

# Chapter 11

## “Musicmedia” in Childhood:

### The Impact of Digital Platforms of the Musical Preferences of Lusophone Children

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*In recent decades, digital media have transformed children's cultural and communicative practices. This study explores musical understandings among Lusophone children and their interactions with digital platforms. Through ethnographic research with 84 children (ages 5–13) from choirs in southern Brazil and northern Portugal, we analyze data using the concept of musicmedia, which examines the interplay between music and digital media. Findings reveal that platforms like YouTube and Spotify shape children's musical preferences, serving as primary sources for discovering genres and artists. These results highlight the need to integrate digital repertoires into school curricula, fostering critical engagement with music in educational settings.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Is it urgent to integrate diverse technologies into school practices? Will 21st-century children continue to be educated in schools with 19th-century structures and teaching methods? Do digital platforms and streaming services foster meaningful learning? Do children genuinely learn while consuming content from these interactive platforms? Should we aim to form citizens capable of critically understanding the role of media in their lives? Are adults, particularly educators, comfortable utilizing these technologies? Can the dynamism of these channels - with their images, short videos, and instant interaction - be a tool to engage children in learning? Are we heading toward a future where much of school knowledge will be mediated by technology?

Questions like these raise more doubts than definitive answers. However, in the field of technology and education, such issues are often addressed dichotomously. How can we move beyond the common notion that views digital platforms and streaming services solely as allies or threats to education? How can we adopt a critical and reflective perspective that allows for a distanced analysis of a reality in which we are deeply immersed? More importantly, how can we consider the multiple angles and layers of this integration, revealing its potentialities and limitations? Understanding the relationship between children, technology, and education requires an approach that goes beyond simplifications, fostering debates that take into account the cultural, ethical, and pedagogical implications of this phenomenon.

To critically analyze the technological advancements that society has faced in recent decades, it is essential to understand that Generation Alpha, comprising children born into this highly digitized environment, also has its social and cultural practices shaped by the vast media universe to which they have been exposed since birth (McCrindle & Fell, 2021). Today, a variety of interactive platforms, such as YouTube, Spotify, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, play central roles in the lives of these children, offering new means of cultural consumption. In the Lusophone context, both in Brazil and Portugal, children's media consumption has increased substantially, significantly impacting the construction of their artistic and musical preferences.

The cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1989; 1998) that children carry, combined with the cultural appropriation of musical content through digital means, which we designate as *musicmedia*, exerts a notable influence on the formation of children's musical identities. Thus, the concept of *musicmedia* is proposed as a theoretical lens to examine the interactions between music and digital media, enabling children not only to consume but also to dynamically reinterpret new perspectives on their cultural identities.

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