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The Content Assessment of Pre-School Education Program in Turkey towards Music Education

Ayhan Helvacı^{a*}

^aUludag University Fine Art Faculty, 16059, Mudanya/Bursa

Abstract

The pre-school period when the brain is developed the most rapidly forms a strong ground for the cognitive, language, motor, social and emotional development of the child. Therefore, children grow very quickly especially in their first six years of life which is named as the pre-school period and in these development areas, they become complete in every respect with an amazing speed. Thus, this will result in having the child achieve his/her own potential and be a productive member of the society. Education is the head of the most effective processes in shaping, directing, changing and developing individuals and societies. Contemporary education is carried out by being organised within a framework which includes the three general subject areas named as science, art and technique. As for music education, it forms one of the most important branches of fine arts education as an education of art having vocalic and auditory qualities. It has a significant place within pre-school education. In this context, the pre-school education program lastly prepared in 2013 in Turkey was studied and a content assessment was made directed towards music education in this research.

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1. Introduction

Educaiton can be defined as a process which supports individuals' development in mental, physical, emotional and social aspects, and helps them to grow up with self-sufficient and to be capable of living in harmony with society. Education has two important functions in individual and social. As an individual, it brings up self-sufficient individuals who are in happy life; and as a society, it brings up good citizens who adopt the values of the society in

* Assoc. Prof. Dr Ayhan Helvacı, Tel:+ 29 40321

E-mail address: ayhanhelvac@gmail.com

which they live, and contribute to the society for its development. Education, via programs, must be designed carefully by experts for children to combine philosophy and the nature of free society (Akinoglu, 2001). According to Acay, who is music educator, music provides individuals to grow up in quality which can be useful for the community. This is a common indispensable feature for every nation. However, education, as a word, expresses the whole. In detail, the development of person in artistic, social, cultural and scientific aspects would be questioned.

The first six years of life called pre-school period, can be expressed as the fastest and most sensitive period which is lived in human life; accordingly, it is specified in many sources that after birth, training which is received in the first years of life has significant impacts on individual's success and in the process that individual lived. Developmental characteristics of children and searching efforts for training in accordance with the specifications are based on very early years "Antiquity".

In this age, Plato and Aristotle were the pioneers of this quest. Plato argued that children have different abilities and they should be educated considering these different skills. In the historical process, John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Vygotsky, Jean Piaget were important figures who worked on child development and education and pre-school education. (Tufan, 2006).

That the most important reflection of innovations in educational approach which appeared in the early 21st century about child development and approaches and methods on their education are seen in the field of art. Music education which is one of the most common fields of art education is the natural reflection of this new approach (Akkas, 1993).

Music education affects the individual and the society it lives in. Music education brings cultural, artistic and musical behaviour to individual purposely. Changes occur in individual as a result of these achievements. "Music education will affect society through the changes that occur in the behavior of the individual, and it is clear that the changes in society affect the individual" (Say, 2002; 361).

According to Ucan (1996), the educational functions of music provide actualizing individual, social, cultural and economic functions of music in healthy, consistent, effective and efficient way, and include all musical teaching-learning activities which provide its development, and planning, editing, organization related to these activities, and structures and functions related to all of these. Music intrinsically carries an educational nature. Everyone takes, learns, and wins something from it depending on the format, direction, scope and degree of the relationship of him with music. In this term, everyone associated with the music care, more or less, educational dimension of music.

It is indicated by experts that musical education in pre-school period is quite an effective way for children to gain some of the concepts and values. These can be expressed as follows, respectively.

In Spiritual Sense: Pre-school music education plays a positive role in the child's psychological development. Through music education, gratifying developments can be seen in socialization progress by teaching what is good, true and beautiful. Child who was satisfied in spiritual sense through music education gets the chance for healthy spiritual growth and healthy personality (Akkas, 1993).

In Cultural Sense: Music is an expression way, and expression carried out with the language. Musical expression can only be expressed in the language of music. Music, due to the nature of being common language of the people, the basis of universal culture are created by understanding of child of his country and human communities who live in other countries and their cultures. In this regard, music can be viewed as a culture transponder. Child recognize his own culture and traditions with music and dance, and his national feelings develop (Ucan, 1997).

In Social Sense: Music education in pre-school period helps the child in gaining the habit of living together and happily with other children. Every child when involve various music activities, will direct towards this goal in group works that he does both as lonely and as a responsible member of his group. Experiments of involvement of children in social activities are very little. Musical activities will enable children to work as a group and collective by inserting children to communal and social environment, so their participation in social activities will increase. As a consequence, the child will socialize. He supports this view and points out that group and collective works will provide habits of working together, being organized and disciplined, adapting to his environment and living together happily, and children will enter the socialization process.

In Development of Intelligence and Understanding Sense: The music education which will be held in pre-school will be effective for child to detect and interpret life, and to develop creativity and thinking system, and in training issues. It is an acceptable assumption that an efficient music education in pre-school period will help the development of children's understanding of music and their talents, and it also make it easy to understand reasons of problems and events they face. (Akkas, 1993).

When we look at the pre-school works in our country, first, pre-school education requirement has been discussed in the Ministry of Education Council meeting IV in 1949, regulations for the opening of these institutions were prepared in Ministry of Education Council meeting V in 1953, but the most important step in this regard is that "Child Development and Education" section has been opened in the Vocational School for Girls in 1960. Ministry of Education Council meeting IX in 1974 redefined tasks and goals of pre-school education and determined in accordance with the general objectives and basic principles of Ministry of Education that this education should be in the form providing children their development mentally and physically, bringing good habits, preparing them for basic training, creating a common habitat for the children who come from unfavorable conditions of environment and family, and providing them to speak Turkish well. Although a number of decision on the subject in all Council works had been made until 1993, Ministry of Education Council meeting XIV is the first Council meeting which examined pre-school education in detail and took decisions for the first time (Bektas, 2001). With program workings between 2006 and 2013, the importance given to pre-school education has been fairly well grasped and workings in this field have continued by developing.

2. Research Signification

This study is regarded to be significant in point of evolution of pre-school education program which was prepared and updated in 2013 by examining, after 2006, revealing the importance of music education in pre-school period, and supporting the new studies which will be done.

3. Method

In the study, a model is taken in order to identify the case and descriptive method is used in order to evaluate pre-school education program in Turkey for music education policy.

According to Karasar (1982), descriptive method is a study which defines the event or situation occurred today or in the past in the form they exist.

4. Findings and Discussions

This program updated in 2013 after 2006 is seen as a developmental program. This developmental program handles child's social, emotional, motor, cognitive and language development areas together with self-care skills with a holistic approach. The developmental characteristics of children constitutes the basis of the program. While their learning process is planning, their interest and needs, and environmental conditions in which they live should be taken into account after their developmental levels determined. The goals of this program are supporting children by creating different education processes with acquisitions and indicators, and move them from their developmental level to the highest level they can reach.

While the program was updating the goals and acquisitions in the 2006 program are expressed as acquisitions and indicators. This case can be considered that it will make easy to write and practise the activities in qualification to cover recovery. In the program, developmental features for each age group, rearranged and developed gains, indicators and explanations about them are presented in tables. Developmental characteristics which include 36-72 months children are handled as Cognitive Development, Language Development, Social and Emotional Development, Motor Development, and their Self-Care skills in itself 36-48, 48-60 and 60-72 are considered separately on a monthly basis. When musical activities are analyzed, it is seen that they are workings which support children's cognitive, language, motor, social and emotional developments and affect musical development process positively. This study consists of activities such as listening and discriminating of sound and music, rhythm exercises, breathe and voice exercises, singing, playing musical instruments, creative movement and dance, movement with music and creating stories with music. As well as these activities give a child habits of listening proper and quality music and habits of singing and playing, it is stated that they support to know local, national and universal child music for children. In addition, it is seen that the acquisitions obtained from these activities have similarities with expert's opinions stated in many sources. It is emphasized that it gives responsibilities such as composing music as individual and with community, listening to others and cooperating, and music is one of the effective ways to facilitate learning and cognition.

When the benefits of the program are examined with its indicators and explanations, it can be seen that practices of music education are very convenient to practise. Children use the music as an object from time to time when they have difficulties in telling the experiences in their inner world. The child who listens music learn to be quiet, to concentrate, to show respect to those who listen to music by remaining silent, to recognize and distinguish sounds. Remembering musics he listened in different times, establishing cause-effect relation between subject and music if the music has a matter, so it is provided to support cognitive processes.

Singing, ensures the child learning how to use the voice, helps to comprehend the meaning of unfamiliar words in the lyrics. Together singing, contributes children to control their voices relative to each other, to strive for a common harmony, to reach the pleasure of sharing same activity. Thus, children's language, social and emotional developments are supported.

While using the instruments, child reflects his energy to the external, discovers the sounds, creates his own rhythms, and develops his sense of achievement and confidence. Reaction of the child to the music with body movements, his tryings to create suitable dancing figures for the music and recognizing his voice by accompanying the music with his voice contributes to his cognitive and motor developments (Omeroglu, Esra, Ersoy, Ozlem ve Digerleri, 2003).

This prepared program, with its last updating, is seen appropriate to do activities for music education policy. In addition, the music center located in class working environment and in ideal class which its plan and drawing is given in the program is considered significant in point of showing the importance given to music education. The only problem with these activities is seen as a lack of qualified music teachers for editing.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Evaluating the pre-school period which has such an important place in human life in the best way is only possible with qualified education. From past to present, all the works and researches done in the whole world stated that the music education given in pre-school period has positive contributions to multilateral development of individual. But each individual can not have the same opportunities to realize these contributions and aims expected from pre-school music education is not always fully realized by a variety of factors.

Ucan (1997) emphasized "That problems on music education in Turkey, obviously, start in pre-school educational institutions, and he stated that these insitutions do not work in desired efficiency and productivity." In today's conditions, increasing needs for science and knowledge, and thus a rapid increasing in the need for education, and educating child via art emerge as one of the most important educational ways. It is seen that experts emphasize strongly that the music activities in pre-school period are workings which support children's cognitive, language, motor, social and emotional developments, as well as musical developments, they affect their subsequent training process positively. For Example; Gardner, call attention to the fact that the superiority in musical intelligence occurs earlier than all other areas of human intelligence. (Demirel, 1999).

It is scientifically proved in several studies that there are parallels between music education and intellectual opinion development, and intelligence capacity develops when an immature brain is enriched with music activities (Sharp, 2003). In another study, over 25,000 students in 10-year period, the measurements made by the application of standardized tests, regardless of socio-economic backgrounds, students engaged with music, have proved to be more successful than students who are not dealing with music (Sen,2006).

Planning and implementation of pre-school educaiton which is scientifically proved that it directly affects the future life of children is an extremely important issue. In our country, it was found that pre-school education program updated in 2013 is prepared in accordance with the norms of modern education by experts, and it is a program that considers principles of music education. It is inevitable that this program will be used with teachers who are trained for this field and that the individuals of future will be better equipped, more self-confident, more art-lover and who know the culture. Moreover, subjecting the teachers who are responsible for this education to in-service training, renewing the program and physical conditions continuously, educating music teachers for pre-school education in Education Faculty and Faculty of Fine Arts, and considering it as a Department will provide to apply the music education effectively in the future.

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