

INFLUENCE OF MUSIC ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this theoretical paper is to explore and analyze the influence that music can have on the development of a child from the physical, cognitive, emotional and social aspects. Through a detailed bibliographic research and analysis of conceptual models, we have identified the key role that music plays in improving the motor coordination, perceptual development and cognitive skills of the child. From the emotional perspective, musical experiences serve as a means of expressing and understanding emotions. Introducing music into early education can also potentially improve social skills and interaction among children. Through the analysis of empirical studies and a review of existing theories, we tend to emphasize the importance that music has in the development of a child. By presenting this analysis, we intend to provide a contribution in order to understand how music can improve the scope and quality of a child's development during the period which one grows up.

Keywords: influence of music, child development, cognitive, emotional and social aspect, early education

INTRODUCTION

Music has a significant influence on child development in many ways. It can improve physical and motor development skills by helping with coordination and motor development. From the cognitive point of view, listening to music can strengthen children's perception, memory and problem-solving skills. Additionally, music experiences can help develop social and emotional skills. Musical activities such as, musical games in a group can help improve interaction and communication between children. Studies have shown that the introduction of music into early education can benefit children's skills with their level of reading and writing. Music can also be a powerful tool for expressing and recognizing emotions by the children. Thus, music can be included as an important part of a child's developmental environment so that it can have a positive impact on many different aspects.

The goals of this paper are: (1) An analysis of the physical and motor impact to look into ways how musical experiences affect the development of physical and motor skills in children; (2) the study of cognitive changes to understand how listening to and playing music can influence perception, memory and cognitive skills in children; (3) communicational and interactive skills to study the role of music in improving social and emotional skills in children, including interaction and communication; (4) Advancement in the field of education to identify the ways how the integration of music in early education can help develop reading, writing and other teaching skills; and (5) Expression of emotions to study ways how children express & recognize emotions through music and its role in the emotional skill.

Therefore, musical experiences carefully assembled and conveyed to the youth, have a positive influence on all areas of child development, including physical, cognitive, emotional and social aspects. This influence is greater when music is integrated into the child's early education and environment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The working methodology of this topic includes an in-depth analysis of relevant literature and sources. Here are some of the methodologies that can be included:

- Bibliographic research was based on existing literature related to the role that music plays on child development, including the works of scientists and researchers in this field.
- Identification of conceptual models concerned conceptual models or distinguished theories related to the influence of music on child development are identified.

- An analysis of empirical studies meant an analysis of studies and research conducted on this topic.
- A review and theoretical discussions pointed of view of various authors and researchers, relevant to this topic.
- Internet sources considered to be accurate and relevant sources of researchers in this field, etc.

Out of these materials and research methods of analysis and description, different authors, experiences and schools will be referred to, in order to come to discussions and final conclusions that musical experiences have a positive impact on the development of children, to include the physical, cognitive, emotional and social aspects of development, emphasizing the importance of the integrity of music in a child's education and environment.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Music has always been an essential part of learning and education; therefore, Kuhn is right when saying that “musical education is as old as music itself” (Rojko, 14, 2014). From early childhood, a series of psychophysical traits and processes develop in the child, so that by the end of that development, they have an entirely complex personality. It all takes shape gradually and simultaneously through several aspects, such as: intellectual, moral, physical and aesthetic. At first, it may seem like music does not play an important role in personality development. However, a closer examination reveals multiple connections and a significant impact of music on all aspects of both, the individual development and collective education and living (Gluvić, 1980).

According to Swanson: “Music has a place in every culture. It stimulates the feelings and intuitions, letting people express and understand what cannot be communicated in other ways. In interacting with the environment, young children naturally, rely on their senses and intuitions. As they begin to develop cognitive abilities, children should continue to refine their intuitive, creative abilities by active involvement with music and other arts that touch emotions and intuition” (Swanson, 1969). As children engage with positive music, whether through listening, singing, or moving to the rhythm, the brain undergoes a symphony of activity. Children's music engages numerous areas of the brain, including those related to:

- Working memory;
- Language processing;
- Spatial-temporal processing;
- Emotional regulation and self-control;
- Problem-solving;
- Flexible thinking.

Recent neuroimaging and neurophysiological research have started the journey toward a sound neuroscientific basis for rhythm and music-based interventions, providing a better understanding of how the brain responds to the periodicity of auditory rhythmic patterns and how movements can be shaped by rhythm. A full understanding of the mechanisms underlying the wide range of therapeutic benefits of rhythm-based musical interventions is on the research agenda for the years to come (Janzen et al., 2021). Early brain development is all about building connections through input from the outside world, and music provides a rich and supplementary source of input as young brains develop. Exposure to music allows young brains to soak in the range of notes, tones, and words they will later use, and in doing so, build neural pathways that can influence and enhance cognitive ability for a lifetime.

In terms of childhood and adolescence, for example, Putkinen et al. (2019) demonstrated how musical training is likely to foster enhanced sound encoding in 9 to 15-year-olds and thus be related to reading skills. A separate Finnish study by Saarikallio et al. (2020) provided evidence of how musical listening influences adolescents' perceived sense of agency and emotional well-being, whilst demonstrating how this impact is particularly nuanced by context and individuality. Aspects of mental health are the focus for an Australian study by Stewart et al. of young people with tendencies to depression. The article explores how, despite existing literature on the positive use of music for mood regulation, music listening can be double-edged and could actually sustain or intensify a negative mood. A Portuguese study by Martins et al. shifts the center of attention from mental to physical benefits in their study of how learning music can support children's coordination (Welch et al., 2020).

Music may play an important role in meeting a child's educational needs as it provides a means of self-expression, giving the child an outlet for feelings and emotions. Music, aside from being a source of enjoyment, is also a means of communication with others (Suthers & Niland, 2007). Music may expose the child to challenges and multi-sensory experiences which enhance learning abilities and encourage cognitive development. In particular, music can also engage cognitive functions, such as planning, working memory, inhibition, and flexibility (Dumont et al., 2017).

School music is very important for a child's development, too. It is based on many teaching topics which are part of the teaching curriculum on the Musical education subject. According to Rojko (2004), the tasks of teaching curricula and methodical literature of music education and teaching are divided into three categories:

- Professional musical tasks or direct teaching of music, which deal with acquisition of knowledge and professional musical competence and developing musical skill (e.g. adjusting to voice alterations based on duration, tone and volume; proficiency at independent singing by notes; acquisition of basic knowledge from the musical theory; etc.)
- Indirect tasks of music education represent the category of tasks, which require the development of certain characteristics, manners, attitudes, as well as, skills that are not related to acquiring professional musical knowledge and are not a result of direct knowledge of that kind, either (e.g. development of musicality; development of love for music; development of artistic taste; development of aesthetic feelings; etc.)
- Non-musical tasks of teaching music.

Regarding non-musical tasks of music, included in Rojko's book "Music teaching methodology," there we can find a connection with our topic "The influence of music on the development of a child." According to Rojko (2004), the non-musical tasks of music that affect children are: developing a sense of collective belonging, strengthening social feelings, music is an educational instrument, developing a sense of discipline and community work, developing creative skills, developing communicative skills, developing sensitivity, helping with untidiness and discharge of motor skills, shaping up the moral and social awareness of students, developing correct breathing, etc. So, the abovementioned tasks, which are non-musical in nature and influence a child's development, are related to the role that music plays on a child's development in the physical, cognitive, emotional and social aspects.

The goal of music education (and not only that of the first school years) through musical activities, is to emotionally activate children, bringing joy and happiness to the daily life of the classroom. It is known

that emotional and mental activities, achieved through music, encourage all other psychological activities of students (Požgaj, 1950).

The author from Kosova, Seniha Spahiu, in her book “Musical Education” says that the educational role of learning music is not presented as a separate quality of this type of learning, it educates through schooling. By providing new concepts, it develops the student’s intellect. To be observed in the process of musical education, it means to be listened to. By listening to, the student notices the expressive music elements. Different forms of musical education work develop one student’s attention and memory (Spahiu, 1976).

According to Požgaj (1950), Learning should not be understood solely as a process where knowledge is acquired, skills are developed and habits are perfected. It develops students’ psycho-physical skills and their scientific viewpoint, altogether. Learning is educational in the sense that it develops a child’s thinking at its best, refines what they’ve observed, enriches them with new visions and concepts, develops their attention and memory, creative imagination, gives shape to their interests, dignifies their feelings and strengthens their will”.

On the other hand, the psychology of music deals with music as a specific type of human experience and its subject is the systematic, scientific study of relationships between musical phenomena, on one hand, and the psychological ones, on the other. It is a wide field that incorporates the study of the following theoretical questions: the perception of music, the nature of music skills, the aesthetic experience of music and the emotional reaction to music. Furthermore, the psychological approach to music implies, although at a lesser extent, the treatment of practical issues of the application of music in different areas of life – therapy, industry and education. The basic tendencies in the development of psychology were also preserved in the development of the music psychology. This is how early activities are carried out in this area under experimental conditions and are referred to the physiological and biological aspects of music and musical activities. However, the latest psychology of music is no longer exclusively biological, but it is mainly socio-psychologically oriented. It is not only conditioned by physical factors and the physiological structure of the organism, but also by cultural and historical factors and the musical history of the individual.

One of the most important contributions of the 20th century, in terms of human development and personality, is the systematic study of child development. This study covered a wide range of disciplines, problems, viewpoints, theories and methods. Each participant noted the importance of the mutual effect of different types of development: intellectual, physical, emotional and social. Child development in general, including musical development, is a series of stages that appear in a continuous developmental order within specific age intervals. But it is unquestionable that the pace of reaching certain stages and developing through them is an individual achievement, determined both by internal factors – the level and quality of disposition and by favorable conditions of development – the quality and quantity of encouragement in a given environment (Radoš, 1983).

When it comes to child development, especially the development of concepts, the fruitful empirical work and theory of child development, based on the work of the distinguished researcher of child intelligence and thinking – Jean Piaget – is essential. His idea is that child development is a continuous process of interaction between the individual and the environment. American psychologist, Carom Bruner dealt with the development of concepts (even though not musical) and his understanding of intellectual development, as well as understanding of learning, can be extremely useful for planning children’s musical experiences, especially in the preschool age (Radoš, 1986).

According to Radoš and Matić (1986), music has an influence on people, contributes to the development of emotions, and stimulates human imagination. How important music is to an individual, depends on how ready he is to surrender to its effect and dedicate himself to the search for the unknown in its special language (Radoš & Matić, 1986). Also, the authors presented the importance of music in child development through three segments:

The direct effect of music and the encouragement of positive emotions

The importance of using music when working with children from the earliest age is not there solely to stimulate musical skills. Music has a much greater role. With its help, opportunities are created for spontaneous, warm, mutual communication between children and children with adults. We experience joy, sadness, or some other type of mood expressed by music even when we are unable to explain how the music inspired a certain mood in us.

Developing the ability to observe and synthesize knowledge

By listening to music, the child develops observation skills through the differences in the pitch of tones, their length, color and power of interpretation. Over time, the child also observes changes in rhythm, melody, and characters of musical pieces. From a series of individual experiences, the child develops the ability to reason, arranges previously acquired knowledge and often surprises with logical reasoning. Music as a rhythmic background and an incentive for children to express themselves through movement. Movement is a natural need for the child. This inner urge develops spontaneously through music. Music of a dance nature is a stimulus where most children respond to this music. The game with coordinated body movements affects the development of the skills of organized body movements performed with certain figures or movements.

MUSIC AS A SPEECH STIMULUS:

The talent of expression in speech enables the child to communicate and participate actively in his work. The development of speech in preschool children is a field that has been carefully studied, and the methodology and working procedures are still analyzed in detail to enrich and modernize educational practice. Music experiences are valuable stimuli for the speech, especially because they encourage children's imagination, the ability to imagine and the freedom to describe their ideas through speech. The child knows music, but also speech, through the first impressions that an adult gives them through a lullaby, a small song, swinging to the rhythm of music, music from auditory and audio-visual tools, etc. (Radoš & Matić, 1986).

Based on the opinions and researches of various authors, we realize that music is an inseparable part of children and humans in general. We find it everywhere. Since birth, the child is exposed to musical sounds. The child is surrounded by music at home, school and social environments. Music at school is taught in accordance with the curriculum of the given subject, while the music heard in different other conditions and circumstances is imposed on the child spontaneously, or by one's own accord. Musical activities are among the most diverse ones, as such are singing, dancing and listening to music, playing musical instruments, etc.

Various researchers, through the above-mentioned studies (as well as the others below), have placed a special emphasis on the effect that music has on the child's development. Some ideas are based on school music and its impact on the child and others are based on music in general. According to research, it can be seen that a greater emphasis is given to the impact that music has on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of the child.

DISCUSSION

As we mentioned above, a child is exposed to the art of music from the moment of birth. Music is present in the family, in the living environment, as well as in preschool and school educational institutions. Both, the music that is taught and cultivated at school institutions and the one outside the school, have a great role in the developmental aspect of the child. It means that music and its activities, not only play a role on the development of musical skills, but they also affect other non-musical developments in children. From discussions and analyses of different opinions and theories on this topic, we will emphasize the impact that music has on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of the child.

Music can be an individual activity, but it also is the most social of the arts; people share feelings and enjoyment through music. Children come to preschool classes as individuals who need to learn to relate to others, to do things together; group music activities; foster social interaction.

Through contact with the music of other cultures, children learn that people in other parts of the world use music to enhance their ceremonies, to enliven their dance, and to underscore feelings of love, joy and grief. Although the music itself is significantly different, simply knowing that people of other cultures use music in feeling, human ways help children relate to them as fellow human beings.

Music can also help the handicapped child to grow. Juliette Alvin reports that for such a child, music can provide a chance for achievement and sensory development, an emotional outlet, a mental stimulus, and a means of socialization. These many aspects of a single factor give music an integrating power because they are indissolubly linked with one another and they involve the mind, body and emotion of the child in one experience (Swanson, 1981).

CONCLUSION

This study, which is based on the research of theories, opinions and concepts of various musical authors and of the field of music psychology, covered the influence that music has on children's development. If we analyze the papers and the time when the research was conducted and written, we come across different time periods of the opinions given, starting from the 1950s to the recent years, such as 2023. So, we can conclude that:

- Old schools are as important and well-established, as the new ones;
- The connection between the theories of earlier authors with theories of new authors is very solid;
- Every recent development has its starting point in the earliest developments.

Analyzing and researching through different sources (old and new), which are not the only ones on this topic, being only a very small part of sources; we split the research concept into four segments of musical influence on the development of the child, which are:

- The influence of music on the physical development of the child;
- The influence of music on the cognitive development of the child;
- The influence of music on the emotional development of the child;
- The influence of music on the social development of the child.

According to numerous researchers and authors, we conclude that music has a great influence on the holistic development of children, affecting the physical, cognitive, emotional and social areas.

The influence on the physical development – Music exercises its influence on the physical development of children through musical activities such as, dancing and using musical instruments. Such activities improve motor coordination, flexibility and strengthen muscles. The influence on the cognitive

development – Music stimulates cognitive development by promoting intellectual skills. Experience with musical notes, other musical signs, different rhythms as well as, other expressive musical elements, help improve information processing, concentration and problem-solving skills. Music can also increase children's mathematical

Knowledge and logical skills.

The influence on the emotional development – Music is an expression of feelings and affects the emotional development of children. Through song lyrics, melodies and rhythms, they learn to express and understand their feelings. Musical activities help to create a positive emotional environment, improve the sense of emotional awareness and help children to better manage their emotions.

The influence on the social development – Music has an essential role in shaping up social skills in children. Through participation in musical activities, they develop cooperative, communicative skills and a sense of inclusion. These experiences influence the formation of social bonds, build a shared empathy and create an environment where children can share their creativity and expression within a group.

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