Evaluation of Music Education: Musical Competences and Self-confidence in Teaching

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Abstract

This paper refers to the influence of the music curriculum upon music education of the future teachers at the Faculty of Pedagogy in Skopje, R. Macedonia. The academy program is very important for developing musical competences, thereby self-confidence as essential for self-efficacy in teaching. Given that studying music need more time and continuous practice, the aim was to perceive if the current course provides generalists the necessary knowledge and skills. A research was conducted among the students (N 42) who had finished the internship (2015/16). The questionnaire was designed to perceive their previous music activities, attitude toward music education, and the music experience in class teaching. According to the responses, gender, musical background and the attitude don't affect the music competences ($t=1,141, df(40)\ p>0.05$), ($F=0,453, df(40)\ p>0.05$). The acquired musical skills turned out to be the most important ($ß = 0,894$, $p<0,01$) in influencing the confidence ($R^2=0,79$, $F(1,146)=580,815$, $p<0,01$). Due to the results, students have the justified need for longer lasting music studying and the longer internship in schools. The recommendation is reviewing the curriculum according to useful student insights also as one of the postulates of EU higher education concept.

Keywords: **Future teachers; higher education; musical competences; teaching music.**

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Introduction

Higher education of the future teacher is a complex task because it should develop general and specific competencies, and skills in various scientific fields in addition to arts and sport. For this reason, the faculty educational plans and programs are the fundamental requirements that determine the competences (cognitive, motivational, moral and social) as a pre-requisites for mastering a wide range of tasks of the future teacher.

The model of education in R. Macedonia is set by the educational policy (Ministry of Education and Science, Bureau for Development of Education) according to teaching subjects in the school curricula, the Bologna process and the postulates and the needs of new era for modernizing higher education (Report to the Europian Commission, 2013). Because teachers come from state faculties, faculties play an important role in examining and strengthening their teacher preparation programs to ensure they are graduating quality teachers. Faculty in teacher preparation programs provide future teachers with a foundation in human development, learning theories, and educational philosophy which can empower them to take an active role in shaping the education of children. Therefore, study programs in recent years are undergoing many changes in terms of structure, content, and number of representation of the subjects. This situation also refers to the music education which should develop the students specific comptences irrespective of their musical predispositions. That is why, in addition to music theory, the corse contains practical musicianship as singing and playing on keyboards, recorder or other children's musical instruments. So, due to complexity of the subject, especially performing music, the duration and the manner of studying is of crucial importance. In this way, future teacher will improve competencies and increase self-efficacy which is the greatest predictive power of attainment. Actually, self-efficacy is the first step in helping generalists to develop the right blend of skills, knowledge and understandings, necessary to teach music and to boost their own creativity.

Starting from these views, the purpose of the paper is to discover the role of the curriculum on music competences and self-confidence of future teachers. The polling was initiated by the need for the communication and cooperation with students as a key for effective teacher preparation program. Same time, Europe's higher education institutions recommend continuously tracking the opinion of students in order to improve the level of education and the quality of teaching and learning (Report to the European Commission, June 2013).

The Subject Music Education in the Faculty Curriculum

In compliance with ECTS and Bologna, at the Faculty of Pedagogy in Skopje, the number of music subjects was decreased within semesters as well as in the number of classes. As a result of these changes, musical education courses has been shortened, and additionally, teaching material has been compressed into less semesters through fusion of the subjects (Table 1) .

Table 1
Music subjects in the curriculum of the Faculty of Education in Skopje

Subject	Classes per Week	In semester	Study program
Fundamentals of music education with method 1, 2, 3,4*	2	5th, 6th, 7th, 8th	2004/2005
Knowledge of music instruments *	4	5th	
Music instruments with keyboards *	3	6th	
Music instruments **	4	7th	
Choir and orchestra **	4	5th	
Total	26	4	
Fundamentals of music education *	5	5th	2011/2012
Method of music education *	5	6th	
Knowledge of music instruments *	4	7th and 8th	
Creative music workshop **	4	6th	
Total	18	4	
Fundamentals of music education with Knowledge of music instruments *	8	5th	2013/2014
Method of music education *	5	6th	
Creative music workshop **	4	8th	
Total	17	3	

*Note: * Compulsory subject, ** Elective subject*

Table 1 reveals that music education subjects in each reaccreditation of the study program continuously decline, so in the last one (2013/2014), number of classes are significantly reduced from 26 to 17. Such a thing produces a huge burden for the students, creating difficulties in mastering the content of the curriculum. This especially refers to the subjects *Fundamentals of music education* and *Knowledge of music instruments*, which are compressed into a singular course. In addition, there is an interruption in the continuity of studying the subjects and internship that is mandatory as late as 8-th semester, which is not in favor of the self-efficacy and confidence of the future teachers.

Research Aim and Problem

The aim of this research was to examine influence of the current study program (2013/2014) upon musical competences and self-efficacy of the generalists in music teaching during the internship in school. The problem studied was to see if the music subjects provide required specific competencies for teaching music.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis tested in this article is that the acquired musical competences during the education are crucial for the self-confidence in teaching music.

Method

Research Sample

The research was conducted during the academic year 2015-2016, among the students of the Faculty of Pedagogy in Skopje who had just finished the compulsory internship. Within the research, the sample was convenient, consisted from 42 respondents (N=42), of which 31 (73,8%) were female and 11 (26,2%) were male.

Data Collection Procedure

Out of many methods in researching the pedagogical phenomena, the descriptive–explicative method was applied, which enabled review of the conditions and the situation. In

the research technique, a questionnaire was used as the main tool which comprised dichotomous questions, questions with verbal and scaled answers and a five-point Likert scale of viewpoints. A questionnaire was designed for the purpose of investigation. It included open-ended and close-ended questions outlined in three parts according to the contents, to perceive participants (1) musical background, 2) attitude toward the subject music education in schools, and (3) confidence as well as self-efficacy in teaching music i.e. relation between the acquired competencies and the practical application in schools.

Data Analysis

Data collected were processed using qualitative and quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis included reduction, collating data and extrapolation. Research materials were computerised with an SPSS computer program for PC. Descriptive statistics were used for the description of characteristic value of the variables: percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient and statistical interference — t-test, ANOVA, linear regression analysis.

In order to test the hypothesis from the data, three factors were taken as relevant variables for further analysis: Factor 1 — self-confidence, Factor 2 — musical skills (singing and playing keyboards), and Factor 3 — theoretical knowledge. In all three factors, a correlation was made with intercorrelation.

Findings

Responses in the first group of questions concerning musical background indicate that the interviewees had musical activity only in the primary education.

Table 2

Responses regarding musical background of students

Questions regarding musical background of students	Yes		No		Sometimes	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Do you like listening to music?	42	100	0	0	0	0
Do you like singing?	30	71,4	4	9,5	8	19
Do you like going to concerts?	32	76,2	8	19	2	4,8
Did you have any musical activities in the primary school?	42	100	0	0	0	0
Did you have any musical activities in the secondary school?	0	0	42	100	0	0
Do you attend musical activities out of classes?	10	28,6	32	76,2	0	0

As the most favorite musical activities, the respondents mention the singing (67%). In relation to musical activities out of school, small part of them were singing in a choir (19%) and playing the instrument like recorder (4,7%). In the course of the secondary education, studying the subject musical education is not included (except in the specialized music school) that creates interruption in the continuity of their musical activities.

In the second part of the questionnaire, the stance of the future teachers regarding the subject of musical education is examined. The answers relating to the attitude of the pre-service teachers for the importance of the subject Music Education show that only half of the respondents 19 (45,2%) consider it to be important in school curriculum, and 23 (54,8%) of them categorize it under not important items. Here are the responses to the following two questions regarding the attitude toward the subject: 15 (35,7%) — *Music is useful for the development of children*; 27 (64,3%) — *There are more important subjects for the development of the children* (Table 3).

Table 3
Responses concerning the music attitudes of future teachers

Attitudes toward subject music education	Yes		No		I don't know	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Music education subject is important	19	45,2	23	54,8	0	0
Music is useful for the development of children	15	35,7	4	9,5	23	54,8
There are more important subjects for the development of the children	27	64,3	11	26,2	4	9,5

In order to find out their attitude about the importance of music education in comparison to other subjects in school program, participants were offered to sort them according to personal priority. The priorities were: mother tongue (28,4%), mathematics (26,4%), informatics (18,9%), foreign language (14,7%), nature (8,5%), music (1%), physical education (1%), and art (1%) (Fig. 1).

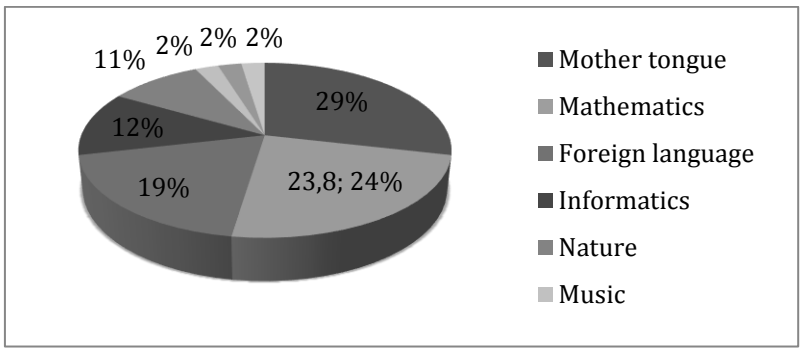

Figure 1. Responses regarding the most important subject in the school curriculum

The results show that the participants paid poor attention to musical education compared to the other school subjects, which corresponds to their general attitude regarding the importance of music (45,2%).

The third group of questions is related to perceive the influence of the music curriculum upon the self-confidence in class teaching during the internship. As one of the key questions that refers to the self-confidence (Factor 1) is the question how confident the students feel and have self-efficacy in teaching music topics (theory, singing, playing instrument, listening). In order to elaborate that in more details, in Table 4 the results are shown on a scale from 1 to 5 in relation to their experience during the internship.

Table 4
Responses concerning the self-confidence in teaching music topics

Topics of subject music education	How confident you feel in teaching music topics?									
	Very confident		Confident		I don't know		Less confident		Not confident	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Teaching theory	12	28,5	19	45,2	0	0	10	23,7	1	2,3
Singing	9	21,5	15	35,7	2	4,7	12	28,5	4	9,5
Playing keyboards	5	12	11	26,2	0	0	16	38,1	10	23,7
Listening	15	35,7	20	47,6	0	0	7	16,6	0	0

According to the results, respondents had the greatest self-confidence in implementing the topics listening to music (83,3%) and music theory (73,8%). Self-confidence weakens at contents

that require specific musical competencies, e.i. singing (57,1%) and playing keyboards (38,1%). Therefore the students believe that the skills would improve with optimal allocation of subject content during the studies (100%), the longer internship in the schools (100%), and increasing the number of semesters for continuous studying of musical activities (95,2%).

Table 5
Responses concerning the improving the level of self-efficacy

Do you think that your level of self-efficacy would be improved by:	Strongly agree		Agree		I don't know		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Optimal allocation of teaching musical contents within the semester	30	71,4	12	28,6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Increasing the number of semesters for continuous studying of musical activities	24	57,1	16	38,1	0	0	2	4,7	0	0
Creating conditions for practicing on the instrument out of classes	22	52,4	14	33,3	0	0	6	14,3	0	0
Elongate the duration of internship	33	78,6	9	21,4	0	0	0	0	0	0

Discussion

In relation to the responses of the participants to the first group of questions, t-test and ANOVA were calculated. According to the statistical analysis, it was determined that these relevant variables: gender ($t = 1.141$, df (40), $p > 0.05$), musical background ($F = 0.275$, df (40), $p > 0.05$) and attitude ($F = 0.453$, df (40), $p > 0.05$) don't represent an important factor that affects the level of self-efficacy.

The research showed that during the practice in school, future teachers do not have difficulties regarding teaching of the theoretical part of the subject — music theory and notation. The lack of confidence is evident during singing and playing keyboards. This situation is due to the fact that 95,7% of the population begins with methodical study of playing the keyborads for the first time at the faculty.

Table 6
Descriptive statistics of variables

Relevant Factors	M	SD	N	Min	Max
(1) Self-confidence	2,63	0,56	42	1,00	5,00
(2) Musical skills- singing and playing keyboards	2,33	0,79	42	1,00	5,00
(3) Theoretical knowledge	3,33	1,12	42	1,00	5,00

By means of the Pearson's coefficient of correlation, a comparison was made among the relevant factors (Table 6). With their inter-correlation, it was determined a positive connection at the level $p < 0.01$ among all of them: Factor 1 is connected to Factor 2 ($r = 0.57$ ($N = 42$), $p < 0.01$), Factor 1 is connected to the Factor 3 ($r = 0.61$ ($N = 42$), $p < 0.01$), and Factor 3 is connected to the Factor 2 ($r = 0.47$ ($N = 42$), $p < 0.01$).

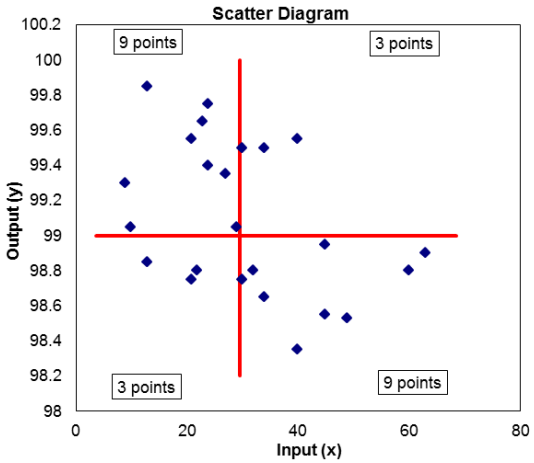

Figure 2. Scatter Analysis

Table 7
Pierson's coefficient of correlation

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1			
Factor 2	0.57** 42		
Factor 3	0.61** 42	0.47** 42	

*level of significant (p<0,05)
** level of significant (p<0,01)

The data in the Table 7 show that three factors are interconnected, and that theoretical knowledge and music practicing are largely associated, i.e., they increase the self-confidence. On the other hand, in order to determine to what extent both of them have influence on the degree of self-confidence, a linear regression analysis was made from which it can be seen that:

- The acquired music skills (singing and playing) are a significant predictor (ß = 0.894, p <0.01) and in 79% it has influence on the self-confidence of the student in teaching music (R^2 = 0.79, F (1,146) = 580.815, p <0.01).

- The acquired theoretical knowledge is a less significant predictor (ß = 0.789, p <0.01) and in 62% it has influence on the self-confidence in teaching music (R^2 = 0.62, F (1,146) = 240.271 , p <0.01).

Conclusion and Recommendation

The subject of research in this paper was to reveal the impact of musical education on music competencies and self-confidence acquired during the studies at a Faculty of Pedagogy in Skopje, R. Macedonia. For that purpose, a survey was conducted among the students (N 42) that have completed the mandatory internship. A questionnaire was designed for this purpose to find out about their (1) previous music activities, (2) attitude toward the subject music education in school curriculum, (and 3) confidence and self-efficacy in class teaching.

According to the responds, gender, musical background and the attitude don't affect the music competences and self-confidence (t = 1.141, df (40), p> 0.05) (F = 0.453, df (40), p> 0.05).

The Pearson's coefficient of correlation between self-confidence, music practice, and teaching theory was made. Intercorrelation was determined that there is a positive connection among them at the level of p <0.01, self-confidence in the practical (r = 0.57 (N = 42), p <0.01)

and self-confidence in the theoretical part of teaching (r = 0.61 (N = 42), p <0.01) respectively. In order to determine to what extent theoretical knowledge and acquired musical skills have influence on the degree of self-confidence, a linear regression analysis was calculated, from where it can be seen that: (1) the acquired musical skills (playing and singing) are a significant predictor (ß = 0.894, p <0.01), and in 79% it has influence on the self-confidence of the students (R^2 = 0.79, F (1,146) = 580.815, p <0.01), (2) the acquired theoretical knowledge is a less significant predictor (ß = 0.789, p <0.01) with 62% influence on the self-confidence (R^2 = 0.62, F (1,146) = 240.271, p <0 01).

The hypothesis tested in this article has confirmed that aquired musical comptences during studying are crucial for self-confidence in teaching music.

The survey confirmed that the most of the students begin with a playing keyboards for the first time at the faculty. Therefore, it is clear how important is the academic program for generalists to develop the will (i.e., self-efficacy) and the skills (i.e., competence) needed to provide effective music teaching. Each of these components highlights the importance of practical, hands-on experience in building their teaching confidence.

As a result, the students consider that there is a need to review the faculty music program in terms of increasing the number of semesters for continuous studying of musical activities, optimal allocation of teaching musical contents within the semester, and elongate the duration of internship (clinical practice) as a vital component to effective teacher preparation.

The recommendation is reviewing the music curriculum according to useful student insights also as one of the postulates of EU higher education concept.

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