

MUSIC SCHOOL AND INNOVATIONS: ATTITUDE OF INSTRUMENT SUBJECT TEACHERS

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Abstract

The article deals with the attitude of music school teachers (N=367) towards music innovations and their dissemination. This analysis grounds on a significant research of attitudes of music pedagogues working in schools in Lithuania; this research aims at diagnosing how current music education changes/remains unchanged in the context of paradigm change, under the impact of manifestation of professional attitudes of pedagogues. Obtained results of the empirical research provided valuable information on delivered music education and possible innovations in its various fields. Therefore, the present article will present a relevant part of the mentioned research – pedagogues' attitudes towards innovations selected and suggested by researchers, hypothetically postulating that they are the most lacking in current music education. The research found out that pedagogues were quite favourable towards dissemination of innovations. Education of people with disabilities and training of adults were supported the most, whereas the least approval was expressed towards the change of the assessment system and possibilities for organisation of group learning. Pedagogues treat new disciplines, such as improvisation, ensemble, accompaniment, reading notes, performing music aurally, as important.

Keywords: *music school, music education, attitude of teachers, innovation, innovations in music education.*

Introduction

Relevance and the problem of the research. Treating the perspective of education through a prism of the phenomenon of changes in educational paradigms being currently emphasised in the scientific field of education (Čiužas & Navickaitė, 2008; Šiaučiukėnienė, Stankevičienė, & Čiužas, 2011), the necessity of new education in music school grounded on pupil's individual needs and, thus, based on innovation, is revealed. This would manifest in the possibility to learn music according to every pupil's needs and abilities, using individually appropriate strategies facilitating revelation of independence, creativity, individuality of

a music performer. Successful practical implementation of such vision of music education would meet the aims currently being raised to our national education: the striving for them would not seem declarative but rather become implementable in reality. Exploration of these perspectives of music education in detail leads to **a relevant problem question** how is the modern school ready to adjust to the new needs of society? Are they on the same page with rapid advancement of science, changes in the societal life stimulating the search for new niches of education, innovative strategies, forms, methods of education? As Fredrickson (2007), Robinson (2010), Burkett (2011) have it, the vision of future school is being formed by many factors, including the pedagogical attitude. Thus, it is not rejected that the perspective of music schools in Lithuania will be determined by the attitude of pedagogues working in these schools towards professional development, characteristics of implemented content as well as educational innovations. Diagnostics of the latter enables revealing how innovation is perceived, interpreted in the context of music education, how innovative ideas suggested by researchers are assessed; therefore, this can be useful to the practice of education and is **scientifically new**.

The object of the research is the attitude of instrument subject pedagogues towards innovations.

The research aim is to investigate the attitude of music school teachers towards innovations in music education.

Research objectives:

1. To substantiate the concept of *innovation* in music education.
2. To investigate music pedagogues' attitude towards educational innovations and their dissemination.
3. To generalise the perspective of manifestation of innovations suggested by pedagogues.

Research methods: analysis of scientific literature sources, questionnaire-based survey, statistical analysis of the research data (employing the software *SPSS 16.0 for Windows* for processing statistical data).

Theoretical substantiation of the research

In scientific literature, interpretations of the notion of *innovation* are possible in the context of three areas: education, management, economics. This allows classification of innovations into three major types: teaching – pedagogical, organisational – managerial, engineering – technological (Ramanauskienė, 2010). *Innovation* can be defined on the ground of all mentioned areas: “Innovation is the end result of implementation of novelty, aiming to change the object of management and obtain an economic, social, ecological, scientific and technical or other kind of effect.” (Ibid, 2010, p. 16) The context of the latter research directs towards pedagogical innovations in the field of education, teaching. Thus, the research mentioned aims to investigate pedagogues' attitude towards innovations that have been selected and suggested by researches, hypothetically postulating that they are the most needed ones in music education today. Innovations in music education are related to various centres of education: innovative forms of education, new disciplines, changed aims of learning, changes in the assessment system.

Aiming to investigate the prevailing attitude of pedagogues towards innovations, seven diagnostic scales generalising every innovation have been employed: *Differentiation of Education, Changes in the Assessment System, Need for Experimentation, Group Learning, Adult Music Training, Education of People with Disabilities, Possibility for a Pupil to Select*

Curriculum Subjects. The degree of reliability of diagnostic scales was assessed by calculating the value of *Cronbach α* coefficient. When sorting the data, the variables whose factorial weights were less than 0.3 ($L < 0.3$), in single cases when the factorial weights were less than 0.4, grounding on logic, also these whose *r/itt (Item Total Correlation)* was less than 0.2 were eliminated. Aiming to find out the suitability of the matrix for factorial analysis, the KMO (*Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin*) coefficient was used: the more the coefficient value was closer to 1, the more the matrix was suitable for performance of factorial analysis, when the coefficient value was below 0.5 the factorial analysis was not applied. On the ground of obtained values, 50 statements suitable for construction of the diagnostic questionnaire have been selected. The processing of obtained survey results by the method of factorial analysis allowed us merging statements to 7 scales mentioned above.

The research employed *Chi-Square criterion* characteristics to test the hypothesis of independence. The criterion was used in assessing statistical significance of the correlations of respondents' demographic data as well as professional factors and pedagogues' attitudes.

To process the results of the questionnaire-based survey, methods of qualitative data analysis have been employed, too. The constructivism-based approach to qualitative research, i.e. construction of categories on the ground of obtained results, when elements of obtained data were compared with each other and the categories were given titles generalising the content of the data, was used (Charmaz, 2006).

The scale of *Differentiation of Education* was constructed on a hypothetical postulation of current music education lacking attention to individual needs of pupils: educational practice is grounded on standards which are necessary for professional training; thus, education meets only the preferences of music professionals-to-be. The statements included in the scale targeted at finding out how pedagogues assessed significance of this innovation: would differentiated education improve the practice of training individuals who do not seek education for a music professional? (*Differentiated education would open new opportunities in music performance for pupils lacking musical abilities/ Having differentiated education, a professional level implemented in music/art schools would become poorer...*).

The diagnostic scale *Changes in the Assessment System* aims at finding out what is the prevailing pedagogues' attitude in the aspect of the existing assessment system and possible changes in assessment (*Current criteria of assessment are quite good/ Having eliminated assessment using grades, more individuals wanting to perform music would appear...*). The change in the assessment system as an innovative phenomenon has been chosen not accidentally. A hypothetical assumption has been drawn: in present-day music education the system of assessment is quite faulty: formal assessment usually makes the process of music performance formal, when learning music or to perform music there is constant threat to get a poor assessment grade, in many instances assessment in grades "repels" from music at all (Kriščiūnaitė, Strakšienė, & Deveikytė, 2011).

To investigate pedagogues' attitudes towards innovations in music education, the scale *Need for Experimentation* has been constructed. This diagnostic scale aims at finding out how much novelties capable of impacting educational practice are relevant to present-day pedagogues. According to Rutkienė & Teresevičienė (2010), in the area of education an *experiment* is applied when striving to ground new ideas. Whereas in this questionnaire-based survey the statements used in the scale *Need for Experimentation* were not directed to particular, named experiments: the statements were given sense which, likely, could reveal pedagogues' attitudes to experiments in a broader sense (*I suppose that in music teaching experiments which would "move" the educational system lasting for decades are a must...*).

The purpose of the questionnaire's scale *Group Learning* is to explore pedagogues' attitudes towards group learning to play a music instrument. Pedagogues were asked to assess the idea of group learning as an innovation, to disclose their attitude to a possibility to combine individual and group music performance in educational practice (*The idea of group music performance seems attractive to me, just still little information on how this could be implemented is available/ When combining individual training with group training, pupils would obtain new experiences of performing music in group...*). Treatment of group learning as the innovation in music education was facilitated by the situation that the learning to play a music instrument in Lithuanian music schools is still based on individual teacher's work with a pupil in class. As Berezhnoy (2011) underlines, the idea of group learning in the context of instrumental education can presently be treated as innovative, and further scientific research and practice will show whether such training becomes traditional.

The scale *Adult Music Training* is constructed on the ground of scientific ideas emphasising that the discussion on adult music training and learning is enabled by the rapidly aging society which will be the major consumer of education in the future. Therefore, the search for proper forms, strategies for music learning is relevant today (Taylor & Hallam, 2008; Pike, 2011). Adult music training is treated by researchers as a possible innovation in music education because it has not manifested in music education practice in Lithuania yet. The statements presented in the diagnostic scale were directed to practical manifestation of adult music training (*Adult music training is a subject hard to apply in practice...*).

The questionnaire-based survey deals with music education of people with disabilities as a precondition for innovation in non-formal education. Šinkūnienė (2003), Vilkelienė (2003) hold it that music education of people with disabilities in the context of special education or social work systems has been developed in Lithuania insufficiently, and integration of people with disabilities in non-formal education is witnessed by single facts only. The research authors hypothetically postulate that this was partly determined by a prevailing negative expression of the attitude of pedagogues towards integration, lack of methodical sources on education of people with disabilities. Thus, diagnostic statements of the scale *Education of People with Disabilities* focused on the latter insights (*Lack of information on how to help children with physical or mental disabilities to perform music/ Music pedagogues are still poorly prepared for integration of education of people with disabilities...*).

Today researchers actually focus much of their attention on analysis of preferences of pupils: needs for music activities (North, Hargreaves, & O'Neill, 2000), correlation between personality characteristics and music "consumption" (Chamorro-Premuzic, Furnham, 2007), music preferences in the aspect of gender (Colley, 2008), importance of musical elements (Kopacz, 2005) are dealt with. Therefore, the authors of the present research wanted to find out how pupil's needs to select curriculum subjects, specialities are assessed by present-day pedagogues; statements of the diagnostic scale *Possibilities for a Pupil to Select Curriculum Subjects* focused on this aspect (*Pupils should select subjects they want to learn in music school themselves...*).

Characteristics of the sample of the surveyed, the research procedure

The geography of the research spanned throughout various locations of Lithuania: the sample of the surveyed comprised music school pedagogues from Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys and smaller towns. In total, 367 respondents were involved. It should be noted that women prevailed among the surveyed sample (opinions were expressed by 74.4% of

female respondents and 25.6% of male respondents). Majority of the surveyed were pedagogues having 21–30 years of work experience (30.2%). The biggest part of the respondents (41.8%) were awarded the qualification of a senior teacher, teachers methodologists constituted 34.3%, teachers covered 18.5%, teachers experts were 5.4%. It was found out that 4 students, 131 respondents holding Bachelor's degree and 230 holding Master's degree, 2 doctors of sciences took part in the survey. Summing up statistical data of the research sample, it can be stated that it roughly reflects general demographical and professional characteristics of the community of music teachers; this allows treating the sample as representative and meeting the requirements set for diagnostic research.

The respondents were given a questionnaire with formulated statements reflecting professional attitudes, including statements generalising the dissemination of innovations in music education; each statement had to be assessed by a respondent marking a category reflecting his/her attitude (the questionnaire employed the method of a Likert-type scale: a format of 5 multiple choice statement assessment with a neutral middle category).

Research results

As it was mentioned, the research aimed at finding out pedagogues' attitude towards differentiated education, changes in the assessment system, need for experimentation in education, possibility of group learning, adult music training, education of people with disabilities. Also, it explored how much pedagogues were concerned about the needs of education of pupils (learning of several specialities, subjects at a time). Expression of pedagogues' attitudes is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Expression of pedagogues' attitudes towards innovations in education, by per cent (N=367)

| Innovations | Disagree | | Partly agree | | Agree | |
|--|----------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Differentiation of education | 28 | 7.6 | 129 | 35.1 | 210 | 57.2 |
| 2. Changes in the assessment system | 188 | 51.2 | 143 | 39 | 36 | 9.8 |
| 3. Need for experimentation | 59 | 16.1 | 166 | 45.2 | 142 | 38.7 |
| 4. Group learning | 191 | 52 | 136 | 37.1 | 40 | 10.9 |
| 5. Adult music training | 16 | 4.4 | 78 | 21.3 | 273 | 74.4 |
| 6. Education of people with disabilities | 17 | 4.6 | 83 | 22.6 | 267 | 72.8 |
| 7. A possibility for pupil to select curriculum subjects | 60 | 16.3 | 136 | 37.1 | 171 | 46.6 |

As Table 1 suggests, the total sum of agree and partly agree values in five mentioned factors out of seven reaches over 80%. The most supported are adult music training and education of people with disabilities. Pedagogues less but still favourable are about experimentation. It was found out that such attitude was impacted by some demographical factors, too: men are more favourable about experimentation than women ($p=0.027$). Thus, men will be more flexible and enthusiastic about educational changes, perhaps they will be major initiators in generating innovative educational ideas. The aspect of the place of residence is also significant: the highest agreement was recorded in the case of pedagogues living in smaller towns; experimentation was favoured the least by pedagogues of Vilnius ($p=0.003$). The latter result supports the hypothetical idea that actually pedagogues of the capital city

are sceptical about radical educational changes in school, are keener to retain established traditions of teaching, treat changes as certain inertia related to the changes of the period. The obtained results revealed that experimentation was mostly supported by pedagogues having under 5 years of pedagogical work experience ($p=0.21$). Thus, the process of implementation and development of innovations could be based on initiatives of the younger generation of pedagogues.

Table 1 demonstrates that the least agreement is reflected on the aspects of the changes in the assessment system and group learning possibilities. It was found out that support to the changes in the assessment system was directly impacted by almost all factors related to educational innovations. Formulation of such insight is enabled by the results of the Chi square criterion presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Causal correlations between favourable attitudes towards the changes in the assessment system and influencing factors. Results of the Chi square test. (N=367)

| Factors influencing attitude | Value | df | Sig (p) |
|--|--------|----|---------|
| Differentiation of education | 18.590 | 4 | 0.001 |
| Need for experimentation | 23.951 | 4 | 0.000 |
| Group learning | 25.999 | 4 | 0.000 |
| Adult music training | 18.139 | 4 | 0.001 |
| A possibility of a pupil to select curriculum subjects | 19.892 | 4 | 0.001 |

Note: *Value* - chi square criterion, *df* - the number of degrees of freedom, *Sig(p)* - statistical significance

We can state that criticism of the current assessment system is expressed in the context of the need for the mentioned educational factors. Thus, a negative attitude towards changes in the assessment system forms as a result of rejection of latter innovations, not accepting them.

Another educational innovation-related factor that received quite little approval is group learning. Results of the Chi square criterion revealed that disapproval of group learning was possibly inspired by manifestation of a certain attitude towards competence development. Paradoxically, the more development of teachers' competences is supported, the higher is disapproval of group learning ($\chi^2=9.646$; $df=4$; $p=0.047$). This statistically significant correlation proves that development of competences is perceived by pedagogues quite narrowly: intensive professional development is more related to professional excellence rather than with obtaining new competences necessary for innovative areas to emerge. Also, it was found out that disapproval of group learning was significantly impacted by a negative attitude towards differentiated education: the higher disagreement with the idea of differentiation in education, the higher is disapproval of learning to play a music instrument in group ($\chi^2=27.984$; $df=4$; $p=0.000$). A strong, statistically reliable correlation is found between this attitude and pedagogues who obtained the grand piano speciality ($p=0.000$). In fact, perhaps, teaching to play the grand piano in group is the most difficult; sceptics hold it that this is hardly possible at all. Nevertheless, as the supporters of the idea of learning to play music in group have it, the purpose of such learning is much broader than perfection of performance skills. It was not unexpected that group learning was mostly disapproved in cities. The biggest disagreement is recorded among pedagogues of the capital city ($p=0.002$).

In the context of the current research, the results requiring separated discussion are significant, too: these are pedagogues' attitudes in the aspect of differentiated education. In

fact, approval of differentiated education from majority of pedagogues proves that nowadays teachers pay more attention to different interests of pupils. Pedagogues' enthusiasm in the aspect of differentiated education depends on demographical tendencies as well. Here pedagogical qualification is emphasised: the highest approval is recorded in the group of senior teachers ($p=0.032$). We can draw an assumption that differentiated education is more supported by pedagogues of the younger generation. Likely, the latter pedagogues are more ambitious to seek professional career; therefore, they are interested in innovations, not indifferent to implementation of them.

The questionnaire-based survey enquired the respondents: *What innovations are most needed in music teaching?* Even though this open question of the questionnaire raised interest only in half of the respondents, slightly more than one fifth of them acknowledged that they did not lack educational innovations in present-day education. Several respondents expressed they had no opinion on this matter. It should be noted that innovations mentioned by the respondents did not completely match the researchers' understanding of innovations. Some pedagogues related innovations to particular music disciplines, also to learning facilities, personality of a teacher. Obtained answers of the respondents were grouped into six characterising categories; their content is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Categories of innovations in music education, grounding on responses of the surveyed*. Results of the qualitative analysis. (N=175)

| Titles of the categories | Content of responses | Amount of responses |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Innovations related to implementation of new disciplines | <i>Lack of additional time for reading sheet music, performance of ensembles / Low attention to improvisation / Possibilities to select attractive curriculum subjects</i> | 43 |
| 2. Implementation of a more flexible repertoire | <i>More flexible repertoire (not following the programmes) / The biggest lack of contemporary music pieces in the repertoire/ Music pieces played at national and international contests are too difficult, children are tortured, a kind of nonsense</i> | 10 |
| 3. Application of computer-assisted technologies in music education | <i>To use the possibilities provided by a computer more intensively / Possibilities to listen to a music piece performed by professionals</i> | 44 |
| 4. New forms of teaching | <i>People of various ages could learn in music schools / To differentiate the curriculum of music teaching</i> | 22 |
| 5. Richness of learning facilities in school | <i>First of all, every innovation requires learning facilities / To my mind, today we mostly lack everything what costs! Instruments, equipment, metronomes, control desks. In "Auto ABC" nobody thinks that one can learn driving a car by riding a broom. Automobile is a must!</i> | 22 |
| 6. Changes in teacher's pedagogical attitude | <i>To be interested, not lag behind life, not fossilise / Independent thinking / I suppose there should be a broader view of pedagogues, their higher motivation</i> | 14 |

Note*: the table presents unedited answers of the respondents

As demonstrated in Table 3, pedagogues mostly lack integration of computer-assisted technologies in education. In their answers, the respondents state that in present-day education

these technologies become unavoidable. Teachers relate latter technologies to software which would expand, diversify activities of pupils. Pedagogues emphasise that when using computer technologies instrument subject education would be enriched by listening to the music, and this would render a possibility for a pupil to greatly expand his/her musical horizon, to develop one's taste. The issue of new disciplines in present-day education is not of lesser importance. Among mentioned disciplines, improvisation, reading sheet music, aural performance, ensemble, accompaniment are mostly emphasised. It should be noted that such disciplines as ensemble and accompaniment would not be new in the curriculum because they had been compulsory in learning almost every music instrument for several decades. Current programmes of instrument education almost eliminated these disciplines, with rare exceptions. However, pedagogues attribute them to educational innovations and lack them in the curriculum. It was revealed that some pedagogues called certain new forms of education innovations; this meets the concept of innovations shared by the authors of the research. Thus, these pedagogues emphasise the necessity of differentiated education, mention education of people with disabilities, adult training, group learning. Some pedagogues relate educational innovations to learning facilities available in school. Here quite a categorical position of teachers stands out: innovations are possible only when establishing sufficient material welfare in school. Pedagogues express an interesting opinion emphasising significance of the shift of a conservative teacher's attitude. They state that teacher's endeavours to see present-day education "in the eyes of the current period" would bring innovativeness to the entire educational process. Pedagogues emphasise that present-day music education lacks innovations which are related not only to educational practice. There is lack of good-natured, collegial relationship between teacher and pupil, "short-sighted" vision of development of pupil's creativity is criticised, the problem of teacher's demotivation is underlined.

Conclusions

1. The concept of *innovation* can be interpreted not only in the managerial, economic, but also in the educational context where the end result of implementation of innovation may influence educational practice or essentially change some elements of educational practice. The aim of the dissemination of teaching-pedagogical innovations (*differentiation of education, changes in the assessment system, experimentation, group learning, adult music training, education of people with disabilities, possibilities for a pupil to select curriculum subjects*) in music education is to create attractive, innovative education meeting pupil's needs.
2. Results of the research reveal that pedagogues are quite favourable towards dissemination of innovations. Mostly favoured are: education of people with disabilities and adult training; whereas least approval is shown to changes in the assessment system and group learning. It was found out that a negative attitude towards group learning was determined by demographical factors: grand piano pedagogues disagree with instrument learning in group the most; the highest disapproval manifests in the group of capital city teachers. It was discovered that changes in the assessment system were opposed by the pedagogues who had negative attitudes to other above-analysed innovations, too.
3. Qualitative analysis of the research shows that pedagogues treat new disciplines, such as improvisation, ensemble, accompaniment, reading sheet music, aural performance, as important. It was found out that a possibility to select a more "flexible" repertoire was treated as a significant innovation in music education. Pedagogues relate innovations in

music education to new forms of music education: education of people with disabilities, adult training, group learning. It was noticed that teachers were concerned about learning facilities in school; according to the pedagogues, the material resources are necessary for innovations to occur in schools. Pedagogues indicated the shift in pedagogues' attitudes as one of the preconditions for dissemination of innovations in order to make school attractive, innovative, modern.

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Summary

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This article analyses attitudes of music school teachers towards music innovations and their dissemination. Music innovations were related with various aspects of educational practice by researches: new educational forms, disciplines, changes in the assessment system, expression of different learning aims. 7 diagnostic scales were used in order to reveal elements that were mentioned above: *Education Differentiation, Changes in the Assessment System, Need for Experimentation, Group Learning, Adult Music Training, Education of People with Disabilities, Possibility for a Pupil to Select His/Her Curriculum*. The questionnaire was made in order to find out how modern day teachers evaluated the need of education differentiation, changes in the assessment system, the experimentation, group learning, adult music training, education of the disabled, possibility for a pupil to select his/her curriculum. In order to systemise and generalise research data the research made use of numerical measures of descriptive statistics, multidimensional and probabilistic statistical methods. They show that the largest approval is to the education of people with disabilities and adult music training, whereas change of assessment system and group learning is the least favoured. Majority of the teachers are quite favourable towards education differentiation but this attitude discords with modern day educational practice: teachers accept the education differentiation but they follow standards of professional education. The qualitative analysis revealed the most relevant educational innovations according to teachers, such as implementation of computer-assisted technologies, integration of new disciplines, such as improvisation, ensemble and accompaniment in educational curriculum. The teachers relate the success of implementation with upturn of school circumstances and personality of a teacher.

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