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## ***Serbian Traditional Music in the Lower Grades of Primary School: Teachers' Perspective***

### **Extended summary**

Traditional music should have greater significance and impact in education of children of younger school age. Serbian traditional music, including folk songs, folk dances, folk instrumental music, hymns, patriotic songs, and spiritual music, is an important characteristic of Serbian culture and tradition and it can have a significant impact on students. Curricular content of music education lessons enables students to learn about heritage and, therefore, learn to respect and cherish Serbian music and traditional music of other nations. Becoming familiar with traditional music in music lessons is one form of contributing to the development of the awareness of cultural and national treasure and of the need for its preservation and cultivation. Similarly, through processing the content of traditional music, language, national awareness, social belonging, social interaction, and creativity of students, as well as the originality and uniqueness of a certain environment, are nurtured. Traditional music in teaching (music education) is the first and the most important material on which music education should be built upon at school. Therefore, the contents of traditional music can represent the material for the formation of a rich fund of musical impressions and be the main material for the creation of images, associations, and the conscious acquisition of knowledge.

The paper presents the research that included 671 primary school teachers from all districts of the Republic of Serbia. The aim of the research is to examine the opinions of teachers regarding the status of traditional music in the lower grades of primary school. This goal is

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important because students' level of interest in traditional music, and the possibility that they will understand and accept its underlying values, largely depends on teachers and their attitude towards this content. The research investigates the validity of the hypothesis that traditional music plays a significant role in teaching music in the lower grades of primary school. The research tasks involved investigating teachers' opinions related to 1) covering traditional music contents at music lessons; 2) students attitudes towards this content in music lessons; and 3) students' preferences regarding the content covered in music lessons. The method of theoretical analysis and descriptive method were used. The research instrument was a questionnaire for primary school teachers, which contained closed-ended questions. Statistical data were obtained by computer processing - using the SPSS software package, version 20. Counting (numerical and percentage frequencies) and the chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ) were used as statistical measures - to determine the statistical significance of the difference in teachers' opinions, depending on different variables.

The results show that the contents of traditional music are practiced to a greater extent, but primary school teachers also believe that there is a need for including more of these contents in music lessons. When it comes to specifying which traditional contents are used in music lessons, it is noticeable that in different regions the contents related to the traditions of the local environment are nurtured. By using qualitative analysis, we determined that the most represented traditional contents taught by primary school teachers in the Republic of Serbia are actually three folk dances with singing - *Dunje ranke*, *Ja posejah lubenice* and *Ersko kolo*. The other most frequently covered traditional contents mentioned by the teachers are mostly prescribed in the curriculum for music education for the lower grades of primary school. The respondents believe that students have positive reactions to traditional content, but that it is not in the first place for them when it comes to children's interests. Such results are consistent with the fact that a greater exposure to some content and its more frequent practice affect the attitude of students and their preferences.

The research findings can serve as the basis for considering an improvement of continuous professional development courses for employees in education because, apart from environmental factors, primary school teachers are the ones who can contribute to pupils' increased interest in traditional music and their country's tradition. The findings can also be an incentive for collecting and publishing literature with the contents of traditional music in order to facilitate and improve the work of primary school teachers and the learning process of students. In addition, the contents related to local traditions should be adapted for primary school music lessons and made available to students.

**Keywords:** Serbian traditional music, Music teaching, content of traditional music, teachers' attitudes, primary school age

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