



## THE IMPACT OF MUSIC EDUCATION ON THE PREFERENCE OF MUSICAL GENRES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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The term “music” is constantly influenced by technical and technological dynamics which take on new dimensions in terms of spatial, temporal, and stylistic nature. This enables the expansion of global music culture to be imposed as an imperative in the formation of musical taste and value systems. In this paper, we would like to present music education versus the preference of musical genres among the young population in the Republic of Macedonia in order to get a picture of the correlation between these two categories. For this purpose, we surveyed 187 students of the final grade in primary education at the age of 13–14 years. We conducted the survey in three primary schools taught in Macedonian, Albanian, and Turkish languages in the capital of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje. The results from the survey show that the highest percentages of students listen to pop–rock (43%) and the newly created folk music (31%), while the remaining percent (26%) is related to the preference of electronic, art, and folk traditional music. If we take into consideration the age of the respondents, the time and developmental interval in which they are located, they are characterized by the quest to establish a place of an individual in the music culture. Because they are directly exposed to a variety of musical influences from the environment and the media, all of that influences the formation of their personality and paves the way of musical taste as an important component of the completely developed personality. In such conditions, the relevant musical bodies are especially called to establish a balance in the relationship between music education and the current music culture, through finding new contents and educational methods in the school music activities.

**Keywords:** Music education, Music genres, Preference, Students, R. Macedonia.

### 1. Global Music Trends

Great difficulty in the theoretical reviewing of music today is the variableness of the term “music” in the historical and geographical sense. Diversity in accepting this term derived from different regions, cultures, and social groups can fully change experiencing, that is, interpreting and understanding of music (Buzarovski 1996:9).

In the context of all the technological and cultural changes and movements is introduced the need to analyze the new audio culture through the answer to the question “What is music?” The new technological revolution has produced different groups of musicians—producers, sound arrangers, young

people, who can afford to have only one computer and to cover recordings through the Internet sites, that is, to remix them and then share them with other users. In this way, the new technologies really completely changed the way of creating and communicating in the art of music (Johnson, 1997). With the audio-technological revolution, music has already lost its transitional character and became independent in time and space (Ringli, 2003). Thus, the nature of new music communication has been transformed into synthetic cultural construction, which operates with a huge number of different symbols that change with the enormous speed. *Mass* and *micro* media communication technologies with distributive capacity, in contact with the global economies, are becoming the heart of this dramatic evaluation of the genres and the complexity in the music culture (Lull, 2001). All these stimulate parallel existence of several musical genres, such as serious music, jazz, pop, rock, folk, hip-hop, techno, etc., and the establishment of music as the most internationalized form of culture (Rutten, 1996).

And that is why globalization of music culture is the issue which is given great importance in the recent time. Throughout the world is largely spread out sociological frame of reference in which in general can be analyzed each type of music product (Williams 1996:247). It is the result, mainly, of one of the most interesting phenomena, the emergence of mass culture, that is, art.

In that way, globalization has strengthened the dominance of Western culture, that is, Western European within the classical music and the Anglo-American within the pop, rock, and jazz. This is constantly noticeable through the programs of radio and television, CDs and DVD production, and through the Internet advantages (Buzarovski 2001:105).

Popular music is also often associated with the processes and the acculturation, creolization, or hybridization. Contemporary migrations, modernization or westernization, refer to mixing and mutual influence of the various cultural flows and traditions. The global trend of popular music is the appropriate field to study contemporary cultural dynamics (Eriksen 2001:298). There are several countries in the world where it is impossible not to find recordings or music from Madonna, Michael Jackson, Lady Gaga, Beyonce, etc. We would like to mention in particular the South Korean phenomenon Psy, who, with his video Gangnam Style, has broken the world records with 1,000,000,000 views. The video of Psy was posted on YouTube on July 15, 2012, which means that it reached this fascinating number within 6 months. For comparison, the second most watched video is Justin Bieber's Baby, which has "only" 800 million views, and it was published 3 years ago.

Also, there are a few countries in the world that did not create their own local genres of the popular, rock music, rap or hip-hop, because the "hypothesis of cultural imperialism" is deeply seductive (Stokes 2003:302).

By summarizing the previously mentioned, we would like to emphasize that the global musical culture in the transition between the XX and XXI century is characterized by the dominance of digitalization and segmentation of the music genres.

## **2. Global musical Culture and Musical Education Among Young Population in the Republic of Macedonia**

As a part of this global musical family, these processes of the global music culture are reflected in the Republic of Macedonia too, which implies complete influence of the international music trends. This is mostly apparent in the young population that is fully oriented toward different influences of popular music. In this musical mosaic, music production of the Balkan countries has an important part, as well as the local popular music. In addition, in the formation of musical taste and aesthetic values, crucial are the Internet and the mass media that contribute music to become accessible to all people, and to fulfill the majority of their free time. At the same time, the places where young people have fun, such as café-bars and discos are offering the same musical content (Anglo-Saxon pop-rock, electronic, turbo-folk, etc.).

In such surroundings, one can assume that the old forms of communication, especially those from the category of public musical performances (concerts) would be gradually repressed. However, cultural communication is in equal steady growth in the public musical events too, precisely because of the

increase of leisure time and the need of the man, as a social being, to be fulfilled within the community. The mass character of music production has led to huge musical offer concentrated in the capital town, where, in addition to the great works of art music (Macedonian Philharmonic, MOB, etc.), there are many different musical events. Viewed from the aspect of the genre, the largest number of audience attends pop-rock, electronic, and turbo-folk music events (Zelenkovska & Islam 2012).

Such image of music offers to young population motivated us to survey the correlation between the existing music education and the preference of music genres among the teenagers of 13–14 years.

### 2.1. Music Education in the Primary Schools in the Republic of Macedonia

The curriculum for music education in the Republic of Macedonia provided by the Ministry of education is identical in all the schools, regardless of the language in which teaching takes place. According to this program, in all 5 years of class teaching are studied the following six topics: *Singing of songs; Playing on children's musical instruments (State Musical School); Listening to music; Fundamentals of music literacy; Music and movement; and Children's musical expression and creation*. Each of the represented teaching subjects (with a total of 72 class hours per year) has its own features and specifications that are different in the manner of realization according to music skills, general and specific competencies.

Starting from VI to IX grade, the main task of the music classes consists of expanding the knowledge in the field of theory and history of music through the instructional topics: *Singing; Music literacy; Listening to music; Playing (State Musical School); Musical forms; Folk music creation; Music expression and creation; Musical instruments; Vocal interpretations* (with a total of 36 class hours per year). Music education is provided in two elective subjects *Projects of music art* and *Dances and folk ring dances*.

Teaching contents has always been based on the study of the works of Western European classical, local contemporary, and traditional music. In the last decade are planned musical examples from the popular musical genres, jazz, and rock, as well as the use of ICT methods in teaching.

Besides the general music education, there are also specialized music schools, private music schools, as well as private lessons. There, in addition to studying musical instruments of classical music, the spectrum of musical activities is gradually extended with the inclusion of other genres, such as for example, playing electric guitar, popular music singing, traditional/folk, and jazz music.

## 3. Preference in Music Genres

In order to perceive the preferences of the musical genres, we conducted a survey in three schools with different teaching languages (Macedonian, Albanian, and Turkish) in the central city area of Skopje. In that way, we wanted to observe the different sociocultural impacts on young people in a multiethnic environment. This survey encompassed a sample of 187 respondents from the final grade in elementary education. We chose the population aged 13–14 years, since it is the age at which primary studying of the subject of music education is completed, which implies that the basic aesthetic evaluation of music art should be present there. Also, the teenagers are abreast of the contemporary global music events and open to the acceptance and rapid adaptation toward the new happenings.

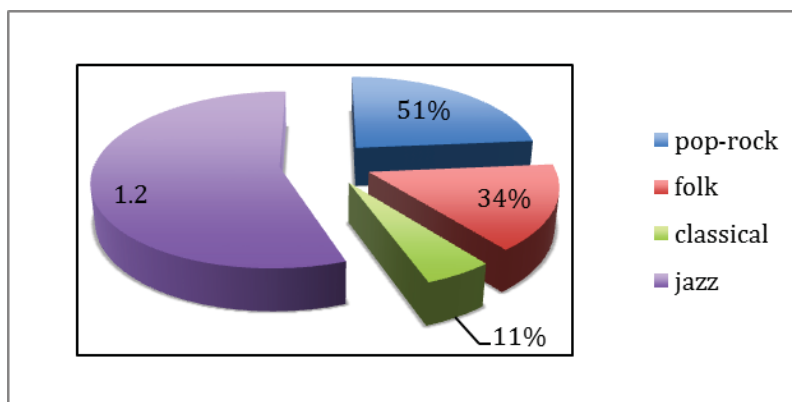
We conducted the survey with a questionnaire which encompassed 20 issues in three thematic groups that relate to the economic and sociocultural surroundings of the respondents, their personal musical preferences, and the music education influence.

### 3.1. Results

Starting from the thesis of the dominant influence of the new technological achievements, and through it, the impact of the global music culture, we were first of all interested whether and how many of the

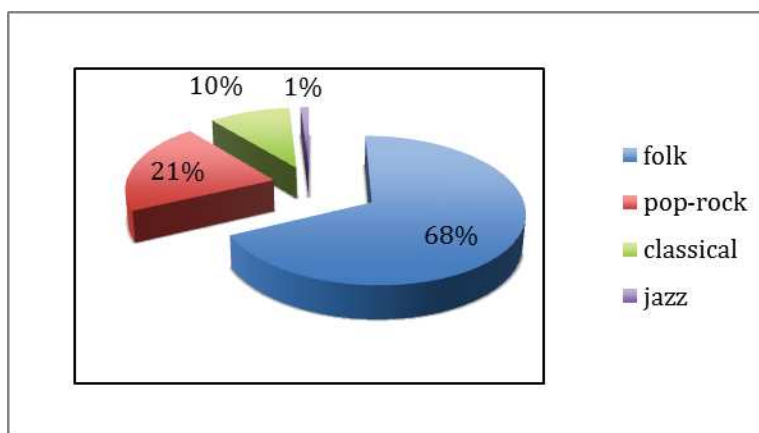
respondents possess a computer and use Internet at home. On this issue, 89% of the respondents gave affirmative response, which means that computers are an integral part of everyday life of the young population. Identical is the situation in relation to the results for watching the cable and satellite television (91%), which confirms that this population is abreast of and under the influence of the global, especially Balkan musical trends.

The questions in relation to the family and wider sociocultural influence that are dominant factors in the selection of the musical genres of the young population yielded the following results: 98% of the families listen to the music through TV or radio programs: 34% folk, 51% pop and rock, 11% classical, 4% jazz (graph.1).



**Graph 1.**

We were specifically interested in knowing how many of the respondents had visited concerts with the family (26%), with a special emphasis toward the selection of music genre: 68% folk music, 21% pop-rock, 10% classical music (only 7% of the respondents had visited the opera or ballet event along with their family) and jazz (1%) (graph.2).

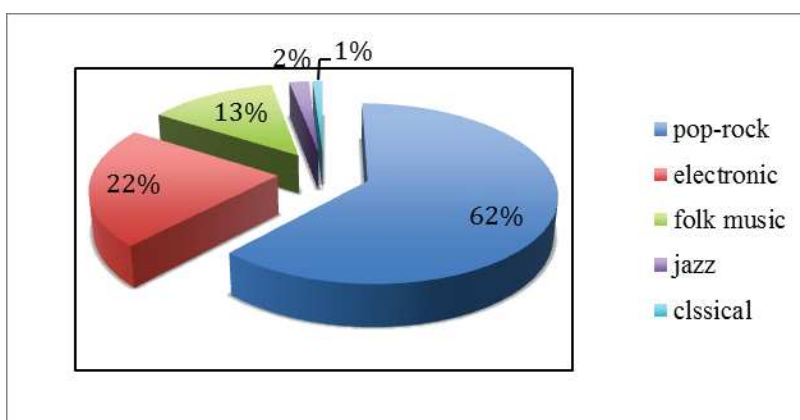


**Graph 2.**

The data on visiting the concerts of art music with the family have shown that they are not commonplace practice for that profile of teenagers. In contrast, most of the respondents have attended the event of art music (opera, ballet, symphonic concert) organized by the school in view of the fact that they are the compulsory part in music education teaching.

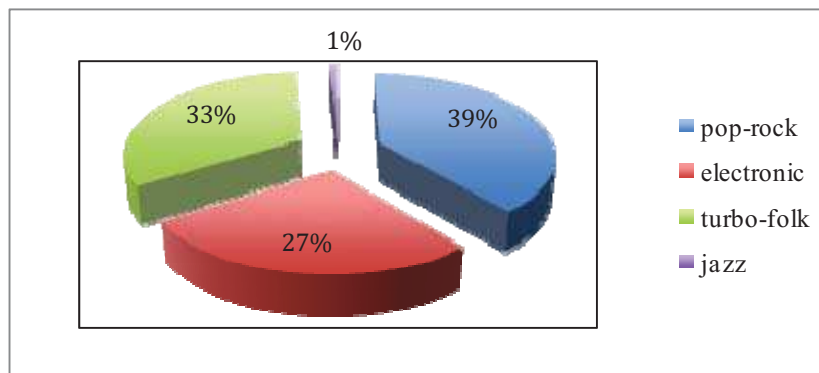
The distribution of music activity showed that all respondents study musical instrument and play the block-flutes that are compulsory for the subject of music education. Thirty four percentage of them participate in the school orchestras consisted of block-flutes, mandolins, guitars, percussion instruments, and in some of them the traditional instruments too. At the same time, 24% of them additionally study other musical instruments such as piano (15%), guitar (6%), and (3%) traditional instruments. In the survey, schools actively participate in school choirs, and even though they are not in the regular curricula, they attract stable number of students (42%).

The genre preference of the respondents is mainly determined based on the places (the source) from where the music is listened to. Thus, the largest number of respondents (96%) follows music and music news through TV and the Internet (pop-rock (62%), electronic (22%), folk music (13%), jazz 2% and classical 1%) (graph. 3).



Graph 3.

When in group, they listen to music that is played in places where they gather on certain occasions (birthday, celebrations, etc.), and it is mostly pop-rock (39%), electronic (27%), turbo-folk music (33%) and jazz (1%) (graph 4).



Graph 4.

In fact, all respondents said that they get acquainted with art music and listen to it only during the teaching instruction in music education. In this sense, on the question whether you like to listen to classical music during the class hour, 59% answered affirmatively, while 88% answered that they did not prefer this genre outside of school.

### 3.2. Discussion

The successful music education in primary schools is a continuous burning topic that initiates a series of polemics, different attitudes, doubts, and necessity of finding the optimal ways of conveying the knowledge and adjustment to current musical situations. Within this complex phenomenon, the survey has showed that the significant factors that provide guidance in the direction of the musical genre preference are the socioeconomic, cultural, as well as the tradition.

If taken into account the age of the respondents, their time and development interval, they are characterized by a quest for identifying their own place in the sphere of music. Since they are directly exposed to various musical influences from the surroundings and the media, young people especially accept all that is offered by one aggressive campaign of the music industries as modern and “in” product. All this reflects on the formation of their personality and pave way for musical taste as an important aesthetic component in music evaluation.

In such conditions, the relevant educational institutions are particularly called upon for establishing balance in the relation among the current music education and existing music culture, through finding new contents and educational methods in the school musical activities. As an example, we give the planetary hit “Gangnam style” of the rapper Psy, which had its classical performance in Slovenia, with the musicians Jure Godler and Tilen Artac who performed the song in accompaniment with the Symphonic Orchestra as part of the humanitarian concert.

In fact, such examples show that in parallel with the old forms, new forms constantly need to be introduced, and they will contribute to the expansion of the traditional academic curriculum. This implies interdisciplinary connection of several areas with redefining the didactic and methodological approaches through the integration of e - methods, balance between the outlined program and genre preferences, inducing greater creativity, and students’ critical approach to music. The discussion on active listening to popular music and comparison of different songs of that genre can be used as practical solutions in this sense. A trained staff is already available educated in the departments of popular and jazz music at the faculties of music arts throughout the Republic of Macedonia.

Generally, efficient music education implies the necessary complementarities of multiple parameters which are an integral part of this complex process, as for example, the teacher, the curriculum, the conditions under which teaching takes place, etc. For the realization of these ideas, a greater stimulation is required for the educational policy by increasing the number of classes, or by restoring the former number of classes (from 1 to 2 class hours) of teaching subject in music for that level of education. Moreover, an additional handicap is the prevailing general opinion that the other teaching subjects are more significant, especially mathematics, native language, computers, studying foreign languages, and in that way, the teaching subject in music education is practically put in an inferior position.

### Conclusion

By summarizing all the above-mentioned, we can conclude that:

- Within the young population, there is an absolute domination of popular music, rock, and electronic music under the influence of the global music trends.
- As a reflection of the musical trends in the surrounding Balkan countries, the new hybrid genres are increasingly preferred, such as turbo-folk music, and they dominate among the young population.
- In our cultural and musical environment, there is no correlation between the existing elementary music education and preferences in music genres of respondents aged 13–14 years.

As a result of the overall survey, we may conclude that the system music education should be the main factor in developing the criteria and the aesthetic taste in the preference of musical genres of the young population.



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