



SURVEYING ON THE KODALY METHOD IN TEACHING CHORUS FOR SEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT BEIJANG MIDDLE SCHOOL, GUANGDONG PROVINCE, THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to survey the Kodály Method of teaching chorus to 7th-grade students at Beijiang Middle School. The research methodology was a qualitative study of the use of the Kodály method in the choral classroom at Beijiang Middle School in Guangdong. Research tools include Interview forms, observation forms, and Index of Item-Objective Congruence forms. The research findings were: In interviews, teachers commented that the Kodály method was effective in improving students' pitch, rhythm, and sight-singing skills, especially through the hand-signature symbols and the note-singing system, which helped students to master pitch and melody quickly. Through classroom observations, the Kodály method was well implemented. Teachers used hand signs and note singing to help students clarify pitch and rhythm, and the classroom atmosphere was positive and interactive. The result of the IOC interview form was 0.74, higher than 0.5. It is allowed for use for research purposes. And the IOC results of the observation table are higher than 0.87 than 0.5. It is permitted for use for research purposes.

Keywords: Kodály Method; Chorus teaching; Beijiang Middle School

Introduction

Kodály Zoltán is a famous Hungarian music educator, composer, and national musician. Kodály grew up in Hungary in a time of turmoil. Under the country's conditions at that time, the development of music education was slow, and the original music teaching was not applicable. Kodály was actively involved in music education reform to change the status quo of music teaching. He advocated music education through the basic form of singing, and based on extensive research and practice, he selected the most attractive and interactive teaching methods. He adapted them appropriately according to the actual situation, forming a unique Kodály teaching system. In the early 1980s, the Kodály method was introduced to China. Researchers in music education in China borrowed and absorbed its ideas, from which they gained many teaching ideas and combined them with the practical use of music classroom teaching in primary and secondary schools in China, which has played a great role in promoting the development of music education. Today, Kodály's teaching method has been widely used in the field of music education. Kodály attaches great importance to singing, teaching that song combined with movements and activities can highlight the sense of simplicity and fun in the music, effectively stimulate children's desire to explore and learn, and give full play to children's artistic creativity. At present, some junior high school music teachers are accustomed to adopting the teaching method of "teacher demonstration, student imitation," which makes it difficult to stimulate students' motivation to learn music knowledge. Teachers can study the Kodály teaching method in depth and use scientific methods to apply the Kodály teaching method in teaching to promote the development of students (Zhuo, 2023).

With the in-depth implementation of quality education, the Kodály teaching method is widely used in junior high school music classroom teaching. This teaching method has distinctive features that fit well with the teaching concept of the music curriculum, which is of great significance in stimulating students' interest in exploring music knowledge, improving the quality of music classroom teaching, and cultivating students' core literacy in the music discipline. Exploring the effective application strategies of Kodály's teaching method in

junior high school music classroom teaching, including scientific planning of teaching objectives, focusing on the selection of teaching materials, exercising students' literacy, focusing on the application of rhythmic syllabic reading, guiding students to utilize gestures to assist the practice of intonation, guiding students to carry out improvisation and composing activities, and carrying out diversified teaching evaluation, etc., to improve the quality of teaching and promote the development of students. (Zhang, 2023)

Kodály believes that the human voice is the best teaching tool. Singing must be unaccompanied, just like traditional ballad singing. From this point of view, music teaching can be practiced in cities, towns, and even in the most remote areas if there are well-trained teachers and complete teaching materials; and it can be taught to children as young as two years old and to adults who can learn music through singing. (Bai, 2022)

Choral education is the most famous education in Hungary. Kodály is one of Hungary's finest music educators, and his educational methods are revered in every country of the world. Kodály 's method of choral education has strengthened Hungary's position in the world of choral education. The scientific application of " Kodály 's teaching method" can improve the students' accuracy of notes and sense of rhythm in choral music, thus improving the quality of choral teaching. At the same time, applying the " Kodály teaching method" enriches the teaching content. The popularisation and application of the " Kodály Teaching Method" can effectively improve students' choral level and stimulate their enthusiasm for learning chorus. (Huan, 2022)

Although China's choral education has made some progress, it should be said that there are still many problems in primary and secondary choral education.: First, school choral activities are generally afraid to do and dare not do. Some schools, class teachers, and parents do not support, do not cooperate, and even resist, resulting in choral education not being carried out. Examination-oriented education still occupies the main position (especially in most rural schools). Students and parents only look at the examination results of a few subjects, and the time spent on choral singing is a waste of time. Not doing their work should be spent on the cultural subjects of examination-oriented education.

Research Objectives

1.To survey on the Kodály Method in teaching chorus for seventh-grade students at Beijiang Middle School.

Literature Reviews

Kodály's teaching method is a characteristic method gradually formed by Kodály in his long-term teaching practice. He will use his method of concept and domestic and foreign music teaching methods for an organic combination of unity. According to the actual needs of the localization of the country, in Kodály 's teaching system, it plays its due role in the teaching process, which also reveals that we should be based on the cultural traditions and the actual situation of the country or the region when we learn and understand a certain method and education system. With the changes in the exact problem, we should update our concepts and teaching methods to achieve the best results in a timely manner.

Kodály's life: In the twentieth century, Kodály Zoltán was a Hungarian composer, folk music theorist, and music educator of international renown." The "Kodály Teaching Method," named after him, has been widely disseminated worldwide. Born in Kecskemét, Kodály received a good musical education at home and learned to play piano, violin, and many other instruments at a high level. Kodály completed his primary and secondary schooling in a small city in northern Hungary. He spent his teenage years growing up in a rural artistic environment, where country music always nurtured him, leading him to understand and love Hungarian folk music. Kodály began his first musical compositions in high school and had strong language and literature abilities. The good family musical education and the musical environment in which he grew up played an important role in shaping Kodály's musical concepts.

Kodály studied conducting and composition at the Liszt Conservatory and Hungarian, German, and literature. During that time, Kodály also studied various Hungarian folk instruments in-depth. In 1904, Kodály graduated from the Liszt Conservatory, majoring in composition, and in 1906, he began his doctoral studies by writing the "Structure of the Lyrics of Hungarian Folk Songs" and studying Hungarian folk music. Kodály composed many musical works, and his compositional materials were mainly Hungarian folk music and pieces. He devoted himself to the reform and

innovation of Hungarian music education, took the "inheritance of national music" as the concept of his music education, and devoted himself to teaching music in kindergartens and primary and secondary schools for a long time. Kodály worked out a set of music teaching methods in his long-term teaching practice, including rhythmic singing and reading, gesture-assisted singing training, sight-singing and singing teaching materials based on a large number of Hungarian folk songs, music training for children based on the Hungarian pentatonic tonality, and emphasizing on choral singing, and so on. Based on Kodály's teaching practice and other countries' excellent teaching methods, he formed his own unique "Kodály's Music Education System," widely disseminated and highly recognized internationally. (Yang,2010)

Kodály Philosophical Foundations of Music Education: The emergence of Kodály's idea of music education is inseparable from the history and culture of the Hungarian nation, and he believes that the inheritance and popularization of national music is one of the most important reasons for the existence of music education. After combining the Hungarian philosophy of music education with his years of research, Kodály formed his philosophical basis for music education, believing that music is an indispensable part of a person's spiritual life, a link to the soul, and can shape a person's personality. This formed the philosophical basis of Kodály's educational system of music method: 1) If a person can read and write words, he is also capable of reading and writing music. The ability to read and write music should be mastered by all, and all people have the right to learn and enjoy music, not just a few. 2) Everyone can sing, which is our innate instrument. Singing is the most convenient and the best way to express feelings. Children's ability to sing should be cultivated so that musical knowledge can be mastered by children through singing, and everything gained through singing will be deeply imprinted in children's brains and bodies. 3) Early childhood music education is the most important stage of music learning in a person's life, and the age of 3-7 years old is the most important stage of accepting music learning. music education for young children must be started as early as possible, as early as when the fetus is still in the mother's womb. Music education for young children must begin as early as possible when the fetus is still in the mother's womb. 4) Folk songs of the nation should be the main content of children's music learning. Combining the mother tongue of the language with the mother tongue of the music and the language vocabulary and tones of the mother tongue can improve children's ability to express themselves, deepen the understanding of the connotation of the nation's culture, and cultivate the nation's ethnicity. 5) The influence of music on human beings is comprehensive, and the effects of music on cultivating

emotions, aesthetics, and enhancing intellect are irreplaceable. In addition, music teaching needs to be strengthened in school education so children can develop better.

Kodály believes music education is indispensable to all aspects of a person's development. He adheres to his style of national music. He does not follow the tide of popular music because he carries the burden of national cultural revitalization and the continuation of traditions for the majority rather than catering to the needs of the minority. National folk music culture is the spiritual wealth of all nationals and is something every national has the right to learn and understand rather than a privilege for the few. Therefore, this belief accompanied the creation of theoretical research and educational reform after Kodály. After a long period of teaching practice and theoretical research, Kodály developed his philosophy of music education.1) Everyone should be well educated in music and learn through singing. Everyone can sing, and teaching music with a voice is the most practical, easy, and convenient way.2) Instrumental learning cannot become popular culture, but singing can. If you want to cultivate a quality foundation for all students, the chorus is the best way, the form of collective singing, training students in many kinds of social abilities, a cappella training, cultivating students' good pitch concepts and vague feelings.3) School music education must be based on the music culture of our nation, folk songs must be carried through all the aspects of school music education, and students must learn the folk songs and music culture of our nation, in the familiarize themselves with and love their folk songs, but also learn and understand the excellent music of other ethnic groups.4) Music education in early childhood has an important impact on a person's life, and music education should be started as early as possible when the mother is pregnant. 3-7-year-old children are the best time for music education, and music can express their emotions and become their way of communication. In early childhood music education, we must pay attention to the quality of music, and the quality of music education at this time will have a great impact on the children's future development in all aspects.5) We must first have excellent music teachers for a good music education. Music teachers need to be good at music, love the cause of music education, and have the spirit of innovation to continue to learn and improve their own. Music teachers must choose appropriate teaching methods according to the actual situation of children in teaching, choose each teaching step, arrange teaching links, clarify the purpose of teaching, and flexibly deal with various changes to choose the best teaching content.6) The choice of teaching content must be based on the cornerstone of the nation's music and widely learn the excellent music of other

nationalities so that the teaching materials are diversified and the children's patriotic feelings and the spirit of cultural tolerance are cultivated spirit. (Cui,2014)

Kodály Music Education Philosophy: Kodály believes that music education is related to the needs of each individual's life essence, the development of culture, and the development of the nation and society. Kodály puts forward the following three aims of music education in schools. Kodály's idea of music education is to educate the individual through folk songs from childhood or even early childhood and to train the individual through music education to train society.

Research Methodology

The research methodology was a qualitative study of the use of the Kodály method in the choral classroom at Beijiang Middle School in Guangdong. Research tools include Interview forms, observation forms, and Index of Item-Objective Congruence forms.

Results

For choral training, students' singing ability, singing habits, choral technique, breathing, vocal practice, pitch, emotion, and other aspects are the most important and need to strengthen the training, but also the key to determining the level of the choir. A few days ago, more junior high school choir members were mainly in the seventh and eighth grades, the two grades of students with different levels of knowledge and the ability to receive knowledge, a level gap. Therefore, choosing the means of choral training is especially important. Traditional choral training methods mostly rely on the piano to carry out pitch and rhythm training, resulting in students' over-dependence on the piano. Secondly, the use of a single training method for junior high school students, students' interest in learning, and choral training enthusiasm is not strong. In junior high school, choral training time is limited, a single training method will consume a long time, and efficiency is not a high phenomenon. For choral intonation, rhythm, and music recognition, the Kodály music teaching method for junior high school choral training provides a set of scientific and effective training means, does not rely mainly on musical instruments for training, encourages the active mobilization of the human voice,

the human voice as a leading tool, and the training environment is low, for junior high school students, the Kodály music teaching method is easier for the students to accept and efficient.

Most junior high school students are from different primary schools; however, due to the teaching level of music teachers in various primary schools and school teaching conditions, the importance of music education is different; these factors will also lead to the students' uneven music foundation. A single training method is a test of the student's mastery of basic knowledge of music and the student's receptive ability, the student's ability to receive knowledge and skill of the understanding of different degrees, for the chorus of the overall training has a more incredible difficulty, therefore, through the practice of the research found that Kodály music pedagogical training tools, such as "Colvin gestures" and "rhythmic reading value method." Therefore, through practical research, it was found that the Kodály music teaching method training tools, such as 'Kodály gestures' and 'rhythmic reading,' etc., are more conducive to the acceptance of knowledge for junior high school student's mastery of basic understanding of music, and the overall training efficiency is higher.

Choral training and music teaching and the psychological characteristics of students have a very important connection. Junior high school students' physical and mental development is undergoing great changes with the primary school stage of great changes; they have broad interests, active thinking, doing things, and learning interests. For this reason, the psychological perspective of students learning music is a breakthrough for teachers to use teaching methods, with the actual situation of students' development changes, to choose different teaching methods. Kodály's teaching philosophy is in line with this approach, paying more attention to the effect of music on students' physical and mental development, emphasizing the psychological laws of music learning, and advocating that the design of the educational process must be in line with the progress of students' physical and mental development. Actively mobilize students' interest in learning so that students with a positive and strong interest take the initiative to learn and participate in choral training so that students can identify the musical point of view and receive music. According to the main

features of Kodály choral training and teaching, Kodály choral training teaching methods are more suitable for the age and psychological characteristics of junior high school students, the use of music games as an auxiliary training method, the students' psychological experience as the starting point, is the Kodály music teaching method used in junior high school choral training theory support.

Discussions

The studies reviewed in this research collectively highlight the transformative potential of the Kodály Method and other innovative pedagogical approaches in music education, particularly in choral teaching. Dai (2022) emphasizes the effectiveness of the Kodály Method in primary school choral teaching, particularly through its focus on rhythmic exercises, gesture-based learning, and the integration of ethnic music. These strategies not only enhance students' musical skills but also foster cultural confidence and a deeper connection to their heritage. By combining music with movement and incorporating culturally relevant materials, the Kodály Method creates an engaging and inclusive learning environment that resonates with young learners.

Similarly, Zhong (2013) explores the application of the Kodály Method in high school music classrooms, particularly in underdeveloped regions of China. Her research underscores the method's ability to address the limitations of traditional music education, such as passive learning and low student engagement. By incorporating singing, choral training, and folk music into the curriculum, the Kodály Method helps students develop musical literacy and a sense of cultural pride. Zhong's findings suggest that the method's adaptability and student-centered approach make it a valuable tool for improving music education in resource-constrained settings.

Li (2012) further expands on the holistic nature of choral education, emphasizing the integration of vocal techniques, musical literacy, and emotional expression. His work highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to choral training, which not only develops technical skills but also nurtures students' emotional and social development. Li's advocacy for multisensory learning and collaborative practices aligns with the Kodály Method's emphasis on active

participation and experiential learning, reinforcing the idea that music education should be both engaging and meaningful.

The psychological and emotional benefits of choral singing are explored in depth by Zhang (2015), who demonstrates how group singing can reduce stress, foster social connectedness, and promote emotional well-being. Her research aligns with the Kodály Method's focus on creating a positive and supportive learning environment, where students can experience the joy of music-making while developing resilience and a sense of belonging. This perspective highlights the broader impact of music education on students' overall development, beyond just musical skills.

Wang (2018) and Chen (2020) offer additional insights into the social and technological dimensions of choral music. Wang's work illustrates how choral singing can serve as a powerful tool for social justice, fostering collective identity and amplifying marginalized voices. Chen, on the other hand, explores the potential of digital technology to revolutionize choral training and performance, suggesting that tools like virtual reality and online collaboration can enhance accessibility and engagement. These studies underscore the evolving nature of music education and the need for innovative approaches to meet the challenges of the modern world.

Finally, Daniel Shawcross Wilkerson (2012) and David R. W. Sears (2020) provide a scientific perspective on music theory and analysis, emphasizing the importance of understanding the underlying principles of harmony and musical structure. Their work complements the pedagogical focus of the Kodály Method by highlighting the cognitive and emotional processes involved in music perception and performance. This scientific approach can inform the development of more effective teaching strategies and deepen our understanding of how students learn and engage with music.

New Knowledges

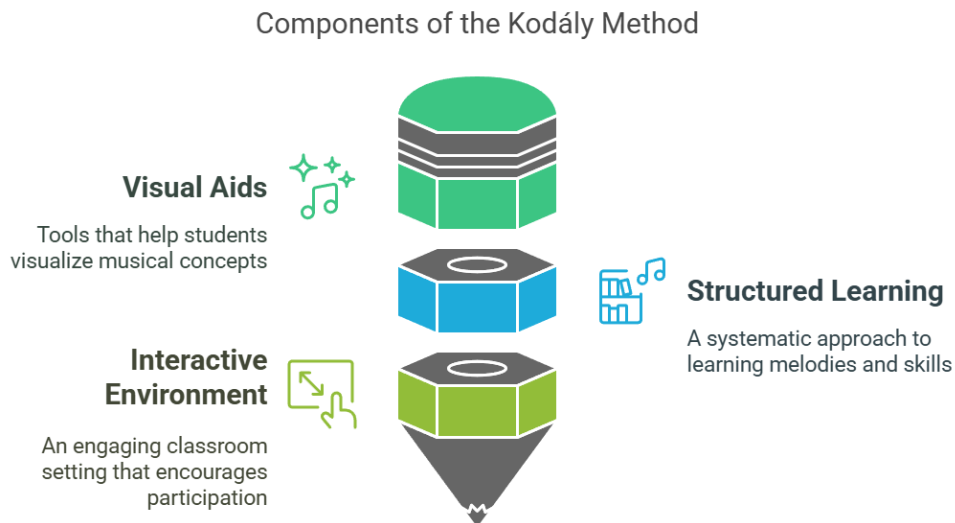


Figure 1: Diagram Showing the Components of the Kodály Method.

The program helped students enhance their choral singing through structured practice and collaborative learning.

Weekly discussions and peer feedback sessions facilitated continuous improvement. Students selected pieces that suited their vocal range and style preferences, allowing them to personalize their musical interpretation.

Group rehearsals encouraged teamwork and artistic expression. Through teacher feedback, students refined their vocal techniques and stage presence. Over time, they experienced significant growth in vocal blending, expressive singing, and confidence on stage.

The structured approach to vocal training and performance preparation ensured that students developed into well-rounded choral singers.

Conclusions

The research findings from teachers commented that the Kodály method was effective in improving students' pitch, rhythm, and sight-singing skills, especially through the hand-signature symbols and the note-singing system, which helped students to master pitch and melody quickly. Through classroom observations, the Kodály method was well implemented. Teachers used hand signs and note singing to help students clarify pitch and rhythm, and the classroom atmosphere was positive and interactive.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Recommendations for this Research

1. Based on this study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the implementation of the Kodály Method in teaching choir to 7th-grade students at Bejjang Middle School and other similar educational settings.
2. These recommendations address various aspects of music education, including teacher training, curriculum development, student support, parental involvement, and future research.
3. To ensure that teachers are skilled in applying the Kodály Method, specialized workshops and seminars should be organized regularly. These should be led by experts in the field who can provide practical training, theoretical insights, and practical strategies for integrating Kodály principles into choral teaching.
4. Workshops should cover vocal training, rhythmic exercises, solmization, folk songs, and musical notation. In addition to initial training, ongoing support, and mentoring are essential for teachers to refine their skills and keep abreast of the latest developments in the Kodály Method.
6. This can be achieved through peer-to-peer learning groups, regular check-ins with Kodály specialists, and access to online resources and

communities. Pre-service teacher education programs should incorporate Kodály principles and methods into their curricula. This will ensure that future teachers are well-equipped to teach choirs using this approach from the start of their careers.

7. It should be integrated into the school's music curriculum to ensure the sustained and effective use of the Kodály Method. This requires careful planning and the development of structured lesson plans and resources. Develop a comprehensive music curriculum that incorporates the Kodály Method.

8. This curriculum should include clear learning objectives, sequential lesson plans, and assessment criteria. It should also include activities such as singing games, rhythmic exercises, and folk song performances to keep students engaged and motivated. Create a repository of teaching resources, including sheet music, audio recordings, and instructional videos. These resources should be easily accessible to teachers and students in print and digital formats. Collaboration with local musicians and cultural organizations can help enrich the content and ensure cultural relevance.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Future research should conduct long-term studies to assess the sustained impact of the Kodály Method on students' musical development, cognitive abilities, and emotional well-being. Tracking students over multiple years can provide deeper insights into the effectiveness and adaptability of the method in different educational contexts. Further studies should compare the Kodály Method with other music teaching approaches, such as Orff Schulwerk and Dalcroze Eurhythmics, to evaluate their relative effectiveness in different aspects of music education, particularly in choral training for middle school students.

2. As digital tools become increasingly important in education, research should explore how technology, including virtual choirs, mobile applications, and AI-assisted music training, can complement and enhance the traditional Kodály Method.

3. Research should evaluate the impact of different training models for Kodály-based choral instruction, including workshops, online courses, and peer mentoring programs. Understanding which training approaches yield the best outcomes can help improve teacher preparation programs.

4. Further research should explore the psychological and social benefits of Kodály-based choral singing, such as its effects on students' confidence, teamwork skills, and emotional resilience. Examining how choral participation fosters social connections and well-being can provide additional justification for incorporating the Kodály Method into educational policies.

5. By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to refining and expanding the application of the Kodály Method in choral education, ensuring that it remains relevant and impactful in modern music classrooms.

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