



Exploring Teaching Skills and Needs of Piano Teachers in Guangdong Province

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Abstract

In Guangdong Province, Province-G, the realm of piano education is burgeoning, with an increasing number of individuals pursuing piano instruction. Within this context, this research endeavors to explore the multifaceted dimensions of piano pedagogy by focusing on the teaching skills and needs of piano instructors. Employing a comprehensive mixed-methods approach integrating surveys and interviews, this study seeks to unravel the intricate tapestry of pedagogical methodologies utilized by piano teachers across the province. By delving into the diverse approaches and techniques employed, the research aims to uncover the spectrum of educational strategies tailored to meet the needs of students in Guangdong. Furthermore, through in-depth interviews with piano instructors, this study endeavors to identify the specific challenges and areas for improvement within the realm of piano education. The findings of this research provided valuable insights for curriculum development, teacher training programs, and educational policy formulation, ultimately fostering a more enriched and effective piano education landscape in Guangdong Province.

Keywords

Piano education; piano instruction; teaching skills

1. Background of the Study

Guangdong Province, located in southern Province-G, stands as a vibrant hub of cultural exchange and economic dynamism. With a rich heritage in music and arts, the province has witnessed a surge in interest and participation in piano education in recent years (Liu, 2018). This trend reflects not only the growing affluence of the region but also a deep-seated cultural appreciation for music and its role in personal development (Chen & Wang, 2019).

The proliferation of piano instruction in Guangdong Province is intertwined with broader socio-economic shifts, including urbanization, globalization, and the increasing emphasis on education as a pathway to success (Yang & Li, 2020). As parents aspire to provide their children with well-rounded educational opportunities, learning to play the piano has become increasingly popular, symbolizing both cultural refinement and intellectual advancement (Zhang, 2017).

Amidst this burgeoning demand for piano education, the role of piano teachers becomes paramount. These educators serve as guides, mentors, and facilitators, shaping the musical journeys of their students (Wang & Liu, 2021). However, the diversity of teaching methodologies, educational backgrounds, and pedagogical philosophies among piano instructors in Guangdong Province remains largely unexplored.

Understanding the teaching skills and needs of piano teachers is essential for optimizing the quality and effectiveness of piano education in Guangdong (Hu & Wu, 2019). By delving into the unique challenges, innovative approaches, and professional development requirements of piano instructors, this research aims to contribute to the advancement of piano

pedagogy in the region. Moreover, this exploration holds the potential to illuminate broader trends in music education, cultural transmission, and societal values within the dynamic landscape of Guangdong Province. In Province -G, the cultural context profoundly influences piano education, as it does with many aspects of life. Traditional Chinese cultural values place a strong emphasis on discipline, diligence, and academic achievement. These values permeate various facets of society, including education and the pursuit of extracurricular activities such as music.

Chinese culture traditionally places a high value on discipline and self-control. This translates into the way piano is taught and learned. Students are expected to adhere to strict practice schedules and follow the instructions of their teachers diligently. Discipline is seen as essential for mastering the intricate techniques and nuances of piano playing. Diligence, or hard work and persistence, is another core value in Chinese culture. Students are encouraged to put in extensive effort and time into their piano practice in order to achieve proficiency and mastery. There is a belief that consistent and focused practice leads to improvement, reflecting the broader cultural ethos of perseverance and dedication.

Besides, academic success is highly prized in Chinese society, and this extends to achievements in extracurricular activities like music. Learning to play the piano is often viewed as a means to enhance cognitive abilities, creativity, and overall academic performance. Parents may enroll their children in piano lessons with the expectation that it will contribute to their intellectual development and future success.

Therefore, understanding the cultural significance attached to music learning provides insights into the motivations of students and the expectations of parents. For students, piano education may be seen as a pathway to personal development, self-expression, and cultural enrichment. It may also serve as a means of fulfilling parental expectations and societal norms regarding academic achievement and social status.

Furthermore, the cultural context shapes the teaching methods and approaches employed by piano instructors. Teachers may emphasize discipline and hard work in their instruction, instilling in students the values of perseverance and dedication. They may also incorporate elements of traditional Chinese culture into their teaching, such as reverence for authority and respect for elders.

Overall, recognizing the cultural context is essential for understanding the dynamics of piano education in Province-G, including student motivations, parental expectations, teaching methods, and societal attitudes towards music learning. It provides valuable insights into why and how piano education is valued and pursued within Chinese society.

2. Literature Review

Andragogy, the theory and practice of adult education, in Province-G, is significantly influenced by cultural traditions, technological advancements, economic imperatives, and social dynamics. Traditional Chinese values, particularly respect for elders and authority, shape the dynamics of adult education, where instructors are highly respected and students approach learning with humility and deference. The emphasis on lifelong learning, a deeply rooted Confucian ideal, promotes continuous self-improvement, and andragogy in Province-G supports this by offering opportunities for adults to pursue education for personal, career, or societal benefits. The rapid technological advancements have led to the incorporation of digital tools and online platforms in adult education, enhancing learning experiences and accessibility. Continuous professional development is crucial in Province-G's evolving economy, with andragogy helping adults gain the necessary skills and knowledge for career advancement and economic contribution. Despite economic growth, social and economic disparities persist, and andragogy aims to address these by providing equitable educational opportunities to all adult learners, regardless of their background or location. Overall, andragogy in Province-G plays a transformative role in empowering adults, fostering lifelong learning, and contributing to socio-economic development.

Andragogy in Province-G takes on unique dimensions in the context of instrumental tuition, influenced by the region's rich cultural heritage and growing interest in music education. Traditional Chinese values, such as respect for authority and dedication to learning, shape adult learners' approach to instrumental studies, with reverence for teachers and disciplined practice being common. The cultural emphasis on lifelong learning extends to music education, where adults seek personal growth and artistic expression throughout their lives. Instrumental tuition in Province-G combines traditional teaching methods with modern pedagogical approaches, incorporating innovative strategies and technological tools to enhance learning. Adult learners pursue instrumental tuition not only for personal enrichment but also for career advancement and personal fulfillment, whether they are aspiring professional musicians or amateur enthusiasts. Additionally, instrumental tuition fosters social networks and community engagement, as adult learners participate in ensembles, workshops, and performances, building connections and collaborations. By understanding these cultural, pedagogical, and social dynamics, educators can create enriching and effective learning experiences that empower adult students to develop their musical skills and deepen their appreciation for music and cultural expression within the Chinese context.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research approach to comprehensively investigate instrumental tuition for adult

learners in Province-G. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods, this research aims to capture the breadth and depth of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.1 Quantitative Phase

In this phase, a structured survey questionnaire will be developed to gather data on demographic information, educational background, motivations for engaging in instrumental tuition, preferred learning styles, and satisfaction with the learning experience. Utilizing a stratified random sampling technique, participants will be recruited from diverse regions, age groups, and levels of musical proficiency across Province-G. Data collection will be conducted online through secure platforms, with recruitment efforts targeting music schools, community centers, online forums, and social media channels. Quantitative data analysis will involve descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, alongside statistical techniques like correlation analysis to explore relationships between variables.

3.2 Qualitative Phase

This phase will involve in-depth semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of adult learners, music instructors, and educational experts. Participants will be selected to represent diverse backgrounds, experiences, and roles within instrumental education. Interviews will be conducted either face-to-face or via online video conferencing platforms, audio-recorded with participants' consent, and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Thematic analysis will be employed to identify recurring patterns, themes, and categories within the qualitative data, with data coding, categorization, and interpretation conducted iteratively.

3.3 Participants

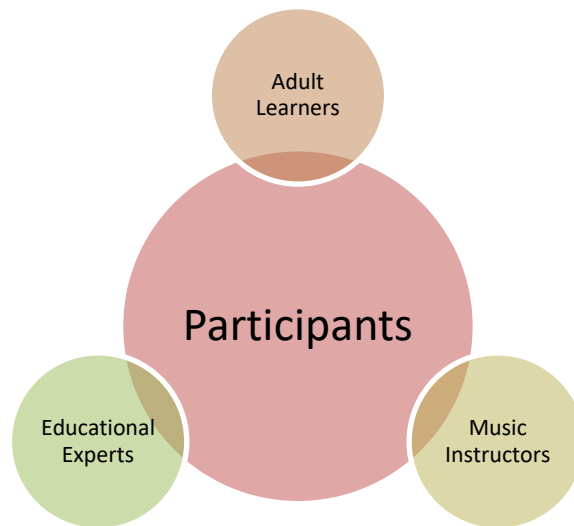


Figure 1. Participants.

The study focuses on adult learners aged 18 and above engaged in instrumental tuition in China, music instructors teaching these adults in various educational settings, and educational experts in music education and adult learning theory. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling via online platforms, professional networks, and academic institutions.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods include qualitative interpretive questionnaires, reflective journals, video recordings, and interviews. Piano teachers complete an initial questionnaire on their musical background, training, teaching skills, strategies, and repertoire preferences, followed by maintaining reflective journals for each student, and documenting lesson content, student progress, and teaching methodologies. Teachers also record two videos per student to show progress and participate in a final interview discussing the study's benefits and challenges. Student participants provide insights through three

multiple-choice questionnaires at different project stages and maintain weekly improvement journals to document their learning experiences. This comprehensive approach explores the teaching skills and needs of piano teachers and the experiences of adult students in piano education in Guangdong Province, China.

3.5 Data Analysis

The utilization of a mixed-methods approach comprising qualitative interpretive questionnaires, reflective journals, video recordings, and interviews provided a multifaceted analysis of the teaching skills and needs of piano teachers, as well as the experiences of adult students, within the context of piano education in Guangdong Province, China.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Teachers' Outcomes in Piano Education in Guangdong Province, China

The analysis of data collected from piano teachers revealed several key outcomes regarding their teaching skills, approaches, challenges, and professional development needs within the context of piano education in Guangdong Province, China.

Diverse Teaching Practices: The initial qualitative interpretive questionnaires unveiled a diverse range of teaching practices employed by piano teachers. Teachers demonstrated a variety of approaches to cater to the needs of adult learners, including the selection of repertoire, instructional methodologies, and adjustments made in response to student progress and feedback. This diversity highlights the adaptability and flexibility of piano teachers in navigating the complexities of adult education in a culturally diverse and rapidly evolving educational landscape.

Reflective Practices: The reflective journals maintained by piano teachers provided valuable insights into their reflective practices and pedagogical decision-making processes. Teachers documented their reflections, observations, and anecdotes related to teaching experiences, student progress, and instructional strategies. Through reflective practice, teachers were able to critically evaluate their teaching methods, identify areas for improvement, and make informed adjustments to optimize student learning outcomes. This reflective approach underscores the importance of ongoing professional development and self-assessment in enhancing teaching effectiveness and fostering continuous improvement.

Challenges and Opportunities: The final interviews conducted with piano teachers illuminated the challenges and opportunities encountered in teaching adult learners in Guangdong Province. Teachers discussed various challenges, including language barriers, cultural differences, diverse learning needs, and logistical constraints. However, they also highlighted opportunities for professional growth, such as collaboration with colleagues, participation in professional development activities, and integration of innovative teaching technologies. These discussions underscore the importance of supporting teachers in overcoming challenges and leveraging opportunities to enhance the quality of piano education for adult learners.

Professional Development Needs: Analysis of the data revealed several areas for professional development needs among piano teachers in Guangdong Province. These needs included language proficiency in Mandarin Chinese, cultural competence, pedagogical training specific to adult learners, and integration of technology in teaching practices. Addressing these professional development needs is essential for equipping teachers with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to effectively engage with diverse adult learners and navigate the complexities of piano education in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

In conclusion, the results of this study shed light on the diverse teaching practices, reflective approaches, challenges, opportunities, and professional development needs among piano teachers in Guangdong Province, China. By addressing these outcomes, stakeholders can work towards enhancing the quality and effectiveness of piano education for adult learners, fostering a supportive and dynamic learning environment that empowers students to achieve their musical aspirations and goals.

4.2 Student Outcomes in Piano Education in Guangdong Province, China

The analysis of data collected from adult piano students provided valuable insights into their backgrounds, goals, learning experiences, and progress within the context of piano education in Guangdong Province, China.

Diverse Student Profiles: The initial multiple-choice questionnaires administered to students revealed diverse profiles in terms of backgrounds, goals, and expectations. Students came from varied educational backgrounds, professions, and musical experiences, reflecting the diverse demographic landscape of adult learners in Guangdong Province. Their goals ranged from personal enrichment and artistic expression to career advancement and professional development, highlighting the multifaceted motivations driving adult participation in piano education.

Progress and Feedback: Subsequent questionnaires administered at different stages of the project enabled tracking of students' progress and gathering of feedback on their learning experiences. The data demonstrated varied levels of progress among students, with some reporting significant improvements in technical skills, musical expression, and confidence, while others encountered challenges and setbacks along their learning journey. Student feedback provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of teaching approaches, areas for improvement, and suggestions for enhancing the learning experience.

Weekly Improvement Journals: The weekly improvement journals maintained by students offered qualitative insights into their learning processes, challenges, and achievements. Students documented their feelings, goals, and reflections before and after practice sessions, providing valuable self-assessment and self-reflection opportunities. These journals served as a tool for tracking progress, identifying areas for improvement, and fostering a sense of accountability and commitment to personal growth and development.

Engagement and Commitment: Analysis of student outcomes highlighted high levels of engagement and commitment among adult piano students in Guangdong Province. Despite the challenges posed by busy schedules, competing priorities, and logistical constraints, students demonstrated dedication and perseverance in their pursuit of musical excellence. Their active participation in lessons, practice sessions, and reflective activities underscored their commitment to achieving their musical aspirations and goals.

Cultural and Linguistic Considerations: Student outcomes also reflected the influence of cultural and linguistic factors on their learning experiences. Language barriers, cultural differences, and diverse learning needs presented challenges for some students, impacting their ability to fully engage with instructional materials and communicate effectively with their teachers. However, many students demonstrated resilience and adaptability in overcoming these challenges, leveraging their cultural heritage and linguistic resources to enhance their learning experiences.

In conclusion, the results of this study provide valuable insights into the diverse backgrounds, motivations, learning experiences, and progress of adult piano students in Guangdong Province, China. By addressing the needs and aspirations of students, stakeholders can work towards fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment that empowers adult learners to realize their full potential and achieve their musical goals.

4.3 Teaching Materials for Adult Piano Students

In designing teaching materials for adult piano students in Guangdong Province, China, it is essential to consider their diverse backgrounds, motivations, and learning preferences. The following teaching materials are recommended to accommodate the varied needs and interests of adult learners:

4.3.1 Repertoire Selection

Offer a diverse selection of repertoire encompassing various musical genres and styles, including classical pieces, popular songs, folk tunes, and seasonal music. Provide repertoire options suitable for different occasions such as examinations, special events, family gatherings, and holidays. **Customized Sheet Music:** Develop customized sheet music tailored to the individual preferences and skill levels of adult students. Provide arrangements that cater to their specific musical interests, whether it be classical masterpieces, contemporary hits, or traditional folk tunes.

To enhance adult piano lessons, instructors should provide supplementary materials such as technical exercises, sight-reading exercises, and music theory resources. They should also utilize online resources and digital platforms for learning. Creative assignments and projects can encourage artistic growth. Flexible lesson plans should balance structured activities with student-led exploration. Performance opportunities, such as recitals and informal gatherings, can showcase progress and achievements. This approach creates engaging learning experiences for adult piano students.

5. Recommendations

Based on the guidelines outlined for teaching adults in piano, it is recommended that piano instructors in Guangdong Province, China, adopt a student-centered approach that prioritizes individualized instruction, flexible curriculum design, and supportive learning environments. By tailoring the teaching methods and materials to align with the diverse needs, interests, and motivations of adult learners, instructors can enhance the effectiveness and engagement of piano education in the region.

Furthermore, it is recommended that piano teachers in Guangdong Province leverage technology and multimedia resources to supplement traditional teaching methods and enhance the learning experience for adult students. Integrating digital platforms, interactive apps, and online tutorials can provide additional support, enrichment, and accessibility, particularly for students with diverse learning styles and preferences.

Additionally, fostering a culture of lifelong learning and musical curiosity among adult piano students is crucial. Piano instructors should encourage ongoing exploration, experimentation, and growth beyond the confines of formal lessons, providing opportunities for continued musical enrichment, professional development, and community engagement.

Moreover, creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students feel empowered to take ownership of their musical journey is essential. Piano instructors should prioritize open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect, fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared learning among students and teachers alike.

Overall, by implementing these recommendations, piano instructors in Guangdong Province can create meaningful and enriching learning experiences that inspire and empower adult students to achieve their musical aspirations and goals.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the guidelines and recommendations provided for teaching adults in piano education in Guangdong Province, China, underscore the importance of adopting a student-centered approach that prioritizes individualized instruction, flexible curriculum design, and supportive learning environments. By tailoring teaching methods and materials to align with the diverse needs, interests, and motivations of adult learners, piano instructors can enhance the effectiveness and engagement of piano education in the region.

Overall, by implementing the guidelines and recommendations outlined in this study, piano instructors in Guangdong Province can create meaningful and enriching learning experiences that inspire and empower adult students to achieve their musical aspirations and goals. Through a commitment to student-centered teaching, innovation, and lifelong learning, piano education in Guangdong Province can continue to thrive and evolve, enriching the lives of adult learners and contributing to the cultural vibrancy of the region.

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