# BACKGROUND

- 14 % of the Slovenian primary school population is enrolled in the Slovenian music school system, majority of them (93,9 %) learn to play a musical instrument or sing in the public music school system (SURS, 2015)
- 22 % of instrumental students drop out of music education in the first two years (Bogunović, 2010)
- a limited number of studies on children's (7 15 years) motivation in the context of learning a musical instrument (Oliveira et al., 2021)
- Existing research discovers intertwining internal and external factors of music motivation decline, which include:
- underdeveloped musical abilities (Gerleus et al., 2017)
- low pre-existing personal interest in instrument learning that fosters selfregulation (Evans and McPherson, 2014)
- high levels of stage fright (Spruk, 2011)
- less supportive family and social context (Corenblum and Marshall, 1998; Gerleus et al., 2017; Hallam et al., 2018)
- instrumental teacher's **harsh communication** (Spruk, 2011)
- inadequate teaching materials (Asmus, 2021)
- competitive musical environment (West, 2013)
- From the perspective of self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) perspective, children's motivational decline and eventual dropout occur, when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their musical learning are »being thwarted« (Evans, McPherson, and Davidson, 2012, pp. 17)

## AIMS

This study was conducted to get a more in-depth understanding of the perceptions, insights, and experiences of contributing factors to motivation decline in drop-out students from Slovenian music schools. This is the first step in our ongoing research aimed at creating learning environments that ensure higher levels of student retention in music schools.

# **RESEARCH QUESTION**

What are the leading factors toward dropping out of instrumental music education from the perspective of instrumental teachers, music students, and their parents?

## **METHOD**

- a qualitative study based on semi-structured group interviews in 3 focus **groups** (music students, music teachers, parents)
- a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was used because of the lack of knowledge regarding the specific factors and factor relationships that comprise the student motivation decline in musical instrument lessons

# **PARTICIPANTS IN 3 FOCUS GROUPS**



Drop-out **students** aged 10 - 13 (N female = 4, N male = 2))



# **CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO STUDENT MOTIVATION DECLINE IN MUSICAL INSTRUMENT LESSONS**

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underdeveloped

musical abilities

and skills

Teacher: "I know of

cases where students

went to music school

and then found out

that they really had

no [musical] talent.'

poor teacher-

student

relationship

Parent: "I know that

this relationship

with the teacher is

very important; to

feel accepted."

SOCIAL

2

# RESULTS

competitive setback and diminished competence percention Teacher: "One drop-out

student was disappointed after the competition because expectations were higher and he was very upset afterwards.'



convince me for

another year, but

said no.

limited repertoire choice autonomy Teacher: "We have a gar between what is taught in music school and what they would like to learn.

#### unstimulative classroom atmosphere

Student: "I expected the theory to be quite different, and these notes ... [...] I didn't like it so much anymore, it was getting boring.

#### limited social interaction opportunities

Parent: "There was no socialising, so she found it boring. She needed some company, some socialising, to make things happen a bit more."

#### ТР unappealing musical repertoire Teacher: "Students expect pop music to be played,[...] which,

of course, is not part of the current curriculum.

#### Т Р (over)emphasis on

musical literacy Student: "I would keep studying music if I could write my own notes with a maaic wand.

# music theory and solfège

Student: "I would have continued my music education if it hadn't been for the music theory classes... perhaps music theory classes could have been held once every three weeks or once a month."

# limited financial resources

Teacher: "Music education requires an investment, a lot of financial investment. in the purchase of an instrument, then in the purchase of sheet music. and that these investments are not one-time events.'

(3)

(2)

# CONCLUSIONS

• most of reported contributing factors (RCF) to student motivation decline concord between all 3 focus groups (FG), most of internal RCF are in line with SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1985), external RCF concur with previous research too, except in the music school curriculum category: music theory and solfège lessons were reported as important drop out factor by all 3 focus groups

### **FUTURE RESEARCH**

- a quantitative study among Slovenian music school students, instrument teachers, and music school principals
- analyses of good teaching practices in Slovenian music schools with the lowest dropout rates

