

## The Current Status of Elementary Music Education in Yangon, Myanmar

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### Abstract

Public schools in Myanmar have offered music education as part of the regular curriculum since 2000; however, very little information is available about the current teaching practices of music education as well as differences and problems regarding music education in different types of schools. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the current status of elementary music education in Yangon, Myanmar in three different types of schools: Public schools, private schools, and international schools. A mixed-method design was employed to achieve the purposes of the study. Qualitative data were collected using in-depth interviews with seven key informants. Quantitative data were collected from 93 respondents—33 music teachers and 60 classroom teachers responsible for teaching music—using a web-based questionnaire and telephone interviews. Both the quantitative and qualitative results indicated that compared to private schools and public schools, international schools receive more practical support in terms of qualified music teachers, standard music programmes, and excellent facilities. Although the Ministry of Education in Myanmar has commenced curriculum reform to include music as a compulsory subject in public schools at the elementary level since the 2016-2017 academic year, there are still many challenges regarding music training for teachers, the effectiveness of music curricula, and adequate support for music facilities and other necessities such as musical instruments, teaching aids, musical equipment, and educational resources. The findings of the study also confirm that the support

of the government is crucial for music education policy and partnership in Public schools and Private schools.

*Keywords:* elementary school, music curricula, music education, Myanmar, Yangon

### **Introduction**

As music education impacts child development at an early age, many countries provide music as a compulsory subject in their elementary schooling. Although there is very little accessible research data on the current status of music education in Myanmar, elementary music education is offered in three different types of schools: public schools, private schools, and international schools. Public schools introduced music as a co-curricular subject under the topic of aesthetic education at the primary level in the 2000-01 academic year (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2012). There are no exact details about the introduction of music education in private schools and international schools. However, Onishi & Young (2012) reported the international schools with a music programmes in their research study as follows:

1. Horizon Kindergarten, Taunmwe Township, Rangoon/Yangon,
2. International Language and Business Center (ILBC), Rangoon/Yangon and Mandalay,
3. International School of Yangon,
4. Network Primary School, Sanchaung Township, Rangoon/Yangon,
5. Yangon International Education Centre,
6. Yangon International School (YIS) (Onishi and Young, 2012)

According to the information provided by the websites of all these schools above, the oldest international school is the International School of Yangon (ISY), founded in 1955, so music education in international schools can be said to have begun in 1955.

“The Private School Registration Law” was enacted by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the Assembly of the Union, Myanmar, in December 2011 (Myanmar Law2, 2011). It was the first such legislation since private schools were nationalised in 1965 at the time of Ne Win’s government (Kyaw, 2015). Therefore, it can be said that 2012 marked the beginning of music education in private schools, which have to follow the guidelines of the MOE. There were just over 50 private schools in the 2012-13 academic year, but the number of private schools quickly increased to 585 in the 2016-17 academic year following the enactment of the Private School Registration Law (Oxford Business Group, 2018).

A general overview of music education in Yangon is that the approach toward music education in all types of schools varies in terms of curriculum

design, teaching methods, and support. Most of the private schools follow the same music curriculum used in public schools provided by the MOE, but with the additional enrichment of music programmes. International schools mostly use an international music curriculum, but a self-developed music curriculum is used in some international schools. The effectiveness and benefits of music education in elementary schools in Yangon are locally varied according to their support and encouragement.

### **Background of the Study**

The beginning of Western music education in Myanmar was recognised as the practice of all students singing hymns at mission schools during the daily Christian worship, regardless of the religious background of the students' families. There were some embryonic marching bands in those schools that typically played marching music and the Myanmar national anthem at school events, assemblies, and some special occasions. Although The Rangoon State School of Fine Arts attempted to have Western music education in their curriculum by appointing a pianist, Ms. Doris Htoo, who is a Karen (currently known as Kayin, an ethnic minority group in Myanmar), as a curriculum organiser of music in 1950, this project was terminated at the time of Ne Win's government, which was from 1962 to 1988 (Onishi & Young, 2012).

Christian communities were considered the crucial societies for the early Western music education in Myanmar. People in these societies had a chance to be in touch with music in regular church service activities—singing hymns, choirs, sing-song-service, and Sunday schools for young adults and older people. The majority of the Christian people could not be found among the Burmese, but in other ethnic groups—Karen, Palaung, Chin, Kachin, Anglo-Indian, and some Shan and Mon communities. Christian Karen was generally regarded as the group of people who were most familiar with Western music among all people in Myanmar. Other Myanmar people, on the other hand, explored Western music differently by listening to miscellaneous songs from the Burma Broadcasting Service, BBS (currently known as Myanmar Radio and Television, MRTV), which presented Western music programmes once a week with descriptions and explanations (Onishi & Young, 2012).

Although music education was not included in Myanmar school curricula in the past, there has been one option for the students to explore Burmese traditional music in the So-Ka-Ye-Ti annual competition for every age level from kindergarten to high school and above in two types: amateur and professional (Onishi & Young, 2012). The So-Ka-Ye-Ti competition's name derives from a shortened form of a Myanmar word which means “Myanmar nationalities singing, dancing, composing and instrument playing

competition” (Soe, 2016). This annual event commenced in 1993, entirely supported by the government. The government has been supporting this event with the purpose of preserving and inspiring the intrinsic nature of the national culture in Myanmar. It also aims that the competition will bring the people from different states and divisions to engage in the national unity process. This competition, however, focuses only on Burmese traditional and classical music, Mahagita, with ethnic minority music not included (Douglas, 2001; Soe, 2016).

### **Purpose of the Study**

In Myanmar, many people in the society of music and education can describe the general view of the current music education in public schools, private schools, and international schools. However, there is a lack of detailed information and research studies to be found in this area.

At present, music is a part of the educational system in Myanmar. However, the fundamentals of teaching methods, teaching materials, and curriculum design are inadequate in public schools (UNICEF Myanmar, 2018). International schools, by contrast, usually provide the essential principles of a standard music education since they have higher budgets. Private schools are in different categories due to their budgets. Some private schools can provide educational resources adequately, but not all (Kyaw, 2015). Nevertheless, there have been no previous investigations to describe the details of current music education in Myanmar. As the impact of music education on child development is highly significant at the elementary level, the study on this topic is perceived as an essential part of reforming, advancing, and developing future music education in Myanmar.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current status of elementary music education in three different types of schools in Yangon—public schools, private schools, and international schools. For logistic reasons, this research was limited to studying music education at the elementary level attached to high schools—Basic Education High Schools, BEH (public); Private High Schools, PHS; and International Schools, IS (K-12). Elementary schools that were not connected to the high school level were excluded from the study. The purpose of this study is to (a) address currently existing characteristics of elementary music education—demographics, curriculum design, teaching content, teaching materials, assessments, parent-teacher relationship, extracurricular activities, and the instructors’ perception of teaching music—in public schools, private schools, and international schools in Yangon, Myanmar; and (b) examine educators’ perspectives on elementary music education at these schools. Furthermore, this study aims to provide an

essential awareness of music education to the teachers in these schools who have no formal music training.

## Literature Review

### The Importance of Music Education at the Elementary Level

Music education is widely considered to benefit young children in their growth, development, and maturation. Music can raise levels of physical development, emotional development, intellectual development, and social development for young children. Music can be used as a tool to promote social skills and aptitudes for the children in their early education. The experience of music in childhood effectively aids the progress of child development (Wood, 1996).

Music and movement are vital activities for physical development in children. Musical movements can be considered as a child's first language in learning music (Blythe, 2014). Listening and responding physically to music in terms of clapping, marching or other physical movements with tempo variation is significant for training the psychomotor abilities of the children (Anderson, 2013).

Productive and enjoyable learning in the classroom can be enhanced by using music, as subjects that are collaborated with music can help students to learn more actively and comfortably during the teaching and learning process (Flohr & Trollinger, 2010). Music can be considered a subject for the students to enjoy and relax while other subjects keep them under high pressure (Swanson, 1969). There is a relationship between humans and music in the responding and reaction of every musical experience such as "tension and release, density and transparency, a smooth or angry surface, the music swellings and subsidings, its pushing forward or hanging back, its length, its speed, its thunders and whisperings" (Copland, 1952).

Many research studies suggest that music can encourage the development of the sense of hearing, which can interact with the process of typical sound related to language development, reading skills, and excellent communication skills (Bergland, 2013; Gersema, 2016; Locker, 2014). There is an effect of building the brain while children play musical instruments, and composing and improvising can be valuable tools for children to develop their creativity (Sullivan, Willingham, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Children can express their feelings of happiness or sadness by playing musical instruments or singing. Campbell & Scott-Kassner (1995) also stated that "Teaching music without allowing children to compose would be like teaching art without allowing children to draw or paint, or teaching writing by having children copy other people's work."

### **Music Teachers and Classroom Teachers at the Elementary Level**

Classroom teachers are very often responsible for teaching music although music teachers are sometimes available in schools. Students spend most of their time in learning with the classroom teachers rather than with music specialists, which can be problematic as these classroom teachers have generally not been trained to be music teachers. The skills of teaching music for classroom teachers at the elementary level are paramount because they are responsible for teaching music and they spend a greater amount of time with the students than other teachers (Anderson, 2013). In addition, a research study by Hash (2010) on classroom teachers' attitudes toward music in the elementary curriculum indicated that most classroom teachers did not feel comfortable teaching music as a subject. They believed that a specialist should teach music. They also disagreed with the idea that classroom teachers should be able to teach music.

### **Music and Education in Myanmar**

In the tradition of learning Myanmar classical music, the method of rote learning is fundamental and common. Although the lyrics of a song can be written down, the melody, the pitch, and the accompaniment must be taught by a teacher verbally. The songs are chosen carefully and systematically by the teachers for the students. There are 13 songs, (13 *kyou*), for the students to begin learning Myanmar classical music. Using voice symbols or oral notes has been the primary approach of teaching and learning methods to study Myanmar music (Myaing, 2004).

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is the central organisation responsible for providing education in Myanmar, operating with a concept "to create an education system that will generate a learning society capable of facing the challenges of the Knowledge Age" (MOE, 2004). In 2014, the CREATE Project (The Project for Curriculum Reform at Primary Level of Basic Education in Myanmar) was established by the MOE and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The objective of the project was to develop new textbooks for primary education, teacher's guides, and assessment, including the introduction of new primary education to in-service and pre-service teachers. The new curriculum has been applied to Kindergarten in 2016, Primary 1 in 2017, and Primary 2 in 2018 (CREATE, 2018).

Painting and music were introduced into the curricula of primary schools and middle schools as aesthetic education in the 2000-01 academic year by the MOE (Lwin, 2002; MOE, 2004, 2012). It was a campaign to revise and upgrade the former curricula and syllabi by adding not only aesthetic

education but also general studies, social studies, and other school activities. The objective of including aesthetic education in the curriculum is to promote nationalism, synergism, and getting involved in school activities, social activities, and some events of the government (MOE, 2012).

The enrichment of Western music education is privileged in the environment of Myanmar's international schools. Every international school provides a variety of musical experiences through classroom education, annual or occasional activities, and exclusive music events. Due to the high rate of school fees in international schools, most middle-class people are unable to support their children to study in those schools. The International Language & Business Centre (ILBC) has the highest population of students among all international schools in Myanmar (Onishi & Young, 2012).

### **Methodology**

In this study, a convergent parallel design was used to investigate the current status of elementary music education that attached to the high school in Yangon, Myanmar. A mixed-method design, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, was used in this study. The researchers divided the study into two strands in order to get in-depth information on elementary music education in Yangon. A total of 100 respondents, seven key-informants for the qualitative strand and 93 teachers for the quantitative strand, participated in this research study. One-to-one interviews were conducted with seven open-ended questions in the qualitative strand. In the quantitative strand, web-based questionnaires and telephone interviews were used to collect the data.

### **Qualitative Strand**

In the qualitative strand, the researchers gathered data through interviews with seven key informants. Based on the interview questions, the researchers selected seven key informants who (a) were concerned with the development of music education in public, private, and international schools, and (b) have at least ten years' experience in music education. The participants for the qualitative interviews were a (a) managing director from one of the IS (b) head of school from one of the BEHS (c) director from one of the PHS (d) managing director of a music business company (e) government official who was responsible in developing music curricula (f) freelance education consultant of the MOE, and (g) department head of music from the National University of Arts and Cultures. The researchers used seven open-ended questions in these qualitative interviews that were in part based on a previous study by Cajas (2007) and the core results were determined through inductive data analysis.

## **Quantitative Strand**

In the quantitative strand, web-based questionnaires and telephone interviews were conducted with elementary music teachers and elementary classroom teachers who were responsible for teaching music. As a means of acquiring extensive information about the base and framework of elementary music education in Yangon, the researchers arranged a survey questionnaire established on research studies conducted by Cajas (2007), Mundle (2008), Lee (2013), and May (2015) in the quantitative strand. Adapting the ideas and formats of the preceding studies, the researchers modified the present survey and added some related questions suited to the specific aspects of elementary music education in Yangon, Myanmar. The survey questionnaires were sent to three outside experts for evaluating the validity of the research instruments, and the survey questionnaires were revised in reference to the comments and suggestions from the three experts before the data collection.

Elementary music teachers and elementary classroom teachers who were responsible for teaching music in Basic Education High Schools (BEHS), Private High Schools (PHS), and International schools (IS) were contacted to participate in the study. Based on the overall number of schools, there were 93 participants in this research survey from 18 townships in Yangon: 61 from BEHS, nine from PHS, and 23 from IS. The inclusion criteria of questionnaire participants in this study were: (a) at least two years' experience or responsibility in music teaching; (b) singing or playing at least one musical instrument; (c) willingness to participate in the study; and (d) recommendation by head or director of school. According to the recommendation from head of school from BEHS, however, two respondents had teaching experience of less than one year.

A total of 45 survey questions were comprised of multiple-choice questions, checklists, closed-ended questions, semi-closed-ended questions with short answers, and Likert-type questions. The survey was conducted both in English and Myanmar languages. Usually, the medium of instruction in IS was English; however, the Myanmar language was common in BEHS and PHS. All of the survey questionnaires were created in a Google Form and sent to all the participants through email, Facebook Messenger, and Viber. The information about the consent form was attached to the survey questionnaire.

The responses to the 45 survey questionnaires were gathered as the quantitative data for this study using a Google Form. SPSS software was employed to analyse descriptive statistics, including standard deviation, frequency, and percentage to present the quantitative findings.

## Qualitative Results

### The Importance of Music

All of the interview participants in this investigation valued music education as a compulsory subject at the elementary level. Although their views on music education varied, they firmly asserted that music education was necessary at elementary schools in Myanmar.

Some interviewees emphasised that music is a tool for child development at the elementary level. The goal of teaching music in schools was not for the students to become musicians, but it is a tool to emphasise the importance of music. Music education is also a tool that can help develop people's abilities to express their feelings. Music at the elementary level is suitable for intellectual development and music can support the students in their elementary education through listening and responding activities.

Emotional development is one of the essential benefits of music education mentioned by interview participants. They stated that when children have a music class, they look happier than in other classes. They all enjoy doing musical activities. Some students even want to stay longer in music class because they feel happy. Moreover, building teamwork is one of the benefits of music education. Music activities such as choir, dance, and movement can allow students to learn how to work cooperatively. Some of the key-informants strongly believed that creativity is one of the essential goals for teaching music at schools. Arts and sciences have different objectives in the school curriculum.

### Music Programme

According to the results of the interviews, the current situation of music education in BEHS, PHS, and IS differs in terms of facilities, government support, teaching methods. The lack of cooperation between the music societies and the government was also cited as one of the factors in the current state of music education.

At the present time, music is a compulsory subject in BEHS. Nevertheless, it is still weak in most of the schools. Some of the schools from BEHS have to struggle to hold a regular teaching period for music. Although the new music curriculum has been implemented in BEHS, the teachers did not have enough training for music classes. The current music education in PHS is similar to BEHS as they are attached to the MOE. Based on the budget, the quality of the music programme is different among PHS.

On the other hand, most of the PHS include the music class for commercial use to attract the parents' interest. Music education in IS is more prominent than in BEHS and PHS. Almost all of the IS have enough budget to

support their music programmes in terms of music facilities, teaching aids, and teaching methods. Although the curriculum objectives can be controversial in IS, they have significantly achieved a goal of developing music instruction independently.

### **Main Challenges in Music Education**

The main challenges of current music education in BEHS, PHS, and IS can be classified into three categories: music teachers, awareness of music education, and budget. Most of the key-informants pointed out the lack of music teachers as the primary issue for the development of music education in Myanmar. One of the significant issues in supporting music education was the awareness of music education for government officials and parents. This significant issue results in the lack of budget in many public schools and private schools.

### **Quantitative Results**

There were 93 respondents in this research survey from 18 townships: 61 from BEHS, nine from PHS, and 23 from IS. As the total population was 123 teachers, the return rate was 75.6%. The following results and interpretations were analysed from those 93 participants.

### **Demographic Information**

The majority of the participants in this study were female (86%), and most of the respondents were between the ages of 50-59 (28.3%), 30-39 (25%), and 20-29 (23.9%). The largest portion (64.5%) was classroom teachers from BEHS and the rest were music teachers from PHS and IS. Most of the classroom teachers (47.7%) had to teach all subjects including music.

There were (65.6%) full-time teachers and (34.4%) part-time teachers in this investigation. The current teaching grade of the majority of the teachers was primary 6 (41.4%), succeeded by primary 5 and primary 2 with the same rate (40.2%). Many teachers (48.3%) had to teach multiple grades, often ranging from two to four grades, and some teachers were even responsible for teaching all the grades at the elementary level from kindergarten to primary 6. A large number of teachers (47.7%) had total years of teaching experience between 1-5 years. Most of the teachers (46.2%) received the salary range between 200,000-399,999 MMK (approximately 155-310 USD). Only 8.8% of the music teachers from IS and PHS earned a high salary *above* 1,000,000 MMK (approximately 776 USD).

Almost all of the teachers obtained a bachelor's and master's degree; only 1.2% did not have a degree. There were 5.8% of the teachers who received a Bachelor's Degree in Music and another 5.8% teachers gained a

Master's Degree in Music. More than half of the respondents from BEHS (56.7%) did not have a chance to receive formal music training but 41.7% received music training from an education college or university of education. On the other hand, almost the entire population from PHS and IS obtained formal music training from the National University of Arts and Cultures, church music centers, private music centers, private music teachers, and music college or university (Abroad).

Teachers from BEHS did not have an opportunity for any training in music teaching methods such as Orff, Dalcroze, Kodaly, and Suzuki but 11.5% experienced Private Lessons. Voice or singing was the most frequent field of teachers' specialisation in music (41.3%). Almost all of the teachers (90.2%) from BEHS did not have music activities outside the schools, but all the music teachers from PHS and IS had the music activities such as singing in a choir, playing in the orchestra, music band, and most had experience in teaching private lessons.

The majority of the research participants (65.6%) were from BEHS, (24.7%) from IS, and (9.7%) from PHS. The largest percentage of schools (72.2%) were full-day (1 section) and 27.8% of the schools were half-day (2 sections). The student population among all schools most frequently ranged from 500-999 (28.6%) and 2000 and above (27.5%). Many BEHS had a large ratio of students to teachers, even 60:1 in 12.5% of the schools. Myanmar language was the primary language at 90.2% of the schools in BEHS while most of PHS and IS used English and a combination of both.

### **Music Programmes**

The highest rate of regular music schedule in all schools was once a week (47.3%) and the most frequent class duration was 31-45 minutes (75%). The MOE was the central organisation for curriculum development in BEHS (85.2%), and music teachers and director or head of music were the most responsible people for the music curriculum. The most important reason for using music as a subject was for enjoyment and recreation (41.6%) and the essential achievement objective was to develop motor skills (29.3%) and to promote creativity (26.8%). Only Myanmar songs or music was used in (68.9%) schools from BEHS. Most of the teachers (40.2%) applied the recorder playing in Primary 2.

All of the teachers from BEHS (100%) never used Orff-Schulwerk, Dalcroze, and Kodaly in their music class as they did not receive training for such music teaching methods. However, most of the music teachers from PHS and IS applied those music teaching methods sometimes or often. Almost all of the music activities were used in BEHS with different portions except Talking about and recording composition. The majority of the teachers from

BEHS used “singing melody” as a daily activity (18%), weekly activity (49.2%), and monthly activity (11.5%). In PHS, “singing or playing along with the music” was mostly used by the music teachers as a daily activity (11.1%), weekly activity (66.7%), and monthly activity (11.1%). Unlike BEHS and PHS, the music teachers from IS used “exploring sounds (Environmental/Vocal/Body Percussion/Instruments)” as a daily activity (13%), Weekly activity (65.2%) and Monthly activity (13%).

Across all schools, the majority of the teachers (71%) used observation of musical behaviours, tasks, and participation as their assessment methods. There was no assessment for music subjects in 31.1% of BEHS. The assessment results were shared with administrators (65.8%), parents (54.8%), teachers (34.2%), and students (41.1%).

Most of the schools (51.6%) could not provide extracurricular music activities but choir (23.7%) and *kabyarlut* (Myanmar Dance) (23.7%) were the most frequent extracurricular activities in the rest of the schools. The schedules of the extracurricular music activities were mostly once a week (50%). The relationship between elementary music classroom and students’ families were mostly parent-teacher conference (25.8%) and performance or concert (21.5%).

### **Music Facilities**

A yearly budget for the music equipment was available in 29% of the schools and 21.5% of the schools could apply Music Technology such as computers with music software. However, Internet access for music was only available at PHS (33.3%) and IS (39.1%) but not accessible at BEHS. Almost all of the teachers from BEHS (93.3%) used the music textbooks provided by the MOE. Most of the teachers from PHS and IS used a variety of general music textbooks from foreign countries. A large number of schools possessed percussion instruments (40.9%), electronic keyboard (36.6%), guitar (25.8%), and *pattalar* (Myanmar xylophone) (23.7%). The audio types of equipment CD or Audio Player were adequate in 67.7% of the schools and Educational Resources such as curriculum and teacher’s guide were adequate in 65.6% of the schools.

### **Educators’ Perspectives**

The main problems perceived by the respondents in carrying out the music programme in the schools were lack of resources such as facilities, instruments, etc. (73.7%) and lack of money/ budget (52.6%). Musical instruments were the basic needs in many schools (57.6%), and Music Teachers were required at 34.8% of the schools. Music room, teaching aids, and music equipment were also essential in some other schools. Awareness of

Music Education and the appreciation from society for job satisfaction were also highlighted as primary issues in music programmes from some PHS and IS music teachers.

### **Discussion**

This study serves as the initial research of not only the status of current teaching practices in elementary music classes but also of the differences and main problems regarding music education in all types of schools in Yangon, Myanmar. Both the qualitative and quantitative results help provide an overview of the current music education situation in Myanmar. In the qualitative strand, the outcome revealed the viewpoints and evaluations of key-informants on the current status of music education in Yangon that covered the importance of music education in Myanmar, the overall setting of current teaching music in schools, and the main obstacles in carrying out music programmes in BEHS, PHS, and IS. The quantitative strand reported the demographic information about teachers and schools, the current teaching practices and context regarding elementary music classrooms in different types of schools, the support for the music facilities, and the educators' perspectives on the problems and the needs of the music education in Yangon, Myanmar.

#### **Shortage and Training of Music Teachers**

As noted above, 64.5% of the respondents were classroom teachers who were responsible for teaching music in BEHS. Among them, 56.7% of classroom teachers did not have a chance for formal music training. All of the remaining respondents were music teachers from PHS and IS. This finding confirms the comment of Interviewee 6: "There are no music teachers in government schools. No music teacher training is also available for teachers." This fact also reveals the needs reported by 47.7% of the respondents from BEHS that music teachers were required at the school music programme. However, there were 2% of music teachers among the participants from BEHS, which corroborated the statement of Interviewee 2:

There are no music teachers in BEHS. But some BEHS can hire part-time music teachers who are graduated from NUAC (National University of Arts and Cultures), and some marching band directors who are retired from a military band. It is a deficiency of HR and salaries. (Interviewee 2, 2018)

Based not only on the dearth of government support but also the government's policy which restricts collecting money from the parents, the majority of the BEHS in Yangon could not hire music teachers. However, quite a few schools with substantial financial support from the parents could hire

some music teachers and provide the music programme with some amount of qualities and facilities. In contrast, all PHS and IS had the respondents with the title of the music teacher.

Moreover, most of the classroom teachers (47.7%) from BEHS were responsible for teaching all subjects, including music. This result also reveals the burden of classroom teachers in teaching music. Most of the classroom teachers mentioned this issue during the visit to their schools by the researchers from June 2018 to May 2019. As they had a heavy workload in their daily schedule, not only in teaching many subjects but also in other activities, the responsibility of teaching music was a double burden for them. Since most of them (56.7% of the respondents from BEHS) did not receive formal music training, they were unconfident in teaching music. All these facts revealed that music teacher training was perhaps the most important factor in the development of music education in Yangon, Myanmar.

Regarding the shortage of music teachers and the scarcity of music training in BEHS, on the other hand, music teachers from PHS and IS can incorporate music training if they are asked. Government and private sector collaboration can aid in the development of music education in BEHS. As there were part-time music teachers in PHS and IS, those types of teachers might be available for helping the classroom teachers in their general music classrooms. The technique of learning by doing with those music teachers is highly recommended for classroom teachers in this setting. Parental cooperation is also crucial in this case, as the government support has limitations. The role of the parent-teacher conference or meeting is imperative for hiring part-time music teachers. BEHS can invite some music educators to these conferences or meetings to deliver the awareness of music education for parents and teachers.

Moreover, the critical finding concerning the experience of formal music training for classroom teachers in BEHS was highly significant in this investigation. More than half of the participants from BEHS (56.7%) did not have a chance to receive formal music training. It means that the classroom teachers in BEHS were responsible for teaching music without regular training. This fact was mentioned by Interviewee 4: "They (BEHS) have started music education in schools but have no proper or effective training for teachers for teaching music." As a result, the classroom teachers from BEHS were not well prepared for teaching music as a subject. Many of them (47.7%) believed that music teachers or specialists were the most suitable persons for the music classroom. This finding aligns with the study by Hash (2010), in which the data indicated that most of the classroom teachers did not feel comfortable teaching music as a subject. They believed that a specialist should teach music, and they disagreed that classroom teachers should be able to teach music. This finding highlighted the fact that music teacher training in

Myanmar is urgently required not only for helping the current music teachers but also for the classroom teachers who are responsible for teaching music.

Furthermore, even though 62% of the participants experienced formal music training, only a small percentage of respondents (15.1%) obtained training in music teaching methods such as: Orff-Schulwerk (17.2%), Dalcroze (16.1%), Kodaly (16.1%), and Suzuki (10.8%). Regarding educational background, formal music training, and knowledge of prominent music teaching methods, it is clear that most of the respondents did not have an opportunity to be well-trained as music teachers. This fact was also highlighted in the statement of Interviewees 1 and 6 as a big issue in music education: “The no.1 problem is the shortage of music teachers.” “There are no music teachers in government schools. No music teacher training is also available for teachers.”

### **Music Programmes**

In BEHS, the MOE was the central organisation for curriculum development (85.2%), while Music teachers and Director or Head of Music were the most responsible people for the music curriculum in PHS and IS. Although PHS were supposed to follow the curriculum provided by the MOE, all of them developed their music curriculum based on the market demands (Interviewee 3, Interviewee 4, 2018).

As the music curriculum was confidential in most of the schools except BEHS, this survey's results on curriculum objectives represent only the respondents' opinions. The most important reason for using music as a subject by the majority of the participants (41.6%) was for enjoyment and recreation. This fact is congruent with the statement of Interviewee 3: “I want the children to have relaxation and recreation by learning music. It is the main target for me for teaching music. It's good for the affective domain.” The comment of Interviewee 2 also supports the idea that students have to spend the whole day learning many subjects, which makes them tired. Using music as a tool to release tension and arouse the feeling of relaxation thus aligns with the writings of Copland (1952), Swanson (1969), and Flohr and Trollinger (2010).

Music teaching methods varied between BEHS and the two other types of schools. All of the teachers from BEHS Never used Orff-Schulwerk, Dalcroze, and Kodaly in their music classes as they had no experience with these methods. The questionnaire from this study thus served as a tool for providing awareness of music teaching methods for those teachers. There were questions about the teaching methods by these participants during and after the quantitative data collection. It was one of the successful outcomes of this study as it aimed to provide an essential awareness of music education to teachers with no formal music training.

The highest average of teaching methods used in BEHS was Myanmar traditional style ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ). Myanmar traditional style is the method of rote learning. Using “voice symbols” or “oral notes” has been the primary approach of teaching and learning methods to study Myanmar music (Myaing, 2004). On the other hand, all the music teaching methods listed above were used in PHS and IS. In PHS, Orff-Schulwerk teaching methods had the highest average ( $M = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ) use by the music teachers. Similar to PHS, the highest average for teaching methods used in IS was Orff-Schulwerk ( $M = 2.69$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ).

There was no assessment for music subject at BEHS which was checked by (31.1%) of the teachers. However, as the assessment for music is applied in the new curriculum since the 2016-17 academic year, the teachers from BEHS who follow the new curriculum are responsible for music assessment. Across all schools, the majority of the teachers (71%) used observation of musical behaviours, tasks, and participation as their assessment methods.

### Facilities and Budget

Concerning the yearly budget for musical equipment, music technology, and internet access, IS had the most substantial support in music facilities among the two other types of schools. PHS had an average support rate, and BEHS received the lowest support.

Despite the fact that recorder instruments were beginning to be used at most of the schools in Yangon, 28.3% of the survey respondents did not use them in their elementary music class. The largest group of the participants (40.2%) applied the recorder playing in Primary 2 followed by 29.3% in Primary 1, 28.3% in Primary 4, 27.2% in Primary 5, 21.7% in Primary 3 and Primary 6, and even in Kindergarten (5.4%).

In PHS and IS, the students were responsible for buying a recorder on their own, and parents can also afford it. But in BEHS, it was noted by the researchers that there was no permission from the MOE to ask the parents to buy a recorder or *palwe* (similar to a recorder) for their children. MOE provided a recorder for every BEHS but not adequately. According to the researchers' field notes, most BEHS received 10 to 15 recorders though there were more students (from 30 to 60 students) than the number of recorders. The students had to take their turn to play the recorder by sharing each other around the class. It was a huge issue for the personal hygiene of the students. Fortunately, in some BEHS, they discussed this issue with the parents and solved the problem through the parents' support. Interviewee 2 stated that this issue in BEHS should be taken seriously by the government:

There are a lot of limitations in music education at BEHS. They are not independent to make the development as they want. They need to follow the instruction of the MOE. They have to be careful in working cooperatively with parents. Unless the parents are interested, the school can't get support from them. As there is a limited grant by the government, the awareness, and support of the parents are very important for the musical instruments and salary of the music teachers. (Interviewee 2, 2018)

The support from the parents is critical in BEHS since the government budget is highly insufficient for music education. Parents will need to be responsible for some educational resources and teaching aids either in music or other subjects. The awareness of parents about music education and the government's policy are thus very important for future music education in Myanmar, especially in public schools.

The inadequacy of government support is considered a lack of appreciation for music education by some key informants. The development of music education cannot happen without serious support from the government. It is a massive issue for the improvement of future music education in Myanmar. Accordingly, the lack of awareness about music education mainly affects the budget deficit. Although the budget can be raised for the music programme, government policy is vital for a long-term plan.

### **Conclusion**

In all, IS receive more practical support than PHS and BEHS in terms of qualified music teachers, standard music programmes, and excellent facilities. Although the MOE in Myanmar has commenced curriculum reform including music at the elementary level since the 2016-17 academic year, there are many challenges regarding music training for teachers, the effectiveness of music curricula, and the adequate support for music facilities and other necessities such as musical instruments, teaching aids, musical equipment, and educational resources. Support from the government is essential for music education not only in public schools but also in private schools in terms of policy and partnership. Moreover, public awareness of music education and cooperation between a small number of local music educators are vitally essential for the development of elementary music education in Myanmar.

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