

A Case Study of Integrative Music Learning Towards Preschool Children in Lina Anne Music School

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100400606>

Received: 23 April 2026; Accepted: 28 April 2026; Published: 20 May 2026

ABSTRACT

This case study looks at how Lina Anne Music School in Desa Pandan, Kuala Lumpur, uses integrative music instruction for toddlers. This study seeks to investigate music education that integrates several domains of learning, such as cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development, potentially facilitating a holistic enhancement of young children's growth and their engagement in musical activities. Integrative music education merges traditional music teaching with aspects of movement, storytelling, visual arts, and play-based approaches, cultivating a child-centered and comprehensive learning environment. The goal of this study is to find out how music lessons are set up and taught to meet the developmental needs of preschoolers. This research is essential as many similar institutions use traditional teacher-centered methods to teach children. For this research, a qualitative approach including watching classes, talking to teachers, and looking at teaching materials is used. The results indicate that integrated teaching practices enhance children's creativity, attention span, and self-expression, while also fostering social connection and emotional well-being. The teachers at Lina Anne Music School create a warm and interesting environment by using rhythmic activities, vocal exercises, instrumental excursions, and interactive stories. The study's results show that integrated music education is a strong way to help both musical and non-musical skills in young children. Integrative music education promotes a nurturing, flexible, and engaging curriculum that aligns with the child's innate interest and developmental stages. The research opens the way for more researchers to do further research in this field of integrative music education for preschoolers.

Keywords: Music education, preschoolers, integrated teaching practice

INTRODUCTION

Background Of The Study

Music is very vital for the growth of young children in all ways. It helps kids grow in all four areas which are cognitively, emotionally, socially, and physically. Early infancy is a critical phase for musical development, as children begin to explore sound, pitch, and rhythm as means of self-expression and communication. In recent years, integrative music learning has been a new and exciting technique to teach young kids. It emphasises the integration of music with many domains such as language, movement, art, and play (Bresler, 2023). These approaches help youngsters learn music in a more natural, fascinating, and cross-disciplinary way, which makes them more creative and improves their memory and attention span.

Music education is a fundamental component of early childhood education development that offers various cognitive, emotional and social benefits. Nowadays, the educational landscape in Malaysia is evolving rapidly,

and the need to explore pedagogical approaches in music education has slightly increased significantly throughout the years. The impact of music education has become essential towards the development of these children's growth. It is because with the growing recognition of music education that fosters creativity and critical thinking, the understanding of music education has impacted the structured music programs among preschools' in Malaysia. By enhancing the children's learning experiences and personal growth, we as educators have to identify several teaching methods and strategies that can contribute to the development of music education curriculum in Malaysia.

At Lina Anne Music School in Desa Pandan, Kuala Lumpur, the goal of instruction is to assist kids improve their musical skills via activities that are both fun and useful. The school is entirely about the kids and employs singing, dancing to music, telling stories, and playing instruments to help them grow mentally and emotionally. Research indicates that music activities combined with storytelling and creative movement improve children's fine motor skills, social skills, and emotional regulation (Hallam, 2010). Integrative music learning improves toddlers' musical intelligence and helps them learn new words, numbers, and how to get along with others (Gardner, 2011). In this context, the case study at Lina Anne Music School examines the implementation of integrative music learning methodologies and their impact on the developmental outcomes of preschool children.

The study seeks to elucidate the efficacy of integrative methodologies in early music education and their capacity to foster holistic learning among young learners within Malaysia's dynamic educational context, by analysing pedagogical techniques, classroom interactions, and children's responses. This study also intends to explore the application and impact of integrative music learning among preschoolers at Lina Anne Music School in Kuala Lumpur, emphasising how music-centered pedagogical methods promote their cognitive, emotional, and social development. This study also examines the effects of music on children's development and employees' attitudes towards including music into early childhood education activities. The research gathers data through teachers' evaluations, personal observations, and comments from parents. The goal of this study is to show how important music is as a complete learning tool for young children and to encourage teachers to use more integrated methods in their teaching.

Problem Statement

Even though music is becoming more and more important in early childhood education, many preschools still use traditional, teacher-centered music lessons that focus on rote learning, repetition, and technical skill acquisition instead of creativity and overall growth (Hallam, 2010). Traditional methods like these could stop kids from being creative, engaged, and emotionally open, which are all important parts of early learning (Kim & Kemple, 2011). Integrative music learning, which combines musical experiences with other developmental domains such as language, movement, art, and social interaction, offers an alternative approach that promotes active participation and holistic growth (Bresler, 2023).

The integration of music education into the curriculum of early childhood education has received much attention as a powerful tool for enhancing language development and acquisition. Research suggests that music, with its rhythmic and melodic nature, plays an important role in developing linguistic skills such as phonological awareness, grammar and vocabulary retention in young learners (Tsao et al., 2023). It is particularly relevant because this is where the children are at a critical stage of language development. Despite having so many potential benefits, the implementation of music education as a pedagogical tool in preschool classrooms presents challenges. These include limited teacher training and expertise in music and early childhood education, lack of resources and varying levels of interactions and engagements among the children.

Preschool curriculum in Malaysia often marginalizes music, treating it as an optional activity rather than a core instructional medium, despite evidence that musical experiences enhance cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional development (Destura et al., 2024). Research on integrative music learning for young children remains fragmented while improvisation-based approaches have shown promise, systematic investigations of their impact on preschoolers are scarce (MacGlone, 2020). Furthermore, current case studies underscore the

essential requirement for intentional design and phased execution of musical settings to attain enduring educational advantages (Liao et al., 2024). Teachers sometimes lack confidence and culturally responsive tools, which makes it hard for them to use music that represents the many languages and cultures of their pupils (Garcia, 2024). Persistent obstacles, including socio-economic inequities, transient interventions, and inadequate professional development, continue to hinder fair access to high-quality music experiences (Sun & Wong, 2025). As a result, there is a pressing need for a thorough, integrated music learning framework that corresponds with complete early childhood education, enhances teacher effectiveness, and yields quantifiable results for preschool students (Babalola & Emmanuel, 2025). This research fills that gap by showing a case study that looks at an integrated music curriculum made to fulfil these demands.

In Malaysia, however, study and implementation of integrated music learning are still restricted, especially in public schools and private early childhood centres. Not to add that public schools aren't getting any integrative music learning. For instance, students in public schools must perform recorders and percussion instruments from Year 1 to Year 6.

| STANDARD KANDUNGAN | STANDARD PEMBELAJARAN | CATATAN |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| 2.1 Nyanyian | <p>Murid boleh:</p> <p>2.1.1 Bernyanyi dengan sebutan yang betul.</p> <p>2.1.2 Bernyanyi dengan pic yang betul.</p> <p>2.1.3 Bernyanyi mengikut tempo.</p> | <p>Cadangan Aktiviti:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mendengar dan menyanyikan semula pic yang didengar • Latihan menyebut lirik lagu. • Memperkenalkan lagu kebangsaan Malaysia iaitu Negara Ku • Menyanyikan lagu Negara Ku |
| 2.2 Permainan Alat Perkusi | <p>2.2.1 Memainkan alat perkusi mengikut tempo.</p> <p>2.2.2 Memainkan alat perkusi mengikut detik lagu.</p> <p>2.2.3 Memainkan alat perkusi mengikut corak irama melodi.</p> <p>2.2.4 Memainkan alat perkusi berdasarkan skor ikon.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mendengar dan memainkan semula corak irama yang didengar • Memperkenalkan alat perkusi serta cara memainkannya: Contoh alat perkusi: – <i>rhythm stick</i> dan kerincing. • Memberikan penekanan pada detik tertentu. Contoh: – detik pertama – detik pertama dan ke-3 • Mengenal skor ikon. |

Figure 1: Curriculum and Assessment Standard Document Primary School Standard Curriculum Music Education Year 1, Page 20

The implementation of the KSSR (Revision 2017) for music education in primary schools marks a significant step towards enhancing the quality of music education in Malaysia. Despite the potential benefits of this curriculum, several challenges are hindering the implementation. As we can see in Figure 1, it has been mentioned that Year 1 students are required to learn and study about percussion instruments. Although percussion instruments like tambourins, wood blocks, and maracas are accessible for primary school students, this can lower the barriers of the student’s participation when learning music for the first time.

| Cambridge Primary Music (0068) Stage 1 | | Scheme of Work |
|---|--|---|
| Learning objectives | Suggested teaching activities and resources | Comments/Teaching notes |
| 1MM.01 Sing and play music, joining in when appropriate and spontaneously. | <p>Following a vocal warm-up, ask learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What songs do you know? • Which song is your favourite? • Why is it your favourite? <p>Ask learners to share their favourite songs and nursery rhymes with the class by singing aloud. Encourage the class to clap after each rendition to show support and appreciation.</p> <p>After each song, ask the rest of the class whether they also know the song. If they do, the song can be repeated with other learners or the whole class joining in.</p> <p>Once learners have had the opportunity to share their favourite songs, introduce a new song. Play the song for learners. Once they are familiar with the whole song, the melody and lyrics can be explicitly taught by going line by line and asking learners to repeat what they hear.</p> <p>The whole class can be split into groups with each group singing one line. When you point to a group, they should sing just their line. Point to each group in turn until all lines have been sung.</p> <p>Once learners are confident with their lines, give them the opportunity to try singing the song without the non-verbal cue of when to join in. This can either be done with accompaniment or without.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recording of your chosen song or an instrument on which to play the song | <p>Refer to the Teacher Guide for examples of vocal warm-ups.</p> <p>The new song could be a nursery rhyme or a folk song. Use a recording or play the song on an instrument.</p> |
| <p>1MM.01 Sing and play music, joining in when appropriate and spontaneously.</p> <p>1MM.03 Freely explore and enjoy playing with sounds, melodies and rhythms.</p> | <p>Play a game of 'Higher or Lower' with learners. Play or sing a note and then play a second note. Ask learners to identify whether the second note is higher or lower in pitch than the first. Starting from standing, learners can demonstrate whether the second note is higher or lower by either standing on tiptoe with their hands in the air (higher) or crouching down to the floor (lower). Repeat this several times.</p> | |

Figure 2: Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum Scheme of Work for Year 1, Page 8

Based on figure 2, Cambridge Primary Music curriculum and learning standards are designed to nurture creativity, expression and personal musical identity. Compared to KSSR (Revision 2017), Cambridge Primary Music curriculum, music is treated as a creative exploration and expression. It encourages students to make choices, having open discussions and reflections. It is designed to build positive attitudes towards music but less focused on technical mastery.

Standard curriculum music learning in Malaysia primary schools generally emphasizes basic musical knowledge, simple notation reading, and ensemble participation through percussion instruments. It focuses more on basic musical skills such as singing, keeping tempo, rhythmic accuracy and playing percussion instruments. It also emphasizes precision, repetition and basic competency. This approach tends to follow a structured, teacher-directed model that focuses on skill acquisition and uniform learning outcomes. In contrast, Cambridge Primary music curriculum focuses more on exploration, creativity and enjoyment rather than skill mastery, understanding music structure and accuracy. Cambridge Primary music curriculum is more student-centered instead of a teacher-directed teaching style. This contrast highlights the comparison and differentiation between Malaysia curriculum and Cambridge curriculum.

In the implementation of KSSR (Revision 2017), the time allocation for music subjects and for each grade (Year 1 to Year 6), is a minimum of 16 hours per year, breaking it down by week to 30 minutes per class session. This limited implementation of time makes it difficult to cover the overall syllabus properly, let alone give the students enough time to practice, exposure, or individualized feedback. (Noor Sham et al., 2022), also stated that the reduction of 30 minutes for primary school music education has had an impact on the learning process itself and subsequently also affected the recruitment of students in the field of music education at the tertiary level.

Teachers frequently have difficulties in creating classes that successfully incorporate music with other educational domains owing to insufficient pedagogical training, limited resources, and a lack of familiarity with integrative teaching paradigms. Many primary schools rely on general-class teachers to teach music, rather than trained music specialists. These teachers often lack sufficient background in music knowledge and ability. Due to this issue, teaching tends to be superficial, relying on a small set of activities such as singing, playing the recorder and playing percussion instruments rather than deeper, more creative or culturally rich musical exposure. Additionally, there is a lack of empirical research demonstrating the effects of integrated music learning on preschool children's cognitive, social, and emotional development within local educational contexts. Consequently, several educators and parents may underestimate music's capacity as a holistic educational resource (Nethsinghe, 2012). This gap underscores the necessity for a comprehensive case study to investigate the use of integrative music learning at Lina Anne Music School, its contribution to the holistic development of preschool children, and the problems educators have in the implementation of such methodologies. Comprehending these challenges will yield significant insights for improving music education methodologies in early childhood programs and fostering a more integrated and child-centered approach to learning in Malaysia.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the application and impacts of integrative music learning in Lina Anne Music School.
2. To investigate how music impacts children's development and employee perceptions about using music for activities in early child education.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. How is integrative music learning being implemented at Lina Anne Music School, and what are its impacts on the musical development and overall learning experiences of preschool children?
2. How do teachers and staff at Lina Anne Music School perceive the use of music as a tool for learning and development in early childhood education?
3. What challenges and opportunities do educators encounter when implementing integrative music learning strategies in the preschool classroom?

Significance of the Study

This case study is significant as it presents the effects of integrative music learning on the holistic development of preschool children within the framework of early childhood education in Malaysia. Music is widely recognised as an effective instrument for promoting several aspects of a child's development, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth when utilised effectively within an educational context (Hallam, 2010). This study provides significant insights into the actual implementation of interdisciplinary approaches that integrate music with movement, narrative, art, and play, through an analysis of the integrative music learning practices employed by Lina Anne Music School. The findings will aid educators and preschool teachers by offering effective frameworks and methodologies for developing engaging, child-centered learning experiences that foster creativity, self-expression, and collaboration among young learners. The research also helps curriculum architects and politicians by showing that integrative music programs may make early childhood curricula better and fit with Malaysia's National Preschool Standard Curriculum, which is based on holistic and experiential learning. The findings underscore the importance of music as a significant resource for parents to facilitate their children's emotional and cognitive development beyond traditional educational subjects. Additionally, this study contributes to the existing literature by addressing the gap in local research on integrative music instruction in private preschools, establishing a foundation for future investigations in the Malaysian context. In conclusion, the findings of this case study can serve as a framework for improving

music education techniques and cultivating a creative, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate learning environment for young children.

Scope of the Study

This case study examines the application and impact of integrative music education for preschoolers at Lina Anne Music School in Desa Pandan, Kuala Lumpur. The research focuses on exploring how music-related activities like singing, rhythmic movement, storytelling, and basic instrumental play are incorporated into early childhood learning experiences to promote children's overall growth. This study involves preschool children between the ages of 4 and 6, along with teachers and staff who actively participate in teaching and facilitating music activities. The research focuses on the use, methodology, and results of integrative music learning instead of evaluating students' technical musical competencies or their formal performance skills. Data gathering emphasizes classroom observations, teacher interviews, and evaluation of the learning environment to grasp how integrative techniques are implemented in actual classroom scenarios. The study is geographically limited to a single institution Lina Anne Music School that allows a concentrated view on the implementation of integrative learning within a private early childhood music education setting in Malaysia. Consequently, the results do not aim to reflect every preschool or music school nationwide but instead to offer perspectives on the distinct practices, difficulties, and effects within this particular environment. Moreover, the study's timeline encompasses a designated observation duration within the academic term, restricting the long-term assessment of children's development. However, the results seek to act as a useful guide for educators, researchers, and policymakers focused on fostering innovative, music-infused teaching approaches that aid the holistic growth of young children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Music Early Childhood Education

When music enters early childhood education programs, educators combine musical curriculum with student activities to develop children on cognitive and emotional levels. Through music children experience both self-expression as well as educational learning of ideas and language proficiency and social group interaction. Learning development occurs across the period from birth until age eight which makes up early childhood education. The approach focuses on students' multiple aspects of development which include their cognitive skills and social abilities and emotional growth and physical coordination while using hands-on activities as well as play-based learning methods. Music creates inclusive learning environments, supporting children with diverse learning needs, including those with special education needs.

Concept of Integrative Music Learning

Music has been a part of our daily life. People can access music anywhere and anytime whether it is in a public space or through online platform digitals. Music plays an important role throughout people's lives thus evolving and contributing to the promotion of interpersonal relationships as well as an enhancement of group cohesiveness. In this case study, preschool children in Lina Anne Music School were examined to investigate the integrative music that integrates in several domains of learning, such as cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development, potentially facilitating a holistic enhancement of young children's growth and their engagement in musical activities. The integration of music in preschool children and classrooms has received significant attention and has received great results due to the effectiveness of integrative music learning.

Music is an essential component of early childhood education, playing a fundamental role in cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development (Särkämö et al., 2013). Integrative music learning in early childhood education fosters holistic development, enhancing several aspects of a child's growth and development such as enhancing physical, cognitive, and social-emotional skills. In terms of history, music has been through centuries and decades thus until now music has been a part of our daily lives and routine. The integration of music has its roots deeply combined with historical and cultural contexts. For example, the integration of music came a very long time ago from the ancient times and civilizations of Greece and Egypt to progressive educational philosophies of Maria Montessori and Friedrich Froebel. In the 20th century, the concept of music

integrative has evolved and has been a fundamental part of holistic development. Pioneer works such as Carl Orff, Zoltan Kodaly and Shinichi Suzuki have been applied to every music activity and education until now.

Integrative music learning is an educational approach that combines music with other domains of learning such as language, movement, art, and cognitive development to create a holistic and engaging learning experience for children (Bresler, 2015). This concept moves beyond traditional, subject-based teaching by encouraging cross-disciplinary connections that stimulate multiple areas of intelligence (Gardner, 2011). Children develop musical aptitude naturally when they are exposed to a variety of musical experiences that integrate rhythm, melody, and movement, allowing them to express themselves creatively and emotionally. Integrative learning also promotes active participation, problem-solving, and self-expression, which are key principles in early childhood education. In preschool settings, integrative music learning serves as a bridge that connects sound and movement to children's real-world experiences, enhancing both understanding and retention of concepts.

The concept of integrative music learning in early childhood education refers to the holistic approach of incorporating music into various aspects of preschool learning to promote the comprehensive development of young children. Integrative music learning engages multiple intelligences, such as musical-rhythmic, verbal-linguistic, interpersonal, and visual-spatial, supporting individualized learning that caters to each child's unique strengths. It fosters cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth by encouraging creativity, motivation, active participation, communication, and collaboration among children while also enhancing attention, memory, and learning skills. Teachers play a crucial role in effectively delivering integrative music learning by employing thematic approaches, reflective teaching, and collaboration with parents and the community to create an inclusive and stimulating environment. Research highlights that integrative music learning provides significant benefits in preschool settings, such as accelerating skill development, improving behavior, boosting confidence, and enriching the overall educational experience for children.

Concept of Music in Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education is the first step towards further education. Music education plays a very important role in children's lives. Children are attracted to music. Through music, they can express themselves freely. It is because children have high curiosity and they are very active. In early childhood education, music has its strategic role. Music can be a medium and a tool for educators and teachers to use it as a fun learning activity. In addition, through music, teachers and children can communicate to each other by using music. This way it can channel the children's talents, desires and expressions. Through music too, children are given the chance to express their feelings and ideas by moving to the rhythm of the music. Music can be used to assist children in learning other subjects such as language, mathematics, science and physical movements. The concept of music in early childhood education is vital, multifaceted and a strong tool for holistic child development and supports cognitive, social, emotional and physical growth. It involves the children to engage in activities such as singing, dancing, and playing instruments to build skills such as language, motor coordination, and creativity while serving as an effective learning tool and a way to build their confidence level. Preschool children can be exposed to activities like dancing to nursery rhymes to turning everyday objects into musical instruments. It is because children respond naturally to sounds, rhythms, and movements as music allows them to explore patterns, express themselves, and communicate. As a result, preschool children can develop multiple domains such as, social-emotional development, cognitive development and physical development.

Preschool children's music education is an essential aspect of the broader music education spectrum. Heimann (2022), stated that music education actually nurtures children's creativity and expression thus allowing them to share their ideas, thinking critically, and build relationships. It also offers performance, composition, reaction, and listening skills that can develop their capacity to understand (Ubaidillah, 2019). Music activities significantly contribute to influence development domains and school subjects such as improving language skills, spatial awareness, mathematical development, and overall academic achievement (Arini et al., 2021). Through music, it can support children's emotional support and encourages pro-social behaviour.

In early childhood settings, music is blended with activities such as storytelling, movement activities, plays and arts. This integrative approach can strengthen multiple intelligences and enhance learning retention of a child. It is believed that music can train children's motor skills and nerves thus it can stimulate the brain's

development rapidly and responsively. It also expands and strengthens children's memory to support the development of their language skills. Playing and learning music can also increase the concentration level which is beneficial for children in other areas of intellectual development.

Within the Malaysian curriculum context, music is recognized and treated as a key element in the standard curriculum. However, studies show that music is often underutilized, and many preschools treat it as an optional enrichment activity rather than a core learning component (Destura et al., 2024). Given Malaysia's multicultural setting, integrating traditional music, instruments and rhythmic patterns into preschool curriculum helps to preserve cultural identity while supporting multilingual development. Yet, there is limited research studies examining how Malaysia private preschools, such as music-focused early childhood centers, are actively implementing integrative music learning into their curriculum or scheme of work.

Lina Anne Music School has been implementing integrative music learning for more than 10 years in their education curriculum. At Lina Anne Music School, integrative music learning is implemented and applied through a variety of structured and engaging activities that blend music with movement, storytelling, play, and creative expression. The teachers there incorporate singing, rhythmic exercises, movement activities and a little bit of instrumental play into daily lessons, allowing children to explore sound, rhythm, and melody while simultaneously developing language skills, motor skills, social skills, and emotional skills. Learning sessions at Lina Anne Music School are designed to be child-centered, interactive, and exploratory that can allow the children to express themselves. Lina Anne Music School's teaching approach emphasizes holistic development by connecting musical experiences with real-life contexts. For example, in figure 3 above, the preschool children are singing to "Good Morning" while doing some movement activities with the accompaniment piano from one of the teachers there. To support this statement, singing while doing movement activities can enhance the children's vocabulary, coordination and comprehension. As a result, by conducting these integrated activities, Lina Anne Music School creates an enriching learning environment where music serves as both the content and medium of instruction, promoting meaningful learning experiences and supporting the overall growth and development of preschool children.

The Role of Music in Early Childhood Education

Music holds a very important role in our lives. It holds a fundamental place in early childhood education, serving as both a developmental tool and an enriching learning experience for young children. Music is engaging and accessible for the children to learn. As a result, children develop natural responses to rhythm, melody and movement. The role of music goes beyond entertainment as it supports holistic development by nurturing cognitive growth, language acquisition, emotional expression, social interaction, and physical coordination. Music functions as a powerful pedagogical tool and approach that encourages children to learn, strengthens classroom engagement, fosters positive developmental outcomes. Within early childhood settings, music education is not only integrated as a subject but also embedded across learning areas, making it a versatile and essential component of a high-quality early education environment.

Cognitive Development towards Preschool Children

Cognitive development in preschool children refers to the progression of thinking, problem-solving, memory, and language abilities that help them to understand and interact with other people. During the preschool years, children experience rapid growth in areas such as attention span, symbolic thinking, early literacy and numeral literacy. Early experiences in childhood learning contribute to brain development, with music training plays a significant role in influencing this growth (Gordon, 2026). Music plays an important role in supporting these cognitive processes, as musical activities engage multiple regions of the brain simultaneously. Music has been shown to significantly influence several developmental domains in young children, making it an essential component of early education. Music enhances memory, attention, and language acquisition by engaging multiple areas of the brain simultaneously (Hallam, 2010). Activities such as singing nursery rhymes or playing rhythm games strengthen auditory discrimination and phonemic awareness, which are foundational for literacy skills (Kim & Kempe, 2011).

According to Jean Piaget's theory, transition from the sensorimotor exploration to symbolic thinking, which involves moving from learning through physical movement and sensory input to using the symbols such as words, images, or musical sounds to represent ideas. During Piaget's era, cognition was perceived as a comprehensive structure, whereas the development of cognitive abilities such as memory, perception, and comprehension were interconnected and synchronized. Children's cognitive development is shaped through interaction with more knowledgeable others within meaningful cultural contexts, making music a powerful medium for constructing knowledge, language, and identity in early childhood learning environments. For instance, by implementing music into preschool standard curriculum can enhance children's phonological awareness which is a critical foundation for literacy. Structured activities such as call-and-response songs, chanting rhymes and movement activities can help children to develop classification abilities and spatial awareness.



Figure 3: ‘Who’s Got a Fish Pole?’ is a song used in elementary music education

The figure above shows sheet music for a children's song known as ‘The Fishpole Song’ or ‘Who's Got a Fish Pole?’. It is a popular call-and-response song that is used in elementary music education. The melody uses two different ‘D’ notes (high and low). This is one of a good example of using structured activities to help children enhance their phonological awareness. Phonological awareness refers to the ability to recognise and manipulate the sound structures of language, such as rhymes, syllables, and phonemes. Songs with repetitive lyrics, rhythmic syllables, and rhyming lines help children to figure and decode the words. According to Brady (2020), phonological awareness can begin developing in preschool through songs that include rhyme, repetition and rhythm, which help children distinguish between spoken words into sound parts, a necessary skill for phonological awareness and decoding. To support Brady's (2020) statement, the role of music in fostering and nurturing early literacy in particular throughout the developmental stages of phonological awareness. Given that integrating music into early childhood education serves not only as an enjoyable learning tool but also as an effective early intervention strategy that supports long-term literacy development.

Social and Emotional Development towards Preschool Children

Music promotes emotional expression, empathy, and cooperation among children. Group singing or ensemble playing helps develop social bonding, teamwork, and self-confidence (Eerola & Eerola, 2013). Through shared music-making, children also learn to express emotions in socially acceptable ways and build positive peer relationships. Children's emotional well-being during their early years has a powerful impact on their social relationships. Social-emotional development is essential to children's sense of well-being. The relationships that they form in early stages help to shape who they are, who they become, and their understanding of the world.

Music significantly boosts preschool children's social and emotional development by fostering skills such as cooperation, empathy, self-reputation, and emotional expression through various activities. It provides a safe space for emotional expression that allows children to practice social skills like turn-taking and respect for each other, and can improve their ability to understand and manage their emotions and others. For example, by participating in a music activity, especially in group settings, allows children to experience a sense of belonging and community. Activities such as movement games and instrument ensembles help children to

practice coordination, turn-taking, listening, and shared attention. Children may explore a range of emotions from excitement, calmness and sadness. For example, activities like body percussion may help children to express big emotions or release excess energy, while slower melodies may calm and

KSSR PENDIDIKAN MUZIK TAHUN 1

| PROFIL MURID | PENERANGAN | PROFIL MURID | PENERANGAN |
|---------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| Pemikir | Mereka berfikir secara kritikal, kreatif dan inovatif; mampu untuk menangani masalah yang kompleks dan membuat keputusan yang beretika. Mereka berfikir tentang pembelajaran dan diri mereka sebagai pelajar. Mereka menjana soalan dan bersifat terbuka kepada perspektif, nilai dan tradisi individu dan masyarakat lain. Mereka berkeyakinan dan kreatif dalam menangani bidang pembelajaran yang baharu. | Berprinsip | Mereka berintegriti dan jujur, kesamarataan, adil dan menghormati maruah individu, kumpulan dan komuniti. Mereka bertanggungjawab atas tindakan, akibat tindakan serta keputusan mereka. |
| Kerja Sepasukan | Mereka boleh bekerjasama secara berkesan dan harmoni dengan orang lain. Mereka mengalas tanggungjawab bersama serta menghormati dan menghargai sumbangan yang diberikan oleh setiap ahli pasukan. Mereka memperoleh kemahiran interpersonal melalui aktiviti kolaboratif, dan ini menjadikan mereka pemimpin dan ahli pasukan yang lebih baik. | Bermaklumat | Mereka mendapatkan pengetahuan dan membentuk pemahaman yang luas dan seimbang merentasi pelbagai disiplin pengetahuan. Mereka meneroka pengetahuan dengan cekap dan berkesan dalam konteks isu tempatan dan global. Mereka memahami isu-isu etika/undang-undang berkaitan maklumat yang diperolehi. |
| Bersifat Ingin Tahu | Mereka membangunkan rasa ingin tahu semula jadi untuk meneroka strategi dan idea baru. Mereka mempelajari kemahiran yang diperlukan untuk menjalankan inkuiri dan penyelidikan, serta menunjukkan sifat berdikari dalam pembelajaran. Mereka menikmati pengalaman pembelajaran sepanjang hayat secara berterusan. | Penyayang/ Prihatin | Mereka menunjukkan empati, belas kasihan dan rasa hormat terhadap keperluan dan perasaan orang lain. Mereka komited untuk berkhidmat kepada masyarakat dan memastikan kelestarian alam sekitar. |
| | | Patriotik | Mereka mempamerkan kasih sayang, sokongan dan rasa hormat terhadap negara. |

Figure 4: Curriculum and Assessment Standard Document Primary School Standard Curriculum Music Education Year 1, Page 7

In the Malaysian curriculum and assessment of KSSR (Revision 2017), one of the aims is to produce students with 21st century skills (*Kemahiran Abad Ke-21*) by focusing on thinking skills as well as life and their career skills based on the practice of noble values. To support the statement, primary schools are aiming to produce students with the characteristics that have been stated as shown in figure 5. This can contribute to the achievement and acquisition of 21st century skills (*Kemahiran Abad Ke-21*) among students. The Malaysian curriculum supports social and emotional development through play-based learning like group play (percussion ensemble), music and movement activities which encourage expression and cooperation, storytelling and discussions that highlights the importance of having emotions and moral values, and project-based learning activities that require teamwork and communication skills. In terms of social development, this area emphasizes helping the children to understand and interact positively with each other. For example, children can learn to share materials, take turns, and participate in group activities such as circle time and play-based learning activities. Through cooperative learning, children can communicate between themselves. This can encourage the children to use polite language, greet others, listen actively, and express their thoughts respectfully. By understanding communication and social skills, children can learn classroom rules, follow instructions, and adapt to school environments which can develop self-discipline. Besides, the Malaysian curriculum promotes unity and diversity in a multicultural society setting that can teach the children to respect each other, respect different cultures, languages and backgrounds. In terms of emotional development, this domain can help children to understand, manage, and express their feelings freely. By having self-awareness, children can learn to recognise their own emotions, strengths and weaknesses. This can provide healthy self-esteem for the children. Furthermore, children have to feel empathy and understand each other to recognise other people's emotions so that they can respond with care, thus developing sympathy and compassion. Collectively, these profiles and values demonstrate the curriculum's holistic approach and aim to shape well-rounded young children who are intellectually capable, socially responsive, emotionally balanced and morally grounded.

Physical Development towards Preschool Children

Integrating music with movement enhances children's motor coordination and body awareness. Simple activities like clapping, dancing, or playing percussion instruments improve gross and fine motor skills while supporting rhythmic synchronization. These developmental benefits highlight the importance of incorporating music meaningfully into preschool curricula to foster well-rounded growth in children. Generally, children like to play and move around freely. Through playing, they learn, move, and play music so that they can develop both of their motoric skills which fall under physical development. When children play musical instruments, it involves their limbs, such as their fingers. This activity can develop their soft motor skills, rough motor skills and develop sensitivity to the other motor sensors, such as their eyes and hands. This will help the children synchronize their movement thus increasing how their body works and improve its coordination.

Children's physical development typically progresses from large to small muscle control. Activities such as playing instruments and movement games can improve their ability to connect directly to their motor development. To support this development, teachers and educators may plan movement-based activities such as musical plays or percussion ensembles. These kinds of activities can build coordination, thus can adapt to their instruments to match the children's fine fine and gross motor skills. Percussion instruments like shakers, rhythm sticks and small drums are appropriate for young children because of their physical and size. This is a simple but effective activity that actually involves the teachers playing a short rhythmic pattern for children to echo, which builds both motor control and coordination.

Music is a physical activity that supports both fine and gross motor skills. Playing instruments or fingerplay songs can help support the development of small muscles in children's arms, legs, and eye-coordination. Moving their bodies to the music can help children gain body awareness, balance, and coordination. Music often triggers natural physical reactions like nodding, wiggling, finger snapping, and stepping. By integrating music learning for physical development, teachers and educators can make it a regular part of the day. For example, every morning before the children go to class, Mrs. Lina, the founder of Lina Anne Music School will conduct a short warming-up singing session and movement activities before the day starts. This is a good example of music integrated lessons that can develop the children's coordination skills and balancing which is crucial for a child's physical development and dexterity. Understanding the importance of physical development towards preschool children allows the intentional

The Application Of Integrative Music Learning Towards Preschool Children

The integration of music in preschool teaching, learning, and settings has been receiving great attention to enrich the children's learning experiences. According to the 2017 revised National Preschool Standard-Based Curriculum Malaysia, music is recommended as one of the teaching activities based on creativity and aesthetics. The category of music is falling under the categories of creativity and intellectual development. It is also considered as a medium that contributes to the holistic development of children, enabling social, emotional, physical, intellectual aspects. Integrated music learning is important for preschool children because when music is integrated into the curriculum, it can significantly enhance the learning outcomes in various domains, including language, mathematics, and motor skills. By implementing the integration of music, preschool children will be able to prepare to enter primary school. It is believed that preschool education is widely known as a milestone in the growth and progress of young children. Their abilities begin to develop around the age of five, thus, the implication of learning music at the preschool level is crucial for music education. Integration of music learning into preschool curriculum entails more than simply instructing students to sing, play the piano and dance but instead it aims to enhance the student's aptitude, accomplishments, and appreciation for music.

Teaching/Pedagogical Methods

Music education has an important role in preschool children's early life and development. Teachers' and educators' attitude has an important role in the process of learning as well. Integrating music into preschool curriculum can positively impact their cognitive, social and emotional development. Effective pedagogical methods are essential to harness music confidence and training in using music as a teaching tool. This case

study will explore the pedagogical methods when applying integrated music learning through specific teaching methods for preschool children, addressing the gap between recognizing music's importance and successfully implementing it in the classroom. The process of teaching and learning music occurs through various ways and channels, utilizing various methods or methodologies, and taking into account the student's holistic development and experience. Music theory has significant implications that have influenced preschool education, laying the groundwork for effective teaching methods and strategies that can stimulate children's holistic development through musical media. Individuals who have been exposed to music at a young age are more likely to absorb and understand music very well as they age. This section explores relevant music learning theories, discussing key concepts and their applications in the preschool context.

(a) Montessori Method

This method is named after Dr. Maria Montessori. She is an Italian physician and educator best known for philosophy of education and her writing on scientific pedagogy. This approach deals with developing the children's personality through sensory learning, which includes touching, seeing, smelling, and tasting rather than reading. This method is an educational approach where it emphasizes child-centered learning within a prepared environment. Instead of focusing on teacher-traditional lessons, Montessori classrooms allow children to choose their activities based on their interests, encouraging independence, cultivating motivation and a natural love for learning. In Montessori's classrooms, the education is not controlled by the teachers, but instead, the majority of the students will make decisions for themselves, thus the teachers' will supervise them throughout the whole class. Mixed-age groupings in Montessori education enable older children to guide the younger children. With this approach, it can foster collaboration, leadership, and social responsibility. The environment in the Montessori method encourages children to develop self-discipline, where children will be able to manage their own behaviour and attention through purposeful engagement rather than external rewards or punishments. When a child makes a mistake, he or she will be given an opportunity to do self-correction that will be supported by materials that will allow them to identify and adjust their mistakes independently. Montessori's philosophy and methodology of music education were years ahead of time, yet as a description of the various aspects of her music program will illustrate.



Figure 5: The Children' House Montessori at Jalan U Thant, Kelab Golf di Raja Selangor, 55000, Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur

Based on the Montessori pedagogical method, the layout of the classroom is quite different from traditional classrooms. To support this statement, the layout for the Montessori classroom is open and spacious, with soft light, uncluttered surfaces, and a gentle hum of focused activity. It is built based on a child-centered layout whereas the furniture and shelves are child-sized and placed at their height to promote independence, self-

discipline and self-directed learning. Children can roam around freely around the classroom to choose their work or they can choose to work alone at a table or on a rug on the floor. In figure 6, the classroom is organized and has an aesthetically pleasing environment. It is appealing and peaceful to children and teachers', with everything having a specific place to foster a sense of order. In the Montessori classroom, children and teachers' have been equipped with hands-on learning experiences. The children are equipped with wooden furniture and open shelves for them to choose and work with hands-on activities. By learning in the Montessori learning environment, children are able to deeply engage in their own learning progress at their own pace, thus discovering learning opportunities and learning outcomes through repetition and practice. The Montessori method ensures that every aspect of the prepared environment is aligned with the principles that fosters independence, confidence, and a lifelong love or learning.

(b) Reggio Emilia Method

The Reggio Emilia approach was originally developed in Italy. This approach is an early childhood education philosophy that emphasizes child-centered and inquiry-based learning through exploration, creativity, and collaboration. This approach views children as a capable, curious and active learner, rather than passive recipients. The teachers will talk to the children about their interests or notice what they lean towards thus supporting and observing the children as they explore the topic. The Reggio Emilia approach assumes that the children have 100 languages, such as the language of dance, art, laugh, play, and song, which they use to make sense of the world. Children will be able to express themselves through language, art, music and movement. The environment of the classroom is considered as the "third teacher", which is designed to be engaging, open-ended, and rich in materials that encourage discovery.

The Reggio Emilia method and Montessori method have a lot in common. It is believed that the Reggio Emilia method and Montessori method are both community-centered spaces that focus on following the lead of the children and their potential. An example of the Reggio Emilia activity is nature exploration and inquiry table. Children will collect the leaves, stones, flowers, or sticks during outdoor walks and will bring them back to explore. They will use magnifying glasses to observe the patterns and sort it by size, colour or texture. Then, teachers will ask open-ended questions about the nature exploration activity. This encourages curiosity and develops scientific thinking in children.

(c) Carl Orff Approach

The Carl Orff approach or known as Orff-Schulwerk is an active and creative music education approach that blends singing, movement, speech and drama. Based on this idea and philosophy, the Carl Orff approach builds the understanding of concepts and skills through connecting students with the music by experiencing it in multiple ways. This approach focuses on the holistic development of learning through imaginative play, exploration, improvisation, and composition. The Carl Orff approach develops creativity, self-expression and social skills in children thus enhancing cognitive development skills such as memory and attention. This approach also builds musical skills such as rhythm, pitch and form through active and engaging activities. The Carl Orff approach is not a method, but a process, often referred to as the Orff Process, and is used in many music classrooms worldwide.

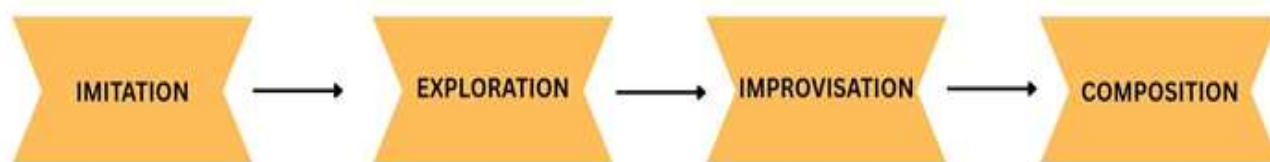


Figure 6: Orff Approach Stages

Based on figure 6, the Orff approach, which imitation, exploration, improvisation and composition are the essential components in music education. Imitation is defined as copying behaviours and it enables children to learn from observing adults and peers, foundational for acquiring language, cultural norms, and social

conventions like greetings and thank-yous. In the Malaysian educational context, music classes also use imitation to teach basic musical concepts such as pitch, rhythm, meter, and dynamics as outlined in the Malaysian KSSR (Revision 2017). Exploration and improvisation are equally important in the Orff approach. Exploration encourages children to experiment with sounds and engage imaginatively, forming a foundation for musical expression and self-discovery. Improvisation is defined as creating music in real time, and is employed in music therapy across regions to connect with diverse individuals, providing a creative outlet for self-expression and stress-free exploration (Biasutti, 2017). Lastly, composition will tie these elements together, empowering children to create, arrange, and understand music's structure as they craft original melodies and lyrics.

By applying the Orff approach in the classroom environment, it will have a good impact on these children's musical development and growth, which is one of its main advantages. Children can develop a strong sense of rhythm, melody, and harmony through Orff's approach and emphasis on active engagement, improvisation, and the exploration of diverse instruments. The Orff approach's incorporation of music and movement helps children to develop cognitive skills like memory, attention and spatial-temporal ability. Overall, the Orff approach fosters an enjoyable, playful, and exploratory music environment that nurtures early musicality and confidence in children.

(d) Dalcroze's Approach

The Dalcroze approach or also known as Dalcroze Eurhythmics, is a music education approach developed by Émile Jacques-Dalcroze that is significantly focused for preschool children. It is believed that the Dalcroze approach teaches children music holistically through a dynamic partnership of mind, body, and movement, focusing on kinesthetic learning to build musical understanding, expressivity, and intuition. This approach teaches musical concepts through movement, sensory awareness, and experiential learning. Its core components are eurhythmics which is expressing music through physical movement, solfege which is ear training and sigh-singing to develop the inner ear and improvisation. This approach emphasizes learning music through the body, making it appropriate for preschool children because they are very active, curious and have quick and natural responses to music. By implementing the usage of eurhythmics, where children move their bodies to represent rhythm, beat, tempo, and expressive elements of music. For example, activities such as walking to a steady beat and changing movements according to the tempo changes can develop strong rhythmic awareness and body coordination. In terms of improvisations, it plays a key role in children as this activity explores spontaneous movement and vocal responses to music thus encouraging children creativity, self-expression and emotional understanding. Overall, the Dalcroze approach supports holistic development and enhancing motor skills, listening abilities, musical sensitivity, and social interactions while providing a joyful, engaging environment for lifelong musical learning.

(e) Kodaly Approach

The Kodaly approach is an educational method that is developed by Zoltán Kodály, a Hungarian composer and educator. This approach is a child-centered approach to music education that emphasizes singing, musical literacy, and the natural musical abilities of young children. By emphasizing singing, folk music, and sequential learning this will build musical literacy, creativity, and deep listening skills into children. Using tools such as movable-do solfege, hand signs, and rhythm syllables to make concepts intuitive and accessible to preschool children. This approach is significantly effective for preschool children because it is simple, playful, and developmentally appropriate activities that build strong musical foundations. Overall, the Kodaly approach nurtures listening skills, vocal development, musical memory, coordination, and early music literacy, while promoting joyful participation and cultural appreciation through meaningful song repertoires.

(f) Suzuki Method

The Suzuki Method is developed by Shinichi Suzuki. He was born in Japan and studied western music in Germany in the 1920s. The Suzuki method is based on the principles of all children that possess ability and that this ability can be developed and enhanced through a nurturing environment. All children are able to speak in their own language with ease and if the same natural learning process is applied in teaching other skills,

these can be achieved successfully. Suzuki referred to this process as the ‘Mother Tongue Method’. His approach has now spread throughout the world and is proving increasingly popular among the teachers’ and educators’. Although Shinichi is a violinist, this approach can be applied to other instruments, in nursery school and other more general areas.

The Suzuki method has helped many children to play music to a high standard. The numbers of Suzuki-trained children have increased significantly over the years and have become highly professional musicians. Music educators recognize the Suzuki method as a successful approach for delivering content and meeting the needs of the students. The core principle of the Suzuki method is by using the ‘Mother Tongue’ approach. Children learn music by listening and imitating, similar to learning their first language, before formal reading. This approach begins at a very young age, around 3-4 years old to develop musical sensitivity.

Another core principle in the Suzuki method is parental involvement. The parent will be attending to all lessons, becoming the home teacher, thus creating a supportive learning environment for the child. Parental involvement is very crucial and important to children who learn music through the Suzuki method. Parents will act out as the teacher at home and guide their child’s practice daily, ensuring the child follows the teacher’s instructions. Parents also can take notes during their child’s lessons and can learn alongside with their child. Parental involvement is very important to children as it creates a positive environment for them as it offers encouragement and support to the child.

Listening and repetition are also one of the most important principles in the Suzuki method. By listening to the recordings of the repertoire everyday it can enhance the children’s ear training and memorization skills. Followed by listening to repertoires, repetition during lessons or practice sessions are vital to the children. It is believed that skills and pieces are repeated in small, manageable steps that can build confidence and mastery in music.

Twinkle, Twinkle
Treble Clef
Letter Names traditional



The image shows three staves of musical notation for the song 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' in treble clef. The first staff is labeled 'Letter Names' and 'traditional'. The notes are: C C G G A A G F F E E D D C. The second staff is a repeat of the first staff. The third staff is a repeat of the first staff.

Figure 7: Twinkle Twinkle Little Star Piano Sheet for Preschool Children

For example, figure 8 shows a piano sheet of a children's song that is very popular in the preschool settings. Most of the children knew ‘Twinkle Twinkle Little Star’ because it has been played so many times throughout the years. By using this repertoire, teachers’ will play a few bars before the children play it on the keyboard. For the first time, of course they would not get it right due to the notation and rhythm. But, after a while, the children will be able to play it clearly and perfectly due to immense repeated playing by the teachers’. It is believed that this approach is also done through recordings. Children repeatedly get to hear the pieces that they are going to play on their instrument. Not just piano and violin but other instruments such as guitar and drums are also using the same approach. In other words, the child is introduced to the instrument through playing by ear. It is very important for the children to develop and enhance their listening skills so that the children will be able to listen and will be able to judge their own sound and playing.

Teachers' Perceptions And Roles In Integrative Music Learning Towards Preschool Children

Teachers play a vital role in the success of integrative music learning. Their attitudes, training, and confidence in using music significantly influence how effectively it is implemented in the classroom. Preschool teachers must make an effort to make sure they excel in the art of integrating music into appropriate educational activities for the children. This highlights the importance of efficient utilization of music integration, which requires a thorough understanding of children's learning processes (Davidova, 2020). Academics advocate for the examination of preschool teachers' readiness to integrate music into daily lessons in preschool classrooms. To effectively integrate music, preschool teachers' must have the confidence to include a wide knowledge about music, must have the ability to possess positive attitudes, must have the correct and abundant resources, and exposure to effectively implementing music learning integration into their educational practices for children. It serves as the main driving force to promote comprehensive child development.

Preschool teachers' served as facilitators, mediators, and designers of music experiences. Preschool teachers' that have the experience in the music industry for over more than 5 years or 10 years are able to conduct an effective music integration and educational program in preschool settings. It is believed that experienced preschool teachers' that have served in the music industry are most likely to shape these children by implementing integrated music learning into their lesson plans. Their beliefs and understanding will shape how integrative music activities are implemented in preschool classrooms. Naturally, these preschool teachers' who have music education experience will support the children's creativity, expression, and exploration through music.

Teacher Competency and Training

Many preschool teachers' lack formal training in music education, leading to limited use of music-based activities in classrooms (Nethsinghe, 2012). Professional development programs and workshops can help teachers integrate music confidently and appropriately in early learning contexts. Workshops, short courses, and hands-on training are essential for enhancing practical teaching skills. Additionally, formal pre-service such as interim/internship at teacher education institutions will shape the teachers' basic musical knowledge, confidence, and attitude towards music. Although some preschool teachers' have music education experience, they still went to workshops and short courses that allow them to update their skills, learn new educational strategies, and remain confident in music delivery. Nowadays, there are many music education training programs that are available for preschool teachers. Opportunities like this will be an eye-opener for new preschool teachers to attend music workshops or courses that can vary across schools and regions. Music training programs for preschool teachers' are guaranteed in high-quality training that include practical demonstrations, modelling, and collaborative activities. If there are not any music training programs for the preschool teachers', then, the training will leave a result in limited or inconsistent gaps for teacher quality.

Teacher competency and readiness encompasses the mental, physical, and emotional states necessary for implementing changes in teaching approaches, including using music as a learning tool (Patrick, L., & Abu Bakar, K., 2024). To support this statement, teachers must require a strong foundational understanding of early childhood development to design age-appropriate music activities. Teaching methods such as Montessori method, Kodaly approach, Orff approach and Suzuki method are a guide to preschool teachers' that will make them familiar with music education models and curriculum nowadays. By applying various teaching methods into daily lessons will understand how preschool children can learn through play, movement, and sensory engagement is crucial for them. Preschool learning can transform the children's behaviour by acquiring knowledge that connects to their daily life and experiences.

Teacher competency is very important in integrative music learning. It is believed that teachers' who are competent and ready can effectively integrate musical elements such as rhythm, melody and movement into daily learning. Teachers' who are competent will ensure that music activities will support the children's holistic development and that includes cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. Teachers' skill levels also directly influence the quality and richness of children's musical experiences. It is very important for the preschool teachers' to have a music education background to initiate their lessons in the classroom confidently. It is believed that obtaining basic musicianship is very important classroom practice. In contrast, if

the teachers do not have the confidence in basic musicianship when teaching, it can hinder the integrative music learning purposes. To avoid this matter, training helps the teachers' to overcome the fear and anxiety thus developing positive musical self-efficacy. Well-trained teachers' can plan integrative and engaging music lessons. Teachers who are ready and well-trained can enhance the creativity, flexibility, and confidence in using music across subjects. Teachers who are motivated are more confident and willing to carry out their responsibilities. Improvement in teacher competency leads to better learning outcomes for preschool children. Overall, this can conclude that preschool teachers' who have the music education experiences and qualifications are able to conduct music integrated lessons in preschool classrooms.

Teachers' Perceptions Towards Music Education

Teachers who view music as an integral part of learning rather than a supplementary activity tend to design more creative and meaningful lessons (Hallam, 2010). Positive teacher attitudes encourage children's engagement, motivation, and appreciation for music as a learning tool. At Lina Anne Music School, understanding teacher perceptions and practices is crucial to evaluate how integrative music learning contributes to children's development and classroom dynamics. Many people underestimate music education. In contrast, teachers' must have the positive attitude and beliefs to influence how frequently and effectively music is used in the classroom. Positive perceptions toward music may lead to richer, more meaningful musical experiences for children. On the contrary, negative attitudes and perceptions toward music may result in minimal or superficial music activities.

Teachers' who view music as a valuable learning tool are those who recognise its role in supporting cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Music is often perceived as a tool for creativity, self-expression, and classroom engagement. Some teachers see music as a cross-curricular medium that enhances learning in literacy, numeracy, and social skills in children. Teachers with positive attitudes will likely to gather positive personal experiences in music and are most likely to integrate music with confidence. If they lack experience and exposure to music, it may lead to anxiety, low confidence, or avoidance towards their teaching methods. Perceptions are shaped by cultural exposure, training background, and familiarity with musical activities. Teachers' beliefs about musical abilities will affect their teaching activities and teachers' interactions in the classroom which relates to the goals of music education for the children.

Teachers' may have perceived music teaching as difficult due to the lack of training, resources or instruments. Furthermore, time constraints and heavy workload may influence their attitudes and perceptions towards music education. This happens because preschool teachers who have music educational backgrounds are still lacking. This will impact the practice of music education learning in early childhood education. If music is seen as a non-core subject in preschool, primary and secondary education, teachers' may deprioritize it. Therefore, the perception of music is essential for teachers' for them to develop holistic development thus to increase the integration of music learning towards education in Malaysia. Positive surrounding and institutional culture are also an important factor to raise the level of music education in Malaysia. Positive school culture encourages teachers to value music and view music as an important subject. By having a supportive environment and leader will shape the teachers' perceptions positively. Teachers' perceptions are directly related to the frequency, variety, and quality of music activities implemented. Positive perceptions towards music education will correlate with integration, child-centered. and interactive approaches. Due to these reasons, having a good and positive perception towards music helps teachers' to understand more about music education.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case study design to explore the implementation and impact of integrative music learning among preschool children at Lina Anne Music School, located in Desa Pandan, Kuala Lumpur. A qualitative approach is most suitable for this research because it allows an in-depth understanding of human experiences, behaviors, and interactions within a natural learning environment (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The case study method enables the researcher to focus intensively on one bounded system, the preschool context of Lina Anne Music School to capture detailed insights about how music is integrated into early childhood

education (Yin, 2018). This design is particularly valuable for educational research, as it allows the examination of real-life teaching practices and classroom dynamics in their authentic settings. The study emphasizes the process of teaching and learning rather than the outcomes alone, focusing on how teachers implement integrative music activities and how preschoolers respond to them. By employing this design, the research aims to provide a holistic picture of integrative music learning as practiced in a private preschool setting.

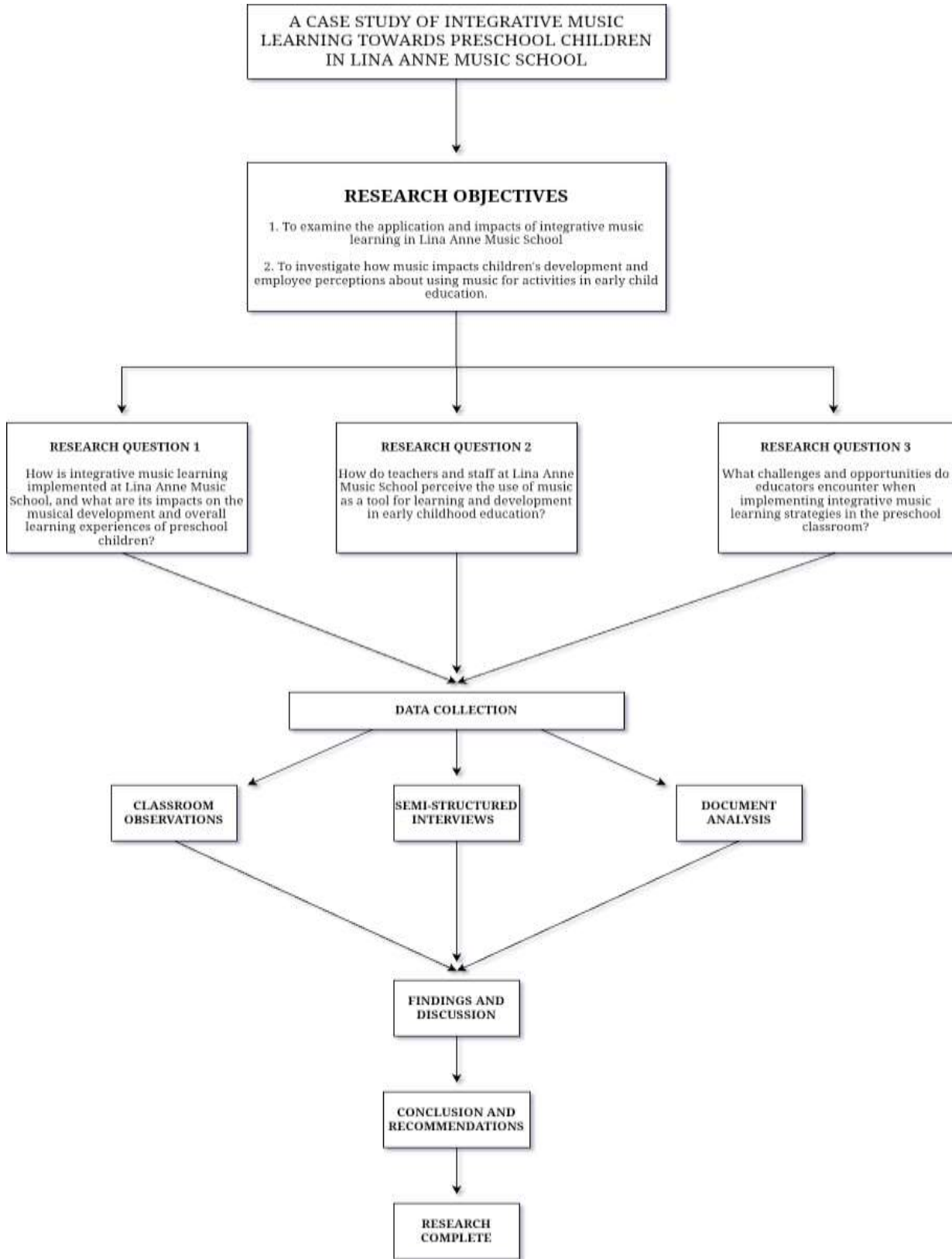


Figure 9: Research Design

Sample

The study involves a purposive sample consisting of both teachers and preschool children from Lina Anne Music School. Purposive sampling is chosen to ensure that participants have direct involvement and relevant experience with the teaching and learning of integrative music. The subjects of this case study will involve 3 early childhood teachers who have experiences in the music industry for more than 10 years and have conducted music-based lessons daily. There were observations of the teachers teaching 9 preschool children. The teachers are selected based on their active roles in designing and implementing music-integrated activities. This sample size is adequate for a qualitative case study, as the goal is not statistical representation but depth of understanding. The participants' experiences provide rich data that reflect the educational practices, perceptions, and developmental outcomes related to integrative music learning in a real-world preschool environment. Ethical approval was obtained for the research and the research was conducted in an ethical manner.

Demographic Information Table

Each respondent in this interview were selected using purposive sampling, which is a method where participants will be chosen based on specific characteristics that are important for this case study. This approach ensures that the selected participants have relevant experience and knowledge about this case study, allowing them to provide useful information. By carefully choosing the participants with the right background, this case study can gather more accurate information and meaningful data. To maintain confidentiality and protect their identities, each respondent will be labeled as TA, TB, and TC, where 'T' represents the teacher.

| PARTICIPANT CODE | MAJOR INSTRUMENT | YEAR TEACHING EXPERIENCES | CORE GENRE OF PLAYING |
|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| TA | Classical Piano | 40 years | Classical and Pop |
| TB | Guitar | 40 years | Classical, Pop, and Jazz |
| TC | Classical Piano | 30 years | Classical and Pop |

Table 1: Participants Information

Data Collection

The data for this case study will be collected through three primary qualitative methods which are classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis.

Classroom Observations

The case study will conduct non-participant observations in several music sessions and classroom observations to record how teachers at Lina Anne Music School integrate music with other learning areas, such as movement, storytelling, and play. Classroom observations will focus on teaching strategies, classroom interactions, and children's levels of engagement and response (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2002). Field notes and observation checklists will be used to document findings systematically.

Field notes are often advised in qualitative research to capture necessary contextual details. As data sharing, secondary analysis, and metasynthesis become more common, field notes help maintain a rich context that extends beyond the original research team. Nonetheless, despite being considered crucial, there is no guide available in the literature for researchers on collecting field notes. Drawing on qualitative literature and earlier research experience, we present a succinct guide for collecting, integrating, and sharing field notes. We offer a summary of the content of field notes to contextualize both the overall study and the specific interviews and focus groups. Furthermore, we offer two "sketch note" manuals, one tailored for study context and another for personal interviews or focus groups intended for field application. Our guidelines align with various qualitative

and mixed methods, ensuring that contextual data is gathered, maintained, and shared as a vital part of ethical, robust qualitative research.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Teachers and staff members will be interviewed to gain insights into their perceptions of integrative music learning, the challenges they face, and the benefits they observe in children's development. Semi-structured interviews provide flexibility, allowing participants to share their experiences in detail while keeping the discussion aligned with the research objectives.

By conducting semi-structured interviews, this will allow and offer a better and flexible conversational approach that will combine structured and open-minded questions with the freedom to dig in deeper into interesting and nuanced topics. The usage of flexibility structure within the semi-structured interviews can guide necessary topics that are consistently covered across different participants, while allowing the conversation to be free and flow naturally without being constrained by a strict order. Overall, by conducting semi-structured interviews, it can provide the comparability of structured interviews with the depth and flexibility of qualitative interviews.

Document Analysis

Relevant documents such as lesson plans, activity outlines, and school curriculum materials will be reviewed to understand how music integration is formally planned and implemented. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis complements other data collection methods by providing supporting evidence and verifying observed practices.

By comparing different documents, it can be concluded that this analysis can provide significant advantages in research by offering a cost-effective, time-efficient, and highly accessible method to analyze data, track changes, and ensure accuracy. Document analysis can be done quickly and more efficiently rather than conducting interviews or surveys. This happened because analyzing and comparing different documents allowed researchers to study events or decisions over the time without relying on memory or self-reporting. By comparing multiple documents can help researchers to identify shifts in tone, priorities, or underlying motivations in policy or organizational changes. This can help to confirm findings from other research methods such as interviews or observations by providing a more comprehensive point of view, robust and credible analysis. Besides, many documents are easily accessible and readily available in the public domain making them easily accessible for research.

Data Analysis

Data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, a method that involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting recurring patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). After data collection, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents will be carefully read and coded to identify key ideas related to the research objectives. The coding process will involve organizing data into categories such as "teaching strategies," "children's engagement," "learning outcomes," and "implementation challenges." These categories will then be refined into overarching themes that describe the main findings of the study. The six stages of thematic analysis are familiarization, coding, theme development, reviewing, defining, and reporting will guide the process (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Triangulation will also be applied to cross-check themes from multiple data sources to enhance accuracy and trustworthiness. Finally, the analyzed data will be presented descriptively, supported by excerpts from interview responses and observation notes to illustrate the findings clearly.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study on integrative music learning towards preschool children at Lina Anne Music School. The findings are derived from qualitative data collected through semi-

structured interviews with teachers, classroom observations, and document analysis. These data sources were triangulated to ensure credibility and to provide a comprehensive understanding of how integrative music learning is implemented in the preschool setting.

The analysis focuses on addressing the research objectives and research questions by examining the application of integrative music learning, its impact on children’s holistic development, and teachers’ perceptions and roles in the teaching process. The findings are organised into key themes that emerged from the data, including teaching practices, children’s engagement and responses, teacher competency and training, perceptions towards music education, as well as challenges and opportunities in implementing integrative music learning.

This chapter not only reports the findings but also discusses them in relation to existing literature presented in Chapter 2. Through this discussion, similarities, differences, and new insights are highlighted to demonstrate how the findings contribute to the understanding of integrative music learning within the Malaysian early childhood education context. Overall, this chapter provides an in-depth interpretation of how integrative music learning supports preschool children’s cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, as well as the crucial role played by teachers in facilitating meaningful music-based learning experiences.

Discussion Of Classroom Observations, Respondents’ Answers And Document Analysis

Field Notes from Classroom Observations

Observation Date: 8 December 2025

Location: Lina Anne Music School, Desa Pandan, Kuala Lumpur

Class Type: Preschool Integrative Music Class

Age Group: 4-6 years old

Number of Children: 8

Observer Role: Non-participant observer

Duration: 30 minutes (9.00 a.m - 9.30 a.m)

| TIME | OBSERVED ACTIVITIES AND BEHAVIOURS | INITIAL ANALYTICAL NOTES |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 9.00 a.m - 9.05 a.m | The teacher in-charge begins the morning session with a “Good Morning” song accompanied by piano. The children will sit in a circle and sing while performing simple hand movements, Most children make eye contact with the teacher and follow the gestures. | Warm-up activities help settle children and prepare them emotionally. Music combined with movement will support the children’s social bonding and routine building. |
| 9.05 a.m - 9.10 a.m | Children are encouraged to stand and move freely to the rhythm. The teacher in-charge changes tempo, prompting the children to move fast and slow. Children laugh and respond immediately to tempo changes. | This demonstrates the integration of music and children’s physical development. Children show strong engagement and rhythmic awareness. |
| 9.10 a.m - 9.15 a.m | The teacher in-charge introduces a storytelling song about animals. Children are asked to imitate animal movements and sounds. Some children | Creative expression and imagination are evident. Music supports language development and confidence. |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|---|
| | spontaneously add their own movements. | |
| 9.15 a.m - 9.20 a.m | Group activity: Rhythm and movement with props. The children were introduced to hula-hoop. The children jumped in and out to the tempo of the music. | Turn-taking and listening skills observed. Repetition enhances confidence and musical memory. |
| 9.20 a.m - 9.30 a.m | The morning session ends with a calm closing song. The children sit quietly, follow hand movements, and gradually relax. Several children smile and clap at the end of the session. | Music supports emotional regulation and smooth transition to the next activity. |

Table 2: Field Notes from Classroom Observations at Lina Anne Music School

The classroom observation provides valuable information and valuable insights into the implementation of integrative music learning towards preschool children in Lina Anne Music School. The observed lesson has been conducted with preschool children in the morning session at 9.00 a.m to 9.30 a.m as it has been shown in table 3. The observed lesson, conducted with preschool children aged four to six year olds, demonstrated a structured yet flexible approach with integrated music with movement activities, social interaction, and emotional engagement. Through the field notes, the observation revealed how integrative music strategies were being applied in the classroom and how these preschool children responded to these approaches during the 30-minutes session.

At the beginning of the morning session, the teacher in-charged initiated the morning session with a ‘‘Good Morning’’ song accompanied by piano, which functioned as a warm-up activity for the children, This morning activity played an important role for the children to have a smooth transition into the learning environment and the next activity. The combination of singing, instrumental music accompaniment and simple hand movements allowed the children to settle emotionally and mentally, creating a positive and welcoming classroom environment. Most of the children maintain eye contact throughout the session with the teacher that demonstrates attentiveness. By following the simple hand gestures and movements, this indicates the early engagement and readiness of the children’s participation. This observation supports the notion that music-based routines are effective in establishing structure and predictability, which are essential for preschool children.

With conducting the classroom observations at Lina Anne Music School, this indicates that integrative music learning at Lina Anne Music School creates a highly engaging, child-centered learning environment. Children actively participated in singing, and movement activities that can demonstrate enjoyment and sustain attention throughout the whole class session. Music was effectively integrated with physical activities, storytelling, and social interaction, supporting holistic development. Classroom observations revealed that integrative music activities significantly enhanced children’s engagement and participation in classroom activities. As shown in the field notes, children actively responded to music-movement activities, demonstrating improved attention, coordination, and emotional expression. This finding supports Hallam’s (2010) assertion that music enhances holistic development in early childhood.

Teachers in Lina Anne Music School played a facilitative role by adapting classroom activities according to children’s responses and maintaining a positive classroom environment. The use of repetition, tempo variation, and familiar children's songs can help children to build their confidence and musical understanding. From a pedagogical perspective, the teacher’s role was very important to facilitate integrative learning towards preschool children. The teacher demonstrated clear guidance throughout the classroom observation with verbal instructions, musical accompaniment, and physical gestures, ensuring the children understood the expectations of each activity. This observation highlights the importance of teacher competence and intentional planning in implementing integrative music approaches effectively.

Overall, the classroom observation demonstrated that integrative music at Lina Anne Music School is effectively implemented and developmentally appropriate for preschool children. The integration of music that includes singing, movement activities, and social interaction creates a learning environment and experience that supports the children’s musical, emotional, social, and physical development. The field notes indicate that such an approach enhances engagement, promotes positive behaviour thus creating an enjoyable learning environment. These findings contribute to the understanding of how integrative music learning functions in real classroom contexts and supports its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool and approach for preschool children.

Thematic Analysis from Semi-structured Interviews

| RESEARCH QUESTIONS | SUB-QUESTIONS |
|---|---|
| <p>How is integrative music learning implemented at Lina Anne Music School, and what are its impacts on the musical development and overall learning experiences of preschool children?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you describe a typical music lesson conducted at Lina Anne Music School? 2. How do you usually integrate music with other learning areas such as movement, language, or play? 3. What teaching approaches or methods do you commonly use in your music lessons? 4. How do you adapt music activities to suit different children’s developmental levels and abilities 5. In your observation, how does integrative music learning influence children’s overall development? |
| <p>How do teachers and staff at Lina Anne Music School perceive the use of music as a tool for learning and development in early childhood education?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does integrative music learning mean to you in a preschool setting? 2. How important do you think music education is in early childhood learning? 3. How confident do you feel in teaching music, and what training or experience supports this confidence? 4. Can you describe your background and experience in teaching music to preschool children? |
| <p>What challenges and opportunities do educators encounter when implementing integrative music learning strategies in the preschool classroom?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What challenges do you face when implementing integrative music learning in the classroom? 2. What support do you receive from the school in conducting music-based activities? 3. In your opinion, what is the main benefit of integrative music learning for preschool children? |

Table 3: Research Questions and Sub-questions

The findings of this study were organised and analysed based on the three main research questions and their corresponding sub-questions. By conducting semi-structured interviews, this research method clearly answers each one of the questions and it matches the objectives of this case study with the results discussed at the end of each question.

The first research question examined how integrative music learning is implemented in the preschool classroom settings at Lina Anne Music School and its impact on preschool children’s musical development and overall learning experiences. The second research question is more focused on the teachers’ perspectives of music as a tool for learning and development in early childhood education. The third research question explored the challenges and opportunities encountered by educators when implementing integrative music learning strategies in the preschool classroom.

| RESEARCH QUESTION (RQ) | THEMES | CODE/S | DATA SOURCE | RESPONDENTS’ VIBRATIM QUOTES |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| RQ1: How is integrative music learning being implemented, and what are its impacts on the musical development and overall learning experiences of preschool children? | Theme 1: Child-centered integrative music teaching | Music integrated with movement, storytelling and play | Classroom observations (Field notes), semi-structured interviews | TA: “Basically what music does it enhances the brain for little children, so we teach them spelling, say for an example, you want to spell the word yellow, they would sing out a particular rhyme where they are actually learning without realizing” |
| RQ1 | Theme 2: Children’s engagement and active participation | Preschool children’s engagement, high attention and active participation | Classroom observation (Field notes), semi-structured interviews | TB: “Like I have mentioned before, different children have different ways of teaching them. Like I said before, we cannot force them into liking and learning music. Some can accept it and some cannot” |
| RQ1 | Theme 3: Holistic development of preschool children | Preschool children’s learning outcomes (cognitive, social, emotional and physical) | Semi-structured interviews, document analysis | TC: “Playing piano helps improve motor skills, hand-eye coordination and focus. It also builds confidence, patience and thinking skills” |
| RQ2: How do teachers and staff at Lina Anne Music School perceive the use of music as a tool for learning and development in early childhood education? | Theme 4: Teachers’ positive perceptions and professional competency | Teaching strategies, confidence in teaching | Semi-structured interviews | TC: “I feel confident teaching music because I have experience in teaching piano. Over the time, I have learned how to explain music in simple ways to young children and adjust my teaching to suit different children” |
| RQ3: What challenges and opportunities do educators encounter when implementing integrative music learning strategies in the preschool classroom? | Theme 5: Challenges and support in implementing integrative music learning | Implementing challenges, children’s attention | Semi-structured interviews | TC: “The challenging part is managing the children with different levels and abilities. Some children may feel tired or lose focus easily” |

Table 4: Thematic Analysis Table

The thematic analysis presented in Table 3 reveals several interconnected themes that illustrate how integrative music learning is implemented and experienced by preschool children at Lina Anne Music School. One dominant theme emerging from the observation data is structured yet flexible teaching through music-based routines, as evidenced by the consistent use of opening and closing songs to frame the lesson. The “Good Morning” song at the beginning of the session functioned not only as a musical warm-up but also as an emotional and social transition tool, helping children to settle, focus, and mentally prepare for learning. This routine highlights how music is intentionally used to establish predictability and security, which are essential for preschool learners. Another key theme identified is active engagement through music and movement integration, where children were encouraged to respond physically to musical elements such as tempo and rhythm. During the fast and slow movement activities, children demonstrated immediate responses, laughter, and sustained attention, indicating high levels of engagement and embodied musical understanding. This theme supports the notion that learning through movement enhances children’s physical coordination while reinforcing musical concepts in a developmentally appropriate manner. A further theme evident in the data is creative expression and imagination through storytelling and musical play. The storytelling song involving animal movements allowed children to explore sound, gesture, and role-play, with some children spontaneously adding their own movements, reflecting confidence, autonomy, and imaginative thinking. This finding illustrates how integrative music learning encourages children to become active contributors rather than passive recipients of instruction. Additionally, the observation highlights the theme of social interaction and cooperative learning, particularly during group rhythm activities involving props such as hula-hoops. Children practised turn-taking, shared attention, and peer awareness, demonstrating that integrative music activities naturally foster social skills and collaborative behaviour. Finally, the closing calm song reflects the theme of emotional regulation and smooth transitions, as children gradually relaxed, followed instructions, and displayed positive emotional responses such as smiling and clapping. This indicates that music plays a significant role in helping children manage emotions and transition effectively between activities. Collectively, the thematic analysis of Table 3 demonstrates that integrative music learning at Lina Anne Music School supports holistic development by simultaneously addressing cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and creative domains. The findings reinforce existing literature that positions music as both content and pedagogical medium, while also highlighting the crucial role of teacher facilitation in guiding meaningful, child-centred musical experiences within the preschool classroom.

The findings from the interviews indicate that all respondents demonstrated a positive perception towards the implementation of integrative music learning at Lina Anne Music School. The teachers viewed integrative music learning as an effective and meaningful approach that supports preschool children’s holistic development, rather than focusing solely on technical musical skills. Most respondents emphasized that music, when combined with movement, storytelling, and play, allows children to learn naturally and joyfully while remaining actively engaged throughout the lesson.

One respondent (TB) explained that integrative music learning helps children to stay focused and motivated during class, stating that “when music is combined with movement and stories, the children do not feel like they are being forced to learn. They are more excited and can focus for a longer time compared to traditional lessons.” This highlights that integrative music learning enhances attention span and reduces passive learning among preschool children. Another respondent (TA) supported this view by noting that “children learn faster when music is involved because they are enjoying themselves and not pressured to get things right.”

In terms of emotional and social development, several teachers reported that integrative music activities encourage children to express emotions confidently and interact positively with their peers. One teacher (TA) mentioned that “group singing and movement activities help shy children open up and communicate better with their friends.” This suggests that music serves as a safe medium for emotional expression and social bonding, particularly for children who may struggle with verbal communication. The respondents also observed improvements in cooperation, turn-taking, and listening skills during group-based music activities such as circle time and ensemble play.

The respondents further emphasized that integrative music learning supports children’s physical development through movement-based activities. According to respondent TA, “activities like clapping, dancing, and action songs help children improve their coordination and body awareness.” This finding aligns with classroom

observations where children were actively engaged in rhythmic movement, demonstrating improved motor coordination and balance. Teachers believed that such activities are essential for preschool children, as physical movement is closely linked to their learning and cognitive processing.

Additionally, the teachers perceived integrative music learning as beneficial for language development. One respondent (TA) stated that “songs with repetition help children remember words easily and improve their pronunciation.” Teachers highlighted that singing songs with simple lyrics, repetition, and actions helps children expand their vocabulary and improve verbal expression, especially for younger learners and those with limited language proficiency.

Despite their positive perceptions, some respondents acknowledged challenges in implementing integrative music learning. These challenges included the need for careful lesson planning, sufficient teaching materials, and maintaining children’s attention during longer sessions. However, most teachers agreed that these challenges were manageable and worthwhile. As expressed by respondent TC, “integrative music learning requires more preparation, but the outcome is very rewarding when we see the children enjoying and learning at the same time.”

Overall, the respondents strongly agreed that integrative music learning is an effective teaching approach that enhances preschool children’s cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. The teachers’ positive perceptions indicate strong support for the continued implementation of integrative music learning at Lina Anne Music School, reinforcing its role as a holistic and child-centered educational practice.

Document Analysis



Figure 9: Curriculum and Assessment Standard Document Primary School Standard Curriculum Music Education Year 1 (KSSR)

The Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR) Pendidikan Muzik Tahun 1 document serves and acts as the official national guideline for music education at the primary school level in Malaysia and this document provides an important features and references points for understanding the broader educational expectations among students in primary school in Malaysia. This document also reveals that ‘KSSR’ aims to foster students’ overall development through organized musical experiences, which encourages them to listen, sing, conduct movement activities, play instruments and understand the fundamentals of music literacy. This curriculum standard acts and focuses more on cultivating musical abilities together with values such as discipline, teamwork, creativity and respect for cultural diversity, aligned together with the national education philosophy.

The document's learning standards are outlined and based on progress. As a result, the students are graded through their progress thus they can gain essential musical knowledge in an organized way. Nonetheless, the organized and results-oriented criterias' of 'KSSR' differs from the adaptable and play-centered methods that was found in Lina Anne Music School. 'KSSR' promotes engagement and pleasure in music education, but music in public schools in Malaysia is often regarded as a separate subject with distinct content and evaluation criteria. 'KSSR' are more focused towards skills and structured lesson plans so it does affect the integrative learning in the school environment. It also emphasizes basic musical competencies such as rhythm accuracy, singing, recorder playing, and percussion ensemble participation, which reflects a teacher-directed and standardized approach. While this structure supports consistency and measurable outcomes, it provides limited flexibility for creative exploration, improvisation, and cross-curricular integration, which are the core elements of integrative music learning. In 'KSSR', the time allocation for each class would be a limited instructional time which is approximately 30 minutes per week. This restricts opportunities for movement-based music activities. On the contrary, from a preschool point of view, where preschool children learn best through play, repetition, sensory engagement, and movement activities. Results from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews in this case study suggests that integrative music learning in the preschool environment focuses more on experiential learning, child-centered discovery, and the combination of music with movement activities, languages and play. Regardless of these criterias, the principles that have been outlined in the 'KSSR' document have shown satisfied results that have been seen in the integrative music that corresponds together with Lina Anne Music School. Although 'KSSR' acknowledges holistic values such as 21st-century thinking skills and moral development, its implementation tends to prioritise uniform achievement over individual expression. This contrasts with the observed lessons at Lina Anne Music School, where music is functioning as both content and medium of learning, supporting emotional regulation, social interaction, and physical coordination.

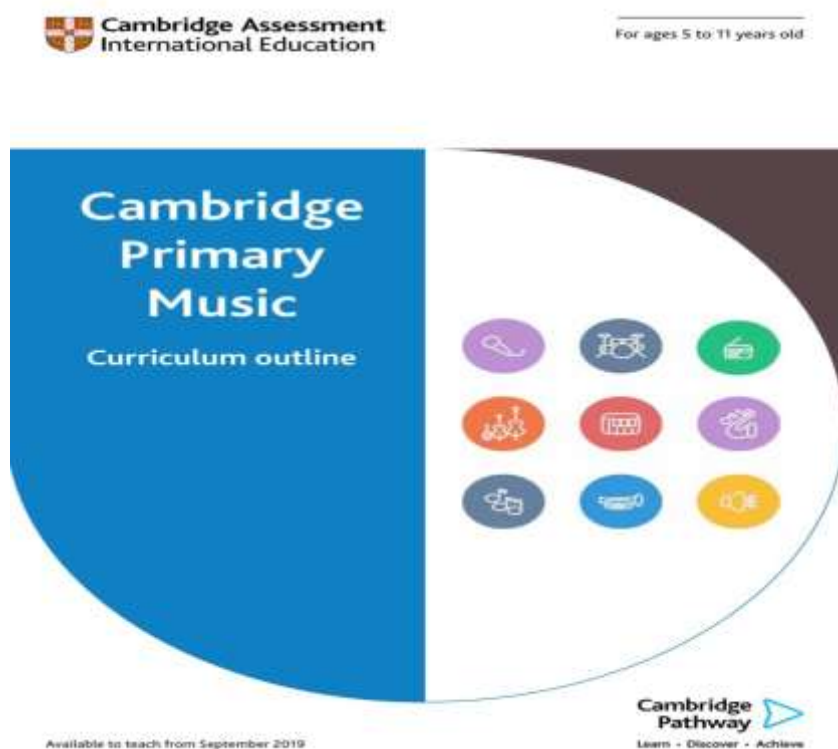


Figure 10: Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum Outline

Cambridge Primary Music fosters creativity and boosts self-esteem, assisting students in gaining a more profound comprehension of self-expression. Additionally, it teaches students the value of communication as they develop relationships with audiences and other artists. It places a strong focus on musical discovery and offers students the chance to present and perform their music at every developmental level. A greater knowledge of oneself and one's own musicality results from the emphasis on play and reacting to music. Their curriculum is flexible in that they could combine music from their local context with music from other

cultures. The students will experiment and contribute as they follow a wide step and variety of possible musical paths. This also helps the students to develop a deep connection with music and to find ways to express their unique musical personality. Throughout Cambridge Primary Music, the students will develop a genuine depth of understanding, so that they can both make music and make sense of music. This can prepare the students to become lifelong makers and listeners of music. It is because the Cambridge Primary Music adopts a process-oriented approach and learner-centered framework, where music is treated as a medium for exploration, expression, and reflection, rather than technical mastery. The curriculum encourages students to experiment music through sounds and movements. As a result, this aligns strongly with integrative music learning principles that has been observed in Lina Anne Music School. Besides, Cambridge Primary music emphasizes more on choice-making, doing open-ended tasks and conducting collaborative music-making that supports the students’ overall development. Unlike ‘KSSR’ structured progression, Cambridge allows flexibility for teachers to adapt lessons according to the student’s responses, interests, and developmental levels. This flexibility mirrors the findings on the previous classroom observation where teachers adjusted music activities and movement activities based on the children’s engagement and participation. In the context of the findings and discussions regarding the implementation of music education at Lina Anne Music School, the Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum Outline serves as an important role and critical external benchmark for this case study’s qualitative analysis. This document was designed for students aged 5 to 11 years old. This document offers an organized framework that highlights a comprehensive method to the student’s musical growth, which closely reflects the integrative music learning approaches. Through this curriculum analysis, this document can assess the school’s existing methods such as the combination of music with movement activities, languages and plays. As a result, this can prove the capability for acknowledging the standards for early childhood and primary music education teaching. This document enables a deep understanding and more in-depth conversation on the implementation difficulties of teaching music and educational techniques by providing a certain degree of benchmark for teaching methods/approaches. This document serves as an additional data source that enhances the reliability and triangulation of this case study, enabling us to verify local classroom observations with a formal curriculum aimed at promoting musical creativity and involvement. Overall, the Cambridge Primary Music curriculum closely resembles the integrative practices that have been implemented in Lina Anne Music School, reinforcing the effectiveness of a child-centered, exploratory music education and curriculum development for early childhood education in Malaysia.

| ASPECT | KSSR PENDIDIKAN MUZIK TAHUN 1 | CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY MUSIC CURRICULUM |
|--|--|---|
| Curriculum Orientation | National curriculum aligned with Malaysia’s education philosophy and value | International curriculum with global perspective and flexible implementation |
| Main Focus | Development of basic musical knowledge, skills, and appreciation | Development of musical understanding, creativity, and critical musical thinking |
| Learning Domains | Listening, singing, movement activities, playing instruments, and basic music concepts | Performing, composing, listening, and responding |
| Teaching Approach | Structured and teacher-guided with clear learning standards | Learner-centered and exploratory with emphasis on creativity |
| Integration with Other Subjects | Limited integrative music (music is often treated as a standalone subject) | Strong encouragement of cross-curricular integration (movement, language, arts) |
| Creativity and Improvisation | Basic creativity encouraged but within structured activities | Strong emphasis on creativity, improvisation, and composition |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Assessment Style | Formative and summative assessments based on performance standards | Formative assessment focusing on musical process and progress |
| Flexibility in Implementation | More prescriptive learning standards and outcomes | Flexible framework allowing adaptation to the learners' context |
| Cultural Context | Emphasizes Malaysian cultural elements and values | Encourages exploration of diverse musical cultures |

Table 5: Curriculum Comparison

The KSSR Pendidikan Muzik Tahun 1 and the Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum Outline include both parallels and variations, according to the document study. Both of the curriculum incorporate essential musical activities including listening, performance, and movement and acknowledge music as a crucial part of a child's whole development. These similarities demonstrate how music fosters children's emotional, social, and cognitive development.

The KSSR Pendidikan Muzik Tahun 1, on the other hand, has a more methodical, teacher-led approach with well-defined learning objectives and criteria. Focusing on fundamental musical abilities and national cultural values, music education is frequently taught as a stand-alone topic. There is creativity, but it is mostly found in pre-planned activities.

The Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum, on the other hand, emphasizes learner-centered learning, creativity, and discovery more. It promotes composition, improvisation, and cross-curricular integration, enabling the fusion of music with language, dance, and other artistic disciplines. It is because the curricular framework is more adaptable, instructors may modify lessons to fit the settings and skill levels of their students. Overall, the Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum is more in line with integrative and child-centered music learning approaches, even though both curricula seek to promote holistic development. The results of the current study, which demonstrate the value of integrated music learning strategies in early childhood education, are corroborated by this comparison.

The KSSR Pendidikan Muzik Tahun 1 and the Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum Outline both think that music is an important part of helping children grow up well. They both want children to be actively involved in music so they include things like listening to music, performing music, moving to music and expressing themselves creatively through music. The KSSR Pendidikan Muzik Tahun 1 and the Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum Outline are very similar in that they both value music highly. The KSSR Pendidikan Muzik Tahun 1 and the Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum Outline want children to have fun with music and to learn from it. The KSSR Pendidikan Muzik Tahun 1 is a music class where kids learn music in a structured way. They have to follow rules and meet specific goals. The teachers make sure the kids learn the basics of music like how to play instruments and sing and also about the music of Malaysia.

The KSSR Pendidikan Muzik Tahun 1 teachers guide the kids a lot to make sure they learn what they need to know. The kids get to be creative and have fun. They still have to follow the rules of the class. The teachers check to see if the kids are meeting the goals they are supposed to meet. The KSSR Pendidikan Muzik Tahun 1 is a class where music education's very important and the kids learn a lot about music and Malaysian culture. The Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum Outline is different. It is more flexible and focused on the learner. This means it pays attention to creativity, trying new things, making things up and creating music. The Cambridge way of teaching music is not as rigid. Teachers can change what they teach. The activities they do are based on what the students are interested in, what they are good at and what they need. The Cambridge curriculum also says that music should be connected to things like movement, language, drama and other creative things. This is similar to how music's often taught in a way that combines different things. The Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum Outline does this by making music a part of subjects, which is a good way to learn music. The Cambridge curriculum is really different from KSSR. It is more about how children

learn music than just testing what they know. The Cambridge curriculum wants children to understand music, express themselves through music and respond to music in their way.

This study found that the way Lina Anne Music School teaches music is very similar to the Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum. They both focus on letting children learn at their pace and they try to make music learning fun and interesting, for each child. They also try to connect music to things that children learn so it all makes sense together. However, the underlying principles of KSSR such as active participation, creativity, and holistic development remains relevant and complementary, suggesting that integrative music learning in the preschool context can serve as a strong foundation that prepares children for both national and international curriculum expectations in formal schooling.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study set out to evaluate the application and impact of integrative music learning towards preschool children at Lina Anne Music School, with specific emphasis on how music operates as a holistic educational instrument that supports cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. Data were gathered through document analysis of curriculum-related documents, semi-structured interviews with seasoned educators, and classroom observations using a qualitative case study methodology. The results showed that a child-centered, play-based, experiential method is used at Lina Anne Music School to execute integrative music learning, where music is smoothly integrated with movement, narrative, rhythmic activities, and basic instrumental play. Integrative music activities offered a supportive and exciting learning environment, as evidenced by the high levels of children's engagement, sustained attention, active involvement, and good emotional reactions during music sessions. Teachers' strong conviction and belief in music as a powerful medium for learning beyond the development of musical talents was further demonstrated by interview data, especially when it comes to improving children's self-assurance, creativity, communication skills, and emotional regulation. It was discovered that teachers' musical training and experience were crucial to the successful implementation of integrative music education, enabling them to modify classes in response to the demands and reactions of the students. The findings were further contextualized by document analysis comparing the KSSR Pendidikan Muzik Tahun 1 and the Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum. This analysis showed that, although the Malaysian curriculum emphasizes standardized outcomes and structured skill acquisition, integrative practices at Lina Anne Music School are more in line with the Cambridge framework's exploratory, creative, and learner-centered approaches. This indirectly shows that there is still room for improvement in the Malaysian curriculum. Overall, the results of this study support the idea that music can be used as both content and a teaching medium in early childhood education by showing that integrative music learning not only improves preschoolers' musical experiences but also makes a substantial contribution to their overall development. This case study consequently gives valuable insights into the value of integrative music learning within the Malaysian setting and underlines its potential as an effective educational strategy for developing well-rounded preschool learners

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows that integrative music education is a useful and successful pedagogical strategy for preschoolers, especially when combined with child-centered, experiential, and holistic teaching methods. The results unequivocally show that music at Lina Anne Music School serves not only as a subject but also as a potent medium that improves kids' overall educational experiences by concurrently fostering social interaction, cognitive development, emotional expression, and physical coordination. Through the combination of singing, dance, narrative, and instrumental play, children were found to be highly engaged, motivated, and confident in their learning, showing the favorable influence of integrative music learning on early childhood development. The effective application of these techniques was greatly aided by teachers' positive attitudes, professional competence, and musical experience, which allowed them to modify classes in a flexible way to meet the developmental requirements and skills of the students. Strong institutional support and reflective teaching techniques successfully reduced issues like managing mixed-ability groups and sustaining attention span. This also shows that with suitable facilities and teacher experience, the courses can be successful.

Additionally, the document analysis showed that while the KSSR Pendidikan Muzik Tahun 1 offers a structured foundation for music education, the integrative and learner-centered practices found in this study are more in line with the Cambridge Primary Music Curriculum's tenets, especially when it comes to encouraging creativity, exploration, and holistic development. All things considered, this study offers insightful information on the function of integrative music education in Malaysian early childhood education and emphasizes the significance of viewing music as a necessary pedagogical instrument rather than an optional activity. The results confirm that integrative music education has a great deal of potential to promote preschoolers' well-rounded development and should be regarded as an essential part of successful early childhood education strategies.

Recommendations

This case study has shown that integrative music learning is important for preschool children. Based on the findings, several recommendations have been suggested to enhance the implementation of integrative music learning in early childhood education classrooms and environments, especially in the Malaysian context. In the first place, early childhood educators and music instructors should be motivated to initiate and embrace integrative, child-focused music teaching methods that incorporate singing, movement, storytelling, and instrument exploration, as these methods have demonstrated effectiveness in improving children's overall development and involvement. Therefore, professional development courses should be offered to supply educators with hands-on skills in integrative music learning and teaching. Methods such as the Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze and Suzuki should be familiar and aligned with integrative music teaching strategies while promoting reflective teaching practices to enable teachers to modify lessons based on the children's development. In addition, schools and educational leaders should promote the systematic integration of music education into preschool curriculum by designating an adequate teaching time, supplying suitable musical instruments and educational materials, and establishing adaptable learning settings that foster the children's movement, creativity, and teamwork. Strong institutional support is essential in addressing challenges such as mixed-ability classrooms and attention management, ensuring that teachers are not constrained by rigid schedules or limited facilities. Next, curriculum developers and policymakers should consider strengthening early childhood and primary music curricula by embedding integrative and experiential learning principles more explicitly, particularly within the KSSR framework, to ensure smoother continuity between preschool and primary education. Greater emphasis should be placed on process-based learning, creativity, and cross-curricular integration, rather than solely on technical skill acquisition and standardized outcomes at the early stages of music education. Additionally, collaboration between preschools, music schools, and mainstream educational institutions should be encouraged to share best practices, resources, and professional expertise in integrative music teaching. Finally, future research is recommended to extend this study by involving multiple preschool settings, larger participant samples, and longitudinal designs to further explore the long-term impact of integrative music learning on children's academic, social, and emotional development. In a nutshell, these recommendations aim to enhance the quality and sustainability of integrative music learning practices and reinforce the role of music as a vital pedagogical tool in supporting holistic development during early childhood.

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