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THE EFFECT OF HOME MUSICAL ENVIRONMENT ON
CHILD ATTITUDE AND APTITUDE

by
Donna Lyon

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts in Subject Matter Teaching: Music Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
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Approved by _____
Advisor

Date Approved _____

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ABSTRACT

Donna Lyon

**The Effect of Home Musical Environment on Child Attitude and Aptitude
2007/2008**

**Thesis Advisor: Dr. Rick Dammers
Master of Arts in Subject Matter Teaching: Music**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent the home musical environment affects a child's attitude towards and aptitude in music. Factors that were explored were parent attitudes, parent music background, child attitudes, child aptitudes, age, and gender roles. Parents (N=95) from a suburban elementary school completed an online survey to determine the nature of the musical environment of their home. Their children (N=121), who were first and fourth graders, completed a student attitude survey. The Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation was administered to determine student aptitude. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the data collected from both parent and student surveys. Home musical environment did not appear to influence attitude or aptitude.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Much research has been devoted to the home environment and its impact on the child. Studies ranging from success in schools to social and cultural development have sought to explore the relationship between the child and their home life. Schools even stress the importance of the role of the parent in the success of a child and will often send home reminders of how to create a home environment that will aide in child success.

As is often seen when a child picks up a new vocabulary word and uses it out of the blue, children mimic what they see and hear in the home. They copy the attitudes and behaviors of their parents, siblings, and other extended family members. Another influence of the family can be seen when a child exhibits a particular musical skill or talent. Parents will attempt to link that skill to another family member such as a mother, father, grandmother, etc, stating that the child's skill comes from a certain side of the family. Whether or not such connections are the nature of family history or the nurture of the skills, a bond is certainly thought to exist between the home environment and the musician. One of the components of this study is to determine whether or not a similar relationship of attitude exists within the context of music.

Despite the linking of musical skill to family environment, a child's potential to learn music, also known as aptitude, seems to be overlooked. If a child cannot sing in tune or move to a steady beat, that child frequently becomes labeled by their family as non-musical. Even music teachers have been found guilty of confusing the concepts of

musical achievement and aptitude, thinking that positive performances in music and behavior are equivalent to a high musical aptitude (Reynolds and Hyun, 2004). This all or nothing approach towards being musical leaves little room to address the stages of musical development let alone a child's developmental aptitude. If such a connection exists between home environment and musical skill, it would be worth while to explore the relationship of home environment and music aptitude.

Need for the Study

Previous research seems to suggest that there is no relationship between the home music environment and music aptitude (Brand, 1986, Atterbury and Silcox, 1993). Yet conflicting studies suggest there is indeed a relationship between the two (Mallet, 2000). Such a conflict in research calls for further investigation on the home music environment and its relationship to music aptitude.

Previous research has also found that parent attitudes towards music appear generally favorable (Addison, 1990, Mallet 2000, Wu, 2005). However, there is little research that explores the effect of parent attitudes on child attitudes in music. If in fact a relationship exists between parent attitudes and child attitudes, it would certainly be beneficial for music educators to take into consideration the value of these external influences on the students in their classroom.

Problem & Purpose of the Study

The conflicting studies on home musical environment and music aptitude combined with the lack of research on the effects of parent attitude and child attitude indicate a need to further explore these relationships. The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent the home musical environment affects a child's attitude towards

and aptitude in music. Relationships that will be explored are parent attitudes, parent music background, child attitudes, child aptitudes, age, and gender roles.

Research Questions

In pursuing the purpose of this study, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What is the relationship between parent background and home musical experiences?
2. What is the relationship between parent attitudes and home musical experiences?
3. What is the relationship between home music experiences and child attitudes?
4. What is the relationship between home music experiences and child aptitude?
5. Is there difference between the home music experiences of first graders and fourth graders?
6. Is there difference between the home music experiences of boys and girls?
7. What is the relationship between parent attitude and child attitude?
8. What is the relationship between parent attitude and child aptitude?
9. Is there difference between the parent attitudes of first graders and fourth graders?
10. Is there difference between the parent attitudes of girls and boys?

Definitions

Home Music Environment, in this study, refers to three factors: parent musical background, parent musical attitudes, and home musical experiences.

Home Music Experiences, in this study, refers to musical activities that occur within the home. They can be shared among family members or simply experienced by one member, such as a child, in solo.

Developmental Music Aptitude is music potential that is affected by the quality of environmental factors (Gordon, 2003). Gordon believes that a child is in the developmental music aptitude stage from birth to approximately nine years old. Since this study investigates the aptitudes of first grade and fourth grade children, the first grade children are considered to be in this developmental aptitude stage. The aptitude of the fourth grade children is to be considered at the end of this developmental stage and entering stabilized aptitude according to Gordon's definition.

Attitude is simply a person's general feeling of favorableness or unfavorableness towards an object or concept (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

Limitations

This study involves a narrow sample population from the researcher's place of employment. Generalizations from this study might not be applicable to all situations due to the small sample population. Sample bias is also a minimal consideration as the sample works closely with the researcher on a regular basis. In addition, it is possible for older siblings to influence the home music environment and therefore affect the investigation of age and attitude in this study.

Summary

The home environment is thought to contribute a significant amount of influence on a child. Conflicting studies exist, however, as to which types of outcomes the home environment affects. The purpose of this study is to explore which specific influences (parent music background, parent attitudes towards music, home musical activities, gender, and age) relate to the specific outcomes of attitude and aptitude in the hopes of gaining greater insight to the musical child as a whole.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

The home musical environment and its various effects on child achievement and aptitude has been a source of much research over the past several decades. Few studies, however, explore the effect of home musical environment on child attitude. This review of related literature will begin by discussing the various influences of the home musical environment, specifically parent musical background, parent attitudes towards music and finally home musical experiences. The influences of gender and age will follow. The outcomes of attitude and aptitude will be addressed under each section where applicable.

Parent Background

In many studies, parent musical background is often considered a component to the home musical environment. It would appear that parents with musical backgrounds feel that music will help their child in the following ways: to learn other subjects, to learn instruments later in life, to value music in adult life, and to help develop creativity (Wu, 2005). But what is the direct influence of parent music background on a child's response? Shelton (1965) studied the influence of home musical environment on musical response in first grade children. Parent musical background, ability, and participation were among the factors investigated in the home music environment (child opportunities for music participation, hearing music, and outside the home experiences were among the

other factors). Although a significant relationship between home music environment and child's music response was found, previous study of applied music by parents seemed to show no significant relation.

Parent Attitudes

In general, studies have found parent attitudes towards music to be generally favorable (Addison, 1990, Mallet, 2000, Wu, 2005). In an attempt to understand parents' attitudes towards music in the elementary school, Addison (1990), along with ten other primary school teachers, sent out their own original survey. It included musical activities in the home environment, child interest in music, as well as parents' thoughts on priorities in the music curriculum. The results showed that parents valued singing, listening and dancing/moving to music. Parents also showed an interest in their children learning orchestral/band instruments. Positive parent attitudes were seen as parents who are interested in music (a lot) or whose children are interested in music (a lot) and, quite predictably, put a higher value on all musical activities, and on the importance of music (Addison, 1990).

Mallet (2000) and Wu (2005) also found positive parent attitudes towards music. Mallet (2000) suggested that the display of positive attitude and enjoyment of music-making might contribute towards a positive music environment for the child. And the results of Wu's (2005) study showed significant correlations between parent attitude and musical activities at home with their children as well as significant correlations between parent attitude and parent musical background.

Home Musical Experiences

The early musical experiences provided in the home are invaluable to a child. Not only do they provide a sense of bond between family members, but they also aid in the musical development of the child. Shelton (1965) studied the influence of home musical environment on musical response in first grade children. The subjects were thirty children from various schools, classified as either musical or unmusical by their music teachers. Shelton assessed the home music environment of the subjects through parent interviews and found a significant relationship between home music environment (all musical stimuli provided by the home or its environs) and the child's musical response. The factors that appeared to have a close relationship to musical response were as follows: (1) frequent opportunities for the child to hear singing in the home, (2) frequent opportunities to sing with other members of the family, especially the mother, and with older children, (3) frequent opportunities to hear records played in the home, and (4) ability of the mother and father to sing melodies and to learn new songs (Shelton, 1965).

Before music aptitude stabilizes at age nine it is ever changing, moving up and down as it develops in association with the child's environmental influences (Gordon, 2003). If music aptitude is most volatile during the early years and if young children are teaching themselves to understand the music of their culture, it seems reasonable to suggest that it is crucial for environmental influences to be highly favorable for musical growth (Levinowitz, 1993). The home environment, above all environments, would appear to be most important as it is the place in which the child spends most time and is primarily influenced. Conflicting studies, however, exist on the effects of home environment on developmental aptitude. Mallet (2000) explored the relationship of select

factors (parent attitudes, home musical environment, socioeconomic status, age of child, and gender of child) as predictors of musical aptitude of preschool children. Of the selected factors involved in the study, age of the child and home musical environment proved predictive of developmental musical aptitude. Contrary to the results of Mallet's study, however, Brand (1986) and Atterbury and Silcox (1993) found no relationship between home musical environment and musical aptitude. Brand (1986) explored the relationship between home musical environment and musical achievement and aptitude of second grade children. Parent attitudes, musical involvement with their child, and other select factors were incorporated in the home musical environment survey. Results showed a strong relationship between home musical environment and musical achievement with parental attitudes forming the strongest link with achievement. Yet no relationship was found between home musical environment and music aptitude. Similar to Brand's study, Atterbury and Silcox (1993) found a relationship between home musical environment and the singing ability of kindergarten children but no relationship between environment and aptitude. The conflicting results of these studies indicate a need for further investigation on the relationship of home musical environment and child aptitude.

Gender

Past studies seem to point towards no relationship between gender and musical aptitude. In Mallet's (2000) study on select factors as predictors of musical aptitude in preschool children, gender of child did not appear to be predictive of developing musical aptitude. Farr (1993) also conducted a study with similar results. The study compared home musical environment and musical aptitude among three to seven-year-old children.

Relationships explored were gender, parent-observed music behaviors, and music aptitude scores. Instruments used to assess the home environment included a parent questionnaire and a behavior profile that primarily focused on musical skills of the child. Results showed that gender had little effect on aptitude scores. Few relationships were found between the behavior profile and aptitude scores.

Age

Age appears to be an important factor when considering developmental music aptitude due to its stabilization by age nine (Gordon, 2003). Mallet's study (2000) confirms this relationship with his finding of age being predictive of developmental aptitude. But is there a relationship between age and attitude? Hedden (2007) conducted a study in the hopes of gaining insight into why upper elementary students would choose to participate in a musical event such as a choral festival. Both students who desired to participate as well as students who did not were given a survey that asked their reasons behind their decision. Child attitude towards singing (attributed to personal desire as well as other people's influence) was a common reason for participating. In response to this finding, Hedden states, "It would seem important for the teacher to clearly communicate to parents the child's musical strengths, to promote positive attitudes about music." (p. 53).

Summary

Studies on the home music environment and its various effects on the child are as vast as they are diverse. Each one contributes another layer to understanding the musical child as a whole. The goal of this study is to more closely examine the effects of the home music environment on the child's attitude towards and aptitude in music in the

hopes of contributing another layer of insight to this existing body of research and above all, better serve the needs of the child.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent the home musical environment affects a child's attitude towards and aptitude in music. Relationships that will be explored are parent attitudes, parent music background, child attitudes, child aptitudes, age, and gender roles. This chapter begins with a description of pilot activities, followed by a description of the site information. The next section describes data collection and treatment procedures, and the chapter closes with a brief summary.

Pilot Activities

Prior to the study, three pilot activities occurred. The first pilot study involved adults who were not participating in the research at hand to determine feasibility of the parent survey. The last two pilot studies involved both adults and children to determine the feasibility of the first grade and fourth grade attitude survey.

Site Information

Elementary School Description

First grade students, fourth grade students, as well as their respective parents at a suburban school on the east coast participated in this study. Since the researcher is the general music teacher at this school, the sampling of students' and parents' for this study is one of convenience. This economically diverse school district serves students in pre-

kindergarten through eighth grade living within the township. This particular school is one out of six other elementary schools in the district. The grade levels within this school range from pre-kindergarten through fourth grade with a school population of roughly 450.

Music Information

All students, except for a few pre-kindergarten classes, receive general music instruction for 50 minutes once a week. Other music activities offered to interested students in the third and fourth grade include instrumental lessons, band, orchestra, and chorus. Winter concerts, performed by the second grade, and a spring concert, performed by the fourth grade, are held each year under the direction of the general music teacher. The fourth grade chorus meets once a week for one hour and performs throughout the school year at various school functions. An instrumental concert is performed each year under the direction of the instrumental music teacher in the spring.

Research Permission

Permission was obtained from the school's principal and Rowan University's Institutional Review Board. Voluntary consent forms outlining the details of the study were sent home to first grade and fourth grade families in their Wednesday folder. All parents and students who returned the signed consent form were participants in the study.

Technical Support

Technology used in this study came from two primary sources: online at [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) and a program called ActiVote. The researcher created the surveys in both programs with the help the researcher's faculty advisor and the technology

specialist at the research site. The technology specialist assisted in the administration of the student survey using ActiVote.

Method

Surveys

Two surveys were administered in this study. The parent survey (Appendix A) was administered at the beginning of the study and was designed to collect information about the home musical environment. This survey was split into the following three sections to investigate the home musical environment: parent musical background, parent attitudes towards music, and home musical activities. The second survey (Appendix B) explored both first grade and fourth grade attitudes towards music. Both student surveys inquired about the students' enjoyment of certain musical activities as well as specific styles of music.

Aptitude Tests

The Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation (IMMA), as developed by Edwin E. Gordon, was administered to first grade and fourth grade students during their general music class period. The tonal test was administered in the first class, followed by the rhythm test in the next class. Since all students have music class once a week, the administering of the tests spanned the course of two weeks, with make-up testing throughout the following month for students who were absent during either period. The researcher evaluated the students' scores and then compiled the data.

Treatment of Data to Address Research Questions

The following research questions will be addressed using descriptive statistics:

What is the relationship between parent background and home musical experiences?;

What is the relationship between parent attitudes and home musical experiences?; What is the relationship between home music experiences and child attitudes?; What is the relationship between home music experiences and child aptitude?; What is the relationship between parent attitude and child attitude?; and What is the relationship between parent attitude and child aptitude?

The following research questions will be addressed using inferential statistics: *Is there difference between the home music experiences of first graders and fourth graders?; Is there difference between the home music experiences of boys and girls?; Is there difference between the parent attitudes of first graders and fourth graders?; and Is there difference between parent attitudes of girls and boys?*

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

This study used descriptive and inferential statistical methods to analyze the data collected from both parent and student surveys. Means and standard deviations will be discussed with their respective research questions. This chapter begins with an overview of how the scales were created for parent background, home musical experiences, parent attitude, and finally student attitude. Following the scale overview are the results of the analyses and will be presented in relation to the ten research questions posed in this study.

Parent Survey

The parent survey was sent to all first grade and fourth grade parents who agreed to participate in the study. The following central questions from the parent survey were used to address the three scales of the home environment:

Parent Background:

- *How many years did you take music in school?*
- *Which types of musical activities did you participate in at your school?*
- *Have you ever studied a musical instrument or participated in a musical group outside of your school?*
- *How long have you studied your instrument or participated in a musical group?*

Home Musical Experiences:

- *When considering spending money on your child, rate music as a budget priority.*
- *Did/do you provide any toys or instrument(s) that make sounds or music for your child(ren)?*
- *Rate the frequency of which these activities have occurred over the past year:
Singing with or to your child, playing instruments with or to your child,
reading/reciting nursery rhymes or poems for your child, dancing or moving in
response to music, concert attendance with your child, listening to music with
your child*
- *Has your child(ren) attended (or currently attend) instrumental/vocal lessons
during the school day?*
- *Has your child(ren) attended (or currently attend) instrumental/vocal lessons
outside the school day?*

Parent Attitude:

- *Please check your agreement with each of the following statements: Music is an
essential part of my child's public school education, music is important for my
child, other school subjects are more important, music is not important.*

Parent Background Scale

In order to create the parent background scale, each question was assigned a numerical value. For the question, *How many years did you take music in school?*, the answer was converted into a scale so that the weight of the answers was balanced throughout the parent background section. If a parent responded one year or less, that answer was assigned a one. If a parent responded either one, two, or three years, that

answer was assigned a two. If a parent stated that they had between four and eight years of music in school, that answer was assigned a five. And finally if a parent responded that they took more than eight years of music in school, that answer was assigned a value of ten.

The next question, *Which types of musical activities did you participate in at your school?*, was rated on a ten point scale. Since there were only nine areas that a parent could potentially check off (general music class, instrumental lessons, band, orchestra, chorus, musical theatre, music composition, music theory class, other), the highest potential value assigned for this question would be a nine. Likewise, if a parent did not check anything due to lack of participation in any musical activities, this answer would be assigned a zero.

The next two questions in the parent background section, *Have you ever studied a musical instrument or participated in a musical group outside of your school?* and *How long have you studied your instrument or participated in a musical group?*, were contingent upon each other. If a parent responded no to the first parent of the question, the second part of the question was null and therefore a numerical value of zero was assigned. If a parent answered yes, however, a scale similar to that of the first question under parent background was assigned. Therefore, one year or less was assigned a numerical value of one. A response of one to three years was assigned a numerical value of two. If a parent responded that they played their instrument for four to eight years, a numerical value of five was assigned. And finally, eight years or more was assigned a ten.

After converting all the questions into numerical values, the scores were added to create one number that represented the parent background scale. Out of a range of 1-27, the mean parent background score was 10.66 with a standard deviation of 6.23.

Home Musical Experiences Scale

Similar to the parent background scale, each question was reduced to a numerical value. For the first question under home musical experiences, *When considering spending money on your child, rate music as a budget priority: very high, high, medium, low*, a value from zero to three was used with zero being assigned the answer of low and three being assigned the answer of very high.

The next question, *Did/do you provide any toys or instrument(s) that make sounds or music for your child(ren)?*, used a simple point system. If the parent responded yes, then a one was assigned. If a parent responded no, then a zero was assigned.

The following question, *Rate the frequency of which these activities have occurred over the past year*, used six different types of musical activities and asked parents to rate their frequency using the following scale: often (almost every day), sometimes (a few times a week), seldom (a few times a month), and never. A value from zero to three was assigned to each activity with zero being assigned the answer of never and three being assigned the answer of often. Since there were six different types of activities to rate in this question, the highest potential value that could be assigned would be a 18.

The last two questions under home musical experiences, *Has your child(ren) attended (or currently attend) instrumental/vocal lessons during the school day?* and *Has your child(ren) attended (or currently attend) instrumental/vocal lessons outside the*

school day?, both followed the same point system. If the parent responded yes, then a one was assigned. If a parent responded no, then a zero was assigned.

After converting all the questions into numerical values, the scores were added to create one number that represented the home musical experiences scale. The parent responses in this section ranged from four to eighteen. The mean home musical experiences score was 10.75 with a standard deviation of 3.21.

Parent Attitude Scale

The following question was used to create the parent attitude scale: *Please check your agreement with each of the following statements: Music is an essential part of my child's public school education, Music is important for my child, Other school subjects are more important, Music is not important.* A four-point Likert scale was used to determine the parents' agreement with the four statements. Responses were then assigned a numerical value of zero to three. For the first two statements, *Music is an essential part of my child's public school education* and *Music is important for my child*, the response of strongly agree was assigned a three and therefore strongly disagree was assigned a zero. However the last two statements, *Other school subjects are more important* and *Music is not important* used a reverse scale due to the negative direction of the statements (strongly agree = 0 and strongly disagree = 3).

After converting the levels of agreement into numerical values, the scores were added to create one number that represented the parent attitude scale. The parent responses in this section ranged from four to twelve. The mean parent attitude score was 8.61 with a standard deviation of 1.93.

Student Survey

The student survey consisted of five questions: *Do you like to sing?*, *Do you like to move or dance to music?*, *Do you like to listen to music?*, *Do you like to play instruments?*, *Do you like to teach songs or dances to your family or friends?*. Students were asked to use the following scale to determine their attitude towards the various activities: really like, kind of like, okay, kind of don't like, really don't like.

Student Attitude Scale

Similar to the scales used in the parent survey, a numerical value of zero to four was assigned to each question in order to create the student attitude scale. Therefore, if a child really liked a particular activity, a four was assigned. Likewise, if a child really didn't like a particular activity, a zero was assigned. The scores were then added to create one number that represented the student attitude scale. The student responses ranged from four to twenty. The mean student attitude score was 14.15 with a standard deviation of 3.85.

Analysis

Research Question One

The first research question: *What is the relationship between parent background and home musical experiences?*, was calculated using a one-tailed Pearson correlation with the parent background scale and the home musical experiences scale. The results showed little correlation ($r = .14, p < .15$).

Research Question Two

The parent attitude scale and the home musical experiences scale, combined with a one-tailed Pearson correlation was used to calculate the second research question: *What*

is the relationship between parent attitudes and home musical experiences? While it was statistically significant ($p < .001$), a low correlation was found ($r = .317$).

Research Question Three

The third research question is: *What is the relationship between home music experiences and child attitudes?* The home musical experiences and child attitude scales were used. A one-tailed Pearson correlation revealed little to no correlation exists between the two variables ($r = .24, p < .006$).

Research Question Four

A two-tailed Pearson correlation between the home musical experiences scale and the raw scores of the IMMA found little relationship between the variables in the fourth question: *What is the relationship between home music experiences and child aptitude?*, ($r = .094, p < .345$).

Research Question Five

The results of the fifth question: *Is there difference between the home music experiences of first graders and fourth graders?*, found no significant correlation using a Mann-Whitney Test ($Z = -1.231, p = .218$). The home musical experiences scale for both first grade and fourth grade ranges from 0-18. Little difference was found between the mean score of first graders ($M = 11.28, SD = 2.83$) and fourth graders ($M = 10.56, SD = 3.27$).

Research Question Six

A Mann-Whitney Test was also used to analyze the sixth question. Similar to the previous question, the sixth research question: *Is there difference between the home music experiences of boys and girls?*, found almost no correlation ($Z = -.996, p = .319$).

The home musical experiences scale for both male and female ranges from 0-18. And also similar to the finding of the fifth question, little difference was found between the mean score of males ($M = 10.56$, $SD = 3.329$) and females ($M = 11.24$, $SD = 2.766$).

Research Question Seven

The next research question explores attitude: *What is the relationship between parent attitude and child attitude?* Using both parent and child attitude scales, the results of a one-tailed Pearson showed little correlation ($r = .047$, $p < .639$).

Research Question Eight

A two-tailed Pearson correlation between the parent attitude scale and the raw scores of the IMMA found little relationship between the variables in the eighth question: *What is the relationship between parent attitude and child aptitude?*, ($r = -.077$, $p < .440$).

Research Question Nine

The results of the ninth question: *Is there difference between the parent attitudes of first graders and fourth graders?*, were analyzed using a Mann-Whitney test and found no significant correlation ($Z = -.531$, $p = .595$). The parent attitude scale for both first graders and fourth graders ranged from 0-12. Not only was little difference found between the mean score of parent attitudes of first graders ($M = 8.85$) and fourth graders ($M = 8.57$), the parent response deviated little between first graders ($SD = 1.87$) and fourth graders ($SD = 1.9$).

Research Question Ten

Similar to the previous question, the tenth and final research question: *Is there difference between the parent attitudes of female students and male students?*, also used a

Mann-Whitney test and found almost no correlation ($Z = -.402, p = .688$). The parent attitude scale for both girls and boys ranges from 0-12. And also similar to the finding of the ninth question, little difference was found between the mean score of parent attitudes of girls ($M = 8.56, SD = 1.988$) and boys ($M = 8.75, SD = 1.841$).

Summary

The findings for the ten research questions show no correlation between the home music environment and a child's attitude towards and aptitude in music. There also appears to be no relationship between home musical experiences and parent attitudes of children of different ages and genders. Further exploration of these findings as well as potential implications for practice and future research will be discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent the home musical environment affects a child's attitude towards and aptitude in music. According to the findings of this study, no correlation exists between the home environment and child attitude or aptitude. As can be with many studies, the surprising results of this study seem to create more questions than provide answers. This chapter will discuss the implications of the study through the variables of parent background, home musical experiences, and parent attitude. The chapter will conclude with a brief summary as well as possibilities for future studies on the home musical environment.

Parent Musical Background

The participants' responses for parent background proved to be quite interesting. Practically all parents have taken a music class at some point or another within their lives although the degree varied. Most parents stated that they had roughly three to four years of music classes. General music was the most common type of music class, followed by chorus, and then instrumental lessons. When asked whether or not they have studied a musical instrument or participated in a musical group, the responses were split down the middle. Of the half that said they did take lessons or participate in a musical group, between four to eight years was the most common duration of time. Between one to three years was the next most frequent response, followed by one year or less. Only a

few participants stated that they took lessons or participated in a group for more than eight years.

A few inconsistencies were noted in some of the participants' responses. For example, some participants stated that they had never played an instrument or participated in a musical group. Instead of skipping to the next appropriate question, however, it was then stated that they played their instrument for four to eight years. Whether these inconsistencies were due to the unclear nature of the survey, or simply the participants' mistake, some of the data could have been affected to an unknown degree.

When looking at the parent background scale, the mean parent background score widely varied ($M=10.66$, $SD=6.23$) out of a range of 1-27. According to these results, it appears as if parent background in music varies greatly between families and might not necessarily be a great strength in the home environment. When considering the lack of correlation between parent background and home musical experiences, parents can rest assured that they do not need to have a strong background in music in order to provide their children with musical experiences. Likewise, it cannot be assumed that parents of strong musical backgrounds will provide an enriched musical environment for their children.

Home Musical Experiences

When considering the home musical experiences scale, the mean home musical experiences score was 10.75 with a standard deviation of 3.21. The lowest range in the scale was four, with eighteen being the highest possible score. It seems as if most parents, regardless of their background, incorporate a mixed variety of shared musical activities with their children in their home lives. Few parents responded no when asked

whether or not they provided toys or instruments that make sounds for their children. This response might come to no surprise when considering that most children's toys on the market today use a variety of sound effects, especially ones created for infants. In terms of rating music as a budget priority, most families responded medium out of a scale of very high, high, medium, and low. Less than half of the participants' children, however, attend instrumental/vocal lessons either during or outside the school day.

Participants were asked to rate the frequency of which the following six activities occurred over the past year: singing with or to your child, playing instruments with or to your child, reading/reciting nursery rhymes or poems for your child, dancing or moving in response to music, concert attendance (professional or otherwise) with your child, and listening to music with your child. Singing with or to their child, followed by listening to music were activities that occurred most in the home (almost every day). Dancing or moving in response to music occurred sometimes (a few times a week). Playing instruments, reading/reciting nursery rhymes or poems, and concert attendance were activities that seldom occurred in the home (a few times a month).

Overall, it appears that instruments, whether through private lessons or played by the parents, do not take a large priority in the home musical environment. Perhaps it is no coincidence that concert attendance is also low since few participants incorporate instruments into their lives on a regular basis. This particular study explored the relationship between home musical experiences of first graders and fourth graders and found no correlation. It would be interesting to see, however, which activities frequently occurred with a broader age group. For example, do instrumental lessons and concert attendance increase with high school students? Likewise, does reading/reciting nursery

rhymes or poems increase with infants and toddlers? Future studies on the home musical environment might want to take a broader age group into consideration when exploring the relationship to specific musical activities.

Parent Attitude

Parent attitude towards music proved to be relatively positive. The parent responses in this section ranged from four to twelve. The mean parent attitude score was 8.61 with a standard deviation of 1.93. Most participants strongly agreed that not only was music important for their child, but music was also an essential part of their child's public school education. In accordance with this attitude, most parents strongly disagreed with the statement, "Music is not important." The interesting part of this data, however, came from the statement, "Other school subjects are more important." Most participants agreed with this statement, which shows that although parent attitude towards music is positive, the subject of music is not on par with other subjects such as reading and math. It is worthwhile to note that some music educators believe that music will never be an equivalent subject until there is standardized testing in music. It certainly would be interesting to explore how parent attitude towards music changes if this were ever to become practice in public school education.

Summary

The finding of no correlation existing between the home music environment and child attitude towards and aptitude in music poses some interesting thoughts. On the one hand, parents who often feel that they are unmusical and therefore their children will suffer the same fate can rest assured knowing that this is not necessarily true. On the other hand, musical talented parents and enriched home musical environments will not

always provide the atmosphere for a child to have a high aptitude in music, let alone even appreciate it. For music educators, this study confirms the belief that there are several complex factors, not just one environment, that create a child who not only appreciates music but can also bring a certain level of musicality into their lives. As previously stated, potential future research on the topic of the home music environment could include a more broad scale of participants to explore their relationship to specific musical activities. It would also be interesting to see a longitudinal study in which the effects of the home music environment could be seen as it evolves over a child's school years.

In conclusion, this study sought to understand the relationship between the home music environment and a child's attitude towards and aptitude in music. The variables of age and gender were also explored. While the finding of no correlation exists within the context of the ten research questions of this study, it poses more thoughts for discussion and future research. It is the hope of the researcher that this study provided another layer of understanding the complexities of the musical child as a whole.

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APPENDIX A

Parent Survey: The Home Music Environment

Parent Background

1. You are your child's:

Mother

Father

Grandmother

Grandfather

Other legal guardian (female)

Other legal guardian (male)

2. Your child(ren)'s gender and age.

Age

Age

Age

Male

Female

3. How many years did you take music in school (kindergarten through college)?

|

4. What kind of music did you study in school?

|

5. Which types of musical activities did you participate in at your school? Check all that apply.

General music class

Instrumental lessons

Band

Orchestra

Chorus

Musical theatre

Music composition

Music theory class

Other (please specify)

6. Have you ever studied a musical instrument or participated in a musical group outside of school?

Yes

No (skip to question 8)

If yes, what instrument or group?

7. How long have you studied your instrument or participated in a musical group?

one year or less

1-3 years

4-8 years

more than 8 years

Do you still sing or play your instrument?

8. How often do you listen to music on the radio, CD, or other media device (i.e. iPod) away from your child?

several hours a day

about one hour a day

a couple hours a week

a couple hours a month or less

9. How often do you listen to the following

	very often	often	sometimes	rarely	never
children's songs					
classical					
pop/rock					
traditional religious					
country/folk songs					
R&B					
jazz					
other					

10. Have you attended any musical concert in the past six months?
(i.e. church choir, orchestra, school concerts, solos, pop, rock or jazz concerts)

Yes

No

If yes, what kind(s)?

Home Music Activities

1. Does your child(ren) have his/her own music recordings and/or tape, CD, or DVD player?

Yes

No

2. When considering spending money on your child, rate music as a budget priority.

very high

high

medium

low

3. Did/do you provide any toys or instrument(s) that make sounds or music for you child(ren)?

Yes

No

4. Rate the frequency of which these activities have occurred over the past year:

	Often (almost every day)	Sometimes (a few times a week)	Seldom (a few times a month)	Never
Singing with or to your child				
Playing instruments with or to your child				
Reading/reciting nursery rhymes or poems for your child				
Dancing or moving in response to music				
Concert attendance (professional or otherwise) with your child				
Listening to music with your child				

5. Has your child(ren) attended (or currently attend) instrumental/vocal lessons (chorus, trumpet, flute, etc) during the school day?

Yes

No

If yes, which instruments?

6. Has your child(ren) attended (or currently attend) instrumental/vocal lessons outside the school day?

Yes

No

If yes, which instruments?

Parent Attitudes

1. Please check your agreement with each of the following statements.

strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

**Music is an
essential part of
my child's public
school education**

**Music is
important for my
child**

Other school subjects are more important

Music is not
important

2. Do you think all children have the potential to learn music?

Yes

No

✱

3. Why or why not?

[illegible]

APPENDIX B

Student Attitude Survey

1. Do you like to sing?
 - a. Really like
 - b. Kind of like
 - c. Okay
 - d. Kind of don't like
 - e. Really don't like
2. Do you like to move or dance to music?
 - a. Really like
 - b. Kind of like
 - c. Okay
 - d. Kind of don't like
 - e. Really don't like
3. Do you like to listen to music?
 - a. Really like
 - b. Kind of like
 - c. Okay
 - d. Kind of don't like
 - e. Really don't like
4. Do you like to play musical instruments

- a. Really like
- b. Kind of like
- c. Okay
- d. Kind of don't like
- e. Really don't like

5. Do you like to teach songs or dances to your friends and family?

- a. Really like
- b. Kind of like
- c. Okay
- d. Kind of don't like
- e. Really don't like