



A Comparative Study of Perfectionism, Coping Style & Interpersonal Relationship between Music Major and Non-music Major College Students

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Abstract

The target of this thesis is to study differences on perfectionism, coping style and interpersonal relationship between music major college students and non-music major college students. The main study methods are to make the use of Frost multi-dimensional perfectionism scale, coping style questionnaire and college student interpersonal relationship comprehensive diagnostic scale to measure 350 college students. The results of the study show that: (1) The scores of music major students on coping style are apparently higher than those of non-music students. (2) On the parents criticism dimension of the perfectionism, the immature dimension of the coping style and the mixture dimension, the scores of music major students are apparently higher than those of non-music students, while the scores of music major students are apparently lower than those of non-music students on orderliness dimension, friends communication dimension of interpersonal relationship. The differences on other dimensions between music major students and non-music major students are not apparent. So the conclusion of the thesis is that music major students have more problems on the coping style than non-music students do.

Keywords: Music major, Perfectionism, Coping style, Interpersonal relationship

The perfectionism refers to the tendency that a person cannot take the fact that he has not reached the high standard which is set by himself or the perfect situation he expected. (Frost RO, Marten C, Lahart CM and Rosenblate R, 1990, pp.449-468) The perfectionism is related with eating disorders, suicidal tendency and attempt, psychological health, depression, nervousness, self-esteem, procrastination and neuroticism. (Blatt S J, 1995, pp.1003-1020) The coping style refers to the cognitive and behavior style that the individuals faces the setback and stress. (ZhangLin, Che Wenbo and Li Bing, 2005, pp.36-41). The coping style is an important regulate factor in the process of psychological stress. The coping style of the individual influences the nature and strength of the stress response and hereafter adjusts the relations between the stress and the strength outcome. (ZhangLin, Che Wenbo and Li Bing, 2005, pp.36-41) The study shows that some dimensions of perfectionism is probably related with the coping style that can adjust well, while some dimensions is probably related with the coping style that adjusts badly. From three dimensions, such as self-oriented perfectionism, others-oriented perfectionism, society-prescribed perfectionism, O'Connor (2003) studied the relationship between perfectionism and coping style. He finds that self-oriented perfectionism is positively correlated with task-oriented coping, and others-oriented perfectionism is correlated task-oriented coping for women, whereas society-prescribed

perfectionism is correlated with emotion-oriented coping, task-oriented coping and society-deviation coping. (O'Connor R C, O'Connor D B, 2003, pp.362-372.) Dunkley studied the relationship between perfectionism and coping style from two dimensions, i.e. adaptive perfectionism and maladaptive perfectionism. He finds that maladaptive perfectionism tends to adopt more maladaptive and avoidance coping styles such as isolation and refusal. (Dunkley DM, Zuroff DC and Blankstein KR 2003, pp.:234-252) Interpersonal relationship refers to the direct psychological relationship that is formed in the process of people exchanges and interaction. (Zhen Quanquan & Yu Guoliang, 1999, pp:5-21.) Perfectionists usually impose high requirements and high standards on others, require others' performance must be perfect. Therefore, perfectionists usually behave badly in interpersonal relationship. The study of Hill and others shows that others-oriented perfectionism and society-prescribed perfectionism will lead to interpersonal problems. (Hill RW, Zuckerman M C and Turlington S. 1997, pp:81-103) The studies of YU Ling on Taiwan youth demonstrate that the stronger the tendency to perfectionism is, the more problems in interpersonal relations there are. (Yu Ling 2001) Except a small number of research literature taking some art major students as objects when comparing different major students, no research literature studying on perfectionism, coping style and interpersonal relationship taking music major students and non-music major students as objects has been found yet. Herewith this thesis takes taking music major students and non-music major students as research objects and discusses the differences on perfectionism, coping style and interpersonal relationship between music major students and non-music students.

1. Object and Method

1.1 Research Object

We got 324 valid questionnaires from a total of 350 college students of music major and non-music major whom are sampled from Qufu Normal University using stratified random sampling method. Among them there are 148 music major students and 176 non-music students, whereas there are 93 males and 231 females.

1.2 Research Method

(1) Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, MPS-F, 1990

In the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale compiled by Frost, there are 35 items in total, including Concerning Mistakes (CM), Action Procrastination (AP), Personal Standard (PS), Parent Expectation (PE), Parent Criticism (PC) and Orderliness (OR). Among them, AP is taken from Moel questionnaire of Muadse. PS and OR measure the adaptive (positive) perfectionism while the other 4 items measure the maladaptive (negative) perfectionism. 5 points scoring is used in this scale. The correlation coefficient between this scale and other perfectionism scale is above 0.91, and the coefficient of internal factors consistency is 0.78 – 0.92. This scale is a comparably mature measurement tool in the field of perfectionism studies. At present it is mainly applied in adult groups.

(2) Coping Style Questionnaire

"The Coping Style Questionnaire" compiled by XIAO Jihua and others is adopted in this thesis. There are 62 items altogether, including 6 branch scales, i.e., problem-solving, self-reproach, for help, fantasy, avoidance and rationalizing. Among them, problem-solving and for help are classified into mature coping style; avoidance, fantasy and self-reproach are classified into immature coping style; rationalizing is classified into mixture coping style. (Xiao Jihua & Xu Xiufeng, 1996, pp: 164-168.)

(3) College Student Interpersonal Relationship Comprehensive Diagnostic Scale

This study adopts Interpersonal Relationship Comprehensive Diagnostic Scale compiled by Professor Zheng Richang, Beijing Normal University. This questionnaire was used to measure test subjects whether distress exists and the degree of distress in the process of people exchanges. In total there are 28 items, 28 scores in full and 4 categories, i.e., no/little distress (0-8 scores), distress to some extent (9-14 scores), serious distress (15-20 scores), very serious distress (20-28 scores). The scale is divided into 4 branches, i.e., conversation, communication and making friends, treating people, interaction with opposite sex, which measure distress specifics in the above 4 aspects and corresponding degrees. It is tested that its Cronbach reliability coefficient is 0.86, and its reliability coefficient of split-half is 0.78. Moreover, it also owns fairly good internal factors consistency and construct validity. (Zheng Richang, 1999, pp: 339-343)

1.3 Research Procedure

Under the guidance of test supervisor, college students fill in the above questionnaires on spot in the form of group testing. The questionnaires are collected in spot. The demographic information of the tested students, including major, grade and gender is acquired in the process of testing.

1.4 Statistics Method

SPSS 17.0 is adopted and the results have been verified by T verification.

2. Result

2.1 Scores of Music Major Students and Non-music Major Students on Perfectionism, Coping Style and Interpersonal Relationship

There are only apparent differences on total scores of music major students and non-music major students on coping style. Notwithstanding the differences on total scores on the other aspects, perfectionism and interpersonal relationship, are unapparent.

Insert Table 1 Here

2.2 Scores of Music Major Students and Non-music Major Students on Various Dimensions of Perfectionism, Coping Style and Interpersonal Relationship

According to Table 2, further studies show that comparing with non-music major students, music major students get higher scores on parent criticism dimension of perfectionism than non-music major students do, whereas music major students get lower scores on orderliness dimension of perfectionism; there is no apparent differences on the other dimensions.

Insert Table 2 Here

Table 3 demonstrates that there are apparent differences on immature dimension and mixture dimension of coping style between music major students and non-music major students; non-music major students get higher scores on these two dimensions than music major students do; there is no apparent differences on mature dimension.

Insert Table 3 Here

Table 4 demonstrates that there are apparent differences on communication and making friends dimension of interpersonal relationship between music major students and non-music major students; music major students get lower scores on this dimension than non-music major students do; there is no apparent differences on the other dimensions of interpersonal relationship.

Insert Table 4 Here

3. Discussion

This research shows that music major students get higher scores on the coping style than non-music major students do. Further studies manifest that music major students get higher scores on the immature dimension and mixture dimension of coping style than non-music major students do; there is no apparent differences on mature dimension. Comparing with non-music major students, the personalities of music major students tend to go extremes. Music major students handle things more emotionally, and adjust themselves to new situation more slowly. (Zhou Tianmei. 2006, pp:10-19)

As a whole the behavior of music major students is often affected by impulse. All the above factors lead to why music major students get higher scores on coping style, especially immature dimension and mixture dimension.

Music major students get higher scores on parent criticism dimension of perfectionism than non-music major students do, whereas music major students get lower scores on orderliness dimension of perfectionism; there is no apparent differences on the other dimensions. In our opinion, because the self-discipline of music major students is poorer, and their emotion goes out of control more easily, they are more easily scolded by their parents. The fact that non-music major students get higher scores on orderliness demonstrates that they lay more emphasis on logic, tend more to pursue for order, know more about how to achieve their set goal. Different majors have different ways of skill training and cultivation.

Music major students get lower scores on the dimension of communication and making friends than non-music major students do. According to some literature, it is shown that music major students behave more indifferently, care less about other people, and their self-protection awareness becomes stronger and stronger when they grow older. This probably causes to why they get apparently lower scores on the dimension of communication and making friends than non-music major students do.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, there exist some differences on perfectionism, coping style and interpersonal relationship between music major and non-music major college students. Music major students have more problems on perfectionism, coping style, especially interpersonal relationship. When university or college educators carry out psychological health education, they should take corresponding measures according to their students' respective major and different existing problems, guide students to make use of positive aspects of perfectionism, strengthen training and cultivating the mature coping compatibility of music major students, improve their interpersonal ability, therefore improve their overall level of mental health.

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Table 1. Scores of Music Major Students and Non-music Major Students on Perfectionism, Coping Style and Interpersonal Relationship

	Music Major Students (148)		Non-music Major Students (176)		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Perfectionism	72.6622	12.88175	71.3977	14.46773	0.824
Coping Style	39.9324	12.68545	31.3523	7.11223	7.318***
Interpersonal Relationship	9.6892	5.49193	9.9432	5.37371	-0.420

Note: ***P<0.001

Table 2. Scores of Music Major Students and Non-music Major Students on Dimensions of Perfectionism

	Music Major Students	(148)	Non-music Major Students	(176)	t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Parent Expectation	21.0676	3.81843	21.0852	3.65648	-0.042
Orderliness	18.9054	4.41293	21.2386	4.72681	-4.562***
Parent Criticism	3.6959	1.78680	3.1023	1.38184	3.297**
Personal Standard	24.9527	6.38486	24.9773	6.90586	-0.033
Concerning Mistakes	10.1486	3.91989	9.2955	3.81773	1.979
Behavior Concerns	12.7973	2.63921	12.9375	3.65850	-0.400

Note: *P<0.05 **P<0.01 ***P<0.001

Table 3. Scores of Music Major Students and Non-music Major Students on Dimensions of Coping Style

	Music Major Students	(148)	Non-music Major Students	(176)	t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Mature	15.0473	3.62969	14.4545	3.34291	1.529
Immature	18.3311	7.47002	12.5739	4.92866	8.022 ***
Mixture	6.5541	3.18005	4.3239	1.87089	7.509***

Note: ***P<0.001

Table 4. Scores of Music Major Students and Non-music Major Students on Dimensions of Interpersonal Relationship

	Music Major Students	(148)	Non-music Major Students	(176)	t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Conversation	2.5203	1.73585	2.6761	1.79927	-0.789
Communication and Making Friends	2.6761	1.79927	3.4034	1.81479	-2.031 *
Treating People	2.0338	1.71196	1.7727	1.36677	1.526
Interaction with Opposite Sex	2.1419	1.63720	2.0909	1.70469	0.273

Note: *P<0.05