



Music education for children aged 5-6 years through a multicultural approach at Sen Hong kindergarten, ho chi Minh city, Vietnam

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Abstract

Music education plays an important role in the comprehensive development of children aged 5-6, particularly in shaping aesthetic emotions, creative thinking, and communication skills. A multicultural approach allows children to experience a variety of musical forms, thereby broadening their understanding of the world and developing their social skills. Survey findings at Sen Hong Kindergarten indicate that music activities have been regularly implemented; however, the integration of multicultural elements remains limited and the content is not sufficiently diverse. In addition, challenges related to instructional materials, physical facilities, and teachers' organizational experience continue to affect educational effectiveness. Building on these findings, the study entitled "Music education for children aged 5-6 years through a multicultural approach at Sen Hong Kindergarten, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam" proposes a set of practical measures aimed at improving the quality of music education in a multicultural direction for young children.

Keywords: Music education; Preschool children aged 5-6; Multicultural approach; Kindergarten; Music activities

1. Introduction

Music education plays a vital role in the comprehensive development of young children. Through music activities such as singing, moving to music, listening to music, and music games, children not only develop their capacity for artistic appreciation but also cultivate their emotional responses, creative thinking, and social communication skills. At the age of 5-6 years, children begin to perceive melody, rhythm, and musical content more clearly; therefore, organizing age-appropriate music education activities is a significant contributing factor to their holistic development.

In the context of globalization and international integration, multicultural music education has received increasing attention in early childhood settings. This approach draws on the multicultural education theories of James A. Banks (1993) and Geneva Gay (2000), which emphasize respect for cultural diversity in educational practice. In the field of music, it is also influenced by Ethnomusicology, with scholars such as Bruno Nettl (1983), who helped expand music teaching content beyond the Western tradition. In addition, the Orff (1963), Kodály (1974), and Dalcroze (1921) methods, which prioritize experiential learning, provide a strong foundation for integrating cultural elements into music instruction. Furthermore, the perspectives of Piaget (1952) and Vygotsky (1978) affirm the essential role of the cultural environment and social interaction in children's development. Together, these theoretical foundations support the view that multicultural music education helps children broaden their knowledge, develop aesthetic awareness, foster creativity, and strengthen social skills. However, in practice, the application of a multicultural approach within music education activities at a number of kindergartens remains limited and has not yet been utilized fully or effectively. Given this context, it is necessary to investigate the current state of music education for children aged 5-6 through a multicultural approach at Sen Hong Kindergarten, Binh Tan Ward, Ho Chi Minh City. The findings of this study are

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expected to clarify the strengths and limitations of the existing music education activities and, on that basis, to propose appropriate solutions for improving the quality of music education for young children.

The study employs the following research methods:

2. Theoretical research method

Scientific publications, books, journals, textbooks, and relevant research works on music education, early childhood education, and multicultural education were reviewed and analyzed to construct the theoretical framework of the study.

2.1. Observation method

Direct observation of music education activities for children aged 5-6 at Sen Hong Kindergarten was conducted to document how activities were organized, and to examine the instructional content and teaching methods employed by teachers.

2.2. Survey method

Questionnaires were administered to collect the opinions of teachers and parents regarding the organization of multicultural music education activities for children.

2.3. Interview method

Teachers were interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of the actual implementation of music activities, as well as the facilitating factors and challenges encountered in the process.

2.4. Data analysis method

The collected data were systematically compiled, analyzed, and processed to evaluate the current state of multicultural music education for children aged 5-6 at the kindergarten. Data from the questionnaires were summarized and processed using descriptive statistical methods, primarily employing percentage (%) to assess the frequency of participants' responses.

The percentage calculation formula used is as follows:

$$P = (n / N) \times 100\%$$

Where:

P: Percentage (%)

n: Number of respondents selecting a given option

N: Total number of survey participants

After calculating the percentages, the data were compiled into statistical tables and analyzed to evaluate the current state of multicultural music education for children aged 5-6 at Sen Hong Kindergarten.

3. Main content

The main content of this study focuses on investigating music education for children aged 5-6 through a multicultural approach at Sen Hong Kindergarten. First, the study clarifies the role and significance of music education in supporting children's comprehensive development, particularly with regard to aesthetic appreciation, creative thinking, and communication skills. At the same time, a multicultural approach enables children to become familiar with a wide range of musical forms, thereby expanding their knowledge and cultivating an attitude of respect toward cultural diversity. On this basis, the study surveys and analyzes the current state of music activity organization at the school, identifying strengths such as the relatively regular implementation of music activities, as well as limitations such as insufficient diversity of content, a shortage of instructional materials, and limited organizational experience among teachers. Drawing from these findings, the study proposes a set of practical measures to improve the effectiveness of multicultural music education, contributing to children's balanced development in terms of cognition, emotion, and social skills within the context of modern education.

3.1. Current state of Music education for children aged 5-6 through a multicultural approach at Sen Hong Kindergarten

To investigate the current state of multicultural music education for children aged 5-6 at Sen Hong Kindergarten, the research team conducted surveys with teachers and parents to assess their awareness, the frequency of activity organization, and children's access to diverse multicultural musical forms. Survey results indicate that the majority of teachers and parents are clearly aware of the role that multicultural music education plays at Sen Hong Kindergarten, Binh Tan Ward, Ho Chi Minh City, in developing children's aesthetic sensibility, emotional growth, and cultural integration competencies. Nevertheless, the actual implementation of this approach in practice still faces a number of specific limitations.

3.2. Teachers' awareness of Music Education through a multicultural approach

To assess teachers' awareness of music education through a multicultural approach, the research team surveyed teachers who are currently teaching at the school. The survey results are presented in the following table:

Table 1 Teachers' awareness of Music education through a multicultural approach

No.	Survey item	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1	Multicultural music helps children broaden their understanding and respect differences	16	80.0	3	15.0	1	5.0
2	Vietnamese children's songs should be integrated with international children's songs	15	75.0	4	20.0	1	5.0
3	Multicultural music is difficult to implement due to a lack of materials and teaching aids	13	65.0	5	25.0	2	10.0
4	Multicultural music education contributes to developing children's cultural integration competency	16	82.0	3	13.0	1	5.0
5	Teachers are willing to apply it if provided with training and guidance	14	70.0	4	20.0	2	10.0

The survey results indicate that the majority of teachers hold positive views toward music education through a multicultural approach. Specifically, 82% of teachers agreed that multicultural music education contributes to developing children's cultural integration competency, and 80% believed that such activities help children broaden their understanding and develop respect for cultural differences. These findings suggest that teachers are already aware of the role of multicultural music in early childhood education. However, 65% of teachers still reported that implementing multicultural music education is challenging due to the limited availability of appropriate teaching aids and musical instruments. This indicates that, while awareness is relatively well established, practical application continues to face considerable obstacles.

3.3. Parents' awareness of Music education through a multicultural approach

In addition to teachers, parental awareness is also a critical factor influencing the implementation of multicultural music education. The survey results from 50 parents are presented in the following table:

Table 2 Parents' awareness of Music education through a multicultural approach

No.	Survey item	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1	Multicultural music helps children become more confident and develop their imagination	36	72.0	10	20.0	4	8.0
2	Vietnamese children's songs should be integrated with international children's songs	14	28.0	15	30.0	21	42.0
3	Families have limited means to create a diverse musical environment at home	30	60.0	12	24.0	8	16.0
4	Willing to collaborate with the school in music-related activities	28	56.0	15	30.0	7	14.0

The survey results show that the majority of parents hold positive views regarding the role of multicultural music. 72% of parents agreed that multicultural music helps children develop confidence and imagination. However, 28% of parents believed it is sufficient for children to learn only Vietnamese children's songs, suggesting that a portion of parents have not yet fully grasped the value of multicultural music education. In addition, 60% of parents reported that their families have limited capacity to provide a diverse musical environment at home, which means that children's access to multicultural music largely depends on educational activities organized at the kindergarten.

3.4. Level of musical competency in children aged 5-6

To assess children's level of musical expression, the research team observed the music activities of 20 children. The observation results are presented in the following table:

Table 3 Level of musical competency in children aged 5-6

No.	Observation criteria	Well achieved		Achieved		Needs practice	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1	Enthusiasm and focus when listening to unfamiliar music (international, ethnic)	20	100	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	Ability to distinguish the timbre of musical instruments from different regions	16	80.0	3	15.0	1	5.0
3	Confidence when participating in music games and using traditional/international instruments	9	45.0	7	35.0	4	20.0
4	Ability to move creatively to multicultural rhythms	10	50.0	8	40.0	2	10.0
5	Respectful and appreciative attitude toward diversity in performance pieces	20	100	0	0.0	0	0.0

The survey results indicate that the musical competency of children aged 5-6 shows a clear degree of differentiation:

Well Achieved and Achieved groups: These groups constitute the majority (over 70%). This indicates that young children are highly responsive to unfamiliar sounds and have strong potential for cultural integration when appropriately guided. Children are particularly enthusiastic about experiential activities, such as using self-made musical instruments.

Needs Practice group: Approximately 15-20% of children fall into this category, particularly in skills that require motor coordination and a deeper understanding of cultural characteristics. This finding presents a clear demand for teachers to closely observe this group, design supplementary exercises, and increase children's exposure to musical materials during activity corners and spontaneous daily routines. The shift from evaluating "outcomes" to evaluating "the process of skill development" affirms that children's progress is closely tied to teachers' early identification of difficulties and

timely adjustment of educational strategies. This further confirms that the "learning through experience" approach plays an important role in enhancing the effectiveness of multicultural music education for young children.

4. Proposed measures for Music education for children aged 5-6 through a multicultural approach at Sen Hong Kindergarten, Binh Tan Ward, Ho Chi Minh City

4.1. Enhancing teachers' professional competency in multicultural Music education

Enhancing teacher competency is not only a matter of equipping educators with specialized knowledge, but also a process of transforming their professional mindset and establishing their role as cultural "bridges" that help children develop an attitude of respect toward diversity. At Sen Hong Kindergarten, teachers' initiative and dedication account for approximately 80% of the program's overall success.

The school should organize professional training workshops and subject-matter seminars to equip teachers with knowledge of multicultural music and methods for organizing activities suitable for children aged 5-6. Teachers should be guided on how to select songs from various regions and countries and how to integrate cultural elements into music activities. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to engage in self-directed learning, seek out relevant resources, share experiences within their professional teams, and observe one another's classes to improve their skills. The school should also create opportunities for teachers to participate in continuing education courses, pedagogical competitions, and demonstration lessons to develop and strengthen their professional competencies. Throughout the implementation process, it is important to regularly evaluate outcomes, draw practical lessons, and adjust the content of professional development activities to align with real conditions.

4.2. Developing a curriculum framework and content for multicultural Music education for children aged 5-6 suited to the context of Sen Hong Kindergarten

The development of a concrete curriculum framework and educational content provides teachers with a clear instructional guide, ensures systematic implementation, and reflects the specific cultural characteristics of the local area. At Sen Hong Kindergarten in Binh Tan Ward, where children come from diverse demographic backgrounds, this measure helps music function as the most natural and accessible bridge for cultural connection. It aims to help children develop musical appreciation, learn to move expressively to music, and express their emotions. It also enables children to become familiar with multiple cultural traditions (Northern, Central, and Southern Vietnam, as well as international cultures) and fosters learning motivation by avoiding monotonous instructional routines.

Teachers should begin by assessing children's musical receptiveness, their ability to move to music, and the physical conditions of the classroom in order to establish a solid basis for developing appropriate lesson plans. On this foundation, teachers select and design musical content that includes Vietnamese folk songs, children's songs, and a selection of simple international songs, ensuring that each thematic unit incorporates multicultural elements. When organizing activities, teachers follow a structured sequence: a warm-up phase to generate enthusiasm, a phase in which children listen to and appreciate the music, followed by guided singing combined with movement, and concluding with experiential activities such as performance or role-play. Simultaneously, teachers create a rich musical environment by setting up a music activity corner equipped with musical instruments, images, and costumes, while ensuring that children have regular opportunities to listen to music throughout the day. During implementation, teachers consistently observe children's level of engagement, enthusiasm, and ability to perform in order to make timely adjustments to the content and format of activities as needed.

4.2. Diversifying activity formats through an experiential learning approach in multicultural Music education for children aged 5-6

Diversifying activity formats through an experiential learning approach helps children learn through hands-on practice and exploration, thereby increasing engagement and supporting more effective knowledge retention. Through a variety of enriching music activities, children have the opportunity to develop musical appreciation, movement skills, and social communication skills. At the same time, the integration of multicultural elements allows children to encounter and understand diverse cultural traditions in a natural and accessible way. This contributes to enriching the forms of educational activity organization, reducing the risk of monotony, and improving overall instructional effectiveness.

Teachers should organize a variety of experiential music activity formats, such as music games, group or individual performances, character role-play linked to songs, and the use of simple instruments to accompany music. During these activities, teachers integrate multicultural elements by selecting songs from different regions and countries and pairing

them with distinctive costumes and visual materials. Beyond formal instructional periods, teachers can organize extended experiential activities such as cultural performance exchanges, music festivals, or activity corner explorations that allow children to freely discover and express themselves. Throughout the process, teachers should observe, encourage, and support children's active participation, and then adjust the activity format accordingly to suit children's abilities and interests.

4.3. Integrating information and communication technology into multicultural Music education for children aged 5-6

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in music education helps create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that captures children's attention. Through media such as videos, audio recordings, and images, children can more easily access music from various regions and countries, thereby broadening their cultural knowledge. At the same time, technology supports teachers in innovating their instructional approaches, enhancing teaching effectiveness, and promoting children's active and self-directed engagement.

Teachers can make use of devices such as computers, televisions, and speakers to display videos and play music alongside visual illustrations for songs from diverse cultural backgrounds. During activities, teachers may have children watch video clips of musical performances, folk dances, or distinctive musical instruments to help them visualize and imitate more easily. In addition, teachers can utilize simple music applications and software for interactive activities, such as listening and identifying melodies or selecting appropriate instruments. Outside of formal instructional periods, teachers can play music during morning arrival time or activity corner sessions to ensure children have regular and ongoing exposure to diverse musical styles. Throughout implementation, teachers should carefully select appropriate content, manage screen time reasonably, and observe children's reactions in order to make effective adjustments.

4.4. Strengthening collaboration between families, schools, and the local community in multicultural Music education for children aged 5-6

Collaboration between families and the community helps extend children's music education environment beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Children have the opportunity to engage with a wide range of musical forms and diverse cultural traditions encountered in everyday life, thereby enhancing their cultural appreciation and understanding. At the same time, the participation of parents and community members increases cohesion, supports the school in improving educational outcomes, and provides children with richer and more authentic experiential learning opportunities.

Teachers should proactively communicate with parents about the goals of multicultural music education, thereby encouraging their participation and support — for example, by contributing songs, traditional costumes, musical instruments, or by helping children practice at home. The school may also organize events such as music festivals and cultural performance exchanges, and invite parents or community members with musical talents to perform and introduce distinctive regional musical forms. Furthermore, the school can collaborate with the local community to arrange visits and hands-on experiences with relevant cultural and artistic activities. Throughout the process, teachers should maintain regular communication with parents regarding children's progress and remain flexible in adjusting the content and format of collaborative activities to ensure maximum effectiveness.

5. Conclusion

Music education for children aged 5-6 through a multicultural approach at Sen Hong Kindergarten, Binh Tan Ward, Ho Chi Minh City holds significant value in supporting children's comprehensive development, particularly with regard to aesthetic and emotional growth, creative thinking, and social skills. The research findings indicate that the school has shown genuine commitment to music education and has implemented music activities on a relatively regular basis. However, the integration of multicultural elements remains limited, the content is not yet sufficiently diverse, and the process is still hampered by challenges related to instructional materials, physical facilities, and teachers' organizational experience.

Based on an analysis of the current situation, the study has proposed a number of practical measures, including: enhancing teacher professional competency; developing an appropriate curriculum framework and educational content; diversifying activity formats through an experiential learning approach; applying information and communication technology; and strengthening collaboration among families, schools, and the community. These measures are considered feasible and well-suited to the actual conditions of the school, and are expected to contribute meaningfully to improving the effectiveness of multicultural music education.

The systematic implementation of these measures will not only allow children to engage with a broad range of musical traditions but will also foster an attitude of respect toward cultural diversity from the earliest stages of childhood. This constitutes a critical foundation for developing children's character and enhancing their capacity for integration within the context of modern education.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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