

THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC EDUCATION ON CHINESE STUDENTS' PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR: A CASE STUDY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN FIRST-TIER CITIES

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ABSTRACT – Music is a universal aspect of all cultures and positively impacts prosocial behaviour. However, current research on this topic lacks a focus on Chinese college music students and an analysis of the influence of music courses on their prosocial behaviour. Previous studies have confirmed the positive impact of music on students' mental health, but most of these studies were conducted in other countries and not in China. As a result, there is a relative lack of research on whether music education for college students in China's first-tier cities actively promotes their prosocial behaviour. This paper will explore the relationship between modern music education in colleges and universities and its influence on prosocial behaviour among the educated. Specifically, it will examine how the music curriculum affects the prosocial behaviour of college students. This cross-sectional study will involve a sample of 1000 college students from first-tier cities who are enrolled in modern music education programs. The study aims to demonstrate that modern music education can improve the prosocial behaviour of college students and that positive and negative emotions and prosocial cognition play a significant intermediary role in this improvement.

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INTRODUCTION

This study aims to develop an analytical framework to investigate the impact of modern music education on prosocial behaviour among students in first-tier urban universities in China while also analyzing the role of emotion and cognition in this influence. The integration of modern media technology has transformed how music education is delivered, and this education has been found to affect students' emotions, cognition, and behaviour (Váradi, 2022). However, there is a lack of research on the prosocial impact of modern music education on college students. As a course that fosters students' appreciation, creation, training, and performance skills, music education in colleges and universities should not only meet the requirements of core literacy but also incorporate social humanistic and professional content and adapt to the innovative trends in music teaching in the new era (Yi, 2022; Pierce, 2015). However, preliminary investigations have identified issues with the general course of modern music education, such as a lack of social knowledge and professional content (Jiang, 2022). The current research results lack the research object of Chinese college music students and the analysis of music courses' influence mechanism on students' prosocial behaviour. Therefore, this study aims to collect data on the modern music education and prosocial behaviour scores of college students through online questionnaire surveys. It proposes that music type and rhythm may affect the prosocial behaviour of college students through emotional and cognitive mediation.

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Prosocial or altruistic behaviour refers to behaviour that conforms to social norms and benefits others without any immediate benefit to the actor. The term "prosocial behaviour" was first coined by Westen in 1972 to encompass all acts that help others and society, including sympathy, donation, cooperation, praise, and comfort. Muson and Eisenberg (1977) define prosocial behaviour as any act aimed at helping the interests of other individuals or groups, such as offering assistance, protection, sacrifice, generosity, loyalty, responsibility, and respect for the rights and feelings of others. An individual's prosocial behaviour is determined by a combination of internal motivation, external environment, perception of the external environment, and selective behavioural response (Yu, 2004; Kawamura et al., 2021; Olivero, 2021). Therefore, a complex interplay of these factors.

MODERN MUSIC EDUCATION

Modern music education has undergone significant changes with the integration of information technology and music education in the era of "Internet +." This integration has led to four main differences in music education in colleges and universities: teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching methods, and teaching models (Cui & Bai, 2022; Camlin & Lisboa, 2021). On the one hand, this integration has enriched the materials and teaching methods of music education, providing students with a broader music-humanistic background that cannot be replicated in a traditional classroom setting. On the other hand, the diversification of audio-visual and communication modes, personalization of music teaching, and the time-space span of interactive communication offered by modern music education help college students construct a more comprehensive and systematic understanding of music and the world. They can communicate in online community interaction with a more open attitude, which helps to form a positive emotional attitude (Platz & Kopiez, 2012).

THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF EMOTION

According to the emotion maintenance hypothesis, individuals experiencing positive emotions are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour because helping others can prolong their positive mood. In addition, when prosocial behaviour is perceived as pleasant, people who have experienced positive emotions are more likely to engage in such behaviour as they expect it to maintain their positive emotional state (Berman et al., 2022). On the other hand, the negative state mitigation model suggests that individuals experiencing negative emotions can alleviate the effects of their negative mood by helping others (Zhao et al., 2022). However, Carlson and Miller's (1987) meta-analysis of 47 studies did not support this model. Numerous experiments have supported the notion that positive emotions stimulate prosocial behaviour. For example, Rosenhan (1981) found that adults randomly assigned to experience positive emotions offered more help than those who did not. Furthermore, individuals who experience positive emotions daily are likelier to spend time and energy on volunteer work. This suggests that people are motivated to engage in behaviours that maintain and improve their positive emotional states, and prosocial behaviour is one such behaviour. Therefore, emotion plays a significant role in the influence of music education on prosocial behaviours.

THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF COGNITION

Music education can significantly impact individual prosocial behaviour through cognitive approaches (Zhao, 2022; Gate & Zhao, 2022). With the advent of online learning, music education has taken a different form from traditional classroom teaching. Online learning is a carefully designed and organised educational form accessible to everyone and can be organically integrated with offline classroom instruction (Huang et al., 2021). Online learning can facilitate deep learning, mobilise high-order thinking skills centred on learners, and help achieve high-order cognitive goals (Su & Wang, 2019). In addition, using music courses, pro-social music interaction, and games on Internet education platforms can positively impact empathy cognition (Jing et al., 2017). The impact of music on cognition has been studied by Ruth (2019), who hypothesised that attention plays a mediating role in the listening process and affects behavioural results. Recipients can be influenced through two routes, namely, the central and peripheral routes. Unfocused listeners, who rely more on pre-existing knowledge, are likely to take the peripheral route. Therefore, it can be concluded that cognition plays a crucial role in the influence of music education on pro-social behaviours.

After reviewing and analysing the literature, this study suggests that modern music education is an essential tool for enhancing students' pro-social behaviour. With its innovative teaching methods, extensive and diverse music resources, and various forms of learning and community communication, modern music education provides the necessary elements for students to develop positive emotions and pro-social cognition, which in turn influences the formation of pro-social behaviour. By exploring modern music education, utilising online communities, pro-social music audio-visual materials, and games, students' empathy ability and pro-social cognition can be significantly improved in the internet environment. This, in turn, stimulates positive emotions and further improves their pro-social behaviour.

pro-social behaviour. Lastly, educators may explore innovative teaching models, such as interdisciplinary integration and musical communities, to expand the application possibilities of music courses. This can elevate the societal impact of music education and foster students' pro-social behaviour development.

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