

Survey on the Development of Pop Music in Music Teaching of Wulanhaote No.4 Middle School in Inner Mongolia, China

Liu Tianhao,
Kla Somtrakool and Chinnapat Taipanich
Bangkokthonburi University, Thailand
Corresponding Author, E-mail: nicha.musiced@gmail.com

Abstracts

This research objectives were (1) To study on the Current Situation of Popular Music in the Teaching of Music in the Fourth Middle School of Wulanhaote City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. (2) To find the development trend and direction of integrating pop music into middle school music teaching.

The methodology was mixed method research and key informants were three experts to find out current situation of popular music and the development trend and direction of integrating pop music. The research findings were (1) Interviews with three key informants revealed the importance of popular music in secondary school music teaching, its benefits, and the need for a holistic, student-centered approach. They advocate for a balanced combination of theory and practice, focusing on creativity and individual learning needs. (2) The teacher's comprehensive and engaging approach to teaching pop music covered topics like history, production, marketing, and critique, using varied and interactive methods for effective learning.

Keywords: Development; Pop music; Music teaching; Inner Mongolia; China

Introduction

This study examines the integration of pop music in music education at Wulanhaote No.4 Middle School in Inner Mongolia, China. Pop music, with its catchy melodies and relatable lyrics, has gained immense popularity among the younger generation in China. However, its integration into formal education is still in its early stages. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative data from expert interviews and quantitative data from student surveys. Pop music's development in music teaching is crucial as it enhances students' interest in learning music and helps them understand various music genres. In China, the traditional focus of music education has been on classical and traditional Chinese music. However, with the increasing influence of Western culture, pop music has gained popularity among Chinese youth, leading to a demand for music education that incorporates pop music. Wulanhaote No.4 Middle School has recognized the importance of incorporating pop music into its music curriculum. The inclusion of pop music in music teaching is crucial as it bridges the gap between the music students are exposed to in their daily lives and the music they learn in school (Chen, 2010:35-49). It also serves as a valuable tool for teaching various musical concepts and techniques and helps students develop critical listening skills and the ability to analyze and interpret music. Despite the benefits, challenges include the lack of suitable teaching materials, potential resistance from parents and school administrators, and some educators' lack of necessary skills and knowledge to effectively

teach pop music. Incorporating pop music into music teaching can increase students' interest and engagement in music education, help them develop a broader understanding of music history and cultural diversity, and develop important skills such as critical listening, analysis, and interpretation (Li, 2011: 405-421.). Despite the challenges, the potential benefits for students make the inclusion of pop music in music teaching a worthwhile endeavor. This research aims to provide valuable insights into the development of pop music in music teaching and contribute to the ongoing conversation about the role of pop music in music education (Liu, 2012: 313-320.).

Research Objectives

1. To study on the Current Situation of Popular Music in the Teaching of Music in the No.4 Middle School of Wulanhaote City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region,China.
2. To find the development trend and direction of integrating pop music into middle school music teaching.

Research Methodology

Research methods: Mixed method research

Research tool: Questionnaire form, Interview form and Observation form.

Tools constructing

Interview form:

The researcher constructed interview forms by studying a large number of books, literature, articles, research reports, and websites, and sought out three key informants from three universities with extensive experience in teaching popular music singing for interviews. Interviews about the teaching of popular music included

- The importance of popular music
- The benefits of popular music
- Teaching content
- Teaching methods
- Teaching evaluation

Questionnaire form

A student questionnaire was constructed to ask the seventh to ninth grade students of the fourth middle school in Ulaanbaatar about the teaching of popular music.

The questionnaire was distributed to 30 students. They were asked about

- 1) Curriculum;
- 2) Teaching Content;
- 3) Teaching methods;
- 4) Teaching assessment

Key informant: Three experts in pop music singing from three different universities.

Population: A total of 320 students from Grade 7 to Grade 9 are enrolled in Wulanhaote No.4 Middle School in Inner Mongolia,China

Sample: 30 students randomly selected in grades 7 to 9 in Wulanhaote No.4 Middle School in Inner Mongolia, China.

Research Conceptual framework

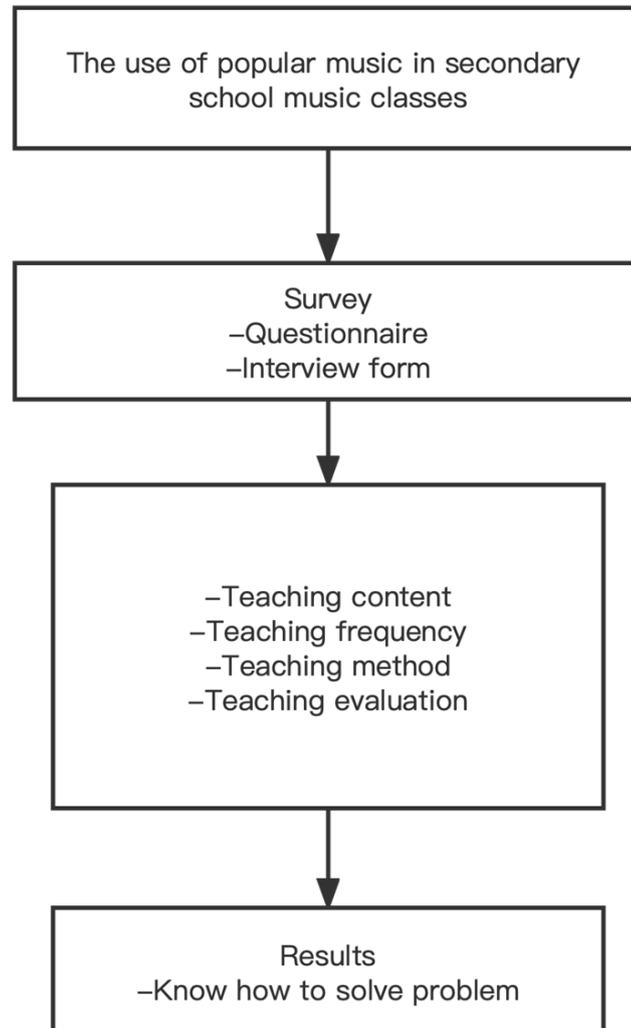


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

Research Results

To sum up, the researcher can conclude that: (1) the experts agreed on the importance and place of popular music in the teaching of music in secondary schools. They considered that popular music could stimulate students' interest, develop their creativity, teach musical concepts and skills, reflect contemporary culture and society, develop critical thinking skills, inspire career aspirations, promote cultural diversity and inclusiveness, and facilitate collaborative learning. However, they also emphasized the need to balance the teaching of popular music with other types of music and to ensure the quality of popular music. Thus, popular music has an important and diverse role to play in the teaching of music in secondary schools. (2) three teachers emphasized the diverse benefits of studying popular music for

middle school students. Zhang Hao focused on music's role in enhancing creativity, self-expression, cultural understanding, critical thinking, social awareness, motor skills, confidence, and self-esteem. Liu Tianxiang highlighted the positive effects of music education on academic performance, cognitive abilities, stress relief, emotional well-being, teamwork, leadership, friendship, and social networking. Zhang Lulu discussed music study's potential in promoting personal and career development, talent discovery, self-improvement, career exploration, 21st-century skills, dream pursuit, and social contribution. Thus, studying popular music can offer middle school students a comprehensive and enriching learning experience that can benefit various aspects of their lives. (3) three teachers advocate for a comprehensive, engaging, and student-centered approach to popular music instruction in middle schools. Zhang Hao focuses on teaching music theory and practical skills, Liu Tianxiang emphasizes fostering a deep appreciation for music through historical, cultural, and critical analysis, and Zhang Lulu promotes an interactive, technology-integrated approach that encourages student participation and exploration. Despite their differing views, they all agree that the ultimate goal is to develop students' musical abilities, encourage creativity and self-expression, and instill a lifelong love for music. (4) school popular music education should be a balanced blend of theory and practice, focusing on creativity and individual learning needs. Utilizing multimedia resources, hands-on activities, collaborative projects, and diverse learning materials can aid teachers in helping students comprehend the structure and elements of popular music, enhance their musical skills, express personal ideas, learn from peers, and accommodate their unique interests and abilities. (5) teachers propose diverse evaluation methods for teaching popular music in middle school. Zhang Hao recommends a blend of formative and summative assessments for continuous feedback and a complete understanding of a student's abilities. Liu Tianxiang supports performance-based assessments to evaluate a student's performance skills and promote creativity. Zhang Lulu suggests a holistic, student-centered assessment that considers all aspects of a student's musical development and is customized to their needs and learning styles. All three teachers concur on the significance of a comprehensive, practical, and personalized evaluation in popular music education.

As shown in the table, if the average is more than 3, the item is considered excellent, and if it is less than 3, the item is considered problematic.

Pop music teaching curriculum: current pop music teaching curriculum is rated as engaging and interesting with a score of 3.8, indicating its excellence in this aspect. The curriculum is also effective in improving music skills, as reflected by a score of 3.4. However, the curriculum scored 2.9 in providing a good balance between theory and practical application, suggesting that there is room for improvement in this area. The issue may be due to an imbalance in the curriculum, with either too much emphasis on theory or practical application, which could hinder students' comprehensive understanding and application of pop music.

Teaching content: teaching content in the classes is relevant to my daily life and experiences, scoring a 3.7, indicating that it is excellent in this aspect. This suggests that the course material is practical and relatable, which can enhance students' interest and engagement in learning. However, the teaching content in the classes is not challenging enough to stimulate my thinking and learning, as it only scores a 2.2. This indicates that the course content may be too simple or not sufficiently thought-provoking, which could limit students' intellectual

growth and learning potential. The course may need to incorporate more complex concepts or critical thinking exercises to address this issue. Lastly, the teaching content in the classes is clearly explained and easy to understand, also scoring a 3.7. This shows that the instructor is effective in delivering the course material, making it accessible and comprehensible for students. This is crucial in facilitating students' understanding and retention of the knowledge.

Equipment: school's provision of popular music materials, use of interactive media equipment for teaching, and availability of various instruments scored 2.8. This score is below 3, indicating that there are some issues in these areas. The problems could be due to the quality of the music materials, the effectiveness of the interactive media equipment, or the condition and variety of the instruments available. Further investigation is needed to identify the specific causes.

Evaluation: feedback received from teachers is considered beneficial for improving academic performance with a score of 3.2. The grading system is perceived as fair and transparent, scoring a perfect 4.0. The school provides adequate opportunities for self-evaluation and reflection, and the evaluation methods are believed to accurately reflect students' abilities and knowledge, both scoring a satisfactory 3.0. The school's consideration of individual learning styles in performance evaluation is highly appreciated, scoring another perfect 4.0. The evaluation system is also seen as motivating for learning and improvement, scoring a good 3.5. However, the school's evaluation system is perceived as not being supportive enough and overly stressful, scoring a low 2.2. This suggests that the school may need to review its evaluation system to ensure it is not causing undue stress on students.

Teaching methods: music teacher's group teaching method is excellent, scoring 4.2, as it effectively helps students understand popular music. The one-on-one teaching method also performs well, with a score of 3.6, significantly improving students' skills in popular music. The small group teaching method, scoring 3.3, enhances the learning experience in popular music. The teaching methods make popular music lessons enjoyable and encourage active participation, both scoring 3.0. They also help develop creativity in popular music, scoring 3.3, and make it easy to understand the theory behind popular music, scoring 4.0. However, there are areas for improvement. The teaching methods are not as effective in helping students improve their performance in popular music, scoring 2.8. This could be due to a lack of individual attention or practical exercises. The most significant issue is that the teaching methods do not sufficiently motivate students to practice popular music outside of class, scoring only 1.8. This could be due to a lack of engaging homework assignments or a lack of emphasis on the importance of practice. On a positive note, the teaching methods help students appreciate the cultural significance of popular music, scoring 3.6. This shows that the teacher is successful in conveying the broader context and importance of the music.

Students' interest in learning summary of the given issues is as follows: Satisfaction with pop music learning is rated as excellent with a score of 3.0. This indicates that the learning process is effective and enjoyable. The teacher's teaching style is also rated as excellent with a score of 3.0. This suggests that the teaching methods are engaging and well-received by the students. However, satisfaction with the evaluation system of pop teaching is rated below excellent with a score of 2.5. This suggests that there are issues with the evaluation system. The cause of this problem could be due to a lack of clarity in the evaluation criteria, or the system may not be comprehensive enough to accurately assess the students' progress and skills in pop music.

Teacher's approach to teaching pop music was comprehensive and engaging, covering a wide range of topics from the history and characteristics of pop music to its production, marketing, and critique. The teaching methods employed were varied and interactive, including lectures, multimedia presentations, case studies, demonstrations, hands-on practice, and group discussions. These methods were suitable for the subject matter and effectively facilitated students' learning.

In the first lesson, the teacher used a lecture and multimedia presentation to introduce pop music and its history. This method was effective in providing a broad overview of the subject. The students showed active participation and high interest, indicating that the teaching method was engaging and stimulating.

In the second lesson, the teacher used case studies and group discussions to teach about the characteristics of pop music and famous musicians. This method allowed students to learn in a more interactive and practical way, enhancing their understanding of the subject. The students' active participation and good understanding demonstrated the effectiveness of this teaching method.

In the third lesson, the teacher used demonstrations and hands-on practice to teach about different genres and instruments of pop music. This method was highly effective in engaging students and fostering their enthusiasm for the subject. The students' active participation and high enthusiasm indicated that this teaching method was both enjoyable and educational.

In the fourth lesson, the teacher used a lecture and group work to teach about pop music composition and lyrics writing. This method encouraged creative thinking and collaboration among students. The students' active participation and creativity demonstrated the success of this teaching method.

In the fifth lesson, the teacher used demonstrations and role play to teach about pop music performance and stage presence. This method was highly engaging and allowed students to learn in a fun and interactive way. The students' active participation and high enthusiasm showed that this teaching method was effective and enjoyable.

In the sixth lesson, the teacher used a lecture and hands-on practice to teach about pop music production and music video making. This method provided students with practical skills and knowledge. The students' active participation and good understanding indicated that this teaching method was effective.

In the seventh lesson, the teacher used case studies and group discussions to teach about pop music marketing and social media promotion. This method encouraged critical thinking and practical application of knowledge. The students' active participation and critical thinking demonstrated the effectiveness of this teaching method.

In the eighth lesson, the teacher used a lecture and group discussion to teach about pop music critique and the future of pop music. This method encouraged reflective thinking and discussion among students. The students' active participation and reflective thinking indicated that this teaching method was effective.

In conclusion, the teacher's methods of teaching pop music were effective and engaging, fostering active participation, high interest, good understanding, creativity, enthusiasm, critical thinking, and reflective thinking among students. However, it would be beneficial to incorporate more hands-on practice and real-world applications in future lessons to further enhance students' learning experience.

The interviews with the three key informants revealed that : (1) the experts agreed on the importance and place of popular music in the teaching of music in secondary schools. (2) The three teachers emphasized the benefits of learning, such as improving creativity, enhancing self-expression, realizing talent discovery and self-improvement. (3) Three teachers advocate a holistic, participatory and student-centred approach to the teaching of popular music in secondary schools. (4) Pop music education in schools should be a balanced combination of theory and practice, focusing on creativity and individual learning needs. (5) Teachers put forward a variety of evaluation methods for popular music teaching in middle schools.

Through the calculation of students' questionnaires, it can be known that: 1) the current popular music teaching courses are attractive and interesting, which shows its excellence in this aspect. The course was also effective in improving musical skills, with a score of 3.4. However, the balance between theory and practical application of the curriculum scored 2.9, suggesting that there is room for improvement in this area. This may be due to the imbalanced curriculum setting, with too much emphasis on theory or practical application, which is not conducive to students' comprehensive understanding and application of popular music. 2) The teaching content in the class is relevant to my daily life and experience, which is excellent in this respect. However, the teaching content in class is not challenging enough to stimulate my thinking and learning. This indicates that the course content may be too simple or not thought-provoking enough, limiting the intellectual development and learning potential of students. The teaching content in class is clearly explained and easy to understand. 3) Equipment: There are some problems in the provision of pop music materials and the use of interactive media equipment for teaching. These problems are due to the quality of musical materials, the effectiveness of interactive media devices, or the condition and variety of instruments available. Further investigation is needed to determine the specific cause. 4) Evaluation: Feedback received from teachers is considered to be conducive to improving academic performance, and the grading system is considered fair and transparent. However, the school's assessment system was seen as insufficiently supportive and overstressed. This suggests that schools may need to re-examine their assessment system to ensure that it does not create undue stress for students. 5) Teaching method: The group teaching method of music teachers is very good, which can effectively help students understand popular music, and the one-to-one teaching method also performs well. The group teaching method was used to enhance the learning experience of students in popular music. This teaching method makes pop music lessons interesting and makes the theory behind pop music easy to understand. However, there are areas for improvement. Teaching methods are less effective in helping students improve their pop performance, which may be due to lack of personal attention or practical exercises. The most important problem is that teaching methods do not sufficiently motivate students to practice pop music outside the classroom. 6) Student interest in learning The questions given are summarized as follows: Satisfaction with popular music learning is excellent, which indicates that the learning process is effective and enjoyable. The teacher's teaching style was also rated excellent, which indicates that this teaching method is engaging and well received by students. However, they are not satisfied with the pop teaching evaluation system, which indicates that the evaluation system has problems.

It can be seen from observation that: Teacher's approach to teaching pop music was comprehensive and engaging, covering a wide range of topics from the history and characteristics of pop music to its production, marketing, and critique. The teaching methods employed were varied and interactive, including lectures, multimedia presentations, case studies, demonstrations, hands-on practice, and group discussions. These methods were suitable for the subject matter and effectively facilitated students' learning.

Discussion

Wulanhao No. 4 Middle School adopts a variety of teaching methods in the teaching of popular music, which is consistent with the research results of Ho (2011: 451-467). Only by adopting a variety of teaching methods in the classroom can we ensure that the teaching methods suitable for students can be met and the quality of the classroom can be improved.

Wulanhao No. 4 Middle School follows the teaching philosophy from easy to difficult, which is inconsistent with the research of Wang (2011: 373-384). Music lessons at Wulanhao No. 4 Middle School are structured from easy to difficult, while Wang Ping believes that music lessons can skip overly simple content.

Recommendation

1. Practical recommendation

The subjects selected for observation in this study were only in the eighth grade, making it difficult to fully represent the entire middle school class; therefore, future selections will be wider in scope.

2. Recommendation for future research

Subsequent researchers should adopt more international music teaching methods in the study of popular music teaching in order to improve the quality of teaching.

Reference

- Chen, J. (2010). Popular music education in China. *International Journal of Music Education*. 28 (1), 35-49.
- Ho, W. (2011). School music education and change: A study of a school music program and its impact on student attitudes toward school music. *Music Education Research*. 13 (4), 451-467.
- Li, Y. (2011). School music education in China: The crossroads. *Music Education Research*. 13 (4), 405-421.
- Liu, X. (2012). The current situation and development of music education in Chinese primary and secondary schools. *Music Education Research*. 14 (3), 313-320.
- Wang, J. (2011). The current situation and future development of music education in Chinese schools. *Music Education Research*. 13 (4), 373-384.