

The Relationship Between Performance Anxiety and Music Education from the Perspective of Music Psychology

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Abstract. Many students and professional musicians are afraid to perform in front of others, and this problem has negatively affected music education. Research on the connection between performance anxiety and music education has been conducted by scholars of music psychology. Based on the above analyses, it is believed that performance anxiety is not solely due to a deficiency in an individual, but is a multi-dimensional phenomenon with various contributing causes, such as training environment, teacher support, self-efficacy, perfectionism, audience pressure and the quality of practice. Based on recent reviews and empirical studies, the four educational priorities in this paper are: early psychological preparation, supportive teaching strategies, structured performance exposure, and self-regulation training. Therefore, based on the above analysis, music education can alleviate the problem of maladaptive performance anxiety by combining technical training with psychological skills instruction and cultivating a healthy concept of musical achievement.

Keywords: Music performance anxiety; Music education; Self-efficacy; Music psychology; Performance preparation; Teacher support.

1. Introduction

Performance anxiety of music is a typical problem that has been frequently researched in music psychology. It will harm the students and teachers, as well as professional performers; they may lose self-confidence, lose focus, and fail to perform well [1-2]. MPA has some relevance for education because music learning is often a public, evaluative and high-visibility activity. Students need to perform in front of teachers, peers, examiners and other students, etc., so anxiety has been happening regularly in training.

Recently, some scholars have studied how MPA is affected by both internal and external forces. Internal factors are self-efficacy, perfectionism and prior anxiety experience; external factors are teacher expectations, audience presence and institutional pressure [3, 4]. Therefore, music education will be employed either to alleviate or exacerbate the problem of performance anxiety. The way teachers organize practice, evaluation and opportunities for performance will affect how students feel anxious.

Research on the impact of anxiety on musical education from the perspective of music psychology. It is about whether education practices will cause anxiety or help students cope normally. The first is to recognize that some anxiety in performance is expected and acceptable in the learning process; otherwise, it will lead to poor results.

2. Psychological Basis

Psychologists of music have also called this type of anxiety a fear of performing. Anticipatory anxiety includes anticipation of a negative outcome, heightened physiological arousal, negative self-assessment and fear of failing [1-5]. Anxiety may start to appear long before a performance and continue throughout the training period. It can be seen that the educational environment is responsible for the emotional connotation of the work, not only for the technical merits.

Self-efficacy is a kind of defence mechanism. Students who believe that they can handle the difficult parts and perform well are less anxious and have better learning results [3, 6]. Low self-efficacy is frequently linked to a higher fear of failure, thus performers may perceive normal arousal as a threat.

Therefore, through several good experiences, guided practice, and positive reinforcement, anxiety can be reduced in music education.

Another type is perfectionism. Students who believe that only perfect performance is acceptable are more likely to be anxious in high-pressure situations [4]. In such cases, the educational effect will be less pronounced; if the value taught is "perfection", it may unintentionally raise MPAs. Normalize errors as a way to learn and reduce the fear of failure.

3. Educational Context

3.1. Teacher support

Teacher behaviour is a typical feature of MPA. In 2024, a study on Chinese preservice music teachers found that music performance anxiety, teaching anxiety and self-efficacy were all related, and this anxiety could also manifest in performance and teaching roles [6]. Therefore, a lack of support from teachers is not a trivial matter but should be viewed as a psychological atmosphere in music classes. A calm teacher will be more likely to make realistic demands and comfort students emotionally so they do better.

At the same time, teacher anxiety may be conveyed to the students. Teachers' models of excessive criticism, stress and perfectionism may be absorbed by students. Therefore, the educational environment should be psychologically informed as well as technically feasible.

3.2. Performance culture

Culture of performance is also included. Programs with frequent public performances but limited support are likely to cause anxiety over time. A systematic review of the literature on music performance anxiety and higher education teaching shows that teachers often use strategies such as simulated performance, preparation, breathing and a positive attitude to manage MPA [2]. The above measures will provide multiple chances for performance in a relatively low-risk environment.

It is not to eliminate assessment; rather, the evaluation process will also serve as music instruction. To foster a climate in which people are driven by the desire for excellence rather than by the fear of failure. Students need to be taught that anxiety can be managed and that performance is a skill that improves with practice, reflection and exposure.

4. Educational Strategies

4.1. Early Psychological Preparation

The first is early psychological training. Students should not be anxious about performance or exams only at the moment of the test or competition. They need to learn how anxiety manifests in childhood, how to control their breathing and think differently about mistakes, and how to prepare for public speaking [1, 2]. Advance preparations can reduce the sense of being out of preparation and unfamiliarity during a debut.

4.2. Structured Performance Exposure

The second is organised exposure. Simulated performances, peer run-throughs and small in-class presentations gradually enable students to get used to being in front of others. The educational value of exposure is to turn a performance into a sense of habituation. Recent research has shown that this is one of the more frequent and effective teaching methods for MPA management [2, 7].

4.3. Self-regulation Training

Train self-regulation ability as well. Musicians will also be able to use breath control, imagery, self-talk, attention control and planned practice [1, 5]. These abilities help students recognise the

excitement of arousal as a desire to learn. They also make the students feel more in control, and a sense of control is generally associated with reduced anxiety.

4.4. Balanced Assessment

Balance of assessment design. If the tests are too infrequent or too harsh, they may cause students anxiety. If the evaluation is too weak, it will not motivate students to study better. Therefore, the assessment of music education should be explicit, fair and supportive of development. Help the students learn to perform under pressure and reduce the sense of chronic anxiety.

5. Music Psychology

Performance anxiety can be seen as a connection among the person, the task and the situation from the perspective of music psychology. It is also learned from performance circumstances rather than being an innate trait [1, 5]. Therefore, educational intervention will be more effective if it changes students' thoughts and environments simultaneously. A good teacher can offer some practical advice on how to present to help ease a student's performance anxiety.

Recently, many people have reported that the best interventions are those that encourage deeper learning rather than reducing anxiety at the last minute. When the students learn their lessons in advance, they will feel more confident and be less likely to panic during the show [1]. Therefore, music education and anxiety management are related through learning quality; good learning generally results in reduced anxiety, and reduced anxiety promotes better learning.

6. Implications

Performance anxiety and music education: a study of their relationship and implications for curriculum development. Music classes should also teach psychology at the same time. Support the teachers as well, because teacher anxiety and teaching style will affect student results [6]. Finally, the programs should recognise that some anxiety is normal and even beneficial; however, prolonged anxiety can impair learning, health and long-term musical interest.

The psychology of music can help schools see performances as learning occasions rather than tests of students' abilities. Improve the quality of life for students and promote their all-around development. That is to say, the reduction of maladaptive anxiety is not in opposition to excellence; it can be a condition for excellence.

7. Conclusion

Performance anxiety and music education are closely related. MPA is formed by self-efficacy, perfectionism, teacher support and educational culture, and it can be reduced through early preparation, structured exposure, self-regulation training and balanced assessment [2, 3, 6]. The first is that psychology in music education should be used in actual teaching. When teaching students how to manage anxiety in the process of musical education, they will be able to perform with greater confidence, resilience, and expressiveness.

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