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EXPERIENCE AND ATTITUDE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS GREGORIAN SINGING

Izvirni znanstveni članek / Original Scientific Article

Abstract

Gregorian singing is a part of liturgical tradition of Western-European Christianity. It is a special type of singing sprung from the Church of Roman ritual for the needs of church service. The specificity of Gregorian coral's music expression is entailed in modal monody which is inseparable from the text. With its overriding the ancient music practice (Greece, Jewish music) and alongside the influence of local specificities in the West, Gregorianics gave way to later vocal forms. In primary education, Gregorian singing isn't represented in the school subject Music according to the Teaching Curriculum prescribed by the Republic of Croatia's Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. The aim of the paper is to examine the experience and attitude of students in primary education towards Gregorian singing. The research used audio questionnaire with five music examples of Gregorian singing. It was implemented in the school year 2016/2017 on 110 students of primary school Galdovo (Sisak, Croatia). The results have shown that pupils express liking (positive attitude) towards the heard examples of Gregorian singing although most of them didn't hear Gregorian singing before. The subjects expressed the desire to get to know Gregorian singing more deeply during Music lessons. More than 80% of them considered Gregorian singing to be soothing and pleasant.

Keywords: music, Gregorian singing, primary education, students, standpoints

Izvlaček

Izkušnje in odnos osnovnošolcev do gregorijanskega petja

Gregorijansko petje je del liturgične tradicije zahodnoevropskega krščanstva. Gre za posebno vrsto petja, ki je nastalo v Cerkvi rimskega obreda za potrebe bogoslužja. Posebnost glasbenega izraza gregorijanskega korala označuje modalna monodija, ki je neločljivo povezana z besedilom. Gregorijanika je bila s premoščanjem antične glasbene prakse (Grčija, judovska glasba) in ob vplivu krajevnih posebnosti na Zahodu glavni temelj zametkov kasnejših vokalnih oblik. V primarnem izobraževanju skladno z Učnim načrtom in programom za osnovno šolo Ministrstva za znanost, izobraževanje in šport Republike Hrvaške, gregorijansko petje ni vključeno v predmet Glasbena kultura. Namen prispevka je preučiti doživljanje in stališča osnovnošolcev do gregorijanskega petja. V raziskavi smo uporabili avditivni vprašalnik s petimi glasbenimi primeri gregorijanskega petja. Raziskava je bila izvedena v šolskem letu 2016/2017, v njej pa je sodelovalo 110 učencev iz Osnovne šole Galdovo (Sisak, Hrvaška). Izsledki so pokazali, da učenci izražajo naklonjenost (pozitiven odnos) do slišanih primerov gregorijanskega petja, čeprav ga večina še nikoli prej ni slišala. Udeleženci raziskave so izrazili željo po poglobljenem poznavanju gregorijanskega petja med urami Glasbene kulture. Več kot 80 % udeležencev gregorijansko petje namreč doživlja kot pomirjujoče in prijetno.

Ključne besede: glasbena kultura, gregorijansko petje, osnovna šola, učenci, stališča

Gregorian singing as the foundation of Western European cultural and musical heritage

Gregorian singing presents a various repertory of Christian monodic music, which was created and standardised in the first millennium for liturgical rituals of the Roman church. These rituals include Eucharistic Celebration and the Liturgy of the Hours¹ (Martinjak, 1997). Following the standardisation of Western Christian singing, This type of singing was named after Pope Saint Gregory the Great (c. 540-604), following the standardisation of western Christian singing. Totality of Gregorian heritage was generated by joining different local traditions of liturgical singing which had been created until the eight century (Koprek, 2013). One of the essential qualities of Gregorian melody is a close link with the text which was most frequently based on the Scripture. So, it represents the sound image of a certain Biblical text. The exceptions are Gregorian hymns and later created sequences in which we find strophic and prose types of poetry from the first millennium of Christianity. Due to the fact which testifies that Gregorian chant is a singed prayer, this type of singing got the name *holy singing* (Martinjak, 1997; Koprek, 2013).

Recognisability of Gregorian melody has been shaped through many centuries. Its main characteristics are: unison singing, diatonic singing based on the tonal scales without the chromatics, free rhythm singing which follows the law of spoken words giving the melody its naturalness, spontaneity, festiveness and serenity; and finally, modal singing founded on the tonal system of eight scales or modes of the Old Church (Martinjak, 1997).

In the cultural sense, Gregorian singing as art overrides the ancient Greek and Jewish musical practice by incorporating the spirit of Western Christianity. That makes Gregorian singing a foundation of a great part of Early Modern Times European music practice. Musicologist Jacques Challey (2006) claims that not only old traditions were passed around in the old convents, but also new musical techniques which lead to today's music must have been created.

Since Christian singing was in the making since the beginning of Christianity, exclusively for the needs of Service, it incorporated in itself many older traditions. Martinjak (1997) stresses that, although today's Gregorian repertory was created in later centuries, the way, purpose and style of liturgical singing were transferred into compositions which were being made later.

Despite the fact that liturgy in Jerusalem temples used various string, wind and percussion instruments, Christians have nonetheless taken psalmody from Hebrew musical culture, the way it was practiced in synagogues. This type of singing was based on modular reciting in free non-metrical rhythm which connects psalmody, as the foundation of

¹ Repertory of Eucharistic Celebration or Mass consists of parts that vary or the proper (proprium): Introit (introitus), Gradual (graduale), Sequence (sequentia), Alleluia (alleluia), Trop (tropus), Tract (tractus), Offertory (offertorium) and Communion (communio). Invariable parts are: Lord, Have Mercy (Kyrie eleison), Glory (Gloria), Creed (Credo), Sacred, Blessed (Sanctus, Benedictus) and Lamb of God (Agnus Dei). Repertory for the Liturgy of the Hours consists of: a hymn (hymnus), antiphony (antiphona), psalm (psalmus), responsory (responsorium) and song of praise (cantica).

Gregorianics, with Jewish tradition established in the fourth or third century BC. Liturgical exclamations *amen* and *alleluia* are of Hebrew origin. Alongside them, Hebrew chants most probably came into Christian liturgy as well (Chailley, 2006).

One of the important elements which Gregorian chant inherits from the music of the aforementioned are melismata, i.e. singing certain word syllables, frequently connected to singing the last syllable of *alleluia* exclamation. Such melisma is called *jubilus*. Very early in church music's theory, in the third century, we read about the function of melismata in St. Augustus, '...the one who exclaims doesn't pronounce the words, but expresses one's own joy with unarticulated sounds. In the rapture of his/her cheer, things, which can be understood, are no longer enough, but one is surrendered to a sort of a happy cry without words' (Chailley, 2006, p. 31).

Christians adopt musical theory and philosophy from Greek musical practice. Looking upon moral interpretations of church modal scales according to Greek ways, Chailley (2006) states that only Greek musical theory could have provided a solid technical foundation for church music. However, unlike Greek music, which was also inclined to chromatics, singing in the Western Church, due to moral reasons, completely abandoned small intervals. With Boethius and Cassiodorus writings about music, Greek theory survived the Middle Ages.

We find out about the beginnings of three musical types of Christian singing, which can represent free forms in the course of liturgical gatherings (Fučak, 1998), as early as from the Scripture. In his Epistle to the Ephesians 5, 19 Saint Paul encourages, 'Talk to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.' Words of the apostles in 16,25 also testify to purposeful singing in prayer, 'About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.' Cultural dimension of singing is evident in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, 'When you come together and some have praise, some the wisdom, some revelation, language, explanation – all be it for our betterment.' Pedagogical-didactical purpose of music is visible in the Epistle to the Colossians 3,16, 'Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.'

Latin Christian poetry appeared for the first time in the third century and it is the basis of modern versification and musical rhythmic. Poets of Comedian and Genoa circle cease to use then obsolete classical metrics and apply the metrics of Latin language of their time. Later, this poetry will be the foundation of quality medieval hymns and sequences. Genesis of hymns starts as the Church's response to heretical poems in strophes. They were created in the East and they spread to the West in the fourth century. They represent the folk element in Gregorian chant in the form of stanzas, rhymes and clear rhythm (Chailley, 2006).

According to testimony of John Deacon, Pope Gregory I composed the antiphony, the collection of texts from chants sang in Mass, and founded *Scholae cantorum* whose goal was to disseminate new Gregorian chants through cantors educated in Rome (Chailley, 2006). However, more recent research speak in favour of the fact that the oldest liturgical books from which people sang were edited as late as after Pope Gregory and that the concept of 'Gregorian' derives from the manuscript so called due to the holiday texts in accordance with the 'Gregorian' calendar of church holidays from the eight century (Koprek, 2013).

The repertory of liturgical singing of Western Church was standardised and almost finally defined with the reform of Gregorian singing which lasted more than 200 years, as long as until the ninth century (Chailley, 2006).

Listening in the school subject Music

Listening area is the youngest dimension of school subject Music because it is closely linked to technology and media's development (Rojko, 2012). According to the *National teaching curriculum of Ministry of Science, Education and Sport* of the Republic of Croatia (2013), the tasks of listening include getting to know all forms of music ranging from artistic music, folk music (domestic and foreign), to jazz and popular genres of all kinds. Listening focus is based on the development of listening concentration and ability to analyse a music work. This leads to forming basic aesthetic criteria for music's evaluation.

Alongside the artistic, music listening also has an educational role. This role is directed towards listening perception ability's development and perceiving musical expressive components of the composition. This implies determining the character, tempo, performers, and dynamics. Musical form of the piece is also identified in the third grade of primary school. The stated suggests that music listening requires students' active listening approach (Dobrota, 2012). Listening in itself is based on experience for which previous musical knowledge is not needed. McAnally (2007) considers teacher's lead in the listening process necessary for students' music listening. Rojko (2012) states it is possible to train all teachers for leading the listening activity, regardless of their musical ability. Primary educational degree does not require strict expert-musical approach.

Oblak (2001) stresses that guided listening is experiential-analytic listening. According to Denac (2010), such listening includes emotion and cognition. The combination of experiences in the shape of emotional reaction and analyticity, through analysis of certain musical elements, are the foundation for systematic and active music listening and understanding.

Gregorian singing as a specific musical form is not represented in the listening component of the school subject Music in primary education in the first four forms. Considering the cultural significance of Gregorianics, as the basis of a great part of the later musical and

European practice, this work aimed at pointing out the importance of listening to Gregorian singing in teaching music in the first four grades of primary school.

Methodology

The problem and goal of the research

The problem of the research is grounded in the fact of Gregorian chant's non-inclusiveness in the listening component of Music in primary education in Croatia. Main goal of the research was to examine students' standpoints about examples of Gregorian singing they listened to, and to gain insight into their interest for deeper familiarization with Gregorian singing. Secondary research goal was based on examining students' standpoints towards the subject Music and the areas within the subject. The number of students with musical education outside regular classes was also determined.

The methodology of the research

Primary work method is based on descriptive and causally non-experimental method of research.

Sample

The research was done in primary school Galdovo in Sisak in June 2017. Hundred and ten pupils participated in the research.

Chart 1 displays the school research groups according to age, number of enrolled children and number of children who participated. 46.4 % of the subjects who participated in the research were boys and 53.6 % girls.

Chart 1: Structure of students according to the school grade they are in (N=110)

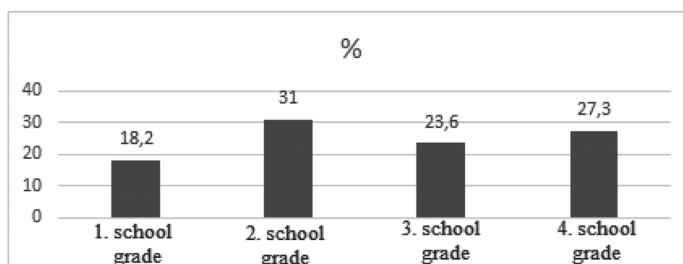


Chart 1 shows that most participant were from the second school grade, 34 students (31 %), while there were only 20 students (18.2 %) from the first school grade.

Instrument

Independent questionnaire was constructed for the needs of the research. Data of objective type were gathered (gender, form, attending musical education) and subjective type (opinions about certain phenomena). Dichotomously set questions and the questions of five-degree scale of ordinal type were used. The questions were of closed type, all apart from one open question. Questionnaire's validity was checked with the method of internal consistency of ordinal scale. *Cronbach Alfa* validity coefficient was calculated and it showed satisfactory level of questionnaire's reliability ($\alpha = 0.790$).

Data analysis and the used statistical methods

Gathered data were processed in Excel programme 2010. Descriptive statistics was used for basic data analysis. Indicators expressed in absolute (f) and relative frequencies (%) were figured out for nominal and ordinal variables. Arithmetic mean (M), mode (Mo), median (Md), standard deviation (SD) and the measure of normal distribution (kurtosis and skewness) were calculated for interval variables.

Results of the research and their interpretation

According to the *National Teaching Curriculum of Croatian Ministry of Education, Science and Sports* (2013), the areas represented in the first three forms of primary school are: singing, playing a musical instrument, music listening and elements of musical creativity. Subject teaching starts in the fourth form and, apart from singing, listening and performing music, musical notation and games are introduced.

Considering the subjects' age, 94.5 % of them stated they participate in Music classes gladly. In the multiple choice question pupils stated they like to sing the most (80 %), listen to music (67.3 %), perform musical games (54.7 %) and play children's instruments (34.5 %). Only 13.6 % of the subjects state that rhymes are their favourite musical activity.

In the open type question subjects stated in which of the aforementioned activities they participate most gladly in Music classes.

Chart 2: Students' inclination for musical activities (N=110)

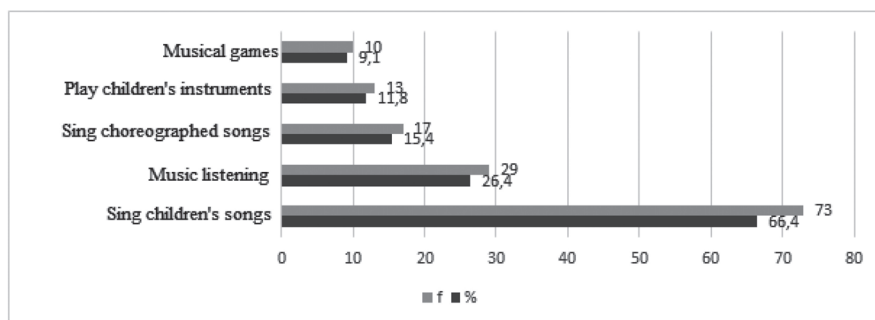
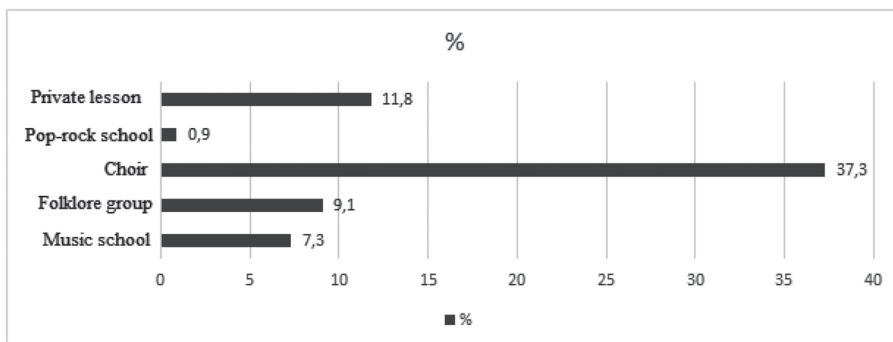


Chart 2 displays absolute and relative frequencies about music areas which student like the most. 66.4 % of them sing children’s songs most gladly, while as little as 9.1 % prefer to participate in musical games. 26.4 % of the students ranked music listening as favourite area in Music classes. 15.4 % of them most preferably sings choreographed songs, and 11.3 % of the pupils play children’s instruments most gladly. The link of singing songs as a favourite activity is most frequent with children and teachers both. Research has shown that educational workers practice singing songs most preferably and that they feel the most pleased when signing (Šulentić Begić, 2006; Cakić, Šulentić Begić and Begić, 2015). Students’ inclination towards certain musical area and type of music contents could be linked to teacher’s inclinations to specific musical areas. Hamann and Ebie (2009) point out that the affinity toward certain musical areas and type of musical content is connected with a sense of closeness to some musical content in the course of whose performance enough self-esteem is felt. Hesterman (2012) states that positive or negative self-image can be reflected upon work success. It can also influence teachers to choose musical activities in which they feel pleased and capacitated more frequently when working with children.

The number of children who attend extracurricular musical classes was examined. Seventy-three pupils (66.4 %) go to music school, folklore group, are member of a choir (school, church or city), attend pop-rock school or have private music tutoring. The results are presented in Chart 3.

Chart 3: Students’ musical activities outside regular Music classes (N=110)



Most subjects, 37.3 %, sing in a choir, while the least attend pop-rock school (0.9 %). 7.3 % of the students go to music school, while 9.1 % of them are a part of some folklore group. 11.8 % of the students learn music privately.

Subjects have expressed their attitudes towards the examples of Gregorian singing they listened to on a five-degree ordinal scale (1 means I don’t like it fully; 5 means I like it completely). Auditive part of the questionnaire was composed of five musical examples of Gregorian singing. Each example was listened to for 30 seconds, after which students assessed the level of liking each example. The results are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Students' attitude towards the examples of Gregorian chorale they listened to (N=110)

	N	Min	Max	M	Md	Mo	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
<i>Regina coeli</i>	110	1	5	3.6	4	5	1.41	-0.62	-0.92
<i>Lumen et revelationem</i>	110	1	5	3.54	4	5	1.25	-0.48	-0.71
<i>Ubi caritas</i>	110	1	5	3.72	4	5	1.25	-0.61	-0.61
<i>Ave regina coelorum</i>	110	1	5	3.78	4	5	1.36	-0.98	-0.23
<i>Victimae paschali laudes</i>	110	1	5	4.37	5	5	1.16	-1.86	2.34

According to arithmetic mean, it is visible from Table 1 that students partially like or dislike the heard examples of Gregorian singing. The highest arithmetic mean in the positive attitude was expressed for the chant *Victimae paschali laudes* ($M = 4.37$), and the lowest for *Lumen et revelationem* ($M = 3.54$). The mode shows that all students liked the heard examples completely ($Md = 5$). The listened to Gregorian chants are in their structure syllabic and syllabic-neumatic melodies.² *Regina coeli* is a simple Easter Marian antiphony of syllabic nature in which almost every syllable has one tonal pitch. It is of cheerful and merry character so it communicates well with the listener, especially children. *Lumen ad revelationem* is an antiphony³ of a simple and syllabic style. The melody was created in the VIII, hypomixolydian mode which is by its character strong and festive, capable of expressing solemn atmosphere and celebration (Martinjak, 1997). *Ubi caritas* is a gift song of the Lord's Mass on Holy Thursday Dinner. It belongs to syllabic-neumatic style and the VI, hypolydian mode. It is of peaceful and contemplative character. *Ave, Regina coelorum* is a simple Marian antiphon of syllabic style. The melody belongs to the VI, hypophrygian mode. *Victimae paschali laudes* is a syllabic sequence⁴ (Ljubičić, 2007) of Easter and Easter Week. It is realised in the I, Doric mode which leaves us with an impression of dignity and calm (Martinjak, 1997).

The subjects have stated that 28.2 % had heard the chorale before the auditive questionnaire. This can be linked to children's religious practice. Gregorian chant is the foundation of Roman Catholic liturgy and can be heard in the chants of priests as well as in the prayer Our Father.

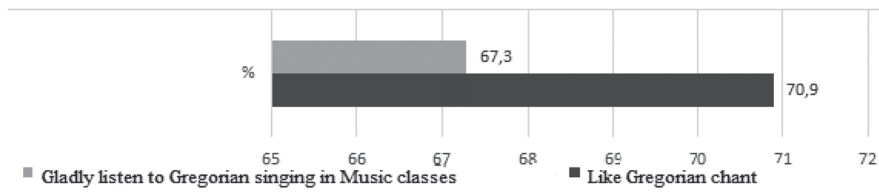
2 Gregorian repertory is divided into three groups according to the melody's complexity. Syllabic style presents simple melodies in which one tonal pitch corresponds with each syllable in the text (each syllable is sung to a single tone). Neumatic style has more embellished melody due to the syllables which have two or three tones. Melismatic chants are the most ornate, which have elaborate melodies on long sustained vowels putting forward sound interpretation of certain words and their context (Martinjak, 1997).

3 Antiphone is a short line in the Scripture which has a double role: musical, because it introduces the psalmody, and liturgical, because it foretells the content of the psalm that follows (Martinjak, 1997).

4 Sequence is a musical-poetic subtype of hymns. It first appeared in the eighth century and it is sung in Eucharistic Celebration, unlike hymns (Ljubičić, 2007).

The subjects have stated whether they liked Gregorian chant by answering the dichotomously set question and if they would like to listen to it in Music classes. The results are displayed in Chart 4.

Chart 4: Students' standpoints on Gregorian singing (N=110)



Subjects express liking Gregorian chant in high percentage (70.9 %), and 67.3 % of them would gladly listen to Gregorian singing in Music classes.

Considering the musical specificity of Gregorian singing, the way this music effects the students was examined. The questions were set dichotomously (yes/no) with polarised adjectives. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Gregorian singing's influence on the subjects (N=110)

	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
Soothing	91	82.7	19	17.3
Unnerving	9	8.2	101	91.8
Cheerful	33	30	77	70
Sad	50	45.5	60	54.5
Interesting	78	70.9	32	29.1
Boring	33	30	77	70
Appealing	73	66.4	37	33.6
Repulsive	22	20	88	80
Beautiful	87	79.1	23	20.9
Ugly	13	11.8	97	88.2
Clear	59	53.6	51	46.4
Not clear	53	48.2	57	51.8
Pleasant	88	80	22	20
Not pleasant	18	16.4	92	83.6
Demanding	49	44.5	61	55.5
Not demanding	41	37.3	69	62.7

Students have stated that Gregorian singing acts soothing in highest percentage (82.7 %) and that they felt pleased (80 %) during listening. They perceive Gregorian singing as beautiful (79.1 %), interesting (70.9 %) and appealing (66.4 %). These results are a consequence of Gregorian's singing nature which is contemplative, inspired and sacred. Martinjak (2005) considers that the aesthetics of Gregorian singing derives from synergy of the inspired word and melody.

Conclusion

National teaching curriculum (2013) issues the instruction about getting to know all musical styles, but Gregorian singing is not represented in the listening area when teaching Music in the first four grades of primary school. As an activity, listening should be the centre of musical education (Campbell, 2005; Rojko, 2012). Research by Šulentić, Begić and Tomljanović (2014) has showed that students in the first three forms of primary school enjoy themselves and feel joy when listening to music.

Considering the structure of Gregorianics and its influence on musical forms of Western European musical heritage (Korek, 2013), Gregorianics should have a place in Music classes in the first four grades of primary school. Research subjects have shown a positive attitude towards the chant, although Gregorian singing was something completely new to most students. It has given them a pleasant and soothing feeling in the course of listening. Unison, diatonic melodies of free rhythm based on the dynamics of spoken words give Gregorian singing naturalness, spontaneity, festiveness and serenity (Martinjak, 1997; 2005).

The pilot research raised a question about the place of Gregorian singing as specific and unique form of musical heritage. That is, it is upon us to examine students' standpoints about Gregorianics further through structural elements of the chorale. Koprek (2013) stresses that Gregorian singing is in problematic position within the field and in a bad position not only in relation to liturgical heritage, but also in musical programmes in primary education.

Based on the research results and positive students' relation to Gregorian singing and its stated features, it should be represented in the listening component of music teaching in primary school.

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Povzetek

Gregorijansko petje je del liturgične tradicije zahodnoevropskega kršanstva. Zanj je značilna modalna monodija, ki se tesno povezuje z besedilom. Gregorijansko petje ni vključeno v hrvaški učni načrt za predmet Glasbena kultura v osnovni šoli.

V raziskavi smo preučevali doživljanje in stališča osnovnošolcev do gregorijanskega petja. Zanimala so nas stališča učencev do predmeta Glasbena kultura. Raziskovali smo tudi koliko učencev poleg osnovne šole obiskuje še glasbeno šolo ter je vključenih v druge oblike glasbenega izobraževanja in udejstvovanja. Raziskava je bila izvedena v šolskem letu 2016/2017, v njej pa je sodelovalo 110 učencev iz Osnovne šole Galdovo (Sisak, Hrvaška). Rezultati so pokazali, da večina vprašanih (94,5 %) rada sodeluje pri pouku Glasbene kulture. Učenci najraje pojejo pesmi (80 %), poslušajo glasbo (67,3 %), izvajajo glasbene didaktične igre (54,7 %), igrajo na otroške instrumente (34,5 %) in izvajajo izštevance (13,6 %). Izmed vseh učencev jih 66,4 % obiskuje glasbeno šolo, sodeluje v folklorni skupini, poje v zboru (šolskem, cerkvenem, mestnem), obiskuje pop-rock šolo ali se zasebno glasbeno izobražuje.

Odnos učencev do gregorijanskega petja smo preverjali z avditivnim vprašalnikom, ki je vseboval pet glasbenih primerov. Rezultati so pokazali, da 70,9 % učencev izraža pozitiven odnos in naklonjenost do slišanih primerov, čeprav gregorijanskega petja večina še nikoli prej ni slišala. 67,3% učencev je izrazilo željo po poglobljeni obravnavi gregorijanskega petja pri pouku Glasbene kulture. Več kot polovica učencev je gregorijansko petje doživela kot pomirjujoče, prijetno, lepo, zanimivo in privlačno. Gregorijansko petje je treba zaradi specifične muzikalnosti, zgodovinske in estetske vrednosti vključiti v poslušanje glasbe pri predmetu Glasbena kultura v osnovni šoli.