**Research Article***Copyright © All rights are reserved by Dennis Ping-Cheng Wang*

Assessing Music Teachers' Competence in Regard to Multicultural Music Education in the Greater China Region

Dennis Ping-Cheng Wang**Associate Professor in Music Education, Faculty of Education, University of Macau, China****Corresponding author:** Dennis Ping-Cheng Wang, Associate Professor in Music Education, Faculty of Education, University of Macau, China**Received Date:** November 05, 2024**Published Date:** November 15, 2024**Abstract**

Multicultural music education can broaden students' understanding of cultural diversity and encourage them to view the world with a positive perspective. This study aims to assess current music teachers' understanding of multicultural music, including awareness, knowledge, and skills in the Greater China region. The assessments consist of the Multicultural Music Education Test, portfolio assessment, and personal interviews.

The results revealed that a lack of such knowledge hinders the promotion of multiculturalism in schools. There is a desperate need for more diverse international music courses at local universities offering music education degrees. Additionally, more diverse performances and exhibitions need to be promoted in society. Lastly, local governments should encourage more international cultural-related courses and workshops for current music teachers, enabling them to update and deliver the requisite knowledge to the next generation.

Keywords: Multicultural Music Education; Teacher competence; Music assessment; Cross cultures; Portfolio Assessment**Purpose of the Study**

Music is a cultural expression that acts as a tool to communicate across different races and nationalities, providing intercultural understanding (Urbain, 2008). According to UNESCO (2010), one of the missions of music education is to promote social differences and enhance cultural diversity, while fostering sensitivity towards students from various cultures. Therefore, music education can be an effective tool and bridge linking aesthetic aspects and intercultural understandings, creating a pathway for sharing and respecting cultural diversity. Additionally, multicultural music education has been recognized as a crucial educational resource and has become part of music curricula in public schools worldwide. It is believed that music fosters respect and understanding of different cultures, enriching students' educational experiences [1]. In the USA, the goals of music education include performing, appreciating, learning, and creating a wide variety of music from different cultures and genres, as clearly stated in the National Standards for Music Education [2]. Pope and Reynolds' (1997) theoretical model of multicultural competence includes three aspects: knowledge, skills, and awareness.

They believe that the more multiculturalism is integrated into

classrooms, the more it contributes to the creation of multicultural understanding, there by culturally influencing students. Similarly, Sue and Sue [3] assert that multicultural competence in education is an ability that can be adapted and utilized in teaching to understand different cultures. This competence not only reflects various cultures but also introduces new ideas into classrooms. Gay (2002) states that multicultural competence is a teaching skill specifically related to cultures, which can expand students' learning and enhance teachers' instruction. Additionally, Banks and Banks (2002) argue that multiculturalism is a significant element of teacher education to broaden students' international perspectives. Numerous researchers have conducted studies on connecting and merging cultures through songs, performing groups, and the music history of different cultures. However, little is known about assessing students' and teachers' competence and knowledge of multicultural music education, which are crucial and fundamental issues for promoting music-based education. The purpose of this study is to assess current music teachers' understanding and competence in multicultural music education in the Greater China region. The assessment also includes an evaluation of the teachers' music teaching techniques, content, and strategies. Additionally,

the study examines music teachers' awareness of the importance of multiculturalism. Finally, the extent to which music departments at local universities and normal universities provide multicultural

Methodology

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of participants' multicultural music competencies, the researcher assessed them based on Pope and Reynolds' (1997) theoretical model of multicultural competence, which includes Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills (Figure 1). This model indicates that competent teachers need to have broad perspectives of international knowledge and

Table 1: Number of Schools and Teachers in Participating Cities.

	Number of Schools	Number of Teachers
Beijing	10	18
Shanghai	11	19
Guangzhou	12	20
Shenzhen	12	19
Hong Kong	11	6
Macau	10	10
Taipei	8	14
Kaohsiung	6	11

music courses and educational resources for teacher preparation is discussed and assessed.

positive attitudes. Additionally, teachers must equip themselves with professional skills and awareness of diverse cultures.

Participants in this study included 117 current music teachers, randomly selected from eighty elementary schools across the Greater China region (mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan). The participants, aged between 24 and 50, all had academic backgrounds in music or music education.

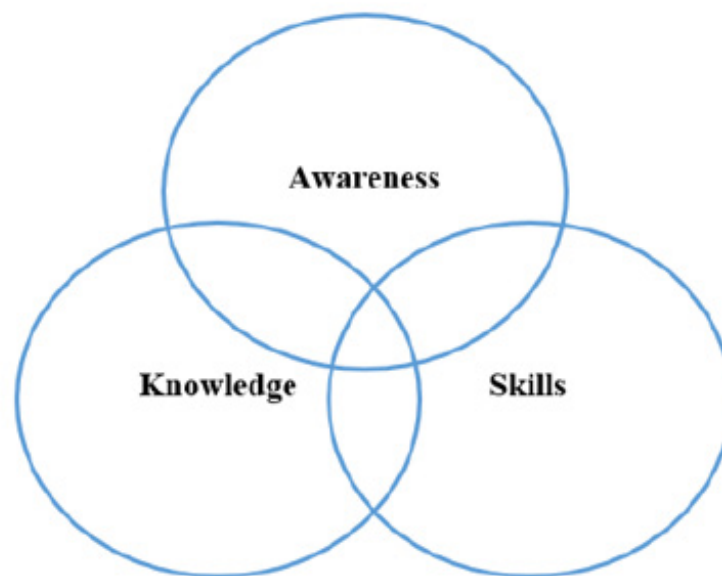


Figure 1: Pope and Reynolds' (1997) Theoretical Model of Multicultural Competence.

The assessments for this study consist of three parts: A) The Multicultural Music Education Test, which includes teachers' music skills, international teaching techniques/approaches, musical instruments, comprehension of basic multicultural music knowledge, and teachers' awareness of multicultural music; B) The Teachers' Portfolio Assessment, which includes self-evaluation, course content, and lesson plans; and C) Personal Interviews, which cover their music preferences, multicultural beliefs and attitudes,

music skills, and the promotion of multiculturalism by schools and government.

A. The Multicultural Music Education Test

The Multicultural Music Education Test included assessments of teachers' music skills, international teaching techniques/approaches, use of musical instruments, basic multicultural music knowledge, and awareness of multicultural music. The questions

were based on school textbooks, general music information of the country/regions, and the National Curriculum Guidelines of local governments.

B. The Teachers' Portfolio Assessment

Paulson (1991) states that a portfolio serves as a significant collection of teachers' or students' works, approaches, and achievements in multiple aspects, providing an opportunity to develop creative solutions and gain comprehensive perspectives of their performances. The Teachers' Portfolio Assessments included self-evaluation/reflection journals, course content, teaching approaches, lesson plans, use of musical instruments in class, and self-reflection. The researcher believes that the Portfolio Assessment is a valuable tool for teachers to reflect on their teaching and helps both teachers and researchers view their teaching from different perspectives, allowing for modifications accordingly.

C. Personal Interviews

The personal interview included teachers' music preferences, music skills, beliefs and attitudes towards multiculturalism, and the encouragement from schools and governments. To determine validity, the validation team consisted of the researcher, one senior music teacher with at least 10 years of teaching experience at local elementary schools, and one university professor with relevant professional background and training. The researcher believes that the assessments can effectively evaluate teachers' multicultural music competencies.

Results of the Study

Among all the participating cities, Hong Kong received the highest scores on all questions of multiculturalism compared to other Chinese cities in the study. Despite the participants showing a positive attitude towards multicultural music education, their results on the Multicultural Music Education Test were less satisfactory. The average test score was 61.88%, indicating that participants were generally unfamiliar with international music knowledge. Surprisingly, the test results showed that nearly half of the teachers were even unfamiliar with their own Chinese

music theory and music history. Participants also demonstrated a poor understanding of international scales and common music knowledge. Moreover, the results showed that the majority of participants could sight-read and perform international children's songs with at least two different musical instruments, such as piano and recorder. Interestingly, many music teachers from Taiwan were found to play and use the melodica in music classes, which is different from other Chinese cities.

Regarding the teachers' teaching content, more than 80% of the participants expressed that they had introduced international children's songs in their music classes, considering it sufficient for including international music concepts. However, 64.86% of the music teachers admitted they did not explain the background of international songs in detail to their students and did not find it necessary to provide detailed explanations of foreign music in their classes.

Furthermore, 65.2% of the teachers introduced Western Classical Music history, but less than 30% have ever introduced different types of international music in their classes. The results also showed that less than 60% of the teachers were aware of the importance of multiculturalism. Surprisingly, nearly 80% of the participants had not taken any world music-related courses during their undergraduate studies, and more than 60% of the teachers found it too troublesome to learn and introduce new concepts of multicultural music in their classes. The top two expectations from the participants regarding their alma maters were: 'More world music-related courses should be offered in schools' and 'More music workshops should be given by invited speakers/performers in schools.' Hence, the lack of opportunities and approaches to such knowledge during their undergraduate studies is considered a primary reason behind the poor understanding of multicultural music education among current music teachers.

In conclusion, despite the unsatisfactory test results, the researcher found that participants were uniformly unfamiliar with the music knowledge and questions concerning foreign countries in general; in other words, there was no specific bias or discrimination related to any particular nation or culture.

Table 2: Results of Teachers' Responses Regarding Their Knowledge, Awareness, and Skills in Multiculturalism.

City	Knowledge	Awareness	Skills			
	The Multicultural Music Education Test	Self-Evaluation and Reflection Journal	Teaching Contents		Usage of International Music Teaching Methods	Usage of Music Instruments
			Singing International Songs	Delivery of Background Knowledge of International Music		
Beijing	61.38%	57.52%	87.52%	60.61%	61.78%	2 Instruments (Piano and Recorder)
Shanghai	65.42%	56.86%	84.34%	61.86%	63.24%	2 Instruments (Piano and Recorder)
Guangzhou	60.27%	55.13%	78.61%	62.32%	62.12%	2 Instruments (Piano and Recorder)
Shenzhen	61.49%	52.62%	81.28%	61.27%	60.71%	2 Instruments (Piano and Recorder)

Hong Kong	67.46%	62.79%	92.42%	70.43%	68.22%	2 Instruments (Piano and Recorder)
Macau	56.44%	51.24%	86.55%	64.65%	52.86%	2 Instruments (Piano and Recorder)
Taipai	62.81%	59.12%	84.27%	62.97%	60.31%	3 Instruments (Piano, Recorder and Melodica)
Kaohsiung	59.79%	58.27%	84.62%	60.12%	55.85%	3 Instruments (Piano, Recorder and Melodica)
Average Score	61.88%	56.69%	84.95%	63.02%	60.63%	

Conclusions and Discussion

A competent music teacher should have a solid understanding and broad perception of multiculturalism, along with comprehensive music knowledge and practical musical skills. Universities offering music or music education degrees are responsible for providing and requiring multicultural knowledge and experiences for their students. This exposure enables students to be influenced by different cultures and enhances their teaching depth after graduation. Ameny-Dixon [4] believes that multicultural education stimulates students' creativity and cognition through a variety of mental resources and the achievement of shared appreciation. The researcher suggests that universities, particularly those in the Greater China region offering music education or related degrees, should offer more diverse international music courses so that students can equip themselves with broad and international knowledge before they graduate.

To enable students to explore the diversity of music knowledge and cultures, universities should invite relevant speakers and performers to conduct workshops and introduce current trends in international music. Furthermore, to maintain social harmony and create a multicultural atmosphere, society needs to promote and support more diverse musical performances, artistic exhibitions, and various international cultural events. Lastly, local governments or relevant authorities should encourage more international music and culture-related courses, workshops, and training for current music teachers. This ensures they stay updated, benefit from the promotion of multiculturalism, and can deliver this knowledge to the next generation in a timely manner.

Acknowledgment

None.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

References

- ABRSM (2008) Examination information & regulations – International edition 2009: ABRSM.
- Adamek MS, Darrow AA (2005) Music in Special Education. Silver Spring, MD: The American Music Therapy Association.
- Ameny Dixon GM (2004) Why Multicultural Education Is More Important in Higher Education Now than Ever: A Global Perspective. *International Journal of Scholarly Academic Intellectual Diversity* 6: 1-12.
- Babin A (2005) Music Conservatory in Canada and the piano examination system for the preparatory student: A historical survey and comparative analysis. Unpublished MA degree in Music. University of Ottawa (Canada).
- Bann G, Hadley S (2013) The view from the floor. In S Hadley (Ed.), *Experiencing race as a music therapist: Personal narratives*. Gilsum, NH: Barcelona Publishers.
- Black P, Wiliam D (1998) Assessment and classroom learning: Principles, policy, and practice special issue. *Assessment in Education* 5 (1): 7-75.
- Brophy TS (2000) *Assessing the developing child musician: A guide for general music teachers*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications.
- Bruscia K (1998) *Defining music therapy*. Gilsum, NH: Barcelona Publishers.
- Chase K (2003) Multicultural music therapy: A review of the literature. *Music Therapy Perspectives* 21: 83-87.
- Cominardi C (2014) From creative process to trans-cultural process: integrating music therapy with arts media in Italian kindergartens: a pilot study. *Australian Journal of Music Therapy* 25: 3-14.
- Curtis S (2006) Feminist music therapy: transforming theory, transforming lives. In S Hadley (Ed.), *Feminist perspectives in music therapy*. Gilsum, NH: Barcelona Publishers pp. 227-244.
- Hadley S (2013a) Dominant narratives: Complicity and the need for vigilance in the Creative Arts Therapies. *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 4: 373-381.
- Hadley S (2013b) *Experiencing race as a music therapist: Personal narratives*. Gilsum, NH: Barcelona.
- Lee C (2008) Reflections on being a music therapist and a gay man. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* 8(3).
- Lightstone A, Hadley S (2013) Reflections on the complexities and paradoxes of identity. In S Hadley, *Experiencing race as a music therapist: Personal narratives*. Gilsum, NH: Barcelona Publishers.
- Linton S (1998) *Claiming disability: Knowledge and identity*. New York: NYU Press.
- Milner HR, Flowers LA, Moore E, Moore JL, Flowers TA (2003) Preservice teachers' awareness of multiculturalism and diversity. *The High School Journal* 87(1): 63-70.
- Orzolek C (2008) *Navigating the paradox of assessment in Music Education*. Chicago: GIA Publication, Inc.
- Saidon Z, Shah S (2014) Developing an Assessment and Certification System for Malaysian Traditional Music Based on the International Graded Music Examinations Model: Challenges & Concerns. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 141: 561-565.
- Swanson RK (2006) Music assessment update. *Bluegrass Music News* 57(4): 43.
- Szego CK (2005) Praxial foundation of multicultural music education. In DJ Elliott (Ed.), *Praxial music education: Reflections and dialogues*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press pp. 196-208.

22. Sue DW, Sue D (2013) *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory & practice* (6th ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley.
23. Tochluk S (2010) *Witnessing whiteness: The need to talk about race and how to do it*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
24. Viega M, Hadley S (2013) Direct encounters: Challenging my sense of self as a good, moral person. In S. Hadley (Ed.), *Experiencing race as a music therapist: Personal narratives*. Gilsum, NH: Barcelona Publishers.
25. Volk T (1998) *Music, education, and multiculturalism: foundations and principles*. New York: Oxford University Press.
26. Walker R (1996) Music education freed from colonialism: a new praxis, *International Journal of Music Education* 27: 2-15.

Appendix 1

The Multicultural Music Education Test

1. Most of ancient Chinese music was based on the Pentatonic scale. What are the five notes of the pentatonic scale?

- a) C, D, E, F, G b) C, D, E, G, A c) C, D, E, F, A d) C, D, G, A, B

2. Since the last half of the 19th century, theatres in India experienced a boost in numbers and practice. Which of the following is the most famous India music theater?

- a) Hollywood b) Beijing Opera c) Symphony d) Bollywood

3. Which of the following type of music doesn't belong to Jazz music?

- a) Blues b) Bebop c) Chicago style d) Concerto

4. Which of the following musical instrument is NOT frequently used in Beijing Opera

- a) single-skin drum (单皮鼓) b) Chinese large gong (大锣)
c) Jinghu (京胡) d) Bassoon (低音管 低音管)

5. What of the following is the most popular music instrument use in early Jazz Music?

- a) Banjo b) Harpsichord c) Organ d) Harp

6. Which of the following is NOT form of vocal styles?

- a) Aria b) Recitative c) Pizzicato d) Arioso

7. Which of the following music style is NOT associated with "voice"?

- a) Cantata b) Oratorio c) Opera d) basso continuo

8. Andrew Lloyd Webber is a famous English composer of musical theatre. Which of the following musical is his music composition?

- a) Les Misérables b) Miss Saigon c) The Phantom of the Opera d) Beauty and the Beast

9. Which of the following Chinese musical instruments is "woodwind instrument"?

- a) Pipa (琵琶) b) Erhu (二胡) c) Guzheng (古筝) d) Bāngdi (梆笛)

10. Which of the following international music methods focuses on folk song?

- a) Orff Music Method b) Kodaly Music Method
c) Dalcroze Music Method d) Suzuki Music Method

11. Which of the following music instruments do you normally use in your music class? (multiple choice)

- a) Recorder b) Piano c) Melodica d) others_____

12. Which of the following city was "Motown Music" originated in America?

- a) New York City b) Detroit c) Los Angeles d) Miami

13. Which of the following music instrument is NOT Africa percussion instrument?

- a) Djembe b) Rattles c) Shakers d) Kora

14. Which traditional music influenced the creation of the blues, gospel and jazz?

- a) Europe b) Africa c) Latin America d) Asia

15. Which of the following types of music originated in North America?

- a) Jazz b) Blues c) Bluegrass d) Hip Hop

16. "Samisen" is one of the most used and famous Japanese music instruments. What type of music instrument does it belong?

- a) string instrument b) woodwind instrument, c) percussion instrument,
d) brass instrument

17. Which American composers used jazz music techniques in his music composition?

- a) Gershwin b) Verdi c) Handel d) Beethoven

18. Which of the following is a minor scale?

- a) C, D, E, F, G, A, B b) C, D, E, G, A, c) A, B, C, D, E, F, G#, A, d) C, D, G, A, B

19. "Riverdance" is a theatrical show consisting mainly of traditional Irish music and dance.

What types of dance is that?

- a) Ballet b) Tap Dance c) Street Dance d) Ballroom

20. Which of these is a Chinese Instrument?

- a) Shekere b) Marimba c) Pi Pa d) Djembe