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## The Impact of Songs on Effective Learning of the Pre-Scholars in Uyo Metropolis

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BY

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of this paper was to investigate the impact of songs on pre-scholars learning effectiveness. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study with the population comprising of musical teachers, classroom teachers, and pre-scholars as well. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 30 music teachers, 30 class teachers and 60 pre-scholars within learning institutions in Uyo metropolis giving a total of 120 respondents that constituted the sample size for the study. The Instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Impact of Songs on Effective Learning of Pre-Scholars Questionnaire (ISELPSQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test measurement and evaluation from University of Uyo metropolis to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness and completeness for the study. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.80 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as independent t-test analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels. The study concluded that using songs and humor in the classroom has both linguistic and cognitive value for strengthening effective learning acquisition. It helps to develop cross-cultural and interactive communication skills. One of the recommendations made was that since almost all the students like songs, so it can be used as one of the ways to get the students' participation in the teaching-learning process.*

**KEYWORDS:** Pre-Scholars, Songs, Learning effectiveness, Uyo metropolis

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### Introduction

When children are asked which activities they preferred most when learning, we noted that "listening and singing songs" was their preferred activity, and this is good because singing songs have a positive impact on students' motivation and are a rich resource (Ajibade & Ndububa, 2008; Ratnasari, 2007). The reason for this could be that songs create a more interactive and relaxing environment (Larsen-Freeman, 1985; Vosniadou, 2000). In addition,

songs help students to feel safe in a learning environment (Anshel & Kipper, 1988; Lems, 2006). Songs help our brains to concentrate, and process and retain larger amount of information (Sigurðardóttir, 2012). A boring class can become pleasant and interesting with the use of songs, because music gives students a fun and relaxing pause (Iantorno y Papa 1979). In addition, the use of songs not only plays an important role in learning another language (Rosová, 2007), but also increases the students' interest for learning another language.

Many studies argue that songs have benefits that stimulate learning (Salcedo, 2002) and that songs make learning a second language easier (Defaz, 2011). Most studies focus on the benefits of music or songs for vocabulary acquisition (Joyce, 2011; Medina, 1990; Schunk, 1999), retention of information, involuntary mental exercise, grammar (Rosová, 2007), pronunciation (Sigurðardóttir, 2012) or familiarization with the target culture (Salcedo, 2002). Students can learn new vocabulary or improve their pronunciation if songs are used in class. All in all, songs can help to learn a new language because the student's learning process becomes unconscious. While many studies discuss the benefits of using music or songs to teach a language (Bartle, 1962), very few focus centrally on motivation. These studies deal with this subject from a broader point of view, for example, the use of songs for learning English (Rosová, 2007) or even for learning languages in general (Sigurðardóttir 2012). Although some of these studies mention motivation (Rosová, 2007; Salcedo, 2002), it is not their core element. It is important to remember that "students' motivation and interest is essential for learning" (Gardner, 1985; Iantorno & Papa 1979; Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 129). Many children find listening to songs entertaining. Hence, their interest in learning a new language could be enhanced given that songs provide a more fun and dynamic way to learn: "the addition of songs to the foreign language classroom as a teaching method may be a way to focus student attention, and produce a more committed learner" (Failoni, 1993).

### **Statement of Problem**

As students advance in their education, their established and comfortable ways of knowing, thinking, and reflection are challenged. It appears that despite what is planned and documented in the early childhood curriculum, practices of teachers and events going on in the classroom settings are not being realized. Therefore, this paper will serve as a useful material in the adoption of songs for effective learning atmosphere.

### **Research Objective**

The main purpose of the study was to explore the impacts of songs on the learning effectiveness of pre-scholars in Uyo metropolis. Specifically, the study sought:

1. To find out the extent of application of songs in teaching Pre-scholars in nursery schools in Uyo metropolis
2. To find out the influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-scholars in Uyo metropolis

### **Research Question**

1. What extent is the application of songs in teaching Pre-scholars in nursery schools in Uyo metropolis?

2. What is the influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-scholars in Uyo metropolis?

### **Research Hypothesis**

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-Scholars in Uyo metropolis

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Concept of Songs**

The word, 'music' is derived from the Greek word, μουσική ("art of the Muses") Mousike et al (2015). In Greek mythology, the nine Muses were the goddesses who inspired literature, science, and the arts and who were the source of the knowledge embodied in the poetry, song-lyrics, and myths in the Greek culture. Evolutionary scientists believe that a musical culture would have helped prehistoric human species to survive because the music coordinates emotions, helps important messages to be communicated, motivates people to identify with a group, and motivates individuals to support other group members.

Music is one way to minimize tension and hostility. Music always involves various components, among others, melody, chord, tempo, rhythm, instrument, even language or lyrics of a nature. Music became a unifying language among nations. Music like this has long been done by experts, as did the era of modern composers. Today's modern day composers produce works that have crossed their own cultural boundaries (that is, in this case, the conventional music of the European-scholastic). Malay music in Indonesia was born in the 50s. Usually Malay music in Indonesia is dominated by the game of tambourine, gambus, gong and strains serunai (Pratama, 2014). The origin of music itself is very difficult to determine because in all probability, it is likely to have begun with singing and clapping or beating the hands on different surfaces, for which there is no of course no archaeological record. However, between at least 60,000 and 30,000 years ago, ancient humans experienced a type of 'cultural explosion' – they started creating art in the form of paintings on cave walls, jewellery and ornaments, and to bury their dead ceremonially. If we assume that these new forms of behaviour reflect the emergence of intentionality, then music as we know it must also have emerged at least during this period. Music is performed with a vast range of instruments and vocal techniques ranging from singing to rapping; there are solely instrumental pieces, solely vocal pieces (such as songs without instrumental accompaniment) and pieces that combine singing and instruments.

The creation, performance, significance, and even the definition of music vary according to culture and social context. Indeed, throughout history, some new forms or styles of music have been criticized as "not being music", including Beethoven's Grosse Fuge string quartet in 1825, (Watson 2009) early jazz in the beginning of the 1900s (Reiland Rabaka 2012) and hardcore punk in the 1980s. (Manabe 2015)

#### **Concept of Effective Learning**

Defining effectiveness, teaching effectiveness and learning effectiveness can be complex and controversial. 'Effectiveness' is a contested term that can evoke strong emotions because of its perceived links with notions of professional competency and high stakes accountability in some

systems. It may question individual teachers' beliefs about their professional autonomy. According to Baker (1986) Notions of what constitutes high quality or good teaching, the idea that teaching is an art or a craft rather than a science, are sometimes used to raise concerns with narrower concepts of effectiveness. However, beliefs about what constitutes 'good' or 'high' quality practice in teaching can vary markedly for different age groups of students, at different times and in different contexts.

Although it may be difficult to ensure all pre-scholars experience high quality teaching, the fact that teachers and teaching make such an important difference to student outcomes and life chances should provide impetus to policymakers and practitioners to address the crucial issues of learning effectiveness, quality teaching and teaching standards. Attracting high quality entrants to the teaching profession, and providing high quality pre-service education and ongoing professional development are important requirements for maintaining and raising standards in teaching. However, they are unlikely to be sufficient to ensure high quality teaching across a system. It is important to recognise that learning is not just an art, but that there is a growing knowledge base from research evidence that can provide relevant guidance to promote effective practice and support improvement to learning. There is a need to reduce the variation in the quality of teaching both within and between schools, and to ensure that vulnerable students at risk of poor educational outcomes experience high quality teaching to enhance their educational life chances.

Darling-Hammond (2010) posited that there are variations in teacher effectiveness among the teachers of a department and in a single school. There are likely to be both some more effective and some less effective teachers in all schools, both in those that are defined as more effective as well as in those that are classed as typical or less effective schools. However, in an effective school it is likely that there are a higher number of teachers who typically use more effective practices. In an ineffective school, the reverse is usually the case; thus one of the most important factors that distinguish effective from ineffective schools is the proportion of effective teachers.

### **Concept of Pre-Scholar**

There are numerous sources of information and data about pre-scholars behaviour and classroom practices that can be drawn upon to provide evidence to inform our understanding of pre-scholar effectiveness. These sources involve a range of data collection methods e.g. classroom observation, interviews, inspection frameworks and judgments by trained professionals, examination and test data about, achievement, policy documentation, and questionnaire surveys. There are also different informants offering perspectives from key stakeholders in the system, including inspectors, school principals, heads of departments, teachers and students.

Although students are the major stakeholders, some authors have expressed scepticism about the appropriateness of using student ratings as a source of evidence about teachers' classroom practice. Such authors stress students' general lack of knowledge about the full context of teaching and raise concerns that student's ratings of individuals may be unduly affected by students' views of teachers' personalities or by students' own grades. However, the validity and reliability of using students' course evaluations to understand teacher effectiveness has been established in a number of studies in various countries, based on various measures (Sammons et al 2006). For example, in Students' Evaluation of Education Quality (SEEQ), there are items

measuring the instructor's enthusiasm (*Instructor was enthusiastic about teaching the course*), organisation (*Course materials were well prepared and carefully explained*), group interaction (*Students were encouraged to participate in class discussions*), or individual rapport (*Instructor had a genuine interest in individual students*). These items closely match items found in other measures used to study different dimensions of teaching in research mentioned in the Measurement challenge section. However, it is uncommon for surveys of students' views to focus only on instruction in the classroom, they may also include what the teacher/instructor does outside the classroom or after the lectures (e.g. items such as: *Feedback on examinations/graded materials was valuable; or: Required readings/texts were valuable*).

### **Types of Songs**

There are many types of music, including popular music, traditional music, art music, music written for religious ceremonies and work songs such as chanteys. Music ranges from strictly organized compositions—such as Classical music symphonies from the 1700s and 1800s—through to spontaneously played improvisational music such as jazz, and avant-garde styles of chance-based contemporary music from the 20th and 21st centuries.

Music comes in many different types and styles ranging from traditional rock music to world pop, easy listening and bluegrass. Many genres have a rich history or geographical significance, a cult following or music roots that go far beyond the 20th century.

There are varieties of music types that can be used in the classroom. The actual choice will depend on the characteristics of the students and their interests. Other factors to consider—such as emotional effects and visual imagery—are briefly discussed next.

**Emotional Effects:** All of these types can evoke or induce anger, excitement, activity, motivation, love, laughter, whimsy, tears, dreams, calmness, relaxation, sleep, and a coma. Music can have powerful emotional effects. Teachers need to decide the effect they want to produce in a given learning situation. Applied inappropriately, the music can distract and decrease learning, even incite students to riot.

**Visual Imagery:** The emotional arousal evoked by music may also be accompanied by visual imagery. There is an individualized jukebox full of memories inside every one of us. Hearing a piece of music automatically brings those special memories into focus like a photograph (digital, of course). Hearing the music alone triggers a response similar to what has been called a “flashbulb memory” (Brown and Kulik 1977; Sierra and Berrios 1999; Winograd and Neisser 1992). Music serves as a retrieval cue for those personal memories. When the teacher presses the “play” button, the students' mental picture buttons are pressed into action. Snapshot images suddenly pop into their minds. These images may provide recollections of any of the following: (a) the person performing the song or composition; (b) the person with whom the student associates a scene from a particular TV program, movie, or musical; (c) the person with whom the student heard it; or (d) the time and place where the student heard it. Other details may be recalled as well. All of this occurs in a nanosecond. This image creates feelings, emotions, and moods related to that previous experience.

**The popular types or genres of songs are listed below**

Blues; Country; Electronic music; Folk; Hip hop; Jazz; Pop; R&B; Rock; Classical music; Reggae music; Metal music; Afro music.

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Background music has been traditionally considered as an effective milieu for studying. Some people cannot effectively study without the presence of some kind of music. Cockerton, et al. (1997) reported on a study whose findings suggested that those participants listening to background music outperformed those in a 'silence condition' on the second administration of intelligence test after the same thirty-five undergraduate students had taken a baseline test. Music can act as a very reliable and potent message carrier. Jensen (2000) states that the value of "embedding lyrics in music is that learning this way activates emotional responses, as well as memory in the auditory cortex". Similarly, student learning in the classroom setting can be very much improved and enhanced by musical infusions. Music, musical elements and songs can serve as powerful pedagogical tools that tend to enthuse students, bring a liveliness and spirit to the classroom and enhance student learning in a pleasurable manner (Binkiewicz, 2006).

Good teachers attempt to provide optimal classroom learning experiences for their students. Toward this end, it is appropriate to integrate as many sensory stimulating activities - like music - as are warranted. This inclusion tends to increase student engagement in the classroom (Maroye & Uhrmacher, 2009). Additionally, Barker (2008) has noted how the advantages of music in the classroom are multifaceted, reaching beyond the obvious properties of tonality, cadence and melody and referring specifically to the lyrics of songs. 'Catchy' lyrics can infuse joy, whimsy, happiness, memorability and fun to classroom activities. Such positive aspects of school cultures and classroom climate should not be underestimated when considering issues of student engagement and learning (Barker, 2008).

### **Methods**

The study was conducted in Uyo Metropolis. An Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study with the population comprising of musical teachers, classroom teachers, and pre-scholars. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 30 music teachers, 30, class teachers and 60 pre-scholars within learning institutions in Uyo metropolis giving a total of 120 respondents that constituted the sample size for the study. The Instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Impact of Songs on Effective Learning of Pre-Scholars Questionnaire "(ISELPSQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test measurement and evaluation from University of Uyo metropolis to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness and completeness for the study. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.80 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as independent t-test analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

### **Results/Discussion**

**Research Question One;** The research question sought to find out the extent of the application of songs in teaching Pre-scholars in nursery schools in Uyo metropolis. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed as seen in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Percentage analysis of the extent of the application of songs in teaching Pre-scholars in nursery schools in Uyo metropolis**

Prevalence Level	Freq	Percentage (%)
Very High Extent	58	48.33**
High Extent	42	35
Low Extent	14	11.67
Very Low Extent	6	5*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**SOURCE: Field survey**

The above table 1 present the percentage analysis of the extent of application of songs in teaching Pre-scholars in nursery schools in Uyo metropolis. From the result, it was observed that the highest percentage of the respondent 58(48.33%) said there is very high extent in the application of songs in teaching Pre-scholars in nursery schools in Uyo metropolis, second to the highest respondents on the subject matter affirmed high extent 42(35%), while the third to the highest number of respondents 14(11.67%) said low extent, and the least number of the respondents 6(5%) said very low extent.

**Research Question Two:** The research question sought to find out the influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-scholars in Uyo metropolis. In order to answer the research question, descriptive analysis was performed on the data (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-scholars in Uyo metropolis.**

Variable	N	Arithmetic mean	Expected mean	r	Remarks
LEARNING	120	13.52	12.5	0.72*	*Moderately strong Relationship
SONGS		17.27	12.5		

**Source: Field Survey**

The above table 2 presents the result of the descriptive analysis of the influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-scholars in Uyo metropolis. The two variables were observed to have moderately strong relationship at 72%. The arithmetic mean for learning (13.52) was observed to be greater than the expected mean score of 12.5. In addition to that, the arithmetic mean as regards songs (17.27) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 12.5. The result therefore means that there is remarkable influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-scholars in Uyo metropolis.

**Hypothesis One:** The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-Scholars in Uyo metropolis. In order to test the hypothesis, regression analysis was performed on the data, (see table 3).

**TABLE 3: Regression Analysis of the influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-Scholars in Uyo metropolis**

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.72a	0.52	0.51	1.09	0.51

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 118; N= 120; critical R-value = 0.197**

The table shows that the calculated R-value 0.72 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.5 alpha levels with 118 degree of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.72 predicts 72% of the influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-Scholars in Uyo metropolis. This rate of percentage is highly positive and therefore means that there is significant influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-Scholars in Uyo metropolis. It was also deemed necessary to find out the influence of the variance of each class of independent variable as responded by each respondent (see table 4)

**Table 4: Analysis of variance of the influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-Scholars in Uyo metropolis**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	146.41	1	146.41	123.79	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	139.56	118	1.18		
Total	285.97	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Learning

b. Predictors: (Constant), Songs

The above table 4 presents the calculated F-value as (123.79) and the critical f-value as (.000<sup>b</sup>). Being that the critical f-value (.000<sup>b</sup>) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result therefore means that there is no significant influence exerted by the independent variables (songs) on the dependent variable which is learning.

The result therefore means that there is significant influence of songs on the level of effective learning among Pre-Scholars in Uyo metropolis. The result was therefore in agreement with the research findings of Jensen (2000) who stated that the value of "embedding lyrics in music is that learning this way activates emotional responses, as well as memory in the auditory cortex". Similarly, student learning in the classroom setting can be very much improved and enhanced by musical infusions. Music, musical elements and songs can serve as powerful pedagogical tools that tend to enthuse students, bring a liveliness and spirit to the classroom and enhance student learning in a pleasurable manner (Binkiewicz, 2006).

### Conclusion

The study concluded that using songs and humor in the classroom has both linguistic and cognitive value for strengthening effective learning acquisition. It helps to develop cross-cultural and interactive communication skills. Song lyrics will stimulate phonetics, vocabulary and improve grammar. Students are motivated and the affective filter is lowered through song-based activities combined with humorous lyrics. Listening skills become more intense and focused.

### Recommendations

1. As providers of information, instructors need to remember that learning is best brought about by a combination of motivation and stimulation.
2. Songs can be implemented when the teacher wants to teach vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, or kind of text.
3. Since it is known that almost all the students like songs, so it can be used as one of the ways to get the students' participation in the teaching-learning process.
4. It is better for the music teachers to use songs on their teaching-learning process since songs have a very big benefit for the students.

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