# The Mediterranean as a Factor of Enrolment in Music Programmes of Individual Musical Instruments in Music Schools: A Case Study of Slovenia

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The main objective of the paper is to present the Mediterranean region as a factor in enrolling in the programme of music and musical instruments in elementary music schools. For the purpose of the paper, we have obtained data from the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia on the number of enrolment places of music students and their allocation by a single musical instrument. We compared the data by individual statistical regions and identified the characteristics of the Mediterranean region. The empirical data was analysed using methods for descriptive statistics. The Mediterranean region in Slovenia has 5.6% of all inhabitants in Slovenia. There are two music schools (the national average is  $5.8 \pm 4.1$ ), in which programmes' 8.3%

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of 6 to 18-year-old pupils from the statistical region are enrolled. Woodwind and brass instrument groups are better represented than the Slovenian average, while singing is the least represented music group compared to the regional average at the national level. After enrolment in musical instrument programmes in the Mediterranean region, piano, recorder, trumpet, trombone, tube, and percussions deviate positively from the Slovenian average. Music schools in the Mediterranean region in Slovenia reflect the specific interest of the inhabitants for musical education in this region. A Mediterranean cultural environment in Slovenia encourages students to enrol in numerous musical groups of various genres during and after completing their music education. Despite the differences found in the choice of instrument and participation in group activities in the fields of music and dance (dance programmes, orchestral groups, choral groups), which can only be partially explained by specific regional cultural differences, we must emphasise the importance of formal and informal music education for children, which should be a guide for planning social/national activities in the field of children's education and development.

Key Words: music, Mediterranean, music education, primary schools, children, culture, Slovenia

# INTRODUCTION

In Slovenia, music education has always had an important role in shaping cultural identity. Music education plays an important role in the realization of goals set for artistic education (Sicherl-Kafol and Denac 2010). The Law about Music Schools in Slovenia (Zakon o glasbenih šolah (ZGla-UPB1) 2006) defines the goals and tasks of education in music school as: (1) discovering and developing musical and dance talent, (2) co-creation of personalities and planned improvement of the musical education of the population, (3) gaining relevant knowledge and gaining experience to start performing in amateur instrumental ensembles, orchestras, choirs and dance groups, (4) acquiring knowledge for further music and dance education, (5) enabling artistic experience and expression, enabling the personal development of students in accordance with their abilities

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and the laws of development, (6) education for common cultural and civilizational values stemming from the European tradition, (7) education for mutual tolerance, respect for difference and cooperation with others, (8) concern for the transmission of national and universal heritage and (9) the development of national consciousness, education for a multicultural society, while developing and preserving one's own cultural and natural heritage.

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Slovenia is divided into 12 statistical regions: Pomurje, Podravska, Koroška, Savinjska, Zasavje, Posavska, South-Eastern Slovenia (SE Slovenia), Primorsko-Notranjska, Osrednjeslovenska, Goriška, Gorenjska and Obalno-Kraška (Mediterranean region). Despite being a small country, among statistical regions in Slovenia, there are important differences in economic characteristics, which are mainly attributed to their location, infrastructure, and access to the labour market. The Mediterranean region is also the only statistical region in Slovenia that has access to the sea (Kukanja 2019).

In many European countries, music education is integrated into school systems in terms of content, program and organization. As such, it is flexible and receptive to the positive experiences of related European music education systems, as well as new ideas in the interdisciplinary field of music education (García and Dogani 2011). The Slovenian public education system enables young people to participate in the music education program within music schools in addition to general education in primary and secondary schools. The involvement of music schools in the national education system is a special value (Rotar Pance 2019). The music school enables those students who show the necessary talent at the entrance exams to be included in the music or dance programme of primary education. It provides the individual with the possibility of optimal development of their abilities and specific talents and enables the systematic acquisition of knowledge (Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji 2011).

The development of playing techniques/singing and theoretical knowledge should always be placed in the framework of integrated musical development. In addition to acquiring certain professional knowledge and musical skills, young musicians have to develop spe[94]

cific motor skills related to playing and singing in an extremely important period of development, which are difficult to compensate for in the later period due to developmental laws. In educational work, music education is connected with other educational factors, while in professional work, it must be coordinated with secondary and higher music schools and professional organizations (*Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji* 2011).

Slovenia is characterised by great geographical and cultural diversity (Urbanc, Šmid Hribar and Kumer 2020). It is located 'at the intersection and interweaving of four major European natural geographical landscape units: the Alpine, Dinaric, Pannonian and Mediterranean worlds and four historical, ethnological, linguistic, religious, in short, cultural spaces: Germanic, Romance, Hungarian and Slavic' (Urbanc 2002, 5). The cultural influences of Slovenia's neighbouring regions are also evident in the musical culture of the region, which is closest to each specific cultural influence (Terseglav 1999). Our work aims to evaluate the characteristics of the Mediterranean region as a factor for enrolment in music programmes for individual musical instruments in music schools by comparing the Mediterranean region with other regions of Slovenia. We are aware that there are many different universal, but also specific cultural influences and other relevant factors that determine preferences for choosing an instrument and participating in different forms of music-making in groups. In this paper, therefore, we will only attempt to identify the differences using official statistics on student participation in individual and group music programmes/courses.

#### METHODOLOGY

Research Plan

The general aim of the study was to emphasise the characteristics of the Mediterranean region on music education, especially on enrolment in music programmes of individual musical instruments and group musical courses, choirs and orchestras, which are a part of the programme in music schools. We use the data, which are publicly availed, namely the statistical data for population and regions (see https://www.stat.si). We specifically requested the Ministry of Edu-

cation, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia for the data about Music education and schools. The last statistical data were availed for 1.7.2020, while the last data about students in the music education system were availed for the study year of 2020/2021 (from September 2020 onwards).

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### Research Methods

The descriptive study design was used. We arranged data for the population and region. We separately arranged data for music schools, programmes, and students after individual music instruments and music groups. We compared different regions by the size and number of inhabitants after representation of students' enrolment in individual and group music programmes/courses.

# **Analysing Process**

We entered the data into Microsoft Excel, where we edited it. The empirical data was analysed with IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 using methods for descriptive statistics (frequencies, arithmetic mean and standard deviation). The data is presented as arithmetic mean  $\pm$  standard deviation (AS  $\pm$  SD) and as a proportion (%).

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Mediterranean region accounts for 5.6% of all inhabitants in Slovenia. 12.9% of all inhabitants in Slovenia are between 6 and 18 years old. However, in the Mediterranean region, 12.0% of all inhabitants are between 6 and 18 years old, while the average for the region in Slovenia is 12.7  $\pm$  0.7. In the Mediterranean region, there are 2 music schools, both public, in which 5.5% of all pupils in Slovenia attending music education are enrolled. In Slovenia, 7.8% of all pupils aged 6 to 18 are enrolled in music education. The average for the national region is 8.9  $\pm$  2.0%, while in the Mediterranean region 8.3% of pupils aged 6 to 18 are included in music education (table 1).

In the Mediterranean region, 5.5% of all Slovenian students attend music classes. Of them, 11.5% play one of the instruments from the plucked string instruments, 33.2% play one of the instruments from the keyboard group, 14.0% play one of the instruments

TABLE 1 Number of Students

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Statistical region	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Slovenia*	100	12.9	70	54	100	100	7.8
Gorenjska	9.9	13.7	7	5	8.7	8.4	6.5
Goriška	5.6	12.9	4	4	6.2	6.2	8.6
SE Slovenia	6.9	13.4	5	5	7.6	7.6	8.1
Koroška	3.4	12.4	4	3	4.1	3.8	9.9
Mediterranian region	5.6	12.0	2	2	5.5	5.5	8.3
Osrednjeslovenska	26.4	13.4	18	9	23.7	20.1	6.7
Podravska	15.5	11.9	6	4	12.0	10.6	6.5
Pomurska	5.4	11.6	6	4	6.2	5.1	9.8
Posavska	3.6	12.6	4	4	5.7	5.7	12.4
Primorsko-notranjska	2.5	13.2	3	3	3.9	3.9	11.7
Savinjska	12.3	13.1	7	7	12.9	12.9	8.0
Zasavska	2.7	12.3	4	4	3.5	3.5	10.6
M	8.3	12.7	5.8	3.2	8.3	7.8	8.9
SD	7.0	0.7	4.1	1.9	5.7	4.8	2.0

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) percentage of all inhabitants, (2) percentage of inhabitants aged 6–18 years, (3) number of all music schools, (4) number of public music schools, (5) percentage of students in all music schools, (6) percentage of students in public music schools, (7) percentage of 6–18-years-old students in Slovenia included in music school program. \*n = 2100126, as of 1 July 2020.

from the strings, 2.3% enrol in singing, 24.1% play one of the instruments from the woodwind group, 5.0% play one of the instruments from the percussions group and 9.9% play one of the instruments from the brass group (table 2). In Slovenia, the most represented group of musical instruments is keyboard instruments, followed by woodwind instruments. The groups of keyboard instruments, woodwinds, percussion instruments and brass instruments are better represented in the Mediterranean region than in the average of the national region, while strings and especially singing are the musical groups (of instruments) that are less represented than in the average of the national region.

Table 3 represents the enrolment in singular music instruments on national level as well as on region average. On national level,



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TABLE 2	Percentage of Students in Slovenia According to the Type
	of Instrument and Region

Statistical region	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Slovenia*	100	13.5	33.3	15.8	4.3	21.8	4.3	6.9
Gorenjska	8.7	13.2	29.8	16.3	4.4	25.1	4.1	7.1
Goriška	6.2	15.0	32.6	15.7	5.4	21.0	3.5	6.8
SE Slovenia	7.6	12.5	28.1	20.8	4.8	20.8	4.8	8.2
Koroška	4.1	13.1	35.7	12.6	0.8	23.0	8.0	6.8
Mediterranian region	5.5	11.5	33.2	14.0	2.3	24.1	5.0	9.9
Osrednjeslovenska	23.7	11.3	33.5	20.2	4.8	23.2	2.3	4.8
Podravska	12.0	13.8	41.4	10.7	4.5	18.7	4.3	6.6
Pomurska	6.2	15.1	34.2	12.0	4.6	19.8	7.0	7.3
Posavska	5.7	17.3	26.0	16.1	5.4	21.4	4.8	8.9
Primorsko-notranjska	3.9	12.3	36.5	16.3	4.8	18.4	4.8	7.0
Savinjska	12.9	16.9	32.3	12.7	3.6	21.0	5.7	7.9
Zasavska	3.5	12.1	32.0	15.2	4.2	25.4	3.6	7.4
M	8.3	13.7	32.9	15.2	4.1	21.8	4.8	7.4
SD	5.7	0.2	4.0	3.1	1.3	2.3	1.5	1.3

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) of students in music schools according to region, (2) plucked string instruments, (3) keyboards, (4) strings, (5) singing, (6) woodwind, (7) percussion, (8) brass. \*n = 2100126, as of 1 July 2020.

piano (24.1%), guitar (11.6%) violin (11.4%) and flute (9.3%) are the music instruments with the majority of children enrolled. The same pattern is evident in Mediterranean region (piano 27.2%, guitar 10.2%, violin 9.9% and flute 8.7%). However, on region average, the Mediterranean region differ from other regions. Namely in harp (1.3% vs. 0.7%), piano (27.2% vs. 23.4%), double bass (0.7% vs. 0.6%), recorder (6.1% vs. 3.0%), clarinet (5.1% vs. 5.0%), saxophone (3.7% vs. 3.6%), horn (0.9% vs. 0.6 5), trumpet (5.1% vs. 4.1%), trombone (1.8% vs. 1.2%), tuba (1.5% vs. 0.4%) and percussions (5.0% vs. 4.8%) there are more students included than on region average. Singing is the music programme, in which there are much less students included in Mediterranean region than on region average (2.3% vs. 4.1%).

Table 4 shows that 56.6% (n = 11951) of all students in mu-

Percentage of Students in Slovenia According to Single Music Instrument and Region TABLE 3

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Statistical region	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(9)	(7)	(8)	(6)	(10) (11)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(16) (17) (18) (19) (20)	(18)	(10)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)
Slovenia*	0.7	11.6	6.0	0.3	24.1	0.7	7.1	1.4	11.4	0.5	3.3	0.5	4.3	3.1	9.3	0.5	5.0	0.3	3.6	9.0	3.9	1.2	0.3	6.0	4.3
Gorenjska	1.2	11.3	0.7	0.0	20.9	1.1	7.6	0.2	10.3	1.6	3.6	0.7	4.4	4.4	11.0	0.5	5.1	9.0	3.4	9.0	4.1	1.4	0.3	0.7	4.1
Goriška	1.4	12.6	0.7	0.3	24.9	9.0	7.0	0.0	10.6	0.3	3.9	9.0	5.4	3.1	7.7	1.3	4.6	0.5	3.9	6.0	3.8	1.2	6.4	0.5	3.5
SE Slovenija	0.0	10.5	0.5	1.6	18.3	0.3	7.1	2.4	14.6	8.0	4.6	9.0	4.8	1.6	7.2	1.1	5.4	9.0	5.1	6.0	4.8	1.3	0.3	0.0	4.8
Koroška	1.1	10.2	1.7	0.0	24.3	0.1	5.5	5.7	10.0	0.0	2.0	0.7	0.8	4.6	9.4	0.0	4.8	0.0	4.1	0.2	4.0	0.1	0.5	5.0	8.0
Mediterranian region	1.3	10.2	0.0	0.0	27.2	0.0	6.1	0.0	6.6	0.3	3.1	0.7	2.3	6.1	8.7	0.5	5.1	0.0	3.7	6.0	5.1	1.8	1.5	9.0	5.0
Osrednjeslovenska	9.0	10.1	9.0	0.0	26.3	0.0	6.0	0.3	14.4	9.0	4.8	0.5	4.8	4.5	9.3	0.7	4.7	9.0	3.6	0.5	2.9	8.0	0.2	9.4	2.3
Podravska	0.7	12.6	0.5	0.0	30.4	0.5	10.0	6.4	8.6	0.2	1.7	0.2	4.5	1.7	8.9	0.2	4.5	0.1	3.3	9.0	4.0	1.1	0.1	0.8	4.3
Pomurska	0.0	15.1	0.0	0.0	21.7	0.5	9.7	2.4	6.6	0.0	1.8	0.2	4.6	1.2	10.3	0.0	4.7	0.0	3.5	6.4	4.0	1.8	0.3	0.8	7.0
Posavska	0.7	12.2	2.9	1.5	15.7	0.5	6.4	3.4	11.1	0.3	3.8	9.0	5.4	1.8	8.3	0.3	9.9	9.0	3.6	8.0	4.2	1.8	0.3	1.7	4.8
Primorsko-notranjska	0.0	12.3	0.0	0.0	24.9	0.2	6.5	4.9	11.3	6.0	3.7	0.5	4.8	2.6	8.0	0.2	4.6	0.0	2.9	0.5	4.4	6.4	0.1	1.6	4.8
Savinjska	1.2	13.0	2.1	0.5	23.5	1.0	5.8	1.9	9.4	9.0	1.9	9.0	3.6	1.1	10.2	0.7	5.4	0.1	3.4	9.0	3.9	1.5	0.2	1.6	5.7
Zasavska	0.0	11.6	0.5	0.0	21.5	0.5	8.2	1.8	12.0	6.4	2.8	0.0	4.2	3.8	13.8	0.0	4.7	0.0	3.1	0.5	4.2	1.5	0.5	0.7	3.6
M	0.7	11.8	6.0	0.3	23.4	0.5	7.2	1.9	11.1	0.5	3.2	9.0	4.1	3.0	9.4	0.5	5.0	0.2	3.6	9.0	4.1	1.2	0.4	1.0	4.8
SD	0.5	1.4	6.0	9.0	3.8	0.3	1.4	1.9	1.8	0.4	1.0	0.3	1.3	1.6	1.7	0.4	9.0	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	1.5
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NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) harp, (2) guitar, (3) zither, (4) tambourine, (5) piano, (6) organ, (7) accordion, (8) diatonic accordion, (9) violin, (10) viola, (11) cello, (12) double bass, (13) vocal/singing, (14) recorder, (15) flute, (16) oboe, (17) clarinet, (18) bassoon, (19) saxophone, (20) horn, (21) trumpet, (22) trombone, (23) tuba, (24) other conical instruments, (25) percussion. \*n = 2100126, as of 1 July 2020.

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TABLE 4 Percentage of Students in Slovenia Included in Group Forms of Music vs. Region

Statistical region	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Slovenia*	118.2	20.6	48.9	12.4	100
Gorenjska	10.2	11.9	8.5	7.1	9.3
Goriška	7.2	4.6	6.1	1.8	5.4
s e Slovenija	7.0	0.9	9.1	8.5	7.0
Koroška	4.1	1.2	4.5	5.0	3.8
Mediterranian region	4.2	3.4	4.6	2.0	4.0
Osrednjeslovenska	26.9	19.2	22.7	42.9	25.2
Podravska	11.7	18.8	9.6	8.9	11.8
Pomurska	4.3	9.1	6.1	5.6	6.3
Posavska	4.7	7.9	8.3	3.7	7.0
Primorsko-notranjska	5.2	2.2	3.7	1.8	3.4
Savinjska	10.9	9.6	13.7	9.4	11.8
Zasavska	3.6	11.1	3.3	3.3	5.0
M	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3
SD	6.5	6.3	5.4	11.2	6.0

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) preschool music education, (2) dance programmes, (3) orchestra groups, (4) choir groups, (5) total. \*n = 2100126, as of 1 July 2020.

sic education are involved in group forms of ensemble music programmes/lessons in Slovenia. The majority of pupils attending group forms of ensemble music programmes at national level are included in orchestra groups (48.9%), followed by pre-school music lessons (18.2%). Students in the Mediterranean region are less involved in group forms of music instruction at the national level compared to the regional average, namely 4.2% in preschool music education (region average 8.3%), 3.4% in dance programmes (region average 8.3%), 4.6% in orchestra groups (region average 8.3%) and 2.0 in choir groups (region average 8.3%).

Experts (Cupi and Cupi 2020; Hennessy 2000) in music pedagogical practice have been warning for many years about the neglect of singing activities in music schools. It is only in recent years that it has been established in certain Slovenian regions that more atten-

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tion is being paid to singing. Unfortunately, according to statistics, the Mediterranean region does not follow the mentioned trends. Exceptions have been identified that successfully show quality vocal groups within certain music schools, but the success of these is based only on individuals and their competencies. Systematically, however, the singing field is not yet properly regulated. As the results show, the situation is much better in other Slovenian regions. Field experts note that the reason for the decline in singing activity in the Mediterranean region is, among other things, the strong influence of audio-visual media from Italy in the 1980s, which then drastically reduced the number of choirs in schools and elsewhere. Similar influences of the audio-visual media on singing activities were noted also in other parts of the European region (Balčytis 2009). Another reason for the decline in singing activity, which is still relevant today, is the technological development and the emergence of many sound carriers, which shape most children and adolescents into passive listeners. We believe that experts who decide on the future of music education in Slovenia will follow more advanced curricula from abroad, which withdraw ICT from music classrooms and prescribe the performance of live music in the form of singing and playing instruments.

On the other hand, according to the national system of elementary music education in Slovenia, choirs are not fully part of the compulsory curriculum of music schools; choirs are only part of the compulsory curriculum of large music schools. The size of the music school, therefore, determines the number of funded choirs per school. In regular primary schools, however, choirs are an integral part of the curriculum. Choral culture is therefore nurtured and developed not only at the music school level but especially at the primary school level, making choral culture accessible to a wider children audience. Music schools also cultivate choral singing among younger pupils within the framework of an above-standard programme not financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia. The data presented in table 4 therefore only partially reflects the development of choral singing in the regions. Singing activity is a part of Music Theory and Solfeg-

gio curricula, in which (a prima vista) singing plays an integral part in acquiring musical abilities, skills and knowledge (Zadnik 2019).

Music and dance education in Slovenia has played an important role in shaping and preserving Slovenia's cultural identity in all social, political, and educational contexts (Rotar Pance 2019). Along with the solid vertical of Slovenian music education, various forms of informal music and dance activities and education are expanding and enriching. All this makes an important contribution to the development of a key competence of lifelong learning: cultural awareness and expression (European Union 2017; Rotar Pance 2019).

We have noted several differences between the Mediterranean region and other Slovenian regions. The most important finding is that the Mediterranean region is among the last three regions in terms of the percentage of children and youth aged 6 to 18 who receive music education. Music education is not compulsory and thus represents a leisure activity for children, young people, and their parents. A review of the literature (Kropej 2007) indicates differences in the implementation of physical and sporting activities between Slovenian regions, which could partly explain the differences in the proportion of children or adolescents of a given age who choose one (music school) or another (recreational or competitive) sport. However, the question of why the choice of music school as a

leisure activity is less widespread in the Mediterranean region (also in comparison with sports and physical activities) requires further research, especially in the form of cultural representations of the role of music in the development of children and young people.

#### CONCLUSION

Choosing the instrument that a child will play in music school is an important decision. It is influenced by several factors such as the child's interest and motivation, their physical development and strength, the development of musical abilities, the influence of the surroundings and more. In any case, it is the interest that most often decides on the choice, but we should not ignore the fact that physically weak children will not be able to master certain instruments, as well as untampered instruments those who have problems with au-

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ditory recognition. In addition to the environment, the choice is also influenced by the number of admissions for a certain instrument at a certain music school.

Attending music school has a significant impact on the development of every child. Continuous learning of a particular instrument has, in addition to the development of the musical and artistic field, also a strong influence on the overall development. The active involvement of children in the process of music education in the context of music schools undoubtedly marks strongly their childhood. By singing, playing, and listening to music, they experience and reproduce music, as well as express themselves and communicate. The Slovenian music education system is very well organised and formally well-arranged. One could say that it is based on a long and established tradition, still, at the same time, it faces many new challenges, some of which are pointed out below. In specialised music education the main efforts are focused on: quality application of the curriculum, testing and evaluating the current models of teaching and learning, experimental introduction of new teaching and learning models, quality undergraduate, postgraduate and life-long training of music teachers, development and use of new textbooks based on modern didactic orientations (Denac 2012). Music is a form of human expression through activity. It contributes to a school curriculum by offering a distinctive way of learning where seeing, feeling, hearing, thinking, and creating are combined in a powerful form of visual, aural and tactile affective communication. Through the music, students working both cooperatively and individually have opportunities to research, identify and discuss issues; to provide insights, opinions, solutions, and resolutions; and to reflect on, appreciate and evaluate artwork. Music is a powerful medium for the exploration of the human condition, our society and our world (Hol-

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