

# The Influence of Orff Teaching Method on Preschool Children's Music Education in Western Guangdong

Xuena Zhang, Elmer Eigio

*University of Baguio, Baguio City, Philippines*

**Abstract:** *This study explores the application of the Orff Teaching Method in preschool music education in western Guangdong and its influence on young children. Field investigations confirm that this method, centered on elementality, comprehensiveness and improvisation, can significantly enhance children's musical interest, language expression ability and overall development level. In the implementation process, the Application of the Orff Teaching method remains insufficient in terms of improvisation and cultural localization. Prominent problems exist in teaching practice, including inadequate systematic training for teachers, limited teaching resources, tight class hours and difficulties in catering to the individual differences of young children. Based on these findings, this study puts forward targeted strategies such as localized teacher training, enriching teaching resources, integrating local musical elements, deepening home-kindergarten cooperation and optimizing process-oriented teaching evaluation, so as to improve the practical effect of this method in local application.*

**Keywords:** *Orff teaching method; Preschool music education; Western Guangdong; holistic development; teaching strategy*

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the importance of preschool education has gained increasing recognition globally, with particular emphasis placed on fostering a well-rounded development of young children. Music education, as an integral part of this comprehensive development, plays a crucial role in nurturing children's emotional, social, and cognitive skills. Yet current preschool music teaching often relies on rigid, skill-focused routines that fail to align with young children's playful, intuitive learning traits—this disconnect risks dampening their innate musical interest and hindering holistic growth. Exploring optimized, child-centered music teaching strategies thus becomes vital: it can unlock music's developmental potential for preschoolers and provide actionable guidance for early education practitioners. For preschool children, music education is not only about learning specific musical skills but also about encouraging creativity, enhancing communication, and promoting self-expression. However, the methods and approaches used to teach music at the preschool level vary widely, with some proving more effective in engaging children and fostering their musical abilities than others. In this exploration, the Orff Schulwerk approach highlights its significant value. (Burns, 2020). It emphasizes integrated experiences through play, language, movement, and instrumental playing, guiding young children to perceive music in a natural and creative way, which perfectly aligns with their innate tendency to "learn through play." The localization of the Orff Teaching Method has been extensively discussed in academic circles (Chen et al., 2020; Luo, 2023; Mo, 2024). It provides a systematic and vibrant practical pathway for truly achieving child-centered, holistically-developing preschool music education.

## 2. Research Foundation and Design

### 2.1 Theoretical Foundation

This study selected ten public kindergartens in western Guangdong as research sites. The participants included principals, teachers, and some parents. A total of 70 questionnaires were distributed and all were returned as valid responses, resulting in a 100% valid response rate. The participants represented different roles within kindergarten education, providing a relatively comprehensive understanding of the current situation of preschool music education.

## 2.2 Research Instrument

The study used a questionnaire survey as the primary data collection method. The questionnaire mainly focused on three aspects: The application status of the Orff Teaching Method in preschool music teaching; The influence of Orff music activities on children's development; The main difficulties encountered in teaching practice; The questionnaire included single-choice and multiple-choice questions to obtain objective and quantifiable data.

## 2.3 Data Analysis Methods

The collected data were organized and analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including frequency and percentage analysis. This approach helped provide a quantitative description of the implementation of the Orff Teaching Method in kindergarten music education and improved the objectivity and reliability of the research findings.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Application Status of the Orff Teaching Method

The survey results indicate that the Orff Teaching Method has been applied to some extent in preschool music education in western Guangdong. Regarding the frequency of music activities, 57.1% of kindergartens conduct Orff music activities one to two times per week, while 22.9% organize such activities three to four times per week or more frequently. However, about 20% of kindergartens reported relatively low activity frequency, suggesting differences in curriculum implementation among institutions. The frequency distribution is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency of Orff Music Teaching Activities in Kindergartens

Option	Frequency	Percentage
every day	6	8.6%
3-4 times a week	10	14.3%
1-2 times a week	40	57.1%
1-2 times a month	5	7.1%
rarely carried out	9	12.9%

In terms of teaching forms, music games, rhythm training, singing activities, and instrumental performance are the most commonly used methods. Among them, music games account for 79.17%, rhythm training and singing activities both account for 77.08%, and instrumental performance accounts for 75%. These teaching forms reflect the Orff approach's emphasis on participatory and play-based learning. However, improvisation activities are used less frequently, with only 22.92% of teachers reporting regular implementation. This suggests that creative expression has not yet been fully integrated into classroom teaching. The main forms of Orff music teaching activities are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Main Forms of Orff Music Teaching Activities

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Rhythm exercises (such as clapping, stomping, etc.)	37	77.08%
instrument playing (using Orff instruments)	36	75%
singing activities	37	77.08%
music games	38	79.17%
dance and rhythmic activities	24	50%
improvisation	11	22.92%
other	0	0%

Regarding teaching resources, 85.42% of teachers mainly rely on purchased teaching materials, 79.17% use online resources, 62.5% develop their own materials, and 54.17% obtain resources through professional training. Overall, kindergartens have formed a multi-channel resource system, although teaching resources still need further enrichment. The sources of teaching resources are summarized in Table 3.

*Table 3: Main Sources of Teaching Resources for Orff Music Teaching*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching materials and teaching aids purchased by kindergartens	41	85.42%
teacher-made teaching materials	30	62.5%
online resources	38	79.17%
materials obtained from training	26	54.17%
other	1	2.08%

### 3.2 Impact on Children's Development

The results show that the Orff Teaching Method has a significant positive impact on children's development.

First, in terms of musical interest, 95.84% of respondents believe that Orff music activities significantly enhance children's interest in music. Through interactive activities such as games, movement, and instrumental performance, children can experience the enjoyment of musical learning in a relaxed and engaging atmosphere. Changes in young children's musical interest are shown in Table 4.

*Table 4: Changes in Young Children's Musical Interest after Implementing the Orff Teaching Method*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
interest has significantly increased	17	35.42%
interest has improved	29	60.42%
no significant change	2	4.17%
interest has decreased	0	0%

Second, regarding language development, 97.92% of respondents believe that Orff teaching activities help improve children's language expression ability. Many music activities incorporate rhythmic speech, lyric creation, and storytelling, providing rich opportunities for children to practice verbal communication. The impact of Orff music courses on young children's language expression ability is shown in Table 5.

*Table 5: Changes in Young Children's Language Expression Ability after Learning Orff Music Courses*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
significant progress	15	31.25%
have made progress	32	66.67%
no change	1	2.08%
uncertain	0	0%

Furthermore, 95.83% of respondents believe that the Orff Teaching Method promotes children's holistic development, including cognitive ability, emotional expression, and social interaction. These results demonstrate that the Orff approach contributes not only to musical development but also to children's overall growth. The role of the Orff Teaching Method in young children's holistic development is presented in Table 6.

*Table 6: The Role of the Orff Teaching Method in Young Children's Holistic Development*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
the role is very important	16	33.33%
have a certain effect	30	62.5%
have a relatively small effect	2	4.17%
almost no effect	0	0%

### 3.3 Challenges in Teaching Practice

Although the Orff Teaching Method has achieved positive outcomes in practice, the survey also reveals several challenges.

First, teacher training remains insufficient. Although 81.4% of teachers have participated in some form of training, only 21.4% have received systematic professional training. Most training sessions are short-term and lack continuity. Teachers' training status is presented in Table 7.

*Table 7: Teachers' Training Status in the Orff Music Teaching Method*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
have participated in professional and systematic training	15	21.4%
have participated in short-term training	42	60%
only understand through self-study	8	11.4%
have never been exposed to relevant training	5	7.1%

Second, individual differences among children present significant teaching challenges. About 87.5% of teachers reported difficulties in accommodating children with different developmental levels during music activities. The main difficulties are shown in Table 8.

*Table 8: Main Difficulties Encountered in Orff Music Teaching Practice*

Main difficulties	Frequency	Percentage
Great individual differences among young children, making it difficult to cater to all;	42	87.5%
Lack of professional training and insufficient mastery of the teaching method;	35	72.92%
Limited teaching time;	33	68.75%
Insufficient teaching resources;	32	66.67%
Parents' lack of understanding and support for the teaching method.	12	25%
other	0	0%

In addition, limited teaching time, insufficient teaching resources, and a lack of professional guidance also restrict the effective implementation of the Orff Teaching Method.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the Orff Teaching Method has considerable value in preschool music education in western Guangdong. Its emphasis on participatory experience and integrated learning helps stimulate children's interest in music and promotes improvements in language expression and overall developmental abilities. (Kayili & Kuşcu, 2018; Lim, 2023).

However, the results also reveal that teachers tend to rely more on structured activities, while improvisational and creative activities are used less frequently. This may be related to insufficient professional training and limited teaching experience.

Moreover, the integration of local cultural elements into Orff music activities remains relatively limited. In fact, incorporating local folk songs, nursery rhymes, and traditional musical elements into music teaching can enrich the curriculum and enhance children's cultural identity.

Therefore, strengthening teacher training, developing localized teaching resources, and optimizing curriculum design are essential steps for improving the effectiveness of Orff-based preschool music education.

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the application of the Orff Teaching Method in preschool music education in western Guangdong through a survey of ten public kindergartens. The results show that the Orff approach has significant educational value. It effectively enhances children's interest in music, improves language expression ability, and promotes comprehensive development.

However, several challenges remain in teaching practice, including insufficient teacher training, limited teaching resources, inadequate localization of cultural content, and difficulties in addressing children's individual differences.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed: First, establish a systematic teacher training system to improve teachers' understanding and application of the Orff teaching philosophy. Second, enrich teaching resources and encourage teachers to develop diverse music activity materials. Third, integrate local musical culture into teaching activities to promote the localization of preschool music curricula. Fourth, strengthen home-school cooperation and encourage parents to participate in children's musical learning. Fifth, optimize formative evaluation methods and focus more on children's participation and developmental progress in music activities. Through these

measures, the practical effectiveness of the Orff Teaching Method in western Guangdong can be further enhanced, there by promoting the overall quality of preschool education in the region.

## References

- [1] Burns, A. M. (2020). *ORFF Schulwerk*. In *Oxford University Press eBooks* (pp. 139–142). <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190055646.003.0007>
- [2] Chen Xi, et al (2020). *A Brief Discussion on the Practical Research of Orff Music Teaching Method in Kindergartens*. *Educational Science Development*, 2(2), 108–109. <https://doi.org/10.36012/sde.v2i2.1250>
- [3] Gökhan Kayili, & Özden Kuşcu. (2018). *The effects of Orff-based attention-enhancing music education programme on impulsive preschool children's cognitive tempo*. *Early Child Development and Care*, 190(3), 390–399. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2018.1475367>
- [4] Jiang, M. (2020). *Application of ORFF Music Teaching Method in Piano education of Preschool Education Major*. *2020 International Conference on Educational Training and Educational Phenomena (ICETEP2020)*. <https://doi.org/10.38007/proceedings.0000913>
- [5] Jie Luo. (2023). *Research on the integration of ORFF teaching method localization and preschool music teaching in colleges and universities*. *Transactions on Comparative Education*, 5(5). <https://doi.org/10.23977/trance.2023.050507>
- [6] Lim, J. K. (2023). *The effect of comprehensive early childhood music play based on Orff's teaching method on emotional regulation abilities of infants*. *The Korean Early Childhood Education and Care Society*, 8(2), 63–82. <https://doi.org/10.52384/jecec.2023.8.2.63>
- [7] Mo, C. (2024). *ORFF Music Teaching Method in Domestic (China) Early Childhood Music Education Status and Strategy Analysis*. *The Educational Review USA*, 8(1), 89–93. <https://doi.org/10.26855/er.2024.01.015>