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## SUBCULTURE AND YOUTH: MUSICAL TASTE OF THE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN SERBIA

*Abstract:* This paper presents the results of a research on the musical taste of pre-service teachers – students of the Faculty of Education, University of Kragujevac (Serbia). The objective was to determine whether the cultural style and, in particular, musical taste of this part of the student population is formed by musical programs of television channels with national coverage, and to what extent. The research was conducted in February 2016 and it included 138 respondents. A descriptive-analytical method and a survey as a research technique were applied. The obtained data was statistically analysed using chi-squared test ( $\chi^2$ ) and Pearson's correlation coefficient. The main conclusions are: (a) the musical taste of the pre-service teachers is under the decisive influence of media including television; (b) the students prefer the so-called popular music in relation to rock or classical music; (c) institutionalized education has only a low level of influence on the formation of the pre-service teachers' music taste.

*Key words:* subculture, pre-service teachers, musical taste, media, Serbia.

### INTRODUCTION

The lifestyle of the student youth population represents a *cultural diversity* based on a specific cultural pattern. If this pattern is different or if it represents an alternative to the dominant culture model, then one can speak about it as of a *cultural style* or *subculture* (Hebdige 1979). Subcultures are midpoints in which youths develop their own lifestyles and in which they form their identities (Bennett 1999; Bennett 2000; Furlong, Cartmel 2006; Marić 1998; Spasić 2004). Subcultural style totalities, that music is a part of as well, point to “networks” of meanings that are in common to certain individuals and groups within a wider context of meaning (Fabietti, Malighetti, Matera 2002) which make them mutually recognizable. The choice of music and a certain taste in music represent one of the external indicators of youth identity, including student youth as well.

Education is an institutionalized mediator in the transfer of culture – in the transfer of the dominant culture within a given society at that (Ogbu 1989),

however, in poly-cultural societies this role is complicated by at least two reasons: (a) the “negotiations” between the representatives of different socio-cultural backgrounds don’t always result with the clear-cut separation of the dominant one in relation to other forms of culture; (b) the unclear relations of power between different cultural circles make it difficult to define the cultural policy of the given society at the level of representation, transmission and preservation of a certain culture at various levels of institutionalized education, and thus also make it difficult to create the basis for the formation of certain cultural identities. Educational policies form the framework of action for institutionalized education in the field of presentation and dissemination of culture, of certain cultural patterns, styles and tastes, however, the transmitted cultural expressions are not achieving their expected impact on the participants in the educational process – in the last few decades, in the so-called contemporary Serbian society, education is losing importance in relation to other actors in shaping culture in public space, especially the media and it “surrenders” the decisive influence to them (Koković 2005; Nenadić 1998). Therefore, the role of teacher is becoming increasingly important in the so-called process of the socialization of culture (Ivanović 2003). The processes of socialization and culturalization led by a teacher are connected to the creation of a basis for forming the students’ identities and, in this context, the kind of musical taste that the future primary school teachers have is not an unimportant fact.

Numerous studies on cultural needs, cultural consumption and cultural activism of the population in the Republic of Serbia have been conducted over the last ten years (*Cultural needs, habits and taste of the citizens of Serbia and Macedonia 2007; The cultural life and the needs of students in Serbia 2011; Cultural practices of the citizens of Serbia 2011; Values and cultural activism of graduates in Serbia 2013*). The results of these studies have shown that the respondents are insufficiently familiar with the symbolic systems of art and that once they are “out of the sphere of popular music, Hollywood movies, and to some extent literature, a large number of citizens possesses scarce knowledge about the artists and works of art” (Cvetičanin 2007: 37); the results also point to underdeveloped cultural habits and a need of the citizens of Serbia to fill their leisure time with certain cultural activities (Cvetičanin, Milankov 2011; Subašić, Opačić 2013). The studies have included a variety of groups, however, the students – future primary school teachers, have not been surveyed until now, which justifies this research.

The theoretical framework for analysing the musical taste of the pre-service teachers, students of the Faculty of Education, has been developed based on the literature that explores subculture, style and identity and defines them as follows: *subculture* represents a common lifestyle that is different from the dominant cultural pattern and stems from specific life choices, needs and values shared by its members (Brake 1985; Hebdige 1979; Božilović 2007); *style* represents patterns of action that differentiate people or *ways of playing with identity* (Chaney 1996); *subcultural identity* represents a variation of cultural identity and the point of identity-shaping of the consciousness of individuals and groups (Golubović 1999;

Božilović 2007). Between subculture, style and identity a multidirectional and multidimensional connection is established: the identity is expressed through subculture, the subculture as a meaning of style represents a manifestation of identity. And it is the subcultures that represent midpoints in which youths develop lifestyles and build identities (Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2007). One of the internal indicators of the subcultural identity is a choice of music. The choice of style belongs to the field of individual identification with regard to the freedom of choice of the individual, but also to the field of collective identification, being that identity refers to *meanings* as an expression of convention (Jenkins 1997). Thus, the music preferred by the actors of a subculture “reveals” a certain style and basic features of a symbolic community represented by this music.

Taste is “a special ability that serves to the recognition of beautiful or artistically valuable” (Šuvaković 2011: 742). The very concept arose from the need to define the personal dimension that follows man’s confrontation with the world of objects – that follows his estimates and judgments. Taste can be linked to a *sense of beauty*, to the ability to know what everyone necessarily likes or to the power of objective judgment (of objects or some other kind of representation) by means of like and dislike (Kant 1991: 120). In a broader sense, *taste* can be seen as the totality of the individual’s preferences regarding the evaluation of aesthetic quality in various domains of cultural consumption. Taste is an indicator of subjective aesthetic standards and certain contradictions arising from different theoretical approaches to the defining of the concept of taste certainly are not related to attitudes about the aesthetic evaluation of specific works of art, but to the fact that there is no consensus on the criteria of “how” and “what” in music (and art, in general) should be valued (Frith 1978; Cvetičanin, Milankov 2011).

Aesthetic choices, however, are not accidental nor are they only the result of subjective evaluations, but they are socially conditioned as well. P. Bourdieu (1986) highlights the conditionality of taste by the social position and the class an individual belongs to; subjective criteria of aesthetic evaluation are linked to environmental factors (social and cultural environment) and to the type of cultural capital that people possess. Cultural practices, based on various types of taste are learnt practices acquired through various forms of education: in the family, in contact with other members of society or through the media and in educational institutions (Bourdieu 1986; Bourdieu, Passeron 1977; Roe 1983). Taste is an “inclination and ability to (materially and/or symbolically) appropriate a certain kind of object or activity” (Bourdieu 2008: 156) and is at the base of a lifestyle. Although subjective, taste simultaneously connects individuals and may represent one of the elements of the basis for the construction of collective identity as subcultural.

In addition to the so-called high culture and art, culture also includes the so-called popular culture and everyday living practices (Storey 2009), which together make up a discourse within which specific cultural needs and habits are acquired and taste is formed. Cultural and societal discourse within which the stu-

dents that were included in the research sample were socialized in is specific and marked with the overall developments in the Serbian contemporary cultural space. From the mid-nineties to the present day it was governed by a local newly-composed folk musical direction as part of the so-called *folk culture* (Dragičević-Šešić 1991) which has had an enormous influence on the formation of musical taste, but also of the dominant lifestyle. With the acceleration of the transition processes in the Serbian society after the year 2000, the global music genres, which have entered the Serbian “music” market as “products” of the global culture, have started to gain primacy on its cultural scene and are slowly taking it over. The media, including television channels with national coverage, also affect the creation of cultural needs, habits and tastes: according to the decision of the Republic Broadcasting Agency five television channels have national coverage and thus the possibility to address the widest television audience on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. The channels with national coverage are: Radio-Television Serbia 1 and 2, TV B92, TV Happy, TV Pink and TV Prva.

## METHOD

The subject of the research is the musical taste of the pre-service teachers, students of the Faculty of Education, University of Kragujevac (Republic of Serbia). The objective was to determine whether the musical taste of this part of the student population is shaped by music programs of television channels with national coverage. In accordance with the subject and the objective, the following tasks were set out:

- (1) Determine the musical interests and tastes of the pre-service teachers, students of the Faculty of Education;
- (2) Determine the students’ awareness of music programs broadcasted by television channels with national coverage in the Republic of Serbia;
- (3) Determine whether the pre-service teachers are more familiar with the so-called domestic musicians than with foreign ones;
- (4) Determine whether there is a correlation between a favourite music genre and music programs on television which students choose to watch on channels with national coverage;
- (5) Determine whether institutionalized education has an influence on the formation of the pre-service teachers’ musical taste.

The following hypotheses are given:

*The main hypothesis:* The pre-service teachers, students of the Faculty of Education, choose music and form their musical taste under the decisive influence of the so-called diffuse education – under the influence of the media and especially under the influence of television channels with national coverage. Their taste in music is a “product” of the presentation, expansion and imposing of newly-com-

posed folk music as an expression of local culture. The vaguely defined cultural and educational policies in the Serbian society today do not allow the creation of a strong systemic support to the so-called valuable music offer which would nurture a refined artistic, in this case – musical taste of the youths.

*Special hypotheses:* (1) The students of the Faculty of Education of the University of Kragujevac prefer popular music over classical music. (2) The students of the Faculty of Education are more familiar with the domestic music scene and domestic music “stars” than with the world music scene and musicians, which significantly affects the formation of their musical taste.

The research was conducted in February 2016 on a sample of 138 *randomly selected* respondents. The gender structure of the sample was composed of 16.7% male and 83.3% female respondents, which corresponds to the gender structure of students attending the module for *primary school teachers* at the Faculty of Education. The research included the students attending all years of study of this undergraduate module.

In the operationalization of the research the descriptive-analytical method, the survey as a technique and the Questionnaire for students, designed for this research, as an instrument, were applied. The obtained data were statistically analyzed and expressed through frequencies and percentages. The chi-squared test ( $\chi^2$ ) was used as a measure of statistical inference and Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used in determining the degree of correlation among individual variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Musical interests and taste of pre-service teachers.* To the question “Which music genre they prefer and listen to the most?” the students gave the following answers: *domestic pop music* was chosen by 47.8% of respondents; 16.7% of them chose *foreign pop music*; *rock music* was chosen by 13.8% of students; *original folk and old town music* is preferred by 10.1% of students; 8% of respondents enjoy *newly-composed and folk music*; *classical music and jazz* were chosen as favourite genres by only 3.6% of students. Data showing the low level of popularity of folk music in the surveyed population (8%) should be taken with reserves because a large number of singers, who stood for the biggest folk stars during the nineties, are present on the Serbian music scene today as well, and are very popular, but are now “related to” domestic pop music – a genre chosen by the vast majority of respondents as favourite.

The question “Why do you listen to classical music the least?” the following answers were obtained: 39% of respondents highlight the *underrepresentation of classical music in the media* as a main reason; 19% of the surveyed students answered that they find classical music *boring*, and 14% said that they find it *incomprehensible*. However, 28% of respondents claimed that, although classi-

cal music is not their favourite genre, they gladly listen to it when they have the opportunity. The obtained data can be interpreted as a consequence of: (a) An inadequate cultural policy in Serbia over the last decade in the domain of bringing classical music closer to a wider audience. The exceptions are promotional campaigns of the Belgrade Philharmonic, NOMUS Novi Sad and the Niš Music Festivities. The manner in which these campaigns are conducted can be a “recipe” for the popularization of classical music. (b) Inadequate educational policies at various levels of institutionalized education in the domain of developing musical culture i. e. the under-representation of musical contents of the classical music genre in different education cycles as well as in the preparation of teachers for the realization of musical culture education.

*Institutionalized education and the formation of students' musical taste.* With an aim to assess the knowledge of music creators and well-known music pieces that the future primary school teachers should possess, as a part of general culture, respondents were asked to identify the name of the composer when given the name of the music piece. The following musical compositions were selected: Figaro's aria from the opera *The Barber of Seville* by Gioacchino Rossini, *On the Beautiful Blue Danube* waltz by Johann Strauss, *The Flight of the Bumblebee* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *The Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns and *Bolero* by Maurice Ravel. A significantly higher percentage of respondents recognized the pieces by J. Strauss and C. Saint-Saëns, and the reason is probably that the pieces of these composers are used more often in the realization of the methodical practicum of music culture, but also of art, at the Faculty of Education. The data obtained have shown that there is a correlation between correct answers and the study year which the surveyed students are currently attending: in each individual example the students attending the third and fourth years of studies have demonstrated a better knowledge of the musical literature than their colleagues attending the first and second years of studies. The data obtained allow the conclusion that institutionalized education can represent a significant factor in the process of choosing the music and developing the musical taste of young people, that it can have an impact on them with the selection of musical contents that it presents to them in a systematic and organized way, but that it fails to do so in an adequate way.

The students' awareness of music programs broadcasted by television channels with national coverage in the Republic of Serbia. The research has shown that the medium students choose in order to listen to music is most often the internet – 74.6% of respondents; radio was chosen by 14.5%, while television was chosen by 10.9% of respondents. The reason for the absolute domination of the internet as a medium for listening to music among the respondents is most likely the fact that it is available to everyone in almost every moment. At the same time the internet allows them to make their own selection of content which they will enjoy, and

thus, perhaps, express their rebellion against the role of simple consumers which is imposed upon them. The students, it seems, thereby demonstrate behavior that could be defined as audience resistance to the so-called homogenization of culture (Hall, Jefferson 1976; Brake 1985; Hebdige 1979).

Television is a medium that “serves” certain content to consumers. That content, in the domain of the music offer of the television channels with national coverage in the Republic of Serbia, data obtained shows, fully meets the needs of 57.3% of surveyed students. At the same time, 81.9% of respondents believe that classical music is not sufficiently represented in the programs of television channels with national coverage. The students are well acquainted with the structure of music programs of the television channels with national coverage. However, a significantly higher percentage of respondents (91.3% of them) recognizes the so-called popular music show “Your face sounds familiar” (broadcasted by TV Prva), than the classical music show “A concert at noon” (broadcasted by RTS) which was recognized by 35.5% of respondents. The music show-program “Your face sounds familiar” was chosen by 74.6% of students as a show *in accordance with their own musical taste*.

The surveyed students prefer programs of commercial television channels over the programs of the so-called National Public Service of Serbia (RTS). For the most part, respondents opted for cable television (39.1%) – Pink Music cable television that promotes domestic pop music. MTV has appeared only a few times as a response, which shows that among the pre-service teachers, domestic and regional music has prevalence over the foreign music scene, that it is more popular and that it is more present in the consumption. The most popular among national coverage channels is TV Prva, chosen by 26.1% of respondents, followed by TV Pink, chosen by 17.4% of students. Following are the National Public Service of Serbia (RTS 1 and 2), chosen by 10.9% of respondents, while B92 (3.6%) and TV Happy (2.9%) are at the bottom of the list. It is important to note that RTS is the only television station with national coverage which has all musical genres represented in its program. Given that the respondents chose TV stations according to the music contents that suit their own musical taste, the selection of TV B92 presents a surprise since this channel had no music shows in its program during the last television season, and yet it was chosen by 3.6% of respondents. This shows that the choice of television channels is affected by other factors as well, besides the music offer, including ideological factors.

*Favourite music genre and music program on television channels with national coverage.* With intent to determine whether there is a correlation between variables (1) the choice of a television channel which broadcasts a music program and (2) music genre that students prefer to listen to, a  $\chi^2$  test was performed. Domestic pop music was singled out as an already determined favourite music genre of the students, while television channels were classified into three groups: 1) National Public Service of Serbia (RTS 1 and 2), 2) commercial television channels

with national coverage (TV Pink, TV Prva, TV Happy and B92) and 3) cable television (Table 1).

Table 1. Preferred music genres of the pre-service teachers

		Music genre respondents prefer to listen to		Total
		Domestic pop music	Other	
Music program on television in accordance with the respondents' taste	National Public Service of Serbia	5 33,3%	10 66,7%	15 100%
	Commercial television channels with national coverage	35 50,7%	34 49,3%	69 100%
	Cable television	26 48,1%	28 51,9%	54 100%
Total		66 47,8%	72 52,2%	138 100%

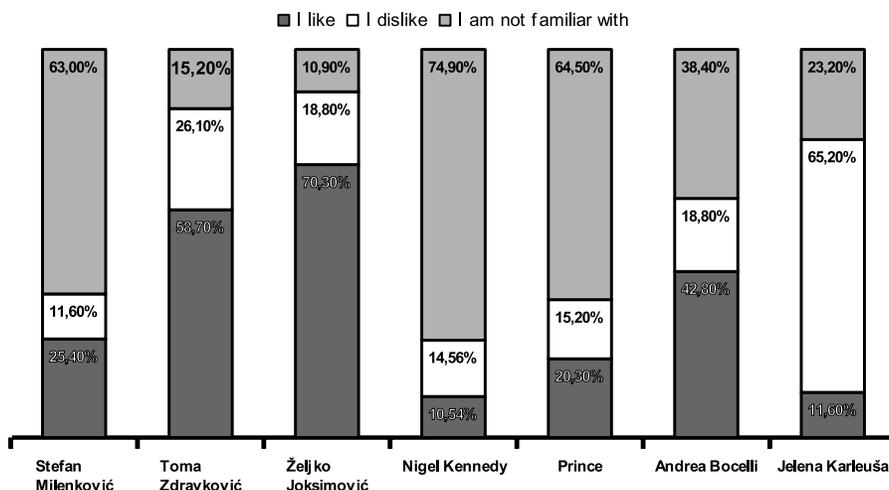
$\chi^2 = 1,497$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = 0,473$

The performed  $\chi^2$  test (chi-squared test) = 1,497 for the significance level of  $p = 0.473$  ( $df = 2$ ) is not statistically significant. Statistical inference for the significance level  $p$  is less than 0.05 and  $p$  is greater than 0.01 shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the distributions of *preferred music genre* and the *choice of TV stations with a music program*. It is shown that the students who prefer different music genres do not differ amongst themselves in the choice of national television stations that broadcast music programs.

*The domestic and foreign performers of classical and popular music.* Evaluating the creativity of music artists the students gave following replies. (Figure 1) In assessing the performers of popular music genres on the domestic music scene respondents replied – *I like* (Željko Joksimović, Toma Zdravković) or *I dislike* (Jelena Karleuša) in a higher percentage, by which they have confirmed their familiarity with the work of a certain performer as well as their own attitude about the performer; the global pop star Prince is preferred by only 20.3% of respondents while 64.5% of them *don't know who this is*. While assessing the performers of classical music, although the performers in question are true stars of this genre such as Nigel Kennedy or Stefan Milenković, the answer – *I am not familiar with* prevales. The exception among the classical music performers is Andrea Bocelli, who respondents recognize and in 42.8% of cases evaluate positively (*I like*), which can, perhaps, be attributed to Bocelli's "flirting" with popular music genres. Popular culture is not by its definition bad, nor is it a reflection of bad taste as is in-

licated by J. Storey (2009), and the creators of classical music who stride towards massively popular genres become more “recognizable” and more “acceptable” to a wider audience.

Figure 1. Evaluating the creativity of music artists



## CONCLUSION

The results of the research have shown that (1) the musical taste of pre-service teachers leans towards classical music only in a small percentage. (2) The students single out domestic pop music as their favourite music genre, which is in accordance with their choice of favourite television channels (TV Pink and TV Prva) and shows that promote this genre. Actually, TV Pink was founded in the nineties and is largely “responsible” for the promotion of the then popular folk and domestic pop music. TV Pink has kept its influence even in the period after the year 2000, because it continues to have a dominant influence on the creation of cultural needs and tastes of the citizens of Serbia as the most watched television channel in Serbia. (3) The students recognize and value the work of domestic musicians and domestic pop music more, which can point to a kind of resistance to the imposition of global music trends and to the expressed need for forming a unique subcultural identity that relies on local culture. (4) Students, pre-service teachers, create their own musical taste in contact with environmental factors in which diffuse education, especially the media, has an important but not a decisive role. The internet, the research has shown, has a more appealing power for the students than national television channels, but the research itself does not show

which factors are decisive in the creation of the students' musical taste. (5) The research shows that the influence of institutionalized education in the sphere of creating the musical taste of youths is partially present but that it is also passive in this field. The research results partially confirm the given hypotheses but they do not reveal the "mysteriousness" of the youth subculture. Still, it can be concluded that the formed musical taste of the surveyed students shows that *the refinement of taste* does not necessarily follow education.

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## ПОТКУЛТУРА И МЛАДИ: МУЗИЧКИ УКУС БУДУЋИХ УЧИТЕЉА У СРБИЈИ

*Резиме:* У овом раду су представљени резултати истраживања музичког укуса будућих учитеља, студената Факултета педагошких наука Универзитета у Крагујевцу (Република Србија). Циљ је био да се утврди да ли и у којој мери музички укус овог дела студентске популације обликују музички програми телевизија са националном фреквенцијом. Пошло се од претпоставке да се музички укус будућих учитеља формира под утицајем мреже ширег контекста значења доминантне културе којој студенти припадају, тј. вредности, сензибилитета и укуса који надилазе културне обрасце омладинске поткултуре. Истраживање је изведено фебруара 2016. године и обухватило је 138 испитаника. Примењен је дескриптивно-аналитички метод и анкетање као истраживачка техника.

Добијени подаци су статистички обрађени и изражени фреквенцијама и процентима. Од мера статистичког закључивања коришћен је  $\chi^2$  тест, а степен повезаности појединих варијабли одређен је преко Пирсоновог коефицијента корелације.

Теоријски оквир за анализу музичког укуса будућих учитеља, студената Факултета педгошких наука, развијен је на основу литературе која истражује поткултуру, стил и идентитет и одређује их на следећи начин: *попкултура* подразумева заједнички стил живота који се разликује од владајућег културног обрасца, а произлази из специфичног животног опредељења, потреба и вредности које деле њени припадници; *стил* представља обрасце делања који диференцирају људе или *начине поштивања идентитета*; *попкултурни идентитет* представља варијанту културног идентитета и тачке идентитетарног обликовања свести појединаца и група. Између поткултуре, стила и идентитета се успоставља вишесмерна и вишедимензионална повезаност: идентитет се исказује кроз поткултуру, поткултура као значење стила представља манифестацију идентитета. И управо поткултуре представљају средишта у којима млади граде стилове живота и граде идентитете. Један од унутрашњих индикатора поткултурног идентитета је избор музике. Одабир стила припада области индивидуалне идентификације с обзиром на слободу избора од стране појединца, али и области колективне идентификације с обзиром да се идентитет односи на *значења* као израз конвенције. Тако музика коју преферирају актери поткултуре „открива” одређени стил и основна обележја симболичке заједнице коју та музика представља.

Аутори су свесни домета микроистраживања, коме по свом карактеру припада овај рад и немогућности извођења општих закључака, међутим, сматрају да подаци до којих се дошло могу да расветле бар један део „тајанствене приче” о музичком укусу студентске омладине у српском друштву данас. На основу резултата овог истраживања изведени су следећи закључци: (1) музички укус будућих учитеља тек у малом проценту је окренут ка класичној музици; (2) студенти као омиљени музички жанр истичу домаћу поп музику, што је у сагласју и са њиховим одабиром омиљених телевизија (комерцијалне телевизије ТВ Пинк и ТВ Прва) и емисијама које исти жанр промовишу; (3) студенти препознају и више вреднују остварења домаћих музичара и домаће забавне музике, што може говорити о својеврсном отпору наметању глобалних музичких трендова и израженој потреби формирања јединственог поткултурног идентитета који се ослања на локалну културу; (4) студенти, будући учитељи, властити музички укус креирају у додиру са срединским факторима, у којима дифузно образовање, нарочито медији имају важну али не пресудну улогу; (5) истраживање показује делимично присутан утицај институционализованог образовања у сфери креирања музичког укуса младих, али и његову пасивност у овом пољу деловања.

*Кључне речи:* поткултура, будући учитељи, музички укус, медији, Србија.