ATTITUDES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN CROATIA TOWARD MUSIC AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT

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Abstract: The paper explores the influence of years of work experience, professional qualifications, additional music education, engaging in music activities in leisure time, and going to the theatre/classical music concerts on the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the school subject Music. The research was conducted on a sample of primary education teachers from all Croatian counties (N = 233), using a questionnaire composed of two parts: *The General Data Questionnaire and Attitudes Toward Music as a School Subject*. The results confirm that primary school teachers with fewer years of work experience have more positive attitudes toward the *Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia*, while in other aspects of attitudes no difference was found. Furthermore, no differences were found in the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music with regard to their professional qualifications. Primary education teachers who have attended additional music classes, who engage in music activities in leisure time and who often attend theatre/classical music concerts, consider Music to be an important school subject that relaxes the students, and consider themselves more competent to teach music. The obtained results have significant implications in terms of music pedagogy, with regard to organizing the music education of preservice primary teachers and their lifelong learning.

Keywords: music classes, attitudes, primary education teachers

STALIŠČA OSNOVNOŠOLSKIH UČITELJEV NA HRVAŠKEM DO GLASBE
KOT ŠOLSKEGA PREDMETA

Izvleček: Prispevek obravnava vpliv večletnih delovnih izkušenj, poklicnih kvalifikacij, dodatnega glasbenega izobraževanja, ukvarjanja z glasbenimi dejavnostmi v prostem času ter obiskovanja koncertov na stališča osnovnošolskih učiteljev do predmeta glasba. Raziskava je bila izvedena na vzorcu osnovnošolskih učiteljev iz vseh hrvaških regij (N=233). Rezultati

potrjujejo, da imajo osnovnošolski učitelji z manj leti delovnih izkušenj pozitivnejši odnos do Kurikuluma za pouk glasbe na razredni in predmetni stopnji osnovnih šol v Republiki Hrvaški, dočim se v drugih vidikih stališč razlike niso potrdile. Tako niso bile potrjene razlike v stališčih osnovnošolskih učiteljev do predmeta glasba glede na poklicne kvalifikacije. Tisti osnovnošolski učitelji, ki so obiskovali dodatne glasbene ure, ki se ukvarjajo z glasbenimi dejavnostmi v prostem času in ki pogostokrat obiskujejo klasične koncerte, doživljajo glasbo kot pomemben šolski predmet, ki učence sprošča. Sebe doživljajo kot bolj kompetentne za poučevanje glasbe. Pridobljeni rezultati imajo pomembne implikacije z vidika glasbene pedagogike v smislu organizacije glasbenega načrtovanja učiteljev razrednega pouka in njihovega vseživljenjskega učenja.

Ključne besede: pouk glasbe, stališča, osnovnošolski učitelji

One of the fundamental efforts of music pedagogues is to surround children with quality music experiences from the earliest age. In addition to the development of musical abilities, such experiences affect children's social, emotional, psychomotor, and cognitive development. Many authors talk about the impact of musical abilities on language development, literacy development, intelligence, creativity, concentration, emotional sensitivity, teamwork, self-discipline, and relaxation (Hallam, 2010). Consequently, encounters with quality music should be an integral part of children's experiences in and out of school (Fiske, 2001). The results of previous research confirm that early musical experiences significantly influence the future development of attitudes toward music and represent significant predictors of engaging in music activities later in life (Asmus, 1986; Bowles, 1991). It is preschool educators and primary education teachers who are the most important sources of early musical experiences and have the ability to influence children's attitudes toward music (Gamble, 1988). The child's early interaction with music has a positive effect on the quality of their overall life.

Attitude is an acquired and stable organization of positive or negative emotions, evaluations, and reactions to an object that is relatively permanent and stable over time, with a complex psychological structure consisting of cognitive, emotional, and conative components (Petz, 2005, p. 465). According to Bohner (2003), attitude represents the overall evaluation of an object, and for the individual it has a cognitive function, a utilitarian function, a function of social identity, and a function of maintaining self-esteem.

The issue of attitudes is closely related to education, both in the context of examining students' attitudes toward school and toward different school subjects (Dobrota & Barbarić, 2017; Dobrota & Conar, 2018; Haladyna & Thomas, 2015), and in the context of examining teachers' attitudes toward the aforementioned phenomena (Della Pietra et al., 2010; Hash, 2010; Nikolić, 2017; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008; Thibaut et al., 2018; Wilkins, 2010).

McCarthy et al. (2019) have explored students' attitudes toward the subject of music in second-level education in the Republic of Ireland. The results showed that students' attitudes to music were influenced by their innate inter-

est in the subject and the perceived use of the subject as a pathway for entry to further/higher education or for a student's professional career.

As of 2006, music teaching in Croatian primary schools has been organized according to the *Curriculum for Primary School (Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu, 2006)*. The music teaching programme is open, which means that the teacher is free to choose the way of active music engagement, while listening to music and gaining knowledge of music is a mandatory part of it. Music classes in the first three grades of primary school are based on the activities of singing, playing, listening, and musical creativity, while in the fourth, fifth and sixth grade, music classes cover the area of singing, listening and knowledge of music, performing and reading music, playing music games and free, improvised rhythmizing, moving to music, dancing, and playing. Music class activities in the seventh and eighth grades of primary school have been reduced to singing, listening, and knowledge of music, playing, creating, and computer use by choice.

Music classes in secondary schools were previously organized according to the "Curriculum for Grammar Schools: Music Education" ("Nastavni plan i program za gimnazije: glazbena umjetnost", 1999), and they were conceived according to the *diachronic model*, in which 'the program mainly follows the chronology of development of music and its styles' ("Nastavni plan i program za gimnazije: glazbena umjetnost", 1999, p. 77).

Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia (Kurikulum nastavnih predmeta Glazbena kultura i Glazbena umjetnost za osnovne škole i gimnazije, 2019) is a document on the basis of which music classes in Croatian primary and secondary schools have been organized since 2019 and which, unlike previous programmes, is based on educational outcomes. The programme defines the purpose and description of the subject, educational objectives of learning and teaching, the structure, educational outcomes, content, and levels of adoption by grades and domains, connections with other subjects and cross-curricular topics, learning and teaching the subject, and evaluation of adoption of educational outcomes.

AIM OF RESEARCH, RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

The aim of this research is to examine the impact of years of work experience, professional qualifications, additional music education, engaging in music activities in leisure time, and going to the theatre/classical music concerts on the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the school subject Music. In accordance with the stated objective, the following research problems were defined:

1. To examine whether the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the school subject Music differ with regard to years of work experience.
2. To examine whether the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the school subject Music differ with regard to professional qualifications.

3. To examine whether the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the school subject Music differ with regard to additional music instruction, engaging in music activities in leisure time and going to the theatre/classical music concerts.

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

- H1: Primary education teachers with fewer years of work experience, compared to more experienced teachers, have more positive attitudes toward the school subject Music.
- H2: Primary education teachers with a higher level of education, compared to teachers with a lower level of education, have more positive attitudes toward the school subject Music.
- H3: Primary education teachers who had additional music lessons, compared to teachers without additional music lessons, have more positive attitudes toward the school subject Music.
- H4: Primary education teachers who engage in music activities in leisure time, compared to teachers who do not engage in music activities in leisure time, have more positive attitudes toward the school subject Music.
- H5: Primary education teachers who go to the theatre/concerts of classical music more often, compared to those who rarely or never attend such events, have more positive attitudes toward the school subject Music.

METHOD

Participants

Table 1. The structure of the sample

Years of work experience	N	Professional qualifications	N
0–10	105	PhD/MA	8
11–20	60	university degree	186
21–30	41	college degree	39
31–40	27	secondary education	0
Total	233		

The research was conducted by administering an online survey to a sample of 233 participants, primary education teachers from all Croatian counties (Table 1). Out of the total number of participants, 30.47% attended music school or had some other form of music education, while 28.33% of participants were engaged in music activities in their leisure time (singing in a choir or 'klapa', playing an instrument, etc.). Only 7.73% of participants have never attended a

theatre/concert of classical music, 76.82% of them sometimes go to such events, and 15.45% of participants often attend theatres/concerts of classical music.

Instrument and Testing Procedure

A questionnaire was constructed for the purposes of the research. In the first part, *The General Data Questionnaire*, sociodemographic data on participants were collected (county and city where the school is located, years of work experience, professional qualifications, additional music education, engaging in music in leisure time, going to theatre performances and classical music concerts). The second part, *Attitudes Toward Music as a School Subject*, contained fourteen statements that examined different attitudes toward the subject: level of difficulty, level of student overload, self-assessment of competence for teaching music, music textbooks, and the attitude toward *Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia*. Each statement was accompanied by a 1–5-point rating scale (1 = I strongly disagree; 5 = I strongly agree). By checking the factor structure of the scale using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) employing the principal components method with varimax normalized rotation, a three-factor structure of the scale was obtained. Six particles had a significant saturation on the first factor (statements 9–14), six particles on the second factor (statements 1–6) and two particles on the third factor (statements 7–8). These factors explain 73% of the variance. The psychometric characteristics of the scale are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Psychometric characteristics of the scale attitudes toward Music as a school subject.

Attitudes toward the Curriculum (S9–S14)		Statement		Textbooks (S7–S8)
		Importance, relaxation, self-assessment of competence (S1–S6)		
1.	I believe that the <i>Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar schools in the Republic of Croatia</i> has significantly improved music classes in primary school.	I believe that Music is an important subject for the overall development of students.		The textbook is extremely important to me in teaching music.
2.	I believe that the <i>Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar schools in the Republic of Croatia</i> is written clearly and concisely.	I think Music is a subject that relaxes students.		I think it would be useful to return Music textbooks for classroom teaching to the list of compulsory textbooks.

		Statement	
Attitudes toward the Curriculum (S9-S14)		Importance, relaxation, self-assessment of competence (S1-S6)	Textbooks (S7-S8)
3.	I believe that the <i>domains</i> (listening to and getting to know music, expressing through and with music, music in a context) of the <i>Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar schools in the Republic of Croatia</i> are clearly and logically defined.	I consider myself competent to teach music in general.	
4.	I believe that <i>the educational outcomes, contents, and levels of adoption</i> from the <i>Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar schools in the Republic of Croatia</i> are defined clearly and logically. I consider myself competent to carry out the activities of singing and playing.		
5.	I believe that <i>the educational outcomes, contents, and levels of adoption</i> from the <i>Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar schools in the Republic of Croatia</i> are realistically defined, i.e. that students can achieve them.	I consider myself competent to carry out music listening activities.	
6.	The evaluation of the adoption of educational outcomes prescribed by the <i>Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar schools in the Republic of Croatia</i> is completely clear to me.	I consider myself competent to carry out the activities of musical creation.	
Cronbach α	0.92	0.89	0.79
M (sd)	21.40 (4.71)	25.88 (3.96)	7.42 (1.98)
range	8–30	12–30	2–10
average r among particles	0.68	0.60	0.66
K-S d	0.09, $p < 0.05$	0.15, $p < 0.01$	0.15, $p < 0.01$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

H1: Primary education teachers with fewer years of work experience, compared to more experienced teachers, have more positive attitudes toward the school subject Music.

In order to examine whether the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music differ with regard to years of work experience, three Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed, one for each factor of attitude toward the subject Music (Table 3). The results confirm the difference between the attitudes of primary school teachers toward Music with regard to work experience, but only in the part related to the *Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia* (*Kurikulum nastavnih predmeta Glazbena kultura i Glazbena umjetnost za osnovne škole i gimnazije*, 2019), where the teachers with the least work experience have the most positive attitudes toward this document (Figure 1). For other aspects of attitudes toward the subject Music, no differences were found with regard to teachers' work experience. This partially confirmed the hypothesis.

The obtained results can be explained by the fact that the youngest teachers became familiar with the *Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia* (*Kurikulum nastavnih predmeta Glazbena kultura i Glazbena umjetnost za osnovne škole i gimnazije*, 2019) during their studies, which could affect their attitudes toward this document.

Table 3. Differences in the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music with regard to work experience.

Years of work experience	F1*			F2*			F3*		
	C	H (3, N=233)	P	C	H (3, N=233)	P	C	H (3, N=233)	P
0–10	3.92			4.63			3.47		
11–20	3.32	11.11	0.01	4.31	3.81	0.28	3.99	3.45	0.33
21–30	3.31			4.32			3.96		
31–40	3.33			4.30			3.98		

*F1 = attitudes toward curriculum; F2 = attitudes toward importance, relaxation, self-assessment of competence; F3 = attitudes toward textbooks

Figure 1. Differences in the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music with regard to work experience.

H2: Primary education teachers with a higher level of education, compared to teachers with a lower level of education, have more positive attitudes toward the school subject Music.

In order to examine whether the attitudes of primary education teachers toward the subject Music differ with regard to their level of education, three Kruskal-Wallis tests were again performed (Table 4). No difference was found for any aspect of the attitude toward the subject Music with regard to the professional qualifications of teachers, which made us reject the hypothesis.

The results of the previous research (Jeanneret, 1997; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008) generally suggest that a higher level of education, which implies better music instruction of primary education teachers, also results in a better self-assessment of teachers' musical abilities.

Table 4. Differences in the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music with regard to professional qualifications.

Professional qualifications	F ₁ *			F ₂ *			F ₃ *		
	C	H (2, N = 233)	P	C	H (2, N = 233)	P	C	H (2, N = 233)	P
PhD, MA	3.83			4.40			3.22		
university degree	3.57	1.64	0.44	4.38	3.81	0.15	3.97	1.99	0.37
college degree	3.51			4.14			3.97		

*F₁ = attitudes toward curriculum; F₂ = attitudes toward importance, relaxation, self-assessment of competence; F₃ = attitudes toward textbooks

H₃: Primary education teachers who had additional music lessons, compared to teachers without additional music lessons, have more positive attitudes toward the school subject Music.

We used three Mann-Whitney U-tests (Table 5) to examine whether the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music differ with regard to having additional music lessons. The results indicate the existence of differences in the aspect of attitude toward the subject Music, which refers to the attitude toward the importance, relaxation, and self-assessment of competence for teaching (Figure 2). Primary education teachers who have attended additional music classes consider music to be an important subject that relaxes students and consider themselves more competent to teach music. No differences were found in other aspects of the attitude toward the subject Music, therefore the hypothesis was partially accepted.

Table 5. Differences in the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music with regard to attending additional music classes.

Attending additional music classes	F ₁ *				F ₂ *				F ₃ *			
	C	IN	z	p	C	IN	z	p	C	IN	z	p
no	3.48				4.33				3.99			
yes	3.65	5694.5	0.12	0.91	4.82	3615	4.56	0.00	3.48	5178.5	-1.23	0.23

*F₁ = attitudes toward curriculum; F₂ = attitudes toward importance, relaxation, self-assessment of competence; F₃ = attitudes toward textbooks

Jeanneret (1997) points out the extremely significant influence of music lessons on teachers' self-assessment of teaching competence.

Figure 2. Differences in the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music with regard to attending additional music classes.

H4: Primary education teachers who engage in music activities in leisure time, compared to teachers who do not engage in music activities in leisure time, have more positive attitudes toward the school subject Music.

In order to examine whether the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music differ in terms of engaging in music activities in leisure time, three Mann-Whitney U-tests were performed again (Table 6). Differences were found in the part of the attitude related to the assessment of importance and relaxation and self-assessment of competence to teach. No differences were found in other aspects of the attitudes; therefore, the hypothesis was partially accepted.

Table 6. Differences in the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music with regard to engaging in music activities in leisure time.

Engaging in music activities in leisure time	F ₁ *				F ₂ *				F ₃ *			
	C	IN	z	p	C	IN	z	p	C	IN	z	p
no	3.50				4.30				4.00			
yes	3.60	5167.5	0.74	0.46	4.81	3755.5	3.83	0.00	3.98	5329.50	-0.40	0.70

*F₁ = attitudes toward curriculum; F₂ = attitudes toward importance, relaxation, self-assessment of competence; F₃ = attitudes toward textbooks

Figure 3. Differences in the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music with regard to engaging in music activities in leisure time.

H₅: Primary education teachers who go to the theatre/concerts of classical music more often, compared to those who rarely or never attend such events, have more positive attitudes toward the school subject Music.

In order to examine whether the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music differ with regard to going to the theatre/classical music concerts, three Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed (Table 7). The difference

was found in attitudes toward the importance, relaxation, and self-assessment of teachers' competence in the sense that teachers who frequently attend these events consider themselves more competent and consider music to be an important subject which makes children feel relaxed. No differences were found in other aspects of the attitudes; thus the hypothesis was partially accepted.

Table 7. Differences in the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music with regard to going to the theatre/classical music concerts.

Going to the theatre or classical music concerts	F ₁ *			F ₂ *			F ₃ *		
	C	H (2, N = 233)	P	C	H (2, N = 233)	P	C	H (2, N = 233)	P
never	3.22			4.13			4.00		
sometimes	3.66	1.55	0.46	4.31	17.25	0.00	3.96	0.18	0.92
often	3.56			4.82			3.98		

*F₁=attitudes toward curriculum; F₂=attitudes toward importance, relaxation, self-assessment of competence; F₃=attitudes toward textbooks

Figure 4. Differences in the attitudes of primary school teachers toward the subject Music with regard to going to the theatre/classical music concerts.

The results of this research confirmed the influence of years of work experience in one aspect of attitudes toward the subject Music - the one that relates to attitudes toward the *Curriculum of Music Education for Primary Schools and for Grammar Schools in the Republic of Croatia* (*Kurikulum nastavnih predmeta Glazbena kultura i Glazbena umjetnost za osnovne škole i gimnazije*, 2019). For other aspects of attitudes, the influence of years of work experience has not been confirmed.

The influence of the level of teacher education on attitudes toward the subject Music has not been confirmed. As for the influence of additional music lessons, teachers who took such lessons consider Music an important school subject which makes students feel relaxed, and consider themselves more competent to teach music. Teachers who engage in music activities in leisure time and who often go to the theatre/classical music concerts are more likely to consider themselves more competent to teach music and consider music to be an important subject that relaxes students.

The obtained results have many implications in terms of music pedagogy. First of all, they stress the importance of conceptualizing quality music education for students of teacher education, but also the importance of their lifelong education through various seminars and workshops. In addition, it is necessary to encourage students to attend theatres/concerts of classical music as often as possible, in order to aesthetically educate them and help them realize the importance of music education, not only for the development of students' musical abilities, but for their overall development as well.

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Prispevek obravnava stališča hrvaških osnovnošolskih učiteljev do predmeta glasba glede na njihove delovne izkušnje, poklicne kvalifikacije, dodatno glasbeno izobraževanje, ukvarjanje z glasbenimi dejavnostmi v prostem času ter glede na pogostost obiskovanja klasičnih koncertov/teatrov. Raziskava je bila izvedena na vzorcu osnovnošolskih učiteljev iz vseh hrvaških regij ($N=233$). V namen raziskave je bil oblikovan vprašalnik stališč do šolskega predmeta glasba. Rezultati so pokazali vpliv delovnih izkušenj na stališča do šolskega predmeta glasba. Rezultati so pokazali vpliv delovnih izkušenj na stališča do *Kurikuluma za pouk glasbe na razredni in predmetni stopnji osnovnih šol v Republiki Hrvaški (2019)*; Učitelji z več leti delovnih izkušenj so izkazovali bolj pozitivna stališča do kurikuluma za predmet glasba. V drugih vidikih stališč do glasbenega pouka vpliv delovnih izkušenj ni bil potrjen.

Vpliv stopnje izobraževanja učiteljev na njihova stališča do predmeta glasba ni bil potrjen. Glede na dodatno glasbeno izobrazbo osnovnošolskih učiteljev se je pokazalo, da tisti, ki jo imajo, doživljajo večjo pomembnost glasbe kot šolskega predmeta in v njem vidijo tudi priložnost za sprostitev učencev. Prav tako sebe doživljajo kot bolj kompetentne za poučevanje glasbe.

Pridobljeni rezultati imajo številne implikacije za področje glasbene pedagogike. Kot prvo, poudarjajo pomembnost konceptualiziranja kakovostnega glasbenega izobraževanja za študente razrednega pouka, po drugi strani pa izpostavljajo pomen vseživljenjskega učenja v obliki seminarjev in delavnic. Pomembna implikacija rezultatov je tudi v uvidu, da je pomembno spodbujati študente razrednega pouka, da čim bolj pogosto obiskujejo klasične koncerte/ teatre z namenom oblikovanja lastnega estetskega okusa. Izpostaviti pa je potrebno tudi pomen kakovostne glasbene izobrazbe študentov razrednega pouka, ne zgolj za razvoj njihovih glasbenih sposobnosti, temveč za njihov celostni razvoj.