

Can a music course on Greek Traditional Music change pupils' dispositions? A classroom teacher research project¹

Elissavet PERAKAKI

Music Educator
perakaki1@yahoo.gr

ABSTRACT | Nowadays, Greek traditional music does not play such an integral role in our society as it did years ago. As a result, its members and consequently pupils in primary and secondary schools do not realize its significance. Specifically, Greek traditional rhythms and dances have been traveling since antiquity, and have influenced contemporary and modern music. The present study reported here of classroom teacher research is a qualitative one. It aims to identify to what extent a 12 -lesson music course based on Greek traditional music can (trans)form adolescents' dispositions about this genre of music. Research data was gathered from the diaries of a teacher and four external observers. Information from recordings and questionnaires (pre-test, post-test and follow-up study) was collected as well. The data analysis indicates that a number of the pupils not only changed their views on Greek traditional music by the end of the course, but they also kept the same opinion after a period of time. Interestingly, even pupils who still had a negative view toward this genre of music, appreciated it and understood how it is important for Greek society and culture.

Keywords: Greek traditional music, teacher classroom research, pupils' dispositions, secondary education, music learning, music lesson

1. INTRODUCTION

The paper presents a qualitative case study of research in secondary education, which aims to explore the influence of a music course on pupils' views of Greek traditional music. Research data was gathered from the diaries of teacher and four external observers. Information from recordings and questionnaires (pre-test, post-test and follow-up study) was collected as well. The data analysis

¹ This paper has been partly presented as a poster under the title "Teenagers' dispositions towards Greek Traditional Music: A teacher classroom research" and as a part of the Symposium "The New Music Curriculum in Greece: Classroom application" (Session Organizer: Sm. Chrysostomou) under the title "A traditional music trip in Greece" at the 30th ISME Conference in Thessaloniki.

indicates that a part of the pupils not only changed their views on Greek traditional music, at the end of the lessons, but also they kept this view after a period of time. Interestingly, pupils, who still had a negative view on this genre of music, were able to elaborate their opinions showing their appreciation of Greek traditional music.

2. A REALIZATION IN MUSIC CLASSROOM

One day a music teacher announced to the pupils that a three-month-course, dealing with Greek traditional music would take place. Judging from their facial expression, the majority of them were disappointed: "Does any pupil, modern pupil, really care about a kind of music to which only older people listen?" The teacher did not blame them. Instead, their reaction was taken into consideration in an attempt to find the perfect balance between curricula aims and activities, and between the students' handbook and pupils' interests. The overall intention was to change their pupils' views and for them to adopt a positive disposition towards this kind of music, involving them in music action. Consequently, the following research emerged as a need!

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although Greek traditional music plays a fundamental role in the continuity of Greek cultural and musical heritage, much current research in Greece and Cyprus highlights that pupils in their last grades of primary and secondary schools are not acquainted with such music and they do not prefer listening to it (Argyriou, 2011; Ekonomidou - Stavrou, 2007; Papapanagiotou, 2006; Perakaki, 2006; Stavrou, 2006).

Doubtful adolescents, although different groups in different societies, tend to identify themselves with particular kinds of music (Elliot, 1995) and adopt its symbolical uses for themselves (Papapanagiotou, 2004). They seem to use their musical identity in order to either understand themselves and others, or to form their personality and personal identity (Harter, 1999, in Papapanagiotou 2004). Peer group pressure, television, radio and the internet strongly influence their cultural and musical preferences (Cremades et al., 2010). Simultaneously, they have the tendency to

"present their degree of maturity and their independence towards their parents, to differ from other adolescents at the same age, and to underline the group to which they belong and their conformity to group values" (Papapanagiotou, 2004, p. 35).

That is the main reason why adolescents are attracted to various genres of music that address their age group (such as pop, rock, and hip hop). The implication for education is that they do not enter the music class without a formed opinion of music (Regelski, 1981), a situation which the music teacher should take into account.

Both family and peer pressure influence pupils' preferences, as from early childhood children listen to music that their social environment makes available and, according to these encounters, they form to some extent their preferences. As Stavrou (2006) concluded, and Teklos (2011) referring to Fry and Fry (1997) implied,

"family and friends are essential for shaping the attitude of young pupils, and the form that attitudes take is largely dependent upon the environment in which pupils grow up and the treatments they receive both at home and in school" (2011, p. 225).

Additionally, Teklos specifies that "if family and peer support is directly linked to the pupils' attitudes towards music, it is also indirectly linked to their involvement or participation in the subject" (ibid). During puberty, the balance between family and friends leans towards the friends' perspective. Adolescents are reported to have a strong need to belong, which they express by following and being influenced by their peers (Papapanagiotou, 2004). Furthermore, pupils and young people generally have strong stereotypes about fans of specific types of music and "these stereotypes are associated with a suite of traits, which could, in turn, influence individuals' stated musical preferences" (Rentfrow et al., 2011, p. 1141).

According to main objectives of the Greek National Curriculum² in Junior High School and in the framework of the development of music awareness and the understanding of tradition, idioms and musical styles from the variety of cultures, times and places, pupils should learn about the components of Greek traditional music in order for a relationship between pupils and music to develop. The fulfilment of this objective involves not only the cultivation of the cognitive and the psychomotor domains, but also the creation of rational, and not subjective, attitudes – dispositions (affective domain).

Regelski (1981) in "Teaching general music: Action learning for middle and secondary schools" defines attitude as

"the set of predispositions to respond in a particular way toward some particular class stimuli (in our case, musical stimuli); attitudes are "predispositions to respond in a particular way toward a specified class of objects" (i.e., the musical "objects" of music education). Thus, music education must concern itself most assuredly with instruction that results in some degree of positive or favorable "predispositions to respond in a particular way" to music" (Regelski, 1981, p. 273).

Although international literature in the field of music education is rich and descriptive about pupils' musical preferences in primary and secondary education in many countries all over the world, it is limited in the field that explores the influence of education in the formation of musical preferences.

Current research has shown the impact of teaching music on (trans)forming pupils' views and dispositions.

N=1061 General Public School and 120 students from a Musical School in Greece participated in a research project aimed to scrutinize musical preferences of participants and the relationship between musical preferences and training (Papapanagiotou, 2006). Statistical analyses in the study indicated a strong relationship among preferences, age and musical training. It was found that children respond more favourably to all styles of music than older students. Adolescents showed a strong preference towards the musical styles of their peers. Musical knowledge of an instrument of either "classical" tradition or "Greek traditional" was found to influence positively the musical preferences of both genres of music (Papapanagiotou, 2006).

Dinopoulos' (2010) quasi-experimental research project took place in Greece with the participation of 41 pupils in primary education (3rd and 4th Grade) and sought to attract pupils' interest and to change their minds about music generally (and Greek traditional music specifically) by using

² Official Gazette Fascicle: [ΦΕΚ] 304-B'/13-03-2003.

New Technologies in his teaching. In a pre-test questionnaire, 83% of pupils of both grades answered that they slightly liked Greek traditional music. His intervention included the production and the application of an experimental programme, which was implemented twice a week for approximately 3 months. By the end, many pupils had changed their minds and 77.5% declared that they were fond of Greek traditional music. In addition, they were positively influenced by music and especially by Greek traditional music in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.

The strong influence of educational practice on a music lesson based on cultivating thinking skills is reported in Perakaki's case study research (2006). 54 students in their middle teens in Junior High School attended a course on Greek traditional music. Among the aims of the course was the formation of pupils' justified opinions about Greek traditional music, either positive or negative. After the intervention, pupils reported that they had learned about this genre of music and 43% gave a justified positive answer in the post-test (compared to 15% in pre-test) and 33% responded in a justified negative way (4% in pre-test). Simultaneously, in the post-test, 30% of the pupils declared that they often listened to Greek traditional music positively and 41% sometimes did. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that it was essential for pupils learn about Greek traditional music and for other musical genres less familiar to them.

This assumption is also implied by case study research in which 100 pupils in their early teens participated (Green, 2007). The researcher tried to identify why so many pupils forcefully expressed antipathy towards classical music and how their opinions related to their personal experiences and identities as music-listeners and music makers. Pupils performed short classical music pieces through an informal learning style. In this research, Green demonstrated that teenagers are often unfamiliar with classical music and that this leads them to

"a negative, dulled response, since the listener will be unable to detect patterning, similarity, difference or other relationships between the musical sounds, both within one piece of music and between pieces" (Green, 2007, p. 236).

At the end of the intervention, a large number of participants said that although they hated classical music prior to the intervention, their views had changed to some extent as the task developed (Green, 2007).

Consequently, the inference is that music teachers must plan their work so that they will know what behavioural changes should occur, both immediately and in the longer term, as a result of a particular course or lesson (Bessom et al., 1981). Furthermore, music educators have been demonstrated to be capable of changing their opinions (Brewer et al., 2011) in order to be more aware and open-minded to a wide range of music.

In such contexts, the music teacher has to find an attractive teaching procedure in order to keep the pupils' interest, provoke their prejudices and expand and perhaps transform pupils' views, especially in secondary education where pupils have already formed musical and cultural attitudes. Practically, this infers that the music teacher has to put themselves in the pupils' shoes in order to understand their needs and to plan an appropriate lesson, as teaching music to adolescents requires great intuition and patience (Kenneth, 1996). The teacher must also know what music materials and experiences can be used to elicit these changes in music preferences (Bessom et al., 1980).

Cremades et al. (2010) concluded that a music lesson, which includes all musical and cultural styles that exist in the world, can motivate and draw the students to music as a school subject. In the teaching procedure, a criterion for selecting a music piece can be, for example, a well-known classical music piece, in order to motivate pupils to come in contact with other less known classical music pieces.

Furthermore, De Vries (2010) revealed in his research that when pupils are integrated actively in music lesson planning, particularly in terms of repertoire selection (songs to sing, songs to dance, music to be learnt and performed), they are likely to participate more positively and with enthusiasm and greater interest.

The connection between pupils' success in music activities and positive attitudes about the music lesson and the scheduled topic is strong. Regelski (1981) describes this connection as follows:

"failure motivates only pupils who already has both a positive attitude and goals that urge him on in the face of what he considers to be only a temporary setback...But for the student whose initial attitude is negative, doubting, or at best neutral, feelings of success are especially important in inspiring the positive feelings that motivate positive attitudes" (1981, p. 275).

Regelski states that pupils can adopt a positive view, respecting the traditional music of their country. They will understand the continuity of its rhythms and enjoy listening to these and dancing traditional songs.

In actuality, can a music course in secondary education alter pupils' views on a genre of music, such as Greek traditional music?

4. METHODS

The research method was qualitative in approach and adopted an action research perspective in which the teacher and researcher were the same person. This kind of investigation is designed to allow teachers to reflect and intervene more consciously in the teaching procedure, and to (re)assess pupils' behaviours and reactions during each lesson in order to achieve its goals effectively (Cohen et al., 2007; Hopkins, 2003).

The research aims of this project were to:

1. Identify pupils' opinions on Greek traditional music;
2. Examine if pupils changed their mind about Greek traditional music after attending a specially designed music course;
3. Scrutinize to what extent pupils changed their minds about Greek traditional music after attending such a music course;
4. Verify if pupils were able to express more objectively their opinion about this music; and
5. Record their disposition about Greek traditional music ten months after attending the original music course.

The music course took place in a state Junior High School in Greece (in an urban area) and n=42, 13-14 year old pupils, who were divided into two different groups, participated. They attended a 12-hour music lesson course that took place once a week (i.e., an hour a week from September -

December 2010), following the recommended curriculum of the Faculty of Music. Prior to the research, pupils' knowledge of Greek traditional music was limited. In primary school, they had just sung a few traditional songs, and they remembered only the titles and some musical phrases.

Data collection

Before the course, a questionnaire was distributed to all pupils (pre-test) containing 5 multiple-choice questions and 1 open-ended question. The same questionnaire was also distributed at the end of the course (post-test) and again after ten months (October 2011) as follow-up research. The results of the questionnaires were analyzed in a quantitative and qualitative way, using Content Analysis tools. The researcher announced to pupils that their answers would be confidential and that no classmates or teacher(s) could learn how they had responded. Much previous research agrees that teenagers are often strongly influenced by their classmates' preferences, thus underlining a potential discrepancy between what pupils think of their classmates' preferences and what type of music their classmates listen to (Finnäs, 1989 and Tarrant et al., 2001, cited in Papapanagiotou, 2009). Thus, the importance of this confidentiality clarification seemed to encourage pupils to express their opinion truly and freely during the completion of the questionnaire. Questions focused not only on the pupils' expression of their opinion, but also on outlining any family and close environment music preferences.

The questions were about:

- Family and friends music preferences;
- Their choice of listening to Greek traditional music;
- The amount of CDs held in Greek traditional music;
- Participation in Greek dancing lessons; and
- Free expression of their opinion about Greek traditional music (Open Question).

Teacher's actions before the lesson

The teacher planned the lessons, setting goals in accordance with the recommended instructions for teaching music in junior high school and pupils' handbooks and workbook activities. The lesson was enriched with appropriate educational materials (videos, photos, musical extracts etc.) and the teacher tried to combine all the above with pupils' interests and competences.

Teacher's actions during the lesson (participation observation)

The teacher implemented the planned activities, assessing the whole procedure during and at the end of the lesson. Activities were transformed/adapted when needed.

Teacher's action at the end of the lesson

Immediately after the end of each lesson, the teacher completed a diary, focusing on:

1. The achievement of lesson goals;

2. The pupils' participation in activities;
3. Their reaction to activities (if they liked the activities or not); and
4. Any evidence of a creative and co-operative classroom atmosphere.

Two pre-service music teachers for each group attended the lessons as external observers, writing their own diaries and focusing on the points mentioned above.

5. IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

The activities that took place were based on official recommendations, on the student's handbook and on activities selected by the music teacher. Pupils' preferences were also taken into consideration. The teaching material was enriched by songs and musical pieces from the students' environment.

Specifically, by the end of the course, the intentions were that pupils would have:

- Participated actively in creative activities;
- Co-operated with each other;
- Listened to, played percussion and sung Greek traditional rhythms and songs;
- Understood the continuity of traditional rhythms throughout the years;
- Recognized these rhythms in modern songs;
- Enjoyed the music lessons.

Lessons focused on creative activities, such as listening to music, composing and singing, following the thematic elements of:

- Greek traditional musical instruments;
- Greek traditional rhythms (5/8, 7/8, 9/8);
- The influence of the above rhythms on Greek contemporary music and other kinds of music.

In the new handbooks for the Music Faculty (edited 2009), a short chapter is dedicated to Greek traditional music. The contents of the student's book and workbook include:

- Musical rhythms in Greece (5/8, 7/8, 9/8);
- Traditional music / songs heard in islands and mainland (e.g. musical features in Thrace, Macedonia, Crete etc.);
- Traditional musical instruments and comparisons between similar instruments;
- Instrumental combinations, orchestras (=zygies, kompanies).

The suggested outcomes were written down in the teacher's book and referred mainly to the cognitive domain:

Pupils would:

- Come in contact with Greek traditional music and instruments;
- Understand and recognize traditional rhythms;
- Understand what isokratis means (Dimitrakopoulou et al., 2009).

The teaching material was enriched with various different music activities, such as the following:

(i) The use of CD-Rom material from the Music Library of Greece "Lilian Voudouri" on Greek Traditional Music

This multimedia CD-Rom contains: a) photos and short music examples of the majority of Greek Traditional Instruments in Hornbostel and Sachs categories and their basic combinations; b) short music examples from all over Greece, according to fundamental characteristics of each place (using a map); and c) an index. The presentation was based on pupils' interests, previous knowledge and their family birthplace. Pupils carefully watched the instruments and focused on those which interested them, listened to music related to their origin, identified instruments and distinguished one from the other. Activities were implemented in groups of 3-4. The "Music Library of Greece "Lilian Voudouri" provides this CD-Rom without charge to all schools.

(ii) Rhythms: playing with instruments and improvising verses

Pupils played in percussions 5/8, 7/8 and 9/8 in order to understand the grouping of these rhythms and afterwards to be able to follow these music patterns; they improvised lyrics (each syllable to each beat). They performed their rhythmic composition in groups and, then, every group self-evaluated its performance and the whole class assessed it, as well.

(iii) How Greek traditional songs are interrelated with classical works from 20th century composers and modern songs

In order for pupils to realize the role and the influence of a Greek traditional instrument (e.g. klarino) in different genres of music, the music teacher selected three typical musical examples: one from Greek traditional music, a classical music work composed from Yannis Konstadinidis (a Greek composer in 20th century by the Greek National School), and one from rock music.

Pupils completed a worksheet about similarities and differences of these types of music and they realized to what extent a traditional instrument influences, enriches and transforms these types of music.

(iv) Traditional dances

Music, words (logos) and movement have been a part of Greek traditional music since ancient times. In order for all pupils to participate actively and to understand this connection, a "feast" took place in the classroom. Pupils were split up into two groups: the first danced and sang and the second one performed and sang a song simultaneously. The music teacher actively participated with either one group or the other.

(v) Reference to important singers and ethnomusicologists, who recorded and saved traditional songs (e.g. Simon Karas and Domna Samiou).

The continuity of Greek traditional music, as traditional music all over the world, is based on oral tradition and improvisation. The role of scientists, such as musicologists, ethnomusicologists and researchers, who recorded and 'saved' this music is crucial. Simon Karas (1905-1999) and Domna Samiou (1928-2012) were two of the most important persons who collected, recorded and performed music from a new constructive society, which was basically formed in capital cities.

(vi) Listening exercises and crosswords from the students' workbook

In students' workbooks there are plenty of crosswords and listening exercises. These are mostly connected with musical rhythms and Greek traditional instruments.

Although all lessons were audio recorded, video recording was officially forbidden.

6. FINDINGS

The data collection was based on questionnaires and the diaries of both teacher and external observers. Their analysis is mostly quantitative.

i. External observation diaries on pupil participation

The external observers had to answer the following questions, either as closed or open in design. This differentiation was not planned from the beginning of the research, but after the first observation, they were asked to elaborate on their stated opinions in order to describe pupils' participation better.

Question 1: Were there problems during the lessons?

Question 2: Was the pupils' participation active?

Question 3: Was the pupils' participation enthusiastic, positive, neutral, hesitant or negative?

According to the external observers' diaries, all the implemented activities attracted pupils and motivated them. They were well scheduled by the teacher and appropriately paced to pupils' interests. Sometimes, pupils had expressed their prejudices at the beginning of the lesson and they participated hesitantly. Gradually, after finding the activities interesting, they took part more actively.

"The classroom atmosphere was negative today. Pupils refused to participate actively. Although the music teacher tried to present the Greek traditional instruments in an interactive framework, pupils refused to take part in the lesson. It was obvious that they felt bored. This atmosphere changed when the teacher asked about the music of their place of origin. At the same time, he presented the map of Greece on the interactive board and they listened to music of their origins. Suddenly, their attitude changed as like they recalled memories and events, which they had participated in feasts or because they had just heard of this genre of music".

From external observer's diary (October 2010)

"It is so impressive that pupils express their opinions and prejudices freely. They did not hesitate to express comments, such as: "This is interesting only for my grandma, who lives in the village", or "I refuse to listen to this kind of music". However, after a few minutes, everything changed. It seems that they forgot everything and participated

actively. They may have been influenced by their classmates. During the music lesson they changed their minds or they just found the activity interesting".

From external observer's diary (November 2010)

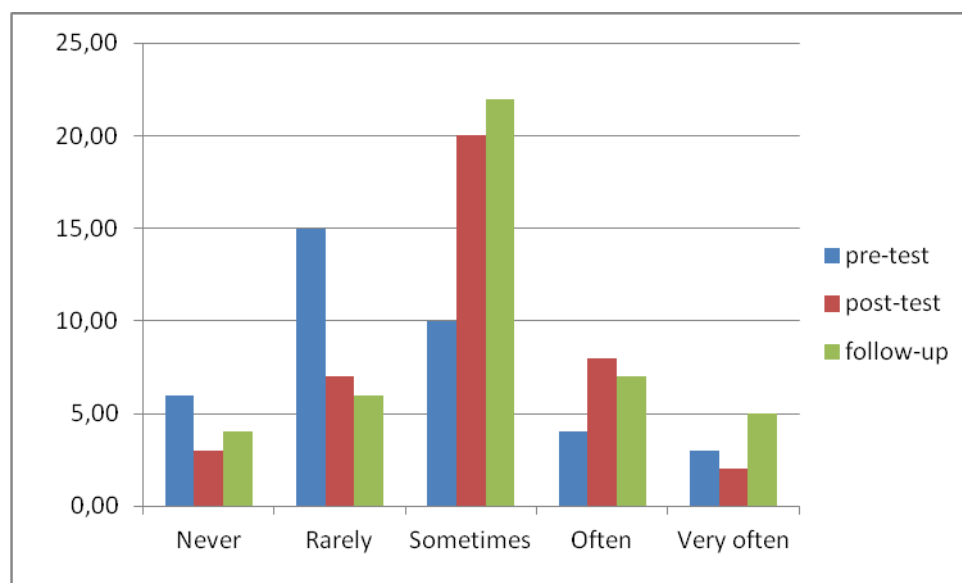
These delineations confirm Regelski's comment about the connection between positive attitudes towards music and motivation and success in musical activities (Regelski, 1981).

ii. Pre-test, post-test and follow-up questionnaires

The social and family backgrounds play an integral role in pupils' opinions about several topics, and in this case, music preferences.

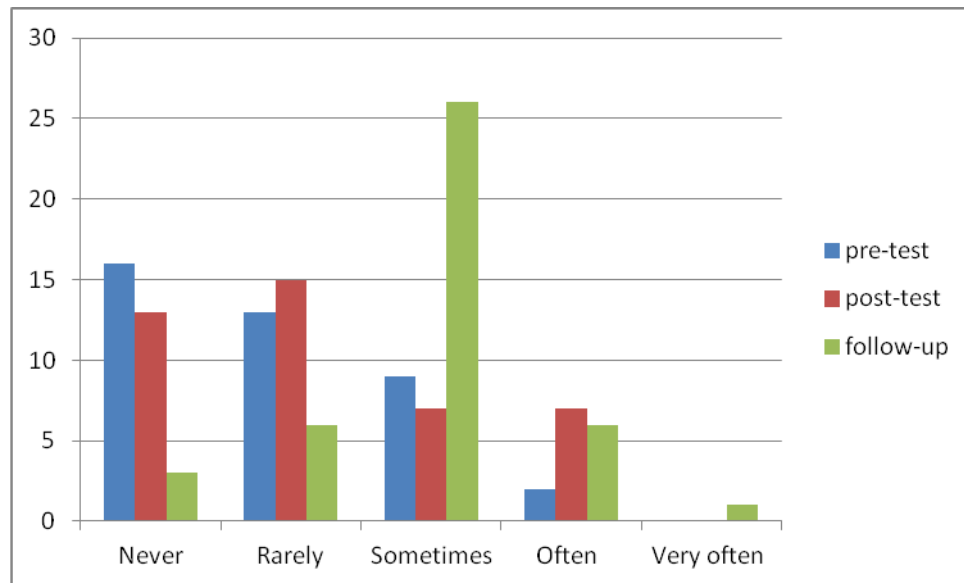
On Graph 1, it can be noticed that the answers of the majority of pupils (15 pupils) implied in the pre-test that their family/friends rarely preferred to listen to Greek traditional music and 10 pupils reported that this was the case sometimes. On the other hand, in the post-test and follow-up approximately half of the pupils changed their mind and answered that they sometimes prefer this genre of music (20 pupils in the post-test and 22 pupils in the follow-up). We should be very careful in interpreting this difference, as teenagers may have preconceived ideas about this type of music in the pre-test and they may have avoided mentioning their preference about a kind of music to which they are not so familiar with. Comparing the results of the post-test and follow-up, we can assume that these slight differences describe an almost real profile of their family/friends' music preferences. Their environment sometimes listens to Greek traditional music, maybe even occasionally.

Question 1: *Do your family or/and friends prefer listening to Greek traditional music?*



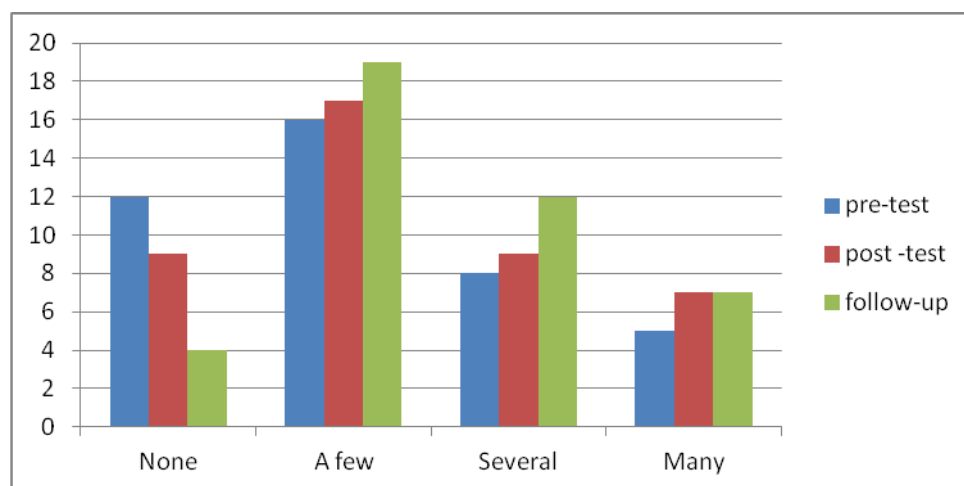
Graph 1

Although members of the participant adolescents' social environment were reported as sometimes listening to Greek traditional music according to the previous question, teenagers initially avoided listening to it and preferred other kinds of music. In the pre-test, 16 pupils never elected to listen to traditional music and 13 rarely did. These numbers changed in the post-test and surprisingly changed in the follow-up. N=26 pupils, more than half, were not so negative after the programme about this genre of music (Graph 2).

Question 2: *Do you prefer listening to Greek traditional music?*

Graph 2

As Greek traditional music played a fundamental role in our society in the past, there are many adults who prefer listening to this type of music and buy or collect CDs with traditional music of their origins. As mentioned earlier, teenagers are likely to be more or less influenced by their close environment. The answer to this question underlines to what extent they have realized or not that people of their environment own CDs of this type of music. It can be noticed that in the pre-test 12 pupils mentioned that there were none in their homes, a number which reduced in the post-test and the follow-up. It seems obvious that the quantity of compact discs did not increase suddenly, but perhaps that adolescents may have started searching for them (Graph 3).

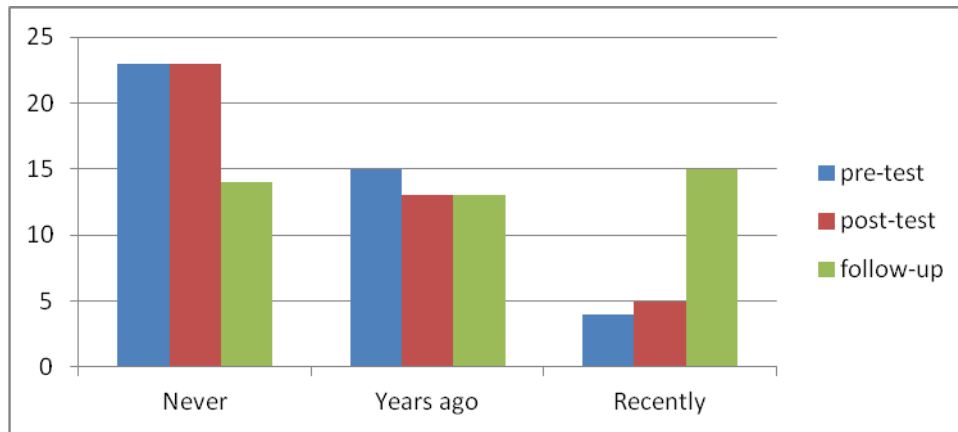
Question 3: *Have you/or your family got Greek traditional music CDs?*

Graph 3

Music – lyrics – and movement as a unity constitutes Greek traditional music. The provision of Greek traditional dance lessons allows an opportunity for participants to come into contact with rhythms, music and customs of Greece and (it was hoped) to develop a more positively objective opinion and attitude towards this type of music. Overall, just a few pupils had attended Greek

traditional dance lessons, which were provided in school at the end of their regular school lessons. Lessons were officially organized by the Municipality and participation was free. According to Graph 4 below, the majority of pupils had never attended dance lessons (23 pupils) and just a few of them had attended in the past (15 pupils). Follow-up research showed that, in the following school year, approximately 10 pupils were interested in taking dance lessons (Graph 4).

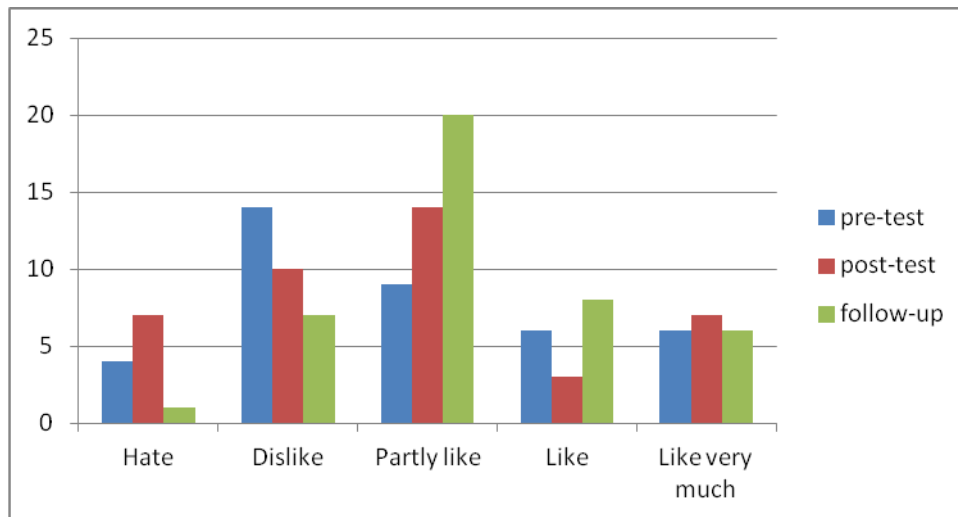
Question 4: *Have you ever attended Greek traditional dance lessons?*



Graph 4

Especially in the summer, in and out of the towns, traditional feasts take place with the participation of people of all ages. People dance and sing altogether during these feasts and have fun. As Graph 5 shows, in the pre-test 14 teenagers disliked this kind of participation and events, but they changed their minds in the post-test and the follow-up, as they partly enjoyed their participation in these feasts.

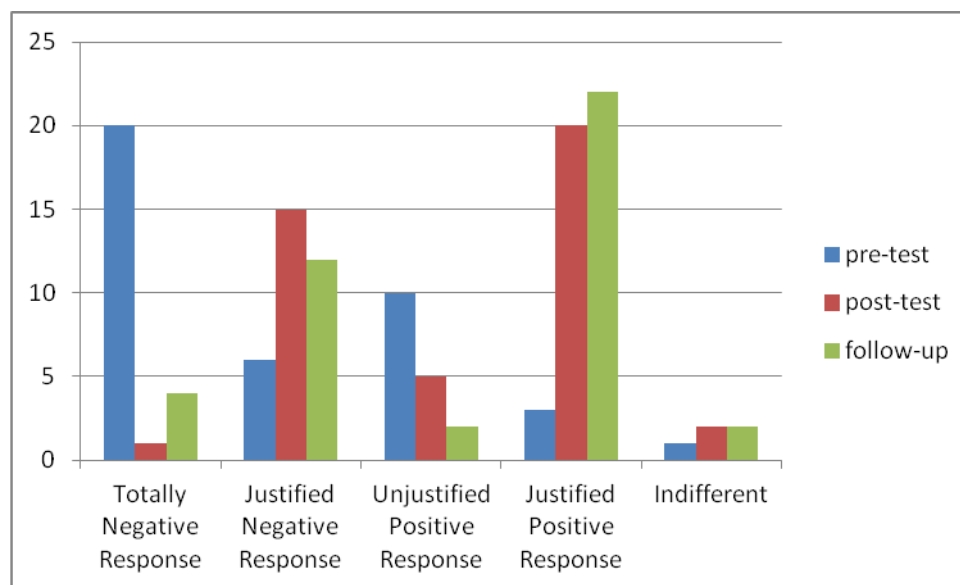
Question 5: *Have you ever been to Greek traditional feasts?*



Graph 5

Question 6 "What is your opinion on Greek traditional music? (Elucidate your opinion fluently)", was designed as an open question aimed to urge pupils freely to express their opinion about Greek traditional music. Answers in the pre-test showed that pupils had a preconception towards this type of music, as 20 of them, approximately half, responded totally negatively. After intervention, it would seem

that pupils realized the connection between Greek traditional music and Greek cultural heritage, understanding its importance for Greek society. This is clearly underlined, when 20 pupils, the same number as before, adopted a justified positive response at the end of the research. The number of these answers changed slightly in follow-up (22 pupils). Comparing the justified negative responses in the three questionnaires, we can notice that some pupils are still negative towards this type of music, but, simultaneously, they have formed their opinion and they are ready to elaborate on it. As a result, the number of unjustified positive responses diminished (Graph 6).



Graph 6

iii. Pupils' opinions

In the open question, the sixth one, participants provided textual opinions. From the example responses cited below, we notice the way Yorgos and Evangelia formed and changed their views during the implementation from the pretest, to the post-test and the follow-up study.

"I dislike Greek traditional music. Nobody else listens to it."
(Yorgos, Pre-test)

"Greek traditional music is definitely an important part of our culture, even though it is not my favorite kind of music. I prefer pop music."
(Yorgos, Post-test)

"Although I dislike Greek traditional music, I believe that traditional music is significant for each culture. It expresses the features of every society."
(Yorgos, Follow-up)

"I dislike Greek traditional music, because it doesn't address to my age group."
(Evangelia, Pre-test)

"Greek traditional music has played an integral role in Greek music evolution. Personally, I prefer listening to pop music, as I am more accustomed to it."
(Evangelia, Post-test)

"We should be very proud of our music, even if it is not our favorite."
(Evangelia, Follow-up)

7. CONCLUSION

The data analyses indicate that, although teenagers may come into the music class with a negative attitude towards Greek traditional music, a positive experience on a music course opens the possibility of a change of mind. It is perhaps likely that at the end of the series of lessons pupils might have changed their mind towards this genre of music as they may have been influenced by their peers, but it is really important to underline that they sustained the same opinion after a period of time. In addition, pupils who still had a negative approach to this music genre nevertheless reported that they appreciated it and understood its importance to our cultural heritage. Interestingly, they observed that Greek traditional music plays an integral role in society and that it can also play the same role in their life. Thus, they participated in Greek traditional dance lessons and they were not absolutely negative in their opinion elucidation afterwards. They were able to respect Greek traditional music and form a more rationale point of view, even if they had a negative emotional engagement with it. On the other hand, we have to take into consideration that just one course is not enough to transform pupils' views. This may be the main reason why all pupils who were negative were not able to give a justified response during the follow-up study.

Taking these conclusions into account, we have to find attractive ways to sustain this music topic over time, in order that pupils do not to lose contact with this genre of music and learn more about it.

8. DISCUSSION

The potential power of a series of music lessons to transform pupils' music preferences and dispositions and teacher effectiveness is also exemplified in Perakaki's (2006), Delsing et al. (2008), Dinopoulos's (2010) and Green's research (2007). They all agree that if music educators plan their lessons based on music activities that can motivate students, such as using thinking skills, new technologies and informal ways of learning, it is possible for pupils to respond positively and change their dispositions towards a genre of music.

A music educator should remember that the way they present the type of music to their pupils is crucial and plays a fundamental role in their preference cultivation, especially when they are not acquainted with this genre of music (Papapanayiotou, 2009; Stavrou, 2006). It is really fundamental to follow such a teaching approach, as we want "to make pupils more aware and open-minded, both in relation to whatever music has already contributed to their identities and to a wider range of music lying beyond" (Green, 2007, p. 243).

On the other hand, we have to take into consideration that students prefer the music lessons to incorporate a genre of music which addresses their age and taste, such as modern music (Ekonomidou-Stavrou, 2007).

A balance of both is presented as the best solution to this problem. According to the aims of music and aesthetic education, pupils should understand the music of their environment both now and later in life, acting without preconceived notions as far as possible. As a result, the presentation and

contact with all genres of music will help them to encode their musical environment in the present and the future. The music lesson can prove to be a catalyst "for broadening teenagers' musical identities, which are perhaps, not necessarily so imposed by the mass media, or so narrow as they might have been at first" (Green, 2007, p. 243).

Furthermore, music education aims to broaden students' understanding and appreciation of various styles of music and aiming to change students' attitudes (preferences) toward unfamiliar styles of music, as a result of exposure and learning about new types of music (Hugh, 2000; Teo, 2003).

In a nutshell, musical preferences are differentiated during the course of life, as each personality develops and changes (Papapanagiotou, 2009). Music is a great teaching tool with which music educators can become effective (Brewer et al., 2011) and help pupils to overlap borders and obstacles. Thus, they can broaden their musical minds and their perspectives, obtain positive dispositions towards different musical genres and construct a life-long relationship between music and themselves.

9. FUNDING

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

10. REFERENCES

- Argyriou, M. (2011). Factors which influence pupils' preferences in music education according to genre (in Greek), *Hellenic Journal of Music Education and Culture*, 2(5), Retrieved 15 March, 2012, from <http://hejmec.eu/ojs-2.2.4/index.php/HeJMEC/article/view/13>.
- Bessom M.E., Tatarunis A.M. & Forcucci S.L. (1980). *Teaching music in today's secondary schools: A creative approach to contemporary music education*. USA: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Brewer, R. D., Lindquist, C. & Altemueller, L. (2011). The dispositions improvement process. *International Journal of Instruction*, 4(2), e-ISSN: 1308-1470.
- Cohen, L. Manion, L. & Morrison K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. New York: Routledge.
- Cremades, R., Lorenzo, O. & Herrera, L. (2010). Musical tastes of secondary school students' with different cultural backgrounds: a study in the Spanish North African city of Melilla. *Musicae Scientiae*, XIV(1), 121-141.
- Delsing, M., Bogt, T., Engels, R. & Meeus, W. (2008). Adolescents, music preferences and personality characteristics. *European Journal of Personality*, 22, 109-130 DOI: 10.1002/per.665.
- De Vries P. (2010). What we want: the music preferences of upper primary school students and the ways they engage with music. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 1, 3-16. ERIC: EJ912411.
- Dimitrakopoulou, M., Tzenou, M. & Androutsos, P. (2009). *Music (teacher books, student books and workbooks for 8th and 9th grade general public schools)*. Athens: Organization of Publishing Teaching Books.
- Dinopoulos, K. (2010). The teaching of music, and particularly Greek traditional music, with the use of new technologies: an experimental research project in elementary education (in Greek), *Musical Pedagogics*, 8, 94-122.
- Ekonomidou-Stavrou, N. (2007). Sound worlds to teach in the Cypriot Music Curriculum for Primary school: Educational policy, teachers' priorities and children's preferences (in Greek). Symeonidis P. (ed.) *"In search of cultural identity in music education"*, 5th Conference Proceedings of GSME: June 29th-July 1st, Thessaloniki: Greece.
- Elliott, D. J. (1995). *Music matters: A new philosophy of music education*. Oxford: University Press.

- Fry, D. and Fry, C. (1997). 'Culture and conflict resolution models: exploring alternatives to violence', in D. Fry and K. Bjorkqvist (Eds.), *Cultural variations in conflict resolution*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Green, L. (2007). Classical music, teenagers' taste, and the classroom: some findings from a curriculum research and development project. Symeonidis P. (ed.) "*In search of cultural identity in music education*", 5th Conference Proceedings of GSME: June 29th-July 1st, Thessaloniki: Greece.
- Harter.S. (1999). *The construction of the self: A developmental perspective*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Hopkins, D. (2003). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Hugh, B. (2000). *Can musicians alter the music preferences of their audience? The effect of pre-performance informational presentations on music preference*. Retrieved 13 December, 2012, from <http://brenthugh.com/piano/musicpreference.pdf> .
- Kenneth, P. H. (1996). *Teaching kids to sing*. Ohio: Wadsworth.
- Papapanagiotou, X. (2004). Adolescence, music and education (in Greek), *Musical Pedagogics*, 1, 49-66.
- Papapanagiotou, X. (2006). Greek students' musical preferences in relation to age and musical training (in Greek), *Musical Pedagogics*, 3, 5-30.
- Papapanagiotou, X. (2009). Social influence and music: some things to stress in education (in Greek, Κοινωνική επιρροή και μουσική: Μερικές επισημάνσεις για τη εκπαίδευση). In Papapanagiotou, X. (ed) *Music Education Issues*, Thessaloniki: GSME.
- Perakaki, E. (2006). Cultivating thinking skills in order to form high school pupils' opinion about Greek traditional music (in Greek).
- Proceedings in the 1st International Educational Conference: Folk Culture and Education, September 29th–October1st, Volos: Greece. Retrieved 28 March, 2012, from <http://www.eipe.gr/images/pdf/paradosiakimousikiosmeso/5perakaki.pdf>.
- Regelski, T. A. (1981). *Teaching general music: Action learning for middle and secondary schools*. New York: Schirmer Books.
- Rentfrow, P.J., Goldberg, L.R. & Levitin, D.J. (2011). The Structure of Musical Preferences: A Five – Factor Model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 100(6), 1139-1157.
- Stavrou, S. (2006). Teachers' dispositions about selection and teaching Greek traditional music (in Greek: Απόψεις των εκπαιδευτικών σχετικά με την επιλογή και διδασκαλία παραδοσιακής μουσικής), Proceedings in the 1st International Educational Conference: Folk Culture and Education, September 29th– October1st, Volos: Greece. Retrieved 28 March 2012, from <http://www.eipe.gr/images/pdf/paradosiakimousikiosmeso/5stavrou.pdf>
- Teklos, P. (2011). *An Investigation into Pupils' Attitudes towards Secondary Music Education in Cyprus*. Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Hull.
- Teo, T. (2003). Relationship of selected musical characteristics and music preference. *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 3. Retrieved 15 December, 2012, from <http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/>

ELISSAVET PERAKAKI

Affiliation

Elissavet Perakaki is an assistant director and a music teacher in a State High School in Pireaus (Greece). She holds a Ph.D in the field of Music Education (University of Athens, Department of Musical Studies, 2009) and has a degree in Musical Studies from the same University. She has worked in primary and secondary schools and in conservatories (she has taught guitar and music theory). She wrote book reviews for the Music Library of Greece "Lilian Voudouri" (1997-2003). She has actively participated in a number of seminars relating to her work and interests. She has written two books in Greek (Fagotto, 2008 & 2009).