

# The Effects of Music Education on Learning Motivation and Mental Health

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**Abstract:** More and more mental health problems faced by adolescents, and as society has changed, the emotional pressure and psychological distress endured by adolescents has also increased. Music education can not only improve students' artistic accomplishment, but also help teenagers' psychological growth. This paper examines the effects of music education on adolescents' emotional health, learning motivation, academic performance and cognitive development. This paper finds that music education has a positive effect on the emotional health development of teenagers. It can assist adolescents in alleviating negative feelings such as anxiety and sadness, enhancing their emotional cognitive capacity and self-regulation skills, so enabling them to more effectively manage psychological stress. Moreover, music education can enhance students' engagement in learning, elevate their intrinsic motivation, and consequently augment their academic achievement, particularly in topics like mathematics and language. Music education fosters cognitive growth via interdisciplinary instruction, particularly in linguistic proficiency, mathematical reasoning, and problem-solving abilities. Cultural background influences pupils' acceptance of music education. Consequently, educators must instruct pupils in accordance with their aptitudes and adapt pedagogical approaches to reflect students' cultural backgrounds. In summary, music education helps teenagers enhance their skills while also improving their general emotional well-being, scholastic achievement, and cognitive capacities.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, adolescent mental health problems have attracted increasing attention. Adolescents develop rapidly physically and mentally, their emotions change greatly, and they are prone to psychological distress, including stress, anxiety, depression, etc. (Blasco-Magraner et al., 2021). These emotional issues not only affect adolescents' daily life but may also severely impair their academic achievement, social skills, and future growth. Due to the rapid speed of contemporary society and the escalating level of academic competition, adolescents frequently feel unable to handle emotional distress and academic pressure. Hence, finding valid methods of helping adolescents to manage their emotions, reduce stress, and improve psychological resilience has been an important educational research topic nowadays.

From this perspective, music education is viewed as a way of emotion regulation. Evidence has demonstrated that musical training can further develop students' artistic aptitudes, psychological

health, learning motivation, and cognitive capabilities (Alvarenga; De Witte et al., 2022). Through its function as an artistic medium, music gives teenagers a means of processing their feelings through resonance and expression. Teenagers who participate in musical activities may experience a decrease in anxiety, a release of tension, and an increase in their self-awareness and confidence. Furthermore, music education enhances children's motivation for learning and academic achievement. Research indicates that teenagers engaged in musical activities are generally more active and motivated in their academic pursuits in other disciplines (Črnčec et al., 2006).

The aim of this study was to explore how music education affects the emotional health, learning motivation and cognitive development of adolescents. This study aimed to investigate the impact of music instruction on teenagers' emotional well-being, learning motivation, and cognitive development. This study will investigate how music education can aid teenagers in coping with emotional distress and academic pressure by enhancing cognitive awareness and self-regulation, by the synthesis and analysis of prior research findings. The

research will examine the influence of music education on students' motivation to learn, particularly its significance in transdisciplinary domains.

According to studies, teaching music can increase students' intrinsic motivation, as well as their interest in and involvement in other subjects (Črnčec et al., 2006; Zhang, 2018). To accomplish this, this study used a literature review, a thorough analysis of research findings in related fields, and music education practices from various cultural backgrounds to investigate how music education affects adolescents' emotional well-being, motivation to learn, and cognitive development. Through these analyses, this paper aims to provide some useful enlightenment for educators to help them better use music education in educational practice and promote the all-round development of teenagers.

Moreover, this paper also examines the divergent effects of music education within different cultural settings. In fact, many studies have established that the cultural background significantly affects the outcome of teaching music. The article tries to explain, through cross-comparison across countries and regions, how different cultural backgrounds can affect the actual effects of music education and serves as a reference for music education practice under globalization. This research will furnish educators with a comprehensive examination of how music education improves teenagers' emotional well-being, learning motivation, and cognitive development, allowing them to comprehend and utilise the various purposes of music education.

## 2 LEARNING MOTIVATION

### 2.1 Research Subjects and Core Concepts

This study examines teenage populations, specifically evaluating the impact of music education on their emotional well-being, learning motivation, academic achievement, and cognitive development. As teenage mental health difficulties have grown increasingly prevalent in recent years, music education has emerged as a favoured method to alleviate emotional discomfort and enhance psychological resilience. The adolescent years signify a critical period for both physical and psychological growth. Educators are increasingly recognising that music is an essential tool for enhancing mental health, in addition to serving as a source of enjoyment. Throughout the epidemic, adolescents globally saw unprecedented psychological distress and emotional volatility, with

music serving as an essential instrument for numerous individuals to manage their mental well-being. Surveys indicate that many adolescents assert that participation in music-related activities—such as playing instruments, singing, or listening to music—can significantly alleviate anxiety, lessen feelings of loneliness, and enhance general physical and mental calm (Aggarwal, 2021; Sun, 2022).

Studies have demonstrated that music education can substantially boost adolescents' enthusiasm for learning. Baylarova-Alakbarova highlights that music education extends beyond mere skill development; it also fosters students' intrinsic motivation and enhances their interest and self-drive in learning (Baylarova-Alakbarova, 2022). Among young people, music education frequently grants students greater autonomy in decision-making (for instance, selecting preferred instruments or engaging in group performances), leading to heightened satisfaction and a sense of achievement in the learning process. This promotes sustained intellectual involvement and motivation. Many schools have created interdisciplinary programs that focus on music. These programs help students improve their music abilities whereas also improving their ability to work with students from different subjects by combining music with subjects like language arts and maths. Baylarova-Alakbarova underscores the significant improvement in adolescents' motivation that might result from integrating music into the school curriculum (Baylarova-Alakbarova, 2022). She also provides examples of how music can be incorporated with other academic disciplines to improve educational outcomes. Zhang underscores the importance of music education in brain development, demonstrating its potential to improve mental faculties when integrated with subjects like mathematics (Zhang, 2018). Moreover, Črnčec, Wilson, and Prior examine the cognitive and academic advantages of music, illustrating that creative approaches integrating music strengthen artistic expression while simultaneously improving academic performance in associated subjects (Črnčec et al., 2006). This pragmatic approach aligns with Asmus's observation that when students recognise their development in music, their motivation to succeed in other academic disciplines often escalates (Asmus, 2021).

Music education significantly contributes to the enhancement of adolescents' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy denotes an individual's confidence in their capacity to successfully do tasks, which is intricately linked to academic performance. Sun discovered that teenagers engaged in musical activities had markedly

enhanced self-efficacy (Sun, 2022). This enhancement is seen not only in academic achievement but also in emotional and social flexibility. Some teenagers experience a sense of achievement from participation in ensemble and band activities, which enhances their self-confidence in interpersonal interactions and teamwork. The augmentation of self-efficacy facilitates not just academic achievement but also enables teenagers to confront life obstacles more effectively and cultivate a good self-concept.

An increasing amount of evidence supports the augmentation of music education to strengthen students' cognitive abilities. Music education can enhance the linguistic, attentional, and mnemonic capacities of infants and adolescents, as revealed by Črnčec, Wilson, and Prior (Črnčec et al., 2006). Students with prolonged engagement in musical activities exhibit superior capabilities in non-musical cognitive tasks, particularly in mathematical reasoning and linguistic communication. Zhang asserted that music education strengthens neural connections in the brain, fostering brain plasticity and thus augmenting students' total learning capacity. This concept has been thoroughly substantiated in practice (Zhang, 2018).

Cross-cultural research illustrates the diverse impacts of music education in different cultural settings. Brand conducted a comparative investigation of music majors in China and the United States, uncovering significant differences in motivation, learning strategies, and perceptions of achievement across students from various cultural backgrounds (Brand, 2001). American students often advance their learning through personal interests and independent decisions, but Chinese students depend more on external incentive and teacher assistance. This difference shows how culture has a big influence on students' motivation to learn and how they approach their studies. Cross-cultural music education enhances the authors comprehension of how students from varied cultural backgrounds acquire knowledge, while also providing educators with a framework for modifying their pedagogical approaches to accommodate cultural differences in the contemporary globalised context.

The Self-Determination Theory, proposed by Deci and Ryan, philosophically underpins music education (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This concept suggests that individuals are more likely to participate in proactive learning when they have autonomy and intrinsic motivation. Music education can augment students' intrinsic drive by providing several choices and opportunities for autonomy. This can augment

their comprehensive development in both academic and social domains. Certain educational institutions include music into Project-Based Learning to afford students increased autonomy and creative liberty, allowing them to derive enjoyment and a sense of accomplishment in tackling real-world issues while gaining knowledge. This intrinsically motivated learning approach not only improves musical proficiency but also effectively fosters students' personal development in other areas.

## 2.2 The Relationship Between Music Education and Learning Motivation

A strong correlation exists between music education and the motivation to learn. Motivation to learn is the impetus that students possess to engage in educational activities, which has a direct impact on their academic success, learning efficacy, and engagement. Research indicates that music education not only helps students' musical abilities but also increases their drive to learn, particularly in other disciplines, thereby positively influencing their overall educational engagement. According to Baylarova-Alakbarova's investigation of the influence of music education on motivation, pupils who participate in music programs exhibit increased levels of motivation in a variety of academic disciplines (Baylarova-Alakbarova, 2022). Furthermore, Črnčec, Wilson, and Prior assert that music education augments cognitive functioning, hence enhancing learning efficacy in subjects such as mathematics and language arts. This demonstrates the fundamental role of music in developing musical skills and improving overall academic engagement (Črnčec et al., 2006).

Primarily, music education can enhance students' intrinsic motivation by offering demanding and imaginative assignments. Asmus noted that the music learning process was replete with opportunities for inquiry and invention, granting students greater autonomy in selecting their areas of interest (Asmus, 2021). This autonomy not only augments students' enjoyment of music education but also cultivates greater motivation in facing academic hurdles. When students participate in playing instruments, singing, or composing music, they frequently achieve a sense of personal fulfilment, which subsequently enhances their enthusiasm to learn. Baylarova-Alakbarova discovered that students involved in music activities tend to exhibit greater motivation to engage in other subjects, as they receive affirmative feedback from educators and peers during music activities, this

emotional reinforcement aids in sustaining their interest in learning (Baylarova-Alakbarova, 2022).

Autonomy and choice are critical elements in music education that enhance students' motivation to learn. This autonomy and personalised learning approach empowers students to assume control of their educational experience, thereby augmenting their confidence and motivation. Zhang discovered that music education can improve students' self-efficacy, particularly in relation to other academic subjects. Students will exhibit increased proactivity and confidence, thereby enhancing their motivation to learn (Zhang, 2018).

Furthermore, music education has a significant impact on interdisciplinary learning. According to Root Wilson, music education can promote students' learning motivation in other subjects, especially in mathematics, language arts, and science (Wilson, 2009). Learning music is not just about skill development, it can also indirectly enhance students' interest in other subjects by improving their cognitive abilities, such as attention, memory, and problem-solving skills. For example, training in the regularities of rhythm and pitch can help students make progress in their logical thinking and problem-solving skills in mathematics. Črnčec, Wilson, and Prior also believe that music education has a positive impact on students' brain development, especially in the improvement of language and math abilities (Črnčec et al., 2006). Numerous educational procedures have really demonstrated that kids who study music are frequently more able to comprehend the proportional relationships found in mathematical formulas, and they are even better able to understand rhythm and phonetic patterns when learning a language.

Educational institutions have begun integrating music education with other subjects to enhance students' general enthusiasm for studying. Some schools have adopted a "Mathematics and Music Integration" curriculum, enabling students to apply rhythmic and proportional ideas from music in their math classes in order to further develop their communication with the subject. This interdisciplinary teaching method may make students feel more enjoyment when learning other subjects, and their learning motivation might be improved.

The group activities in music education, such as choir, band, and orchestra, are another remarkable feature. These activities have a big influence on students' social motivation and sense of teamwork. Sun discovered that students participating in collective activities often have a sense of belonging through collaboration and derive a sense of accomplishment from working with others (Sun,

2022). This event enhances their social skills and improves their collaborative awareness in learning. When students work together to complete assignments in a group, they are more driven to work hard because they understand their role and contribution to the group. Collective activities can enhance students' attitude and sense of responsibility, hence increasing their motivation to learn. In specific school choirs and ensembles, students are required to engage in both individual practice and collaboration with peers. This collaboration facilitates students' ability to collaborate, enhancing their learning across several disciplines. As children learn how to effectively communicate, resolve conflicts, and collaborate to achieve a shared goal, it also enhances their academic achievement.

As a result, music education not only improves students' musical and cognitive skills, which directly increases their motivation to learn, but it also fosters their interest and enthusiasm in other disciplines by offering possibilities for selective, difficult, and group participation. In conclusion, music education is not only a method of fostering instrumental abilities, but also a highly effective approach to improving the overall learning motivation of students and fostering their holistic development.

### 3 MENTAL HEALTH

#### 3.1 Research Subjects and Core Concepts

When studying music education and mental health, people first need to clarify the characteristics of the research object. The impact of music education will vary depending on the research subject. Blasco-Magraner et al. focused on the emotional development of children aged 3 to 12 years old (Blasco-Magraner et al., 2021). They found that music education might be of great help to teenagers in enhancing their emotional awareness, self-control and social skills. The author's systematic review indicates that music instruction enhances children's emotional awareness and regulation skills, with 65% of the youngsters exhibiting elevated levels of emotional comprehension (Blasco-Magraner et al., 2021). This reinforces the perspective of the current study that instructing youngsters in music not only facilitates the acquisition of new abilities but also enhances their emotional and mental well-being. Currently, children have unprecedented emotional and social obstacles, and music has emerged as a valuable instrument for developing these

competencies, alleviating stress, and mitigating mental health issues.

Alvarenga's research focusses on adults, examining music's ability to modulate emotions during stressful circumstances (Alvarenga). The results indicated that participants involved in musical activities throughout the evaluation exhibited a notable decrease in anxiety levels after experiencing stress. Approximately 80% of participants indicated significant emotional relief through musical engagement, with their worry levels declining from an average of 7.5 out of 10 prior to the investigation to 5.2 following the intervention (Alvarenga). This discovery made me deeply realize that music can not only be used as a skill training tool, but also an important means of stress management for adults, especially in contemporary society, where adults are facing increasing work and life pressures. Engaging in music activities more often may significantly alleviate stress and anxiety in people, hence enhancing their mental health.

De Witte et al. performed a meta-analysis to investigate the impact of music therapy on reducing symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression in certain populations (De Witte et al., 2022). They examined 20 randomised controlled studies on music therapy and concluded that it reduced anxiety symptoms. Music therapy, in contrast, somewhat reduced depression symptoms (effect size: 0.42) (De Witte et al., 2022). This data made me realize that music therapy can not only play a role in emotion regulation in healthy people, but also bring significant mental health improvements to special groups. In these populations, music, as a non-pharmacological intervention, has fewer adverse effects and may markedly enhance patients' quality of life. Consequently, the author believe that music therapy need to be more extensively used in mental health treatment moving forward.

"Music education" encompasses not just technical development but also the enhancement of emotional, cognitive, and social competencies. Hallam said that music education enhanced people' adaptation to social life by fostering emotional comprehension and management (Hallam, 2010; Hallam, 2020). The author contend that this is also the rationale behind the close association between music education and mental wellness. Music aids individuals, especially adolescents, in identifying appropriate coping mechanisms for psychological stress through its unique emotional expression and regulatory functions. Engaging in music may enhance individuals' emotional regulation skills, a vital aspect of mental health preservation (Hallam, 2020).

### 3.2 The Relationship Between Music Education and Mental Health

The connection between music education and mental health can be examined from various perspectives. The research conducted by Blasco-Magraner et al. demonstrated that music instruction significantly influences children's emotional cognition and regulation. In their retrospective study, 65% of the participants scored significantly higher in tests of emotional cognition and social skills, indicating that music education has a positive impact on children's mental health (Blasco-Magraner et al., 2021). The author think this finding emphasizes that music education not only helps children improve their skills, but also provides them with effective emotional support to help them deal with psychological challenges in their growth process. In contemporary society, children encounter numerous social demands and emotional turmoil. Music education can provide as a secure outlet for emotional expression and assist individuals in cultivating effective emotional regulation strategies.

Alvarenga shown that music can markedly reduce stress and anxiety. Music-related tasks helped study participants control their feelings, and their anxiety levels went down from 7.5 (before the experiment) to 5.2 (after the intervention) (Alvarenga). This evidence supports the idea that music can help people control their emotions, especially when it comes to dealing with the high amounts of stress that many adults face today. This further solidified my belief that music education should go beyond the confines of traditional school curricula and into the wider community as a means for people to manage their emotions in the face of societal and occupational demands.

De Witte et al.'s meta-analysis indicates that music therapy can significantly alleviate anxiety and depression in specific populations. Studies demonstrate that music therapy yields an effect size of 0.65 for anxiety and 0.42 for depressive symptoms (De Witte et al., 2022). This outcome profoundly highlighted the distinctive significance of music therapy in mental health care. For many elderly patients or those with long-term illnesses, drug treatment may not be the only option. Music therapy provides a non-invasive, low-side effect psychological intervention method. The author personally believe that in the future, music therapy should be considered a standard treatment method in elderly care and mental health treatment, rather than just an auxiliary means.

In addition, Sutcliffe et al. explained the physiological effects of music on emotions from the perspective of neuroscience. Studies have shown that music helps people regulate mood and relieve stress by stimulating the brain's reward system and promoting the release of dopamine and endorphins (Sutcliffe et al., 2020). This study increased my knowledge of how music influences emotions and mental health on a physiological basis. The progress of modern psychology and neuroscience shows that music is not only helpful to people emotionally, but its neurophysiological effects provide people with a scientific basis. The findings suggest that the significance of music in mental health interventions should not be overlooked. It serves as an efficient instrument for assisting persons in sustaining emotional equilibrium.

Hallam stated that community music activities may enhance social skills and promote social support, ultimately improving mental health. Engaging in collective musical endeavours, such as choirs and ensembles, can improve musical skills while cultivating a sense of community and reciprocal support (Hallam, 2020). Simultaneously, the author contend that in contemporary culture, particularly with rapid urbanisation and pervasive emotional isolation, communal music activities serve as a vital social platform. Music facilitates profound emotional connections, fosters a sense of belonging, and alleviates loneliness, all of which are crucial for mental health.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

This study examines the impact of music instruction on adolescents' emotional well-being, learning motivation, and cognitive development. The results show that music education successfully promotes the growth of adolescents' learning motivation and cognitive abilities in addition to greatly improving emotional well-being. With the growing societal and academic focus on teenagers' mental health issues, music education is increasingly recognised as a crucial instrument for promoting adolescents' overall development.

The study revealed that music education significantly influences the emotional well-being of adolescents. Blasco-Magraner et al. demonstrate that youngsters engaged in music education exhibit enhanced abilities to recognise and manage emotions. Through music, individuals acquire emotional expressiveness and enhance their emotional regulation. Alvarenga underscores the capacity of

musical activities to alleviate stress in participants, particularly in relation to the anxiety and psychological strain common in contemporary culture. Research demonstrates that the emotional expression and control capabilities of music aid adolescents in adeptly navigating life's adversities, so bolstering their mental resilience and emotional well-being. Adolescents frequently employ music as a means of emotion to alleviate anxiety and loneliness when confronted with scholastic pressure, social challenges, or familial issues.

Furthermore, music education substantially influences adolescents' drive to learn and their academic achievement. Baylarova-Alakbarova discovered that pupils involved in music education had increased interest and involvement in other areas. Music education enhances students' artistic abilities while also fostering their willingness to engage in other academic disciplines. For example, Zhang pointed out that music study can stimulate students' interest in mathematics, language and other subjects, especially through rhythm, harmony and structure in music, students' abstract thinking and logical reasoning skills are exercised. Unlike standard classroom instruction, music education can inspire students' inner motivation and increase their excitement for learning activities outside of the classroom because of its distinctive inventiveness and involvement.

Moreover, music education markedly improves pupils' self-assurance and interpersonal abilities. Sun posits that youngsters engaged in collective music activities, including choirs, bands, and orchestras, typically exhibit improved teamwork and social competencies. In addition to fostering the development of students' musical skills, these group activities also create a sense of responsibility and cooperation among them. In music activities, students must cooperate and synchronize with each other, and this social participation has a positive impact on enhancing self-confidence and a sense of belonging. In the context of a diverse and modern society, community music activities provide an important platform for emotional support and social engagement for adolescents.

The cognitive benefits of music instruction are also a major theme of research. Wilson and Prior showed that students who participated in music activities often performed better on cognitive tasks, including memory, attention, language skills, and mathematical thinking. Learning music is more than just an artistic experience; it may stimulate multiple areas of the brain and induce neuroplasticity, thereby improving students' general cognitive abilities. This

conclusion is corroborated by several interdisciplinary research demonstrating that music instruction improves students' comprehension of proportional relationships in mathematics and phonological principles in language. Music education enhances pupils' logical reasoning and linguistic comprehension.

In conclusion, music education significantly enhances adolescents' emotional health, academic motivation, cognitive development, and social abilities. These findings underscore the importance of music education as a multifunctional tool that facilitates students' emotional regulation, enhances their academic performance, and promotes social integration. Future educational techniques may improve access to music teaching, particularly in increasing teenage mental health and academic performance. Incorporating music education into the standard curriculum and social activities allows schools to provide students with more comprehensive developmental opportunities and aids them in managing the intricacies of modern society.

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