits of music training. A total of eight Chinese parents who send their children to private music lessons participated in this study and were interviewed based on 33 interview questions. Results indicated that overall, Chinese parents in the study had positive attitudes towards their children learning music and were prepared to provide financial and emotional support as well as time and energy for their children to learn music privately outside of school. Parents think that music could give a lot of benefits to their children. In addition Chinese parents in general are more open to accepting music education as they believe that there are many benefits to learning music. Their beliefs about the positiveness of music education and the effects music has on children have made them more motivated to commit to providing their children with musical experiences. Chinese parent's explained that philosophy of life teaches them how to face realities of life and they also considered that education is very important to live. Overall, the researcher concludes that Malaysian Chinese parents similar to Chinese parents in other parts of the world do have positive attitudes and perceptions towards music education. They do tend to perceive music learning as an opportunity that all children should not miss in their childhood. The reason why is because music is valuable for character building and development of children cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities since music instruments also cost quite expensive.

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Chapter 1: Background of the Study

Introduction

It is a common fact that music affects human beings in many different ways. For example, “music is said to influence the process of thinking and learning. Music may help you think better, analyze matters faster and work more efficiently.” (<http://science.yourdictionary.com/articles/how-does-music-affect-the-brain.html>). Although the statement above just shows a general belief about how music affects human beings, the benefits of involvement in musical activities cannot be overlooked.

Participation in music brings numerous benefits to each individual. Music encourages self-discipline and has great power for bringing people together. Music also is a way for young people to connect with themselves and their peers. Music is all about communication, creativity and cooperation. According to Clinton (2012), in his music education quotes, “by studying music in school, children have the opportunity to build on these skills, enrich their lives and experience the world from a new perspective.” (<http://musicedforall.com/music-education-quotes/>).

Many studies have been done to investigate what and how music affects us. Scientific findings based on research done by psychologists, neurologists, behaviorists and educators have generated many different perspectives about the benefits of being involved in music whether as passive listeners or as active learners. Some researchers have found that music increases brain function that not only develops during musical study but also academic and social skills. According to Yoon (2000), children can perform better in certain academic tasks and life skills as a result of being involved in