

Analysis of the Development Status and Countermeasures of Music Education for Special Children in Remote Areas

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Abstract

With the country's continuous promotion of educational equity and inclusive education, the issue of education for special children has gradually shifted from the margins to the core. Music education, as a unique form of education, has profound effects on the physical and mental development of special children. However, the development of music education for special children in remote areas still faces numerous challenges, such as the lack of systematic and personalized curriculum, teacher shortages, insufficient teaching resources, lack of family and social support, and outdated social perceptions. This paper, through field surveys and literature analysis, explores the root causes of these problems and proposes specific countermeasures, including improving curriculum design, enhancing teacher training, improving teaching resources, and promoting family and social support. The research shows that with policy support, social cooperation, and educational innovation, music education for special children in remote areas can achieve sustainable development, providing a broader stage for the comprehensive growth of special children.

Keywords

Remote Areas; Music Education for Special Children; Educational Equity and Inclusion

1. Introduction

In the context of the country's strong promotion of educational equity and the development of inclusive education, the education of special children has gradually shifted from the periphery to the core. Music education, as a form that integrates both artistry and functionality, demonstrates irreplaceable value in the sensory training, emotional regulation, social interaction, and psychological rehabilitation of special children. Especially for groups such as those with hearing impairments, in-

tellectual disabilities, and autism spectrum disorders, music education is not only an aesthetic experience but also an effective means of rehabilitation and communication. However, a gap still exists between the advancement of educational policies and their real-world implementation, and special children continue to face many barriers, particularly in music education, in terms of equal educational opportunities with differentiated support.

As a vulnerable unit within China's social structure, remote areas suffer from weak educational foundations, insufficient resource allocation, and serious teacher turnover. These issues are more pronounced in the field of special education. The development of music education for special children in remote areas is constrained not only by financial investment in education but also by social awareness, cultural atmosphere, family support, and local educational governance capabilities. Music courses are often missing, teaching facilities are rudimentary, and teachers lack professional training, which leads to music education in these areas being regarded as a marginal subject, neglecting its deeper role in children's physical and mental development. This phenomenon not only limits the potential of special children but also reflects a severe gap in the implementation of regional educational equity.

Therefore, it has become a key issue in current special education research to analyze in depth the real development status of music education for special children in remote areas and to propose a comprehensive set of countermeasures from the perspectives of educational policies, resource guarantees, teacher training, and social support. This research aims to uncover the real dilemmas and potential opportunities in the process of promoting music education for special children in remote areas, explore actionable optimization paths and policy suggestions, and provide theoretical support and practical references for promoting balanced regional educational development, improving the special education system, and reflecting and responding to the need for truly high-quality and equitable education.

2. Concepts

2.1. Remote Areas

Remote areas generally refer to regions that are geographically distant from political, economic, and cultural centers. These areas often suffer from poor transportation, isolated information flow, and uneven resource distribution, with limited capacity to provide public services. In China, remote areas are mostly located in the western, southwestern, and northeastern border areas, as well as some areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. Typical characteristics of these regions include weak infrastructure, insufficient teaching staff, and a lack of educational resources. According to relevant educational policies, remote areas are often included in categories such as the "three regions and three prefectures" (poverty-stricken areas) or "weak rural schools" and are the focus of national support and targeted educational aid.

In the context of music education, the particularity of remote areas is not only re-

flected in the scarcity of teaching resources but also in the weak family music environment, the difficulty of retaining professional teachers, and the large cultural differences among students. These factors directly restrict the popularization and quality of music education. However, remote areas also have abundant ethnic music resources and local cultural characteristics, providing unique soil for regional music education.

2.2. Music Education for Special Children

Special children refer to children who face difficulties in the general education process due to physical, psychological, cognitive, emotional, social, or sensory disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to, hearing impairments, visual impairments, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), learning disabilities, and physical disabilities. Music education, as an integrated form of art, psychology, and rehabilitation, has been widely applied in the field of special education in recent years.

Music education for special children is a comprehensive educational process that focuses on special children as the main educational subject, based on their physical and mental characteristics and developmental needs. Through purposeful and planned music activities such as singing, rhythm training, instrument playing, music games, and music therapy, it helps them improve their sensory abilities, emotional regulation, language expression, and social interaction skills. The goal of this education is not just to teach music knowledge and skills but to use music as a medium to stimulate individual potential and promote the healthy development of their personality. Research has shown that systematic music education has a positive effect on the physical and mental health of special children and is an important component of inclusive and differentiated education.

3. Development Status of Music Education for Special Children in Remote Areas

3.1. Lack of Systematic and Scientific Curriculum

Special education schools in remote areas generally have significant deficiencies in music education curriculum design. Many schools only offer music as an elective subject, with limited class hours and simple content that often only involves basic instrument playing or simple singing training. There is a lack of targeted design for the individual differences of special children. Especially in groups with intellectual disabilities and hearing impairments, standardized courses have not been adjusted based on their cognitive development and emotional needs. As a result, many special children do not receive music education at a level suited to their abilities. In some schools, due to a lack of teachers, music courses are often given casually or even not offered at all. This lack of a systematic and comprehensive curriculum significantly affects the cognitive development and emotional expression of special

children in the field of music.

3.2. Teacher Shortages and Low Professionalization

Special education schools in remote areas generally face a shortage of teachers, particularly in music education, where both the quantity and quality of teachers fail to meet the needs of special children. Many music teachers lack professional backgrounds, and in some schools, music courses are even taught by teachers from other subjects, making it difficult to ensure teaching quality. Furthermore, special education music teachers lack professional training regarding the psychological, behavioral, and cognitive characteristics of special children, which prevents them from effectively identifying and meeting the individualized learning needs of students. Some teachers, even with music education backgrounds, are unfamiliar with teaching methods for special children and cannot fully utilize the therapeutic and enlightening functions of music education, resulting in reduced educational outcomes.

3.3. Lack of Teaching Resources and Rudimentary Facilities

A prominent issue in music education for special children in remote areas is the extreme lack of teaching resources. Due to economic constraints, special education schools in these areas cannot afford sufficient music teaching facilities and equipment. Many schools have rudimentary musical instruments and even lack necessary sound equipment and basic instruments. In addition, the lack of textbooks and teaching aids exacerbates the problem. Existing textbooks are often general-purpose music materials and lack specialized content for special children's cognitive and emotional needs. For instance, music education for children with autism should focus more on sensory stimulation and emotional regulation, but current textbooks emphasize technical performance and single artistic expression, neglecting the importance of music education in promoting social interaction and emotional expression. Therefore, the scarcity of resources directly limits the depth and breadth of teaching activities.

3.4. Lack of Family and Social Support

In addition to internal challenges in schools, the lack of family and social support systems is another critical issue. Due to low cultural levels and weak support functions in many special children's families, parents tend to have a low recognition and emphasis on music education. Some parents believe music education lacks direct social benefits, overlooking its potential value in emotional regulation, cognitive development, and social skill training. Moreover, social support is also relatively scarce. While local governments have issued relevant policies, the actual implementation often faces challenges such as uneven financial and resource distribution, leading to stagnation in the development of music education for special children. Social organizations, art groups, and other community forces are not sufficiently in-

volved, and there is a lack of public resources and activities to enhance the music education environment for special children in remote areas.

3.5. Outdated Social Perception and Educational Concepts

The current status of music education for special children in remote areas is closely related to outdated social perceptions and educational concepts. Many places still adhere to traditional "knowledge education" frameworks and overlook the multi-faceted value of music education in children's overall development. In the field of special education, music is often regarded as an "optional" subject, and social and educational decision-makers lack sufficient understanding of the special functions of music education in the physical and mental development of special children. Due to a lack of recognition of the value of music education, investment and attention to music education are generally low, and relevant policies and funding support are limited. Worse still, many parents still perceive music education for special children as simply skill training, failing to recognize its importance in enhancing emotional, cognitive, and social adaptability. Therefore, outdated educational concepts and limited social awareness are deep-rooted causes of the development constraints for music education in remote areas.

4. Countermeasures for Music Education for Special Children in Remote Areas

1. Improve Curriculum Design and Build an Individualized Education System

One of the major problems in music education for special children in remote areas is the simplicity and lack of a systematic curriculum. Traditional curricula fail to fully consider the diverse needs of special children, making it impossible to implement personalized teaching. Therefore, deep reforms are needed in terms of curriculum content, teaching methods, and teaching hours.

The content of the curriculum should be designed based on the cognitive development, emotional needs, and behavioral characteristics of different types of special children. For example, for children with autism, music courses should focus more on promoting emotional expression and social skill development, incorporating rhythm training, emotional perception, and non-verbal communication modules. For children with intellectual disabilities, the course design should emphasize the basic aspects of music education, sensory training, and life skills application. The curriculum should include sensory stimulation, music creation, dance, and chorus, aiming to improve self-awareness, emotional regulation, and social interaction abilities. Teaching methods should be more flexible and interactive. Teachers should adjust teaching content according to the students' interests and emotional states, incorporating music games, scenario performances, and collective creation to cultivate creativity and teamwork. Additionally, art forms and educational technologies should be appropriately used to provide more sensory stimulation, motivating special chil-

dren to engage in learning. Finally, course hours should be reasonably increased, with music education being established as a core subject in special education schools.

2. Strengthen Teacher Training and Professional Development

The development of music education for special children in remote areas heavily relies on the professional competence and capabilities of teachers. Currently, many music teachers in special education schools in remote areas lack professional backgrounds, and some schools even have regular teachers filling in for music classes, which severely undermines the quality of teaching. These teachers are unable to effectively address the cognitive and emotional barriers special children face in music education.

To address this issue, the focus should first be on teacher training and continuing education. It is necessary to promote the cultivation of "dual-skilled" teachers—those who are proficient in both music education and special education. Through cooperation between national and local governments, targeted training programs for special education music teachers should be established. Universities should offer relevant professional courses, provide a system for teacher development, and strengthen teachers' teaching abilities and experience through practical teaching and field internships.

Additionally, a continuous training mechanism should be established for in-service teachers. Regular professional skills training and learning should be provided, covering topics such as the psychological characteristics of special children, behavioral analysis, teaching methods, and assessment techniques. This will enhance teachers' sensitivity to the needs of special children and diversify their teaching strategies. Remote education and online courses can also be used to provide more learning opportunities for teachers in remote areas, enabling them to access the latest teaching ideas and skills.

Most importantly, quality urban teachers should be encouraged to work in remote areas through programs like "targeted teaching support," "remote support," and "teacher exchange programs between cities and rural areas." This approach can help improve the teacher structure in remote areas and promote the flow and sharing of quality educational resources, ultimately fostering educational equity across the region.

3. Strengthen Teaching Resources and Improve Facilities

The lack of resources is one of the major factors restricting the development of music education for special children in remote areas. Many schools in these areas lack essential music teaching facilities and musical instruments, and the shortage of teaching materials and tools directly impacts the quality of education.

To resolve this issue, the government should increase financial investment, particularly in the field of special education in remote areas. Special funds can be allocated to help special education schools build music education infrastructure, such as mu-

sical instruments, sound equipment, and multimedia teaching platforms. Moreover, education authorities should work with social organizations to mobilize businesses, art groups, and charitable organizations to donate musical instruments and teaching tools, providing richer music education resources for special children.

In terms of textbooks, traditional music materials often fail to meet the learning needs of special children, lacking flexibility and relevance. Therefore, education departments should collaborate with professional publishing institutions to develop textbooks tailored to the needs of special children, focusing on sensory stimulation, emotional experiences, and social skill development. For example, music textbooks for children with autism can be designed with an emotional focus, using simple, easy-to-understand illustrations, symbols, and interactive content. Additionally, various teaching resources such as image notes and gesture music should be developed for different age groups and types of disabilities, helping students learn at their own pace.

Furthermore, the introduction of modern technology can significantly expand teaching resources in remote areas. Using online platforms for remote teaching, special children in remote areas can access online music courses, bringing them high-quality resources from across the country and even globally, addressing the shortage of teaching resources caused by geographical limitations.

4. Strengthen Family and Social Support, Promote Comprehensive Collaboration

Family and social support are crucial to the success of special children's education, and the support system for special children in remote areas is generally weak. Parents' understanding and involvement in music education are low, affecting the effectiveness of education. Therefore, comprehensive support strategies are needed to strengthen school-family cooperation and encourage social participation.

First, schools should regularly organize parent schools and parent meetings to raise parents' awareness of music education. Parents need to understand that music education is not just about cultivating artistic skills but also serves as an effective way to express emotions, train cognition, and enhance social skills. Schools should establish close communication mechanisms with parents, helping them understand the value of music education and encouraging them to actively participate in their children's learning process.

Second, governments and social organizations should increase the publicity of music education for special children through various channels such as media and public welfare activities, raising social attention and support. Social organizations can support special children by donating musical instruments, funding music courses, and organizing music exchange activities. Moreover, local governments can involve social enterprises and cultural institutions to establish special funds or scholarships to support the development of music education for special children in remote areas. Through cooperation among the "government-school-family-society," a comprehen-

sive and positive ecosystem for supporting music education for special children can be established.

5. Enhance Social Awareness, Promote Policy Support and Conceptual Change

Delayed social awareness and outdated educational concepts are fundamental barriers to the development of music education for special children in remote areas. Many parents and educational decision-makers still fail to recognize the importance of music education in the physical and mental development of special children. Therefore, multi-channel and multi-level publicity efforts are needed to promote a shift in social awareness.

First, education departments should strengthen the promotion of the value of music education, especially its unique role for special children. Various approaches such as social media, public service advertisements, and seminars can be used to enhance public understanding of music education for special children, eliminating the misconception that music education is "useless" and helping more people realize the profound impact music education has on special children's emotions, cognition, and social adaptability.

At the same time, the government should establish more comprehensive policy support, especially by providing more policy and financial support for music education for special children in remote areas. For example, setting up special funds to support music education infrastructure, teacher training, and textbook development in remote areas, ensuring that policies are effectively implemented and that education resources are distributed more equitably.

Ultimately, all sectors of society should recognize that music education for special children is not only the responsibility of schools but also a shared responsibility of society as a whole. Through increased cooperation and support from all sectors, a better learning and growing environment can be created for special children in remote areas.

Conclusion

This study deeply explores the development status and challenges of music education for special children in remote areas and proposes practical and feasible countermeasures. By analyzing the basic situation of special education in remote areas, we identified several key constraints, including unstructured curriculum design, insufficient teacher capacity, inadequate teaching resources, lack of family and social support, and outdated social awareness. The study proposes a series of optimization measures, including improving curriculum design, enhancing teacher training, improving teaching resources, and promoting family and social support systems.

To achieve sustainable development for music education for special children in remote areas, in addition to policy support and financial investment, active participation and support from all sectors of society are also essential. As a diversified educa-

tional form, music education can not only promote special children's sensory, emotional regulation, and social skills but also help them build confidence, improve mental health, and integrate into society. With the joint efforts of society, music education for special children will surely develop towards a more balanced and high-quality future.

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