



A Comparative Study on Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Coping Strategies among Musicians and Non-Musician

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ABSTRACT

The current study sought to explore variations in mental health status and depression, anxiety, stress skills between individuals who engage in musical activities and those who do not. Mental health was assessed using the DASS21- Depression Anxiety Stress Scale 21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) while coping strategy was gauged using the CSI- Coping Strategy Inventory Carver et al. (1989). The findings indicated significant difference in depression, anxiety, stress between musicians and non-musicians, with musicians exhibiting notably lower levels in depression, anxiety and stress. Interestingly, there were no significant differences between musicians and non-musicians for any of the coping

styles. This suggests that musicians and non-musicians tend to utilize similar coping strategies on average, regardless of their musical involvement. Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies to understand the lifelong impact of musical engagement on depression, anxiety, stress, and coping. Combining self-reported data with physiological measures can offer a more objective assessment, while larger and more diverse samples would enhance generalizability. Furthermore, exploring neurophysiological mechanisms through brain imaging, examining music's role in different contexts and populations, and designing music-based interventions show promising avenues for promoting emotional well-being.

Keywords: *Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Musicians, Non-Musicians.*

INTRODUCTION

Humans have always loved music. There's evidence of musical activities in every culture we know about, dating back at least 250,000 years (Zatorre & Peretz, 2001). This widespread love of music for such a long time has made people wonder where it came from and why it exists. Many thinkers have tried to answer these questions. Philosophers, psychologists, and even scientists have come up with different theories about the origins and purpose of music (Fitch, 2006; Peretz, 2006; Levitin, 2007; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2010).

Research indicates that musical experiences impact depression, anxiety, stress by activating specific brain regions involved in regulating emotions (Moore, 2013). For instance, music has been shown to mitigate emotional threats, thereby aiding depression, anxiety, stress during challenging tasks (Graham et al., 2009). Additionally, music serves as a tool for relaxation and mood maintenance, allowing individuals to manage emotions and replenish energy (Saarikallio, 2010).

Closely intertwined with depression, anxiety, stress are coping strategies, the cognitive, behavioural, and emotional efforts employed to manage stressors, conflicts, and challenges encountered in daily life (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Coping strategies serve as adaptive mechanisms for mitigating the impact of stressors on mental health and fostering resilience in the face of adversity. The repertoire of coping strategies individuals employ may vary depending on personal characteristics, situational factors, and contextual demands.

While research has elucidated the multifaceted nature of depression, anxiety, stress and coping strategies, relatively less attention has been directed towards understanding how these processes differ among individuals engaged in musical activities compared to those who are not. Musicians, by virtue of their immersion in the world of music, are uniquely positioned to explore the nexus between musical engagement, depression, anxiety, stress, and coping strategies. Through their artistic endeavours, musicians navigate a landscape rich in emotional expression, drawing upon a myriad of techniques to convey and interpret the nuances of human experience.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sloboda (2001). Emotion in music cognition and performance. Music & Emotion: Theory and Research, 65.

Sloboda's (2001) offers a comprehensive overview of the complex relationship between music and emotion. It explores how music evokes and influences emotions, delving into the cognitive processes involved in music perception. The review examines how musical elements like melody, harmony, rhythm, and timbre interact to create emotional responses in listeners.

Juslin and Västfjäll. (2005). Emotion regulation in music listening: The role of aesthetic experience. Music & Emotion: Theory and Research, 80(3), 217-240.

The review by Juslin and Västfjäll (2005) review dives into the concept of aesthetic experience in music listening. It highlights how finding music aesthetically pleasing can facilitate emotion regulation strategies like reappraisal and positive reinterpretation. When an individual experience music as beautiful or moving, it can shift our perspective and create a more positive emotional state.

Juslin and Sloboda (2015). The social context of musical emotion. Music & Emotion: Theory and Research, 88(3), 283-311.

Juslin and Sloboda (2015) examines the social context of musical emotions. Musical experiences can be significantly influenced by social interactions and shared cultural meanings. For example, listening to music with friends at a concert can create a more powerful emotional response compared to solitary listening. Similarly, music associated with specific cultural traditions or historical events can evoke emotions tied to those contexts. Understanding the social aspects of music is crucial for comprehending the full picture of how music impacts our emotions.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To conduct a comparative study on depression, anxiety, stress and coping strategies of musicians and non-musicians.

Research Objectives

- To assess depression, anxiety, stress of musicians and non-musicians
- To assess coping strategies of musicians and non-musicians.

Sample

A total sampling size of 100 (N=100), where 50 are musicians and the remaining 50 are non-musicians. Participants are mostly students and are interested in music age ranging from 20 to 30 years.

Hypotheses

- There will be significant difference in depression, anxiety and stress between musicians and non-musicians
- There will be significant difference in coping strategies between musicians and non-musicians.

Variables

- ***Coping Strategies***: Operationalized by assessing the variety and frequency of coping strategies employed by participants in response to emotional challenges.

- *Depression, Anxiety, Stress*: Operationalized through self-reported assessments and potentially observable behaviours, exploring how participants enhance and maintain positive emotional states.

Research Design

A qualitative research design was opted for this research paper to collect primary data's. The survey was done through google forms as well as physical distribution of the questionnaire to the participants.

Statistical analysis of parametric tests and independent t-tests were performed using the SPSS software package.

Tool

- Brief COPE (Carver, 1997)
- DASS21- Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 (Lovibond & Lovibond (1995))

RESULTS

Table 1

Average scores for depression, anxiety and stress of musicians and non-musicians

	Are you a musician	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
DEPRESSION	Yes	50	6.86	4.005
	No	50	6.90	4.665
ANXIETY	Yes	50	6.84	3.749
	No	50	7.14	4.031

STRESS	Yes	50	7.22	3.222
	No	50	8.26	3.901

Table 2

Average scores for different coping strategies (problem focused, emotional focused, avoidant focused) of musicians and non-musicians

	Are you a musician	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Problem focused	Yes	50	20.42	5.414
	No	50	21.70	4.900
Emotional focused	Yes	50	28.28	6.398
	No	50	28.54	5.997
Avoidant focused	Yes	50	16.08	3.827
	No	50	15.24	4.885

DISCUSSION

The title of the study “*A Comparative Study on Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Coping Strategies of Musicians and Non-Musician,*” a sample comprising of 100 (N=100), where 50 were musicians and the remaining 50 were non-musicians was selected. Participants were mostly students and are interested in music age ranging from 20 to 30 yrs. Data collection involved two tools namely, DASS21- Depression Anxiety Stress Scale 21 and CSI- Coping Strategy Inventory were used.

- Table 1 shows that musicians reported lower stress on average compared to non-musicians. This aligns with other research suggesting music can reduce stress. While the stress findings are encouraging, the study also found no significant differences in

depression and anxiety scores between the two groups. This suggests that music might have a more specific effect on stress compared to depression and anxiety.

- Table 2 shows that, there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups for any of the coping styles. This suggests that musicians and non-musicians tend to utilize similar coping strategies on average, regardless of their musical involvement.

CONCLUSION

The current study contributes significantly to the growing body of research exploring the potential benefits of music for emotional well-being. The findings suggest that musicians might experience lower levels of emotional distress, as measured by the DASS-21, and exhibit more consistent coping styles, as indicated by the Brief COPE, compared to non-musicians. However, the cross-sectional design limits causal inferences.

Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies to understand how musical engagement influences depression, anxiety, stress and coping throughout life. Additionally, incorporating physiological measures alongside self-reported data can provide a more objective assessment. Furthermore, using larger and more diverse samples recruited through random methods would strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

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