

How Group Violin Lessons in Kindergarten Help Children's Development

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Abstract

Because the earlier children contact with music education, it will better cultivate children's artistic appreciation and record. Early music education will also positively affect children's development in all aspects to a certain extent. Such as improving emotional development, cognitive and social skills, memory, etc. However, whether these positive effects also exist in the collective curriculum needs further research and discussion. This article uses the research method of stratified random sampling, the violin students and kindergarten teachers affiliated with A university sample; statistical students' parents choose the kindergarten which is associated with the school's collective violin lessons, whether students like this course and whether the teacher in the teaching process should notice the cognitive ability. Then find two volunteers and make them observe and judge students' performance before and after violin class and put forward their own opinions. Then this paper will analyze and discuss the results of the above series of investigations and finally get the experimental results. The results showed that group music learning did improve children's non-cognitive abilities, especially endurance and attention, as did music learning alone. In addition, participating in group activities can improve children's sense of competition and enthusiasm for learning, which is more effective than studying alone. At the same time, the process of collective knowledge can also make children realize the importance of the collective and improve the sense of unity among children.

Keywords

Violin, Early Childhood Education, Group Lessons, Child Development

1. Introduction

Early music education (Chuutou, 2017) states that "activities such as listening to music, thinking about actions, and singing at the beginning of early childhood

education develop the sensuality and richness of expression necessary for forming one's personality throughout life." It has been argued that learning music in early childhood is also essential for forming a personality. In China, learning musical instruments in early childhood improves playing skills and is also valued in terms of physical and mental development. For example, Cai Zhaomei argues that four non-intellectual elements (Japanese: non-cognitive abilities) in young children are influenced by learning a musical instrument (Cai, 2006).

- 1) Musical instrument learning can effectively develop children's attention.
- 2) Learning musical instruments is very effective in developing children's self-confidence. Young children can believe in their abilities and evaluate themselves positively.
- 3) Receiving good music education from childhood can cultivate emotions.
- 4) Through learning musical instruments, children can cultivate the spirit of continuous effort and strong will to overcome difficulties.

In addition, the OECD made the following three recommendations: replace non-cognitive skills with social-emotional skills.

- a) Goal Attainment: The Power of Reaching Goals
 - Endurance: The ability to tolerate one's desires and impulses
 - Self-suppression: The ability to control one's feelings and actions
 - Passion for the goal: Enthusiasm and enthusiasm to achieve the goal
- b) Collaboration with others: The power of collaboration with others
 - Sociality: The ability to establish friendly relationships with others
 - Respect: The ability to respect others
 - Care: Ability to empathize with others
- c) Control of emotions: The power of being able to control one's feelings actively
 - Self-esteem: Ability to affirm one's abilities
 - Optimism: The ability to look at various things with optimism
 - Confidence: The ability to believe in qualifications and abilities

Learning a musical instrument impacts young children's non-cognitive skills. So does learning a musical instrument improve children's non-cognitive skills in group lessons? Do children's attention and perseverance improve as well as individual lessons? With this question in mind, the author reviewed the following literature.

Regarding participation in the group instrument study, Isogai said the following.

An instrumental ensemble is an excellent opportunity for a collaborative experience, to experience the collaborative formation of harmonies that one person cannot achieve. The person learns musical ensemble skills and the care and friendship between classmates through the activity (Hallam, 2010). Finally, the independence and subjectivity of each other can be felt with the opportunity for self-formation.

The above account describes how ensembles learn not only musical ensemble techniques but also promote human growth through ensemble playing. The violin group class is exactly that, an ensemble. Therefore, the author believes that learning violin group lessons can also foster the human nature of young child-

ren. Therefore, this paper will take the collective violin course of the affiliated kindergarten of A University as the research object.

The group violin program at the kindergarten attached to University A in Japan started in 1970 and has been in existence for 52 years.

The group violin program at the University of A-affiliated kindergarten is a unique kindergarten feature. According to Yamaguchi, "The purpose of the group violin program for kindergarten children is to improve cooperation and concentration, to cultivate morale, and to get them interested in stringed instruments." (Yamaguchi, 1979)

A University Kindergarten in Japan has been conducting a group violin program for about 52 years. The author believes that since A University Kindergarten has set up a group violin program as its unique program and has implemented it for so many years, it must have brought some positive effects on the growth and learning of children.

As an instructor of violin education, the author had the following questions. "Violin is more difficult to produce a stable sound than other instruments. Especially in early childhood, even teaching a young child requires much effort, so why would a very difficult violin be chosen for a group lesson?"

Based on the above queries, the following hypotheses were generated.

Hypothesis: The non-cognitive skills of young children will be improved through group violin lessons.

Purpose: The positive effects of group music courses on children's non-cognitive abilities were analyzed through the sample survey results of parents, students, and teachers related to the violin class in the kindergarten above and the changes in students after the class.

Significance: The advantages of group violin lessons can be identified through this study. It can be clarified that the violin is an effective instrument in improving young children's non-cognitive skills. It is hoped that it will provide a reference for educators preparing to conduct music education for young children.

2. Experiment Design and Results Analysis

2.1. The Teacher's View of Instruction in a Group Violin Class in Kindergarten

2.1.1. Introduction to Violin Group Study in Kindergarten Attached to University A

The University of A kindergarten educators believes music education is crucial for forming personality in early childhood.

There are two violin instructors and one piano accompanist who is the class teacher of this class in the kindergarten of University A. There are three sizes of violins in the kindergarten. Three sizes, 1/4, 1/8, and 1/10, are assigned according to the children's height. The instructor tunes the violins and sets up the chairs where the children sit before entering the classroom. The instructor prepared two music stands in the front row so everyone could see the music. At the end of the group study, the children returned the instruments, and the chairs

were packed too. As it shows, the development of technical aspects of music playing in the violin group is emphasized. However, the instructor also considers the children's manners and attitudes towards valuing objects.

The author conducted a questionnaire survey to determine how the guardians of kindergarten affiliated with university A perceived violin group learning.

Since the questionnaire can not survey the students of the past, the author can only survey the parents and teachers of the students in class. So all members of the collective violin class are subject to this investigation.

Kindergarten, affiliated with University A in 2020, had 24 children in the older group, of which 13 families participated in the questionnaire. The survey was conducted in late March 2021, and the number of recoveries was 13 (recovery rate 54.2%).

After that, Excel was used to analyze the survey results, and pie charts were made to help readers better understand the results.

In this paper, the analysis of the survey results does not consider other subjective conditions, such as the family situation of students. It only analyzes the parents' views on the collective violin course and students' preferences for the course.

The following chart (see **Figure 1**) is categorized according to the contents of the author's questionnaire.

Of the 13 participants in this survey, 4 participants (30.8%) had learned violin before participating in the group violin program, 3 participants (23.1%) had learned another instrument, and 6 participants (46.2%) had not learned an instrument. In the group violin program at the school, these values suggest that children do not need to have experience with violin and other instruments to participate in the program.

The next question is whether the guardian's choice of kindergarten for the child is related to the group violin program (See **Figure 2**).

Musical instrument learning experience

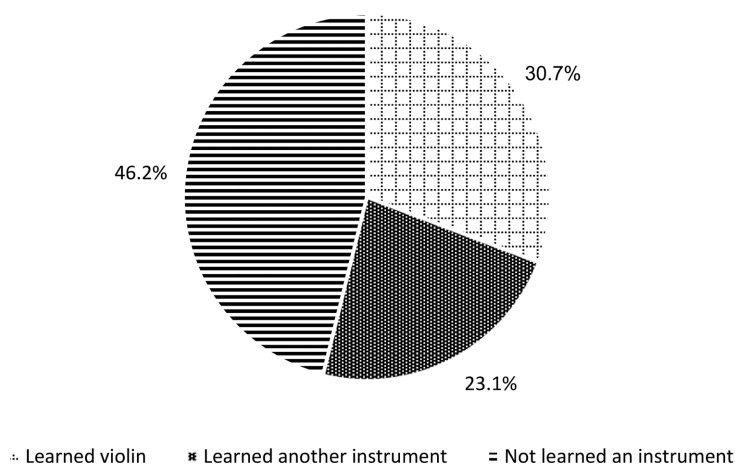


Figure 1. Experience of learning a musical instrument.

The relationship between the choice of kindergarten and the group study of the school

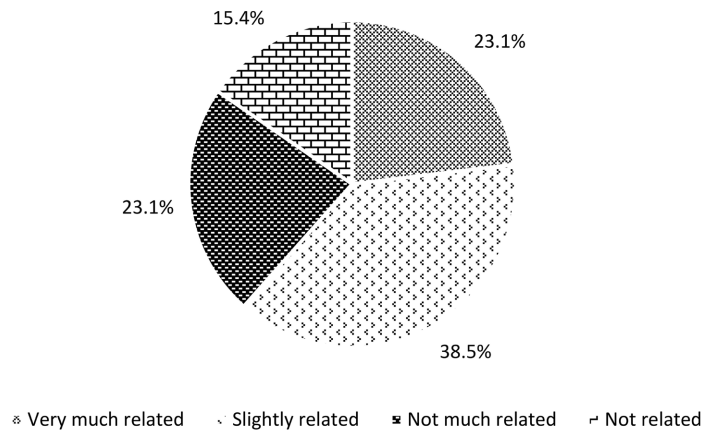


Figure 2. Relationship between kindergarten selection and violin group learning.

Of the 13 guardians who participated in this survey, 3 (23.1%) thought that the reason for choosing kindergarten and affiliated with University A was very much related to the group violin study, five (38.5%) were slightly related, three (23.1%) were not much related. Two (15.4%) were not related at all. More than half of the guardians cited group violin study as one of the conditions for choosing a kindergarten.

Violin is more complicated than other instruments to produce a consistent sound, and it can be painful for beginners to press the strings. So can young children accept or enjoy group violin lessons? With this in mind, the author asked the following question. “Does your child seem to enjoy violin lessons? Can you ask your child?” (See **Figure 3**)

As seen in **Figure 3**, of the 13 guardians who participated in this survey, 7 (53.8%) of the children liked the group violin lessons very much, 3 (23.1%) liked them more, 2 (15.4%) hated them more, and 1 (7.7%) hated them very much.

In this questioning, 76.9% (preferably, very much) of the children answered that they liked violin group learning.

It can be found from the previous survey results that most parents believe that music learning is a relatively important part of children’s growth. Moreover, some parents even choose this kindergarten because of violin lessons, which the author believes proves that most parents think music education is essential. Moreover, most children also like this course very much, which shows that the children have a good time during the learning process, but whether the course can improve some of the children’s non-cognitive abilities needs further investigation.

Finally, the author investigated the guardians’ satisfaction with the group violin lessons (See **Figure 4**).

Of the 13 guardians who participated in this survey, 10 (76.9%) were delighted, 2 (15.4%) were more satisfied, and 1 (7.7%) was not sure about the implementation of the group violin program.

Children's attitudes toward group violin learning

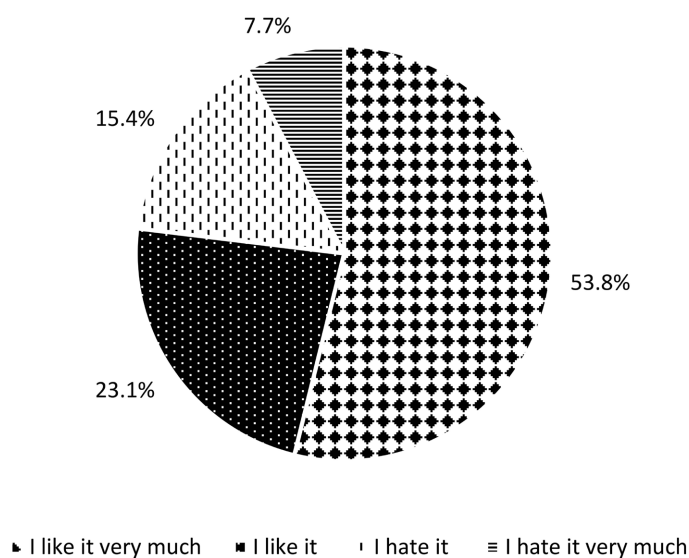


Figure 3. Children's attitudes towards group learning of the violin.

Parental satisfaction

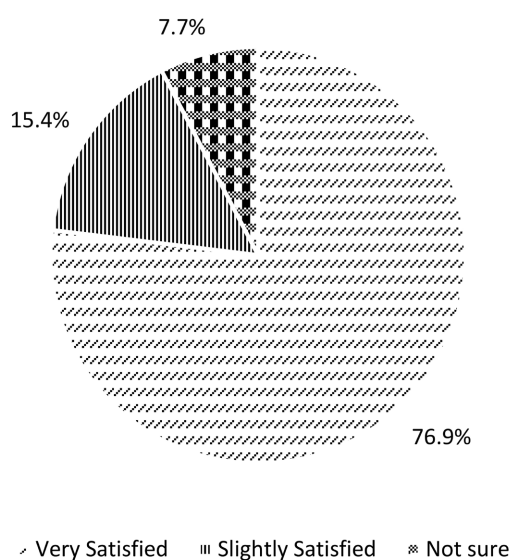


Figure 4. Parental satisfaction.

The data suggest that young children in violin group learning do not need to have a foundation in playing the instrument.

2.1.2. Purpose and Method of Investigation

According to the report of the Central Education Review Board on "Future Direction of Early Childhood Education Based on Changes in the Environment Around Young Children," the Central Education Review Board noted in 2005 that "regarding the growth of young children in recent years. They lack basic

living habits and attitudes, are not good at interacting with others, and lack self-control, patience, and a sense of discipline, patience, lack of sense of norms,” and “inability to concentrate on learning in classes such as the first grade of elementary school.” However, one of the educational goals of the kindergarten at University A is to develop children’s endurance. Therefore, the author will focus on endurance and concentration and observe the changes in the children.

Purpose: To investigate whether teachers of violin group classes in kindergartens a and b affiliated with University A are consciously improving children’s non-cognitive skills in their teaching.

Methods: Interviews and surveys of kindergarten teachers were conducted with a particular focus on developing non-cognitive skills.

2.1.3. Components of Acquired Non-Cognitive Abilities - Concentration, Endurance, Self-Confidence

As seen from the content, the group violin lessons do not necessarily require children to have a basic knowledge of playing the instrument (Brouillette, 2009). The educational goal of kindergarten a two violin group lesson instructors, U and V, is to improve violin playing skills and improve children’s concentration and endurance, develop self-confidence and foster the ability to think independently through group lessons.

Through her observations, classroom teacher W noticed that after participating in group violin lessons, the children became interested in the tones emitted by the instrument and actively wanted to learn about these things on their initiative. However, it was not only the significant musical growth but also the growth in human nature beyond music, especially in the children’s endurance and concentration.

As instructors of the violin group class at kindergarten b of University A, X, and Y, the two focus on the playing skills of young children and want to nurture children interested in music and make it fun for them. In addition, the group violin program also develops non-cognitive skills beyond music. Children’s non-cognitive skills, especially concentration and endurance, improve through group violin lessons. For young children who are about to enter elementary school, this ability helps to help them adjust to elementary school life as soon as possible.

Teachers respond to problems in the classroom by using praise as a teaching tool to increase self-confidence, improve mental focus, and help children continue their violin practice. However, the author believes that mere performance praise is not the only way to improve the non-cognitive skills of young children.

In summary, all teachers in the violin group classes at kindergartens a and b affiliated with University A consciously focus on developing concentration, endurance, and self-confidence among non-cognitive skills as educational goals.

So, do these abilities improve after children receive instruction in a group violin program to develop non-cognitive skills? With this question in mind, the author conducted the following observations.

2.2. Development of Non-Cognitive Skills in Group Learning of Kindergarten Violin

2.2.1. Purpose and Method of Investigation

Purpose: This chapter will validate and add to the results obtained in Chapter 1 to clarify whether the non-cognitive abilities of endurance, concentration, and self-confidence are improved in the children who participated in the group violin program.

Methods: Images of group violin lessons were observed to demonstrate whether group violin lessons develop endurance, concentration, and self-confidence among young children's non-cognitive skills.

To ensure the objectivity of this observation, the author will request the assistance of two teachers related to early childhood education. The same images were viewed, and the opinions of each teacher were sought. In addition, the author's opinion will also be sought from the two teachers. Finally, a tripartite meeting will seek a common conclusion and opinion.

2.2.2. Activity Observation

The research in this chapter was conducted to confirm whether children's non-cognitive skills were growing within the group lessons, so observations were made not from the content of the lessons but the following three viewpoints.

The first perspective is "line of sight."

"The human sight provides a variety of information in social life. For example, it can tell me what others are interested in and what they are paying attention to." By confirming the line of sight, we can determine whether the attention and concentration of young children are on the lecturer.

The second perspective is the "small movements of young children."

Observe children's small movements during class. The author means movements that are not directly related to the lesson's content by small movements here. Therefore, the author will observe the children's small movements, in particular, to verify whether the children's endurance has been improved.

The third perspective is "children's responses to instructions".

"When the other person is talking, do not interrupt, do not get bored and start doing other things, do not ignore others, but listen carefully, and this will gradually develop patience." The author believes that by observing how children follow instructions if they promptly respond to the instructions conveyed by the instructor, it is possible to determine whether children are listening carefully and thus whether their patience is growing.

The violin group course was shortened from one year to six months due to the new crown epidemic in 2020. The author's observation is from September 2020 to February 2021.

1) Sight observation.

Phase 1: September-October 2020

Young children are immersed in their world, looking at the violin during lessons and chatting heavily with the friend next to them. The author believes that

young children at this stage may not be comfortable with group violin lessons for the time being or may only be interested in the instrument itself.

Phase 2: November-December 2020

More than half of the children's eyes were focused on the instructor, but there were still scenes of head bowing. The children at this stage gradually got used to the group violin lessons. The author believes it is because the children's eyes gradually focused on the direction of the primary instructor as their concentration power increased.

Phase 3: January-February 2021

The children's eyes focused on the lecturer during the group violin study. In the final stage, the children's eyes were focused on the instructor, thus showing that they cared about the instructor for the lesson.

Through 3 periods of observation, it was possible to confirm that the children could control their eyes well and observe the teacher's movements as a role model. So six months of group violin learning significantly improved the children's concentration.

2) Observe small movements that are not related to the class

Phase I: September-October 2020

There are a lot of subtle movements in class, and at this stage, not only the lack of endurance but also the lack of concentration is one of the reasons. Violins and bows are often dropped during practice. The bow is not a heavy object and can be easily held in the hands of a child, but the sound of a bow falling to the floor is often heard in the classroom. The author thinks this is a state of inattention. When sitting, they lean forward, shaking their legs randomly, and talk to their friends around them most of the time. However, this condition gradually improved with the increase of classes.

Phase 2: November-December 2020

Although there were also young children who set up their violins in the wrong position and had wobbly bodies, the number was down compared to 2 months ago.

Phase 3: January-February 2021

Although the toddlers could also be seen making small movements, only a few of them did so. The other children could set up their violins in the correct position, whether standing or sitting. Small movements could be controlled or tolerated, and the sound of violin or bow dropping could hardly be heard in these two months. Through 6 months of observation, the author could feel the rapid improvement in the children's concentration and endurance.

3) Observation of the response to the indication

The ability of young children to listen to themselves properly is evidence of growing tolerance.

The author believes that children listening attentively to the speaker not only develops patience but also helps develop concentration.

Phase 1: September-October 2020

Only a few children listened carefully to the speaker's instructions during this

period, while the rest were almost immersed in their world.

Phase 2: November-December 2020

More than half of the children's response time improved. They responded quickly to the instructor's instructions and responded positively to questions posed by the instructor.

Phase 3: January-February 2021

By this time, almost all of the children could respond quickly to the instructions given by the instructor. As a whole, almost all children could focus on the content of the instructions given by the instructor.

2.2.3. Summary of the Content of the Interviews with Teachers Working in Early Childhood Education

Thirty video shoots were conducted within six months of this study. Considering the length, it was not possible to show all the videos to the interviewees, so the author consolidated the videos from the apprenticeship phase and selected one video per month, five in total (September 17, 2020, 1:00, October 22, 45 seconds, December 1, 1:00 2021: January 26, 40 seconds, February 25, 35 seconds) and edited them into a 4-minute video for this interview.

Table 1 Items of interview questions for teachers engaged in early childhood education

The subjects of this interview are S and T, teachers who are engaged in early childhood music education. S has 16 years of instructional experience in elementary school and 16 years in early childhood education (on-site instructional experience.) T has 13 years of experience as a teacher, six years of instructional experience in a caregiver development school, and three years of experience in early childhood education (on-site instructional experience).

1) S's point of view

Small movements of young children

Table 1. Shows the content of this question.

Question content	
First video	
1	What do you think about the change of sight and small movements of young children?
2	What changes in abilities do you think led to the change in young children's small movements in the classroom?
3	What do you think was the change in ability that caused the vision change.
Second video	
4	After listening to the instructor's instructions, what do you think about the change in the children's response to the situation?
5	What do you think is the change in ability that caused the children to change their instructions to the instructor

S pointed out, through images, the children's movements, which gradually stabilized as the course progressed.

S says it is also clear from the images that the young children's judgment progresses. "In the group violin lessons, gradually, they can judge what they can and cannot do. For example, they cannot talk to random people around them or make small movements unrelated to the lesson, etc. These behaviors are accompanied by an increase in endurance and the children's self-discipline."

The direction of children's eyesight

In the final video, S said, I was impressed by how everyone faced the instructor. The children turned their eyes to the instructor, and as the children's movements became less frequent, the classroom atmosphere calmed down, allowing the class to move toward the same goal.

Children's reactions after listening to instructions

The number of children who can respond quickly to the instructions given by the instructor is also gradually increasing.

2) From the viewpoint of T

Small movements of young children

T watched the video and noted that the children performed many actions unrelated to the lesson during the initial period. As the number of lessons increased, the number of small movements unrelated to the lesson decreased.

The direction of children's eyesight

T says, "As young children's concentration improves, they can work on immediate responses. Also, the respect and reverence for the instructor affect the direction of the children's eyes." it shows the gradual unity in this class from the video footage.

Next, the author summarizes the contents based on the interviews with S and T.

T believes that children's immediate reactions improve their endurance and respect for the instructor. S hypothesizes that the children around them also influence the reduction of small movements unrelated to lessons. He said, "When young children feel the atmosphere of the children around them who are desperately practicing, then they will also respond positively to the violin."

On the other hand, T pointed out that as the children show respect for the behavior of their classmates, the small gestures will slowly decrease. The time spent with the instructor of the group violin lessons gradually develops respect and esteem for the instructor, enhancing the relationship of mutual trust.

These insights emerged beyond the author's observations, the influence of children, judgment, respect for lecturers, respect for each other, trusting relationships, Etc. The author will continue to study these as a future subject awareness.

S says, "In an environment where young children are in a group violin class, when they feel the atmosphere of the children around them desperately practicing, they will respond positively to the violin."

Section 4: Reconfirmation of the interview content by three parties

Children's reactions after listening to instructions

The number of children who can respond quickly to the instructions given by the instructor is also gradually increasing.

This survey was conducted based on the following elements (see **Table 2**).

First, the author showed S and T the table summarized by the author after watching the images of the group violin lessons. The two expressed their agreement with the contents of the table.

Next, the author showed the quotes summarized by the author from the last meeting interview in S and T, respectively. Both said there were no significant problems with the quotes summarized by the author.

In addition, the author connects S and T's viewpoints with his own and gives a consensus view of the three parties. What the author did not realize in his separate analysis, what S and T pointed out in the last meeting interview, was confirmed again.

S and T provided new insights by viewing images of violin-playing scenes.

First, S felt the reverberation of the music blending, and the children's sense of moving in the same direction with the power of the blended sounds increased.

T started by watching violin playing scenes, especially in the December class, and saw how the children wanted to hear themselves play with a good tone and said that the children's ability to think and judge was also improving.

3. Discussion and Conclusion

3.1. Limitations of This Study and Future Research Directions

This study did conclude that "group violin learning is beneficial for children's development, including non-cognitive skills." However, the author's observations lasted only one year. The interviewees were only the instructors of the older classes in the school, so the author felt that the theoretical basis was insufficient. The author believes that the following issues remain in this study.

Table 2. Issues for tripartite consultation.

	Question
1	Watch the author's summary of the author's personal views. If there are mistakes, please point them out
2	Watch the author's summary of the quote-by-quote of the two teachers in the interview, and please tell me if there are parts that do not meet the teachers' wishes.
3	Based on the quote-by-quote of the two teachers, I have further summarized your points. Please let me know if there are any mistakes.
4	Please watch the video about musical performance in the violin group lesson and see if you have anything to add about the previous interview.

First, a kindergarten was selected as an example for this study. It is essential to verify further the generalization of the conclusions drawn from this study in the future.

Second, whether the findings of this study survive in group music learning beyond the violin; with this question in mind, the author will conduct specific observational studies on group music activities other than violin, such as choral and percussion activities, in the future.

In addition, the author will continue to promote research related to the violin group curriculum, such as expanding the subject of the study to more kindergartens and conducting interviews with instructors and participants at different grade levels in each kindergarten.

3.2. Conclusion

From the interviews, the educational goals of the violin instructors at kindergartens a and b affiliated with University A were to improve musical knowledge and violin playing skills and enhance the children's interest in music. At the same time, the educational goals of U, V, and W were consistent in indicating the desire to improve children's concentration and endurance through the collective learning of violin.

The plenary lecturer said in the interview that the children became more confident by being able to play the violin. This conclusion was drawn from the children's daily performance and language. However, the author's non-participant observation only observed the children's performance in the classroom during the group violin study. It was impossible to confirm whether the children's self-confidence had changed just by observing the video.

In a group violin lesson, the instructor does not criticize the children but instead uses educational tools such as "encouragement". The instructor uses the characteristics of group learning, the children's collective mentality, and the competitive spirit and uses motivational tools to achieve educational goals.

The classroom teachers of kindergartens a and b affiliated with University A, who participate in group violin lessons as piano accompanists, believe that children's endurance and concentration are significantly improved.

By observing the video recordings of group violin lessons recorded by the author, two teachers involved in early childhood education stated, "As the number of lessons increased, the children's concentration and endurance improved.". On the other hand, it is impossible to conclude whether the children's self-confidence has improved just by looking at the images.

The above survey shows that the kindergarten teachers will consciously cultivate the children's ability of endurance and concentration in the teaching process. The subsequent results also show that these methods do play a specific effect. However, whether the same effect will be achieved if the teachers conduct collaborative violin teaching without such awareness cultivation is unknown. Further investigation is needed for other kindergartens offering relevant courses.

However, no matter what kind of collective curriculum, children will have a sense of competition and group consciousness, which will be more evident in the relaxed curriculum environment of music learning. The author thinks this also plays a significant role in cultivating children's communication ability and ability to get along with others.

In summary, the following two are expressed as the findings of this study. First, participating in group violin learning can improve young children's non-cognitive skills of endurance and concentration. Second, group violin learning can improve young children's sense of competition and motivation to learn. On the other hand, collective learning works towards a common goal and promotes collective solidarity.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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