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Differences in the Stress Coping Styles and Social Competences among Classical and Jazz Musicians

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Abstract

The musical milieu raises a number of challenges for artists. Coping with these depends not only on the appropriate level of one's musical abilities but also on a number of personal competences. The ability to manage/overcome stress in difficult situations and a high level of social competences fall under the conditions of high musical achievement and success in musical performance. Furthermore, the psychological functioning of musicians might be partly determined by impacts from musical genres that those musicians performed. Diverse styles of music education and the expectations of musicians performing various musical genres have become an inspiration for the research exploring the existence of differences between classical and jazz musicians. Amongst the important psychological areas for functioning effectively as a musician, stress management styles and social competences have been chosen for this study. It was assumed that the genre of performed music, and thus the varied mode of music education in the field of classical and jazz music performance can cause significant differences in the psychological functioning of musicians. Of the 73 musicians that participated in the study, 38 were classical musicians and 35 were jazz musicians, jazz musicians revealed a significantly higher level of social competence in terms of social exposure compared to classical musicians. There were no differences in the style of coping with stress between the studied group of musicians.

Introduction

The phenomenon of stress is quite often analyzed in the musical environment, both from a practical and research perspective. This is evidenced by numerous works devoted to the performance anxiety experienced by musicians as well as publications on the strategies of dealing with the symptoms of stage fright (Bissinger-Ćwierz & Nogaj, 2018; Kantor-Martynuska &

Domaradzka, 2018; Kenny, 2011; Klickstein, 2009; Williamon, 2004). The education and profession of a musician constantly require the artist to cope with stress, mainly in the context of public performances (Steptoe, 1989). This condition facilitates or hinders the functioning of a musician at the physiological, behavioral and cognitive levels, in connection with preparations for the concert or during it, and even after leaving the stage (see Kantor-Martynuska & Domaradzka, 2018; Kenny, 2011; Steptoe, 2001). The musicians' way of responding to stress in the context of public performances is, therefore, a key issue.

Dealing with Stress among Musicians

Coping with stress is a cognitive and behavioral ability to master specific requirements in difficult situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The general human's functioning of his/her life and professional achievements in music are often indirectly dependent on the skills and style of coping with stress (see Manturzewska, 2014). One of the classifications of stress coping styles (Parker & Endler, 1992) distinguishes (1) task-focused style (defines the tendency to make efforts to solve the problem through cognitive actions or attempts to change the situation); (2) emotion-focused style (refers to people who concentrate on themselves and on their own emotional experiences in stressful situations); (3) avoidance-focused style (to divert attention from thinking, experiencing a difficult situation through two forms: involvement in alternative activities, or looking for social contacts). Emotion-focused style and avoidance-focused style are significantly less effective ways of coping with stress than task-focused style.

Social Competences among Musicians

In turn, the phenomenon of social competence among musicians is rarely included in research in the field of music psychology (Nogaj, 2018). Among the numerous classifications of social competences (see Martowska, 2012), the classification of Matczak (2001) deserves special attention. Based on various human life situations, she distinguished competencies that determine the effectiveness of behaviors in (1) intimate situations, (2) social exposure situations and (3) situations requiring assertiveness. Musicians are expected to have a high level of social competence, which, along with a certain level of musical abilities and a range of cognitive-personality-emotional conditioning, is an integral part of the musician's functioning (see Gaunt & Hallam, 2009; Kemp, 1996; Manturzevska, 2014). The level of social competence is also important, especially those related to the social exposition, which can be the main determinant of school and academic achievements (Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, 2004) and success in a professional career (Smółka, 2016).

Psychosocial Differences Between Classical and Jazz Musicians

Analysis of the selected literature indicates specific differences in the psychosocial functioning of musicians representing the performance of various musical genres. Jazz musicians exhibit a significantly lower level of stress experience compared to classical musicians. They also have a higher level of openness to experience (understood as a personality trait) and a greater ability to think creatively (Benedek, Borovnjak, Neubauer, & Kruse-Weber, 2014). They are characterized by greater independence of action during a musical performance. Conversely, classical musicians are more faithful to the composer's message, as well as the requirements of the conductor (Dobson, 2010; Parasuraman & Purohit, 2000). The increased levels of stress among classical musicians are usually connected with anxiety, precisely about the precision of a performance (Kenny, 2011). The results of research among musicians perform-

ing various musical genres reveal that classical musicians display the highest level of stress associated with public exposure, in comparison to jazz musicians and popular music performers (Papageorgi, Creech, & Welch, 2013).

In addition to the attempt to capture/establish/distinguish differences in the psychosocial functioning of classical and jazz musicians, research is undertaken to indicate differences in their auditory abilities. These differences depend on years of musical training, which is the result of diversified brain activity, primarily in the auditory cortex (see Pantev et al., 1998; Hyde et al., 2009). Whilst jazz musicians are definitely more sensitive to understanding the relationships resulting from transposition and changes in the contour of the melody, classical musicians are more sensitive in terms of precision tuning and intonation.

The results of numerous studies allow for more and more detailed knowledge about the functioning of various specialist musicians, both in the psychological and biological sphere. At the same time, these results inspire one to ask more questions. In this research, the focus was on measuring coping strategies and social competences among musicians of different genres. These variables are not commonly diagnosed in research in the musical environment, although they concern the emotional and social sphere of human functioning, which is equally important for gaining high artistic achievements (see Manturzevska, 2014).

The main goal of the research is to explore the differences between musicians educated in the field of classical and jazz music in terms of their styles for coping with stress and social competences.

The research question aims to resolve/deduce/uncover if there are differences between classical and jazz musicians in the field of stress coping styles and social competences.

Due to differences in the psychosocial and even neuroanatomical functioning occurring among musicians of various specialities (see Benedek et al., 2014; Papageorgi et al., 2013; Vuust, Brattico, Seppänen, Näätänen, & Tervaniemi, 2012), it can be assumed that jazz musicians stand out with a lower level of stress and

a higher level of social competences in the field of public exposure compared to classical musicians (see Benedek et al., 2014; Papageorgi et al., 2013).

Literature analysis allows one to formulate two research questions: (1) are classical musicians less effective in dealing with emotions on the stage than jazz musicians? (2) are jazz musicians distinguished by a higher level of social competence than classical musicians?

Method

Characteristics of the Sample

The study group consisted of 73 students from the Music Academy in Bydgoszcz, of which 38 studied classical music at the Instrumental Department, and 35 people studied music in the jazz trend at the Department of Conducting, Jazz and Music Education. In each tested sample there were people playing various instruments (strings, keyboards, woodwind, percussion). The age of the surveyed students ranged from 18 to 28 years ($M = 21.25$, $SD = 1.94$) and 27 women (37%) and 46 men (63%) took part in the study.

Characteristics of the Tools

The research questionnaire tools were used to carry out the research. For the study of stress coping strategies, the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations Questionnaire (CISS) by Endler & Parker (Polish adaptation by Strelau, Jaworowska, Wrzeceniewski, & Szczepańczyk, 2005) was used. To measure social competences, the Social Competences Questionnaire (SCQ) by Matczak (2007) was used.

The CISS questionnaire consists of 48 statements about various human behaviors in stressful situations. Answers are given on the Likert scale, indicating a number from 1 to 5, determining the degree of compliance with the given statement. The questions are divided into three scales, corresponding to different strategies/styles of coping with stress: (1) task-focused style (TFS); (2) emotion-focused style (EFS); (3) avoidance-focused style (AFS) is to divert attention from thinking, experiencing a difficult

situation through two forms: getting involved in alternative activities (AA) or looking for social contacts (SC). In terms of reliability, as measured by the Cronbach's *alpha* coefficient, the reliability of the tool can be considered satisfactory, and the obtained data is very consistent. The factor structure of the Polish adaptation of the CISS questionnaire is consistent with the theoretical assumptions of the tool.

SCQ is a self-report tool that positions the definitions of various activities or events, expressed in the infinitive form. The examined person assesses the effectiveness with which he performs them using a four-level scale, from 1 to 4. The test consists of 90 items, of which 60 are diagnostic, and the remaining 30 refer to non-social skills of the subject, which are not taken into account when calculating the results. Diagnostic positions, in addition to the general result of social competences, form three separate scales: (1) social competences in intimate situations (I); (2) social competences in social exposure situations (SE); (3) social competences in situations requiring assertiveness (A). The reliability of the SCQ tool is satisfactory.

Characteristics of the Procedure

During the research, students were divided into three groups of around 25 people, in a room that provided the opportunity to calmly and independently answer questions. Implementation of the set of questionnaires took the studied students about 30 minutes to complete. The tests were carried out in the presence of the authors. The research was voluntary and anonymous.

Results

In order to determine/establish the dominant styles of coping with stress and the level of social competences characterizing the researched classical and jazz musicians, the analysis was carried out with regards to basic statistics. The analysis has shown that in terms of coping styles, both classical and jazz musicians mostly use a task-focused style of coping with stress (Table 1). In the area of social competence, a higher score among jazz musicians in terms of social exposure can be noticed (Table 2).

Table 1. Styles of coping with stress and differences among Classical and Jazz musicians.

Stress coping styles	Music speciality	M	SD	U	P
Task focused style	Classical	5.84	2.26	633.5	.73
	Jazz	6.06	2.03		
Emotions focused style	Classical	5.71	1.71	642.5	.81
	Jazz	5.71	1.54		
Avoidance focused style	Classical	4.39	1.53	619.0	.62
	Jazz	4.60	2.10		
Alternative activities	Classical	4.68	1.76	609.0	.54
	Jazz	4.97	1.95		
Social contacts	Classical	4.68	1.74	652.0	.89
	Jazz	4.83	1.72		

Further analysis, in the form of the U Mann-Whitney test, did not show any significant differences in any of the stress coping styles among classical and jazz musicians (Table 1). In connection with the above, the answer to the question (1) – are classical musicians less effective in dealing with emotions on stage than jazz musicians? – is negative.

Significant differences were noted in the field of social competences (Table 2). Jazz musicians display a higher level of social competence in public exposure than classical musicians. This means that jazz musicians might be much better – in comparison to classical musicians – at dealing with the situation of a public performance. The answer to question two – are jazz musicians distinguished by a higher level of social competence than classical musicians? – can be affirmative.

Conclusion

The conducted analysis provided an answer to the posed research question, which mainly concerned the recognition of differences between musicians specializing in the performance of classical or jazz music in the field of stress

Table 2. Social competences and differences among Classical and Jazz musicians.

Social competences	Music speciality	M	SD	U	P
Overall score	Classical	5.13	2.43	545.5	.19
	Jazz	5.86	2.16		
Intimacy	Classical	5.42	1.95	664.0	.10
	Jazz	5.66	2.18		
Social exposure	Classical	5.34	2.43	490.0	.05
	Jazz	6.51	2.24		
Assertiveness	Classical	5.21	2.37	497.0	.06
	Jazz	5.89	1.95		

coping styles and social competences. Using the example of studied groups of musicians, it is possible to indicate some differences between musicians in terms of social competence in the field of social exposure. Jazz musicians have demonstrated a higher level of social exposure skills, which means that they are much better – in comparison to classical musicians – at dealing with the situation of a public performance. Furthermore, studies from other psychological sub-disciplines confirm that people with high social competences receive more support from the environment, which allows for more effective ways of dealing with stress (Cohen, Sherrod, & Clark, 1986; Strelau et al., 2005).

It was surprising that in the studied groups of musicians there were no differences in the use of selected styles of coping with stress. It was assumed that jazz musicians, due to the lower perception of the performance anxiety (Papageorgi et al., 2013) would exhibit a significantly lower level of emotion-focused stress coping styles from classical musicians. The lack of definite differences in the groups of classical and jazz musicians may result from certain limitations of this study. First of all, the studied groups were relatively small. Secondly, the respondents were former students, so they may be characterized by a lower intensity of features typical for professional musicians. In addition, the vast major-

ity of jazz students began their education in the mainstream of classical music.

In conclusion, it is worth emphasizing that the attempt to learn the specific functioning of classical and jazz musicians provokes the planning of further research, which will take into account the measurement of new variables, e.g. to what extent differences in temperament and personality that appear among the musicians of different genres, influence their strategies of coping with stress and social competences (see Kemp, 1996; Nogaj, 2018)? Are these differences the result of personal dispositions (such as temperament) or are they the effect of the specific music genre being performed? Also, it would be worth considering the mediating role of social support. As music is an extremely colorful and diverse phenomenon, dealing with different musical genres requires a range of narrow and specific competences.

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