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**Research Article**

# Music and Children's Well-Being

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**Abstract**: Well-being is a desirable combination of high emotional, social, physical, and cognitive health. It is closely related to an element that has existed since the beginning of humankind: music. It is common knowledge that music is an inevitable part of an individual's life; it affects not just the current mood but more importantly, it serves as a means of social bonding, as a tool for therapy, and it affects the overall quality of living. Therefore, according to the Curriculum of the subject Music Culture for Primary Schools and Music Arts for Gymnasium, the teaching of the subject Music culture is intentionally focused on the overall cognitive, psychomotor, and affective dimensions of the child's development. Through musical activities listening, singing, playing, movement with music, musical games and musical creativity, it is also directed at creating a relaxed class atmosphere, as well as arousing a sense of satisfaction among all students. Students can engage in the aforementioned activities apart of regular classes as well, as part of extracurricular/out-of-school musical activities. This research shows that there are (some) statistically significant differences in the self-assessment of well-being of primary school students, in favor of those who like the subject Music culture, who like listening to classical music in class, and whose household members listen to classical music, while statistically significant difference with regard to (not) attending musical activities was not observed. In fact, students who attend musical activities are (imperceptibly) less satisfied in all life domains. This could be explained by additional obligations, such as preparations for exams and performances, which take place at the time of the survey for the purposes of this research, that is, at the end of the school year. But, it was determined that students who attend extracurricular musical activities have a higher grade point average, which is explained by the acquired good organizational skills necessary for successfully mastering school duties.

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## Introduction

### Subject Music Culture and Attending Musical Activities

Teaching of the subject Music culture, which according to the Croatian *Curriculum for the Subject Music Culture for Primary Schools and Music Art for Gymnasiums* (MSE, 2019) is focused on establishing a democratic, creative, and relaxed atmosphere that encourages all students to

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participate in musical activities and arouses in them a feeling of satisfaction, and on comprehensive development of the child in cognitive, psychomotor and affective dimension, takes place through musical activities *listening*, *singing, playing, movement with music, musical games* and *musical creativity*. In addition to regular classes, students have the opportunity to develop themselves through extracurricular/out-of-school musical activities.

That teaching of Music culture takes place in a positive atmosphere, is confirmed by the data that majority (74.6%) of students like it (Šulentić Begić, 2006; Šulentić Begić et al., 2020) and that most of them feel relaxed (Dobrota & Obradović, 2012; Šulentić Begić et al., 2020), satisfied, involved and excellent in class (Šulentić Begić, 2006). In terms of activities, *singing* is definitely students' favorite activity (Dobrota & Obradović, 2012; Šulentić Begić, 2006; Šulentić Begić et al., 2020; Radočaj-Jerković, 2012). Their next favorite activity is *listenin*g, then *musical games*, *playing*, while they like *musical creativity* and *literacy* the least (Šulentić Begić et al., 2020), and statistically significant differences in the liking of the activities with regard to gender were also determined (Dobrota & Obradović, 2012).

The activity of *listening* is particularly important in the teaching of Music culture because through this activity the value of music is learned, that is, students are educated aesthetically through listening to all types of music, including classical music (MSE, 2019). Although it is not students' and their parents' favorite type of music to listen to in their free time (Dobrota, 2012; Šulentić Begić & Begić, 2013), students, especially younger ones (Dobrota & Mikelić, 2012) have positive attitudes towards classical music (Dobrota & Ćurković, 2006; Dobrota, 2012) and towards listening to it in class (Šulentić Begić & Begić, 2013). More parents than their children listen to classical music (Šulentić Begić et al., 2020) and the fact that students whose parents listen to classical music have more positive attitudes towards Music culture (Dobrota & Conar, 2018), shows that what our environment listens to consciously or unconsciously influences our thinking.

That students in addition to regular Music culture classes want to engage in music, is shown by the fact that musical activities are, after sports, the second most represented and attended extracurricular and out-of-school activities (Gergorić, 2019). Almost all schools offer (one or two) musical activities (Dubovicki et al., 2014), and the following is a list of some existing extracurricular and out-of-school activities: choir-which is most represented and attended activity (Dubovicki et al., 2014; Gergorić, 2019; Vidulin, 2016), learning an instrument, instrumental group, vocal group, dance group, orchestra, folklore, music listening sessions, composition, klapa singing and music workshop, balet, contemporary dance (Gergorić, 2019; Šulentić Begić et al., 2016; Vidulin, 2016). Whether or not students will engage in music extracurricular our out-of-school activities, depends significantly on the parents' (not) engaging in music. This again shows that environment, that is parents, during children's growing up, unconsciously or consciously influence their thinking and future interests (Šulentić Begić et al., 2021). And whether and why students will be involved in extracurricular rather than out-of-school musical activities can also be explained by the fact that extracurricular activities do not require any additional financial investment or participation payment. Let's also add the fact that the mentors of the activities themselves are already known to students and parents, as well as the time in which they take place (Šulentić Begić et al., 2016).

**Relationship Between Music and Well-Being**

According to the World Health Organization (1989, p.1), "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". That well-being is not only closely related to music, but that individual's well-being partially depends on the music, is presented by many researchers whose goal was to collect, and then for easier review, systematize more and more research related to this topic (Croom, 2014; Dingle et al., 2021).

Young people are aware that music contributes to their well-being (Papinczak et al., 2015). Students who attend previously mentioned musical activities say that it relaxes them (Gergorić, 2019), that those activities are a place of joy, socializing and learning (Dubovicki et al., 2014), that they gain new friendships with students from other classes and become closer with students they knew before (Proleta & Svalina, 2011). Students, whose general teachers included singing for five to 10 minutes every day, had a significant improvement not only in singing skills, but also in reading scores and working memory. In addition, the fact that even five months after the research, teachers continued to use this activity in their work with students speaks of the positive aspects of singing (Welch, 2021). Therefore, it doesn't surprise that exactly choir singers are "satisfied and accomplished individuals" (Radočaj-Jerković, 2022, p. 203) and in periods of impossibility of singing together, such as Covid-19, students who normally engage in singing activities feel less happy and it is harder for them to remove negative feelings (Jurkić Sviben & Jambrošić, 2021).

One study, which included a control and an experimental group, showed that additional listening and engaging in musical activities have a statistically significant effect on reducing the level of pessimism. However, the author believes that the mentioned should be practiced for a longer period of time, because then the difference would be even greater. Therefore, they call for the inclusion of musical activities in non-music subjects as well (Ivek, 2016).

Analyzing 63 studies involving 6975 participants, which the authors categorized into the following categories: receptive music listening, intentional music listening, shared music listening, instrumental music playing, group singing, lyrics and rapping, music and movement/dance and composition/songwriting/ improvisation; it was observed that in some way, and depending on the category, music has a positive influence on health and well-being. Just to name a few benefits, some studies have shown that music listening reduces pain; enhances social connection and mood; playing an instrument and movement with music programs improve cognitive health and well-being and so on (Dingle et al., 2021).

Music concert attendance is associated with higher subjective well-being (Kwon et al., 2020), but what kind of music we listen to, that is, the kind of content the music we listen to is made of and is promoting, is crucially important as well, because it can have both positive and negative effects on our health and well-being (Swartbooi et al., 2016). For example, some of the benefits of listening to classical music by Mozart, Haydn, Vivaldi, Bach, or Händel is to achieve better concentration, while more romantic classical compositions, by composers like Debussy or Ravel, are "suggested for creative assignments" (Foran, 2009, p. 57). Besides reducing pessimism and pain, listening to music in the circle of family and peers contributes to both family and peers cohesion (Boer and Abubakar, 2014).

Taking into account that music has the "potential to provide the demonstrated benefits for individuals, societies and human development" (Welch, 2021, p. 3), the advice is to introduce musical activities in non-musical subjects as well (Welch, 2021), but also sometimes to conduct integrated classes that include music related subjects (Šulentić Begić, 2018).

## Method

### Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this paper was to analyze whether there are differences in primary school students' self-assessment of well-being with regard to several elements related to music. The following questions emerged from the stated aim:

*1. Are there differences in students' self-assessment of well-being with regard to:*

*a) (dis)liking the subject Music culture,*

*b) (dis)liking listening to classical music in the Music Culture class,*

*c) their household members (not) listening to classical music,*

*d) (not) attending musical activities?*

*2. Are there differences in students' grade point average with regard to (not) attending musical activities?*

### Sample and Data Collection

The research took place in Croatia during the May 2023, and it included 205 students from fourth to eighth grade from one primary school in Vukovar-Srijem County. A detailed sample of participants regarding gender and grade is in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Sample Description (N = 205)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 107 (52.2%) |
| | Female | 98 (47.8%) |
| **Grade** | 4th | 34 (16.6%) |
| | 5th | 33 (16.1%) |
| | 6th | 46 (22.4%) |
| | 7th | 48 (23.4%) |
| | 8th | 44 (21.5%) |

Considering that there are no ethics committees at the researchers' institutions, the rules of the Croatian *Ethical code of research with children* (2020) were followed. It mandates that parents and children (up to the age of 14) should be informed with the research details before giving the consent to participate in it. We therefore worked with the line of the aforementioned code. The research was conducted under researcher's institution approval, that is, the rules of the school where the research was conducted, were respected. Consent was then given by the parents of the students and then by the students themselves. Before asking for consent and before conducting the research, parents and students were informed about: the researchers, relevant details of the research, about the voluntariness of participation in the research and the possibility of withdrawing from participation as well as withdrawing data in all phases of the research for the purpose of the research, about the level of confidentiality and secrecy of the data, about the method of storage and the time of data storage, the method of data processing and publication of results, and other data related to the research. Before filling out the questionnaire, students were explained how to complete it. Since one of the researchers works at the school where this research was conducted, she was present during the filling of the questionnaire. In case of any ambiguities, she helped to explain the necessary. After the students filled out the questionnaire, they were asked to check again if they answered all the questions.

### Instrument and Statistical Procedure

The questionnaire consisted of 24 questions, 29 particles, and was divided into six parts: 1. Socio-demographic characteristics (gender, grade); 2. Well-being; 3. Opinions about the subject Music culture; 4. Attending extracurricular/out-of-school musical activities; 5. Musical taste; 6. School success. Six questions were dichotomous, one was trichotomous, seven were polytomous, nine were in the form of Likert scale, and one question was an open-type question. For the purposes of this paper, the answers to 21 questions were analyzed. Questions regarding well-being were taken from the 3rd edition of standardized *Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC)* questionnaire, which consists of one question regarding *satisfaction with life as a whole*, and seven questions regarding specific life domains: *standard of living, personal health, achievement in life, personal relationships, personal safety, feeling part of the community* and *future security*. A Likert 11-point scale, where 0 means *very sad*; 5 means not *happy or sad*; and 10 means *very happy*, was used to describe satisfaction within the mentioned domains (Cummins and Lau, 2005). To answer the research questions, frequencies, descriptives, crosstabs, one-way ANOVA, and independent-samples T test from IBM SPSS Statistics 25 program were used.

## Results and Discussion

Before answering the research questions, students' opinions about the subject Music culture and its musical activities with comparison regarding gender and grade will be analyzed.

Most students (N=186; 90.7%) expressed that they like the subject, as previous research has established (Šulentić Begić, 2006; Šulentić Begić et al., 2020). Out of 19 (9.3%) students who expressed that they don't like it, only two (10.5%) of them are female, and so statistically significant difference between the genders was found (p<.01). Considering the grade, the largest number of students who do not like the subject attend the eighth grade (N=7; 3.4%), while zero students from fourth grade replied the same, but no statistically significant difference was found between them. These results only confirm previous research which show that the number of students who do not like the subject Music culture increases in higher grades (Šulentić Begić et al., 2020). Despite the fact that not all students like the subject, it can still be concluded that the desired pleasant atmosphere (MSE, 2019) continues to prevail in Music culture classes because the majority of them usually feel relaxed (N=143; 71.2%), excellent (N=31; 15.1%) and satisfied (N=22; 10.7%), while an imperceptible number of them feel dissatisfied (N=2; 1%) or bored (N=3; 1.5%). One student (0.5%) stated that their mood in class almost always depends on the day. It can be concluded that a stable positive atmosphere is constant in the teaching of Music culture in Croatia, regardless of the time and place of research (Dobrota and Obradović, 2012; Šulentić Begić, 2006; Šulentić Begić et al., 2020).

As for musical activities, of course, they like some more and some less. Activity students like the most is *musical games*, which was not concluded in several earlier research, where *singing* was in the first place (Dobrota and Obradović, 2012; Šulentić Begić, 2006; Šulentić Begić et al., 2020; Radočaj-Jerković, 2012). *Musical games* is followed by *listening to music*, *singing*, *playing, movements with music,* and lastly, *musical creativity*. As before (Dobrota and Obradović, 2012), a statistically significant difference was observed in liking the activity with regard to gender. Female students show a statistically significantly higher preference for all activities, except for *musical games*, which they also rated higher than male students. List of favorite activities regarding gender (female-male) is somewhat similar, and it follows in descending order: 1. *singing* (p<.001)-*musical games*; 2. *listening to music* (p<.05)-*listening to music*; 3. *musical games*-*singing*; 4. *playing* (p<.001)-*playing*; 5. *movements with music* (p<.001)-*musical creativity,* and 6. *musical creativity* (p<.01)-*movements with music*.

Looking at Table 2., it is evident that students who like the subject Music culture assessed higher personal well-being in all seven life domains, but not in their satisfaction with life as a whole. However, it should be noticed that statistically significant difference in favor of them was found only in one domain, and that is *standard of living* (p<.01). It is also the highest rated domain (M=9.04) in general and by students who like the subject.

**Table 2.** Self-Assesment Of Personal Well-Being With Regard To Their Opinion On The Subject Music Culture

| *How happy are you…* | *Do you like the subject Music culture?* | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *…with your life as a whole?* | yes | 186 | 7.71 | 2.32 | -.51 |
| | no | 19 | 8.00 | 2.75 | |
| *…about the things you have? Like the money you have and the things you own?* | yes | 186 | 9.04 | 1.40 | **2.67**** |
| | no | 19 | 8.05 | 2.57 | |
| *…with your health?* | yes | 186 | 8.60 | 1.90 | 1.96 |
| | no | 19 | 7.63 | 3.24 | |
| *…with the things you want to be good at?* | yes | 186 | 8.09 | 1.99 | .39 |
| | no | 19 | 7.89 | 2.31 | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *...about getting on with the people you know?* | yes | 186 | 8.11 | 1.93 | 1.40 |
| | no | 19 | 7.42 | 3.08 | |
| *...about how safe you feel?* | yes | 186 | 8.07 | 2.29 | 1.14 |
| | no | 19 | 7.42 | 2.93 | |
| *...about doing things away from your home?* | yes | 186 | 8.15 | 2.28 | .08 |
| | no | 19 | 8.11 | 2.47 | |
| *... about what may happen to you later on in your life?* | yes | 186 | 7.76 | 2.29 | .14 |
| | no | 19 | 7.68 | 3.23 | |

p<.01**;

Just like the previous research show (Dobrota and Ćurković, 2006; Dobrota, 2012; Dobrota and Mikelić, 2012), here we also concluded that most students like classical music (N=60; 29.3%) or just some classical music (N=107; 52.2%). But, as before (Šulentić Begić and Begić, 2013), regardless of liking, here too it was concluded that fewer students, two thirds to be exact, like listening to classical music specifically in the Music culture classes (N=142; 69.3%). With regard to gender, there are again more female (N=73; 74.5%) than male students (N=69; 64.5%) who like the above. Considering the grade, the largest number of students who like to listen to classical music in Music culture class attend the fourth grade (N=26; 76.5%), followed by students of the seventh (N=35; 72.9%), sixth (N=32; 69.6%), eighth (N=30; 68.2%), and lastly the fifth grade where only slightly more than half of the students like the same (N=19; 57.6%).

**Table 3.** Self-Assesment Of Personal Well-Being With Regard To Liking To Listen To Classical Music In The Music Culture Class

| *How happy are you…* | *Do you like to listen to classical music in Music culture class?* | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *...with your life as a whole?* | yes | 142 | 8.01 | 2.10 | **2.56*** |
| | no | 63 | 7.11 | 2.78 | |
| *...about the things you have? Like the money you have and the things you own?* | yes | 142 | 9.07 | 1.46 | 1.64 |
| | no | 63 | 8.68 | 1.77 | |
| *...with your health?* | yes | 142 | 8.62 | 1.70 | 1.12 |
| | no | 63 | 8.27 | 2.73 | |
| *...with the things you want to be good at?* | yes | 142 | 8.12 | 2.00 | .55 |
| | no | 63 | 7.95 | 2.05 | |
| *...about getting on with the people you know?* | yes | 142 | 8.25 | 1.90 | **2.08*** |
| | no | 63 | 7.60 | 2.35 | |
| *...about how safe you feel?* | yes | 142 | 8.22 | 2.17 | 1.92 |
| | no | 63 | 7.54 | 2.69 | |
| *...about doing things away from your home?* | yes | 142 | 8.29 | 2.29 | 1.34 |
| | no | 63 | 7.83 | 2.28 | |
| *... about what may happen to you later on in your life?* | yes | 142 | 7.98 | 2.19 | **2.03*** |
| | no | 63 | 7.25 | 2.72 | |

p<.05*

Observing at Table 3., it is obvious that students who like to listen to classical music in the Music culture class, reported higher personal well-being in all seven life domains and *satisfaction with life as a whole*. Statistically significant difference in favor of them was found within *satisfaction with life as a whole* (p<.05) and two domains: *personal relationships* (p<.05) and *future security* (p<.05). *Standard of living* is again the highest rated domain by both students who don't like (M=8.68) and students who like (M=9.07) to listen to classical music in the Music culture class. Considering that a much larger number of students prefer only some classical music, it would be good to analyze which specific classical music they like in order to use it as an entrance card to the rest of the world of classical music, which they will later like, and ultimately, to develop

their aesthetic education and well-being. An open attitude towards listening to music, especially classical music, which has a positive effect on concentration and creativity (Foran, 2009), is certainly a good start towards using it to nurture well-being. Also, students should be informed about the benefits of listening to music in Music culture class (Dingle et al., 2021, Swatbooi et al., 2016) so that they do not have the attitude that music is listened to in class only because the *Curriculum* requires it (MSE, 2019).

Out of 205 students, only one quarter of them (N=42; 20.5%) listen to classical music in their free time, while a slightly larger number of their household members listen to the same (N=57; 27.8%). Students whose household members listen to classical music are more satisfied in all life domains and with *life as a whole,* where a statistically significant difference was observed ($p<.05$). Life domain *standard of living* was once again the highest rated domain by both groups (M=9.02; M=8.93). Considering that numerous advantages of listening to classical music have been found (Foran, 2009); that listening to music in the family circle contributes to family cohesion (Boer and Abubakar, 2014), and we (only) assume that students know that their household members listen to classical music because they sometimes listen to it together, we conclude that listening to classical music in the home, even if unintentionally, contributes to well-being. The above are sufficient reasons for listening to classical music to become intentional, whether it is listening alone or with household members.

**Table 4.** Self-Assesment Of Personal Well-Being With Regard To Household Members (Not) Listening To Classical Music

| *How happy are you…* | *Do your household members listen to classical music?* | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *…with your life as a whole?* | yes | 57 | 8.39 | 1.92 | **2.48*** |
| | no | 148 | 7.49 | 2.47 | |
| *…about the things you have? Like the money you have and the things you own?* | yes | 57 | 9.02 | 1.20 | .38 |
| | no | 148 | 8.93 | 1.69 | |
| *…with your health?* | yes | 57 | 8.86 | 1.76 | 1.50 |
| | no | 148 | 8.38 | 2.17 | |
| *…with the things you want to be good at?* | yes | 57 | 8.40 | 1.94 | 1.48 |
| | no | 148 | 7.94 | 2.03 | |
| *…about getting on with the people you know?* | yes | 57 | 8.49 | 1.93 | 1.92 |
| | no | 148 | 7.88 | 2.09 | |
| *…about how safe you feel?* | yes | 57 | 8.37 | 2.18 | 1.36 |
| | no | 148 | 7.87 | 2.41 | |
| *…about doing things away from your home?* | yes | 57 | 8.28 | 2.22 | .52 |
| | no | 148 | 8.09 | 2.32 | |
| *… about what may happen to you later on in your life?* | yes | 57 | 8.14 | 2.17 | 1.44 |
| | no | 148 | 7.61 | 2.45 | |

$p<.05$*

Slightly less than half of the students (N=96; 46.8%) attend some extracurricular/out-of-school musical activity. Most students attend only one, and some indicated that they attend more than one activity. The most attended activity is music school (N=28; 29.17%), followed by folklore (N=23; 23.96%), choir (N=23; 23.96%), private instrument playing lessons (N=18; 18.75%), rhythmic (N=2; 2.08%) and orchestra (N=1; 1.04%). All of the activities that students attend are out-of-school, except for the choir which is in this case both extracurricular and out-of-school activity, and the reason for this is that the school where the students were surveyed, like most other schools, offers only one extracurricular musical activity (Dubovicki et al., 2014).

**Table 5.** Self-Assesment Of Personal Well-Being With Regard To (Not) Attending Extracurricular/Out-Of-School Music Activities

| *How happy are you…* | *Do you attend any extracurricular/out-of-school music activity?* | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *...with your life as a whole?* | yes | 96 | 7.50 | 2.41 | -1.35 |
| | no | 109 | 7.94 | 2.30 | |
| *...about the things you have? Like the money you have and the things you own?* | yes | 96 | 8.93 | 1.60 | -.21 |
| | no | 109 | 8.97 | 1.54 | |
| *...with your health?* | yes | 96 | 8.23 | 2.06 | -1.85 |
| | no | 109 | 8.76 | 2.05 | |
| *...with the things you want to be good at?* | yes | 96 | 8.06 | 2.08 | -.04 |
| | no | 109 | 8.07 | 1.97 | |
| *...about getting on with the people you know?* | yes | 96 | 7.79 | 2.15 | -1.68 |
| | no | 109 | 8.28 | 1.96 | |
| *...about how safe you feel?* | yes | 96 | 7.98 | 2.42 | -.17 |
| | no | 109 | 8.04 | 2.31 | |
| *...about doing things away from your home?* | yes | 96 | 7.92 | 2.59 | -1.35 |
| | no | 109 | 8.35 | 1.98 | |
| *... about what may happen to you later on in your life?* | yes | 96 | 7.69 | 2.56 | -.39 |
| | no | 109 | 7.82 | 2.22 | |

Contrary to previous comparisons that were in favor of music, Table 5. shows that students who attend extracurricular/out-of-school musical activities rate happiness in all life domains slightly lower than those who do not attend the same. However, it is important to emphasize that these differences are subtle, that there is no statistically significant difference between the groups, and that both groups are ultimately satisfied with life. Standard of living is again the life domain with which both groups are the most satisfied with (M=8.93; M=8.97). The authors would explain the lower life satisfaction of students who attend musical activities with a simple reason – more obligations before the end of the school year and, accordingly, stress due to preparing to demonstrate the acquired knowledge and skills in music school exams, as well as performances and concerts that traditionally take place before the summer holidays. It means that during that period, students have rehearsals and lessons, but also independent practice at home, more often than usual. Accordingly, the authors would like to test this group of students again, but in a period when they have fewer obligations, during the summer holiday for example.

A well-known idea that attending musical activities has a positive effect on children's emotional, social, physical, and cognitive health, that is well-being, was confirmed by the students themselves with the following answers to the question *What are the positive aspects of attending musical activities?*:

- *I gained new knowledge.*
- *You can learn to play any instrument you want.*
- *Because I will know something more and I will navigate better in life.*
- *You meet new friends, learn to sing and dance.*
- *I'm not on my cell phone that much.*
- *We can have fun and be happy doing it.*

- *I'm not at home all the time.*
- *You lose weight and meet new friends.*
- *The positive thing is that I learn to organize myself very well.*
- *You are more relaxed and fulfilled.*
- *Meeting new people, i.e., making new friends, developing intelligence, feelings of pride, satisfaction, joy, learning things that help us in life.*
- *Well, you have more experiences in life, and the time you would spend on your cell phone or being bored, I spend that time with quality studying.*
- *We meet new friends, if we dance it's good for our health and at the end of the day, of course, we learn new things.*
- *You can show other people your success,* etc.

With presented statements, we confirm previous findings that go in favor of additional involvement in musical activities (Dubovicki et al., 2014; Ivek, 2016; Papinczak et al., 2015; Proleta and Svalina, 2011; Radočaj-Jerković, 2021). It is essential to show the students the purpose of everything they do, and to point out the advantages of musical activities, of which there are many. Also, it is important to know how students think, so these statements are valuable and can serve not only as an excellent argument for involvement in these activities, but also as a guide for educators of these activities, in order to see which good sides of the activities students have already noticed and which are (still) invisible, that is, which need to be worked on so that they could be improved and noticed.

In addition to differences in self-assessment of well-being, the authors wanted to find out if there are differences in students' grade point average with regard to them (not) attending musical activities. Majority of students (N=128; 62,4%) finished the last school year with *excellent 4,5-5,00*; 69 (33,7%) with *very good 3,5-4,4*; seven (3,4%) with *good 2,5-3,4*; and one student (0,5%) with *sufficient 1,5-2,4* grade point average. No statistically significant differences between the groups were found, but students who attend musical activities, on average, have higher grade point average. So, the answer to the last question of this research is positive, that is, it was observed that students who attend extracurricular/out-of-school musical activities, have higher grade point averages.

Since we learned from the students that attending musical activities is useful for developing organizational skills, therefore, with this knowledge, we conclude that exactly attending musical activities is one of the reasons for higher grade point average.

**Table 6.** Comparison Of Students' Grade Point Average With Regard To (Not) Attending Extracurricular/Out-Of-School Music Activity

| | *Do you attend any extracurricular/out-of-school musical activity?* | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *With what grade point average did you end the last school year?* | yes | 96 | 4.64 | .55 | 1.26 |
| | no | 109 | 4.53 | .62 | |

## Conclusion

Students like the subject Music culture and most often feel positive during classes. With regard to age, liking the subject decreases in higher grades, and with regard to gender, it was observed that female students like the subject more. Female students also show more preferences towards musical activities. Students who love the subject assessed higher personal well-being in all seven life domains, but not in their *satisfaction with life as a whole*. However, a statistically significant difference in favor of them was observed only in one domain, and that is *standard of living.* Two-thirds of students like to listen to classical music in Music Culture classes. Again, a larger number of female than male students, like the above. Students who like to listen to classical

music in the Music culture class reported higher personal well-being in all seven life domains and *satisfaction with life as a whole*. Statistically significant difference in favor of them was found within *satisfaction with life as a whole* and domains *personal relationships* and *future security*. Slightly less than one-third of the students stated that their household members listen to classical music, and it was these students who evaluated all life domains with a higher grade, with a statistically significant difference in favor of them found in *satisfaction with life as a whole.* A little less than half of the students attend some extracurricular/out-of-school musical activity. The largest number of them attend music school, and the smallest attend an orchestra. Interestingly, it was found that students who attend extracurricular musical activities rate happiness in all life domains slightly lower than those who do not attend the same. However, it is important to emphasize that these differences are subtle and there are no statistically significant differences between the groups. The authors would explain it with too many obligations of those students, which is day-to-day practicing before exams and concerts that takes place before the end of the school year. Students recognize the qualities of attending musical activities and cite a variety of positive aspects, which is just an additional confirmation of the benefits of music. Finally, this research showed that students who attend extracurricular/out-of-school musical activities, have higher grade point average, which can be explained by the acquired organizational skills.

As a continuation of this research, the authors suggest re-analyzing the well-being of students who participate in musical activities, but during a less stressful period, that is, a period in which they have (much) fewer obligations. The value of this work is shown in the additional knowledge of the benefits of music, and one of the proposals that emerged from the knowledge obtained is to use musical activities (tactically) in non-musical subjects. It is obvious that children like performing musical activities, especially *musical games*, *listening* and *singing.* Therefore, teachers of non-musical subjects, with the help and guidance of music teachers, can use the mentioned musical activities for the purpose of coming up with different activities to repeat or learn a new lesson. Of course, each subject is specific and different, therefore, we would leave the suggestions, which are many, for another paper. The ultimate goal would be to present music related activities for non-musical subjects, with the task of improving the students' well-being, class atmosphere, learning motivation, and school success.

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