

Introduction: New focuses in research in music education

Research on music education is an area of study that started its journey in the early twentieth century in the USA, around the National Association for Music Education. The first meetings of music education teachers and researchers were organised through annual conferences, at which the initial focus was on essentially musical content, such as new ways of teaching and learning rhythmic aspects (Molnar, 1955). These early stages were also marked by the need for in-depth consideration of training of music teachers in primary and secondary education, conservatories and music schools. This opened a path to study areas of learning that could favour musical appreciation and sensitivity. The aim was to actively participate in the development of psychomotor process (acquiring skills), cognitive process (acquiring knowledge), and, in particular, affective process (receiving, internalising, and sharing what is learnt), which is undoubtedly one of the dimensions that to which music contributes most (Cox & Steven, 2016).

Building on these initial studies, the path of research in music education has seen significant growth thanks to the interchange of collaborative experiences between different areas and disciplines, which have worked jointly on music research through studies of proven methodological quality, in line with other areas based on the clearest academic tradition. This inter-, multi- and trans-disciplinary approach has made a very important contribution, as shown in the emerging lines of research that link music education with educational sciences, pedagogy, technology, psychology, sociology, emotional education, and neuroscience, among others (Barret, 2023).

What is more, this path of research in music education has been favoured not only by the diffusion of articles in specialist journals, but also by the contribution in thematic monographic issues of education journals that aim to showcase the research carried out in the different areas of the field of education. I would therefore like to thank the **Revista Española de Pedagogía** for enabling this monographic issue to take shape with the publication of five articles that make important contributions to bringing the scientific corpus up to date in different lines of research in music education; we hope they will help readers enrich their outlook on music education.

The article “Bibliometric study of the scientific production on music education in Spain (1978–2022)”, by the researchers Gregorio Vicente-Nicolás and Judith Sánchez-Marroquí reinforces one of the ideas with which this monographic issue originated, as focusses on analysing Spanish academic production in music education in recent decades, establishing a ranking of most-cited articles and most productive authors, and determining which thematic lines are most frequent. It is a very interesting and necessary study, which, as an innovation among review studies, analyses the bibliometric laws proposed by Ardanuy (2012), which serve to address directly the proposed objectives. Among its findings, an increase in Spanish academic output since 2014 is apparent. Among its conclusions, it is worth noting that the most common trends in music education are grouped around methodology, teacher training, technology, creativity, innovation, performance, emotions, music therapy, interculturality, or inclusive education. Besides, Spain is one of the most productive countries in music education, technology, and creativity.

For its part, the article “Instrumental practice to shape character: educational possibilities from a perspective of musical craftsmanship”, by David González-Llopis, shows the parallels existing between instrumental practice in the conservatory and the concept of *character education* based on two classic works by Aristotle, *Politics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. This concept, along with the perspective of craftsmanship, underline the importance of instrumental proficiency as the cornerstone of the teaching-learning process. This reflection highlights the criticism of current formative practice in professional instrumental training contexts, concluding that it is necessary to adapt the educational framework and consider not only technical questions, but also the needs of people in their development.

In the article “Music education’s contribution to the development of emotional intelligence in adolescents and its effect on the gender variable”, the authors, Ana-María Botella-Nicolás and Inmaculada Retamero-García, offer an interesting work centred on displaying the contributions of music education to the development of emotional intelligence in a developmental stage as complex as adolescence. This study includes psychological, sociological, and musical aspects to respond to the demands of the educational setting associated with the deficiencies in emotional intelligence observed in young people. It is in this stage that music can play an important role as it is a medium for expressing emotions that contributes to their development by improving the individual’s sensitivity and emotional control. The main findings of this study are that there are differences in emotional intelligence by age and gender of participants, and that, in the case of musicians, these levels are significantly higher. Therefore, the authors conclude that music strengthens the development of emotional competences and produces benefits applicable to the educational context.

The next article, “The music that new generations listen to: preferences and stereotypes”, by Roberto Cremades-Andreu, Carlos Lage-Gómez and Arantza-Campollo Urkiza, features the invaluable participation of one of the most important researchers of the social psychology of music in the international panorama, Professor David J. Hargreaves. This work emphasises the social function that young people attribute to music and how they relate to one another through it given its profound implications in the creation of individual identity. The results show that the styles of popular urban music are the ones preferred by young people, with older respondents listening to a wider range of styles than the younger ones, and female respondents favouring mainstream musical trends and Latin music. Generation, personality, and behaviour are the stereotypes they most associate with their preferences. These findings underline that, despite being a recurring subject of research over recent decades, the meaning that young people give music is still an important aspect to consider in their education, with continued work to strengthen their listening ability and critical capacity in music classes being necessary.

Lastly, the article “Colombia Creativa Artists’ Professionalisation Programme (PPACC - Programa de Profesionalización de Artistas Colombia Creativa): Evaluation of the organisation and musical training accomplished”, by Oswaldo Lorenzo-Quiles, Ana Lendínez-Turón, and Yuly Rodríguez-Ramírez focuses on displaying the functioning and achievements in music training of the Colombia Creative Professionalisation Programme for Artists (PPACC), an initiative funded by Colombia’s Ministry of Culture with the aim of providing music training to professional musicians who did not have the opportunity to certify officially their level of achievement of musical competences in an academic institution. The most important results of this research reveal the difficulties in attending the educational centres where the programme is delivered owing to financial or employment differences among participants, as well as insufficient training for the staff entrusted with teaching the programme to cater for professionals with different levels of musical competence. Therefore, while this initiative is coherent and satisfactory, it should be open to reflection and dialogue to improve and adapt to the different levels of the music teaching-learning process of these professionals.

Each of the articles included in this monographic issue helps bring knowledge in music education research up to date. They also raise new questions and research perspectives to continue delving into the thematic lines that have been presented: the valuation of non-formal music training programmes, the importance of character education in professional instrumental training, musical identity and the meaning of music for current generations, the

contributions of music education to the development of emotional intelligence, and providing a snapshot of Spain's scientific production on music education.

To finish, it is important to thank the authors of such well-written works, as well as the often unrecognised work of the anonymous reviewers who, with their comments, have contributed to improving the articles that comprise this monographic issue.

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