

The Relationship between Self-Compassion and Music Performance Anxiety among Undergraduate Music Students

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Abstract

Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) is a common and complex challenge faced by musicians while performing. Self-Compassion refers to how individuals perceive themselves when facing setbacks or difficulties. Given the increasing emphasis on students' psychological well-being and performance quality in higher music education, understanding factors that can effectively reduce MPA has become essential for both educators and learners. This study aimed to explore the relationship between Self-Compassion and Music Performance Anxiety among undergraduate music students. Data were collected using the Chinese versions of the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) and the Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory-Revised (K-MPAI-R) Scale. The findings revealed a significant negative correlation between Self-Compassion and Music Performance Anxiety. In addition, the three negative dimensions of Self-Compassion—Self-Judgment, Over-Identification, and Isolation—were significantly positively correlated with Music Performance Anxiety, with Over-Identification being the strongest. The study identified Self-Kindness and Over-Identification as predictors of Music Performance Anxiety, indicating that these components might help reduce it, although further research is needed. The study also found no significant gender difference in Music Performance Anxiety among undergraduate music students aged 18 to 23. These findings highlight the practical value of integrating self-compassion-based strategies into music education to support students' emotional regulation and performance outcomes. Future research on Music Performance Anxiety should delve deeper into specific musician subgroups.

Keywords: Music Performance Anxiety, Self-Compassion, Undergraduate Music Students, gender differences, Predictors

Introduction

Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) is a type of anxiety that can significantly hinder performance and success in musical contexts. When triggered, MPA may manifest through a range of physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms (Kenny, 2011). The severity

of MPA experiences can vary; individuals may encounter mild symptoms such as nausea, trembling, and sweating, or more intense effects like reduced concentration and impaired musical performance (Dobos et al., 2019; Huawei & Jenatabadi, 2024; Kemp, 1996; Lehmann et al., 2007).

Considered a performance-only specifier, MPA is a performance-specific subtype of Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). While earlier scholarship characterized MPA as a standalone disorder (Kenny & Ackermann, 2007), recent research suggests that Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) serves as a mediator between MPA and various other types of anxiety (Wiedemann et al., 2019). According to a recent study by Wiedemann et al. (2022), among all major anxiety types classified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5), GAD has emerged as the strongest predictor of MPA (Boileau et al., 2024).

Although the exact prevalence of MPA remains uncertain, various literature reviews have indicated its occurrence among professional musicians, ranging from 15 to 70 percent (Barros et al., 2024; Burin & Osório, 2017; Steptoe, 2001).

Despite the growing body of research on MPA, a critical gap remains in identifying effective psychological resources and protective mechanisms that can be systematically cultivated within educational settings, particularly in higher education and non-Western contexts such as China. Although recent studies have increasingly emphasized the importance of internal regulatory mechanisms, empirical evidence on such factors in music populations remains limited, and there is still a lack of consensus regarding their effectiveness in managing MPA (Barros et al., 2022; Burin & Osório, 2017; Farley & Kelley, 2023; Kenny, 2011).

Gender Differences in MPA

Generally, women are inclined to experience MPA more frequently than men (Gómez-López & Sánchez-Cabrero, 2024; Jónsdóttir, 2010; Kenny et al., 2014), while students and amateurs tend to experience it more than experts (Jónsdóttir, 2010; Steptoe & Fidler, 1987).

The exploration of gender differences in MPA among undergraduate music students has garnered considerable attention in existing research, though with varying conclusions. Most studies have found that students who identify as female demonstrated increased levels of MPA compared to their male counterparts (Dobos et al., 2019; Orejudo et al., 2017; Sulun et al., 2017; Yondem, 2007). On the other hand, others, like Otacioglu, (2016) reported that male students demonstrated higher MPA levels than females. Additionally, some studies found no statistically significant differences between genders (Paliaukiene et al., 2018; Robson & Kenny, 2017; Ryan et al., 2024), while others observed a greater state of anxiety among male students (Umuzdaş et al., 2019).

MPA in different performance contexts

Research indicates that MPA affects both solo and ensemble performers, regardless of instrument or vocal type (Barros et al., 2024; Burin & Osório, 2017).

Meanwhile, certain scenarios evoke greater fear than others, with solo performances (Jiang & Tong, 2024; Rife et al., 2000), memorized playing (Hamann & Sobaje, 1983), and audition environments (Kenny, 2011; Wilson & Roland, 2002) appearing to be the most anxiety-inducing. Some musicians may experience MPA even in less intense settings, such as

music lessons or rehearsals (Dobos et al., 2019). Reducing MPA is essential for enhancing the performance experience and mental well-being of musicians at every skill level (Farley & Kelley, 2023).

Self-Compassion (SC)

As a concept and practice, self-compassion can be adapted into a framework for evaluating one's self and psychological health, defined by how individuals respond to failure or obstacles (Neff, 2003b). The concept of self-compassion stems from the traditional Buddhist interpretation of compassion, which emphasizes being sensitive to both one's own and others' suffering while being committed to alleviating and preventing it (Gilbert & Choden, 2013).

Self-Compassion (SC), as utilized in this study, comprises three key elements: Self-Kindness (SK), Common Humanity (CH), and Mindfulness (MF). Each element has a counterpart: Self-Judgment (SJ) is the opposite of SK, Isolation (IS) stands in contrast to CH, and Over-Identification (OI) is antithetical to MF (Neff, 2003a).

SK refers to treating oneself with the same compassion that one would extend to others during failures or challenges. CH involves acknowledging that all individuals experience difficult times and setbacks. MF includes being aware of the present moment, encompassing one's surroundings, the actions of others, and the positive aspects of one's life. A mindful person can focus on external events instead of becoming absorbed in internal emotional processing (Neff & Vonk, 2009).

An individual displaying the negative aspect of SK, namely SJ, tends to be harsh and critical of themselves when reflecting on a failed experience. When such an individual develops adverse feelings due to the perceived negative experience, they also believe the experience to be exceptional to them, thereby engaging in isolation. This distances them from a sense of CH or being part of a community. When individuals exhibit higher levels of OI— in other words over-identifying with negative emotions and thus reflecting the negative aspect of MF—they may enter a "pathological state" or develop negative feelings about themselves (Neff et al., 2018). These components of SC are separate from each other and can be experienced uniquely by individuals, although they may also interact with each other (Neff, 2003a).

Typically, adolescents exhibit lower levels of SC than older individuals (Lee et al., 2021; Murn & Steele, 2020; Neff, 2003). Meanwhile, although the relationship between gender and levels of SC remains somewhat uncertain, slight variations have been observed among gender groups, with women generally reporting lower levels of SC than men (Tavares et al., 2024; Yarnell et al., 2015). Cultural differences also appear to influence how individuals experience SC (Neff, 2003b).

Social psychologists have observed that higher levels of SC predict a more stable sense of self-worth (Isanejad et al., 2023; Neff & Vonk, 2009). SC correlates negatively with emotionally adverse behaviors such as excessive worrying, neuroticism, rumination, thought suppression, perfectionism, and depressive symptoms (Alsamman et al., 2024; Cowand et al., 2024; Hoge et al., 2013; Mehr & Adams, 2016; Neff et al., 2005). Research conducted in a

controlled laboratory environment revealed that elevated levels of SC served as a protective barrier against anxiety when individuals faced threats to their ego (Neff et al., 2007).

At a physiological level, increased SC can alleviate emotional distress, such as self-criticism and rumination (Ceccarelli et al., 2019). This is significant not only because music performance relies on finely honed motor skills but also because of the emotional strain caused by MPA, which can lead to various physiological symptoms, including an elevated heart rate, hyperventilation, trembling, and dry mouth (Kenny, 2011).

Research on SC among college-level music majors is limited. Only a few studies have examined the relationship between SC and MPA. The results of a 2019 study by Kelley and Farley (2019) did not find a significant relationship between SC and MPA, nor did it identify SC as a significant factor in MPA. However, the lack of precision in measuring MPA may explain the lack of significance in its relationship with SC (Kelley & Farley, 2019). Meanwhile, a study by Sigurðardóttir (2020) found a correlation between MPA and OI, one of the aspects of SC (Sigurðardóttir, 2020). Another study by Kelley and Farley (2023), explored the relationship between SC and MPA, revealing a strong negative correlation between these two constructs. In the study, the analysis of specific components of SC highlighted SK (along with its negative counterpart, SJ) as a distinct predictor of MPA (Farley & Kelley, 2023). Overall, the relationship between MPA and SC in college-level music majors remains underexplored and necessitates further examination. Most existing studies have been conducted in Western contexts, with limited empirical evidence from non-Western populations such as China. This limits the generalizability of current findings and highlights a significant contextual research gap. Addressing this gap is important for advancing cross-cultural understanding within music psychology and contributes to broader discussions in the social sciences regarding emotional regulation and psychological well-being in educational settings. Therefore, this study investigates the relationship between self-compassion and MPA within the Chinese higher music education context.

This study aims to examine the relationship between SC and MPA among undergraduate music students in Shanxi Province, China, with the following research hypotheses:

1. **Hypothesis 1:** There is a significant relationship between SC, including its elements and their negative counterparts, and MPA;
2. **Hypothesis 2:** There are significant gender differences in MPA among undergraduate music students in Shanxi, China.

Methods

Participants

Data were collected using a questionnaire distributed to undergraduate music students at two universities ($n = 322$) in Jinzhong City, Shanxi Province, China. A total of 283 samples ($n = 283$) were included in the analysis, while those who did not complete the study were excluded. Data on SC and MPA with absolute values exceeding three (3) standard deviations were also excluded (Hair et al., 2010). This is in line with Hair et al. (2010)'s suggestion that "observations with standardized scores greater than 3 or less than -3 should be considered outliers and may be excluded from the analysis". A total of 39 samples were excluded. The sample comprised 89 males and 194 females, including 111 instrumental music

students and 172 vocal music students. The mean age of participants was 19.19 (SD = 1.21), with an age range of 18 to 23 years.

Instruments

Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory-Revised (K-MPAI-R) Scale

MPA was evaluated using the Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory-Revised (K-MPAI-R) Scale (Kenny, 2009), a 40-item questionnaire rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The K-MPAI-R has been translated into 22 languages (Kenny, 2023). with the Chinese version considered highly reliable (Kenny, 2023; Lin, 2019).As such, this instrument was deemed suitable for the study.

The K-MPAI-R (2009) has demonstrated strong internal reliability and validity (Kenny, 2011), with eight dimensions as follows:

1. **Proximal somatic anxiety and worry about performance:** This dimension evaluates the physical symptoms and concerns that musicians experience before or during a performance. Symptoms may include increased heart rate, sweating, and trembling. High scores suggest a significant level of physical anxiety and worry associated with performing.
2. **Worry/dread (negative cognitions) focused on self/other scrutiny:** This dimension addresses the negative thoughts and ruminations musicians experience in evaluating themselves or worrying about being judged by others. Concerns may include fears of making mistakes, being judged negatively, and excessive preoccupation with others' opinions. High scores indicate significant anxiety regarding self and others' scrutiny during performances.
3. **Depression/hopelessness (psychological vulnerability):** This dimension evaluates the feelings of depression and despair that musicians may experience in performance situations. It encompasses doubts about success, feelings of helplessness, and a pessimistic outlook. High scores indicate significant depression and psychological vulnerability in performance contexts.
4. **Parental empathy:** This dimension assesses the degree of understanding and support that musicians receive from their parents regarding their emotional and performance anxiety. High scores indicate that the musician's parents provided substantial emotional support and understanding throughout their upbringing.
5. **Memory:** This dimension addresses memory during performances, encompassing memory accuracy, fear of forgetting, and the capacity to maintain memory under stress. High scores indicate considerable concerns about memory retention during performances.
6. **Generational transmission of anxiety:** This dimension assesses the transmission of anxiety within the family, including a consideration of whether parents or family members share similar experiences of performance anxiety. High scores suggest a significant generational transmission of anxiety within the musician's family.
7. **Anxious apprehension:** This dimension measures the anticipatory anxiety musicians experience regarding future performance situations, including fears of potential mistakes, criticism, or failure. High scores indicate elevated levels of anxious apprehension regarding future performances.
8. **Biological vulnerability:** This dimension assesses whether musicians have a biological predisposition to anxiety, including genetic factors and a sensitive nervous system. High scores reflect a greater susceptibility to anxiety at the biological level (Kenny, 2011).

Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)

SC was assessed using Neff (2003a) 's 26-item Self-Compassion Scale (SCS), which is recognized as a reliable and valid tool for evaluating both the overall construct of SC and its six components (Neff et al., 2017). The scale employs a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). SC is understood as a two-sided continuum extending from Un-Compassionate Self-responding (UCS), characterized by SJ, IS, and OI, to Compassionate Self-responding (CS), which includes SK, CH, and MF. Prior to calculating an overall SC score, it was necessary to reverse the scores of the UCS subscale. After this adjustment, a composite mean score of all six subscales could be computed (Neff, 2023). The SCS has been translated into at least 22 languages (Neff et al., 2021). with the Chinese version demonstrating strong reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.84 and a test-retest reliability of 0.89. This version is therefore deemed suitable for assessing SC among Chinese college students (Chen et al., 2011).

Procedure

The research proposal was approved by the University Putra Malaysia Ethic Committee for Research Involving Human Subject prior to the commencement of the study and research subject recruitment; the reference number of the ethical approval was JKEUPM-2023-1413.

Participants were recruited from the music departments of two universities in Shanxi, China and surveyed using the online survey software Wen Juan Xing (WJX). The survey's homepage provided information about the study's purpose and the confidentiality of personal data. This survey includes demographic information (age, gender, instruments played, and institution), as well as the K-MPAI-R and the SCS. The 20-minute online questionnaire was distributed to students by lecturers at each university via student chat groups on the WeChat messaging application. Upon completion and submission, the data collected through the questionnaire were sent to SPSS for processing.

No data or participants in this manuscript have been published previously, wholly or in part, and there is no overlap with prior publications.

Statistical Data analysis

IBM SPSS software was used to conduct statistical data analysis of the survey results. Initially, descriptive statistical analyses were conducted on all items within each scale to assess normality. Following this, reliability analyses were carried out on the SCS and the K-MPAI-R Scale to evaluate their internal consistency. To further explore the relationships between variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the association between SC and MPA. Subsequently, linear regression analysis was employed to investigate whether the individual components of SC could significantly predict MPA. Finally, an independent samples t-test was utilized to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in MPA mean values between genders.

Results

Descriptive statistical analysis was first performed on all items in each scale to test for normality and confirm that the data adhered to a normal distribution. The absolute skewness values for both scales were less than 1, while the absolute kurtosis values were less than 2,

indicating a normal distribution of the SC and MPA data gathered using the SCS and the K-MPAI-R instruments. Reliability analysis indicated that the survey responses exhibited high internal consistency across the K-MPAI-R and SCS, with a Cronbach's alpha of .90 and .76, respectively.

Table 1

Correlation between Self-Compassion (SC) and Music Performance Anxiety (MPA)*

Variable	1	2	3	4
Music Performance Anxiety (MPA)	-			
Self-Compassion (SC)	-.406**	-		
Compassionate Self-responding (CS)	-.013	.588**	-	
Un-Compassionate Self-responding (UCS)	.438**	-.472**	.436**	-

* SC here is a composite mean score of SC, CS, and UCS, as explained earlier

** $p < .01$

A significant negative correlation was found between SC and MPA ($r = -.406$, $p < .01$) (see Table 1). This indicates that participants with high SC levels also tended to report low MPA levels. The positive dimensions of SC did not exhibit a significant correlation with MPA, whereas the negative dimensions showed a positive correlation with MPA ($r = .438$, $p < .01$).

Table 2

Correlation between the components of Self-Compassion (SC) and Music Performance Anxiety (MPA)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Music Performance Anxiety (MPA)	-						
Self-Judgment (SJ)	.376**	-					
Isolation (IS)	.401**	.727**	-				
Over-Identification (OI)	.429**	.766**	.784**	-			
Common Humanity (CH)	.087	.476**	.400**	.514**	-		
Self-Kindness (SK)	-.078	.337**	.263**	.317**	.719**	-	
Mindfulness (MF)	-.029	.411**	.271**	.334**	.749**	.821**	-

** $p < .01$

Furthermore, as seen in Table 2, the components of SC, namely SJ, IS, and OI, all exhibited moderately positive correlations with MPA, with r values ranging between .376 and .429 ($p < .01$). Among the components of SC, OI displayed the strongest correlation with MPA ($r = .429$). Notably, SC showed a stronger correlation with MPA compared to its individual components, except for OI.

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, Hypothesis 1 is partially supported by the data. The total scale of SC demonstrates a significant correlation with MPA; however, not all subscales of SC exhibited significant correlations with MPA.

Table 3

Regression analysis for Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) data

D V	IV	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	R ²	Durbin-Watson
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
M P A	(Constant)	2.168	.167		12.99	.000	1.840	2.497		.254	1.899
	CH	.007	.072	.008	.093	.926	-.134	.147	2.985		
	SK	-.181	.078	-.222	2.29	.029	-.335	-.028	3.363		
	MF	-.036	.078	-.047	.461	.645	-.189	.117	3.858		
	SJ	.128	.080	.142	1.600	.111	-.030	.286	2.927		
	IS	.110	.074	.132	1.487	.138	-.036	.256	2.910		
	OI	.251	.083	.298	3.015	.003	.087	.414	3.616		

Note. CH: Common Humanity; SK: Self-Kindness; MF: Mindfulness; SJ: Self-Judgment; IS: Isolation; OI: Over-Identification

Regression analysis was performed to investigate the best predictors of MPA. As shown in Table 3, the VIF remained below 5, indicating the absence of collinearity issues among the dimensions of SC. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.899 suggested independence in the dataset without autocorrelation. The R-squared value of .254 indicated that each dimension of SC moderately explained variations in MPA. SK and OI significantly predicted MPA. SK showed a significant negative correlation with MPA, with a 95% BCa CI [-.335, -.028], $p < .05$. Meanwhile, OI displayed a significant positive correlation with MPA, with a 95% BCa CI [.087, .414], $p < .05$. The standardized coefficients for SK (Beta = -.222) and OI (Beta = .298) indicated that OI was more predictive of MPA, followed by SK. Specifically, for each standard deviation increase in SK, MPA decreased by .222 standard deviations, and for each unit increase in SK, MPA decreased by .181 units. For each standard deviation increase in OI, MPA increased by .298 standard deviations, and for each unit increase in OI, MPA increased by .251 units.

Table 4

Independent sample t-test on Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) between genders

	t-test for Equality of Means				Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference				
MPA	.127	281	.899	.01	1 female	194	2.90	.678
					2 male	89	2.89	.682

Table 4 presents the t-test results for gender on MPA. A p-value greater than .05 ($P > .05$) indicates that among undergraduate music students aged 18 to 23 in Shanxi, China, there were no significant differences in MPA between males and females. These findings do not support Hypothesis 2.

Discussion

Analysis of the data indicated a moderate negative relationship between SC and MPA. Respondents who reported high SC levels also had a lower likelihood of experiencing MPA. However, the study found no significant negative correlation between MPA and the positive components of SC. Instead, there was a positive correlation between MPA and the negative components of SC. These findings resonate with a study in Iceland, where OI was found to be the component of SC most strongly correlated with MPA (Sigurðardóttir, 2020). Thus, the results suggest that over-identifying with one's thoughts and emotions during performances is the SC component that most increases MPA (Blackie & Kocovski, 2018; Mosewich et al., 2013; Reis et al., 2015; Smeets et al., 2014).

Given the significant correlation observed between SC and MPA, it would be particularly interesting to explore whether the subscales of SC could serve as predictors of MPA. As shown in Table 3, results of the regression analysis suggest the predictive ability of the SC subscales on MPA. Specifically, the analysis of SC components identified SK and OI as predictors of MPA. This indicates that these aspects of SC may influence how musicians experience MPA. Recent research in social psychology indicates that SC can be improved using clinical and individual interventions (Ferrari et al., 2019). Therefore, those involved in designing and adapting interventions to help address symptoms of MPA may focus on SK and OI as a strategy.

SK can manifest through certain behaviors evident in self-talk (Farley & Kelley, 2023). These results imply that interventions focusing on fostering positive self-talk to reinforce SK could potentially mitigate the adverse effects of MPA among musicians. There is ample evidence that modifying self-talk is a successful strategy for enhancing performance among athletes, for example (Mosewich et al., 2013; Reis et al., 2015). Likewise, recent studies have shown that adaptations of this type of acceptance therapy can also effectively enhance music performance and foster practice habits more conducive to a positive training experience (Hatfield, 2016).

A practical approach to developing SK and addressing OI includes interventions that enhance all three elements of SC: SK, CH, and MF. For example, a study published in 2021 found that even targeting just one component of SC resulted in improvements across all components in post-intervention evaluations (Dreisörner et al., 2021). Therefore,

interventions that holistically enhance SC in musicians may help alleviate the psychological symptoms associated with MPA.

Considering the overall strength of the SC score is essential for understanding its implications on MPA. Results in this study demonstrate that the composite SC score, rather than the individual component scores, correlates more strongly with MPA, except for OI. This finding supports the use of composite mean scores (Neff & Germer, 2017) and suggests that addressing overall SC may be more effective in reducing MPA than concentrating on individual aspects alone.

Existing research has consistently indicated that women tend to experience significantly higher levels of MPA compared to men (Dobos et al., 2019; Jónsdóttir, 2010; Kenny et al., 2014; Orejudo et al., 2017; Sigurðardóttir, 2020; Sulun et al., 2017). However, some studies have reported no statistically significant gender differences in MPA levels (Paliuokiene et al., 2018; Robson & Kenny, 2017). Similarly, this study's findings revealed no significant difference in MPA between male and female participants. This finding contributes to the ongoing debate regarding gender differences in performance anxiety, suggesting that contextual and cultural factors may play a more substantial role than gender alone in shaping MPA experiences, particularly within collectivist educational environments.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, like numerous prior studies in this domain, it utilized a cross-sectional design reliant on self-reported data. Secondly, the study sample consisted of undergraduate music students in China, which raises uncertainty regarding the potential influences of cultural differences on the study outcomes. College students from cultures where Buddhism is prevalent tend to exhibit more self-compassion than their peers in more individualistic societies (Neff, 2003b). Future researchers investigating how self-compassion relates to performance anxiety should consider cultural and situational differences when examining these two constructs. Finally, the relationship between the two warrants further investigation in groups beyond undergraduate music students. From a broader social science perspective, these findings reinforce the importance of examining internal psychological resources, such as self-compassion, as modifiable factors in performance-related anxiety, aligning with contemporary research trends emphasizing resilience and well-being in educational settings (Ferrari et al., 2019; Tavares et al., 2024).

Conclusions

In summary, if the correlation between SC and MPA remains consistent across diverse groups, employing self-compassion techniques could serve as a valuable strategy for alleviating symptoms of MPA. This approach may benefit all musicians or specific groups where a strong correlation is observed, as demonstrated in this study. SK and OI were identified as the key predictors of MPA in the analysis of SC components. Further investigation could reveal how SC, whether as a tool or practice, might mitigate the debilitating effects of MPA. The established association between SC and MPA suggests the potential for interventions centered on the concept and practice self-compassion, particularly focusing on SK and OI, to aid musicians in managing their experiences of MPA. Recommend future studies using longitudinal or randomized controlled trials to determine whether increasing SC can actually reduce MPA over time. Such approaches would further strengthen causal interpretations and respond to ongoing methodological discussions within the social sciences

regarding the need for more rigorous intervention-based research designs. Importantly, this study provides meaningful implications for music educators, curriculum designers, and higher education institutions by demonstrating that psychological resources such as self-compassion can be systematically incorporated into music training. From an educational perspective, these findings suggest that fostering self-compassion in music training may help students better cope with MPA. Embedding strategies such as self-kindness into music pedagogy could support both students' well-being and their artistic development. Therefore, the present study not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of MPA and self-compassion but also offers practical value in enhancing teaching practices and student support systems within undergraduate music education. By examining the association between self-compassion and MPA, this study provides empirical evidence of their relationship and highlights the potential value of incorporating psychological resources into music education.

Abbreviations

MPA: Music Performance Anxiety

SAD: Social Anxiety Disorder

GAD: Generalized Anxiety Disorder

SC: Self-Compassion

K-MPAI-R: Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory-Revised

SCS: Self-Compassion Scale

SK: Self-Kindness

CH: Common Humanity

MF: Mindfulness

SJ: Self-Judgment

IS: Isolation

OI: Over-Identification

CS: Compassionate Self-responding

UCS: Un-Compassionate Self-responding

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