

MUSIC IN THE UNIVERSITY CONTEXT AND ITS IMPACTS: PERSPECTIVES FROM EMOTIONAL, PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

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Abstract

Music is a powerful tool for the emotional, personal, social, and cultural development of university students. However, in Colombia, existing research has addressed these dimensions in isolation and with limited approaches. This fragmentation highlights the need for comprehensive studies that explore the impact of music from a holistic perspective. This study adopts a quantitative approach of a descriptive and correlational nature, aiming to analyze students' perceptions, beliefs, and emotions regarding the impact of music on their emotional, personal, social, and cultural lives. The study population consisted of active students from three professional academic programs. A non-probabilistic, purposive sampling method was used, resulting in a total sample of 225 students. The data collection instrument was a structured Likert-type questionnaire composed of 14 items distributed across two dimensions: a) personal and emotional impact of music, and b) social and cultural impact of music. The results, obtained through statistical tools and correlational techniques, demonstrate that music plays a significant role in students' emotional well-being, enhances coexistence, strengthens social cohesion, and contributes to the development of cultural identity. These findings underscore the transformative potential of music as a tool to promote personal and community growth within the university setting.

Keywords: Impact of music, Emotional well-being, Social cohesion

Introduction

Since its earliest manifestations in history, music has been a constant in human development, not only as an artistic expression but also as a powerful driver of personal and social growth (López, 2011). Beyond its aesthetic and cultural value, it possesses a remarkable ability to influence emotions, thought, and human behavior. Various authors agree that music, by enabling emotional recognition and regulation, promotes individual well-being and the quality of social relationships (Gutiérrez et al., 2021; Araujo, 2023). In this sense, it becomes a vehicle for communication and cohesion within communities, acting as a catalyst for identity, personal expression, and social bonds (Cabedo et al., 2023).

In the university context, music plays a significant role in comprehensive education processes, enhancing not only academic development but also the emotional, cultural, and social dimensions of students (Gámez, 2015; Martín & Casanovas, 2021). Despite its many benefits, its formal integration into educational programs remains limited (Rodríguez, 2025), representing a missed opportunity to strengthen learning processes, well-being, creativity, and a sense of belonging.

Internationally, several studies have shown the positive effects of music on emotional well-being (Amorín, 2024), stress reduction (Tejada et al., 2020), identity construction (Lozano, 2019), social integration (Zambrano, 2020), and academic performance (Wang, 2025). These perspectives are articulated around four fundamental dimensions: emotional, personal, social, and cultural. Emotionally, music facilitates affective regulation and the

strengthening of self-esteem (Tu & Fu, 2024; Oriola & Gustems, 2021); personally, it stimulates creativity, sensitivity, and self-awareness (Wang & Huang, 2024); socially, it fosters interaction, cohesion, and solidarity among students (He et al., 2024); and culturally, it serves as a means of intercultural dialogue and a reflection of structural inequalities (Liu, Yang & Rao, 2024).

Despite the recognition of music's role in human development, in Colombia existing studies have addressed the emotional, personal, social, and cultural dimensions in isolation, often with predominantly qualitative and descriptive methodological approaches. In the emotional sphere, for instance, research has shown the effects of music on emotional regulation, subjective well-being, and affective expression (Batuta, 2024; Universidad Autónoma del Caribe, 2022; Ordoñez et al., 2022; Gutiérrez et al., 2021). Regarding the personal dimension, the literature includes reflective articles and qualitative studies that describe music's impact on human behavior, especially among children and adolescents (Marín, 2023; Montaña, 2020). Moreover, a mixed-methods study suggests that music is a determining factor in individual behavior, influencing actions based on musical preferences and the social groups formed around them (Vásquez et al., 2024). From a social perspective, the impact of music has been explored in the transformation of interpersonal relationships and social behaviors related to music listening (Rueda, 2020; Luján & Luján, 2019). Finally, in the cultural realm, studies have highlighted music's role in building cultural identity among children and young people, especially in school and community settings (Jaramillo, 2023; Zapata & Niño, 2018).

However, these studies are characterized by their fragmented approach, which limits a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. This thematic dispersion reveals the need for an integrated perspective to analyze how music influences student well-being and development across its various dimensions. This gap becomes especially important when considering the potential of music as a pedagogical and well-being tool in higher education institutions. In a demanding university environment, where students face numerous academic and personal challenges, music can become an accessible, flexible, and transformative resource that contributes both to individual development and the formation of more empathetic, inclusive, and emotionally healthy educational communities.

Within this framework, the present article aims to characterize higher education students' perceptions regarding the impact of music on their personal, emotional, social, and cultural dimensions, as well as to examine significant associations among these dimensions. Using a quantitative, correlational approach, the study seeks to understand how students value music in relation to their emotional well-being, personal development, the construction of meaningful social ties, and its role in shaping cultural identity within the university environment. The findings will provide insight into the transformative power of music and its potential integration as an educational strategy within Colombian higher education.

The article is organized into sections to facilitate understanding of the study. First, it presents a theoretical framework that contextualizes the topic and supports the research conceptually. Then, the methodology is described, detailing the quantitative approach and the procedures and techniques used for data collection and analysis. Subsequently, the results are presented, organized by analytical dimensions to provide a clear and structured view of the findings. Finally, the article concludes with a discussion section that interprets the results in relation to the theoretical framework and previous studies, followed by conclusions that summarize the main contributions and reflections derived from the research.

Theoretical Framework

Music is a cultural and communicative expression with broad emotional, psychological, and social implications. From various academic disciplines—including psychology, education, sociology, and anthropology—it has been studied as a phenomenon that influences multiple dimensions of human development. Within this framework, the present research is supported by theoretical contributions that explain the influence of music on personal, emotional, social, and cultural aspects of individuals.

From a **psychological perspective**, music has been shown to have a direct impact on emotional regulation, memory, and behavior (Tu & Fu, 2024; Gutiérrez et al., 2021). According to affective neuroscience theories, music activates brain areas related to pleasure and emotion, such as the limbic system, and can generate physiological responses such as heart rate variation or hormone release (Amorín, 2024). These effects contribute to improving emotional well-being, reducing stress, and enhancing positive mood. In this regard, Oriola and Gustems (2021) state that listening to and performing music facilitates the identification, expression, and regulation of emotions, strengthening self-esteem and psychological resilience in individuals.

From a **personal development** perspective, music contributes to self-awareness, introspection, and the construction of individual identity (Wang & Huang, 2024). In this sense, music acts as a mirror of the inner world of those who experience it, allowing for reflection on experiences, desires, and personal values. Musical preferences often reflect aspects of personality and individual life history, and their formation involves both biological and sociocultural factors. According to theories of human development, artistic expression—particularly music—stimulates creative thinking, sensitivity, and critical reflection, which are essential elements in the formation of a conscious and autonomous subject (Marín, 2023; Montaña, 2020).

In the **social sphere**, music is understood as a mediator of interpersonal relationships and group identity. From the perspective of social psychology, shared musical practices strengthen cohesion, empathy, and mutual understanding among individuals (He et al., 2024). Music generates collective experiences that transcend verbal language and can establish emotional and symbolic connections between people, whether in family, educational, or community contexts. According to Rueda (2020), the act of listening to and producing music in groups promotes inclusion, solidarity, and respect for diversity. Likewise, from a sociological point of view, musical tastes are not only individual preferences but also social markers that define affiliation groups and guide interaction in specific cultural environments (Vásquez et al., 2024).

From a **cultural perspective**, music is a product and producer of symbolic systems that shape collective identities. It plays a fundamental role in the transmission of traditions, values, and worldviews (Cabedo et al., 2023). Through music, individuals connect with their roots and cultural memory, and at the same time, with global musical influences that redefine cultural identity in hybrid and dynamic forms. According to Liu et al. (2024), music reflects power relations, resistance practices, and social tensions present in different contexts, especially among youth. Therefore, music also becomes a pedagogical tool for critical reflection on inequalities and intercultural dialogue.

Based on these perspectives, this study is theoretically supported by four analytical dimensions that allow a comprehensive exploration of the phenomenon:

- **Emotional dimension:** explores the role of music in emotion management, affective expression, and subjective well-being.
- **Personal dimension:** analyzes the relationship between music and individual development processes such as identity, self-awareness, and personal values.
- **Social dimension:** examines how music influences interpersonal relationships, group participation, and social integration.
- **Cultural dimension:** addresses the influence of music on the construction of cultural identity and the interaction between local and global values.

These four dimensions are interrelated and provide an integrative framework for understanding the influence of music on university students' lives, not only as a recreational or artistic activity but as a significant experience that shapes their way of being, feeling, relating, and belonging.

Relationship Between the Dimensions

Emotional and Personal Relationship with Music

Music represents a privileged medium of personal and emotional expression due to its artistic nature and its ability to establish deep connections with the cognitive and affective development of human beings. Specifically, activities such as singing, instrumental performance, composition, active listening, and music notation allow students to externalize their emotions and understand those of others, serving as vehicles for affective and social communication (Calderón et al., 2020; Oriola & Gustems, 2021). Musical experience, conceived as an educational practice integrating listening, creation, and performance, acts as a subjective mechanism for appropriating sound language through which students express experiences, emotions, and ideas (Zapata, 2017). From this perspective, music not only strengthens artistic interaction but also becomes a space that articulates educational and therapeutic processes (Dzib et al., 2023).

In the educational context, music training has shown a significant impact on various dimensions of personal development, especially in emotional and cognitive domains. Musical practice stimulates neural processes that support memory, language, emotional self-regulation, and behavioral skills (Benítez et al., 2017; Jauset-Berrocal et al., 2017). At the same time, such training promotes the development of intra- and interpersonal competencies such as self-awareness, autonomy, responsible decision-making, and the appropriate management of social relationships (Campayo-Muñoz & Cabedo-Mas, 2016; Campayo-Muñoz et al., 2020).

The emotional dimension, in particular, has been widely recognized as one of the areas most positively affected by musical practice. Various international studies have demonstrated the positive impact of music on students' psychological and emotional well-being, enhancing their emotional adjustment and contributing to their overall development (Carrillo et al., 2017; Hallam, 2015; Peñalba, 2017).

H1: There is a positive relationship between music and the personal and emotional development of students.

Social and Cultural Relationship with Music

Students' participation in music-related activities constitutes a significant expression of their integration into broader social and cultural dynamics. Music, understood as a form

of artistic and cultural expression, plays a central role in shaping individual and collective identities, as well as in consolidating bonds of belonging and forms of social interaction (Arellano, 2019). In this sense, music consumption habits not only reflect aesthetic preferences but also express symbolic dimensions associated with the construction of both the “self” and the “we” (Cataldo, 2012).

Several studies indicate that music serves as a privileged medium for youth socialization, as it facilitates the emergence of urban tribes, the formation of peer groups around musical genres, and the establishment of verbal and non-verbal communication codes such as gestures, clothing, or leisure practices (Artunduaga, 2012; Correa & Burgos, 2017). Thus, music functions as an identity marker that channels processes of recognition, inclusion, or exclusion within a given social context. In the specific case of university students, research by Terrazas and Idali (2014) shows that cultural and musical consumption is closely linked to variables such as gender, academic semester, and academic program. Their findings also highlight that pop music is among the most listened to by young people, emphasizing the significant influence of digital technologies and mass media in shaping musical preferences and cultural identity.

Therefore, music not only articulates affective and aesthetic elements but also fosters meaningful experiences that influence the development of autonomy, self-reflection, and the recognition of others through cultural difference (Olcina-Sempere, 2020). This perspective is supported by pedagogical approaches that promote music as a key tool in intercultural education, contributing to the construction of more tolerant and inclusive societies (Estrada, 2020; Del Moral-Marcos, 2024). Likewise, the presence of music in educational environments becomes a pedagogical resource that enhances meaningful learning, the development of socio-emotional skills, and the strengthening of cultural identity, particularly in diverse contexts (Meza, 2024; Niño & González, 2023). Integrating music into school and university curricula can thus foster social cohesion, stimulate intercultural dialogue, and enrich students’ educational trajectories.

H2: There is a positive relationship between music and the social and cultural dimensions of university students.

Methodology

Type of Study

The research, developed within a quantitative framework using a descriptive and correlational design, allowed for the systematic identification, description, and analysis of students’ perceptions regarding the personal, emotional, social, and cultural impact of music, as well as the exploration of associations among these dimensions. According to Hernández et al. (2014), descriptive studies aim to specify the properties, characteristics, and profiles of individuals, groups, or phenomena, whereas correlational studies examine the relationships between two or more variables within a given context. In this sense, the objective of this study is to characterize university students’ perceptions of the impact of music across personal, emotional, social, and cultural dimensions, and to examine significant associations among these dimensions using Pearson’s chi-square test.

Population and Sample

The target population consisted of active students from three undergraduate academic programs at the Universidad Colegio Mayor de Cundinamarca: Administrative Technology, Business Administration, and Law. A non-probability purposive sampling method was used,

selecting a total sample of 225 students based on accessibility, availability, and thematic relevance, considering the study's focus on capturing subjective representations and personal experiences. The sample was distributed as follows: 21% belonged to the Administrative Technology program, 33% to Business Administration, and 45% to the Law program. Regarding age, 61% were between 18 and 21 years old, 24% between 22 and 26, 5% between 27 and 31, and 9% were over 31 years old. In addition, 21% reported having received prior music training, and only 4% actively participated in a musical group, offering a contrasting perspective on access to and experience with music.

Instrument

A structured Likert-type questionnaire was designed using a five-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree) to assess students' perceptions across two main dimensions: the personal and emotional impact of music, and the social and cultural impact of music. The instrument included items validated based on specialized literature in music psychology (Hoskyns & Bunt, 2024; Saarikallio, 2019) and studies in education and community music (Pérez-Moreno et al., 2020; Green, 2017). The items addressed aspects such as emotional expression, identity, mental health, social bonds, and sense of community, thus ensuring a multidimensional approach to the phenomenon.

The questionnaire consisted of 14 items divided into two dimensions:

a) Personal and emotional impact of music – 7 items

b) Social and cultural impact of music – 7 items

Table 1. Items of the Evaluation Instrument on the Impact of Music on University Students

Dimension	Example Item	Scale
Personal and Emotional Impact of Music	I believe that music is an integral part of culture and can help people connect with their roots and better understand other cultures.	Likert 1 to 5
	I believe that through music, individuals can explore and affirm their individual and collective identity.	Likert 1 to 6
	I believe that music can express and evoke a wide range of emotions, helping people process their feelings and develop greater empathy and emotional understanding.	Likert 1 to 7
	I believe that music is a social activity that can bring people together and improve coexistence.	Likert 1 to 8
	I believe that music—whether listening to it or playing it—can be an effective way to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.	Likert 1 to 9
	I believe that music—whether listening to it or playing it—can be an effective way to promote a sense of well-being and relaxation.	Likert 1 to 10
	I believe that participating in a musical project can improve my social and teamwork skills.	Likert 1 to 11

Social and Cultural Impact of Music	I believe that music is an important part of my life and personal development.	Likert 1 to 12
	I believe that music has a positive impact on my emotional well-being and mental health.	Likert 1 to 13
	I believe that music has a positive effect on the management of negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, or depression.	Likert 1 to 14
	A university music project can strengthen the sense of community and belonging within the university.	Likert 1 to 15
	I believe that a music project would be a valuable complement to the student community.	Likert 1 to 16
	I would be interested in participating in a musical project within the university.	Likert 1 to 17
	I feel motivated to be part of a collective musical project with other students.	Likert 1 to 18

Note: The full instrument is available upon request from the corresponding author.

The reliability of the instrument was verified using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, yielding a value of 0.891 for the entire questionnaire, which indicates very good internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2016).

Data Analysis

The study procedure began with data collection conducted during the second semester of the 2024 academic year. Anonymity and data confidentiality were guaranteed throughout the process. The questionnaire was administered both in print and in digital format via institutional platforms to ensure broader coverage and accessibility. Once the data were collected through a five-point Likert-type questionnaire, analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics software. Pearson's chi-square test was employed to examine the statistical significance of the relationships between the personal-emotional impact of music and the social-cultural impact dimensions. A 95% confidence level was established ($p \leq 0.05$). Additionally, linear association was assessed to evaluate the presence of an ordered trend between students' perceptions of the personal-emotional and the social-cultural impact of music.

The methodology for applying Pearson's chi-square statistic followed these steps: responses were coded and grouped by dimension; contingency tables were generated to cross-tabulate responses; Pearson's chi-square value, likelihood ratio, and linear-by-linear association tests were calculated; and the assumptions of the test were verified, ensuring that no more than 20% of expected cell frequencies were below 5.

The results presented below aim to describe and analyze students' perceptions regarding the personal and emotional impact of music as well as its social and cultural impact. These findings pertain to three professional academic programs comprising a sample of 225 students: Administrative Technology (21%), Business Administration (33%), and Law (45%).

Regarding students' ages, the distribution was as follows: 61% were between 18 and 21 years old, 24% between 22 and 26, 5% between 27 and 31, and 9% older than 31. Furthermore, 21% of respondents reported having received prior musical training, while only 4% currently participate in a musical group.

Personal and Emotional Impact of Music

Most students recognize the cultural impact of music as a key tool for preserving cultural identity and fostering intercultural understanding. In this regard, music is perceived not only as an artistic expression but also as a powerful means to promote social connection and cross-cultural understanding. This is evidenced by 64% of respondents who strongly agree that music is an integral part of culture and can help people connect with their roots and better understand other cultures, while an additional 32% agree. These findings reflect a significant consensus on the role of music in strengthening cultural identity and promoting intercultural connection.

Likewise, participants perceive music as a means to preserve and reinforce their cultural identity, helping them connect with their origins and traditions. Simultaneously, music is considered to foster empathy and understanding toward other cultures, encouraging respect and intercultural integration.

When evaluating students' perceptions of the role of music in the development and affirmation of identity, both individually and collectively, it was found that at least 89% of students hold favorable views regarding the importance of music in shaping identity. This suggests that most students recognize music as an essential element for exploring who they are, strengthening their sense of belonging to a group or community, and connecting with key aspects of their personal and social identity. Thus, music is perceived as a powerful medium for connecting with emotions, values, traditions, and senses of belonging, both individually and collectively.

Regarding how students assess music's role in emotional development and in building deeper connections with others, it was found that 91% believe that music has a strong emotional impact, either fully or partially. This reflects a broad acknowledgment of music's capacity to express and evoke emotions. In general, music is seen as an effective tool for emotional expression, as well as for fostering empathy and emotional understanding among most students.

Concerning whether students perceive music as a potential enhancer of social coexistence—by creating harmonious environments, fostering mutual understanding, and reducing conflict—and whether they see music primarily as a shared experience capable of building bonds, forming communities, and strengthening interpersonal relationships, at least 86% of students agree (totally or partially) that music has significant potential to unite people and enhance coexistence. Of this total, 56% strongly agree and 30% agree, while the remainder are undecided.

In exploring students' perceptions of the relationship between music and its capacity to improve mental health—particularly in managing negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, and depression—it was found that 64% strongly agree that listening to or playing music can effectively reduce such disorders, while 28% agree. This demonstrates that a considerable majority view music as a highly effective tool for coping with stress and negative emotions.

Additionally, 91% of students believe that music has the potential to promote a sense of well-being and relaxation, either fully or partially. This highlights a predominantly positive perception of music as an effective means to enhance emotional well-being. Only 8% are undecided, underscoring the strong acceptance of music as a beneficial tool for emotional health.

Regarding whether students recognize that participating in musical projects can positively impact their social skills and ability to work effectively with others, 77% believe that taking part in a musical project can improve their social and teamwork skills. This indicates a highly positive perception of music's benefits in these areas. Only 3% disagree with the statement, while 20% are undecided, suggesting that most students recognize music's value in developing interpersonal competencies.

Social and Cultural Impact of Music

When exploring the importance of music in students' daily lives and its influence on their development as individuals—based on the item “Do you consider music to be an important part of your life and personal development?”—78% responded affirmatively, with 39% strongly or partially agreeing, and 20% being undecided. These data indicate that a majority of students view music as a relevant element in their emotional and personal growth.

To investigate students' emotional and psychological perceptions regarding the impact of music on their well-being—particularly its potential to improve emotional states and mental health, and its influence on stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional balance—it was found that 56% strongly agree with the statement that music contributes to emotional and mental well-being, while 36% agree. Altogether, 92% acknowledge the positive impact of music on the dimensions mentioned.

The exploration of students' perceptions about the social potential of music as a tool to strengthen bonds within the university community revealed that 50% are completely certain that a musical project can enhance the sense of community and belonging at the university. Additionally, 37% at least agree with this statement, while 12% remain undecided. These results underscore the widespread perception of music as a powerful tool for promoting social unity and strengthening shared identity in the university setting.

Furthermore, 83% of students (combining “agree” and “strongly agree” responses) believe that a musical project would be a valuable addition to the student community. This demonstrates broad student support for integrating music into the university environment as a tool for enhancing the student experience and fostering unity and belonging. Only 3% disagree, while 14% remain neutral, reflecting a predominantly positive and receptive attitude toward the proposal.

Regarding students' personal interest in becoming involved in a musical initiative within the university, as well as their willingness and motivation to participate in a collective musical project, varied positions were observed. For example, 34% of students expressed no interest in participating, suggesting that a musical project may not appeal to a significant portion of the student community. Additionally, 24% were undecided. On the other hand, 42% of students expressed potential commitment and interest in joining the musical project.

Analysis of the Relationship Between Personal-Emotional and Social-Cultural Impact of Music

The analysis yielded a chi-square value of 109.380 with a significance of $p = 0.000$, confirming a significant relationship between the personal-emotional and the social-cultural impact of music. This finding demonstrates that the greater the emotional impact, the stronger the perception of music as a tool for social cohesion. Moreover, the linear trend found suggests that as music has a greater personal impact, it is also perceived as a more relevant social and cultural element. The result obtained—77.138 with 1 degree of freedom and a

significance level of $p = 0.000$ —provides statistical evidence of a significant linear association between the two dimensions. In other words, a higher perception of personal-emotional impact is associated with a higher perception of social-cultural impact, following a clear, progressive pattern. Therefore, as students perceive a stronger personal and emotional impact of music in their lives, they are also more likely to value its social and cultural influence. This reinforces the hypothesis that "music serves as a bridge between individual experience and the construction of community bonds." In this sense, music not only fulfills an introspective function but also fosters social cohesion and collective identity within the university context.

Table 2. *Chi-square test for the dimensions: personal and emotional impact of music and social and cultural impact.*

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	109,380 ^a	4	0,000
Likelihood Ratio	98,390	4	0,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	77,138	1	0,000
Number of Valid Cases	225		

^a 2 cells (22.2%) have expected counts less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.16.

Source: Compiled by the authors based on data systematized in SPSS.

These findings reinforce the idea that music can serve as a bridge between individual experience and community connection. This suggests that universities in general, and Universidad Colegio Mayor de Cundinamarca in particular, could leverage music as a tool to strengthen students' well-being and social cohesion.

Results

The following results aim to describe and analyze students' perceptions regarding the personal and emotional impact of music, as well as its social and cultural influence. The data corresponds to three professional academic programs, covering a sample of 225 students: Administrative Technology (21%), Business Administration (33%), and Law (45%). Regarding the age of the surveyed students, the distribution is as follows: 61% are between 17 and 21 years old, 24% between 22 and 26, 5% between 27 and 31, and 9% are older than 31. Additionally, 21% of respondents reported having received some previous musical training, and only 4% currently participate in a musical group.

Emotional and Personal Impact of Music

Most students recognize the cultural impact of music as a key tool for preserving cultural identity and promoting intercultural understanding. In this sense, music is perceived not only as an artistic expression but also as a powerful means of fostering social connection and cross-cultural awareness. This is evidenced by the fact that 64% of respondents strongly agree that music is an integral part of culture and can help individuals connect with their roots and better understand other cultures, while an additional 32% agree. These data reflect a strong consensus on the importance of music in reinforcing cultural identity and promoting intercultural connection. Moreover, the results suggest that participants perceive music as a means to preserve and strengthen their cultural identity, helping them reconnect with their origins and traditions. At the same time, they view music as a tool to foster empathy and understanding towards other cultures, promoting respect and intercultural integration.

When evaluating respondents' perceptions of music's role in the development and affirmation of identity, both individual and collective, it was found that at least 89% of

students have a favorable view of the importance of music in identity formation. This suggests that the majority see music as an essential element in exploring who they are, reinforcing their sense of belonging to a group or community, and connecting with fundamental aspects of their personal and social identity. In this way, music is perceived as a powerful medium for connecting with emotions, values, traditions, and senses of belonging, both individually and collectively.

When asked how they value the role of music in emotional development and in building deeper connections with others, it was found that the majority of students (91%) believe that music has a strong emotional impact, either fully or partially. This reflects a widespread acknowledgment of music's capacity to express and evoke emotions. Overall, music is perceived as an effective tool for emotional expression and for fostering empathy and emotional understanding among students.

Regarding whether students believe music has the potential to enhance social coexistence by creating a harmonious environment, promoting mutual understanding, and reducing conflict, as well as whether they see music as a shared experience capable of forming bonds, building communities, and strengthening interpersonal relationships, at least 86% of students consider that music has significant potential to unite people and improve coexistence—56% strongly agree, and 30% agree. The remaining percentage is undecided.

In examining how students perceive the relationship between music and its potential to improve mental health—specifically in managing negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, and depression—it was found that 64% strongly agree that listening to or playing music can effectively reduce such conditions, while 28% agree. This shows that a considerable majority see music as a highly effective tool for managing stress and negative emotions such as anxiety and depression.

Furthermore, 91% of students consider that music has the potential to promote a sense of well-being and relaxation, either fully or partially. This reflects a predominantly positive perception of music as an effective tool for enhancing emotional well-being. Only 8% are undecided, highlighting the strong acceptance of music as beneficial for emotional health.

When asked whether students recognize that musical projects can positively impact the strengthening of their social skills and ability to work effectively with others, 77% believe that participating in a musical project can improve their social and teamwork skills, indicating a very positive perception of music's benefits in these areas. Only 3% disagree, and 20% are undecided, suggesting that the majority of students acknowledge the role of music in developing interpersonal competencies.

Social and Cultural Impact of Music

When exploring the importance of music in students' daily lives and how they believe it influences their development as individuals—based on the item “Do you consider music to be an important part of your life and personal development?”—it was found that 78% of students consider music important in this regard. Of this total, 39% fully agree, and 39% partially agree. Meanwhile, 20% are undecided. These data indicate that a majority of students view music as a relevant element in their emotional and personal growth.

When examining students' emotional and psychological perceptions of music's impact on well-being, particularly its potential to improve emotional state and mental health, and to influence aspects such as stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional balance, 56% strongly agree that music can contribute positively to emotional and mental well-being—the

largest group—while 36% agree. Together, 92% acknowledge music’s positive impact in these areas.

The exploration of students' perceptions of the social potential of music as a tool to strengthen bonds within the university community revealed that half of the students are completely confident that a musical project could increase the sense of community and belonging at the university. Additionally, 37% agree with this statement, while 12% are undecided. These results highlight the widespread belief that music can be a powerful tool for fostering social unity and strengthening shared identity in the university context.

Eighty-three percent of students (combining “agree” and “strongly agree”) consider that a musical project would be a valuable addition to the student community. This demonstrates broad support among students for integrating music into the university environment as a means to enhance the student experience and promote unity and belonging. Only 3% disagree, and 14% are neutral, indicating a largely positive and receptive perception toward the proposal.

Regarding students' personal interest in participating in a music initiative at the university—as well as their willingness and motivation to join a collective musical project—responses varied. For example, 34% are not interested in participating, suggesting that a musical project may not appeal to a significant portion of the student body. Additionally, 24% are undecided, without a clear position on the project or its format. On the other hand, 42% express potential commitment, indicating notable interest in being part of a musical initiative.

Discussion

The theoretical framework outlines the foundation that highlights the relevance of music in human experience, not only from an aesthetic and artistic perspective but also from a social, emotional, and cognitive approach. The review of both classical and contemporary authors reveals that music, beyond being a mere acoustic phenomenon, is a complex structure that integrates sounds and silences organized under specific principles, creating an order that balances surprise and predictability (Rousseau, 2007; Montalvo, 2016; Gumbrecht, 2006). This enables its aesthetic appreciation and its power as an emotional and social tool. Likewise, studies from psychology and neuroscience (Gómez, 2019; Soler & Oriola, 2019; Saarikallio, 2011) acknowledge the influence of music on emotional regulation, motivation, and social connection. This is complemented by historical and anthropological perspectives, which position music as an ancestral practice and an essential cultural element (López, 2011; Arias, 2014). Therefore, this integration demonstrates how music contributes to individual development—emotionally, cognitively, and in terms of identity—as well as to the strengthening of the social and cultural fabric, an essential function in multicultural societies and educational contexts.

Meanwhile, the empirical results described in this study reaffirm these ideas, showing that a wide majority of students recognize the impact of music on cultural identity, emotional well-being, and social coexistence. The widespread perception that music facilitates the connection with cultural roots and promotes intercultural empathy confirms its role as a vehicle for social cohesion, validating the arguments presented by authors such as Wu (2025) and Aguilera et al. (2010). Similarly, the positive assessment of music's emotional impact aligns with theories that highlight its power to express and evoke emotions and to mitigate negative states such as stress and anxiety (García, 2022; Saether, 2016).

Another relevant aspect derived from the findings is the recognition of music as an effective tool for the development of social skills and the strengthening of teamwork. This is especially significant considering that in collective spaces—such as choirs, musical groups, or university bands—students not only learn to coordinate with others in time and rhythm but also to communicate, respect turns, resolve conflicts collaboratively, and value others' contributions. In this sense, music transcends its aesthetic dimension to become a pedagogical resource that fosters essential socio-emotional competencies such as empathy, active listening, and cooperation (García, 2022; Cuervo & Ordóñez, 2021). This finding is particularly meaningful in the current context of higher education, where the comprehensive education of students requires a holistic approach that integrates cognitive processes with emotional and social development. Preparing competent professionals demands not only technical training but also soft skills that enable them to adapt to complex and diverse work environments.

However, it is important to highlight that although the perception of music's benefits is predominant among the sample, most students have not received prior musical training. This reveals a gap between the conceptual appreciation of music and its actual practice, which may be due to institutional, cultural, or personal factors that limit the inclusion of music in academic curricula or students' daily lives.

Finally, the evidence shows that music functions as a universal emotional language that not only communicates but also constructs identity and a sense of belonging (Loureiro et al., 2024; Güsewell et al., 2022). This symbolic and emotional nature of music, together with its capacity to enhance cognitive and social skills, makes it a valuable resource for promoting cultural integration and individual well-being—key aspects for education and human development in contemporary societies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The impact of music in its personal, emotional, social, and cultural dimensions in university students' lives goes beyond entertainment, becoming a key factor in all these areas. The study's findings show how music contributes to strengthening cultural identity, emotional well-being, and social cohesion, highlighting its role in building meaningful relationships and managing stress. Based on the results, it can be concluded that:

Music has a positive influence on students' educational development by fostering skills such as concentration, memory, organization, perseverance, and teamwork. This finding confirms that music is more than entertainment; it is a complementary pedagogical tool that enhances learning processes.

Students perceive that music improves their academic performance and emotional well-being, suggesting that its integration into learning environments can act as a motivational factor and a stress regulator.

Collective musical practice strengthens institutional identity and social cohesion, promoting stronger interpersonal relationships, collaborative attitudes, and a greater sense of belonging to the university community.

Music is perceived as a medium for cultural inclusion and expression, allowing for the sharing of values, the acceptance of diversity, and the construction of a more harmonious coexistence within the academic space.

Despite its potential, music has not been fully utilized in institutional strategies for comprehensive education, which represents a significant opportunity to innovate in pedagogical and community dynamics.

Therefore, it is recommended that academic institutions promote spaces for the integration of music into university life in order to enrich students' holistic education, enhance emotional well-being, strengthen social skills, and stimulate creativity. By promoting musical participation, integrating music into teaching practices, and fostering interdisciplinary research, institutions can transform the educational experience into one that is more inclusive, expressive, and meaningful for their communities.

Ultimately, music is not merely an artistic tool but a bridge toward personal and collective understanding, whose impact on university students' lives deserves recognition and support in educational contexts. This article opens a space for academic dialogue on the value of music as a strategy for holistic development, underscoring the need to promote policies and projects that maximize its reach and benefits.

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