

The Role Music Plays in the Lives of Pre-School Children in the Offinso Municipality

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ABSTRACT: *The study sought to investigate the role of music in the lives of pre-school children in the Offinso Municipality and also examines how children respond to music within the pre-school learning environment. To arrive at a detailed description and identify pre-school musical experiences that will nurture their musical potential and also to observe and outline children's actions and responses when they engage or participate in musical activities in pre-school learning environment, the researcher adopted a qualitative method approach in a conjunction with interpretivists' paradigm and implemented the case study research strategy. The instruments used were interviews and observation. The study revealed that Children learn language structure, word formation, pronunciation, grammar, meaning, and usage of the words in the songs that they sing. Music is used for enrichment, enjoyment, self-esteem, language development, or for teaching other subjects. Children are natural musicians, and exposure to music during the early years enhances the learning process by promoting language development, creativity, coordination, and social interaction. There is a need to develop the early childhood music programme from the following perspectives; self-selected activities, opportunities for individual and small-group interaction, and developmentally and educationally sound musical activities.*

KEYWORDS: nurture, engagement, durbars, repertoire, interpretivist.

INTRODUCTION

Many music scholars attest that listening to music often elicits a physical response from listeners (Reiffinger, 2006). Ferguson (2005) asserts that even the smallest children have musical responses. Almost everyone has experienced being carried away by music. A simple subconscious reaction to some genres of music is the tapping of toes, nodding of heads, and snapping of fingers (Westervelt, 2002 as cited in Benson, 2016). It has become clear that new obstacles forcing the current perspective on music education mean that modern educational theories employ more active engagement and more potent knowledge. It is widely accepted that music is a part of our cultural history.

It has been underlined those new issues impacting contemporary thinking on music education point to the utilisation of more active involvement and more fruitful experiences in modern educational methods. Everyone agrees that music is a significant part of our cultural history.

The people of the Offinso Traditional Area in the Ashanti Kingdom are recognised for their rich traditional songs and most of these songs are in their dialect. These songs are used in every event of life and are performed on social occasions such as recreational activities, the performance of rites, rituals, festivals and durbars, ceremonies, and communal activities just to mention but a few. Indigenous songs in the Offinso traditional area are used to address opinions on significant issues such as hard work, moral, religious, educational, historical, and social life among the people. During such occasions, children in this Municipality are not left out. Pupils take these songs to their various schools and perform with colleagues, but the music enjoyed in the community by these pre-school children does not have space in their curriculum. Songs are vehicles that promote the teaching of music in the educational system and therefore must start from the grass root of pre-school education in Ghana. This is so because songs play very fundamental roles in the education of children in the transmission of cultural values, customs, and moral codes (Sullivan, 2016).

Pre-school teachers in the Offinso Municipality unconsciously use music as an aid to the teaching of other subjects meanwhile music is a subject of its and should be treated as such and this makes it challenging for pre-school teachers to recognise the role music plays in the lives of pre-school children. Music plays a significant role in a child's growth and development. Children's reactions to melody, lyrics, and rhythm portray music as an ideal tool for engaging learners with instruction guided by entangled components of language, writing, reading, speaking, and listening (Kohb, 1996 as cited in Sullivan, 2016). Documentation on pre-school pupils' responsiveness to music as well as their creative activities potential is not in existence in the Offinso Municipality. Even while children's reactions to music differ from one another undoubtedly, they are always obvious. According to Feierabend (1990), referenced in Sullivan (2016), early musical experiences vary from music-based play in that they tend to help youngsters acquire a range of skills. Deasy (2002) states that the relations that exist between music, language, and musical experiences and the fundamental cognitive abilities of children are obvious and significant.

Research Questions

1. What role does music play in the lives of pre-school pupils in the Offinso Municipality?
2. How do children respond to music within the pre-school learning environment in Offinso Municipality?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

This study's framework is heavily influenced by the constructivist ideas of developmental psychologists like Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner, as well as Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory. Their shared studies and ideas on human learning in infancy help to considerably clarify and guide the diversity and mystifications that accompany both the teaching and learning activities for preschoolers.

According to Piaget, children learn best and most naturally when their instructors or other adults encourage them to engage with their environment, adjust it to their needs and preferences, experiment with it, and ask questions of it (all within the scope and limits of the developmental stage of growth they had achieved). Piaget believed that recognising children's growth and organising and providing chances for such investigation and discovery were the pre-school teacher's most crucial responsibilities (Abrahams, 2005). The preoperational stage is one of Piaget's phases, and knowing its reasoning, descriptions, and parameters is crucial for the successful pre-school instructor since most pre-schoolers, if not all of them, go through a progressive growth process that fits into this category. In the preoperational stage, according to Mooney (2000), Piaget saw children expressing their ideas and thoughts based on firsthand experience.

In Lev Vygotsky's theories, the social and cultural environment of education is firmly ingrained. The fact that Vygotski identified the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) may be the part of his theory of Vygotskian learning (ZPD) that is the most well-known and recognised. Based on his or her temporal psychological placement, a learner is said to be progressing along a learning continuum toward acquisition and ultimate mastery of a new skill or ability in the Zone of Proximal Development. Usually, this process involves external steering factors, encounters, or intellectual stretching (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky (1978) explained the Zone of Proximal Development as:

The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers (p. 86).

Learning in the Zone of Proximal Development, according to Dimitriadis & Kamberelis (2006), "leads not only to the creation of ideas and information but also to the development of culturally appropriate activities" (p. 197). His analysis of semiotic mediation—the use of symbols, signs, and other comparable and related mediators to support and facilitate learning and development—is an

intriguing and significant component of Vygotskian thought. Within the context of this researcher's particular investigation, this notion is very pertinent and intriguing.

According to Bruner (1977), a key responsibility of the preschool instructor is to skillfully frame events for the kid. He had great admiration for the skilled use of gadgets in the classroom, which he called "teaching aids," and he encouraged gifted instructors to employ them purposefully to broaden and clarify the experiential foundations of their students. It is a fairly safe assumption that the simple ways to introduce music into the classroom, either manually or electronically, would fit Bruner's requirements for useful teaching aids, even if the technology behind today's electronic gadgets was not yet developed at the time of Bruner's publications. In this case, Bruner made special reference to the instructional aids that the classroom instructor would not otherwise have access to, including "sound recordings, film strips, microphotographic film, television, and the like for such purposes" (Bruner, 1977, p. 81).

In addition to developmental theorists, Howard Gardner's work on the Multiple Intelligence (MI) hypothesis presents a difficult challenge when taking this question into consideration, especially as it relates to what Gardner has dubbed "musical intelligence." One of Gardner's categories of intelligence incorporates the idea of music and its unique place in the study of a larger explanation of intelligence. The Multiple Intelligence Theory seeks to make sense of human intelligence in its many sides and manifestations (Gardner, 2004). It's fascinating to see how Gardner challenges the unified theory of intellectual models that many of his theoretical forebears, like Piaget, embraced. Such theories "failed to reconcile with higher degrees of creativity and that they can be insensitive to the diversity of roles highlighted in human society," according to Gardner (1993, p. 24). Gardner (2004) argues that studying the interrelationship of music to broader intelligence may aid us in better comprehending and recognise the unique taste of music while highlighting its direct connection to other forms of human brain. This justifies Gardner's claim that music should be classified as a predominant intelligence. This study will look for such linkages and relationships, both likely and plausible. The suggestion is that certain preschoolers have natural abilities in a variety of areas, but that these abilities are buried due to their assimilation levels. Musical activities can help to reveal these capabilities.

Gardner (2004) further notes that all people, save the most naive or disabled ones, are capable of appreciating the melodic structures, keys, rhythms, and tones of music. This remark is a commentary on how music permeates both contemporary culture and, more broadly, the human experience. It also reveals the broad range of receptive capacities of people who engage with music in various ways. To update, edify, convince, persuade, and entertain—all significant dimensions of learning and constituents of instructional strategies at all levels in the education of the preschool child—music is largely employed nowadays and is readily accessible, though not always present. Gardner (2004) estimates that most pre-schoolers who have grown up in modern culture have a mental framework for how songs should sound and can reproduce songs they hear around them accurately by the time they start preschool. Children of preschool age are the focus of this observation.

The Role Music Plays in the Lives of Young Children

When children are introduced to music in preschool, they develop a feeling of belonging and consciousness (Gardiner, Fox, Knowles & Jeffrey 1996). Additionally, music can improve academic achievement in the subjects of language and arithmetic (Gardiner, 2000; Deasy, 2002). A few eminent scholars have indicated interest in examining how music affects young children's development. The initial research in this area centred on the lessons that young toddlers may pick up about music by listening to songs. The impact of musical genre listening on development beyond the musical community is a subject of more research. The first study route includes research on how exposure to music impacts young children's capacity to match auditory and visual cues.

Pick, Gross, Heinrichs, and Love (1994) looked at whether young infants could identify the origin of different sounds from distinct musical instrument families as well as different musical instruments within a single family. Pick et al. (1994) allowed children aged three to seven to view a video of two musicians performing while the soundtrack for one of the instruments played. It was discovered that kids between the ages of 5 and 7 were able to recognise and classify different musical instruments within the family of instruments based on their pitch and size. According to anecdotal evidence, youngsters between the ages of 3 and 4 were able to categorise different musical families, but not identical musical instruments in the same family.

Another study group by Pick et al (1994) also described infants aged between 7 and 9 months tended to stare more intently at the instruments that accompanied the soundtrack. The findings postulate that an encounter with hearing and seeing a musical performance in the first few years of life may influence what young children understand about instruments and sound. Young infants, however, are capable of knowing some sounds of particular instruments, suggesting that experience is not the only factor to consider. It suggests that music listening can affect other areas of development beyond music since musical instrument identification has no repercussions outside of the musical domain.

Literacy is of vital importance to all children. Researchers have made strong arguments for how music can contribute to literacy skills. It has been shown that incorporating music into a literary community promotes visual sequential memory, auditory and visual discrimination, vocabulary expansion, eye-motor coordination, fluency, language reception, and phonological awareness (Wiggins, 2007). In addition to using phonetic words, rhythmic rhythms, and auditory sensations, music enables children to learn to read. The left-to-right reading orientation can be seen as an example of how the two may complement each other in music and reading.

In order to determine whether there is a relationship between language proficiency in adults and the beginning of music training as youngsters, Zimmerman (2006) undertook a descriptive research study. "This kind of research suggests that giving a child music instruction at a young age might enhance their reading success and have long-lasting advantages." According to Gromko's study from 2005, "kindergarten students who participated in four months of music training had

considerably larger increases in the development of their phoneme-segmentation fluency when compared to students who did not get music coaching."

As an example of how diverse research is becoming in reporting the effects of music on children, recently there has been researching performed to find the effects of music training on dyslexic children. "Neurological timing issues, or difficulties with time processing, may contribute to dyslexia and complicate auditory and motor skills, ultimately resulting in language and literacy difficulties" (Overy, 2000). Music can help these temporal processing problems through prudently planned lessons including structured rhythmic games, singing, and activities using percussion instruments and movement.

According to Overy (2000), developing timing abilities through music instruction may be a useful remedial strategy for enhancing dyslexic children's language and reading abilities. Math and music also have a correlation that has significant value in increasing a child's intellectual growth. Music is organised sound that is arranged in similar ways to math.

Cognitive Development

Norton, Winner, Cronin, Lee, and Schlaug (2005) looked at the effects of musical instruction on the brain growth of children aged 5-7. Children from two different groups took part in this study. One group included youngsters who received music instruction. The second group of kids, a control group, received no musical instruction. Norton et al. (2005) examined the youngsters in both groups' MRI scans for variations in brain anatomy. Norton et al. (2005) investigated dissimilarities by comparing the visual-spatial, verbal, and/or motor skills of children who excelled in musical aptitude following instrumental instruction to children in the non-music group and to children in the training group who did not. They sought to determine whether the brains of musicians differ from those of musicians who take music lessons but only display average talent in terms of how their brains looked before training and/or how their brains responded to the training. To do this, they prospectively examined the brains of children who continued their music training over time and emerged with exceptional talent and achievement. This approach was also created to determine if the benefits of music instruction on non-musical outcomes, as demonstrated in other studies, are partially attributable to pre-existing connections between musical and non-musical skills or just the results of training. The findings showed no associations between either brain or visual-spatial measurements and musical perception abilities. However, they discover links between phonemic awareness and non-verbal thinking as well as music perception abilities.

Hyde, Lerch, Norton, Forgeard, Winner, Evans, and Schlaug provide more conclusive findings about the impact of music training on brain development (2009). Children who have received various types of musical instruction were studied for their auditory brain architecture by Hyde et al. In this study, two groups of 5-7-year-old kids participated in various musical activities. The "instrumental" group had fifteen kids who took private piano instruction for many months. The "control" group, on the other hand, took part in a weekly 40-minute group music lesson at school that included singing and playing with drums and bells but did not get any instruction in instrumental music. Children who practised and played an instrument exhibited a variety of

advantages, including improved motor-finger dexterity and auditory melodic and rhythmic perception abilities.

Hyde et al. (2009) assert that musical instruction and practise contribute to varying levels of brain growth in various parts of the body. In support of Norton, Winner, Cronin, Lee, and Schlaug's (2005) study, there were no anatomical variations in brain structure between the groups before the musical instruction, refuting biological predictors of musicality.

Language and Linguistic Development

In the 2002 study by Anvari, Trainor, Woodside, and Levy referenced in Obeng (2020), 100 children aged between 4 and 5 years were examined on their early reading skills, musical perception abilities, and phonological awareness. These young kids were exposed to a variety of musical activities that emphasised rhythm, melody, and chord progression. Thereafter, their reading comprehension and phonological awareness were evaluated. Using phonological awareness, Anvari and colleagues (2002) found a correlation between early reading abilities and musical aptitude. Several of the same auditory instruments that predicted reading abilities were also used to predict fundamental auditory skills for music perception. Researchers contend that the ability to perceive music gives kids an aural awareness that contributes to their reading ability even though the study was not based on an experimental approach. According to Milovanov, Tervaniemi, Takio, and Hämäläinen (2007), music and linguistic proficiency are related. This prompted them to hypothesise that musical skill may have an impact on the dominance of one side of the brain in managing the processing of music and language in the brain.

A group of 12 musically inclined children, aged 10 on average, was also present, as well as 12 non-musically inclined children. Compared to adults who don't practice music often, adults who regularly engage in music practice are better able to manage left ear listening abilities. The researchers found that a higher musical aptitude score resulted in more accurate left-ear answers; the higher the overall musical score, the better the right-ear answers. The researcher reported that age and musical ability controlled cognitive capacities. Participants who do well on a musicality exam are unable to demonstrate excellent left ear monitoring abilities when they are young, but those people who regularly practise music and score well on the musicality test have better-developed listening skills across all activities, including linguistic ones. According to Milovanov et al. (2007), the regular practice may have had an impact on how the brain organises language.

Musical Development of Pre-School Children

As children get older, they begin to increase their vocabulary and link words with their definitions. Music and ear training are just two ways that children may improve their language skills. Forgeard (2008) found that learning an instrument can improve one's vocabulary, non-verbal thinking, and auditory discrimination. We evaluated young kids from a range of musical backgrounds. 59 youngsters between the ages of 8 and 12 were chosen from public schools. Children who have studied music for at least three years made up one group. Children in the control group had never had a music lesson. The youngsters underwent tests to assess their fine motor skills, language, and nonverbal thinking abilities. According to Forgeard's (2008) findings, musically trained youngsters

not only performed better than their counterparts in the control group but also their musical training had a substantial impact over a longer period. Children who got musical training for a longer period performed better than those who did not. When it comes to language development, music-making activities have an impact not only on reading, vocabulary, and pre-reading abilities but also on speaking abilities.

In a Gromko (2005) research, four classrooms of preschoolers received four months of musical instruction from accomplished music students from a neighbouring university, whereas another set of kindergarteners did not. Compared to the children in the control group who did not get musical instruction, the children who got the training demonstrated more phonemic fluency. Phonemic fluency is the ability to vocally produce words that start with specific letters or fall into specific categories. According to Gromko's research, kids who take music lessons advance their auditory abilities for hearing spoken words and sounds more quickly than kids who don't, which helps them learn in the classroom.

Children's musical development is a component of their overall growth and development, hence musical traits have a close relationship to those of their general development. In light of Piaget's theory of cognitive development, it is crucial to examine the cognitive components of musical development. We may draw links between the stage of preoperational thinking (2–7 years of age) and musical development since children's growth is a succession of acquired skills and experiences correlated to precise age and specific capabilities.

Young children listen to sounds, note variations in melodic contour, and imitate pitches. The first attempts at spontaneous musical self-expression happen between one and two years of age. Speaking and singing vary in that singing have unique pitches and constant rhythms. Children between the ages of two and three have more control over the contours of melodies and make an effort to imitate the tunes they hear. The capacity to understand a melody as a whole begins to emerge between the ages of three and four, despite the absence of pitch control and stable tonal centre. Absolute hearing growth is best at that age. Between the ages of 4 and 5, the capacity to distinguish between registers and duplicate easy rhythm patterns increases. At the age of 5 to 6, the emphasis is on discerning between sound loudness categories and the capacity to discriminate between melody and rhythm patterns.

Adults believe that by the age of six to seven, children should be able to intone appropriately when singing and recognise the principles of tonal music construction (Ross 2007; Dowling 1988). The youngsters depicted above are typical, non-musically inclined children and the recommendations presented are universal. It must be emphasised that musical growth is so distinctive and unpredictable that statistics connected to specific ages must be considered with caution and as general or average. Nonetheless, general signs of pre-school age children can be identified (3-6 years old).

Preschoolers see pitch relationships as motivations rather than as independent sounds. They rely on pitch and timbre for early sound distinction. Musical motives gain functional significance in a child's consciousness in a favourable musical learning setting, and recognising their acts as

preparation for developing the singing talent. When sound models according to the stage of development are used in music-making and new ones are generated, the best development is ensured (Pats. 1989, p. 21 cited in Obeng, 2020). Youngsters' pitch hearing reaches adult levels around the age of five, and many children can sing comparable songs with accurate intonation. Dowling (1994) emphasises that when children are accompanied by adult inspiration and the "you'll-be-fine" message, the percentage of youngsters singing with appropriate intonation increases.

A sense of tonality develops at the age of five or six as a result of positive musical influences, and it is based on relationships between sounds as well as interactions between individual sounds and the key tone. The key tone serves as the pivot around which the music rotates, as well as the beginning and conclusion point. When these associations remain persistent, a kid learns about scales, beginning with the pentatonic scale and progressing to major and minor scales. According to Hargreaves and Zimmerman's (1992) research study, at the age of eight, the sense of melody functions in a relatively predictable system called as tonality.

Tonality develops instinctively, whereas melody develops via direct experience with scale connections. Relationships between sounds and simpler songs are retained in the auditory imagination. Color perception develops between the ages of four and five, based on the initial sense of tone. Perceiving a melody is an important talent for children under the age of five since it is required for them to acquire their culture's music and combine it with the listener's pitch hearing, analytic technique, and executing melody contours to organise primary pitches in the melody (Dowling & Harwood 1986 cited in Obeng, 2014).

The tonal structure of the melody and its melodic contour, which is directly supported by timbre hearing, create the basis for detecting a melody (Schmucler, 2009). Children of pre-school age can distinguish between instruments with large differences, but they are less accurate when it comes to relatively comparable instruments, such as the flute and clarinet. Tone hearing, according to Shuter-Dyson, is the key sign of a developed hearing system and is associated to music learning ability (1999).

Harmonic hearing, which requires splitting attention, has not evolved in pre-school children. Children can contribute to the vertical arrangement of sounds to a limited extent by changing the backdrop tone colour. With age, a sense of harmony develops and becomes stable. Children, on the other hand, perform admirably in musical rhythm from an early age. They respond to rhythm with their entire body, which is why youngsters have a natural sense of rhythm, and it is critical to develop musical-rhythmic skills at a young age. Preschool children have not yet formed a conscious sense of shape. Form is naturally seen by children. Form sense may exist to some extent because of musical impact.

It is anticipated that Pre-school children might go through a form of musical experiences and progress from the emotional facet of music despite development in basic musical abilities (musical sense of rhythm, sense of tonality, musical auditory imagination). Boone and Cunningham (2001)

attest that children at age three perceive emotional or sad mood in music whereas children aged four-years old exhibit a sense of anger, happiness, sadness, fear, and joy in music. An accurate intoning in pitch/perception, correspondence between rhythm patterns and beat (metro-rhythmic organisation) and having a deeper sense of melody and rhythm is due to the development of cognitive skills in children, which is a form an integral part for knowledge and skills development in music within adulthood and enable heightened contentment from music while performing it or listening to it.

Because musical aptitude reveals itself largely via singing, reasons for musical underdevelopment are perceived as emanating from singing, and this also serves as the basis for steering the learning experience in light of the present task. It is important to outline the following:

- i. Inadequate synchronisation between the auditory and vocal organs. It signifies that a youngster can hear clearly but cannot reproduce it vocally.
- ii. Absence of auditory images. In that case a child is not able to hear accurate pitches and reproduce them. The child's musical development is supported by the movement of melody that relies on childlike intonations, which in the course of repetitions is kept as a pattern in the cerebral cortex and facilitates the development of auditory image perception.
- iii. Undeveloped musical potential. Since most music-making at home has been restricted to mechanical music, this is a generally accepted explanation for the underdevelopment of the musical arts. Pats asserts that it's crucial to pique a child's interest in music and get them actively involved in it. Then, musical potential also starts to emerge. When carrying out effective activities supporting and directing a child's musical growth and choosing repertoire for music educational work in preschool, all the aforementioned factors for the child's musical underdevelopment should be taken into consideration.

The modern view of musical aptitude emphasises social context in the development of individual musical prospects, in which musical talents grow fast until age 9 and then stabilise in a combination of nurture and intrinsic inclinations. Following that, music instruction for pre-school children plays a vital part in the development of musical ability. Musical aptitude develops through the combination of hearing, experience, intelligence, and physical coordination, and incorporates cultural aspects, social, motivational, and cognitive as well as individual experience. Musical abilities are defined as musicality, which is founded on inherent brain processes and has evolved and merged via practise. Children's musical preferences are highly distinctive and linked to their overall development. Musical fundamental abilities develop as a result of musical experience, the development of which is favourable depending on the characteristics of age. Finding the causes of underdevelopment and implementing suitable techniques to incorporate children in viable music creating activities will help to promote the musical potential of children with limited musical development.

Children Involvement/Engagement

According to Skinner and Belmont (1993), children's interest in learning is determined both by their own ideas about instructors and, more directly, by the comportment of teachers. Engagement

is a multidirectional, or reciprocating, tool; both the teacher's and the children's perspectives contribute to the discourse. Preschool instructors who are viewed by their students as articulating explicit expectations, responding appropriately, and providing aid and support when required are more likely to have responsive and engaged students in front of them. In summary, when students perceive their instructor to be caring, nurturing, and compassionate, they feel more secure, more comfortable, and more engaged in class (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Early childhood educators are aware of and appreciate the critical importance of this form of emotional interaction.

According to Appleton et al. (2008), instructors believe that the idea of pupil involvement is critical to student learning. In the early childhood environment, engagement has also been defined as the amount of time children spend in the pre-school classroom engaging in developmentally appropriate ways with professionals, classmates, and resources. Engagement in pre-school children is focused on recognised behaviours, such as children speaking with instructors, other children, and things in developmentally and contextually sensitive ways (McWilliam and Casey, 2008).

The developmental component encompasses the student's demeanor, engagement, and effort. The emotional component involves the student's interest, identity, belonging, and positive attitude toward learning. A cognitive component of such growth would include self-regulation, personal objectives, and interest in learning (Frederick et al., 2004). According to Wenger (1998), the interrelationships and partnership of the pre-school teacher and his students can result in a desired learning community with the outcomes being impactful and instructive.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative approach and the interpretivist perspective formed the spine of the study. The motive for the adoption of the qualitative study was to have a clear picture with a detailed explanation of the central phenomena. Voegtly, Spaulding, & Katherine (2006) postulates that researchers who adopt the qualitative and the interpretivist paradigm frequently seek experience and concerns of individuals for their data rather than rely on numerical figures (p. 21). A tentative design was chosen as the research method for the study. Ideally, the selection of the qualitative research paradigm was ideal for this present study since it is logical, and flexible to discover “naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural surroundings” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.10). More importantly, the qualitative research method offers the researcher with a narrative inquiry and description of the quality of situations, conditions, materials, relations, and events as perceived in the natural space of the classroom and school.

The study was conducted using a case study research design. This design was chosen because it offered a thorough explanation of the musical experiences that young children have in pre-school that develop their musical abilities. It also allowed for the observation and outlining of the actions and reactions of young children when they participate in musical activities in pre-school and social learning environments. This approach was acceptable for this study since it answered the research topics adequately. The design enabled the researcher to observe the natural occurrences of pre-school children’s musical experiences in the selected schools and was able to describe how these

affected them. According to Creswell (2008), the goal of a research design is to extrapolate from a sample of the population in order to draw conclusions about some traits, viewpoints, or behavioural patterns of this population.

The population for this research involved all pre-schools within Offinso Municipal Assembly in the Ashanti Region, Ghana. The Municipal was selected because of its heterogeneous population and their geographical location in an educational setting. Sixteen (16) participants were selected for the study. The researcher adopted purposive sampling technique for the study. Because of its nature the process does not need fundamental theories or a set number of informants. The researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to identify people who can and are willing to share information by virtue of knowledge or experience. Research instruments used for data collection were interview and observation.

The researcher engaged himself in unstructured but planned interviews in a very relaxed face-to-face encounter by conversation with the pre-school children concerning their involvement/engagement in musical activities in the school and at home. As the child did not need to be known by the researcher before carrying out the interview, the researcher rather involved himself in the musical activities in the classroom and during break periods and it was during this period that the researcher got the opportunity to enter into conversation with the individual children. Through this conversation, the researcher was able to collect the needed data. Freedom and flexibility were allowed to clear doubts.

An observational plan was created for this study to aid the researcher in learning about the musical activities that preschool instructors employed in their classes. Additionally, this was done to gauge how much the students participated in their usual daily classroom activities and musical lessons. The observation endeavoured to capture the live musical experiences and usage in pre-school both in and out of the classroom. The researcher, a professional graduate teacher, made sure the pre-school instructors were at ease throughout the observation session and highlighted that it was more of a learning process than an assessment before the observations. According to Cohen (2011), observations allow for the collection of data on a variety of situations, including physical, interpersonal, and program-related factors, and they can be either highly organised or less structured.

DISCUSSIONS

Pre-school Musical roles

Participants disclosed that music is employed in pre-school classrooms for language development, self-esteem, and enrichment. This corroborates Nye's (1983) assertion that young children's music should be primarily focused on the delight and pleasure it brings them. Early musical and cognitive exposure help youngsters develop, claims Tuner (1999). Preschoolers will take advantage of musical and nonmusical opportunities if we expose them to music early on in their education. This will help them develop their critical thinking abilities and their capacity to make a creative contribution to society. According to Gardner (1999, 2004), studying music enhances a child's

capacity for new information acquisition as well as their ability to grasp and retain information. Music is important, just like any other subject that fosters intellectual thought. According to Reimer (1989), music should be viewed as a basic topic having cognitive and intellectual qualities that should not be undervalued. It should be seen as embracing all academic disciplines of the human mind. We must realise that music is the main component of the preschool curriculum.

The deprivation of music will be harmful to children's lives and education since it enhances children's thinking, making them better learners and thinkers. Music instructors would agree that young children should appreciate the music they listen to. According to Kodaly (1966), referenced in Obeng (2020), learning, and appreciating music should be a fundamental human right since it is a necessary language for understanding oneself and the outside world. The continuous singing of songs enables pre-school children to speak the language, understand and develop fluency skills. It will also help children get over stage fright and inferiority complex.

It was also revealed that pre-school teachers use music to promote creativity, musical concepts, skills development and behaviour management. This supports the music for all foundation's (2007) claim that kids are naturally talented musicians and that early exposure to music improves learning by encouraging language development. Pick, Gross, Heimlich, and Love (1994) provided evidence that youngsters could identify the origin of various sounds from musical instruments or items belonging to various families as well as various instruments within an instrumental family. This shows that youngsters are learning to express themselves via music and dance. Because music makes learning simple and pleasurable, it serves as a natural bridge to literacy development, improves self-esteem, fosters inclusiveness and cooperation, and promotes an engaging environment for learning rich in language and positive feeling. Through the judicious use of music, pre-school instructors can achieve higher success in the classroom.

A research finding revealed by Davies (1992) indicated that when children sings, they work with musical phrases, rhythm, tunes, structures, and in short with the language of music (p.119). Davies shows how children retain many characteristics of songs they are taught, such as phrasing components of repetition, commencement, and ends. She contends that music understanding is predated by, and must account for, children's early instinctual musical understanding, and that the pre-school teacher's role is to teach children a repertoire of conventional songs while also promoting and empowering children's song-play. According to Davies (1992), teachers may also construct a musical language in this way and singing with their pupils offers a basic starting point for the growth of musicality (p131).

Participants stressed that pre-school children learn the language structure, word formation, pronunciation, grammar, meaning and usage of words in the folk songs that they sing. They argued that folk songs are greatly used to learn grammar and other aspects of language for children to understand. According to Selberg (1997), as referenced in Mawuse (2015), music helps pre-school children acquire linguistic abilities. Preschoolers will also improve pre-reading and literacy skills by keeping a steady beat while clapping their hands, stamping their feet, and playing rhythmic instruments in time to music. Music may be seen as a good tool for addressing pre-school children's

developmental abilities such as creativity, communication, exploration, self-confidence, language, leadership, self-esteem, attention, listening, and educational demands.

Barnyards (2008) clearly states that “early childhood music education aims at helping children to recognize, explore and change sounds, sing simple songs from memory, recognize repeated sound patterns and match movements to music. Performing various musical activities promote the acquisition of varied and appropriate musical skills and knowledge in children. Music plays an important role in the lives of pre-school children and contributes to their total growth and development”.

Participants revealed that the use of folk songs in children’s language class motivates children and helps them to pay attention to what is being taught. Children learn better when they are well motivated by their teachers and parents. According to Braynard (2008), music used in the pre-school children’s classroom should Children's songs from the past, folk songs, classical music, and music from other cultures, genres, and eras, for instance, have enduring value. The most effective music learning environments, according to him, involve picture-based storytelling, conversations games, plays, group reflection on life events and family activities, as well as individual and group participation in social tasks. (Braynard, 2008). The melody's adaptability to the children's voices, as well as its pattern and range, is a crucial prerequisite for accomplishing effective teaching and learning objectives in pre-school classrooms. Folk songs and song games' educational and musical value is used to help preschoolers build their sense of self. Many of our preschoolers use music as a highly motivating medium while participating in musical activities at school.

It was discovered that children read their own tunes and accompany them with the various instruments while they play. Children connect with musical materials in different ways depending on their individual experiences and developmental stages, as noted by Barnyard (2008). According to Turner (1999), when centres and time are provided for kids to pick how they will play with the various musical instruments, activities that are created to be developmentally appropriate are personally meaningful. Additionally, early childhood music programmes need to be developed from the following angles: own-chosen activities chances for individual and small-group interaction, as well as activities that are both developmentally appropriate and instructional. If it is carefully and critically observed, I think this will go a long way toward producing extremely positive results for the early children music education. Children take pleasure in writing their own compositions. When data collecting was taking place, preschoolers who were able to express themselves said that "they like making sound, singing to the sound, and dancing to own music." They emphasised that they enjoy themselves when they partake in these activities.”.

All of the responses point to a favourable attitude toward playing activities that give children the opportunity to explore, come up with, and produce their own sounds and musical compositions on any available instruments, as well as a corresponding sense of accomplishment, ownership, and personal fulfilment. Children who enjoy singing expressed their enthusiasm with others and pre-schoolers' song choices, as well as for dancing. It was clear that pre-school classroom exercises like singing, and dancing help children form bonds with one another. The most frequently chosen song

genre among preschoolers was action music. Braynard (2008) cited Downing as saying that music can be incorporated into any practical task. The use of opening and closing songs is one of the greatest ways to include music into your lessons. This, according to Braynard, unites the class at the start and ends each lesson on a happy note. According to Zimmerman (2006), giving a child a music lesson at a young age can help them read well and have a positive impact on their lives.

Since music is physically active, children who play musical games develop in a healthy way, which is another essential quality for everyone's body in life. Izumic-Taylor, Morals, Meredith, and Hicks (2012) asserted that young children love dancing when they hear music. The core and peculiarities of music can be understood and expressed via movement, which in turn encourages a greater comprehension of music and an enriched emotional spectrum. Children in preschool develop their musical skills, attention span, self-control, sense of community, and creative activity while playing and dancing.

It was revealed that singing and dancing help pre-school children to exercise their body. Hamilton (2003) voiced that physical development is nurtured through the opportunity to develop movement skills while engaging in music and movement experiences. This assertion is buttressed by Henniger (1999) that social development is supported with music and movement in group performances which promote social interactions. Emotional experience is heightened through the opportunity for self-expression which experience invite (Gardner and Mahler, 1993). Children naturally and spontaneously incorporate music into their daily activities by singing, moving, playing, and creating. Children sing with musical rhythms, lyrics, and melodies, claims Davies (1994). Children can take part in more structured musical activities, or they can peacefully interact on their own with the things and people around them. Making music is a suitable activity that takes place anywhere children may be.

Participants indicated that children acquire language skills in singing folk songs. Singing of folk songs is very good and useful for learning language because they are in local language which children understand. Pre-school children acquire language skills as they learn folk songs by way of analysing the songs through the guidance of the teachers who help them to understand the meanings of the songs. Mcfee (1994) and Walker (1992) stated the importance of music and movement to a child's holistic development. Children experience the wholeness of language through music. Kolb (1996) made the claim, which was cited by Sullivan (2016), that children engage with the concepts and feelings conveyed in a meaningful context through the melody and lyrics. Kolb emphasised that youngsters create personal meanings as a result of the musical composition's structure and motive quality.

How Children Create and Respond to Music

Creating and Responding to Music

There was common question on how children create and respond to music in the pre-school setting. The common response was:

Yes, we engage pupils in a lot of musical activities during music and dance lessons. We make them clap the rhythm of kyekyekule and other songs that can help them learn concepts in language. Before pupils are asked to clap, we take them through the songs. At times we ask them to sing and clap. Pupils enjoy, value and appreciate what they do.

According to Davies (1994), preschoolers take in numerous facets of the songs they are taught, demonstrating an understanding of phrasing, repetition-related features, beginnings, and ends. She contends that pre-school children's early intuitive musical understanding must be taken into account in order for music knowledge to develop, and that the role of the pre-school teacher is to teach the children a repertoire of traditional songs as well as to encourage and give authority to their song-play. Preschool instructors, according to Davies, may also learn a musical language in this approach and can lay the groundwork for musicality development in their students by singing with them (p.131). Preschool instructors must provide suitable creative abilities to children and need not be afraid of teaching music since preschoolers produce music, but they create meaningful music with adults. According to Holt (1988), cited in Mawuse (2015), if children between the ages of four and seven can receive a sufficient foundation in music through singing games, rhymes, and experimentation with sounds and musical instruments, then any pre-school teacher should be able to provide suitable musical experiences to pre-schoolers.

Planning music instruction based on certain age groups is a crucial component of the Kodaly approach, according to Szonyi (1973), referenced in Obeng (2020). Preschool instructors will be able to base each step of children's musical instruction on the preceding phases of development thanks to this activity, according to (p. 37). Kodaly used his native Hungarian folk songs as his teaching tools because he believed that singing is the best place to start when learning music. Kodaly advises utilising singing and singing activities to develop musical literacy, train the ear, and develop listening skills. The hand signs used in the singing games correspond to the pitch of the notes and use musical time values.

Although the benefits of building on a systematic programme of musical knowledge have been shown, it is debatable if regular singing and exploration of musical instruments (both African and Western) may offer an adequate musical foundation from a very young age. Scholars in music education have presented effective techniques for early musical instruction that begin with speech, rhythm, and singing.

Early-childhood musical experiences provide the groundwork for future musical education. Children in pre-school should include these experiences in their everyday activities and playtime. In this circumstance, persistent views about the joy of producing and sharing music are formed. According to Gardner, in most of the globe, early childhood instructors oversee giving preschoolers these early musical experiences (1999). Through their attitudes and hands-on participation, preschool instructors may significantly influence a child's musical development. According to Pats (1989), cited in Obeng (2020), when making music, sound simulations that correspond to the stage of development are used, and new ones are also created, to ensure optimal development. To

effectively support and guide the child's musical growth, as well as when choosing musical pieces and instruments for music academic needs in the pre-school learning setting, it is important to consider the child's musical underdevelopment. We should also be aware that instructors in early childhood settings can benefit from children's differing learning preferences and levels of intellect by using metacognitive skills.

Additionally, it is believed that learning involves both conscious and unconscious processes, and instruction should be planned to maximise the benefits of unconscious processing for students (Cane, 1994, p.92). According to Gardner (1983), of all the abilities that a person may be blessed with, musical skill is the one that manifests first. It is thought that children who are musically intelligent may readily generate and produce melodies or rhythms and organise music rhythmically. They can also discern pitch, tone colour, and rhythmic patterns (p.104). Children in preschool that are musically intelligent learn best through sound, rhythm, and music, and during playtime have been seen echoing, singing, and tapping.

Participants stated that as musical education promotes phonological awareness, early reading skills, and music perception abilities, creative activities related to composition of music were thought to be the best example of music. Making music or engaging in musical activities does not alter the development of linguistic abilities such as pre-reading, vocabulary, or reading. Gromko (2005). Anvari, et al. (2002) highlighted the fact that children's ability to perceive music develops an aural awareness that helps them when it comes to reading. According to Weggins (2007), a music-integrated literacy environment promotes language reception, vocabulary growth, phonological and phonemic awareness, eye-motor coordination, fluency, and auditory and visual discrimination (NaCCA, 2019). The phonetic word patterns, auditory sensations, and rhythmic rhythms in music help children learn to read. In both music and reading, the left to right reading direction illustrates how each may enhance the other.

The provision of some type of music instruction at a young age can support a kid's success in reading, which will have long-lasting effects, according to Zimmerman's (2006) descriptive research on the association between music lessons started as a child and the language ability of adults. According to Gromko's (2005) research, kindergarten students who took music lessons for four months showed noticeably better growth in the development of their phoneme-segmentation fluency than students who did not take music lessons. In recent years, there has been a lot of speculation about the underlying causes of dyslexia (overly 2000), positing that it is neurological timing or temporal processing issues that affect auditory and motor skills, leading to language and literacy difficulties. Dyslexic children can benefit from music lessons carefully planned to help them with their temporal impairment. It has been suggested that the development of timing skills through music instruction may be a useful remedial strategy for improving dyslexic children's language and reading skills. It is difficult for children to distinguish pitches in speech without some musical training, which can enhance their reading abilities and pitch discrimination abilities. In addition to fostering reading language and speech development, music training aids in the organization of the linguistic system through enhanced listening skills.

Pre-School Musical Activities Observed

The researcher concluded that music's many and varied properties have a significant impact on students' achieving academic success and engagement, including memorability, melody, rhythm, beat, lyrics, timbre/tone colour, and invitation to participate. Music was generally played in all of the classroom observations by the researcher to enhance a range of significant ideas, along with its varied and vital qualities. It was found that music in the preschool classroom had a favourable effect on children's mood, acted as a timekeeper, diverted attention, offered mnemonic help, united the group's motivation, and performed as well as a conduit for information and context for shared and community educational joys. Numerous studies have demonstrated that music helps pupils learn and retain information. The study also highlighted the impact of music on students' engagement, focus, and capacity to pay attention. The music playing in the classrooms was shown to cause quite powerful reactions among the students. Preschool teachers observed the children's body positioning, movement, and activity as a result of the use of music in lessons and activities.

Pupil's Involvement/Engagement

In general, preschoolers adore music and appreciate having it in their learning environment. It was evident that pre-school instructors place a high value on paying close attention to the socio-emotional development of their students. Preschool educators believe that the idea of student participation is a crucial consideration for the best possible instruction. The researcher found and documented recurrent student responses throughout the pre-school interviews that suggested that the children loved listening to music because it encouraged and supported or qualified students to move their bodies in the classroom. The idea of student involvement is one that preschool instructors should take seriously to provide the best possible instruction in the classroom. According to Skinner and Belmont (1993), pre-school teachers' actions and the children's impressions of them both have an impact on how engaged the children are in their learning. Preschool instructor and pre-school students' observations, which constitute a multidirectional, or reciprocating, process, are crucial to the case (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

Preschool instructors are more likely to find responsive and interested students in front of them if they are seen by their students as conveying clear expectations, providing acceptable replies, and giving aid and support when required or desired. In short, a preschool child feels better and is more engaged in class when they see their instructor as genuine, loving, and kind. Early childhood educators are aware of the crucial importance of this kind of emotional connection between the teachers and their students. Such emotion pervaded the entire investigation.

Preschool instructors believe that the idea of student involvement is an ideal worry for the best possible instruction. Scholars have classified engagement as either bi- or three-way. The student's behaviour includes their conduct, engagement, and effort. The emotional component includes the interest of the student, evidence of identification, a sense of belonging, and a good attitude toward learning. Other academics have attempted to add a third component to the paradigm. A cognitive component of such growth would involve the student's self-control, personal objectives, and commitment to learning (Frederick et al., 2004). The interactions and help provided by the

preschool instructor and his students may result in a desirable community of learning, and the lessons learned as a result may be insightful and potent.

Recommendations

As a result of the findings made during the research on musical activities in pre-schools in Offinso Municipality, the following recommendations have been proposed for careful consideration: Pre-school teachers should try as much as possible to include music, especially indigenous songs, in every lesson in early childhood classrooms to prepare the children for music education. Developmentally appropriate musical activities are to be used by all pre-school teachers in the study area to help pre-school children develop basic musical concepts. Pre-school teachers are encouraged to engage pupils in fine motor, social-emotion, cognition, communication and gross motor activities to help pupils develop critical skills in music.

Children's music programmes should be created from a variety of angles, such as activities that the children themselves choose, one-on-one and small-group interaction, and musical activities that are both developmentally and educationally sound. Preschoolers should be given the opportunity to participate in musical activities both during organised and unstructured times. Pre-school teachers are encouraged to offer children the opportunities to experience creative movements and dance activities. Pre-school teachers are encouraged to use developmentally appropriate repertoire in their day-to-day musical activities in the pre-school classrooms.

CONCLUSIONS

The research concluded that, Music aids in developing the language of pupils. As they speak good grammar and become fluent in speech, they get over stage fright and inferiority complex. The continuous singing of the songs and pronouncing of the lyrics help children to speak the language fluently and correctly. The study concluded that music enhances cognitive skills through development of logical thinking and musical concepts. Pre-school teachers use music to promote creativity, skill development and behaviour management. Singing indigenous songs contributes greatly to fluency in the use of language because songs are greatly used to teach grammar and other aspects of the language for children to understand. It was clear that music helps pre-school children to develop critical skills such as fine motor, social-emotion, cognition, communication and gross motor skills.

Indigenous songs help pre-school children to understand the lesson better and at the same time remember the song since it is in the language that they understand (local song). Songs build vocabulary and children are exposed to words they have not heard before and they hear them in context. This provides an avenue for the learners to learn and build language. They learn how words are chosen for effective and to imagery. Pre-school children's interest develops when they engage or participate in music-making activities in the pre-school learning environment. Music promotes enjoyment and fun as pre-school children sing together in the pre-school classroom. Music enhances cognitive skills through development of logical reasoning, logical thinking and concept development.

It was concluded that Music creative activities which involve singing, drumming and dancing enable pre-school children to enjoy and value songs they create. Performance of dance/movement activities help build motor control and body relationships and that strengthen self-regulation and memory of the pre-school child. In general, preschoolers adore music and appreciate having it in their learning environment. It was evident that pre-school instructors place a high value on paying close attention to the socio-emotional development of their students. A pre-school teacher's understanding of the idea of student involvement is an ideal concern for the best possible instruction. The researcher saw and highlighted recurrent student replies throughout the pre-school interviews that suggested that the kids appreciated music because it motivated or encouraged them to move their bodies in the pre-school classroom.

Research Implication

All areas of child development and school readiness, including cerebral, social-emotional, motor, language, and total literacy, are projected to be stimulated by this study. It is believed that exposing young children to music will promote cooperation between the body and the mind. This study will work as a cornerstone for parents and educators who want to introduce music to young children since it will help them learn the sounds and meanings of words, as well as strengthen their motor skills and encourage self-expression. This study is anticipated to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of music education and act as a resource for other scholars in the performing arts. Because most preschool teachers are unaware of the possibilities of using music in the classroom, this study is expected to raise awareness among instructors and educators for linguistic practices, as many parents also believe that using music in a preschool classroom will cause chaos or make students reluctant to learn.

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