

Music Preferences in the Early Years: Infants' Emotional Responses to Various Auditory Stimulations

Dr. Dennis Ping-Cheng Wang

Faculty of Education, University of Macau, Macau, China

dennisdma2000@yahoo.com

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Background

Numerous studies have shown that detecting the rhythm of music is an inborn talent for infants. Flom & Bahrick (2010) discovered that one of the communicative approaches for newborns to the world is emotion and also babies can distinguish the upbeat tunes from others. Wang (2003) revealed that babies are able to differentiate speech and melodies.

This research aims to investigate how infants responded to the different types of music. The researcher sought: 1) if the infants respond differently with various auditory stimulation; 2) if the infants' bodies responded differently with various types of music, such as; thriller, suspense, and pleasantness.

Aims

The study aims at investigating if infants can differentiate various types of music and respond differently in terms of emotional and physical behaviours. The study discovers that the infants showed the different emotional and bodily responses to the various auditory stimulations, such as, thriller, suspense, and pleasantness. Moreover, the researcher suggests that the results of the study can be considered as a practical treatment for hospital and parents in the future.

Main Contribution

Prior to the study, each of the participants was measured and verified as healthy condition with heart rates of 120-140 beats per minute. The amount at each milk feeding was about 6 or 8 ounces with 4 to 5 times a day.

The study reveals that the participant infants showed the obvious changes when they listened to the thriller music and new age music on both physical and psychological checks. The infants' increased their heart rates to 138-144 beats per minutes when they listened to the thriller and suspense music. Moreover, the infants demonstrated disturbed and frowning when they heard thriller and suspense music. Comparing with the results of new ages music and comic music, the infants remained rather normal condition without any visible disturbing difference.

After cross compared the two tests of both physical and psychological checks, the researcher discovered that there were around 68% of the infants expressed similar reactions which included the increasing heart rates, prolong regular drinking habits, showing disturbed when they heard thriller music. Moreover, there were about 80% of the infants expressed visible changes of mood and facial expression, such as frowning eyebrows, showing disturbed, and crying when they

heard thriller and pleasant music. On contrast, the infants tended to behavior calmly, such as stable heart rating and longer lengths of eye contacts with their parents and asleep falling when they heard pleasant and comic music. The similar results showed on both tests throughout the whole experimental period.

Implications

The study proved that the majority four- to twelve-month-old infants were able to differentiate the various auditory stimulations when they heard different types of music. Moreover, the infants and demonstrated obvious physical reactions, such as increasing heart rates, blood pressures, and prolong the amount of milk drinking when they hear threatening and disturbing music. On contrast, the infants showed more calm and stable when they heard the music without much sharp repetitive musical notes and phrases. The researcher suggests that music with steady beat and rhythm can be an useful tool for comforting. At last, the study can be considered as a suggested treatment for the future pediatrics.

Keywords

Music and emotions, musical response, music education

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