

**DOMINANT ATTITUDES OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS
TOWARDS NURTURING, PROMOTING AND ENHANCING
TRADITIONAL VALUES WITHIN THE INTEGRATED
APPROACH TO PRESCHOOL EDUCATION**

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Abstract: *During the preschool period, activities designed for children should foster the initiation of friendly relationships based on mutual understanding and the acquisition of traditional values that promote togetherness and encourage individual responsibility. This can be achieved by nurturing customs and music, which, in this context, serve as natural channels of communication. These practices help to instil behavioural norms, strengthen connections, and promote mutual respect. In this article, the authors analyse the dominant attitudes of preschool teachers towards methods for promoting traditional values in preschool-aged children within the integrated approach to education. This is the primary focus of the conducted research. The instrument used was a questionnaire specifically designed for this study, titled Questionnaire on the opinions of preschool teachers on promoting traditional values within the integrated approach to preschool education. The research sample consisted of 116 preschool teachers (N = 116). The selected factors were interpreted as follows: Nurturing traditional values through educational activities; Challenges associated with activities/projects related to traditional values; Development and strengthening of competencies for conducting activities/projects related to traditional values and Local community as a resource for promoting traditional values.*

Key words: *dominant attitudes; preschool teachers; traditional values; integrated approach to preschool education.*

Introduction

The integrated approach in the process of education involves the functional connection and alignment of educational fields and program contents that are similar or complementary, aimed at achieving the planned goals (Mićanović, 2013 as cited in Maljković, Vukobrat, Radaković & Petrović, 2020). This approach stems from the need to facilitate the mutual integration of experiential learning, theoretical knowledge, and practical skills. Additionally, the integrated approach emphasizes the analysis of one's own practice and a critical review of acquired experiences and knowledge. Within this approach, the teacher's role is to introduce children to as many integrated learning scenarios as possible and to use dialogue with the children to link planned activities with spontaneous experiences. However, simply delivering appropriate activities and content does not constitute integrated learning. Integrated learning should not be equated with teaching that merely correlates activities and content. Cooperative learning and problem-based learning are two key aspects of integrated learning. Integrated learning becomes particularly important in problem-solving methods, where it transitions from personal experiences to a broader understanding of the problem through interaction with others and the surrounding community (Stojanović & Bogavac, 2016 as cited in Maljković, Vukobrat, Radaković & Petrović, 2020).

Within educational work, various activities can be implemented through the integration of different content areas. Topics related to tradition, which also serve to promote values, highlight the need to integrate multiple domains. The integrated approach to the preschool-aged children's learning and development is based on viewing the individual as a unique, whole being – active, interactive and creative (Milošević, Zorić, Ulić, Colić & Matović, 2017). Therefore, thematically connecting content from various areas enables teachers to direct the combined, previously acquired knowledge towards new knowledge, experiences and values related to the domain of folk tradition.

Traditional values stem from the understanding of the world, the human connection with nature and relationships within the community, as well as the influence of religion. These values play an important role in shaping the culture and social life of a nation. According to Inglehar (2008), traditional values emphasize the importance of religion, respect for authority, and the relationships between parents, children, and the traditional family. However, international trends of globalisation, technological innovation, changes in the learning environment, as well as internal developments in socio-cultural contexts and the creation of educational policies, continuously shape new and contemporary values, creating challenges in the process of defining and building identity (Läänemets, Kalamees-Ruubel, Sepp and Kiilu, 2019).

When it comes to preparing young people to become active participants and productive members of our society, preschool curricula play a crucial role. *The Fundamentals of the Preschool Education Programme* (2018) states that the real curriculum is shaped by the context of the preschool institution, which is defined by the specific culture and structure of the institution, the immediate community and all participants in the program. In this context, the institution's culture comprises a fixed system of values, norms, rules, traditions, expectations and relational patterns that guide the institution's operations. For this reason, recent research has focused on analysing the ways in which preschool teachers nurture systems of values, norms and traditions in kindergartens.

Authors Vukićević, Golubović Ilić and Stanojević (2026) argue that tradition (from Latin *traditio* - the act of handing down, delivering, or transmitting something, particularly customs, beliefs, or information from one generation to another) involves the process of transmitting, preserving and passing down ideas, values, principles, patterns, and models, either orally or in written form. According to these authors, the preservation of tradition is a complex task that requires various forms of work and activities. Although children initially acquire knowledge about the lives of their predecessors, their customs, clothing, songs, traditional musical instruments, and other aspects of folk tradition within their families, it is crucial to expand this knowledge in a planned and organized manner – particularly during the times when children spend most of their time in institutions, outside the family environment, such as in kindergartens. For this reason, the authors mentioned emphasize the need to educate younger generations in the spirit of traditional values and to raise their awareness of the importance of preserving cultural heritage, while also learning about the customs of other peoples – including different nations, ethnic minorities, and ethnic groups – and respecting existing differences. Before children start school, it is the preschool teacher who should introduce them to basic traditional values of the environment in which they grow and develop, inspire them to learn songs and dances, get familiar with antique objects, crafts, and customs of their nation, and encourage them to actively participate in the cultural life of their region.

In kindergarten, teachers can use a variety of group activities to nurture and promote traditional values, including planned learning situations, practical everyday situations, and playtime. The available literature leads to the conclusion that the dominant focus is on expert articles analysing planned learning situations, particularly those involving traditional games, with special emphasis on music games. These games are part of folk culture and reflect the rich experiences of multiple generations. Although they originated from ritual community practices, they were categorized as recreational activities for both children and

adults as early as the previous century (Radosavljević & Ružin Đurčok, 2022). Traditional music games represent a heritage that has managed to survive into modern times, which underscores their importance. Children actively participate in nurturing and promoting cultural heritage, especially in rural areas, where these traditions have been transmitted from one generation to another, playing a key role in helping children adjust to their environment (Marjanović, 2002). For this reason, Jeremić, Markov and Nikolić (2003) emphasize that traditional music can be integrated into educational work in kindergartens through activities such as learning traditional folk songs, lullabies, counting rhymes, games accompanied by singing and/or musical instruments, *kolo* and other folk dances.

Music and dance are considered natural and spontaneous mediums through which children can develop various skills and enhance their potential. When they practice and perform traditional folk dances, such as *kolo*, and songs, opportunities arise for exchanging customs, knowledge, and skills within a nation or ethnic minority, which can significantly contribute to preserving creative works from fading into oblivion. Traditional dances are among the most vivid ways to represent the spiritual, cultural, and historical heritage of a nation. They provide children with an active means of learning about the lives of their predecessors, promoting and emphasizing important values.

By embracing diversity, traditional dances serve as an expression of the cultural identity of a community and a way to transmit specific cultural elements (Marušić & Jukić, 2022, p. 11), including values.

Therefore, it can be concluded that dance has an educational character, as it promotes traditional values both orally and through movement, offering an opportunity to actively contribute to the education of new generations and the preservation of tradition (Jeremić & Milenović, 2020, p. 443). By nurturing customs, which are behavioural norms specific to a particular group, a suitable direction is established for transmitting values important to the community.

The purpose of the conducted research was to empirically analyse the dominant attitudes of preschool teachers towards nurturing, promoting and enhancing traditional values within the integrated approach to preschool education.

Methodological approach to research

In accordance with the theoretical framework presented, the authors of this article formulated the following research question: What are the dominant attitudes of preschool teachers towards nurturing, promoting, and enhancing traditional values within the integrated approach to preschool education? The research was empirical and non-experimental – utilizing a survey on a sample.

The research instrument

The instrument used in the research was the “Questionnaire on the opinions of preschool teachers on promoting traditional values within the integrated approach to preschool education / Nurturing traditional values in the kindergarten”, specifically designed for the needs of this study. In addition to a section for analysing demographic data, the questionnaire includes a 4-degree Likert scale with 26 items. Respondents rated the items on the scale according to their level of agreement, with the following options: 1 – Never, 2 – Rarely, 3 – Sometimes, 4 – Often. The instrument also contains open-ended questions. Respondents had the opportunity to answer two open-ended questions based on their own experience: 1) Name the title of a project you have implemented aimed at promoting traditional values; 2) Provide a brief description of a project activity aimed at nurturing traditional values.

The scale demonstrated good internal consistency, with a calculated Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.902, indicating excellent reliability.

The research sample

The research sample was purposive and consisted of preschool teachers employed in preschool institutions working with children aged three to seven during the 2023/24 academic year. The sample included 116 preschool teachers (N = 116). Participants were from 112 state preschool institutions (96,6%) and 4 private preschool institutions (3,4%) in the Republic of Serbia.

Results overview and analysis

This study aimed to explore the dominant attitudes of preschool teachers towards nurturing, promoting and enhancing traditional values within the integrated approach to preschool education.

The first step in the research involved analysing the opinions of preschool teachers regarding the nurturing, promoting and enhancing traditional values within this approach. The frequency (%) and mean values of the respondents' answers are presented in Table 1. The respondents' answers ranged from 1 (never) to 4 (often).

Items	Min.	Max.	AC	1 never	2 rarely	3 sometimes	4 often
I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during planned learning activities.	2	4	3,474	0%	1,70%	49,10%	49,10%
I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during free play.	2	4	3,328	0%	8,60%	50,00%	41,40%
I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during extended play.	2	4	3,319	0%	7,80%	52,60%	39,70%
I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during guided play.	2	4	3,405	0%	4,30%	50,90%	44,80%

I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during practical everyday situations within daily routines.	2	4	3,543	0%	6,00%	33,60%	60,30%
I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during practical everyday situations within rituals.	1	4	3,431	0,90%	7,80%	38,80%	52,60%
I use folk music (folk songs and instruments) in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values.	1	4	3,207	0,90%	7,80%	38,80%	52,60%
I use traditional games in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values (e.g.,	1	4	3,431	0,90%	7,80%	38,80%	52,60%

„Okolo salata“, „Kolariću Paniću“, „Care, care, gospodare, koliko ima sati?“ and other games).							
Holiday activities (e.g., Easter, Christmas celebrations) are designed to nurture traditional values.	2	4	3,75 9	0%	1,70%	20,70 %	77,60 %
I use music games (games with singing, accompanied by musical instruments, folk dances) in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values.	2	4	3,40 5	0%	6,00%	47,40 %	46,60 %
I use music listening activities in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values.	1	4	3,34 5	1,70%	5,20%	50,00 %	43,10 %
I try to include children in	1	4	3,10 3	6,00%	15,50 %	40,50 %	37,90 %

activities aimed at learning about traditional cuisine.							
I try to include children in activities aimed at introducing them to customs, past lives of our people and such.	2	4	3,431	0%	7,80%	41,40%	59,90%
During activities aimed at nurturing traditional values, I perceive children of other nationalities as a challenge.	1	4	2,724	10,30%	29,30%	37,90%	22,40%
During activities aimed at nurturing traditional values, I perceive parents of children of other nationalities as a challenge.	1	4	2,595	10,30%	37,90%	33,60%	18,10%
During activities	1	4	2,474	12,90%	36,20%	41,40%	9,50%

aimed at nurturing traditional values, I face the challenge of children not showing interest in project topics related to tradition, nationality, and culture.							
During activities aimed at nurturing traditional values, I face the challenge of a lack of traditional equipment, materials, and resources (e.g. old objects such as a spindle, a loom, traditional attire, etc.).	1	4	2,845	7,80%	26,70%	38,80%	26,70%
The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the	1	4	2,957	6,00%	20,70%	44,80%	28,40%

promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are cultural-artistic associations .							
The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are museums.	1	4	3,08 6	6,00%	18,10 %	37,10 %	38,80 %
The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are	1	4	3,21 6	3,40%	8,60%	50,90 %	37,10 %

cultural centres.							
The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are traditional associations and the events they organize in our community.	1	4	2,86 2	9,50%	27,60 %	30,20 %	32,80 %
The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are individuals who practice old crafts	1	4	2,83 6	8,60%	25,00 %	40,50 %	25,90 %

(e.g., making <i>opanci</i> , pottery, sewing traditional attire, viewing baskets, etc.).							
I enhance my educational practice by attending professional development seminars on the topic of traditional values.	1	4	2,690	12,90%	24,10%	44,00%	19,00%
I enhance my educational practice by attending workshops on the topic of traditional values.	1	4	2,784	10,30%	22,40%	45,70%	21,60%
I enhance my educational practice by reading printed resources on traditional values.	1	4	3,138	1,70%	17,20%	46,60%	34,50%
I enhance my educational	1	4	3,147	0,90%	17,22%	48,30%	33,60%

practice by reading articles, books, monographs on traditional values available online.							
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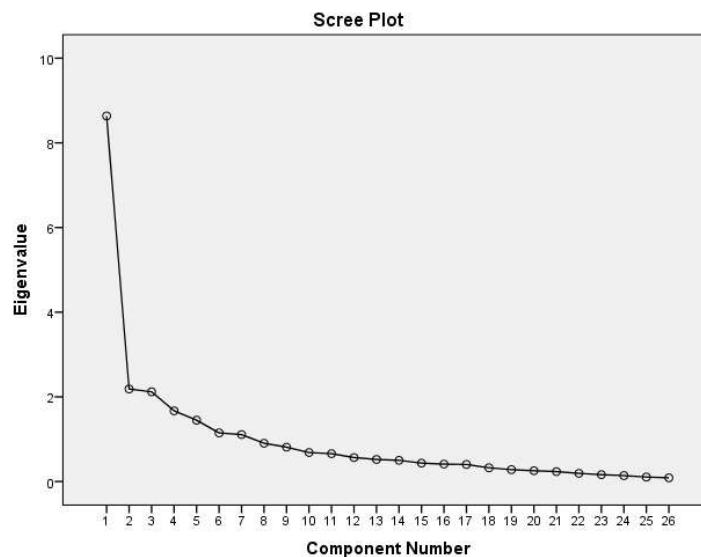
Table 1. Preschool teachers' responses on nurturing, promoting and enhancing traditional values within the integrated approach to preschool education¹

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the influence of socio-demographical variables on the dominant attitudes of preschool teachers towards nurturing, promoting and enhancing traditional values within the integrated approach to preschool education. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences between the four respondent groups based on years of professional experience (less than 10 years, 11–20 years, 21–30 years, and over 30 years). Furthermore, ANOVA results indicated a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) among five respondent groups based on the kindergarten group in which they are employed (younger, middle, older, mixed and the pre-school year). This difference was observed in the item *I use music listening activities in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values* ($F = 4.068, p = 0.004$), with preschool teachers working in mixed-age groups expressing a stronger agreement. Additionally, ANOVA results demonstrated statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between two respondent groups based on the location of the kindergarten (village vs. town) in relation to three items. The first item, *I use folk music (folk songs and instruments) in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values* ($F = 4.267, p = 0.041$), showed that preschool teachers from rural kindergartens were more likely to agree. The other two items, *The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are museums* ($F = 24.031, p = 0.000$) and *The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are cultural centres* ($F = 19.320, p = 0.000$), indicated that teachers in urban

¹ Distribution of the respondents' answers (frequency and percentages) was presented at the conference *Preschool Teacher in the 21st Century*, held under the title *The Promotion of Values within Preschool Education*, at the Department of Preschool Education in Aleksinac, on May 18-19, 2024.

kindergartens more frequently visited these sites. This is likely due to the proximity of museums and cultural centres to urban areas, making them more accessible to teachers working in town-based kindergartens. To reduce dimensionality and simplify the interpretation of variables, factor analysis was conducted on the scale measuring preschool teachers' dominant attitudes towards nurturing, promoting, and enhancing traditional values within the integrated approach to preschool education. All 26 items in the scale were subjected to principal component analysis. The appropriateness of the data for factor analysis was confirmed through the correlation matrix, with coefficients exceeding 0.3. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.824, which is above the recommended threshold of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1970, 1974, as cited in Pallant, 2009). Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett, 1954, as cited in Pallant, 2009) yielded a statistically significant result ($p < 0.000$), indicating that the correlation matrix was factorable.

The analysis of the extracted components revealed seven factors; however, three factors each contained only two loadings. Since it is generally recommended that each factor have at least three significant loadings, four components were retained. These four components account for 56.20% of the total variance. Cattell's scree plot is presented in *Graph 1*.



Graph 1: *Cattell's scree plot*

To facilitate the interpretation of the components, Oblimin rotation was applied. The resulting component structure revealed several large factor loadings, with each variable showing significant loadings on only one component (see Table 2).

FACTOR	FACTOR LOADING			
	1	2	3	4
<i>1. Nurturing traditional values in educational practice</i>				
I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during extended play.	0,832			
I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during guided play.	0,814			
I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during free play.	0,780			
I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during practical everyday situations within rituals.	0,760			
I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during planned learning activities.	0,727			
I nurture and promote traditional values in preschool-aged children during practical everyday situations within daily routines.	0,718			
I use music listening activities in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values.	0,605			
Holiday activities (e.g., Easter, Christmas celebrations) are designed to nurture traditional values.	0,482			
I try to include children in activities aimed at introducing them to customs, past lives of our people and such.	0,405			

I try to include children in activities aimed at learning about traditional cuisine.	0,392			
I use music games (games with singing, accompanied by musical instruments, folk dances) in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values.	0,386			
I use traditional games in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values (e.g., “Okolo salata“, “Kolariću Paniću“, “Care, care, gospodare, koliko ima sati?“ and other games).	0,366			
2. Challenges associated with activities/projects related to the topic of traditional values				
During activities aimed at nurturing traditional values, I perceive children of other nationalities as a challenge.		0,814		
During activities aimed at nurturing traditional values, I perceive parents of children of other nationalities as a challenge.		0,808		
During activities aimed at nurturing traditional values, I face the challenge of children not showing interest in project topics related to tradition, nationality, and culture.		0,732		
During activities aimed at nurturing traditional values, I face the challenge of a lack of traditional equipment, materials, and resources (e.g. old objects such as a spindle, a loom, traditional attire, etc.).		0,568		
3. Developing and strengthening competencies for implementing				

<i>activities/projects on traditional values</i>				
I enhance my educational practice by attending professional development seminars on the topic of traditional values.			0,790	
I enhance my educational practice by attending workshops on the topic of traditional values.			0,722	
I enhance my educational practice by reading articles, books, monographs on traditional values available online.			0,643	
I enhance my educational practice by reading printed resources on traditional values.			0,643	
I use folk music (folk songs and instruments) in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values.			0,480	
<i>4. Local community as a resource for promoting traditional values</i>				
The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are museums.				0,819
The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are cultural centres.				0,728
The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are individuals who practice old crafts (e.g., making <i>opanci</i> , pottery, sewing traditional attire, viewing baskets, etc.).				0,709

The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are traditional associations and their events organized in our community.				0,574
The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are cultural-artistic associations.				0,550

Table 2. The overview of group factors
 Extraction method: Principal component analysis
 Rotation method: Oblimin with Keiser normalization

The extracted factors were interpreted as follows: *Nurturing traditional values in educational practice* consisting of 12 items; *Challenges associated with activities/projects related to the topic of traditional values* with 4 items; *Developing and strengthening competencies for implementing activities/projects on traditional values* with 5 items and *Local community as a resource for promoting traditional values* with 5 items (see Table 2).

Positive correlations were observed between all the factors. A moderate correlation was found between *Nurturing traditional values in educational practice* and *Developing and strengthening competencies for implementing activities/projects on traditional values* ($r = 0.350$), as well as between *Nurturing traditional values in educational practice* and *Local community as a resource for promoting traditional values* ($r = 0.308$). A small correlation was observed between *Nurturing traditional values in educational practice* and *Challenges associated with activities/projects related to the topic of traditional values* ($r = 0.198$). A small correlation was observed between the factors *Challenges associated with activities/projects related to the topic of traditional values* and *Developing and strengthening competencies for implementing activities/projects on traditional values* ($r = 0.136$), as well as between *Challenges associated with activities/projects related to the topic of traditional values* and *Local community as a resource for promoting traditional values* ($r = 0.107$).

Additionally, a small correlation was found between *Developing and strengthening competencies for implementing activities/projects on traditional values* and *Local community as a resource for promoting traditional values* ($r = 0.277$).

Results, discussion and conclusion

Our research confirmed the general hypothesis that preschool teachers most often nurture, promote and enhance traditional values through their educational practice.

The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a statistically significant difference among five respondent groups based on the kindergarten group in which they are employed (younger, middle, older, mixed and the pre-school year). This difference was observed only in the item *I use music listening activities in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values* ($F = 4.068, p = 0.004$), with preschool teachers working in mixed-age groups expressing a stronger agreement. It can be assumed that music listening activities are more suited to project-based activities in mixed-age groups, given the heterogeneous age structure of the children. When examining statistically significant differences between the two respondent groups based on the location of the kindergarten (village vs. town), significant differences were found in the item *I use folk music (folk songs and instruments) in activities aimed at nurturing traditional values*. Teachers in village kindergartens expressed stronger agreement. This may be attributed to the easier access to folk instruments and songs in rural areas, as these are often more integrated into the daily lives of children, resulting in greater interest and engagement. Additionally, statistically significant differences were observed in the items *The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are museums* and *The places in the local community I visit as a preschool teacher, in order to contribute to the promotion and preservation of traditional values in children, are cultural centres*. Teachers in urban kindergartens expressed stronger agreement with these items, likely due to the proximity of museums and cultural centres in urban areas, which makes them more accessible for educators in town-based kindergartens. These findings suggest that preschool teachers in rural areas visit museums less frequently to promote and nurture traditional values compared to their urban counterparts. Similar results were found in the research conducted by Maran and Jovišić (2017), which indicated that children in rural areas, due to geographical distance, are less likely to visit urban cultural institutions (museums, galleries, theatres, cultural-historical monuments). However, local museums and collections in rural areas offer opportunities for educators to introduce children to the civilizational values of their birthplace through lectures and workshops, potentially fostering an interest in history, art, and ethnology. Unfortunately, their research also found that educators in rural areas often neglect these resources. To address this gap, it is crucial to incorporate more content and activities related to traditional values into

the curricula for future preschool teachers, enhancing their competencies in these areas. Birch (2028) highlights that an alternative approach may lie in collective reflection on the experiences of children and adults in museums, offering unique and underexplored content for both groups. Subsequent to the Oblimin rotation, four factors were extracted: *Nurturing traditional values in educational practice*; *Challenges associated with activities/projects related to the topic of traditional values*; *Developing and strengthening competencies for implementing activities/projects on traditional values* and *Local community as a resource for promoting traditional values* (see Table 2). As expected, positive correlations were observed between all the factors. A moderate correlation was found between *Nurturing traditional values in educational practice* and *Developing and strengthening competencies for implementing activities/projects on traditional values*. This suggests that preschool teachers enhance their professional competencies through daily practice, and conversely, a more empowered teacher can implement project activities with greater professionalism. The moderate correlation between *Nurturing traditional values in educational practice* and *Local community as a resource for promoting traditional values* indicates the significant role of the local community and its resources in supporting the nurturing of traditional values in kindergartens. A small correlation was observed between *Nurturing traditional values in educational practice* and *Challenges associated with activities/projects related to the topic of traditional values*, suggesting that preschool teachers are able to effectively address these challenges. This is further supported by the weak correlation between *Challenges associated with activities/projects related to the topic of traditional values* and *Developing and strengthening competencies for implementing activities/projects on traditional values*.

The small correlation between the factors *Challenges associated with activities/projects related to the topic of traditional values* and *Local community as a resource for promoting traditional values* suggests that preschool teachers effectively navigate the challenge of collaborating with the local community. Specifically, they utilize various local sites and institutions to nurture traditional values in preschool-aged children. Similarly, a small correlation between *Developing and strengthening competencies for implementing activities/projects on traditional values* and *Local community as a resource for promoting traditional values* indicates that preschool teachers enhance their professional competencies through their collaboration with the local community.

From the factors extracted through Oblimin rotation, we were able to compare the various approaches to nurturing traditional values through direct work with children, the challenges associated with such project activities, and the active involvement of local community resources,

which may contribute to strengthening the competencies required in these areas. In most cases, medium or small correlations were observed between the factors, suggesting the integrative potential of folk traditions and values, which can be combined with various fields through the use of local community resources.

Given that folk traditions represent an infinite resource of knowledge, preschool teachers have expressed a readiness to engage with this topic across multiple domains, opening opportunities for collaboration with diverse community stakeholders. Among the dominant attitudes of preschool teachers, the most prominent is the presence and use of music content. This is entirely justified by the syncretic nature of music, which serves as both an important element and a testament to past cultural eras. Cooperative designing of project activities focusing on learning about tradition and promoting values can also enhance teachers' professional competencies. Defining and intensifying such activities through projects contributes to the preservation and nurturing of traditional values, thus fostering a sense of belonging and enriching the experiential learning of preschool-aged children.

In that context, the respondents identified several projects whose activities, implemented within planned learning situations, were aimed at promoting traditional values. These included projects such as: "Tradition in everyday life", "Pots and pans of my region", "Games then and now", "When I climb a pumpkin", "Wedding celebration", "Serbia", "Hope for centuries to come", "Customs in our society", "Music which connects us", "My town then and now", "What can my grandma make?", "Each shoe leaves a trace", "What can we make out of wool?", "Children in the world of music", "Musical instruments", "Let's sing and dance", "The *kolo* line spins", "The tailor", "No tools no craft", "My great-grandmother's handicraft", "The time machine", "Customs in my community", and others.

The respondents were also asked to provide a brief description of a project activity aimed at nurturing traditional values. Among the activities described, we have selected the following examples, grouped into categories:

- **Introducing children to traditional attire:** "We represented traditional attire from the Srem and Banat regions and compared it with modern-day costumes. We also learned two *kolo* dances from the Srem region: *Seljančica* and *Igra kolo*"; "The children dressed in traditional attire and sang the song *Lepa Kata*"; "Since our group includes children of Roma nationality who identify as Romanian or German, we organized a workshop with their parents. During this session, with pleasant music in the background, we showed a slides presentation of traditional attire and customs, both religious and secular. We also invited a

choreographer from our local artistic society, who taught us the basic steps of traditional *kolo* dances from these regions. The project concluded with a dance and game involving the parents, creating a very pleasant and relaxed atmosphere.”; “The song *Natalijina ramonda* inspired us to research Serbia from the time of queen Natalija, including the attire and customs of that era...”; “We visited the Cultural-artistic society and observed various folk costumes”; “We made a folk costume using old fabric”;

- **Implementation of traditional games:** “The traditional game *Trčim, trčim oko kruga* helped introduce children to the concept of a circle and circular formations”, “We played the game *Kolariću Paniću*”; “We learned traditional games *Ja posejah lan* and *Ja posejah lubenice*”; “Playing with elastics, playing with mud, playing with corn husks, workshop with hay and mud, introducing children to how balls used to be made”, “During the Children’s week, while learning about the “children of the world”, I talked to the children about the *kolo* dance and we played the game *Ja posejah lubenice*”, “In the *Magic Castle* project, we introduced children to the customs and costumes worn during the Nemanjić era through the singing game *Na kamen sela Anđelka*”, “Movement game *Kolariću Paniću*”; “We learned and played traditional games *Ja posejah lan* and *Ja posejah lubenice*”;
- **Introducing children to old, traditional objects:** “We collected and brought old objects (an old coffee grinder, a scale, a mortar, a spindle, etc.) to the kindergarten for children to explore”; “Parents brought traditional tools, clothes, and artworks to the kindergarten, allowing children to examine them. Later, we compared these objects with modern items and discussed their potential functions in contemporary life”; “We visited the Cultural-artistic society where we viewed old tools and discussed past and present customs”; “We researched with the children who a cobbler is and what he does, we drew a plan of a cobbler’s workshop, built a model workshop, and visited the *Cipelići* cobbler’s workshop”; “We made various traditional objects from clay with the children”; “We wove a carpet using the mosaic method, braiding large strips cut from poster board, which ultimately covered and decorated half of the wall in our room”; “We created a tapestry by threading wool strings through a large frame using a guiding string.”;
- **Introducing children to traditional musical instruments:** “We introduced children to musical instruments (bag pipes, pipes, double flutes, *gusle*, kaval, *tapan* drum, semantron, tambourine)”; “We introduced children to traditional crafts and

invited a choreographer, a bagpipes player, and a musician skilled in various traditional instruments to visit us”; “We engaged the children in playing the snare drum”;

- **Introducing children to traditional cuisine:** “We travelled around the world and learned about traditional dishes, other cultures...”; “We discussed with the children the process of pickling vegetables, and together, we made pickled vegetables. After storing the jars, we waited for three weeks before trying our salad”; “We cooked and baked traditional dishes”;
- **Celebrating religious holidays:** “During Easter celebrations, we discussed Easter customs, and together with the children, dyed boiled eggs in the kindergarten”; “We introduced children to the customs of celebrating *slava* (patron saint’s day) and compared them to the modern-day patron saint’s day celebrations”; “Visit to a church”; “On the day of the kindergarten’s *slava*, the children attended and participated in the breaking of the *slavski kolač* (traditional Serbian cake) with the parish priest”;
- **Introducing children to customs:** “We took the children to visit the registrar’s office and learn about wedding customs”; “In an improvised street scene, a child banged on a pot with a wooden spoon, calling other children to come out and jump over a ceremonial bonfire called *Lazarica*. An improvised bonfire was set up, and popcorn was baked on a grill...”.

From the given descriptions, it can be concluded that the preschool teachers utilize both practical everyday situations in the kindergarten and planned project activities (learning situations) to nurture traditional values. According to their responses, the most dominant activities focus on teaching traditional folk costumes, traditional games and introducing children to old objects. Activities related to introducing children to traditional musical instruments, traditional cuisine, celebrating religious holidays, and teaching certain customs follow closely behind.

Vukićević, Golubović, Ilić and Stanojević (2016) found in their research that preschool teachers in our kindergartens most frequently select folk songs and dances from the folk tradition, while other elements, such as old objects, crafts, and folk customs, are significantly less represented. The least frequent activities are those focused on learning about the past lives of our people, folk instruments, and folk costumes. Earlier studies (Vukomanović & Komnenić, 1981; Ilić & Janković, 1986) also emphasized that traditional games should be an integral part of music activities in the kindergarten. These games need to be versatile, well-designed, organized, guided and supervised to ensure that children’s musical and overall development progresses appropriately. When selecting traditional music games, preschool teachers should provide

guidelines based on the children's musical abilities, interests and their motor skills. It is particularly important to align the games with the children's interests, as this increases their engagement and allows them to pass on cultural heritage to younger generations. Traditional games are especially effective for developing children's social skills. Compared to modern games, traditional games help children enhance cooperation skills and learn how to follow rules. This is further supported by research conducted by Marlina and Pransiska (2007) in kindergartens abroad. Games foster a sense of unity and mutual understanding in smaller kindergarten groups, promoting socialization, cooperation, and democratic values, while simultaneously building social skills and improving problem-solving abilities (Marušić, 2022, p. 117). By combining music, movement, and words, a syncretic community is formed, facilitating the successful transmission of traditions and customs to younger generations. Because of the influences of globalization, traditional culture and values are becoming less prevalent, as younger generations increasingly adopt role models from popular culture.

Due to various historical circumstances, our people have faced significant challenges in preserving their traditions, leading to the disappearance or repression of numerous customs. In contrast to more conservative areas that strongly uphold their customs and beliefs, there are noticeable efforts to revive traditional rituals and values in modern times. The preservation of folk music, art, and its transmission to younger generations is a collective responsibility, as this is the key to preserving and promoting identity and tradition (Stratulat & Stratulat, 2020, p. 16). Therefore, music plays a crucial role in socio-cultural life, creative expression and the preservation of heritage (Jeremić & Milenović, 2020, p. 442).

In conclusion, it is essential to create conditions where children can learn uninterrupted, transform their knowledge, and develop a positive attitude toward the traditional values of their own and other cultures. Researching and preserving cultural heritage, while promoting values holds great potential for encouraging children's self-awareness, and the development of personal identity within the cultural context of their community. For this reason, it is important to introduce children, as early as preschool age, to the significance and beauty of folk customs, enabling them to appreciate their cultural heritage and protect it from oblivion. Given the vast potential of modern technologies in education, future research should explore how traditional values can be nurtured in contemporary settings, particularly through the use of applications, software, and digital tools, especially for music-related content.

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