
Music Performance Self-Efficacy of Music Major Students in China

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Abstract

In China, music majors often undergo structured instruction and performance training at higher education institutions. Their proficiency in music performance stems from their extensive past training, which has cultivated their performance knowledge, structure, and cognition. However, studies have shown that students' confidence level in their performance may also be influenced by their self-efficacy in music performance. This study aims to examine the music performance self-efficacy of music major students in Sichuan, China, taking into account the paucity of research on this matter. The findings indicate that the students have an acceptable degree of music self-efficacy.

Introduction

Most Chinese majors in college enter through the Art College Entrance Examination, or "Art Exam" as it is more often known. This art examination pertains to the professional enrolment assessments administered by music colleges, art colleges, or art departments of different institutions. Individuals who successfully complete the test will be awarded a professional qualification certificate, which enables them to sit for the college admission exam. Once the college entrance test results are published, universities will accept students according to their academic achievements. Music major students will undergo structured training and preparation for stage performances in college. The students rely on their well-developed performance knowledge structure and cognition acquired from years of previous training. Besides, the ability in music performance might also be influenced by self-efficacy as research found that there is a strong and positive relationship between self-efficacy and both music performance and

self-evaluation (Hewitt, 2015). As such, it is interesting to study the music performance self-efficacy of music major students.

Literature Review

Albert Bandura, the creator of social learning theory, introduced the self-efficacy theory in 1982 within the framework of social learning to elucidate motivation in particular circumstances (Bandura, 2018). Self-efficacy, according to the theory, is an individual's own evaluation of their capability to do a certain activity. The evaluation result has a direct influence on an individual's motivating behavior. Self-efficacy theory has generated considerable attention among motivation psychologists since it was introduced. Self-efficacy is an important factor affecting an individual's ability to cope with environmental challenges (Chen, 2010). Music performance self-efficacy, on the other hand can be defines as students' self-evaluation of their mastery level of various skills and knowledge in musical stage performance and their confidence in facing the challenges of stage performance. This self-efficacy has a significant impact on students' learning motivation, performance quality, and career development (Zelenak, 2015). For instance, study suggested that student with high self-efficacy pursued mastery goals involving challenge and gaining new knowledge, scoring good grades and outperforming others (Komarraju, & Nadler, 2013). In a musical context, a qualitative result indicated that students' self-efficacy beliefs influenced their decision to continue in band (Levine, 2019). Research also noted that high level of self-efficacy within the realm of music education empowers musicians, educators, and researchers to understand the motivation and attendance mechanisms that enhance the performance of music learners (Chen, 2024). While self-efficacy showed strong influence in performance, in contrast, self-efficacy and performance anxiety are negatively correlated (Baiyan, South, Xu Li, 2021). In conclusion, evidence showed that self-efficacy has positive influence on individual's performance. In relation to that, it is worth to study the music performance self-efficacy of music major students, especially in China context which currently under study.

Research Methodology

In this study, 404 responses were collected from Grade 1 to Grade 4 music major undergraduate students who were studying in five universities in Sichuan Province, namely Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Sichuan University Musical College, School of Music Sichuan Normal University, School of Music Xihua Normal University, School of Music Southwest Jiaotong University, China. Data was collected through distribution of questionnaire which adopted from Zelenak (2010) that measured the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale of students. This scale evaluates students' self-efficacy from four dimensions: mastery experience, vicarious experiences, verbal/social persuasion, and physiological states. The mastery experience focuses on students' past music performance experiences which directly influence their confidence in future performances. Vicarious experience considers students' skill improvement by observing others' (e.g., professional musicians or peers) performances, which can help build or reinforce their self-efficacy. The verbal/social persuasion centers on feedback students receive from others about their performance, possibly from friends, family, or music teachers. Positive feedback may boost self-efficacy, whilst negative feedback might diminish it. Finally, the section of physiological states focuses on students' physical and emotional responses during performances, including stress, anxiety, and satisfaction, all of which might influence their self-efficacy.

Result and Discussion

Table 1 shows the demographic data of respondents. Findings indicate that female respondents are higher than male respondents, which female consist of 51.20% (n=207) while male respondents constitute 48.80% (n=197) of the sample. All participants are between the age range of 18 to 24 years. The breakdown of participants based on the length of their studies in music performance is as follows: Majority of them (55.5%, n= 222) indicated studying for a period ranging from one to three years and none of them studying for less than one year. 29.50 percent (n=119) of the respondents reveals studying for a duration of four to six years. Lastly, 15.60% (n=63) of the participants reported having pursued music performance studies for over six years. The responses about the participants' affiliated universities are as follows: 14.90 percent (n=60) of the respondent's report attending Sichuan Conservatory of Music; 23.00 percent (n=93) of them are affiliated with the College of Music, Sichuan University; 27.50 percent (n=111) of the respondents recognize themselves as students of Sichuan Normal

University; 9.40 percent (n=38) of them are attending to China West Normal University. The remaining 25.20 percent (n=102) of the respondents are affiliated with Southwest Jiaotong University.

Table 1: Respondents' profile (n=404)

Questions	Valid	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	197	48.80
	Female	207	51.20
Age	18-24	404	100.00
How long have you been studying music performance?	Less than a year	0	0.00
	1-3 years	222	55.50
	4-6 years	119	29.50
	More than 6 years	63	15.60
Please indicate the name of your university.	Sichuan Conservatory of Music	60	14.90
	College of Music, Sichuan University	93	23.00
	Sichuan Normal University	111	27.50
	China West Normal University	38	9.40
	Southwest Jiaotong University	102	25.20

Table 2: Mean Value of Music Self-efficacy

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean_SAA	404	1.00	7.00	4.425	1.588
Mean_SAB	404	1.00	7.00	4.433	1.633
Mean_SAC	404	1.00	7.00	4.372	1.630
Mean_SAD	404	1.00	7.00	4.434	1.642
Valid N (listwise)	404				

*SAA - self-efficacy mastery experiences, SAB - - self-efficacy vicarious experience, SAC - self-efficacy verbal/social persuasion, SAD - self-efficacy physiological state.

Table 2 showed the mean value of music performance self-efficacy of music major students for all the four dimensions. Examination on the mean value of music self-efficacy mmeasure suggested that among the four dimensions, music major students' self-efficacy physiological state (SAD) scored the highest mean value of 4.434, followed by self-efficacy vicarious experience (SAB) with a slightly lower value of 4.433. Self-efficacy mastery experiences (SAA) ranked the third with mean value of 4.425 and lastly is self-efficacy verbal/social persuasion (SAC) with mean value of 4.372 out of the maximum highest score of 7.00.

These findings suggested that with the highest score of self-efficacy physiological state (SAD), music major students from the five colleges and universities at Sichuan were having positive physical and emotional reactions during and after the musical performances. Besides, they are displaying optimistic attitudes by watching others' performances in order to enhance their own talents. Among the four dimensions, students showed least engaged in verbal/social persuasion perspectives which indicated that when come to decision making, they are least influenced by the judgments, opinions and influence of others such as friends, family, or music teachers.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, music major students at Sichuan colleges and universities are demonstrating a sufficient degree of self-efficacy in music performance. This is a good indication that with high level of music performance self-efficacy, we can expect students to have a high achievement in music education and musical performance. As such, colleges and universities need to offer courses that can build up the confident levels of music major students as well as providing ongoing support (i.e physical and mental) and resources for them as to grow their abilities in musical performance later.

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