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The Effects of Amateur Choir Education on Children's Citizenship and Character Development

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to study the effects which Afyon Kocatepe University State Conservatory 9-14 Years Old Children Choir has had on children's education about citizenship and character development in two years. Amateur Music/Choir education thought to be of vital importance for children's acquiring lots of humans values – in other words citizenship and character development – such as attitudes like listening, smooth talking, being respectful, using the time efficiently, loving music, doing favors, getting to know themselves, taking responsibility in groups, acting together; also along with the types of love like of nature, family, people, environment, country, nation, animals and so on. Via this study, I will try to reveal what kind of changes the students who sing at the age range of 9-14 have shown in two years in their attitudes. The study is a descriptive one. The data will be derived from the resource searching and questionnaires applied to the families of the members of the Afyon Kocatepe University State Conservatory 9-14 Years Old Children Choir. The study is of capital importance regarding the determination of the effects of music education on children's citizenship and character education.

Keywords: Education, Children Development, Music/Choir

Citizenship

Citizenship means being a part of politic institutions that are generally countries. In constitutional countries, those who live in a specific country are supposed to be bounded to that very country by citizenship in order to be able to take advantage of the rights promised in the constitution by the government.

Character

Character means a peculiar structure of an object or an individual, a basic indication and a main feature, makeup, character and moral quality which separates him or her from others. Character is also a combination of qualities providing an individual with self-hegemony, enabling him or her to be in harmony with himself/herself, and making him to remain consistent in his mentality and attitudes.

Education

Education is a combination of studies by means of which an individual's mental, physical and social abilities and behaviours could be improved in an identified direction or it is a combination of studies that provides him with new abilities, attitudes and information in relation to certain objectives. (Akyuz 1994)

Education is a significant process that shapes, guides, improves and also helps individuals attain an acceptable status in a society. This process cannot be delayed or evaded.

Character Education

Character education is a character basis that begins forming during the first six months of a human being, moral development during primary school era and character shaping studies that will bring in the ability and awareness of using these skills at high school. In other words, it is a general term referring to systematic and integrated studies that will create; **Ethical Instruction - Ethical Sense – Ethical Behaviour** cycle within the individual by considering firstly the family and the dynamic effects of school and environmental factors.

Citizenship Education

Citizenship education is the studies emphasizing the complementary characteristics of a society in which an individual lives, featuring his or her ethical values and which are conducted in order for his or her being a good citizen. Within this education, moral and social values such as devotion to family, homeland, environment, animals and being respectful and helpful are desired to be given to an individual.

Music And Musical Education

Music, one of the most significant branches of art, has been the way by which people and societies have expressed and explained themselves and also through which they have negotiated with each other since the ancient times. In this sense, music, a cultural element, has made itself clear in every area in a sophisticated and complex way, and has gained an indispensable role and importance in human life (Akt: Yavuzer: 2007)

Since the ancient times, philosophers, physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists and pedagogues supported that music has an important role in individual's mental and physical

development, and it is also of great value with regards to education and treatment. As W. Howard put forward “a musical activity creates a spontaneous effect on our behaviours. (Akt: Yavuzer: 2007)

Music has certain functions in human life. These functions can be categorized in five main groups as individualistic, social, cultural, economic and educational functions. As for the educational sense, music can be defines as the process that brings in individuals certain musical terminal behaviours via their own musical experiences or the process that alters and improves individual’s musical behaviours via his or her own experience (Ucan: 1997)

Musical education is separated into three main groups from the general to the specific as “general musical education”, “volunteer (amateur) musical education” and vocational musical education. General musical education underlies the volunteer and amateur musical education and it includes a kind of musical education for any age, stage and individual. Amateur musical education is aimed for those who have unprofessional enthusiasm for music; and as for vocational musical education is for those who have chosen the whole musical field or a branch of that field as a profession for himself or herself. (Ucan: 1997).

The Educational Role Of Music On Citizenship And Character Education

All children are sensitive to appeal of music, and educational attempts aim to develop this tendency. In proportion with other arts, music is more acceptable to a child. In Plato’s expression “Being an art educationist should precede everything”. Because it enables the artistic and aesthetic satisfaction related with formation of the personality and moral satisfaction to develop. (Yavuzer: 2007).

Music plays an important role in a child’s character development and socializing. He or she is always in the music with the sounds he or she hears around his or her environment. Rhythm and sound studies should help the child be pushed into a musical environment by listening to sounds in the nature, listening to music, and singing, and dramatizing methods of the songs he or she sings. This kind of studies means the child the express his or her emotions via music (Arslan: 2005).

We can summarize the children’s attainments taking amateur musical education in this way;

- Child’s bearings in relation to aesthetic will improve,
- The child who takes amateur musical education will not surrender to popular culture, will not listen only one kind of music and will choose quality music among different ones,
- The child who takes amateur musical education will always seek the good, truth and beauty, and will gain useful habitual and will be able to express himself or herself. He or she will be content with himself or herself and will not have difficulty in communicating with his or her friends and with the environment he or she lives in,
- The child who takes amateur musical education will use his or her free time in an effective and productive way.

Especially in musical activities performed as a group, students’ finding a place for themselves in the group, having o voice and taking responsibilities bear great importance.

Students have to attend the choir classes on time as everyone else, and they also need to bring their files in which their notes present. The choirists who have to be careful about what they eat and drink for their voice health should behave in this sense. This is a necessary activity for their voice health. During rehearsals students acquire awareness by silently listening, if there are any, to their friends singing in choir.

Choirs

Choir means a group that gathers in order to vocalise a musical work created in a monophonic or polyphonic way. One of the main aspects of the musical modernization process which started with Atatürk's leadership is no doubt modernization in producing group music. Choir music is of top priority in making group music. The social functions of choir are basically founded on the social relations that have musical essence or on the musical relations that have social essence. These relations as a whole improve the behaviours of unity among the choir members, being together, being in a union, cooperation and solidarity, consolidation integration, coalition, separation of power and collaboration, being in a group, living as a group, carrying out works as a group, working as a group, achieving as a group, being empathetical, tolerant, compromisable, respectful and affectionate to each other. All these focus on the relationship which we can call as choir fellowship. Other social functions of choir work in a way that is based on choir fellowship. It is for this reason, being a choir fellow or making a choir fellow functions underlie social functions. (Uçan: 2001)

Choirs are musical groups which gather not accidentally but which are formed by well-organized individuals, which have gained certain qualities, which have physiologic, sociologic and democratic freedom in their structures and functions and which use the singing language as an communication and interaction instrument. (Apaydın: 2006).

We can classify the formation of the choirs under two main titles;

- a) according to the kind of composition they vocalize and its artistic features, (artistic)
- b) according to the members' age, sex and quantity that form the choir, (structural)

Some of the artistic choirs formed according to the kind of composition they vocalize are named as:

- Folk Music Choirs
- Jazz Music Choirs
- Madrigal Choirs
- Religious Music Choirs
- Protest and Popular Music Choirs

Some of the structural choirs formed according to their members' age, sex and quantity that form the choir are named as:

- Juniors' Choirs (age 5-8)
- Children's Choirs (age 8-14)
- Youth's Choirs (age 15-25)
- Adult's Choirs (over the age 25)

Afyon Kocatepe University State Conservatory Children's Choir

Afyon Kocatepe University Children's Choir of State Conservatory (age 9-14) started its studies in 2007-2008 education season. The children living in the Afyon city, attending different primary schools and enjoying singing and having an ear for music form the choir itself. AKU Children's Choir of State Conservatory contributes the social and cultural life of Afyon city with its studies within the year.

The Lyrics-Structure Qualities Of The Songs Taught In The Children's Choir

It has great importance that the tessitura's of the children songs that are taught in AKU Children's Choir should be appropriate for children for their voice health. The compositions that the choir is working with should be determined as identical songs to cultural accumulation that is desired to be expressed. In the lyrics, improvement for the subjects such

as, nature, people, zoolatry are emphasized and the works the subjects of which are Nation, Homeland, Atatürk and The Republic are included. In this sense, for the individuals who sing the choir improvements such as self-confidence, acting in harmony, self-activating, speaking fluently and correctly, enjoying the music, sharing, being respectful and affectionate, nature, family, people, homeland, and zoolatry is provided.

Problems And Sub-Problems

Problem: What are the effects of amateur choir education on citizenship and character development?

The solution of the sub-problems is needed for the solution of this problem:

1- What are the contributions of the amateur musical education to children's citizenship development?

2- What are the effects of the amateur musical education on children's character development?

The Objective Of The Study

This study has the objective to find out whether the amateur choir training has an effect on children's citizenship and character development and to express whether there is a change in their aesthetic values and behaviours by singing music/song.

The Importance Of The Study

This study is of high significance in relation to see the effects of amateur choir training on children's citizenship and character development and in relation to express what kind of behaviour they attain in their life by singing music/song in.

Population And Sampling

The children living in Afyon city and attending primary school between 9-14 ages form the cosmos of the study and the children taking choir training forms the sampling.

Method

The qualitative information (data) used in the study is achieved by source scanning method and the quantitative information is gained by surveying method. The surveys were applied to 23 families that participated in the study.

Findings And The Interpretation

The results gained after applying survey to the voluntary families whose children are taking amateur choir training are listed below.

Judging from the questions addressed to the families in order to find out the effects of the amateur choir training on children's citizenship and character development it was understood that children's behaviours have altered in a positive way since they began to take choir training.

The Effects Of Amateur Choir Training On Children's Citizenship Development

Families have expressed that with the choir training there have been certain changes in children's behaviour related to their citizenship development, and especially that there have been positive effects on the love for the country, on the issues such as being protective for the environment and being helpful and also they have stressed that there have been remarkable changes in the issues of family love, zoolatry, using Turkish language properly and being respectful to elders. This proves the fact that amateur choir training has an important role in children's character development.

The Effects Of Amateur Choir Training On Children's Character Development

Families stressed that by amateur choir training children has showed improvement in acting in union, taking responsibilities within and outside the group, using the properly, being participative, doing people favours and expressing themselves. Besides, it has been said that they gained the habit of listening to music and thanks to this their aesthetic emotions have developed and they became to be more selective. Addition to this, it was stated that this situation has a positive effect on their school subjects. This has shown that the amateur choir training has a positive effect on children's character development.

Result And Suggestions

This study has been conducted in order to find out whether the amateur choir training is effective in children's character development and to stress the importance of choir training. From the findings determined related to the first sub-problem it can be said that the students taking amateur choir training changed in the issues of family, homeland, patriotism and zoolatry and they behaved more meticulously in using Turkish, and that there have been positive changes in protecting the environment, being helpful and being respectful to the people around him or her, and it can also be said that the amateur choir training is of great importance for these values to be rooted. In this sense, more importance should be attached to the amateur choir training and children's choirs should be established in schools, in private or government establishments and families should be encouraged.

From the findings determined related to the second sub-problem, It is thought that amateur choir training bears an important role for student's development as social individuals, for formation of their character and also for their self-awareness. It was observed that the students taking choir training took responsibilities within and outside the group, they could expressed themselves through music as well as through words, and they behaved more selectively for the sake of finding the good and beautiful. Judging from this, it is thought that the amateur choir training has great importance in children's character development. In this sense again, choir training at young ages should be considered as vital.

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