

ИДЕНТИТЕТИ МУЗИЧАРА-ПЕДАГОГА И УЧЕНИКА-СТУДЕНАТА

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GENDER AND MUSIC IDENTITY: PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH OF MUSICIANS' PERSONALITY

Summary

Referential literature does not show approved differences between female and male musicians concerning cognitive and musical capacities. Although, research studies of personalities of musicians in various countries showed certain differences that could have diverse grounds. In this text, we will present a meta-analysis of the data concerning gender differences gained in various research studies on the four subsequent age groups: 6 to 12; 13 to 18; 18 to 23 and 24 and older, which were carried out in Serbia by the author and collaborators. Number of participants involved in these research studies is between 140 and 650. Personality inventories (NEO-P-R, HSPQ, BSRI) and Questionnaire for the assessment of students' personalities were used, as well as the assessment of students' musical achievements. When talking about personality characteristics, findings point to statistically significant differences regarding gender in the four age groups: pupils in early music tuition, adolescents at specialized music schools, music students at the University of Arts and professional musicians, i.e., teachers in music schools for the gifted. Along with age and a growing experience in musical activities, the profile of gender differences of musicians is changing, becoming more complex and elaborate. Results point out the development of musical gender identity that could be caused by the nature of musical activities students pursue. It could also be strongly influenced by culturally stereotyped forms of identities, as well as the personal characteristics of musicians. It is shown that gender identity is related to personality traits and some aspects of high achievements in music performance. It is about multilayered musical identity which is primarily conditioned by professional experiences, but also by biological, psychological, social and individual developmental factors.

Key words: musical identity, gender identity, personality, development, musically gifted

Introduction

The research in the field of gender differences in several samples of musicians reported in the Serbian and international literature indicate that there were no statistically significant differences when cognitive and musical capacities of female and male music students were in question (Radoš, 2010, Kemp, 1996). Although, personality research of musicians in various countries showed certain differences that could have diverse grounds. The ratio of musical achievements in both groups also changed during professional music career. Namely, one can notice that, after they take up a professional career in performance, there are less female than male musicians performing either solo or in orchestras. What is the explanation of this tendency, when does it start and does it have anything to do with gender identity? The question that arises is whether we could speak about biological, psychological, socio-cultural and/or professional factors that shape the musical gender identity?

Findings of psychological research studies

Sporadic research from the first period of personality research pointed out the existence of differences between female and male musicians. Males were more oriented towards external interests, mechanical and computation activities, while females expressed mildness and sensitivity more (Hotchkiss, 1971). The first systematic research on this matter was done by Anthony Kemp (1996). He found out about differences between musicians and non-musicians by establishing a stable pattern of traits in three different age groups. His research confirmed the existence of differences between female and male musicians when compared to the general population. Namely, female musicians express higher scores in introversion, which fits to the stable pattern of musicians' personality traits, but also a significant amount of aloofness and self-sufficiency, which is, according to socio-cultural standards, typical for men. On the other hand, male musicians show very consistent presence of sensitivity, which is considered to be a typical trait of women, as well as cautiousness at the students' age group, which could be interpreted in a similar way. Therefore, by taking into account the socio-cultural stereotypes, male and female musicians have personality traits that are considered typical of the opposite gender (Kemp, 1982).

This ambivalence of gender identity, as Kemp named it, was also identified by other researchers who investigated creative persons. Kemp referred to it as psychological androgyny which was first used by Sandra Bem (1974). She stated that gender identity could be rather independent from biologically determined sex ('male' and 'female'). The dominant socio-cultural model identifies masculinity with assertiveness, toughness and self-confidence and finds it more desirable in males. On the other hand, femininity is labeled with tenderness, sensitivity and

submissiveness and is more desirable in females. An androgynous individual should be able to remain sensitive to the changing constraints of a situation and engage into whatever behavior seems most effective at the moment, regardless of what is considered appropriate for one sex or the other. A mixed or androgynous self-concept allows an individual to freely engage in both masculine and feminine behaviors (Bem, 1975). Therefore, these individuals develop a wider range of behavioral patterns that make them more socially adaptable, efficient and healthy. Psychological androgyny may be the most desirable personality. "Expressiveness" of female (understanding and dealing with emotions in oneself and others or having affective attitude) is complementary to the, so called, male "instrumental" orientation that is related to reaching the goals outside the process-goal interaction, as well as attitudes such as approval and respect (Gill, Stockard, Johnson & Williams & 1987).

Kemp states that musicians' androgyny in behavior and emotions is a sign of a wide range of temperamental traits which overcomes stereotypes based on sex differences (Kemp, 1982). Kemp refers to Csikzentmihalyi & Getzels (1973) who, speaking about creative people in general, stated that they "manifest more characteristic personality traits of the opposite gender than normal by the definition of a given culture". He explains this tendency as the answer to the demands of artistic tasks which ask for a full range of cognitive and emotional responses regardless of socio-cultural expectations related to gender. The author, who investigated personality of musicians in the USA, also identified a connection between personality profile and psychological androgyny within all groups of musicians (Wubbenhorst, 1994). Furthermore, he found that those among future teachers who were androgynous, showed to be more intuitive and, those among music performers were more androgynous extraverts. Wubbenhorst and Kemp agree that levels of psychological androgyny among musicians were significantly higher than in general population. Findings of other authors which report about achievements of women in other domains of giftedness support Kemp's conclusions (Reis, 2005).

Personality research of musicians in Serbia, in the first studies, regarding pupils in elementary and secondary specialized music schools provided some interesting data concerning gender differences. The results of Eysenck JEPQ conducted among the elementary music school students aged 10 – 15 pointed out lower psychoticism (Prokić, 1984), lower psychoticism and neuroticism, as well as lower extraversion in boys, in comparison to the pupils in general education schools (Stojanović, 1988). Results show that music pupils were more sensitive, capable of empathy and emotionally more stable than pupils who attended general education schools. In addition, young male musicians were found to be less extroverted, which is a finding similar to the one that Kemp was talking about. The research based on Jung's psychological types theory (using MBTI), conducted among pupils in specialized high schools of music and with regard to their gender

differences, showed that young boys show an inclination towards Judgement and Thinking, rely more on the logical and rational aspect of their personality, while girls rely more on Perceiving than Judgement (Petrović, 1997). These data correspond to the current social profile of gender roles.

Biological components of psychological androgyny among musicians?

The intertwined influence of socialization and biological foundations of gender identity does exist, but it seems that the range of the impact of both of these is not completely defined. To a certain extent, some relations could be made between Kemp's findings (1996) and the biologically founded research results (Hassler, 2000). It is confirmed that lower testosterone levels were linked to higher scores on feminine items. Hassler and Nieschlag (1989) expected musicians of both sexes to be psychologically androgynous and to have different testosterone levels from those of the sex-typed males and females. Creative musical behavior in composers, although observed in a small sample, was associated with very low testosterone values in males and high in females. The authors tentatively suggest from their data that, among the complex interaction of biological and social factors, an optimal testosterone range may exist for the expression of creative musical behavior. The picture is not simple because it includes a wide scope of differences between hormonal systems of musicians and non-musicians.

Musical identity as a social construct?

Aspects of musical identities are socially defined within given cultural roles and musical categories. The role of specific influences, such as schools and family, are central reference points for young people's music-related self-concepts. In some way, a culturally defined features of a musician, composer, performer, improviser or a teacher are central to the identities of professional musicians (Hargreaves, Miell & McDonald, 2002). Being a musician and dealing with music for many years develops aspects of personal identity that are inextricably linked to musical behaviors (MacDonald, Hargreaves & Miell., 2009). Musical personality and musical identity are constructed in relation to other people and different situations, as well as social categories and cultural musical practices (Hargreaves et al., 2002).

Towards musical gender identity

The reasons for dealing with the issue of musical gender identity are several. One of them are observations from the field of music performance practice from the point of view of the author as a psychologist, performer and a teacher. Specific position of masculinity and femininity in musical profession has a status of *tacit* knowledge and, therefore presents a part of an everyday musical experience. The

psychological findings provide empirical confirmation of the informal experience. In the process of finding explanations and understanding this phenomenon, wider constructs of social identity development were used. Another reason was the incentive to rethink the research topic – from the point of view of personality adaptations on the demands of music profession and societal changes in gender roles. Last but not least, curiosity!

In several research studies in Serbia at the subsequent age groups, gender differences were also in focus. These studies were parts of projects (2002 – 2017) realized at the Institute of Psychology, University of Belgrade; Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade and Institute of Educational Research in Belgrade. The intention was to apply meta-analysis of respective studies and try to reach cohesive answers. How could gender identity and musical identity be integrated? In what hierarchical order are they organized? The matters of identity implicate complex hierarchical network where constructs are overarching and incorporating each other (Hargreaves et al., 2002). We will try to make a theoretical construct founded on the basis of the research done in Serbia and abroad by using a socio-cultural theory and the social constructivist point of view as a framework.

Therefore we set the following aims:

1. To review the results concerning gender differences in the samples of musicians;
2. To find a developmental thread in “gender identity in music” from the childhood period to the adulthood;
3. To see how they are related to musical performance success and
4. To reflect about the source of differences between biological, social and cultural influences in the light of either professional role modelling or intrapersonal differences.

Research methodology

Method

The method applied is the meta-analysis of the data gained from the research studies done by the author and collaborators, which refers to the personality of musicians. It applies a transversal approach which includes comparative analysis of data collected on subsequent age groups. Number of participants involved in those research studies is between 140 and 650. Personality inventories (NEO-P-R, HSPQ, BSRI- adapted), as well as a Questionnaire for the assessment of personality of students were used.

The four subsequent age groups are:

- 6 – 12 (elementary music school),
- 13 – 18 (secondary music school),
- 18 – 23 (Faculty of Music)
- 24 and more (professional musicians)

Results

Elementary music school – early stages of the formal instrumental tuition

In the frame of an extensive research project that examined the role of musical, personal and environmental variables in students' success during the early stages of the formal instrumental study, a broad spectrum of predictor variables and achievement criteria was taken into account (Radoš, Kovačević, Bogunović, Ignjatović & Ačić, 2003). Participants in this research were pupils of specialized elementary schools of music (N=993), aged 6 – 12. Among other features, their instrumental teachers assessed their personality traits. It was shown that gifted girls were more diligent and emotionally stable than boys. Girls also scored better results in the field of school achievements, which was similar to the results of general population at that age. However, there was no difference in their achievements in musical performance, i.e. public performances in school and competitions. Diverse results were pointing to an “inborn” characteristic but also to a construction of social labels.

An indirect indicator of the socio-cultural influence on gender identity formation is also the result related to motivation and attitude towards practicing. The data showed positive attitude of girls towards diligent and responsible fulfilment of obligations, but also their enjoyment in mastering skills that include somewhat solitary activities. Namely, they practice playing instruments more often and longer (Bogunović, 2010). Therefore, they get higher marks at music schools. These results could be interpreted in the light of general differences between girls and boys at the beginning of their education, the period when girls are more ready to accept school obligations and are more interested in school activities.

Specialized high school of music – age of adolescence

The aim of the research realized in a specialized high school of music within the framework of a broad age group (13 to 20 year olds) was to investigate main factors that contribute to the development of the musical talent. On one side, various musical achievements were taken into account as indicators of the talent development (academic achievement, public performances and competitions) and on the other, numerous psychological (abilities, personality traits and motivation) and environmental (family and teachers) factors (Bogunović, 2010). The results of the research related to the gender differences and personality traits are to follow. Serbian female adolescent musicians were more sensitive, group-dependent and outgoing in comparison to their male fellow students. So, there were no inverted gender role traits that Kemp identified in the sample of British musicians (1982). These findings oppose Kemp's results and point to potential cultural differences. Also, these results show that the female musicians accepted socially defined gender roles. This implies that socio-cultural impact seems to be stronger than the professional one. However, more research is needed to confirm this data.

With regard to gender, findings show that the quality and quantity of intrinsic motivation at this level of music education is balanced. This demonstrates not only a development of motivation and dedication to musical activities in the group of young men, but also a professional maturity as a consequence of the positive selection based on musical abilities, motivation and achievements. At this age group, there are no significant gender differences in any kind of achievement, whether it is academic or musical performance. Developmental differences of girls and boys regarding talent potentials and achievements are balanced and the primary importance is placed on intrapersonal potentials which are far more important than gender differences. High potential prevailed biological and socially determined distinctions.

Faculty of Music – Music students

Several research studies which aimed to analyze certain aspects of young musicians' personalities were carried out among the students of music. We will present some results with relevance to our topic. In the research that was dealing with value orientations of young musicians in comparison to the non-musician population, some gender differences were found (Bogunović, Dubljević, Dubljević, i Mirović, (2012). Namely, young male musicians were primarily oriented towards obtaining material provisions for everyday life and toward gaining social influence and power. Young female musicians, on the other hand, were more eager to choose a living style that is oriented towards esthetics and artistic activities. Young male musicians chose value orientations that include masculine identification, while female students opted for the option that is considered feminine in the present socio-cultural context. We must notice the similarity of results concerning personality traits at the adolescent age. It is possible that the pressure to accept socio-cultural stereotypes and to conform is stronger than that to accept professional values. This compliance with pattern of gender role types could be explained by the theory of social roles which states that gender stereotypes stem from differential participation of men and women in various roles, professions and behaviors (Eagly, 1996).

The following research study was investigating the relations of gender identity (BSRI, Sandra Bem), musical personality (NEO-P-R) and musical achievements, and we realize that simple bipolar understanding of male and female identity has severe constraints which leaves room for thinking about the concept of psychological androgyny of musicians (Bogunović & Bodroža, 2015). Descriptive analysis of the data gathered by the adapted version of the BSRI (Vuletić, 1985) showed interesting dispersion of results concerning the four groups of sex-type roles. Namely, androgynous and undifferentiated students were represented by the higher percentage in the both sample groups, male and female. The percentage of androgyny corresponds to findings of other research reports and represents

between, approximately 30 to 40 per cent (Bem, 1974, 1975). It was also noticed that male musicians are less decisive in regard to the exclusively masculine attributes and female musicians less determined to choose feminine attributes for themselves.

The results showed very clearly that music achievements measured by the all three objective indicators of music performance achievement (public performance, competitions and the Index of musical success) significantly correlate to femininity in male students, while not any kind of sex-type role correlates to music success of female students. How to understand these findings? It seems that being a biological male while having psychological feminine traits has to do with higher levels of musicianship, interpretation and aesthetic expression, all of which are the ingredients of a high-level musical performance. This dual identity profile enables young musicians to overcome the stereotypical bipolar masculinity-*versus*-femininity attitude and is necessary for reaching higher levels of artistic achievements. Interestingly enough, female students with pronounced masculinity or femininity perceive themselves as being more successful, although they are not more successful when objective indicators of music achievement (public performances and competitions) are taken into account. This finding supports the theoretical rationale that identity presents the result of individual perception of one's own attributes in a framework of their professional environment and not real achievements and is, therefore, socially constructed. In that way, it conducts individual's behavior and feelings (Bogunović & Bodroža, 2015).

These results raise interesting questions. Is the greater music performance achievement/success of male performers with higher levels of femininity an indicator of another social role pattern and are men predetermined to do well in the music profession? Or, is it that male students are more successful in integrating masculine and feminine traits which is necessary for high musical achievements, while young female musicians have more problems in integrating female and male attributes? This would serve as an explanation to the finding that feminine female musicians have more psychological difficulties in the field of self-esteem, they perceive themselves as less successful and they are more emotionally unstable and vulnerable to stress (Bogunović & Bodroža, 2015).

Music professionals

Several research studies on music professionals, mainly music teachers in specialized music schools were also carried out. Regarding gender, statistically significant differences were established in favor of female musicians, and those are higher levels of openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness (NEO-P-R). Female musicians seemed to have personality profile which proved to be more oriented towards imagination, emotions and aesthetics, as well as warmth, straightforwardness, compliance and altruism, as well as an interest in the well-

being of others. They are significantly more oriented towards fulfilling duties, achievement and self-discipline (Bogunović, 2012). Nevertheless, women are less successful and/or present at the performing stage!

When only personality traits of music teachers were taken into account, it was shown that female teachers have significantly higher scores on agreeableness and conscientiousness (Bogunović, 2006). When stress coping styles were explored, there were indications that female teachers are significantly more apt to use avoiding, help-seeking and substitution, emotional-behavioral strategies, but also to improving their own or situational limitations. We believe that these differences are very much influenced by socio-cultural gender role identification which defines women as more passive and relying on other people and their family network (Bogunović, Stanković& Stanisić, 2009).

Discussion

It is clear that gender music identity is something to be discussed. It is a multilayered musical identity which is primarily conditioned by professional experiences, but also by biological, as well as social and individual developmental factors. This means that some musicians have psychological androgyny or, at least, a stronger presence of socially constructed characteristics of opposite sex. Musical gender identity reflects on performance achievements and/or perception of self-success. It is hard to give a clear answer about the way in which it develops. Limitations come from different research methodologies and measures. However, with a growing experience in music activities, the profile of gender differences of young musicians is changing, becoming more complex and elaborate.

We are of the opinion that construction of music (gender) identity is the result of several factors that intervene during a long period of time which starts with tuition and leads to one's professional life. This theoretical concept is to be proven and is a result of reflection upon the data gained in a socio-cultural context of Serbia (Shema 1). It seems that when biologically and evolutionary deep concept as gender is in question, the impact of social field is much stronger than the cultural domain in which the person realizes their individuality. Construction of socio-cultural stereotypes seems to be primary and stronger than professional identity; also, the pressure to accept gender stereotype behaviors could be stronger in our culture. The model of gender social roles is carried on trans-generationally and is dominant in societies which are based on the traditional, rigidly defined canons (Bogunović, Dubljević, Dubljević i Mirović, 2012).

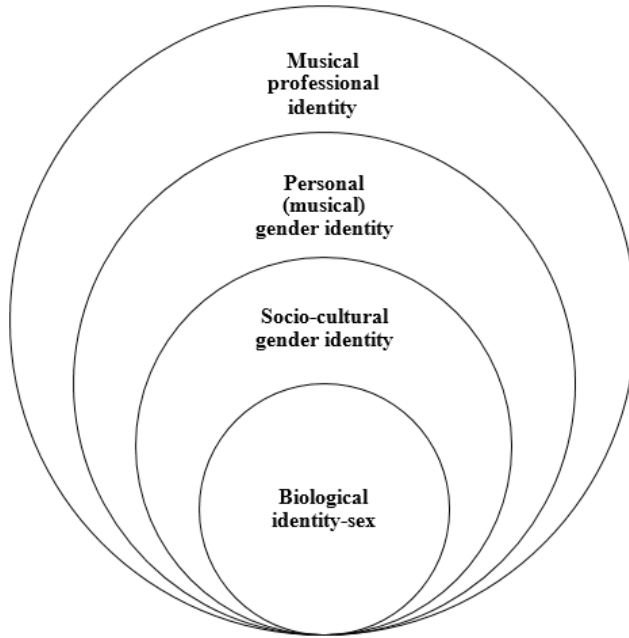


Figure 1. Pattern of the musical gender identity development

Results point out a development of the musical gender identity that is connected to personality profile and self-concept as a consequence of professional dealing with music activities – as identified at the students’ age. As to the achievements in performance and/or creative music activities after a certain high level is reached, there are no differences between female and male musicians of any age during the school period. However, during their professional period, females with high performance achievements mostly “disappear”. It seems that the influence of their social field is stronger than that of the cultural domain in which a person/musician accomplishes their individuality. On the other hand, do female musicians fail to integrate feminine and masculine types of behaviors and feelings that would make them stronger performers? Professional music career development is gender related.

Practical implications for education: Musical gender identity makes difference and psychological androgyny or the cross-sex-typed identity contributes to success in music and one’s well-being.

The questions are:

- First of all, how to develop assertiveness in female students and allow male students to express their emotions?
- How to develop such identities in the course of the music education? How to support female students with a feminine gender identity and increase their resiliency?

- How to enhance balance in both masculinity and femininity, having in mind that it is clear that both have their importance in a wide range of cognitive, emotional, social and personal challenges that music performers are faced with?

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ПОЛ И МУЗИЧКИ ИДЕНТИТЕТ: ПСИХОЛОШКА ИСТРАЖИВАЊА ЛИЧНОСТИ МУЗИЧАРА

Истраживања полних разлика на више узорака музичара, у нашој и иностраној литератури, указују да нема статистички значајних разлика када се ради о когнитивним и музичким капацитетима девојака и младића, музичара. Истраживања личности младих музичара међутим, показују занимљиве полне разлике које се испољавају већ од раног школског узраста и током музичког образовања и професионалне каријере и могу имати различите узроке. У овом раду, презентоваћемо мета-анализу резултата који се тичу полних разлика у различитим истраживањима личности музичара, која су спровели аутор и сарадници, у Србији. Ито, на четири узаstopна узраста: 6 – 12; 13 – 18; 18 – 23 и узраст одраслих музичара, професионалаца. Број испитаника укључених у истраживања се креће између 140–650. Коришћени су инвентари личности (NEO-P-R, HSPQ, BSRI) и Упитници за процену личности ученика, као и Упитник за процену постигнућа. Налази указују на једнаке когнитивне и музичке капацитете оба пола на свим узрастима. Али и континуиране, статистички значајне разлике међу даровитим музичарима када се ради о полу установљене су на сва четири узраста: раношколском, адолесцентном, студентском и код професионалних музичара, наставника у школама. Са порастом узраста, а самим тим и са временом provedеним у музичким активностима, профил полних разлика младих музичара се мења, постаје комплекснији и сложенији. Резултати говоре о развоју музичког полног идентитета који би могао бити условљен природом музичких активности студената. Он би такође могао бити снажно условљен кутуролошким полноим идентитетима девојака и младића, као и личним карактеристикама музичара. Показано је да је полни идентитет повезан са цртама личности и неким аспектима високих постигнућа у музичком извођењу. Ради се о слојевитом музичком идентитету који је условљен пре свега професионалним искуствима, али и биолошким, тако и социјалним и индивидуалним развојним факторима.

Кључне речи: музички идентитет, полни идентитет, личност, развој, музички даровити