

PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN'S OPPORTUNITIES AND MOTIVATIONS IN MUSIC: A RESEARCH IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS OF MUSIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

This paper examines the perceived and documented opportunities and motivations in music that are available for primary school children's in different contexts of music education. Through a study of children's self-perceptions of their participation and learning in the broad range of opportunities that are available to them within music education at Portuguese institutional and cultural levels, four issues are explored: children's musical activities, both in school and outside school; the influence of children's participation in extracurricular musical activities at school on their self-assessments of their musical development; changes occurring in children's musical activities as a function of their participation in extracurricular musical activities, and their attitudes and beliefs about music. The main findings were gathered from two studies that were carried out in two phases (year 1 and 2): the *Pupil Questionnaire study* (406 children from grades 3 and 4, aged 8-11 years), and the *Pupil Interview study*.

Findings has shown that musical participation in the different contexts of music education seems to be an activity participated in only by a minority of those involved in this research. These contexts include children participation in musical activities both at school as a compulsory subject, and outside school as an elective subject in formal and informal dimensions. Findings suggested that opportunities to participate in music outside school through playing, singing, and dancing activities in the community seem not to be available to many children, with music listening at home remaining as the most common musical activity in which they are involved outside school. One of the strongest indicators of changes occurring in children's musical activities as a function of their participation in extracurricular musical activities relates to music at school. Across the sample, the children's level of musical participation in most school activities tended to decrease in frequency in year two. When it existed, the most common musical activity they undertook as part of their statutory music education at school was singing. Most children's did not participated in many other musical activities at school or outside school before participating in these extracurricular activities. Those seem to provide children with wider opportunities to participate in music, to learn and to develop competences that, as we have seen, are largely neglected by schools. The participation in these extracurricular musical activities seems generating musical development and learning, as well as positively influencing children's self-assessment of their 'own musical development', attitudes and beliefs about music. Most children began enjoying their primary school more with the introduction of these musical activities and evidence supported the fact that taking part in those positively affected these children's identification with school music lessons as they moved from grade 3 to grade 4. We suggest that the urgency for change in music education in Portugal should be focused more on practices than on attitudes. It seems to be increasingly important not to neglect the importance of nurturing children's opportunities to actively take part in each one of the potential and desirable contexts of music education, especially music at primary school that should be available to all, not only as a compulsory subject, but also as a reality in the education of all children.

Keywords: Educational contexts, identities, music education, motivations, music, opportunities, primary school, children's music.

1 INTRODUCTION

Opportunities and motivations to participate in musical activities are recognised factors in research on musical development [1]. Interactions between the music, the individual, and the experiences, situations, and other people with whom children interact may influence the musical activities they themselves choose to realize. They may also influence the ways in which pupils listen, make, value and use music; their musical habits, routines and motivations; their levels of engagement in a variety of musical activities; their self-perceptions, beliefs, opinions and views about music; and their own

musical achievements, realizations, improvements and growth. Moreover, the development of a commitment to musical participation over the lifespan seems to recognise a 'series of continuous changes' [2], particularly when emphasising the transitory and socially constructed nature of the sense of self. The management of those changes and the development of a 'sense of self', which usually accompanies the emergence of children's musical identities, occurs in the age range covered by the current research. It may, for many, be a decisive moment in their lives in shaping not only their attitudes, choices and identities towards a lifespan musical involvement but also in 'creating' their own selves [3] and in representing themselves to others. Accordingly, this study explores some environmental factors such as the home environment, parental support, and the influence of teachers and music teachers in developing children's musical identity.

Furthermore, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's [4] statement refers to music as a means of helping pupils 'to develop and form important links between pupil's home, school and the wider world, and by changing the way they feel, think and act'. In this sense, the notion that intimate, intricate and multifaceted relationships and links between music, identity and the processes of musical education can shape or vary who and how children are, was central to an exploration of the particular opportunities in music open to those children. Today musical opportunities and motivations can determine and influence on children's self-perceptions of tomorrow. Children's identities and self-concepts can determine today's musical opportunities and motivations [5].

The 'globe' model of opportunities in music education, developed as part of the work of the Music Development Task Group of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, responsible for the music education policy in schools in England [4] was an important reference for the current research [6]. It proposed a view of the range of opportunities available to pupils in the social and cultural contexts of music education at Portuguese institutional and cultural levels. It refers to music at school as a means of helping pupils 'to develop and form important links between pupil's home, school, and the wider world, and that it should develop pupils' ability to listen and appreciate a wider variety of music and to make judgments about musical quality' [4].

The vertical dimension of the 'globe' model distinguishes between formal and informal learning: according to its authors, the formal dimension leads to qualifications and accreditation, and informal ones do not. Examples of activities within the informal dimension include generalist and specialist provision, namely informal music education provision that is available at schools such as extracurricular activities, school concerts, and plays at the 'generalist' level, and 'specialist' activities such as composer-in-residence schemes, or other contact with professional musicians. The horizontal dimension distinguishes between statutory and elective provision. The first one refers to in-school music provision in all its forms, namely the National Curriculum, public examinations at school, extracurricular events, and professional musicians in school. The last dimension, existing in all four quadrants, distinguishes between 'specialist generalist' teachers previously delineated by Hargreaves [1] and shows that opportunities at both of these levels exist in all four quadrants. Also, the model illustrates that the 'formal-informal' dimension cannot be equated with the 'specialist generalist' dimension, since high levels of specialist performance can be found in 'informal' musical activities [7].

Along with this model, psychological analyses of the functions of music [8] and an international review of music education [9] have been conducted, and a conceptual model of the potential outcomes of music education has been developed. The model represents a mapping of the different aims and objectives of music education as well as the belief that the ultimate outcome of music education is the development of individual self-identity [6].

Therefore, as North and Hargreaves [7] suggest, explaining musical development from an 'inner' perspective, by understanding how children perceive and conceptualize their own musical development, might itself be central in shaping that development. In this sense it is important to understand how the changes that take place in children's musical activities both at school and outside school, as a consequence of the transformations in the contexts of teaching and learning in first cycle schools, give rise to a more specific, particular, unique and individual approach the development of children's individual musical identities. In fact, the transformations of social, cultural, and educational realities in Portugal, particularly in the case of music education, are mounting new challenges for schools, teachers, families, and students. With the development of the democratization of access to music learning, either through the enlargement of vocational pathways to adolescents, or through the generalisation of the curriculum enrichment activities during the first cycle of education with the creation of full-time schools, new organizational, professional, and pedagogical problems, ideals and ideas are raised [10]

These changes have consequences for the planning and organization of schools concerning the role of music, and particularly that of music in education. The Daylong school program brought the opportunity for most children to participate in music through extracurricular activities at primary schools, which were termed curriculum enrichment activities. These were instituted through a directive from the Portuguese Ministry of Education for all public first cycle education (on 16th June 2006) in order to complement students' learning on a daily basis. It is presumed that students stay at their school for longer periods (more or less 8 hours, as compared with the previous 5 hours a day) in order to promote school success and support families, making the school timetable compatible with the families' needs [11].

We argue that those opportunities are changing the previously existing links between pupils' home, schools, and the wider world [13]. By providing new opportunities for children's participation in music, we are altering their individual musical behaviours, routines, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions. By changing the way children's feel, think, and act, we will also be changing and influencing their musical identities. In this sense, the notion that intimate, intricate and multifaceted relationships and links between music, identity and the processes of musical education can shape or influence who and how children are, is central to an exploration of the particular opportunities in music open to those children [12]

The social dynamics of family life and the cultural changes that may influence processes of musical development and impact upon children's musical identities are the subject of the present research. The understanding of the increasingly complex connections between musical activities experienced at school, both in formal and informal settings, and those developed in a daily environment are stimulating interest in the study of existing synergies between school music, the home, and the various cultural environments [14]. The main reasons are that these aspects are reflected in the musical skills and knowledge that children acquire outside the classroom and outside school, and that these are important to consider in the development of musical identity. Moreover, these aspects also have implications for the formal educational contexts of music learning and teaching as they influence pupil's opinions, beliefs, and perceptions about their own musical development and identity.

2 METHODOLOGY

Within this area of research, this paper reports on findings from a larger study developed by Milhano, [12] looking at the effects of participation in extracurricular musical activities on the development of children's musical identities. It examines the changes taking place in their musical activities, both in school and outside school, and the influence of participation in extracurricular musical activities on pupils' self-assessments of their own musical development, as well as on their attitudes and beliefs about music in terms of the activities they themselves choose. We utilized a cross-sequential design that enabled longitudinal, cross-sectional and cohort comparisons in order to investigate the effects of participation in musical activities on children's musical identities [12]. In this paper, we present the main findings gathered from studies A and B that were carried out in two phases (year 1 and 2): the pupil questionnaire study and the pupil interview study, respectively.

In study A, the total number of questionnaires received was 406 from children in the first cycle of education: 43.6% from pupils in grade 3 and 56.2% from pupils in grade 4. All respondents were pupils participating in extracurricular music activities at school: 53% were male participants, and 46% were females. In the pupil questionnaire, errors could occur when children misunderstand the question presented to them, or when they censor their own responses. Therefore, the researcher tried to prepare direct and unambiguous questions, which were as clear as possible. The researcher submitted the questionnaire to several specialists as well as to some first class teachers in order to gain their opinions about it, and thereby to increase its readability and practicability. In addition, questions used in the questionnaire were firstly pilot tested. Specific features of the questionnaire were altered and redesigned to encourage children to respond and to increase readability: tables and visual changes were used in questions to allow for a wide range of different modes of response [12].

In study B, two small group interviews with pupils from grade 3 and 4 were conducted in order to explore the rich and descriptive meanings that children find in assessing the wider influences of taking part in extracurricular music on their musical activities in and out of school, as well as their attitudes towards music and self-perceptions in it. Each interview, one in each of phases I and II, occurred at the end of the school year after the questionnaire administration. A method of semi-structured interviews was used to collect data about pupils' musical activities in and out of school, and about their attitudes towards and self-perceptions in relation to music. The interviewer decided the sequence and

wording of questions in the course of the interview so as to increase both the comprehensiveness and relevance of the questions. Important issues for children regarding particular circumstances and examples therefore emerged from the immediate context during the natural course of the conversation. The questions in the interview schedules mirrored those used in the questionnaires, which explored five main types of content: they included possible prompt questions to help in developing the conversations with children in a more fluid and detailed approach.

In the *Pupil Interview study* as in each phase, the participants were 6 pupils: 3 pupils from grade 3 and 3 from grade 4. As Tubbs [15] characterizes, a small group is as 'a collection of individuals who influence one another, derive some satisfaction from maintaining membership in the group, interact for some purpose, assume specialized roles, are dependent on one another, and communicate face to face'.

Therefore, through a study of children's self-perceptions of their participation and learning in the broad range of opportunities that are available to them within music education at Portuguese institutional and cultural levels, four issues are explored: children's musical activities, both in school and outside school; the influence of children's participation in extracurricular musical activities at school on their self-assessments of their musical development; changes occurring in children's musical activities as a function of their participation in extracurricular musical activities, and their attitudes and beliefs about music [12].

3 RESULTS

The overall findings from study A suggested that:

3.1 Study A results

3.1.1 Children's musical background

- Parents, family members, and friends seem to influence children's development of their musical identities by providing opportunities to participate in musical experiences outside school, such as concert attendance that maintained constant in both grades in year 1 and 2. Approximately 70% of pupils reported having attended to a concert with pupils having mentioned the Banda's as one of the main musical groups heard during concerts along with Portuguese popular and rock artists. As local amateurs groups, the Banda's in particular, seems having provided pupils from particular milieu and schools, with the opportunity to attend musical concerts and, to a much lesser extent, the opportunity to actively participate in music learning and performance. These cultural practices situated within some communities do appear to reflect on children's individual and social opportunities in the music education that is available outside school, and therefore influences the development of their music identities.

- Approximately 60% of pupils from both grades reported not having family members playing musical instruments at home, but brothers, sisters and the father are nominated by pupils as the ones who generally play musical instruments at home (recorder). However, the percentage of pupils that reported owning a musical instrument at home, which were mostly recorders, guitars and pianos or synthesisers, decreased almost 20% in both grades during year II, from approximately 70% to 50%.

- Peers and friends influence on pupils' musical activities appeared to be higher for grade 4 pupils and in phase II. A 10% differences was found between boys and girls, with girls having more friends playing musical instruments than boys. Pupils reported their friends as playing mainly the recorder, followed by the clarinet and the guitar.

- Music listening at home remained as the most constant informal musical activity pupils developed over time, corroborating Boal Palheiros [16] conclusions. Those activities appears to relate to contexts of music learning in which parents are absent, connecting those to the 'third environment', a concept introduced by Heath [17] in which the learning takes place without any formal teacher or teaching element is present. Grade 4 generally displayed higher instances of music listening than grade 3 pupils did [12].

3.1.2 Children's musical activities outside school

- Opportunities to participate in music outside school through playing, singing and dancing activities in the community seem not to be available to many pupils, since approximately 80% reported never

having participating in those, especially younger pupils. The musical instruments that (only 5%) pupils actually reported learning when participants in musical activities outside school were mainly the guitar, the piano and in the second year, the recorder as well.

- Longitudinal findings from study A shown an increase of 7% on reports about being currently involved in learning activities in a music school. There is, this increase was found when comparing these results between grade 3 pupils in year 1 and those same pupils in year 2, by that time in grade 4. In year 2, these pupils' reported being involved in music learning outside school for less than a year, already as participants in the extracurricular musical activities at school. Therefore, is it possible that this recent engagement indicate that families and pupils value more music learning, especially instrumental tuition that is, as we have seen previously, still essentially connected to the specialized dimension of music education outside school. However, this finding may also suggest that, some of those pupils and families' are not satisfied with the requirements, both in nature of the provision, and its perceived quality, of the learning experiences they had in the extracurricular musical activities at school. Further studies would be needed to establish the reasons that underpinned children decisions to participate in these musical learning activities in the music schools. We could however suggest that the generalization of the extracurricular music activities may have had an important role by stressing the importance music learning to children's development.

- When participants in music learning outside school, girls were generally more satisfied with their music classes than boys were corroborating results from other studies [18, 19].

- Approximately 91% of the sample, from both grades and genders (but especially girls) reported that they would 'very or pretty much' enjoy learning to play a musical instrument. Few differences were found between the grades and genders regarding pupils' instrument preferences, which were especially the guitar (as well as the electric guitar), the drums, and the piano.

3.1.3 Children's musical activities at school

- One of the strongest indicators suggesting changes occurring in children's musical activities as a function of their participation in extracurricular musical activities relates to music at school. The pupils' level of musical participation in most of the school activities queried tended to decrease in frequency in year two. Approximately 60% of pupils reported that they had 'never' played, sung, or danced in a group from their school that year. This result was in general a little higher for pupils from grade 4 and boys, suggesting the hypothesis that for those pupils', the participation in the extracurricular music activities could be more influential in their musical identities development.

- Music learning activities and musical participation at school, with their first class teacher, appears to occur less frequently over time. Pupils' reports showed that they do not usually play any musical instrument in class with their first cycle teacher, or listen to music or compose. Findings suggested that, when it existed, the most common musical activity pupils undertook as part of their statutory music education at school was singing.

- Results also indicated a shift in the frequency of music learning at school with their first cycle teachers from 'once a week' to 'once a month': the percentage of pupils who reported learning music with their first class teacher once each week decreased by 20% over time; the percentage of pupils who reported learning music with their first class teacher 'once a month' increased by 23%. Results demonstrated that pupils' who reported 'never' learning music at school in the second year of the study with their teacher also increased by 7%. The most probable explanation as to why this reported decrease in the frequency of musical activities amongst first class teachers (general teachers) at school takes place, could relate to the existence of the extracurricular musical activities. General class teachers may consider that the existence of the extracurricular musical activities releases them of the responsibility of continuing to deliver the music education curriculum established for the first education cycle. However, further inquiries among first class teachers would be needed to establish the real motives that underpin this finding.

3.1.4 Children's musical activities during the extracurricular musical activities

- Finding from study A suggested that most pupils did not participated in many others musical activities at school or outside school before participating in the extracurricular musical activities. Therefore, these activities appear to have been, for most pupils, the only musical activities they had the opportunity to participate in school contexts. This suggestion, emphasis further the importance of the quality of the musical learning experiences that are provided in these elective and 'informal' contexts of learning, which should be careful addressed.

- No major differences were found between grades regarding the musical activities pupils' reported having done during their music classes. Singing songs was the activity that repeatedly pupils reported having taken part in the extracurricular musical classes, and is the least preferred musical activity for grade 3 pupils and boys.
- To play musical instruments is less frequently reported by pupils' as an activity undertaken during the music classes, and when occurring, it seems to usually involve playing some Orff instruments and, in some schools the recorder. This activity of playing musical instruments is among the ones pupils' prefer undertaking in the extracurricular musical activities along with listening to music, and singing, whereas pupils' self-selected preferred musical activities are participating in (musical) 'games'. These results support North and Hargreaves [7] suggestion that pupils report enjoying playing musical instruments and singing as the most popular activities.
- The reports about the learning of notation in the extracurricular musical activities increased in the second year of the study and are one of the less enjoyed activities, both by boys and girls from both grades.
- An important finding was that the majority of pupils (approximately 85%) from both grades and genders reported liking 'very' and 'very much' to continue to participate in extracurricular music classes. Longitudinal findings have shown an increase in the higher level 'very much' in the second year of the study, in both grades, but more significant in grade 4. These results shown overall higher levels of enjoyment than the ones found by Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall, and Tarrant [20] in the study they have carried out in the UK, which questionnaire results showed that 67% of pupils overall reported enjoying their class music lessons. In addition, our results did not show that there was a general decline with age, by the contrary.

3.1.5 Children's perceptions of music

- Pupils' perceptions towards music at school are very positive: approximately 80% of pupils reported learning music at school as being 'very much' and 'pretty much' important and for them. Those values tended to be higher in grade 4 pupils' reports in both years of the study, and rose over time for both grades in the higher level. In addition, not only did the number of participants rating their liking for music increase but the number of participants who disliked music, decreased.
- Children's self-perceptions regarding their participation in extracurricular musical activities are globally optimistic and appeared to develop over time. In addition, pupils' levels of enjoyment of the extracurricular music classes were maintained at a generally high level.
- Girls generally display higher levels of satisfaction towards music at school and outside school than boys.
- Most pupils reported enjoying more their school with the introduction of the extracurricular musical activities. The findings from study A, suggested that taking part in musical activities at school positively affected the children's identification with school music lessons as they moved from grade 3 to grade 4. The results increased during the second year of the study in the higher level 'very', from approximately 52% for grade 3 pupils to 72% in year 2; and from 58% to 65% for grade 4 pupils. Only boys expressed a few negative opinions. These findings seem to support previous research that has shown that taking part in musical activities at school can affect children's identification with school music lessons, and that their identification with school in general can be increased [21].
- The main reasons pupils decide to participate in the extracurricular activities relates to the fun and amusement they reported having, as well as to the idea of becoming a musician. However, the musical activities pupils reported doing in the extracurricular music classes, does not support pupils' assumption that they could become a musician through their participation in those classes.

3.1.6 Children's self-assessments' of their musical development

- A number of positive changes were noticed during the two phases in pupils' self-assessments', at least in relation to musical activities as well as towards the idea of engaging in a profession connected to music.
- The results of the research suggested that pupils seemed to understand that 'being good' at one activity does not indicate their ability in other areas or skills. Children were able to form an impression of how competent they were, and clearly made important distinctions, differentiating between their interest in learning a musical instrument and the importance of being good at music. Being good at

music is seen as more important than being able to play a musical instrument, with almost 15% difference between results: being good at music is 'very important for approximately 70% of pupils, whereas being able to play a musical instrument is 'very important' for approximately 55% of pupils. However, being able to play a musical instrument began being a little more important for pupils in the second year of the study as well as for girls.

- Girls' self-assessments of their musical skills and musicality are generally higher than those of boys and also- self-assessed as being more musical than boys.

- Learning music seems to be regarded as very important for pupils' future, especially for grade 4 pupils with approximately 75% of the reports in the higher levels.

3.2 Study B results

The overall findings from study B, suggested that:

3.2.1 Children's musical background

- During phase I, findings from study B suggested the existence of some differences in pupils' according to their year group: more pupils from grade 4 voiced having attended to concerts and reported owning musical instruments. During phase II, differences were only found in the control groups, with one pupil voicing not having attended to any music concert or commented as owning a musical instrument.

- Differences concerning the activity of listening to music outside school appeared to exist in time between groups as well as between the control groups, since it was not voiced as being developed by pupils over time.

3.2.2 Children's musical activities outside school

- Some differences in children's musical activities outside school were suggested. Over time, fewer pupils from both grades 3 and 4 voiced having participated in these activities outside school. However, interesting insights were provided from some of those pupils belonging to the control groups who had acquired musical skills and knowledge outside school through their participation in a music school: their choice of not participating in the extracurricular musical activities resulted from their comparison between the activities done outside school and the ones undertaken during the extracurricular music classes. Those last activities, in these pupils' voices, do not allow an equivalent development of their music skills; especially the ones related to instrumental practice that they valued more.

3.2.3 Children's musical activities at school

- Longitudinal comparisons showed a continuity of the kind of musical practices undertaken by pupils' at school; however with a voiced decrease of the number of musical activities done with their general class teacher over time. However, an important element found in study B related to teacher training. In-service teachers were found to play a major role in providing pupils some musical learning experiences.

3.2.4 Children's musical activities during the extracurricular musical activities

- There appeared to be some differences in time on the subject of the activities done by pupils during the extracurricular musical activities. Longitudinal comparisons suggested that the use of the recorder and the learning of music notation and writing as new activities during phase II and that they was also an increase in the singing activities undertaken by pupils in year two.

3.2.5 Children's perceptions of music

- The existence of major differences relating to pupils attitudes and self-perceptions of music in school were not suggested since those are generally positive over time. Results appeared to suggest that the drive and motivation of these pupils to participate in musical activities appeared to be more connected with other factors rather than being due to their participation in the extracurricular musical activities. As suggested by the results from study B, those other factors are possibly related to pupil's self - assessment of their own 'musical development', to their attitudes and self-perceptions of music inside school and outside school, and by their general attitudes and self-perceptions about music which are generally positive.

- Findings from the control group stressed that extracurricular music activities were sometimes regarded as being a second period of schooling for pupils.

3.2.6 Children's self-assessments' of their musical development

- Pupils generally expressed positive self-assessments of their own musical development. However, longitudinal comparisons suggested that over time, pupils' perceptions of their music teachers as well as their attitudes, and self-perceptions of music during extracurricular musical activities is more critical and negative. These results suggested the influence of music teachers' on their pupils' self-perceptions and attitudes towards music in the particular context of extracurricular musical activities.

Pupils also voiced a preference for some of the musical activities done in the music classes, particularly the ones that included playing musical instruments.

As a summary, the main findings of the research suggested that:

- Musical participation in the different contexts of music education seems to be an activity participated in only by a minority of those involved in this research. These contexts include children participation in musical activities both at school as a compulsory subject, and outside school as an elective subject in formal and informal dimensions.

- The influence of children's musical backgrounds on their musical activities could be seen in pupils from both grades through the association of the musical instruments they reported owning at home, the instruments played by their friends and peers, their musical listening preferences, and the instruments learned outside school or the ones preferred by pupils, which were the guitar, the drums, and the piano.

- Opportunities to participate in music outside school through playing, singing, and dancing activities in the community seem not to be available to many children, with music listening at home remaining as the most common musical activity in which they are involved outside school. However, the results draw attention to some local social and cultural influences on providing a small percentage of pupils with some opportunities to participate in elective, voluntary, and self-selected musical activities outside school.

- One of the strongest indicators of changes occurring in children's musical activities as a function of their participation in extracurricular musical activities relates to music at school. Across the sample, the children's level of musical participation in most school activities tended to decrease in frequency in year two. When it existed, the most common musical activity they undertook as part of their statutory music education at school was singing.

- Most children's did not participated in many other musical activities at school or outside school before participating in these extracurricular activities. Those seem to provide children with wider opportunities to participate in music, to learn and to develop competences that, as we have seen, are largely neglected by schools.

- The participation in these extracurricular musical activities seems generating musical development and learning, as well as positively influencing children's self-assessment of their 'own musical development', attitudes and beliefs about music.

- Most children began enjoying their primary school more with the introduction of these musical activities and evidence supported the fact that taking part in those positively affected these children's identification with school music lessons as they moved from grade 3 to grade 4.

- The main reasons pupils decide to participate in the extracurricular activities relates to the fun and amusement they reported having, as well as to the idea of becoming a musician. However, as underlined in the findings of this research, further measures are needed to satisfy further pupils' requests for more instrumental practice during music classes. It would be important to provide them not only with more opportunities to develop all 'fundamentals of music education', but also support and nurture their reported desire for music-making, and possibly sustaining and fostering further their idea of becoming musicians as they considered it important for their life.

4 CONCLUSION

The present research has shown that musical participation in the different contexts of music education seems to be an activity participated in only by a minority of those involved in this research. These

contexts include pupils' participation in musical activities both at school as a compulsory subject, and outside school as an elective subject in formal and informal dimensions. Their participation in extracurricular activities at school constituted for most pupils the only opportunities they had to participate in music learning and seems to generate very positive attitudes and a focus for the value of music in these pupils' lives; producing a desire to learn, and to take part more widely in several music practices [10]. Therefore, the findings of this research have suggested that the urgency for change in music education should be focused more on practices than on attitudes, that is, on the need to provide pupils with more opportunities for access to musical experiences than on the need to increase their perceptions towards music and its importance to their lives [12].

It seems to be increasingly important not to neglect the importance of nurturing pupils' opportunities to actively take part in each one of the potential and desirable contexts of music participation, especially music at school as a compulsory subject, which should be available to all. Extracurricular musical activities at schools may be a way to immediately respond to a desperate need. As we have seen, these elective activities were, for most pupils, the only musical experiences and activities in which they had the opportunity to participate. The quality of the musical experiences provided in those, should be carefully addressed as we have demonstrated through this research, as the experience of participating in the elective extracurricular musical activities was, for the large majority of pupils, the main determinant of their musical identity. Therefore, it seems crucial that the system should move in parallel towards other different curricular structures so that music education is not, as it seems to be, associated with something that came out of the curriculum. The curriculum should continue to include music, with formative autonomy, not only in theory and in educational policy, but also as a reality in the integrated education of all pupils [10, 12].

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