

Engagement and burnout among music performance students

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The psychological and physical demands of the music profession can take their toll, putting musicians' health and wellness at risk. Despite its potential impact on the changes in attitudes towards music-making, well-being remains under-researched in the context of tertiary music education.

The current paper reports a study of two facets of well-being: engagement with performance and burnout among music performance students at conservatoires. The study aimed to establish and compare the levels of engagement and burnout in music students in the UK and Australia, exploring their potential social-environmental determinants and health and performance-related consequences. In line with the literature on sport and dance, Basic Psychological Need Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which seeks to explain the role of satisfaction of autonomy, competence and relatedness in well-being, was used as the theoretical framework for studying the possible determinants of engagement and burnout. A cross-sectional design and questionnaire methods were employed in the study. Data were collected from 146 performance students from several conservatoires in the UK and a single conservatoire in Australia. The results revealed that while burnout was not prevalent in the sample, the respondents tended to experience moderate to high levels of engagement. Overall, there were no differences between the students in the UK and Australia in terms of engagement and burnout. Only weak correlations were found between engagement and burnout, and health issues, musculoskeletal pain and practice strategies employed by respondents. The findings of the study suggest that the social context of the conservatoire and the sense of competence may play a major role in the psychological well-being of music performance students, confirming the basic tenets of Basic Psychological Need Theory.

The study sheds light on determinants and consequences of well-being in music education setting, thus contributing to the better understanding of healthy careers in music and forming the basis of practical advice for institutions and principal studies tutors on how to enhance music-related well-being in conservatoire students.

Keywords: music education, psychological well-being, engagement, burnout, Basic Psychological Need Theory

References

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