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Research on the Development Path of Children's Music Activities Based on Creativity Cultivation

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Abstract: The preschool years constitute a critical period for creativity development. As the cornerstone of aesthetic education, music activities-characterized by their engaging, experiential, and open-ended nature-excellently align with the needs of nurturing children's creativity. This study examines the current challenges of neglecting creativity cultivation in preschool music education, grounded in the developmental age-specific traits of young children and the principles of music learning. Through four key dimensions-environmental design, activity planning, innovative methodologies, and teacher-child interaction-it explores pathways to implement creativity-focused music activities. The ultimate goal is to inspire children's imagination and encourage bold expression through musical experiences, thereby fostering the synergistic growth of creativity and musical literacy.

Keywords: early childhood education; music activities; creativity development; implementation approaches

1. Introduction

The "Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3-6" clearly emphasize that the goal of arts education is to nurture children's aesthetic appreciation, fundamental artistic skills, and creative abilities [1]. Among the various forms of artistic expression, music occupies a unique and indispensable position. It allows children to engage with melody, harmony, and rhythm, while simultaneously providing a flexible space for imaginative exploration and personal expression. The development of creativity in children is not an inherent trait but rather a gradual process that emerges through consistent engagement in practical activities. Music activities, including melody composition, rhythm imitation, and bodily expression, encourage children to move beyond habitual patterns of thought, fostering cognitive flexibility and stimulating their imaginative potential. These activities integrate hands-on manipulation, verbal communication, and cognitive reflection, forming a holistic environment for the development of creativity [2].

Despite the recognized value of music in fostering creativity, current early childhood music education practices often overemphasize rote learning and knowledge transmission. In many classrooms, music teaching is reduced to repetitive drills, such as memorizing songs or practicing rhythm patterns mechanically. Such approaches overlook the active role of children as participants and creators, suppressing opportunities for individualized expression and diminishing the intrinsic motivation to explore musical ideas. As a result, children may miss out on critical stages of creative development, limiting their ability to think independently and inventively [3].

To address these challenges, it is essential to design music activities that align with children's cognitive, emotional, and physical development. By creating environments where children can freely experiment with sound, rhythm, and movement, educators can

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transform music activities into fertile grounds for creativity. This involves emphasizing exploratory learning, encouraging improvisation, and providing varied opportunities for interaction and collaboration [4]. Through these practices, children not only acquire musical knowledge and skills but also develop broader competencies, including problem-solving, critical thinking, and emotional expression. Ultimately, well-designed music activities can contribute to the holistic development of children, supporting both their intellectual growth and their capacity for imaginative and artistic engagement.

2. Theoretical Basis and Practical Significance of Integrating Children's Creativity Cultivation with Music Activities

2.1. Theoretical Basis

Piaget's theory of cognitive development indicates that children aged 3 to 6 are in the preoperational stage, a period marked by concrete and imaginative thinking [5]. During this stage, children primarily learn through direct experiences, hands-on engagement, and sensory exploration. Music activities, with their concrete, interactive, and often playful characteristics, align closely with these cognitive needs. They provide a natural platform for exploratory thinking, enabling children to experiment with sounds, rhythm patterns, and melodic sequences in ways that stimulate both curiosity and problem-solving skills. By engaging in such activities, children can gradually move beyond rigid thinking patterns and develop flexible, creative approaches to learning [6].

Rogers' humanistic learning theory emphasizes the importance of respecting learners' autonomy and fostering a relaxed, supportive learning environment. This principle is particularly relevant to nurturing creativity in music education. When children feel free to explore, make choices, and express themselves without fear of judgment, they are more likely to engage deeply with musical experiences. The sense of autonomy and emotional safety provided by this approach encourages children to express personal ideas, emotions, and imaginative concepts, forming a strong foundation for creative growth [7].

In addition, the theory of multiple intelligences highlights musical intelligence as a key dimension of children's overall intellectual development, closely interconnected with linguistic, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences. Fostering creativity through music is therefore not solely about enhancing musical skills—it is a process of promoting coordinated development across multiple domains. Engaging children in diverse musical activities encourages the integration of auditory, linguistic, motor, and spatial skills, thereby supporting holistic development and laying a foundation for comprehensive cognitive, social, and emotional growth [8].

2.2. Practical Significance

Integrating musical activities with creativity cultivation offers numerous practical benefits in early childhood education. By moving away from mechanical or rote learning, children can experience music as a dynamic and interactive medium. While appreciating melodies, rhythms, and harmonies, they simultaneously learn to express their understanding in personal and inventive ways—for example, using body movements to convey tempo changes, creating original rhythmic patterns with simple instruments, or experimenting with melodic improvisation [9]. This active engagement fosters imaginative thinking and nurtures the ability to generate original ideas.

Collaborative music activities, such as group rhythm composition, ensemble play, and collective performance, further extend the benefits of creativity-oriented teaching. These experiences encourage children to listen to others, coordinate their actions, and communicate effectively within a team, promoting social skills and cooperative learning. Additionally, personalized creative experiences allow children to achieve a sense of accomplishment, strengthen self-confidence, and accumulate positive emotional experiences that support lifelong learning and personal growth. The integration of

musical activities with creativity development thus not only enhances artistic competence but also contributes to children's broader cognitive, emotional, and social development, making music education a powerful tool for holistic early childhood education [10].

3. Existing Problems in the Cultivation of Creativity in Current Preschool Music Activities

3.1. Rigid Activity Design and Lack of Exploratory Elements

In many preschools, music activities are still designed according to a rigid "teacher demonstration → child imitation → group reinforcement" model. These activities often emphasize rote teaching of nursery rhymes and basic rhythm exercises, leaving little room for openness or exploratory engagement. For example, during song instruction, children are required to strictly mimic the teacher's melody, tempo, and movements, with no allowance for individual interpretation or personal expression. In rhythm exercises, children are frequently limited to following precise instructions for percussion instruments, without opportunities to experiment with different timbres, combine instruments creatively, or invent their own rhythmic patterns. Such rigid activity designs keep children in a passive learning mode, limiting their ability to think independently, take initiative, and develop their creative potential.

3.2. Overreliance on Conventional Teaching Methods and Neglect of Children's Subjectivity

Some music educators continue to rely heavily on lecture-based or rote-learning approaches, which often overlook children's active participation and individual learning interests. For instance, during instrumental lessons, teachers may focus solely on teaching percussion techniques, while neglecting to allow children to explore the distinctive sounds of various instruments through hands-on experimentation. Similarly, in music appreciation sessions, instructors often provide prepackaged explanations of musical emotions, leaving no room for children to interpret, experience, or express their own emotional responses. This one-directional approach restricts opportunities for independent exploration and prevents children from connecting their imaginative ideas with musical experiences, ultimately hindering the development of originality and creativity.

3.3. Insufficient Environmental Setup and Lack of a Creative Atmosphere

The physical and material environment plays a crucial role in fostering creativity, yet many preschool music spaces remain underdeveloped. Music activities are often confined to standard classrooms without dedicated music rooms, limiting opportunities for movement, collaborative exploration, and experiential play. Available music materials are frequently restricted to traditional percussion instruments such as tambourines and rattles, presented in repetitive and inflexible ways without layered, age-appropriate complexity. Everyday items that could inspire creative exploration—such as bottles, paper cups, or chopsticks—are rarely incorporated, reducing opportunities for inventive sound-making. Moreover, outdated teaching philosophies may fail to recognize children's individuality, creating an environment where children hesitate to experiment due to fear of making mistakes. This combination of environmental and attitudinal constraints results in a setting that stifles creativity and limits expressive freedom.

3.4. Imbalanced Teacher-Child Interaction and Insufficient Effective Guidance

Teachers' guidance methods have a direct impact on the development of creativity in early childhood music education. However, interactions between teachers and children often exhibit imbalance. In some cases, teachers dominate activities excessively, intervening frequently and correcting children's perceived "errors," which interrupts their creative thought processes and prevents independent exploration. Conversely, some teachers fail to respond effectively to children's spontaneous creative expressions. For

example, when children use body movements or improvisation to convey musical ideas, teachers may lack timely recognition, affirmation, or encouragement, which dampens motivation and enthusiasm. Furthermore, teachers often apply a uniform teaching approach that does not consider individual differences in developmental stages, interests, or learning styles. Such practices fail to provide differentiated support tailored to children's creative potential, resulting in missed opportunities to foster diverse forms of expression and imaginative thinking.

4. Implementation Path of Children's Music Activities Based on Creativity Cultivation

4.1. *Creating a Diverse and Relaxed Musical Environment to Foster a Creative Atmosphere*

A supportive environment is essential for cultivating creativity in young children. Kindergartens should provide music-making platforms that integrate both physical and psychological elements. Physically, dedicated music activity rooms can be organized with functional zones for melody, rhythm, and performance, providing ample space for bodily expression and group collaboration. Music materials should be diversified, combining traditional instruments with everyday objects. For younger children, soft and easily handled bells or handbells can be introduced, while older children can experiment with wooden fish, triangles, bottles, paper cups, rubber bands, or cardboard boxes. This variety allows children to explore the distinct timbres of different materials, expand their auditory experiences, and develop creative ideas for musical expression. In addition, playing music of diverse styles—such as nursery rhymes, classical pieces, and folk melodies—in classrooms and corridors helps children gradually develop musical appreciation and broaden their experiential foundation.

Equally important is fostering a positive psychological environment. Teachers should adopt a child-centered educational philosophy, respecting each child's individuality and encouraging bold creative attempts. Even when children's performances do not meet adult expectations, educators can respond with affirmations such as "Your rhythm is very unique" or "Your dance shows great imagination," helping children feel valued and confident. Teachers can also guide children to appreciate and learn from peers' creative ideas, promoting a collaborative, harmonious, and inclusive group atmosphere where children feel free to express themselves and enjoy the creative process.

4.2. *Designing Open-Ended and Exploratory Music Activities to Highlight Creativity*

The design of music activities is a fundamental factor in promoting creativity. Teachers should develop open-ended, exploratory, and tiered activities that match the cognitive and developmental characteristics of children aged 3 to 6, encouraging active exploration and original thinking. For younger children with limited attention spans and predominantly concrete thinking, play-based activities such as "Sound Match" and "Rhythm Imitation Show" are effective. These games allow children to experience rhythm and melody variations, fostering musical perception and initial creative awareness. For middle-age preschoolers, who have increasing manual dexterity and emerging teamwork skills, activities such as "Making Musical Instruments with Everyday Materials" and "Creating Rhythms for Nursery Rhymes" encourage experimentation with timbres and rhythm combinations, laying the foundation for early creative skills. For older preschoolers with more advanced cognitive and expressive abilities, activities such as "Expressing Emotions Through Music," "Reimagining Familiar Nursery Rhymes," and "Collaborative Musical Fairy Tale Productions" allow children to personalize musical interpretations, integrating life experiences with imaginative creation.

Activity design should also encourage cross-disciplinary integration. Combining music with art allows children to paint the melodies they hear, while linking music with language enables them to create rhythmic nursery rhymes. Integrating music with physical education helps children express musical dynamics such as tempo, volume, and

mood through body movements. These interdisciplinary approaches broaden children's cognitive perspectives, deepen engagement, and enhance creative thinking by allowing them to experience music from multiple dimensions.

4.3. Innovating Flexible and Diverse Teaching Methods to Stimulate Creative Desire

Teaching methods that respond to children's cognitive development can effectively stimulate their musical interest and creativity. Educators should move beyond traditional lecturing and adopt play-based, experiential, exploratory, and collaborative approaches, allowing children to learn through movement, experimentation, and social interaction. Play-based methods can transform learning into engaging games, such as rhythmic "leveling challenges," where children complete tasks of increasing complexity, enhancing rhythm perception and control. Experiential methods encourage multi-sensory engagement with music; children listen, move, and express themselves simultaneously, activating visual, auditory, and motor senses to deepen understanding.

Exploratory methods allow children to independently discover musical possibilities. Teachers can pose questions such as, "What happens if you tap a bottle and a paper cup? Can you create different rhythms?" or "This music sounds cheerful-how can you express that through movement?" Such prompts encourage independent thinking, experimentation, and problem-solving, strengthening creative capacity. Collaborative approaches are particularly suitable for middle and senior preschoolers. Group-based tasks, such as choreographing dances or creating ensemble rhythms, provide opportunities for idea exchange, coordination, and teamwork, while simultaneously enhancing creativity and social skills.

4.4. Building an Equal and Interactive Teacher-Child Relationship to Enhance Creative Guidance

Teachers should act as guides, supporters, and collaborators rather than mere transmitters of knowledge. Effective, equal teacher-child interactions can deepen creative development. Teachers should observe and listen carefully, identifying moments when children spontaneously generate novel rhythms or movements, and provide focused attention to understand their thought processes. Inspirational guidance, rather than direct instruction, encourages children to overcome creative blocks. For example, when composing a song, teachers might ask, "This song is about a little flower-what does it do in spring? How could that inspire the lyrics?" Such prompts broaden perspectives while maintaining autonomy.

Personalized guidance is crucial. Teachers should recognize individual differences, setting tailored creative goals for each child. Children with less musical experience can be encouraged to explore simple improvisations, while those with stronger skills may be guided toward advanced tasks, such as adapting melodies or designing complex performances. This approach ensures every child has opportunities to develop their potential while enjoying the creative process.

4.5. Incorporating Local Cultural Elements to Enrich Creative Materials

Creativity in young children is closely tied to life experiences and cultural context. Integrating local cultural elements into music activities enriches creative materials and strengthens children's cultural awareness. For instance, using local nursery rhymes and folk songs helps children appreciate traditional music while encouraging them to create new rhythms or lyrics. Introducing local folk instruments, such as bamboo flutes or coconut shell drums, enables exploration of unique timbres and rhythmic arrangements. Additionally, incorporating musical motifs from local festivals or performances, like dragon and lion dance music, promotes collaborative creativity and enhances the cultural relevance of musical activities.

By connecting music creation with local life and culture, children can perceive the close relationship between music and their surroundings. This fosters cultural

appreciation, strengthens confidence in their cultural heritage, and naturally combines creativity cultivation with the inheritance of local cultural traditions.

5. Discussion

The exploration of creativity cultivation through preschool music activities reveals several significant insights into early childhood education. First, music activities serve as a unique medium for integrating cognitive, emotional, social, and motor development. Through active engagement with rhythms, melodies, and improvisation, children not only acquire basic musical skills but also enhance imaginative thinking, problem-solving ability, and emotional expression. The combination of structured guidance and open-ended exploration allows children to experience autonomy in learning, encouraging them to experiment, take risks, and develop original ideas.

Second, the implementation of child-centered teaching methods highlights the importance of respecting individual differences. Children demonstrate varying levels of musical perception, motor coordination, and expressive ability, requiring educators to adopt flexible strategies tailored to each child's developmental stage. By observing, listening, and providing personalized guidance, teachers can foster creativity while supporting confidence, intrinsic motivation, and a positive attitude toward learning. Collaborative activities further strengthen social interaction, teamwork, and communication skills, indicating that music education can contribute holistically to preschoolers' development beyond the artistic domain.

Third, the integration of local cultural elements into music activities provides both creative resources and cultural learning opportunities. Exposure to traditional melodies, folk instruments, and culturally significant musical practices allows children to connect music with daily life and cultural identity. This approach not only enriches creative expression but also enhances cultural awareness, laying a foundation for lifelong appreciation of music and culture. Cross-disciplinary activities that combine music with art, language, and movement further expand children's cognitive and perceptual experiences, promoting innovative thinking and multi-dimensional problem-solving skills.

Despite these advantages, current preschool music education still faces challenges. Activity designs may remain overly structured, environments may lack sufficient diversity, and teacher guidance may not always balance support with autonomy. These issues suggest that sustained professional development for educators, investment in enriched musical environments, and continuous curriculum innovation are essential for maximizing the effectiveness of creativity-focused music activities. Future research could explore longitudinal outcomes of early creative music education, the impact of digital and interactive tools on musical creativity, and strategies for integrating multicultural music resources to further stimulate imagination and artistic expression.

Overall, discussion of the theoretical and practical aspects of creativity-oriented music activities emphasizes that fostering imagination, expression, and originality in preschoolers requires a comprehensive, child-centered approach. By combining thoughtful activity design, supportive teacher interaction, enriched materials, and culturally relevant experiences, early childhood music education can cultivate both artistic competence and innovative thinking, preparing children for lifelong engagement with creative learning and collaborative expression.

6. Conclusion

Music activities for preschoolers that emphasize creativity do not exclude the acquisition of musical knowledge and technical skills; rather, they allow such learning to emerge naturally through children's active exploration and inventive engagement. The creative abilities of young children are delicate yet dynamic, requiring educators to nurture them with patience, respect, and encouragement, while employing scientific,

open, and diverse pedagogical approaches that balance guidance with freedom of expression.

In early childhood music education, consistently applying a child-centered philosophy is essential. By establishing diverse and relaxed musical environments, designing open-ended and exploratory activities, implementing flexible and innovative teaching methods, fostering equal and interactive teacher-child relationships, and integrating local cultural elements, educators can continuously refine developmentally appropriate music activities that respond to the unique needs of each child. Such approaches encourage children to freely imagine, experiment, and express themselves within musical contexts, enabling creativity to take root, develop, and flourish through hands-on musical experiences.

Moreover, these practices contribute not only to the development of musical skills but also to broader cognitive, emotional, and social growth. Children learn to observe, reflect, and express ideas, enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Collaborative activities nurture communication, cooperation, and empathy, while personalized creative experiences boost self-confidence and intrinsic motivation for lifelong learning. Integrating cultural elements further enriches children's creative materials, strengthening cultural awareness and appreciation while providing meaningful contexts for imaginative musical expression.

Overall, fostering creativity through music activities promotes the coordinated development of children's musical literacy, cognitive flexibility, and imaginative capacity. By providing thoughtfully designed experiences that combine exploration, guidance, and cultural context, educators lay a solid foundation for children's holistic growth and lifelong engagement with music, art, and creative expression.

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