

THE SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF MUSIC EDUCATION

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SUMMARY. The aim of our study is to explore the factors influencing the cultural sensitivity of students aged 8–13 years. We set up our hypotheses based on the theory of Bourdieu and Passeron and the research of Hunyadi. Our main question is instrumental studies, the frequency of singing, and social status how affect cultural consumption. In our research, we examined the impact of parents' attitudes to music on children's musical consumption. To examine the role of cultural capital, we used international models. The aim of our exploratory research is to examine in what form and to what extent the different manifestations of cultural capital prevail in the dimension of cultural consumption. Our results supported that higher education, higher parental care, parents' musical capital, and good financial status increase the chances of cultural consumption. Those family with higher social status can be characterized by a broader cultural consumption pattern, which in turn is accompanied by more frequent musical activity. Families in a better position are characterized not only by higher cultural consumption but also by more prudent methods of cultural transmission.

Keywords: cultural consumption, music education, cultural capital

Social Background and Cultural Activities

By the concept of 'capital', we mostly mean things of financial or material nature in everyday life. However, the capital theory of Pierre

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Bourdieu⁵, the most well-known figure of the French sociology, contains the broader aspects of the interpretation of capital. He distinguishes economic, cultural, and social types of capital. For the present study, we find a concise review of cultural capital relevant.

Bourdieu (1999) divides cultural capital into three groups: embodied cultural capital, objectified cultural capital and institutionalised cultural capital. Embodied cultural capital means the knowledge, education and experience acquired throughout our lives. This kind of cultural capital can later be convertible to economic capital, for instance, we can earn money with our musical qualification. Objectified cultural capital can be the instruments of cultural capital which can either be a painting or a musical instrument. Finally, the certain types of documents and certifications, that have an evidentiary value of the acquired cultural knowledge and education, can be classified as institutionalised cultural capital.

It is not possible to discuss the functions of the family in detail within this study. However, it is worthy of being told that it is dynamically changing, some aspects of it can wither away, new ones can appear or focus shift can occur in the structure of the existing ones. The dynamically changing system affects the norm and value system, as well as the entire structure of the family. The family, as the primary social sphere has an impact on a child's social sensitivity. However, we also know that it is not enough to identify the cultural demands and needs of the family to understand the interrelations as several other factors influence it. Such factors can be the financial situation of the family or the free time available to the parents. The parents' cultural demand alone is not sufficient for a child's education for culture; the quality of communication, emotional harmony, and the presence of the complex network of other components are also necessary⁶. We are most likely to understand the emphasis of the family's role in socialization in this study if we, at least briefly, also present the embodied and objectified forms of cultural capital out of Pierre Bourdieu's components of social stratification. The internalisation of culture, more exactly the accumulation of it, is preceded by an acquisition process. Although we can rule out the principle of representation in the process of the accumulation of embodied cultural capital, we cannot ignore the role of the family since the objectified cultural of the family (also) has a stimulating effect on the individual, in this context, the child, catalysing the socialisation process, so to say. This can be observed with two different signs from the side of the education system. On

⁵ Bourdieu, P.: *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Massachusetts. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1979.

⁶ Bodonyi, E., Busi, E., Hegedűs, J., Magyar E. & Vizelyi, Á.: „A család funkciói” (Family functions). In Hegedűs J. (Ed.). *A gyakorlati pedagógia néhány alapkérdése* (Some basic questions of practical pedagogy). Bölcsész Konzorcium, Budapest, 2006, 14-22.

the one hand, if the socialisation process appears as a negative value, we can regard it as wasted time. On the other hand, its appearance as a positive value can mean double time saving⁷.

Reviewing the socialisation process, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that children's culture consumption habits are not, of course, affected by the family exclusively⁸. Thinking about Kron's definition of culture, according to which "*culture, as the life form of humans, includes every phenomenon, by the use and actualisation of which, humans realise their lives*"⁹. We must not forget – Réthy and Vámos remark – that the extent of *use and realisation* are not carried out to the same degree in society¹⁰. Recalling earlier research, the authors point out that one-third of the Hungarian society has never been to a restaurant, do not go to museums, exhibitions or might never read books. The reasons for these are interpreted in several dimensions; this interpretation can provide an explanation of the understanding of the social patterns of learning the culture. Access to culture can, on the one hand, be a question of finances but in several cases it cannot be interpreted as such; it is simply not included in the mind-set of the family¹¹.

In the Hungarian society, vast differences can be observed regarding social inequalities. On the basis of her examinations, Zsuzsa Hunyadi¹² found that it is mostly the educational attainment level that affects culture consumption. A higher level of activity regarding the different cultural activities can be observed in the highest extent among people with high social status, good income and education. From the factors mentioned, the influencing effect of the educational attainment level stands out¹³. According to the research of the Artistic Panorama among primary school students, the proportion of those engaged in artistic activities is higher among those with higher status, which is the strongest correlation in the field of music, but the effect of social status can be felt somewhat in the case of dance.¹⁴

⁷ Bourdieu, P.: Gazdasági tőke, kulturális tőke, társadalmi tőke (Economic capital, cultural capital, social capital). In: Angelusz R., Éber M. Á., Gecser O. (Eds.). *Társadalmi rétegződés olvasókönyv* (Social stratification reading book). 2010, 156-179.

⁸ Réthy E. & Vámos Á.: *Esélyegyenlőtlenség és méltányos pedagógia* (Inequality and fair pedagogy). Bölcsész Konzorcium, Budapest, 2006.

⁹ Kron, Fr. W.: *Pedagógia* (Pedagogy). Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, 2003. 73.

¹⁰ Réthy E. & Vámos Á.: *idem*.

¹¹ Réthy E. & Vámos Á.: *ibidem*.

¹² Hunyadi Zs.: *Kulturálódási és szabadidő eltöltési szokások, életmódcsoportok* (Cultivation and leisure habits, lifestyle groups). Magyar Művelődési Intézet, Budapest, 2005.

¹³ Hunyadi Zs.: *idem*.

¹⁴ Bíró, I. F., Hórich, B., Szalai, T.: "Általános iskolai tanulók kulturális fogyasztása a társadalmi státusz függvényében" (Cultural consumption of primary school students as a function of social status). In: Váradi, J. (Ed.) *Művészeti körkép* (Art panorama). Budapest: MMA MMKI, 2020.

The Demonstration of the Empirical Research

In our research, we used the database made by Judit Váradi and her colleagues. The focus of the research was a comparative international examination featuring nineteen primary schools from seven towns in four countries. Hungary is represented by Debrecen, from Serbia it was Subotica, from Romania it was Oradea, Satu-Mare, and Târgu-Mureş, and from Slovakia, it was Komarno and Banska Bystrica that participated in the research. The reason for choosing these towns was that their regional significance is similar, so we were more likely to rule out the differences in the types of municipalities. The target group of the questionnaire survey consisted of pupils between the ages of 8 and 13 but since entire classes filled in the questionnaire, the age varied more. The selection of the sample is not representative, so the results do not characterise a country; conclusions that can be drawn from it are limited, yet we thought that it could give a glimpse into the culture consumption practice of particular municipalities in certain countries. The survey was carried out with the help of a questionnaire consisting of 46 questions and it contains responses from 805 pupils. We used SPSS software for the statistical processing of the data.

We formulated the following hypotheses as a starting point for our research:

H1. Among the pupils who belong to the higher culture consumer group, there are more who play musical instruments and sing.

H2. Those pupils who fell into the higher culture consumer group, were, at the same time, coming from families of higher social status.

H3. Those pupils whose parents spend more time with them can be characterized by a higher level of culture consumption.

H4. The parents' attitude to music and their children's culture consumption are positively related to each other: the more music the parents play, the higher the level of culture consumption their children have.

To define the extent of culture consumption of the pupils participating in the research, we formed groups among the participants, based on how frequently they go to concerts and theatre, and how often they listen to music at home.

The criteria for drawing up the index were the following: the more frequently the respondent consumes the particular factor, the higher the score they get, then we summed the scores received. The distribution of the index is presented in Table 1.

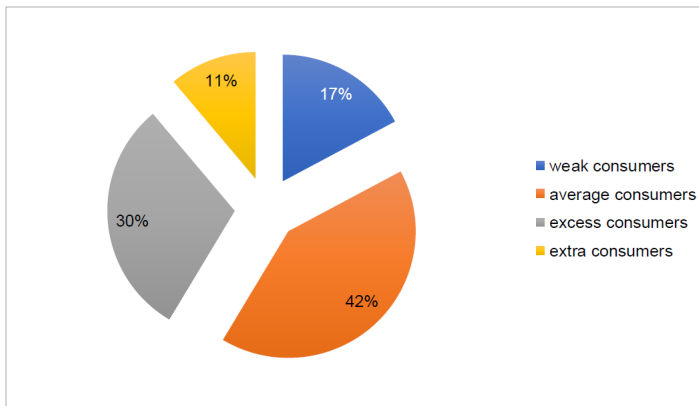
Table 1

Consuming				
Index point	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	2	.2	.3	.3
2.00	38	4.7	4.8	5.1
3.00	95	11.8	12.0	17.1
4.00	325	40.4	41.1	58.2
5.00	166	20.6	21.0	79.2
6.00	74	9.2	9.4	88.6
7.00	90	11.2	11.4	100.0
Total	790	98.1	100.0	
Missing	15	1.9		
Total	805	100.0		

Source: the authors' own editing

Based on the results received, we divide the pupils into four groups based on their characteristics of culture consumption. The higher the score a pupil received, the more diverse and higher level of culture consumption characterises them even as pupils (see: Chart 1).

Chart 1



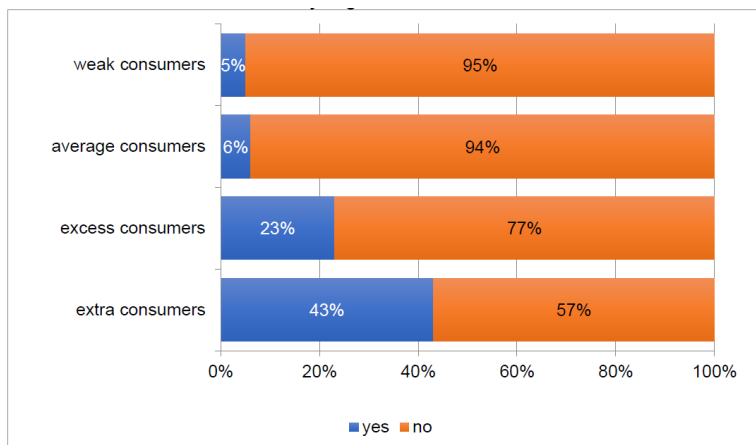
Source: the authors' own editing

Relationship between cultural consumption and musical activities

Based on our first hypothesis, we examined the relationship between the culture consumer groups and the frequency of musical activities. We carried out the measurement by involving three variables: whether the surveyed pupil goes to music school, how often they sing and whether they sing in a choir.

In the case of all three variables, the results clearly show that a higher level of culture consumption goes hand in hand with more frequent musical activities (singing, playing a musical instrument).

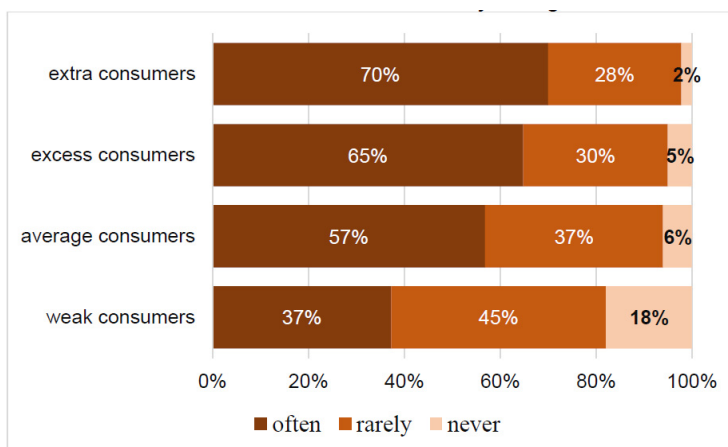
Chart 2



Do you go to a music school? / $\chi^2=97.312$; Sig=.000
Source: the authors' own editing

Based on the examination, a positive relationship between studying at music school and culture consumption can be clearly detected. The higher the level of the culture consumer group a child belongs, the more likely they are to study at a music school.

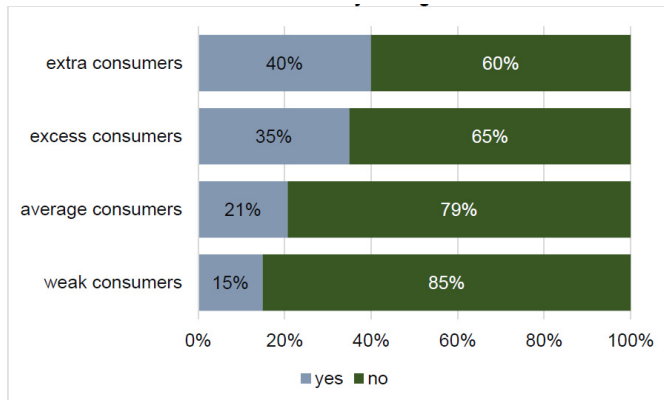
Chart 3



How often do you sing? / $\chi^2=46.125$; Sig=.000
Source: the authors' own editing

The same kind of coexistence can be observed between culture consumer groups and the frequency of singing as in the previous case, Involvement in a choir is more common among pupils who belong to a higher culture consumption group.

Chart 4



Do you sing in a choir? / $\chi^2=32.175$; Sig=.000

Source: the authors' own editing

Regarding singing in a choir, too, the different culture consumer groups showed differences just as they did concern singing habits.

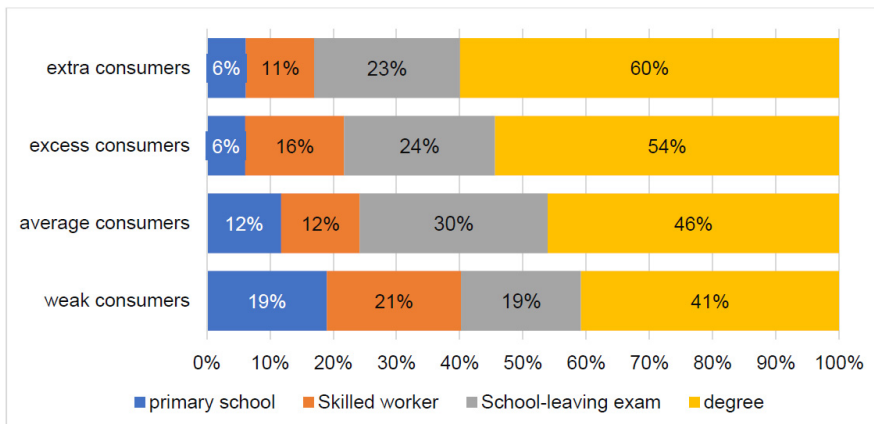
Based on the results, hypothesis H1, namely that pupils belonging to a higher culture consumer group are more likely to play a musical instrument or sing, was confirmed.

The effect of parental background on cultural consumption

In the first phase of the measurement, we compared the culture consumer groups along the parental background variables. Based on the database we used, we can define the parents' status in two dimensions. The questions focused on the parents' educational attainment level on the one hand, and their financial status on the other hand.

First, we examined the parents' educational attainment level. In this case, the two parents' higher level of education was regarded as standard.

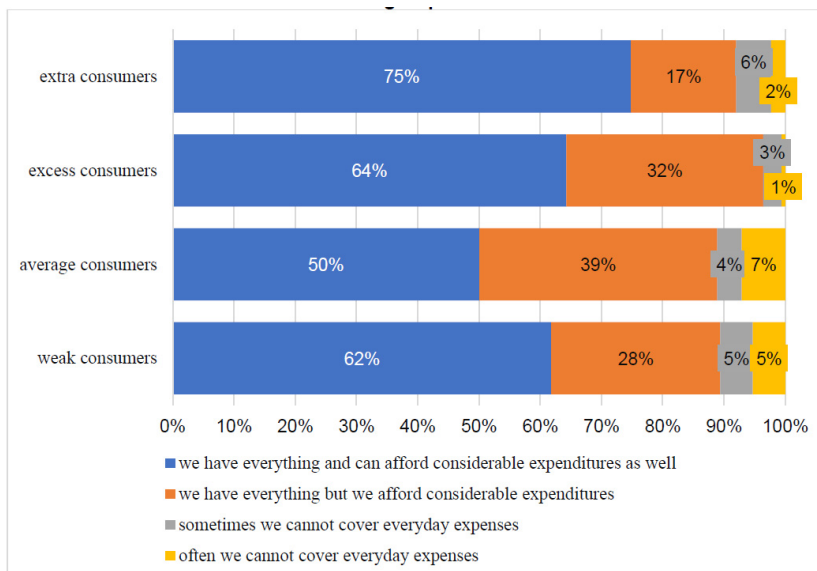
Chart 5



**The distribution of the parents' educational attainment level by consumer group / $\chi^2=97.312$; $\text{Sig}=.000$
Source: the authors' own editing**

The relationship indicates just a significant difference. However, we can conclude that the ratio of the parents with degrees is the highest in the extra consumer group.

Chart 6



**The distribution of the parents' financial situation in the different culture consumer groups / $\chi^2=29.127$; $\text{Sig}=.001$
Source: the authors' own editing**

Examining the distribution of the parents' financial situation, we found significant differences between the different culture consumer groups. Based on the participants' responses, the parents with the highest level of financial fall within the category of the extra consumer group in the largest ratio. This has confirmed hypothesis H2.

The effect of parental care on cultural consumption

During the next measurement, we sought to know to what extent parental care is related to each culture consumer group. We determined parental care by involving the following variables: how often the parents talk with their children, how often they seek information about their children's free time activities, how often they enquire about their studies and how often they arrange cultural programmes with them.

For easier understanding, we created a main component in which we reduced the "common" content of the variables. The higher the value of the main component is, the higher and more frequent parental care is.

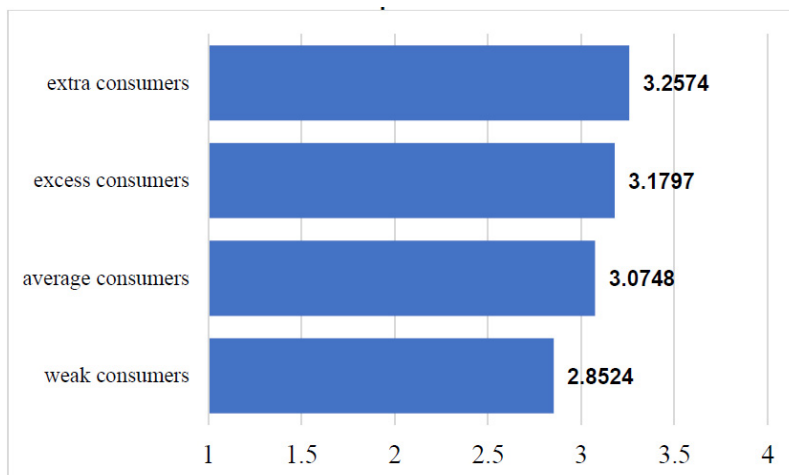
Table 2

Component Matrix	
	Component
	1
How often do your parents/talk with you?	.738
How often do your parents/seek information about how you spend your free time?	.742
How often do your parents/enquire about your studies?	.708
How often do your parents/arrange cultural programmes with you?	.669

Source: the authors' own editing

Information ratio preserved: 51%.

Chart 7



The relation between the parental care and the culture consumer groups /
 $F=10.511$; $Sig=.000$ / **Source: the authors' own editing**

In the chart above, it is visible that the extra consumers sense more frequent parental care in a significantly larger ratio. This has confirmed hypothesis H3, namely, that the pupils who their parents care about more, can be characterized by a higher level of culture consumption.

Parents' musical background

In the next measurement, we examined the parents' relation to music. For this, we included the following in the analysis: whether the parents went to music school, whether they sing or play a musical instrument, whether they listen to music at home and whether there is any kind of record of classical music at home.

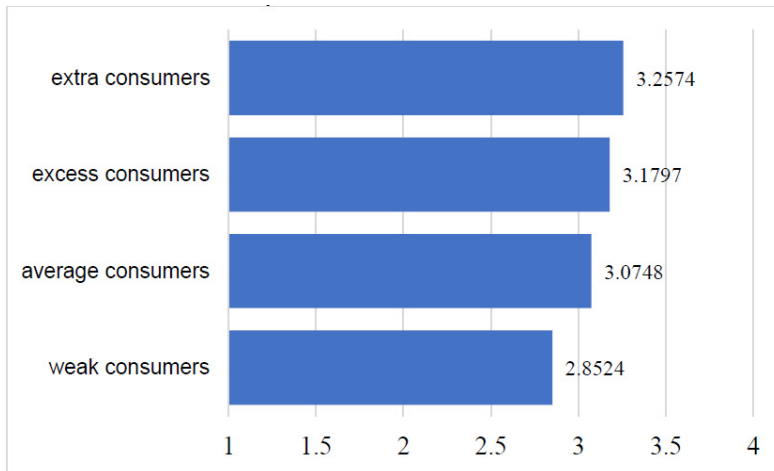
We made a simple index from the pupils' responses. The higher the score the parents received, the more likely the parents are to occupy themselves with music and singing.

Table 3

Parents				
Index point	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
.00	10	1.2	2.3	2.3
1.00	31	3.9	7.1	9.4
2.00	69	8.6	15.8	25.2
3.00	101	12.5	23.2	48.4
4.00	85	10.6	19.5	67.9
5.00	56	7.0	12.8	80.7
6.00	41	5.1	9.4	90.1
7.00	27	3.4	6.2	96.3
8.00	14	1.7	3.2	99.5
9.00	2	.2	.5	100.0
Total	436	54.2	100.0	
Missing	369	45.8		
Total	805	100.0		

Source: the authors' own editing

Chart 8



The relation between the parents' relation to music and the cultural consumer groups / $F=12.328$; $Sig=.000$ / Source: the authors' own editing

It is apparent that there is a significant difference between the consumer groups. In the case of the pupils who consume more than the average, the parents are more likely to spend more time playing or listening to music. This confirmed hypothesis H4, namely, that the parents' relation

to music and their children's culture consumption are positively related to each other: the more the parents play music, the higher the level of their children's culture consumption.

Summary

In the present paper, a small segment of the results of an international survey is presented. The leader of the research is Dr Judit Váradi, instructor of the University of Debrecen. During the present study, we sought to know to what extent the different culture consumer groups go hand in hand with musical activities and the parents' social status. Furthermore, we examined the patterns of parental care and the frequency of the parents' musical activity between the different culture consumer groups. Our first hypothesis was confirmed. According to the hypothesis, in general, musical practice is more typical of the higher culture consumer groups, therefore musical activity closely matches the consumption pattern of classical cultural products. Next, we sought to know whether the parents' social status goes hand in hand with the culture consumption groups. Our next hypothesis, namely that the parents' higher social status is more typical of the higher culture consumer groups. All of this means that the cultural products used in the survey are regarded as products of the cultural elite. The first hypothesis points out that people with a higher level of social status can be characterized by a broader pattern of culture consumption, which is combined with more frequent musical activity, hence, not everybody has equal opportunities to take part in musical studies. As it is confirmed by our study as well, cultural capital or the participation in arts is mostly determined by the parents' social background¹⁵. In our third measurement, we compared parental care in the groups. In this case, a higher degree of parental care was realized in the groups with a higher level of culture consumption. This broadens the mechanism of action of social status. Families in better financial situations are more characterized, not only by greater culture consumption but also by more careful cultural transmittance methods. Howe and Sloboda¹⁶ carried out research in a similar field. They examined the effects of the family background and the parents' musical

¹⁵ Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J.-C. : *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. Sage Publications, London, 1977.

¹⁶ Howe, M.J.A. & Sloboda, J.A.: Young musicians' accounts of significant influences in their early lives. 1. The family and the musical background. In *British Journal of Music Education*, 8(1), 1991, 39-52.

https://www.tankonyvtar.hu/hu/tartalom/tamop425/0010_2A_19_Tarsadalmi_retegzodes_olvasokonyv_szerk_Gecser_Otto/index.html;

qualification on the children's' musical instrument lessons. For the survey, they recorded interviews with the parents and the children as well. According to the results of the survey, relatively few parents were interested in music; however, they were willing to invest money and time in their children's music studies. The music studies of the children who participated in the survey were predominantly influenced by their older siblings' music studies and were less correlated with their friends' music studies. In the last phase of our measurement, we examined the parents' relation to music and the relation of the pupils' culture consumer groups. Our assumption, namely that the parents' more positive relation to music is more typical of the higher culture consumer groups, was confirmed. Brändström (1996¹⁷, 1999¹⁸), who examined children's musical activities and the relationship between the parents' socio-cultural and musical background in his research, came to similar conclusions. He divided the 12-13-year-old subjects (N=369) into three groups, based on the extent to which they studied music and the types of music institutions where they studied. He recorded the data by interviews, based on which they confirm Bourdieu and Passeron's earlier mentioned attitude, namely that children's music education and socialization are influenced by the socio-cultural and musical background.

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¹⁷ Brändström, S. & Wiklund, C.: The social use of music and music education. *Canadian Music Educator*, (337), 1996, 33-36.

¹⁸ Brändström, S.: Music education as investment in cultural capital. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 12(1), 1999, 49-57.

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