

Statement from the Ethical Commission, AMBIS University, regarding a request for a scientific research project assessment including human participants**Research Proposal: The Impact of Music Education and Musical Activities on Children from Institutional Care and Children with Special Educational Needs**

Principal investigator: PhDr. Alois Daněk, Ph.D.

Project Introduction and Rationale:

Music education and musical activities have been increasingly recognized as powerful tools in fostering cognitive, emotional, and social development. For children from institutional care and those with special educational needs (SEN), music can serve as a means of self-expression, emotional regulation, and social interaction.

This research is planned for implementation in 2025, focusing on the role of music education in the development of children from institutional care and those with SEN. Through multiple interconnected studies and interventions, the project will examine how structured music education and participatory musical activities impact these children's well-being, social inclusion, and educational outcomes. The research will investigate how music contributes to their emotional resilience, cognitive abilities, and social skills while also examining the potential role of music therapy in their educational pathways.

As a key outcome, the research will produce a series of academic articles, each presenting partial findings from different study phases. These publications will contribute to the scientific discourse on inclusive education, music therapy, and pedagogical innovation for children in institutional care and those with SEN. The findings will inform future pedagogical strategies, policy recommendations, and potential expansions of music-based educational programs tailored to vulnerable groups of children.

Qualitative Methodology Overview

This project will employ a qualitative research design to understand how music education and musical activities impact children from institutional care and those with special educational needs. The research will focus on subjective experiences, behavioural changes, and contextual factors influencing the role of music in their development. The methodological approach will include:

Semi-structured interviews: Conducted with educators, music therapists, and caregivers to gather insights into their perceptions of music's role in children's cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Focus groups: Discussions with children engaged in music programs to explore their personal experiences, emotional responses, and perceived benefits of musical activities.

Participant observation: Direct observation of music sessions in institutional and inclusive education settings, capturing engagement levels, social interactions, and behavioural changes over time.

Case studies: Longitudinal tracking of selected children's progress through detailed narratives, assessing the long-term impact of structured music education.

Data will be analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Grounded Theory (GT). IPA will allow for an in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences, emphasizing personal meaning-making processes and how children, educators, and caregivers interpret the role of music in cognitive, emotional, and social development. GT will be employed to systematically identify emerging patterns and develop a theoretical framework that explains the impact of music education in institutional and inclusive educational settings. The combination of IPA and GT ensures a rigorous, contextually rich, and theory-driven analysis that captures both individual narratives and broader social dynamics shaping the role of music in education.

Ethical Aspects of the Research

The research will be conducted with complete adherence to ethical guidelines, ensuring the protection and well-being of all participants. Special attention will be given to the vulnerability of children from institutional care and those with special educational needs (SEN).

Informed Consent: Participation in the study will be entirely voluntary. Informed consent will be obtained from legal guardians, institutional representatives, and, where appropriate, the children, using age-appropriate explanations of the study's purpose and procedures.

Confidentiality and Data Protection: No personal or sensitive data will be collected, and all information will be anonymized. Data will be handled according to GDPR and ethical research standards.

Minimization of Psychological Risk: Given the potential emotional sensitivity of the topic, the study will ensure a safe and supportive environment for all participants. A music therapist or psychologist will be available for consultation if needed.

Compliance with Ethical Guidelines: The study will be conducted according to the Helsinki Declaration and the ethical principles for research with children established by relevant academic and professional bodies.

Gender Sensitivity, Inclusive Language, and Anti-Discriminatory Practice

This research is committed to gender sensitivity, inclusive language, and anti-discriminatory practices in all study phases, from data collection to analysis and dissemination of findings.

Gender Sensitivity: The study acknowledges participants' diverse gender identities and will ensure that research instruments, interviews, and discussions are inclusive and free from gender bias. Data collection will be designed to respect individual identities and avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes.

Inclusive Language: All communication, research materials, and publications will use nondiscriminatory and inclusive language, avoiding terminology that could marginalize or exclude any group. The study will employ person-first language (e.g., "children with special educational needs" rather than "special needs children") to emphasize the individual before the condition.

Anti-Discriminatory Practice: The research will actively promote equity and inclusion, ensuring that children from institutional care and those with SEN are respected and valued. The study design will consider intersectionality, recognizing that factors such as gender, disability, socio-economic status, and cultural background interact and shape individual experiences.

Equal Participation: Measures will be implemented to facilitate equal access to participation, including necessary accommodations for children with disabilities and additional support for those who may need it due to their background in institutional care.

Informed Consent and Right to Withdraw

Participation in this research will be entirely voluntary, ensuring that all respondents fully understand the study's purpose, procedures, and rights before participating.

Informed Consent: Participants and their legal guardians (where applicable) will provide at least minimal verbal consent before engaging in the research. In cases where written consent is not feasible, verbal agreement or non-verbal assent (e.g., nodding or engaging willingly in the activity) will be considered sufficient, particularly for younger children or those with communication difficulties. Consent procedures will be designed using accessible and age-appropriate language to ensure comprehension.

Right to Withdraw: Participants will have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without providing a reason and without any negative consequences. This right will be clearly communicated before data collection begins.

Ethical Conduct in Data Collection: Interviews, focus groups, and observations will only be conducted with participants who have given explicit consent. Researchers will remain sensitive to participants' comfort levels, and any signs of discomfort or distress will be taken as a cue to pause or terminate participation.

Conclusion

This research is committed to the highest ethical standards in all design, implementation, and dissemination phases. Special attention will be given to ensuring all participants' safety, dignity, and autonomy, particularly children from institutional care and those with special educational needs.

We hereby commit to absolute adherence to ethical standards as set forth by the relevant institutional ethics committee. This research will be conducted with the utmost integrity, transparency, and respect for all participants, ensuring that the outcomes contribute meaningfully to the field while upholding the highest principles of research ethics.

Members of the committee:

Ethical Committee head: doc. Ing. Milan Půček, Ph.D., MBA

Committee Member: doc. Mgr. Irena Tušer, Ph.D.

Committee Member: Ing. et Ing. Veronika Linhartová, Ph. D.

The Ethics Committee of Ambis University in Prague has reviewed and evaluated the submitted application along with all materials provided by the qualitative researcher. The Committee has concluded that the aforementioned document does not contradict the valid principles of research outlined in the Code of Ethics of Ambis University in Prague. The principal investigator will take all



necessary steps to ensure the ethical integrity of the research, including voluntary participation of research subjects, the provision of relevant information to them, and obtaining consent from the legal guardians of children. No sensitive or personal data will be collected as part of the research. Given its nature, the dignity, rights, and health of the respondents will not be compromised in any way.

Prague 12. 2. 2025



doc. Ing. Milan Půček, Ph.D., MBA
signature of the Ethical Committee head