

Arts-Based Performances (ABPs) in Hong Kong Kindergartens: Stakeholders' Attitudes and Self-Reported Practices

Evidence from our prior project (#04592) suggests that the practice of offering public arts-based performances (ABPs) in Hong Kong kindergartens (e.g., children's concerts, theater plays, dances) might have unintended negative consequences. In semi-structured interviews, teachers and principals commented that preparing ABPs is: (a) potentially detrimental to children's learning, as regular classroom activities are interrupted for rehearsals; (b) not beneficial for the artistic creativity and self-expression of children, as scripts for the performances are generally pre-determined by adults; and (c) often stressful for teachers, leading to increased anxiety and even intentions to leave the teaching profession. No prior study has focused on the topic of ABPs. The aim of our future research program is to systematically examine this commonly taken-for-granted cultural practice, which could be inadvertently impacting on children's learning and teachers' wellbeing. This initial project will give voice to the main four stakeholders in kindergarten education: teachers, principals, parents, and children. Adopting a neutral stance and guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior, we will investigate three research questions: RQ1: What are the attitudes toward ABPs of Hong Kong kindergarten teachers, principals, parents, and children (focusing on cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors), and how do these attitudes differ across stakeholder groups? RQ2: What are the self-reported ABP pedagogical practices of teachers and principals, and what factors influence the adoption of these practices? RQ3: How do teachers' and principals' attitudes toward ABPs correlate with their self-reported ABP pedagogical practices? We will use a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design (QUAL→QUAN), with semi-structured individual interviews (qualitative) followed by surveys (quantitative). Data collection instruments will be tailored to each stakeholder. Interviewees (n = 80) will be recruited from 20 carefully selected kindergartens, including the principal, one K3 teacher, one K3 child, and his/her parent in each school. Transcripts will be analyzed using open and axial coding. Based on the findings, we will design four principle-based surveys (one per stakeholder). Surveys will include four to six items for each of the three latent factors. A chain-referral sampling method will be used to recruit 60 principals, 100 K3 teachers, 170 parents, and 210 children from kindergartens across Hong Kong. Descriptive, non-parametric, and parametric statistical analyses will be conducted. Findings will lead to subsequent projects, interventions, frameworks, and policies to better foster children's artistic creativity and self-expression in kindergartens.