



Fostering Children's Resilience in Learning Music: Reformulating the Importance of Environment and Music Teacher Support

Christina Harianti Sitorus^{1*}, Mauly Purba², Tasnim Lubis³

Faculty of Cultural Science, University of North Sumatra - Indonesia.

*Corresponding Author

Christina Harianti Sitorus

Faculty of Cultural
Science, University of
North Sumatra -
Indonesia.

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Abstract: Learning music, particularly piano, encompasses technical proficiency and emotional expression, demanding a nuanced understanding of psychological influences. This study explores how mood, parental support, and resilience intersect to shape children's engagement in music education. Drawing from qualitative methods, three children actively engaged in music lessons and their parents participated in in-depth interviews. The findings underscored the pivotal role of parental support in fostering motivation and resilience among children learning music. Parents not only provided logistical support but also emotional encouragement and participation in practice sessions, which significantly enhanced their children's commitment to music. Moreover, positive mood states were identified as catalysts for increased motivation, concentration, and perseverance in music learning, whereas negative moods posed challenges to sustained engagement. Psychological theories such as Self-Determination Theory and Expectancy-Value Theory elucidated the mechanisms through which mood influences students' learning experiences. Effective teaching strategies that acknowledge and respond to students' emotional states emerged as crucial in creating supportive learning environments. By integrating insights from psychological research and considering contextual factors, this study advocates for comprehensive approaches to enhance students' emotional well-being and academic success in music education. Ultimately, it contributes to a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics shaping children's involvement and resilience in piano learning, emphasizing the need for holistic educational practices that integrate psychological principles to foster both academic and emotional growth.

Keywords: *learning music; piano; resilience; music teacher.*

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Introduction

Learning music, especially piano, requires a combination of technical skills and emotional interpretation. This intricate process demands not only mechanical proficiency but also the ability to convey emotions through the instrument. The field of music psychology explores how psychological factors influence the experience and learning of music. Among these factors, mood plays a crucial role in the learning process, affecting motivation, concentration, and resilience. Unfortunately, many students do not complete their piano lessons, and there is a noticeable lack of enthusiasm among those who do. This issue underscores the importance of understanding the psychological and environmental factors that influence music learning.

The role of parents in motivating children to learn music is a critical aspect of successful music education. Parents who provide support and opportunities for their children to learn music often recognize the broad benefits of musical education. These benefits include improved cognitive abilities, enhanced emotional expression, and increased social skills. However, despite these advantages, maintaining student interest and commitment to music lessons, particularly piano, remains a significant challenge.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of mood in learning and performing music. Mood, as a key component of psychological state, significantly impacts the learning process. Positive mood states can enhance motivation, concentration, and perseverance, while negative moods can lead to frustration, lack of interest, and eventual dropout. For instance, Sloboda has shown that mood influences not only the motivation to practice but also the quality of practice sessions (Sloboda, 2010). Students in a positive mood are more likely to engage deeply with the material, experiment with different interpretations, and enjoy the process of learning. Conversely, students in a negative mood might practice less effectively, with reduced attention and increased likelihood of errors. This variance in practice quality can accumulate over time, leading to significant differences in musical development and achievement.

Moreover, the role of mood in music learning is intertwined with other psychological constructs such as self-efficacy and resilience. Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific tasks, is critical in music education. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals, persist in the face of difficulties, and achieve higher levels of performance. However,

mood can modulate self-efficacy beliefs. A positive mood can boost confidence and foster a proactive learning approach, whereas a negative mood can undermine self-belief and contribute to a defeatist attitude (Hallam, 2010).

Resilience, defined as the capacity to recover from setbacks and adapt to challenging circumstances, is another key factor in sustained musical engagement. Learning piano is often a long and arduous process, requiring consistent effort and practice over extended periods. Students inevitably encounter obstacles, such as difficult pieces, performance anxiety, or slow progress, which can dampen their motivation and commitment. The ability to remain resilient in the face of these challenges is crucial for long-term success. However, resilience itself is influenced by psychological well-being, including mood states. Positive moods can enhance resilience by promoting optimism and adaptive coping strategies, while negative moods can exacerbate feelings of frustration and hopelessness (Dweck, 2006).

Despite the clear importance of psychological factors in music education, many piano students struggle with low motivation and high dropout rates. Reports indicate that a significant number of students discontinue their lessons within the first few years. This trend is alarming and suggests that current pedagogical approaches may not adequately address the psychological needs of students. To tackle this issue, it is essential to explore how environmental factors and teacher support can be optimized to foster a positive learning atmosphere and enhance student resilience.

Environmental factors, such as the physical learning space, social dynamics, and available resources, play a significant role in shaping students' musical experiences. A supportive and stimulating environment can make learning more enjoyable and engaging, thereby boosting mood and motivation. For instance, a well-equipped and aesthetically pleasing practice room can inspire students to practice more regularly. Similarly, a positive social environment, where students feel encouraged and valued by their peers and teachers, can enhance their emotional well-being and commitment to learning.

Teacher support is another critical element in fostering resilience and motivation in music students. Effective teachers not only impart technical skills but also nurture their students' emotional and psychological growth. They recognize the signs of frustration or discouragement and provide timely interventions to help students overcome these hurdles. This might involve personalized feedback, encouragement, and strategies to manage performance anxiety and stress. By creating a trusting and empathetic relationship, teachers can significantly influence their students' mood and resilience, ultimately contributing to sustained musical engagement.

In short, learning piano is a multifaceted endeavor that requires attention to both technical proficiency and emotional interpretation. The high dropout rates and low enthusiasm levels among piano students highlight the need to address the psychological aspects of music education. Understanding how mood and other psychological factors affect learning and persistence is crucial for developing effective teaching strategies. By optimizing environmental conditions and providing robust teacher support, it can be created a more conducive learning environment that fosters resilience and enhances student motivation, leading to more successful and fulfilling musical journeys.

Some previous researches on the relationship between music psychology and resilience in music learning: research conducted by Vella-Burrows, T., explored the psychological impact of music on individuals' mental health. They discovered that engaging in musical activities, whether through listening or participation, can alleviate stress, anxiety, and depression. Music also has the ability to improve mood and overall wellness. In the realm of music education, these positive psychological effects can contribute significantly to resilience, which involves the capacity to endure and recover from challenges (Vella-Burrows, Ewbank, Gilbert, Forrester, & Barnes, 2019).

McPherson, G. E., and Davidson, J. W. emphasized in their article "Musical Practice: Mother and Child Interactions During the First Year of Learning an Instrument" the crucial role of parental support in fostering resilience among children learning music. They observed that positive interactions between parents and children during musical practice sessions enhance children's motivation and resilience in overcoming the obstacles inherent in the process of learning music (McPherson & Davidson, 2010).

Zdzinski, S. F. investigated in the article "Parental Involvement, Gender, and Ethnic Differences in Musical Achievement" how students' self-perceptions regarding their musical abilities impact their resilience. Their findings indicated that students who hold positive self-perceptions tend to exhibit higher levels of resilience when confronting challenges in music learning. These self-perceptions are often influenced by supportive environments and constructive feedback from both parents and music instructors (Zdzinski, 1996).

Juslin, P. N., and Sloboda, J. A. discussed in their book "Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications" how music can serve as a vehicle for enhancing emotional skills, thereby fostering resilience. They argued that engaging with music enables individuals to better manage their emotions, a critical aspect of resilience (P. Juslin & Sloboda, 2011).

Prior studies establish a robust link between music psychology and resilience within the context of music learning. Factors such as parental support, positive self-perception, emotional skill development, and music-based interventions all contribute significantly to fostering resilience in children engaged in music education. Understanding these dynamics can aid music educators, parents, and therapists in devising more effective approaches to support children throughout their musical journey. By incorporating insights from past research, we can cultivate supportive environments where children can cultivate resilience and achieve success in music learning.

This study aims to explore the role of parents in motivating their children to learn music through a qualitative approach, with informants consisting of three children who are currently taking music lessons. By examining the interplay between parental support, mood, and resilience, this research seeks to provide deeper insights into effective strategies for sustaining students' engagement and success in learning piano.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach to gather and analyze data, aiming to delve into how parents motivate their children to learn music. A qualitative approach is chosen because it allows the researcher to obtain an in-depth and detailed understanding of the

participants' subjective experiences and perceptions. The primary informants in this study are three children who are actively taking music lessons: Child A (10 years old), Child B (13 years old), and Child C (14 years old). The selection of informants is based on the criterion that they have been enrolled in music lessons for at least one year, ensuring that they have sufficient experience to provide relevant insights into their music learning process. These children come from families that support music education, enabling the researcher to explore the parental role in greater depth. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with each child and their parents. These interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, allowing the researcher to follow an interview guide while remaining flexible to explore emerging topics during the conversation. Each interview lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and was recorded with the participants' consent for transcription and further analysis. Interviews with the children focused on their experiences in learning music, including their motivation, challenges faced, and how they perceive the support from their parents and environment. The questions asked included:

- What interests you in learning music, specifically the piano?
- How do your parents support you in learning music?
- Have you ever felt like quitting music lessons? If so, what keeps you going?

Interviews with the parents aimed to explore their perspectives on their role in motivating their children. The questions included:

- What are the main reasons you encourage your child to learn music?
- How do you support your child in their daily music practice?
- What challenges do you face in supporting your child, and how do you overcome them?

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The process began with verbatim transcription of the interviews, followed by initial coding to identify main themes. The researcher then grouped similar codes to develop broader and more comprehensive themes. Each theme was analyzed in-depth to understand how different aspects of parental support contribute to the motivation and resilience of children in learning music. To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the researcher employed data source triangulation by combining perspectives from both the children and their parents. Additionally, member checking was conducted by returning the transcriptions and preliminary findings to the participants for confirmation and further clarification.

Through this approach, the study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the role of parents in motivating their children to learn music, as well as the factors influencing the success and resilience of children in facing challenges in their music learning process.

Results and Discussion

The Role of Parents in Motivating Children

Child A (10 years old): The parents of Child A demonstrate consistent support by attending every music lesson and offering positive encouragement. Child A expressed that their parents' presence provides confidence and enthusiasm. Additionally, the

parents help manage practice schedules and ensure that Child A has sufficient time to practice at home.

Child B (13 years old): The parents of Child B play a crucial role in motivation by providing adequate musical facilities, such as purchasing the necessary instruments and funding music lessons. They also actively give constructive feedback and frequently remind Child B of the importance of regular practice. Child B feels motivated by the support and attention their parents give to their musical development.

Child C (14 years old): The parents of Child C not only offer material support but also participate in their child's musical activities by playing music together at home. Child C feels that their parents set a good example, not just talking about the importance of practice but also showing commitment to music through their actions.

Benefits of Music for Children

All informants reported significant benefits from learning music. These children noted improvements in self-confidence, happiness, and the ability to express themselves. They also mentioned that learning music helped them build new friendships and expand their social networks.

Child A feels more confident when playing in front of friends and often feels proud after mastering a new piece.

Child B experiences deep happiness and uses music as a way to cope with stress and negative emotions.

Child C stated that music is an important form of self-expression and helps them better handle social challenges.

This study also found that peer groups significantly influence children's motivation to learn music. The teaching methods at their music lessons that encourage student interaction help boost motivation. Children feel more driven when they can practice and perform with their friends. Students exhibiting positive moods, such as joy and enthusiasm, are more likely to be highly engaged in the learning process. They show improved abilities in understanding new material and expressing music more effectively. Students with negative moods, such as stress or boredom, show decreased motivation and concentration. They tend to struggle with overcoming technical challenges and exhibit less creativity in musical interpretation.

Teaching Strategies

Teachers can play a significant role in managing students' moods. A personal and empathetic approach from teachers can help create a positive learning environment. The use of relaxation techniques and fun musical activities has also been proven effective in enhancing students' learning moods. Mood can be influenced by various factors from both the surrounding environment and within the students themselves (Kong, 2023).

A supportive learning environment plays a crucial role in students' moods. Comfortable, bright, clean, and cozy classrooms can help improve positive moods. A friendly atmosphere, with good relationships between teachers and students as well as among students, can also create a pleasant and supportive learning environment. Varied teaching methods have a significant impact as well. Utilizing creative teaching techniques such as musical games, technology, and interactive approaches can make the learning process more engaging. Additionally, giving praise and rewards for

students' achievements can boost self-confidence and enhance positive mood (Dalimunthe, 2024).

Emotional support is another important factor. Teachers who provide attention and emotional support can help students feel valued and motivated. Parental involvement and motivation also play a crucial role in shaping a positive mood in students. Health and physical fitness also affect mood. Healthy and fit students tend to have better moods and are more prepared to learn. Adequate sleep and rest can also influence students' moods and concentration (Shen, Tang, & Wang, 2024).

Lastly, personal goals and intrinsic motivation are highly influential. Students with clear learning goals and intrinsic motivation tend to have a positive mood. Experiencing achievement in learning can provide satisfaction and improve mood.

Psychological theories provide insights into how mood and motivation are shaped within educational contexts, including music education. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential for fostering intrinsic motivation and positive mood among students. When students feel in control of their learning activities, capable of mastering tasks, and supported by teachers and peers, their motivation and mood are enhanced. Expectancy-Value Theory posits that students' beliefs in their ability to succeed and their perceived value of tasks influence their mood and motivation positively. High expectations of success and personal relevance of learning music contribute to a positive emotional state and heightened motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Mindset Theory distinguishes between fixed and growth mindsets, where students with a growth mindset perceive abilities as malleable through effort and learning. This mindset fosters resilience, positive attitudes towards challenges, and ultimately enhances students' positive mood during learning. Emotional Response to Music Theory, as articulated by Juslin & Västfjäll, explores how music influences emotional states through resonance, contagion, and triggering of memories. The selection of music repertoire and teaching techniques that align with students' emotional responses can significantly influence their mood and engagement in piano learning (P. N. Juslin & Västfjäll, 2008).

Djohan further delves into how music evokes emotional responses and suggests that contextual factors like learning environment and teacher-student relationships play critical roles in shaping students' emotional experiences. Teachers' ability to select appropriate music, employ empathetic teaching methods, and foster emotional awareness enhances students' emotional management skills and overall engagement in music learning. By integrating these theories, educators can cultivate environments that support students' emotional well-being and academic success in music education (Djohan, 2017).

Conclusion

This study delves into the intricate dynamics influencing children's engagement and resilience in music education, particularly in piano learning. Central to this exploration is the pivotal role of parents in nurturing their children's motivation and perseverance. Through qualitative insights gathered from three actively involved children and their families, it became evident that parental support extends far beyond logistical facilitation to encompass profound emotional

encouragement and active participation in practice sessions. These supportive behaviors not only bolster children's commitment to music but also cultivate broader developmental benefits such as heightened self-confidence, emotional expression, and social adeptness.

Moreover, the study underscores the profound impact of mood on students' musical experiences and learning outcomes. Positive mood states are shown to bolster motivation, concentration, and persistence, thereby enhancing musical achievement. Conversely, negative moods can impede these facets, potentially leading to disengagement and dropout. Drawing upon psychological theories like Self-Determination Theory, Expectancy-Value Theory, and Affective Learning Theory provides a framework for understanding how mood interacts with other psychological factors to shape students' trajectories in music education.

Effective teaching strategies that acknowledge and respond to students' emotional states emerge as critical components of fostering a conducive learning environment. Teachers play a pivotal role not only in imparting technical skills but also in nurturing students' emotional well-being through empathetic support and tailored instructional approaches. By integrating insights from psychological theories and considering contextual factors such as the learning environment and teacher-student relationships, educators can craft environments that promote resilience, enhance motivation, and ultimately support students' sustained engagement and success in music learning.

In summary, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted dynamics influencing children's involvement in music education. By emphasizing the integral role of parents and the significance of emotional factors in learning, it advocates for comprehensive approaches that integrate psychological insights into educational practices. Such approaches are essential for fostering environments where students can thrive academically and emotionally in their musical pursuits.

In conclusion, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted dynamics influencing children's involvement in music education. By highlighting the pivotal role of parents and the significance of emotional factors in learning, it advocates for holistic approaches that integrate psychological insights into educational practices, thereby fostering environments where students can thrive both academically and emotionally in their musical pursuits.

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