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Multicultural Music Education in the Context of Higher Education

Abstract

The paper has explored the influence of age / year of study, high school education, additional music education, engaging in music in leisure time and frequency of going to the theatre and classical music concerts on students' world music preferences, and the relationship between world music preferences and familiarity of music. The research was conducted on a sample of students from different faculties of the University of Split and the University of Zagreb, using a questionnaire composed of two parts: *The Sociodemographic Questionnaire* and *The Music Preferences Questionnaire*. The results do not confirm the influence of the type of high school education or age / year of study on students' world music preferences. Furthermore, the influence of additional music education, engaging in music activities in leisure time or the frequency of going to the theatre / classical music concerts on students' world music preferences has not been confirmed. The existence of a relationship between familiarity of music and students' world music preferences has been confirmed. The obtained results have significant implications for music pedagogy, especially in the context of higher education.

Keywords: music pedagogy, multicultural music education, world music preferences, higher education

Introduction

The term culture includes everything that the people acquire from the societies and transmit to the subsequent generation (Clifford, 1988). The term multiculturalism refers to a pluralism of different cultures and cultural aspects and the interaction among them. Thanks to intensive migrations and processes of globalization in modern society, the need for multicultural education at all levels of the educational vertical is becoming increasingly pronounced. Hall (1997) defines multicultural education as humanistic concept based on the strength of diversity, human rights, social justice, and alternative lifestyles for all people, and Baker (1979) defines it as an approach to teaching and learning based upon democratic values that foster cultural pluralism. According to Nieto (2009), multicultural education is a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society while it accepts and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities, and teachers reflect.

Music is an effective medium for expressing and conveying culture and for understanding different world cultures. Campbell (1994) defines multicultural music education as "the program focusing on music representing two or more of people integrated due to a nation foundation of an ethnic origin" (Campbell, 1994, p. 73).

There are different rationales for the inclusion of world music in school, such as musical, social, educational, and demographic. The *aesthetic approach* to world

music education focuses on the study of the musical elements of diverse music genres and aim at improving students' musical knowledge and abilities (Papageorgiou & Koutrouba, 2014). On the other hand, the *sociocultural approach* studies world music in conjunction with its sociocultural and historical background (Papageorgiou & Koutrouba, 2014).

Music education in primary and secondary schools in Croatia is conducted according to the *Curriculum of Music education for primary schools and for grammar schools in the Republic of Croatia* (MSE, 2019). This document defines the school subject purpose and description, educational goals of learning and teaching, the structure – domains of the subject curriculum (i.e., Listening to music and familiarization with music, Expressing through and with music, Music in a context), educational outcomes, contents, and levels of acquisition by grades and domains, connection with other school subjects and interdisciplinary topics, the subject learning and teaching, and the evaluation of the acquisition of educational outcomes.

The paper relates to the subject purpose and description lists the principles on which the above-mentioned Curriculum is based: psychological principle, cultural-aesthetic principle, synchronicity principle, and interculturality principle. According to the interculturality principle, through learning about their own culture and world music, students develop an awareness of different but equally valuable individuals, peoples, cultures, religions, and customs.

Among the educational goals of learning and teaching, it is stated that students get acquainted with music as art through quality and representative pieces of the music of different origins, styles and types, including *world music*. Furthermore, one of the goals is to raise awareness of the value of regional, national, and European cultural heritage in the context of world culture and to develop cultural understanding and intercultural competence through building relationships with one's own culture and an open approach to other music cultures.

The chances to learn about different music cultures and traditions exist in all three domains, especially in the domain *Music in a context*, which, among other things, directs students to discover the value of the rich regional, national, and global music and cultural heritage.

An analysis of the *Curriculum of Music education for primary schools and for grammar schools in the Republic of Croatia* (MSE, 2019) reveals that primary and secondary school students have the chance to learn about different music traditions and develop tolerance and openness to different cultures and peoples.

Research aim, research problems and hypotheses

The research aim is to examine the influence of age / year of study, completed high school education, additional music education, engaging in music activities in leisure time, and the frequency of going to the theater / classical music concerts on students' *world music* preferences and the relationship between familiarity of music fragments and preferences for them.

In accordance with the formulated research objective, the following research problems were defined:

1. Whether the age / year of study and completed high school education influences students' *world music* preferences?

2. Whether additional music education and engaging in music in leisure time influences students' *world music* preferences?
3. Whether frequency of going to the theater / classical music concerts influences students' *world music* preferences?
4. Whether there is a connection between familiarity of music fragments and preferences for them?

Based on the defined research objective and research problem, the following hypotheses were defined:

- **H1** Students who finished grammar schools and students at a higher university study level, in relation to students attending vocational schools and students at a lower university study level, show greater *world music* preferences.
- **H2** Students with additional music education and students who engage in music activities in their leisure time, compared to students without music education and students who do not engage in music activities in their leisure time, show greater *world music* preferences.
- **H3** Students who often and sometimes go to the theater / classical music concerts, compared to students who never go to the theater / classical music concerts, show greater *world music* preferences.
- **H4** Students show greater preferences for the familiar over unfamiliar music fragments.

Research methods

Participants

The research was conducted using an online survey for a sample of 202 participants including first, second, third, fourth, and fifth-year students from different faculties at the University of Split and the University of Zagreb. First, second, and third-year students form one group (N = 73), and fourth and fifth-year students form another group (N = 129).

Instruments and research procedure

A questionnaire was constructed for the purpose of the research. In the first part, *The General Data Questionnaire*, sociodemographic data on participants were collected (faculty, study group, finished high school, additional music education, engagement in music activities in leisure time, frequency of visits to the theater / art music concerts). The second part is *The Music Preferences Questionnaire*. The task of the participants was to listen to a piece of music and assess on a Likert-type scale, ranging from one to five (1 = I don't like it at all; 5 = I really like it), how much they liked a certain music fragment and how much they were familiar with it.

A compact disc was made containing ten music fragments of children's *world music* (Hartmut E. Höfele & Freunde: *Jibuli Kinderlieder Spiele und Tänze aus aller Welt*), lasting for about one minute each. The CD was constructed exclusively for the purposes of this research, and the criteria for the selection of music fragments were the defined research problems.

Regarding the average degree of the music fragments preferences, the participants rated the song *Lelola* (Spain & South America) with the highest marks and the song *Rasa sayang eh* (Malaysia) with the lowest.

Results

H1 Students who finished grammar schools and students at a higher university study level, in relation to students attending vocational schools and students at a lower university study level, show greater world music preferences.

In order to explore whether students' *world music* preferences differ according to the type of completed high school education and age / year of study, a two-way variance analysis was conducted. The results show no difference in students' *world music* preferences with regard to the type of finished high school ($F = 2.15$; $df = 1$, 198; $p = 0.14$) and with regard to age / year of study ($F = 3.63$; $df = 1$, 198; $p = 0.06$). No significant interaction effect of finished high school and age / year of study on *world music* preferences was found ($F = 2.31$; $df = 1$, 198; $p = 0.13$), which made us reject the set hypothesis.

H2 Students with additional music education and students who engage in music activities in their leisure time, compared to students without music education and students who do not engage in music activities in their leisure time, show greater world music preferences.

In order to explore whether students' *world music* preferences differ with regard to additional music education and engaging in music activities in leisure time, a two-way variance analysis was again conducted. The results showed no difference in students' *world music* preferences with regard to additional music education ($F = 0.34$; $df = 1$, 198; $p = 0.56$) and engaging in music activities in leisure time ($F = 1.03$; $df = 1$, 198; $p = 0.31$). No significant interaction effect of additional music education and engaging in music activities in leisure time on *world music* preferences was found ($F = 3.74$; $df = 1$, 198; $p = 0.05$). This made us reject the hypothesis.

H3 Students who often and sometimes go to the theater / concerts of classical music, compared to students who never go to the theater / concerts of classical music, show greater world music preferences.

A variance analysis was conducted to explore whether students' *world music* preferences differ in terms of the frequency of going to the theater / classical music concerts. The results show that there are no differences in students' musical preferences with regard to the frequency of visits to the theater / classical music concerts ($F(2, 199) = 3.52$; $p = 0.03$). This made us reject the hypothesis.

H4 Students show greater preferences for the familiar over unfamiliar music fragments.

To determine whether being familiar with the music fragments affects students' preferences, correlations between familiarity of music and musical preferences were calculated. The existence of such correlations was observed for all music samples, which made us accept the final hypothesis.

Discussion

We have rejected the first hypothesis that students who finished grammar schools and students at a higher university study level, in relation to students attending vocational schools and students at a lower university study level, show greater world music preferences. The results obtained are not in line with the results of Dobrota (2016), according to which senior students, compared to younger students, show greater *world music* preferences. Furthermore, Dobrota and Reić Ercegovac (2017) confirm no existence of the difference in students' musical preferences concerning the type of high school. On the other hand, Howard (2018) conducted a research on fifth grade primary school students, and confirmed that by familiarizing themselves with the music of different cultures, students develop musical abilities, form their musical preferences, but also come to understand different historical and cultural processes. Similar results were obtained by Kim and Yoon (2016), but on a sample of the university student population.

In order to explore whether students' *world music* preferences differ with regard to additional music education and engaging in music activities in leisure time, we assumed that additional music education would contribute to an increase in musical preferences in general, including *world music* preferences, but this has not been confirmed. The obtained results are not in line with the results of Gürgen (2016), who emphasizes the significant role of music education in the formation of students' musical preferences.

We have also rejected the hypothesis that students who often and sometimes go to the theater / concerts of classical music, compared to students who never go to the theater / concerts of classical music, show greater world music preferences. Dobrota and Reić Ercegovac (2017) examined the relationship between musical preferences, on the one hand, and music education, non-formal and informal influences, and familiarity of music, on the other hand. They noticed that participants who often go to the theater / classical music concerts show greater preferences for jazz and world music.

We have concluded that familiarity of music affects students' preferences, and the obtained results are consistent with the results of numerous studies confirming that familiarity of music is a significant factor influencing the formation of musical preferences (Fung, 1996; Teo, Hargreaves & Lee, 2008).

Conclusion

The results of this research did not confirm the influence of the type of completed secondary education or age / year of study on students' *world music* preferences. Furthermore, additional music education, engaging in music activities in leisure time and the frequency of going to the theater / classical music concerts did not prove to be significant predictors of students' *world music* preferences. However, it was confirmed that students show higher preferences for the familiar compared to unfamiliar music fragments.

The obtained results have significant musical and pedagogical implications for teaching music in the entire educational vertical. It is evident that multicultural music education should start as early as possible, but also that such education has a positive impact on the development of intercultural attitudes and tolerance for

different cultures at all stages of life. Therefore, it is necessary to include traditional music and various *world music* in preschools, primary and secondary schools, but also in higher education, thus making students familiar with various music cultures, but also spreading openness and tolerance towards members of different cultures.

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