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Exploring Perceived Motivating Factors of Busy Urban Adults to Participate in Auditioned Community Choirs: A Grounded Theory Study in Shanghai Context

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Abstract

Choir, which originates from Western religions, has developed along with the process of national independence since its first introduction into China. Choir in China has been presenting with double identity of “mass singing” and “elegant art”. With the rapid development of economy and culture, a new type of Choir with busy urban adults as the main body has emerged, showing new cultural phenomena. The purpose of this grounded study was to explore the motivating factors those busy urban adults perceive in their participation in auditioned community choirs in Shanghai. Purposive maximum variation sampling was used to identify three auditioned community choirs where 20 interviews were conducted with 15 different adult singers. Three waves of data collection and analysis revealed a dynamic motivational factors model of “Music literacy-psychological Needs-urban Context (MNC)” covering eight main categories: family support, past in-and out-of-school music activities and experiences, music literacy, psychological needs, teacher influences, conductor influences and urban situation. This study reveals ‘psychological needs’ as inner factors motivating busy urban adults participating in the choir without external incentives, including aesthetic needs, spiritual needs, music knowledge needs, decompression needs, social needs, and self-realization needs. Music literacy as intervening conditions was identified between past in-and out-of-school music activities and experiences, family-school-urban supports and aesthetic needs, spiritual needs, music knowledge needs and self-realization needs. This study also provides evidences and aspirations in the spectrums of city planning, family education and music education in and out of school: Firstly, the service and resources provided by the city offers situational motivation for busy urban adults to participate in the choir; Secondly, parents’ appropriate pressure serves as an important factor in establishing a stable children’s interest in music; Thirdly, the general music education in Mainland China only focuses on results rather than the process and the concept of “music education for everyone” is inefficiently implemented while students generally form musical aesthetic through private music teachers and choir conductors by their dedication and the love for music. Last but not least, participants shared a strong expectation for contemporary Chinese original choral works reflecting people’s mind and life. They believe that it is necessary to consolidate K12 music education and improve the music aesthetic ability of urban cultural administrators.