

**ACQUISITION OF MUSICAL CULTURAL VALUES IN
PRIMARY EDUCATION: APPRAISING THE VIRTUE OF
HOLISTIC APPROACH**
HOLISTISKĀS PIEEJAS IZPĒTE MUZIKĀLĀS KULTŪRAS
VĒRTĪBU APGUVĒ PAMATIZGLĪTĪBĀ

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Abstract. *The paper reviews current tendencies in making sense of the concept of holism as well as analyses relevant theoretical studies in social science about the substance and significance of holistic approach to shaping the content of primary education and to facilitating the acquisition of musical cultural values. Analysis of scientific literature germane to this topic suggested the following research aim – to ascertain the expediency of holistic approach to facilitating the acquisition of musical cultural values in primary school with due concern for enriching learners’ spiritual and physical experience. The empirical study reported on in this paper draws on survey data obtained from primary education teachers in different regions of Latvia. The survey allowed for evaluating and comparing the views of primary school subject teachers on holistic approach to facilitating the acquisition of musical cultural values in Latvian primary schools.*

Keywords: *holism, holistic approach, holistic education, musical cultural values, primary education teacher, primary school.*

Introduction

Ievads

The study addresses a topical issue whose relevance is underscored by the aim of education – to foster individual growth and development of a balanced personality in harmony with the world. The urgency of the study is underscored by a perceived paucity of comprehensive conceptual research into the substance of holistic approach to facilitating the acquisition of musical cultural values that should target the enrichment of each learner’s individual experience and assist them in making unique, personally meaningful discoveries. These intended outcomes are contingent on the choices that primary school teachers make regarding appropriate teaching and learning strategies. It is essential that their teaching practice amalgamates different approaches and insights from relevant research in order to contribute to the learners’ sustainable development by successfully making use of the integrated content of holistic approach.

Holistic approach has also found its place in the educational context where holistic education is discussed as a pertinent theory (Miller, 1993; Nakagawa, 2000; Miller, 2012, etc.). Miller's (2012) writings about holistic approach to education emphasise that, essentially, everything in this world exists in a relationship of interrelatedness with all else, which means that every action or event, however infinitesimal, sends ripples of adaptation throughout the entire system. Meanwhile, Nakagawa (2000) focuses on the philosophy of life, ecological worldview, systems theory and feminist thinking and calls for a shared worldview as the grounds for educational content. Nakagawa's (2000) argument is built on Dewey's (1938) insights about the development of learners' experiences and their connections with the world and reality.

Rinkevicius (Ринкявичус, 2006) explores the creative phenomenon of musical thinking, whose creative product is a "musical concept" (Ринкявичус, 2006: 175) – an image that fills music with spiritual content and embodies its metaphysical being. He argues that one's prime concern in the paradigm of musical inquiry is to integrate aesthetic and spiritual cultural values. Rinkevicius (Ринкявичус, 2006) points out how, contrary to that, learning the musical language and form and development of relevant musical knowledge and skills, as a rule, take centre stage in music education while learners' creative, spiritual and aesthetic development is somewhat neglected. He maintains that teachers should regard learners' ability to recognise styles, genres and musical cultural values as an integrated model of explored objects. Many scholars (Miller, 1993; Ruismäki & Ruokonen, 2009) agree that teachers should facilitate learners' social, cultural and creative development, help them develop a holistic attitude towards the subject matter and take special care to orient learners towards a sustainable attitude in the future. Beļickis (2000) cautions that a values-oriented lesson is impossible unless learners experience values as a complete structural formation and unless teachers manage to create conditions where learners can understand the core ideas implicit in the targeted values. These arguments reinforce the need for a holistic approach to facilitating the acquisition of subject matter with a view to developing the learners' skills of creative self-expression. And it is the latter, rather than theoretical training, which becomes a prime educational concern. This target orientation is consonant with current tendencies in education (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2011) – refinement of the teaching and learning process and its orientation towards competence formation, which primarily focuses on the learners' creativity and practical experience and only then addresses building logical awareness. The above-discussed studies suggest that holistic approach to facilitating the acquisition of musical cultural values is rooted in a solid philosophical conception of music as an empirical, analytical and holistic, natural, complete and multi-faceted phenomenon.

Research methodology ***Pētījuma metodoloģija***

The study was conducted in 2010-2013. The empirical study relied on data from a written survey of Latvian primary education teachers (N=676). Non-probability sampling with the typical case method was applied. A standardised questionnaire was designed containing 22 questions – statements with multiple choice options. This instrument was used to obtain quantitative data. The respondents were asked to choose the approach (either formal or holistic) that best fits the real and the ideal pedagogical situation in primary school (Forms 1 to 9). Adaptation of the questionnaire involved structural factor analysis and usability analysis of the indicators that describe the phenomenon under study by taking into account internal cohesion among discrete factors. Factor analysis of the internal structure of the questionnaire (its distinct parts) was exploratory.

At this point of the study, cluster analysis of data from two research stages was performed in the space of the discerned factors. Findings from cluster analysis revealed difference in perspective in the two clusters of respondents who had to evaluate each component of the teaching and learning process.

Primary education teachers were surveyed with an aim of ascertaining their views on the holistic approach to facilitating the acquisition of musical cultural values in Latvian primary schools.

Analysis of the findings ***Pētījuma rezultātu analīze***

Factor analysis exposed as factors the following components of the teaching and learning process that relies on a formal or holistic approach to facilitating the acquisition of musical cultural values: *the content component* (primary factor), *the organisational component* (secondary factor) and *the social component* (tertiary factor). The findings from content analysis suggest a difference in perspective in the four clusters of respondents who evaluate each component of the teaching and learning process: the first cluster (K++++++) contains only 128 respondents who choose the holistic approach as a teaching and learning strategy in both real (R) and ideal (V) pedagogical situations. The second cluster (K+---+---) comprises 249 respondents who opt for the formal approach in their evaluation of the *organisational* and *content components* while preferring the holistic approach in the social component. The third cluster (K-----) is composed of a mere 82 respondents who fully endorse the formal approach. The fourth cluster (K---+---) has 224 respondents who select the formal approach in real pedagogical situations (R) while claiming they would prefer the holistic approach in ideal pedagogical situations (I) that would feature some welcome change in social circumstances or other conditions. The survey findings expose statistically significant distribution of music teachers in the identified clusters

(Chi-Square Tests, $p < 0.05$). In clusters K+++++ and K-----, respectively, 20% and 25.61% of the respondents are music teachers whereas in the other two clusters the proportion of music teachers reaches only 8% and 10.8%, as outlined in Figure 1.

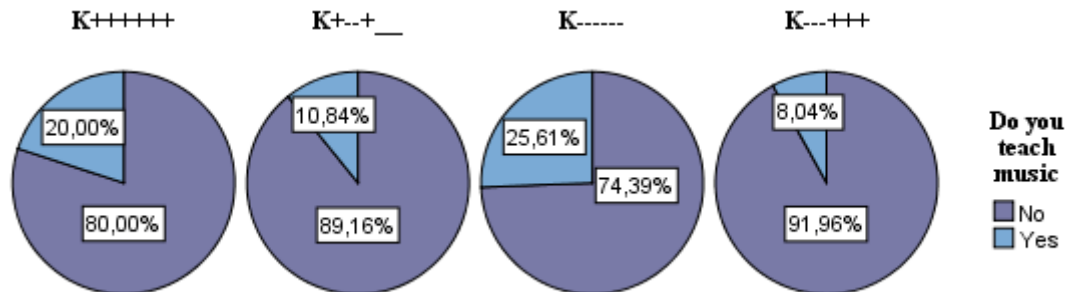


Figure 1. Primary school teachers who are/are not teaching music: Total distribution into clusters

1.attēls. Ar mūzikas mācīšanu saistīto un nesaistīto pamatizglītības skolotāju kopējais sadalījums klāsteros

In primary education teachers' evaluation of the *social component* in real pedagogical situations (R), a correlation is inferred between the respondents' belonging to a cluster and their involvement (or lack thereof) in teaching music (Tests of Between-Subjects Effects, $p < 0.05$). Thus, the respondents from clusters K+++++ and K+--+_ who do not teach music rate this factor higher and tend to incline towards the holistic approach; meanwhile, the respondents from the cluster K---+- rate it lower and are therefore further removed from the holistic approach if compared to music teachers. Higher ratings imply greater support to the holistic approach as outlined in Figure 2.

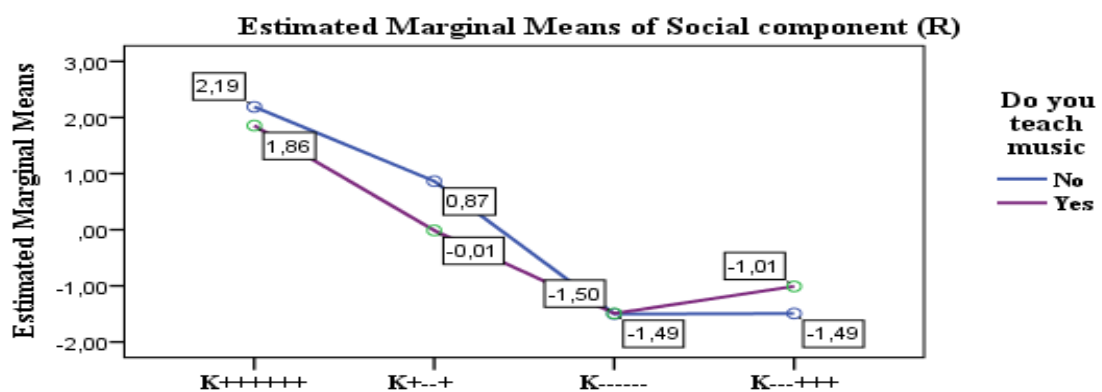


Figure 2. Evaluation of the social component (R) by primary school teachers from different clusters who are teaching/not teaching music

2. attēls. Dažādu klasteru pamatizglītības skolotāju Sociālā komponenta (R) novērtējums atkarībā no tā, vai māca vai nemāca mūziku

Evaluations of the *social component* in ideal pedagogical situations (V) expose no correlation between belonging to a cluster and the respondent's involvement (or lack thereof) in teaching music (Tests of Between-Subjects Effects, $p=0.616$). This factor is rated the lowest by all respondents within the cluster who endorse the formal approach (Figure 3).

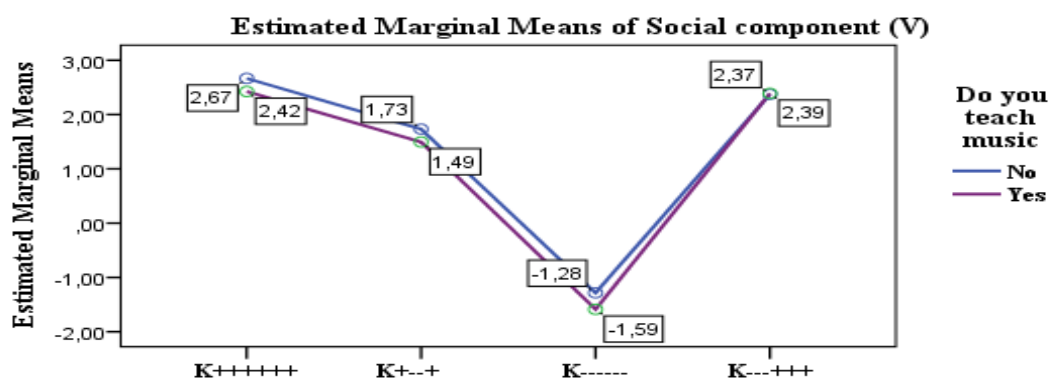


Figure 3. Evaluation of the social component (V) by primary school teachers from different clusters who are teaching/not teaching music

3. attēls. Dažādu klasteru pamatizglītības skolotāju Sociālā komponenta (V) novērtējums atkarībā no tā, vai māca vai nemāca mūziku

A correlation between the respondents' belonging to a cluster and their involvement (or lack thereof) in teaching music is inferred from their evaluation of the *organisational component* in real pedagogical situations (R) (Tests of Between-Subjects Effects, $p=0.048$). Thus, music teachers from cluster K+++++ rate this factor higher, which implies a closer inclination towards the holistic approach if compared to teachers of other subjects (Figure 2).

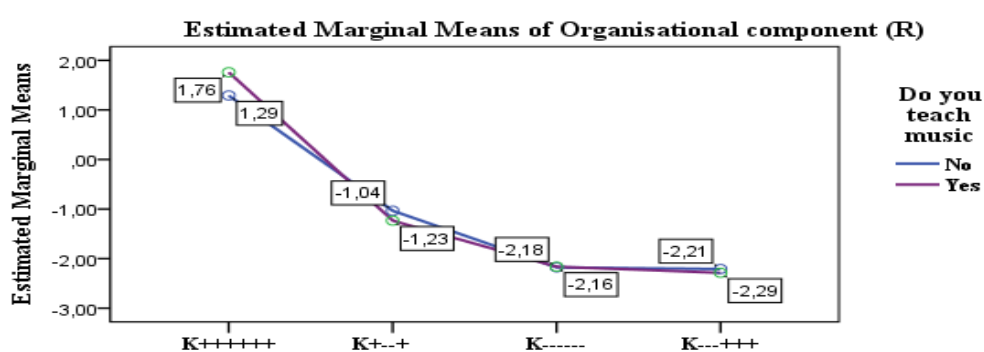


Figure 4. Evaluation of the organisational component (R) by primary school teachers from different clusters who are teaching/not teaching music

4. attēls. Dažādu klasteru pamatizglītības skolotāju Organizatoriskā komponenta (R) novērtējums atkarībā no tā, vai māca vai nemāca mūziku

Evaluations of the *organisational component* in ideal pedagogical situations (V) expose no correlation between belonging to a cluster and the respondent's

involvement (or lack thereof) in teaching music (Tests of Between-Subjects Effects, $p=0.183$). This factor is rated the lowest by all respondents within the cluster who favour the formal approach (Figure 5).

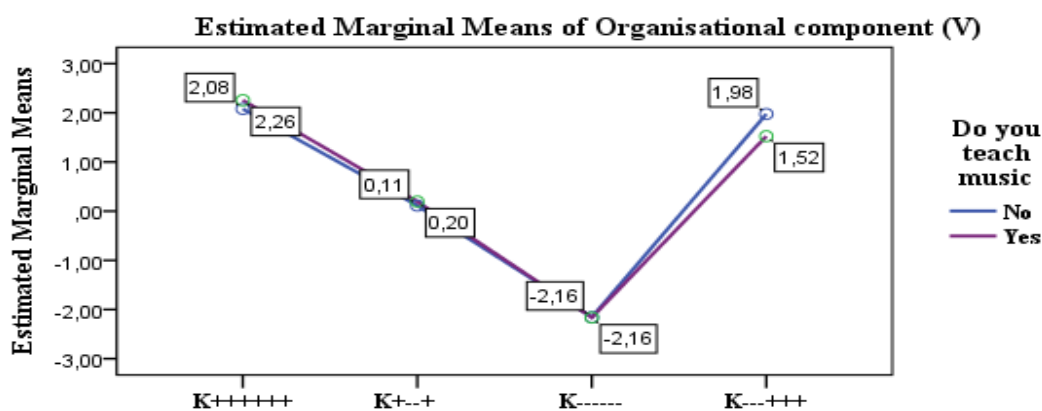


Figure 5. Evaluation of the organisational component (V) by primary school teachers from different clusters who are teaching/not teaching music
5. attēls. Dažādu klasteru pamatizglītības skolotāju Organizatoriskā komponenta (V) novērtējums atkarībā no tā, vai māca vai nemāca mūziku

A correlation between the respondents' belonging to a cluster and their involvement (or lack thereof) in teaching music is inferred from their evaluation of the *content component* in real pedagogical situations (R) (Tests of Between-Subjects Effects, $p=0.006$). Thus, music teachers from all clusters, apart from those from the third one who endorse the formal approach (K-----), rate this factor higher, which means a closer inclination towards the holistic approach if compared to teachers of other subjects (Figure 6).

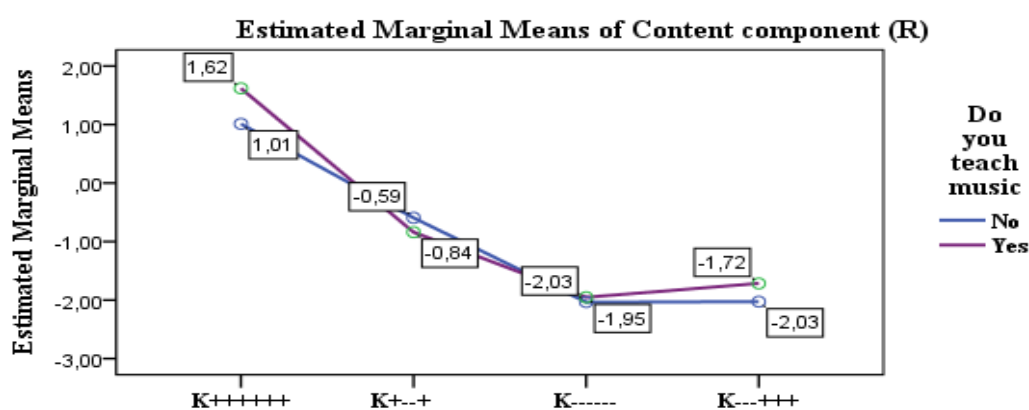


Figure 6. Evaluation of the content component (R) by primary school teachers from different clusters who are teaching/not teaching music
6. attēls. Dažādu klasteru pamatizglītības skolotāju Saturiskā komponenta (R) novērtējums atkarībā no tā, vai māca vai nemāca mūziku

Evaluations of the *content component* in ideal pedagogical situations (V) expose no correlation between belonging to a cluster and the respondent's involvement (or lack thereof) in teaching music (Tests of Between-Subjects Effects, $p=0.205$). This factor is rated the lowest by all respondents from the third cluster (K-----) who endorse the formal approach (Figure 7).

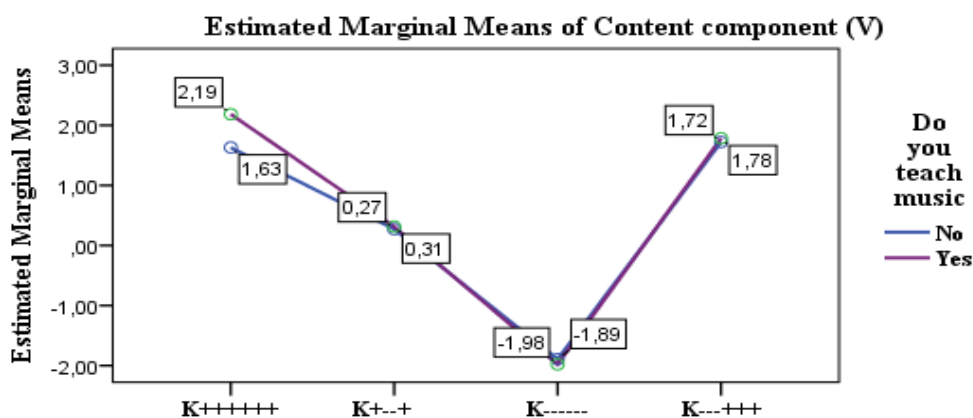


Figure 7. Evaluation of the content component (V) by primary school teachers from different clusters who are teaching/not teaching music

7. attēls. Dažādu klasteru pamatizglītības skolotāju Saturiskā komponenta (V) novērtējums atkarībā no tā, vai māca vai nemāca mūziku

Findings from cluster analysis suggest no statistically significant difference between the views on holistic approach professed by music teachers and teachers of other subjects.

Conclusion *Secinājumi*

Analysis of theoretical insights and empirical findings supports the construal of holistic approach as a methodology for enhancing learners' ability to examine, comprehend and creatively interpret musical cultural values. Primary education teachers perceive the holistic approach in the context of sustainable education as fundamental knowledge, creative skills and positive attitudes; hence the need to orient primary education teachers' practice towards criticality, creativity and constructivism. It is vital to create conditions for appreciation and adequate self-assessment among learners. Teachers ought to develop an ability to empathise with learners' emotional state, accept it, understand each learner's feelings and emotions and also know themselves. Lessons should include active modelling of situations and actions that support learners' willingness to explore the subject matter. This entails involving them in different types of musical activity and encouraging multiple forms of creative expression in order to help learners grasp the content of musical cultural values. Acquisition of musical cultural values in

primary school should be shaped according to the tenets of holistic approach that merges teacher-learner interaction during their engagement in creative activity. Already from the outset and all the way throughout the teaching and learning process, the teacher should demonstrate implicit trust in their learners. In addition, the teacher must be a treasure trove of diverse experience that can always be referred to for assistance. Embracing the holistic approach implies showing deep and abiding respect to each learner's internal experience. This can be achieved by carefully and deliberately shaping the learning environment and adopting such a form of relationships where the teaching responds to the learners' needs rather than seeks to satisfy those of the teacher, whether personal or professional. According to the surveyed primary education teachers, the holistic approach to facilitating the acquisition of musical cultural values enables learners not only to understand and interpret knowledge but also to become actively and creatively involved throughout the lesson, because it is creative activity that shapes the learners' spiritual and practical experience. Analysis of relevant scientific literature and evaluation of findings from a survey of primary education teachers concerning their views on the holistic approach to facilitating the acquisition of musical cultural values suggest that the teaching and learning process during each and every lesson should encourage creativity, be conducive to emergence of new ideas and demand complex learner involvement in different forms of action.

Kopsavilkums *Summary*

Rakstā tiek sniegtas galvenās ievirzes holisma jēdziena apzināšanā, rezumēti teorētiskie pētījumi sociālajās zinātnēs par holistiskās pieejas būtību un nozīmi gan pamatizglītības satura veidošanā, gan muzikālās kultūras vērtību apguvē, pamatojoties uz zinātnisko pētījumu teorētisko analīzi. Rakstā tiek izvērtēta starptautiskās un Latvijas pētnieku koncepcijas par to, ka ir nepieciešams attīstīt skolēnus holistiski – gan garīgi, gan fiziski, apgūstot muzikālās kultūras vērtības mācību stundās pamatizglītības posmā. Balstoties uz zinātniskās literatūras analīzi, tika formulēts empīriskā pētījuma mērķis, kurš paredz izpētīt holistiskās pieejas nepieciešamību muzikālās kultūras vērtību veiksmīgai apguvei pamatskolā, attīstot gan garīgo, gan fizisko skolēnu pieredzi, kur fiziskā attīstība paredz virzību uz skolēnu radošo darbību, kas tiek traktēta kā virzība uz jaunā rašanos, veidojot skolēniem pozitīvu attieksmi pret muzikālās kultūras vērtībām, to apzinātu izpratni un individuālās pieredzes veidošanu. Holistiskās pieejas muzikālās kultūras vērtību apguvē aktualitāti veido skolēnu individuālās pieredzes veidošanās, katra skolēna unikālais atklājums. Šis aspekts ir saistīts ar nepieciešamību integrēt dažādas pieejas un jau izstrādātās dažādu pētnieku idejas pamatizglītības skolotāju praktiskajā pieredzē mūsdienu skolēnu ilgtspējīgai attīstībai, izmantojot holistiskās pieejas integrēto saturu. Rakstā izvērtēti un salīdzināti dažādu Latvijas reģionu dažādu mācību priekšmetu pamatizglītības skolotāju skatījumi uz holistisko pieeju muzikālās kultūras vērtības apguvē Latvijas pamatskolās.

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