

Mastery Motivation and Self-Concept in Music Education

Subjects: [Education & Educational Research](#) | [Music](#) | [Psychology](#)

Contributor: Márta Janurik , Tun Zaw Oo , Noémi Kis , Norbert Szabó , Krisztián Józsa

People hold music in high regard and acknowledge the necessity of providing their children with a solid musical education. Musical education hinges on students' mastery motivation and self-concept, which are crucial for effective musical learning. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the role of children's mastery motivation (MM) and self-concept (SC) to provide children with a solid musical foundation.

mastery motivation

self-concept

music education

relationship

1. Introduction

In the modern era, individuals have increasingly recognized the significance of music education, as it possesses the ability to communicate with people through three different voices such as the voice of music itself, a persuasive voice, and an advocacy voice ^[1]. Consequently, people hold music in high regard and acknowledge the necessity of providing their children with a solid musical education. To provide children with a solid musical foundation, it is crucial to consider the role of children's mastery motivation (MM) and its related factors.

Within the field of music education, there has been increasing interest in understanding the importance of MM which is crucial in children's effective musical learning lessons ^[2]. MM is a form of motivation that refers to the internal drive to attain and enhance one's abilities without being motivated by external or tangible rewards ^{[3][4]}. It is also defined as an individual's inherent desire that propels and sustains a behavior centered around mastering a difficult task, skill, or competency ^[5]. Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate MM as a potential factor that explains different aspects of academic accomplishment, student engagement, mental well-being, cognitive abilities, and future career decisions, among others ^{[6][7][8][9]}. Consequently, the importance of MM holds true for students across various educational disciplines. Recent research has also shown the importance of motivation for the effective learning of musical students ^{[10][11][12][13]}. However, research about MM is very rare in the field of music education.

Another important factor for students' effective musical learning is their self-concept (SC), which encompasses the amalgamation of how an individual perceives, believes, and constructs self-representations regarding their musical abilities and potential ^{[14][15]}. The concept of musical SC revolves around an individual's realization of their musical abilities, which stems from their interpretation of personal experiences ^[16]. The musical SC is crucial for students as a distinctive predictor of musical achievement, indicating a link between their abilities and perception of themselves as talented musical students ^[17]. Several research studies have recognized the significance of musical

SC as a crucial socio-cognitive element that governs students' behaviors, level of effort, and motivation when it comes to practicing and engaging in music learning tasks [\[14\]\[15\]\[18\]\[19\]\[20\]\[21\]](#).

2. Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a comprehensive framework that encompasses various aspects of human motivation and the formation of personality [\[22\]](#). SDT can provide valuable insights into the relationship between MM and SC in music education. According to SDT, individuals have three basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness [\[23\]](#). Recent research has explored how these needs interact with musical MM and SC. For instance, one study [\[24\]](#) has shown that when students feel a sense of autonomy in their learning, they tend to develop a stronger SC and self-determined perception. Autonomy, which relates to having a sense of freedom for students in music, is positively related with their musical SC in learning music [\[25\]](#). Competence, another psychological need, is closely linked to MM in music. Students who perceive themselves as competent and effective are more likely to exhibit strong MM or the desire to improve and develop skills [\[26\]](#). Higher levels of competence are mostly associated with greater intrinsic motivation and a drive for musical mastery. Therefore, students who feel competent are more likely to strive for musical excellence, which, in turn, can enhance their SC as skilled students. Relatedness, the need for social connections and a sense of belonging, also plays a crucial role in shaping musical SC [\[22\]](#). Research has shown that students who perceive a supportive and collaborative social environment are more likely to develop a positive SC as talented musical students [\[17\]](#).

By examining the relationship between musical MM and musical SC through the lens of SDT, we gain a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms that drive students' MM and shape their SCs in music. While these recent findings provide insights into the connection between SDT and the relationship of MM and SC, further investigation is necessary to unravel the complexities of the relationship and identify potential moderating factors.

3. Perspectives of Mastery Motivation (MM) and Self-Concept (SC) in Music Education

3.1. Mastery Motivation

In 1959, White [\[27\]](#) proposed a nonhomeostatic motive for interacting effectively with the environment and for curious, playful exploration that he dubbed 'effectance motivation'. This concept of 'effectance motivation' inspired Yarrow and colleagues to conduct research that led to the mastery motivation approach [\[28\]\[29\]](#). Barrett and Morgan [\[30\]](#) then defined MM as a complex psychological drive that motivates individuals to engage with and overcome moderately challenging skills or tasks. What differentiates this approach to motivation from other motivational perspectives is its emphasis on the persistence and determination displayed when facing difficult tasks within specific domains [\[3\]\[30\]](#). The uniqueness of MM lies not only in its focus on confronting challenging tasks but also in its incorporation of various domains of mastery [\[31\]](#). Actually, MM encompasses two main indicators or behaviors: (1) instrumental behaviors characterized by persistent efforts towards specific tasks or goals and (2) affective and expressive behaviors such as experiencing pleasure in mastering something and showing anger, frustration,

sadness, or shame when faced with challenges [6]. MM drives students to confront and strive to overcome moderate challenges across different domains of development, often by applying diverse strategies to determine which ones are effective [3][6]. MM can vary in different contexts and areas of focus [7][30][31]. Apart from these two broad elements of mastery motivation (instrumental and affective), individuals can exhibit varying levels of mastery motivation across different areas of their development. These areas can be broadly classified as non-social, social, and self-mastery domains [32]. A student's mastery motivation is multifaceted with domains of self-as-agent, their social context, and their non-social or cognitive aspects [6][33]. Within these domains, more specific areas of mastery can be distinguished, such as mastering social interactions with peers or adults, developing skills in self-initiated motor behavior, achieving mastery over emotions, and overcoming impulsive tendencies [3]. Therefore, we can see that a student's mastery motivation is classified into two indicators (instrumental and expressive) in three domains (non-social, social, and self-mastery). The current research examines two indicators (instrumental and expressive) of students' mastery motivation in music education.

The U.S. National Academy of Science's report *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* [9] identified mastery motivation as a key developmental concept, which should be included as part of a child's assessment. Thus, mastery motivation is an important topic, in part because there is evidence that better mastery motivation leads to better competence and achievement later. That is, children become more competent because of their early persistence at tasks, even if early on they are not highly competent [6]. Józsa and Molnár [8] found that the DMQ was more predictive of school grades than IQ and tests of basic skills. More recently, Józsa, Kis, and Barrett [3] found that mastery motivation in preschool children predicted school success in grades 1 and 2.

Within the field of music, Józsa, Kis, and Huang [7] compared MM as the subject-specific mastery motive between Hungarian and Taiwanese students. Their findings indicated that the connection between subject-specific mastery motives becomes progressively weaker as students advance through grades 4 to 10. In this comparative study, Hungarian students demonstrated lower motivation in music than Taiwanese students. Moreover, the MM of Hungarian students decreased significantly between grade 4 and grade 8. From the school subjects under investigation, this decrease was most radical in music among Hungarian students. Taiwanese students, on the other hand, did not demonstrate a significant decrease in their musical MM over the period under investigation. Janurik et al. [34] broke down musical MM into further dimensions. They distinguished between persistence in the acquisition of singing, rhythm reading, music reading, and musical knowledge as well as between musical mastery pleasure and failure in musical activities. These variables are associated with the attitude towards school music lessons.

The literature lists the studies which examined the relationship between MM and SC. Szenczi, Kis, and Józsa [15] revealed a link between academic SC and MM among grade 6–10 students with learning disabilities. According to their results, cognitive persistence was associated with mathematical SC, general school SC, general self, physical abilities, and the verbal and social facets of SC. Moreover, general SC was found to correlate with cognitive persistence, gross motor persistence, and social persistence with adults. In their large-sample study among Hungarian students, they found moderate to strong correlations between MM and the different facets of SC.

3.2. Self-Concept

According to the most general definition of SC, it is “how one describes oneself” [35], p. 612. Its development is affected by self-perception, self-appraisal, self-representation, self-evaluation, and self-description. The most comprehensive model of SC was developed by Shavelson and colleagues [36]. Their model was the foundation for further research that confirmed the existence of specific facets of SC [37][38][39]. General SC is a hierarchical construct which can be divided into specific layers: learning, social, emotional, and physical SC, which can be further divided into specific areas on a lower level. Layers, as well as their parts, are called domains of SC. Research has confirmed that subject-specific SCs are often not connected to each other or demonstrate only weak connections [40][41][42].

Musical SC is a component of general SC, it covers representations with regard to “who I am” in music and “what I can do” in music [43], p. 268. Vispoel’s [44] musical SC model builds on previous research on SC and covers both general and specific areas. His research confirmed that musical SC is part of a SC hierarchy involving a hierarchically superordinate artistic domain and hierarchically subordinate components (music composition, instrument playing, music reading, singing, listening, and dancing). Results suggest that facets of musical SC are connected to each other; however, singing and dancing SCs seem to be more distinct from the other facets of musical SC [14]. A positive musical SC was found to be linked to positive expectations with regard to musical achievement and predicted more effort and higher achievement in musical activities [45]. Vispoel [46] suggests that overall perceptions of one’s musical abilities are dominated by perceptions of skills in instrumental performance and auditory cognition. Music reading, singing, and instrumental play were identified as key components in adolescents. Instrumental play was found to be the most significant factor in musical SC, and perceived low skills in instrumental performance were combined with a lower self-esteem. Vispoel’s [44] results support previous findings with regard to the role of domain importance effects in musical SC [38][46][47]. This implies that global self-esteem has a weaker relationship with musical SC if an individual considers being educated in music less important. However, when one is keen on being musically educated, the relationship between global self-esteem and musical SC is stronger [48]. Research has also confirmed that musical SC is significantly correlated with intrinsic motivation and internal attributions as well [45][49]. Musical SC was found to be relatively stable among elementary school students; however, competition, which is considered an external motivator, and evaluation may have a positive impact on SC [50]. Based on Schmidt’s [20] research, musical SC is moderately correlated with mastery orientation, intrinsic orientation, and individual orientation as well. Within the three factors identified by Schmidt [20], musical SC demonstrated similar factor loadings for individual orientation and learning/task orientation. The research of Schmidt [20] as well as that of Marsh et al. [51] confirms that musical SC is linked to intrinsic motivation.

Based on the research of Shavelson et al. [36], Spychiger, Gruber, and Olbertz [21] proposed a multi-dimensional model of SC which assumes that not only those musically active but all of us have a musical SC. Within this musical SC, they distinguish between non-academic components—emotional, social, physical, cognitive, and spiritual representations related to music—and ideal musical self, as well as an academic component which concerns musical ability. In their view, this model provides a better understanding of one’s musical SC than just

looking at perceptions about one's musical ability. According to their results, the cognitive component of musical SC is strongest in professional musicians and music workers, while the spiritual component was found to be strongest in "leisure" musicians. The cognitive, social, and spiritual components all demonstrated the lowest mean values in music listeners. MUSCI_youth was used by Fiedler and Spychiger [\[52\]](#) among German high school students.

References

1. Mark, M.L. Why does our profession need advocacy? *Int. J. Music Educ.* 2005, 23, 95–98.
2. Fiedler, D.; Hasselhorn, J. The relationship between musical self-concept and motivation in music education. *Rel. Bull. Empir. Music Educ. Res.* 2020, 11, 1–34.
3. Józsa, K.; Kis, N.; Barrett, K.C. Mastery motivation, parenting and school achievement among Hungarian adolescents. *Eur. J. Psychol. Educ.* 2019, 34, 317–339.
4. Morgan, G.A.; MacTurk, R.H.; Hrnčir, E.J. Mastery motivation: Overview, definitions, and conceptual issues. In *Mastery Motivation: Origins, Conceptualizations, and Applications*; MacTurk, R.H., Morgan, G.A., Eds.; Ablex: Norwood, NJ, USA, 1995; pp. 1–18.
5. Calchei, M.; Oo, T.Z.; Józsa, K. Subject specific mastery motivation in Moldovan middle school students. *Behav. Sci.* 2023, 13, 166.
6. Barrett, K.C.; Morgan, G.A. Mastery Motivation: Retrospect, present, and future directions. In *Advances in Motivation Science*; Elliot, A., Ed.; Elsevier: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2018; Volume 5, pp. 2–39.
7. Józsa, K.; Kis, N.; Huang, S.-Y. Mastery motivation in school subjects in Hungary and Taiwan. *Hung. Educ. Res. J.* 2017, 7, 158–177.
8. Józsa, K.; Molnár, É.D. The relationship between mastery motivation, self-regulated learning and school success: A Hungarian and European perspective. In *Handbook on Self-Regulatory Processes in Development: New Directions and International Perspectives*; Barrett, K.C., Fox, N.A., Morgan, G.A., Fidler, D.J., Daunhauer, L.A., Eds.; Psychology Press: New York, NY, USA, 2013; pp. 265–304.
9. Borbélyová, D. Az iskolai motiváció formálódása az első évfolyamba való beilleszkedés kontextusában. In *Zborník Medzinárodnej Vedeckej Konferencie Univerzity J. Selyeho-2017: "Hodnota, Kvalita A Konkurencieschopnosť-Výzvy 21. Storočia"-Sekcie Pedagogických Vied*; CD-ROM, s; Univerzita J. Selyeho: Komárno, Slovakia, 2017; pp. 19–27.
10. Comeau, G.; Huta, V.; Lu, Y.; Swirp, M. The Motivation for Learning Music (MLM) questionnaire: Assessing children's and adolescents' autonomous motivation for learning a musical instrument.

Motiv. Emot. 2019, 43, 705–718.

11. Miksza, P.; Evans, P.; McPherson, G.E. Motivation to pursue a career in music: The role of social constraints in university music programs. *Psychol. Music* 2021, 49, 50–68.
12. Mulder, M.; Hitters, E. Visiting pop concerts and festivals: Measuring the value of an integrated Live Music Motivation Scale. *Cult. Trends* 2021, 30, 355–375.
13. Wieser, M.; Müller, F.H. Motivation in instrumental music instruction before and during the remote learning phase due to COVID-19 crisis. *Music Sci.* 2022, 5, 20592043221132938.
14. Morin, A.J.S.; Scalas, L.F.; Vispoel, W.; Marsh, H.V.; Wen, Z. The Music Self-Perception Inventory: Development of short form. *Psychol. Music* 2016, 44, 915–934.
15. Szenczi, B.; Kis, N.; Józsa, K. Academic self-concept and mastery motivation in students with learning disabilities. *J. Psychol. Educ. Res.* 2018, 26, 98–113.
16. Mawang, L.L.; Kigen, E.M.; Mutweleli, S.M. The relationship between musical self-concept and musical creativity among secondary school music students. *Int. J. Music Educ.* 2019, 37, 78–90.
17. Mazur, I.; Hrinchenko, T.; Teplova, O.; Onofrichuk, L.; Priadko, O. Cognitive determination of musical thinking and musical self-concept of students and musicians: Comparative diagnostics, aspects of modeling and forecasting. *Harmon. J. Arts Res. Educ.* 2022, 22, 368–380.
18. Demorest, M.; Kelley, J.; Pfordresher, P.Q. Singing ability, musical self-concept and future music participation. *J. Res. Music Educ.* 2017, 64, 405–420.
19. Hallam, S. *Musical Motivation: Towards a Model Synthesising the Research*; University of London: London, UK, 2002.
20. Schmidt, C.P. Relations among motivation, achievement, and music experience variables in secondary instrumental music students. *J. Res. Music. Educ.* 2005, 53, 134–147.
21. Spychiger, M.; Gruber, L.; Olbertz, F. Musical self-concept-presentation of a multidimensional model and its empirical analyses. In *Proceedings of the 7th Triennial Conference of European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (ESCOM 2009)*, Jyväskylä, Finland, 12–16 August 2009; Louhivuori, J., Eerola, T., Saarikallio, S., Himberg, T., Eerola, P.-S., Eds.; Department of Music, University of Jyväskylä: Jyväskylä, Finland, 2009; pp. 505–506.
22. Ryan, R.M.; Deci, E.L. Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *Am. Psychol.* 2000, 55, 68.
23. Legault, L. Self-Determination Theory. In *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*; Springer International Publishing: New York, NY, USA, 2020; pp. 1–9.
24. Tang, W.G.; Vandenberghe, C. The reciprocal relationship between affective organizational commitment and role overload: When autonomy need satisfaction meets the individual self-

- concept. *J. Occup. Organ. Psychol.* 2020, 93, 353–380.
25. Nazario, L. da C. Freedom as a trigger for musical creativity. *Res. Stud. Music Educ.* 2022, 44, 192–204.
 26. Evans, P.; Liu, M.Y. Psychological needs and motivational outcomes in a high school orchestra program. *J. Res. Music Educ.* 2019, 67, 83–105.
 27. White, R. Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence. *Psychol. Rev.* 1959, 66, 297–333.
 28. Yarrow, L.J.; Morgan, G.A.; Jennings, K.D.; Harmon, R.J.; Gaiter, J.L. Infants' persistence at tasks: Relationships to cognitive functioning and early experience. *Infant Behav. Dev.* 1982, 5, 131–142.
 29. Yarrow, L.J.; Rubenstein, J.L.; Pedersen, F.A. *Infant and Environment: Early Cognitive and Motivational Development*; Hemisphere, Halsted, Wiley: Washington, DC, USA, 1975.
 30. Barrett, K.C.; Morgan, G.A. Continuities and discontinuities in mastery motivation in infancy and toddlerhood: A conceptualization and review. In *Mastery Motivation: Origins, Conceptualizations and, Applications*; MacTurk, R.H., Morgan, G.A., Eds.; Ablex: Norwood, Australia, 1995; pp. 67–93.
 31. Elliot, A.J. A conceptual history of the achievement goal construct. In *Handbook of Competence and Motivation*; Elliot, A., Dweck, C., Eds.; Guilford Press: New York, NY, USA, 2005; pp. 52–72.
 32. Wang, J.; Barrett, K.C. Mastery motivation and self-regulation during early childhood. In *Handbook of Self-Regulatory Process in Development: New Directions and International Perspectives*; Barrett, K.C., Fox, N.A., Morgan, G.A., Fidler, D.J., Daunhauer, L.A., Eds.; Psychology Press: New York, NY, USA, 2013; pp. 337–380.
 33. Morgan, G.A.; Józsa, K.; Liao, H.-F. Overview of mastery motivation, assessment, and this book. In *Assessing Mastery Motivation in Children Using the Dimensions of Mastery Questionnaire (DMQ)*; Morgan, G.A., Liao, H.-F., Józsa, K., Eds.; Szent István University: Gödöllő, Hungary, 2020; pp. 19–44.
 34. Janurik, M.; Kis, N.; Szabó, N.; Józsa, K. Az ének-zene tantárgy iránti attitűd összefüggése az iskolai zenetanulás iránti motivációval hetedik osztályos tanulók körében. *Neveléstudomány* 2021, 3, 17–42.
 35. Harter, S. The development of self-representations during childhood and adolescence. In *Handbook of Self and Identity*; Leary, M.R., Tangney, J.P., Eds.; Guilford: New York, NY, USA, 2003; pp. 610–642.
 36. Shavelson, R.J.; Hubner, J.J.; Stanton, G.C. Self-concept: Validation of construct interpretations. *Rev. Educ. Res.* 1976, 46, 407–441.

37. Hattie, J. *Self-Concept*; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: Hillsdale, MI, USA, 1992.
38. Marsh, H.W. Relationships among dimensions of self-attribution. dimensions of self-concept and academic achievements. *J. Educ. Psychol.* 1984, 76, 1291–1380.
39. Marsh, H.W. The structure of academic self-concept: The Marsh/Shavelson Model. *J. Educ. Psychol.* 1990, 82, 623–636.
40. Brunner, M.; Keller, U.; Dierendonck, C.; Reichert, M.; Ugen, S.; Fischbach, A.; Martin, R. The structure of academic self-concepts revisited: The nested Marsh/Shavelson model. *J. Educ. Psychol.* 2010, 102, 964–981.
41. Gogol, K.; Brunner, M.; Preckel, F.; Goetz, T.; Martin, R. Developmental dynamics of general and school-subject-specific components of academic self-concept, academic interest and academic anxiety. *Front. Psychol.* 2016, 7, 356.
42. Green, J.; Martin, A.J.; Marsh, H.W. Motivation and engagement in English, Mathematics and Science high school subjects: Towards an understanding of multidimensional domain specificity. *Learn. Individ. Differ.* 2007, 17, 269–279.
43. Spychiger, M. From musical experience to musical identity. In *Handbook of Musical Identities*; Macdonald, R., Hargreaves, D.J., Miell, D., Eds.; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 2017; pp. 267–287.
44. Vispoel, W.P. Self-concept in artistic domains: An extension of the Shavelson model. *J. Educ. Psychol.* 1995, 85, 134–153.
45. Austin, J.R.; Vispoel, W.P. How American adolescents interpret success and failure in classroom music: Relationships among attributional beliefs, self-concept, and achievement. *Psychol. Music* 1998, 26, 26–45.
46. Vispoel, W.P. Measuring and understanding self-perceptions of musical ability. In *International Advances in Self Research*; Marsh, H.W., Craven, R.G., McInerney, D.M., Eds.; Information Age Publishing: Greenwich, UK, 2003; pp. 151–180.
47. Vispoel, W.P. Music self-concept: Instrumentation, structure, and theoretical linkages. In *Self-Concept Theory. Research and Practice: Advances for the Millennium*; Craven, R., Marsh, W.H., Eds.; SELF Research Centre, University of Western Sydney: Penrith, Australia, 2000; pp. 100–107.
48. Marsh, H.W. Relations between global and specific domains of self: The importance of individual importance, certainty, and ideals. *J. Personal. Soc. Psychol.* 1993, 65, 975–992.
49. Sandene, B.A. An investigation of variables related to student motivation in instrumental music. In *Dissertation Abstracts International*; (Uhl No 9315947); University of Michigan: Ann Arbor, MI, USA, 1997; Volume 8, p. 3870.

50. Austin, J.R. The Effect of music contest format on self-concept, motivation, achievement and attitude of elementary band students. *J. Res. Music Educ.* 1988, 36, 95–107.
51. Marsh, H.W.; Craven, R.G.; Hinkley, J.W.; Debus, R.L. Evaluation of the big-two factor theory of academic motivation orientations: An evaluation of jingle-jangle fallacies. *Multivar. Behav. Res.* 2003, 38, 189–224.
52. Fiedler, D.; Spychiger, M. Measuring “Musical Self-Concept” throughout the years of adolescence with MUSCI-youth: Validation and adjustment of the Musical Self-Concept Inquiry (MUSCI) by investigating samples of students at secondary education schools. *Psychomusicology Music Mind Brain* 2017, 27, 167–179.

Retrieved from <https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/history/show/112844>