

Examining Self-Efficacy, Fear of Failure and Performance Anxiety in Theatre Artists and Musicians

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ABSTRACT

Background: In the performing arts, performance anxiety, fear of failure, and self-efficacy are important factors that influence the experiences and results of musicians and theatre professionals. Gaining an understanding of these psychological concepts is essential to improving the wellbeing of performers and maximizing their creative output. Performing artists, including theatre artists and musicians, often face challenges related to self-efficacy, fear of failure, and performance anxiety. These psychological factors can significantly impact their creative process and overall performance quality. This study aims to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy, fear of failure, and performance anxiety in theatre artists and musicians. It seeks to understand how these factors influence creative expression, artistic performance, and overall well-being within these highly demanding fields.

Methodology: A quantitative method is employed, utilizing validated scales to measure self-efficacy, fear of failure, and performance anxiety in a sample of theatre artists and musicians. Statistical analyses, such as correlation and multiple regression, will be used to investigate the relationships between these variables.

Results: The findings of the study reveal that there is no significant correlation between self-efficacy levels and the severity of performance anxiety among theatre artists and musicians. However, a notable impact of fear of failure on both self-efficacy and performance anxiety is observed among participants in these artistic disciplines. This underscores the complex nature of psychological factors influencing creative performance in the performing arts.

Conclusions: Further studies in these populations across different settings are needed to validate the findings of the study.

Keywords: self-efficacy, performance anxiety, fear of failure, theatre artists, musician

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INTRODUCTION

In the performing arts, performance anxiety, fear of failure, and self-efficacy are important factors that influence the experiences and results of musicians and theatre professionals. Gaining an understanding of these psychological concepts is essential to improving the wellbeing of performers and maximizing their creative output [1].

Self-efficacy is the idea that one can carry out the actions required to achieve performance goals on one's own. The belief that one can influence their own motivation, actions, and social surroundings is reflected in self-efficacy [2]. Self-efficacy in the performing arts influences artists' confidence, resilience in the face of adversity, and the quality of their performances. Artists that possess a high level of self-efficacy can take on demanding tasks, explore cutting edge artistic mediums, and thrive in the competitive entertainment industry [3].

Fear of failure is a prevalent and potent emotional experience that can have a significant impact on people's life in a variety of ways. It describes the fear or worries associated with not living up to expectations, making

mistakes, or accomplishing objectives. This dread may be caused by demands from within, expectations from society, rejection, or criticism in the past, or a need for perfection [4].

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes like increased blood pressure. Although the terms anxiety and fear are not the same, they are frequently used synonymously. While fear is a suitable, present-oriented, transient reaction to a clearly defined threat, anxiety is thought of as a future-oriented, long-acting reaction centred on a diffuse threat [4].

Actors in the theatre may experience anxiety due to stage fright, difficulty remembering lines, or fear of being judged by the audience or critics. Physical symptoms like sweating, shaking, and a fast pace may accompany anxiety, but it can also manifest as psychological symptoms such as self-doubt and negative self-talk. Equally, performers may experience nervousness when performing in front of crowds, auditioning, or during recording sessions. Fear of mistakes, pressure to perform well on oneself, and concerns about the public image can all contribute to heightened anxiety. Before and during a performance, musicians may experience physical symptoms like muscle tension, hand tremors, and stomach upset.

Performing arts are arts such as music, dance and theatre that are performed for an audience. They are distinct from visual arts, which involve the use of paint, canvas, or various materials to create artistic or static objects. Performing arts include a range of subjects performed before an audience, including drama, music, and dance. Drama, music, dance, object manipulation, and other forms of performance are present in all human cultures.

The United States Employment Service states that the term "musician" is used to refer to someone who pursues music as a career. Musicians might be conductors who oversee a musical performance, performers who play for an audience, or songwriters who write both the music and lyrics for songs. A musician who plays an instrument or a vocalist who sings is typically referred to as a music performer. Musicians can play solo or in ensembles like bands or orchestras. Even though many musicians perform a wide range of styles based on their cultures and experiences, performers might specialize in one musical genre.

According to Mehr and others, music is a ubiquitous form of expression and communication that is widely used by individuals of all ages and cultural backgrounds worldwide. While listening to music is a fun pastime in and of itself, its impact extends beyond light entertainment [5]. Daker and others [6], highlight the intricate connection between creativity anxiety, creative performance, and state-level anxiety during creative processes. They note that moderate anxiety can enhance motivation and focus, but high anxiety may lead to cognitive rigidity and fear of failure, limiting creativity. Effective management of anxiety levels is crucial for optimizing creative output across various contexts. The interplay of optimism, self-efficacy, perfectionism, and performance anxiety significantly impacts students' performance across various fields, including the performing arts. High performance anxiety can hinder students from effectively showcasing their skills. Moreover, perfectionism can elevate anxiety due to fear of errors or not meeting personal standards. Conversely, students with a positive outlook and strong self-belief can better manage anxiety and perform well [7]. A positive link between performing artists' self-efficacy and subjective well-being, highlighting how self-belief influences happiness and satisfaction in artistic pursuits. They emphasize autonomy, mastery, social support, and meaningful participation as key factors contributing to artists' well-being [8]. Immersive theatre experiences encourage individuals to explore different roles, perspectives, and engage in group storytelling, fostering creativity, problem-solving skills, and proactive life improvement [9].

Research Gap

Although many studies focus on self-efficacy, fear of failure, and performance anxiety in dance and music artists, there is a significant gap in research when it comes to theatre artists and musicians. Furthermore, these three variables have not been studied together in this specific population (that I found). This gap highlights the need for a comprehensive examination of how self-efficacy, fear of failure, and performance anxiety intersect and influence theatre artists and musicians, providing valuable insights into their psychological well-being and performance outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

To examine how self-efficacy levels relate to performance anxiety severity & how fear of failure affects self-efficacy and performance anxiety among theatre artists and musicians.

Research Design

The study is done using Correlational Study to explore the relationship between self-efficacy levels and the severity of performance anxiety among theatre artists and musicians.

Sample and Technique

The 200 participants included in this study are theatre artists, musicians, students ages 18 to 30 years old, who participate in the theatre or music events. All participants involved in the study volunteered to complete the inventory. They were given a questionnaire to fill and then were screened on the basis of the results of the questionnaire. The sampling technique used was the Convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where units are chosen for the sample based on their accessibility to the researcher.

Inclusion Criteria: Theatre artists and musicians actively engaged in their respective fields for more than 6 months between the age of 18-30 years.

Exclusive Criteria: Artists who may not have sufficient experience or exposure to performance-related challenges and not currently involved in theatre or music performances, such as retired artists or those on extended breaks.

Tools for the study

1. **Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI):** The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI) is a self-report 25 items questionnaire developed by Conroy, Willow, and Metzler [10] to assess fear of failure in performance contexts among theatre artists and musicians. The PFAI has shown good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.82 to 0.88 in different studies. This indicates that the items in the inventory consistently measure the same underlying construct of fear of failure. The construct validity of the PFAI is supported by its ability to accurately capture fear of failure experiences specific to performance domains, as evidenced by significant correlations with related constructs in validation studies.
2. **Performance Anxiety Inventory (PAI) for Musicians:** The Performance Anxiety Inventory (PAI) for Musicians is a comprehensive tool developed by Nagel and others [11]. The Performance Anxiety Inventory (PAI) for musicians based on the STAI. There is no specific performance anxiety test for theatre actors/performers within the research. It has 20-item questionnaire with scores ranging from 20 to 80 (higher scores indicating higher anxiety). It helps identify performers with low anxiety (score ≤ 39) and recommends intervention strategies for scores ≥ 55 . The inventory considers cognitive, behavioural, and physiological components of anxiety.
3. **General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE):** The construct of Perceived Self-Efficacy reflects an optimistic self-belief [12] across various domains using 10 items. It predicts coping with daily hassles and adaptation after stressful events. The scale's reliability (Cronbach's alpha: 0.76 to 0.90) and validity are supported by associations with psychological well-being and adaptive coping strategies.

Procedure

The questionnaire chosen will be circulated as google forms through various social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram. The google form was also circulated in social groups related to performing arts, in workshops conducted by few theatres' artists & through the help of drama and music therapists. The Google form includes a consent form and a form to collect their demographic details along with the three questionnaires using Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI), Performance Anxiety Inventory

(PAI) for Musicians and General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE). After the data collection, the scoring for each scale will be carried out and followed by analysis of results the discussion, implementation, and conclusion.

Data Analysis

To examine the relationships between self-efficacy, fear of failure, and performance anxiety among theatre artists and musicians, the following statistical analyses will be employed:

Pearson Correlation Analysis: Pearson correlation analysis, named after its developer Karl Pearson, is a statistical technique used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. Pearson correlation analysis will be conducted to assess the strength and direction of linear relationships between variables. Specifically, correlations will be computed to examine the associations between: Self-efficacy and performance anxiety. Interpretation of correlation coefficients will provide insights into the magnitude and significance of these relationships, guiding further analyses and interpretations.

Multiple Regression Analysis: Multiple regression analysis is a statistical method used to analyse the relationship between a dependent variable and two or more independent variables. Multiple regression analysis will be used to explore the influence of fear of failure on self-efficacy and performance anxiety. This analysis aims to understand how variations in fear of failure predict variations in both self-efficacy and performance anxiety simultaneously.

RESULTS

The current study on Examining Self-Efficacy, Fear of Failure & Performance Anxiety In Theatre Artist And Musicians aims to assess the relationship and impact between self-efficacy, fear of failure & performance anxiety among theatre & music artists. It was hypothesized that i) there is no significant relationship between self-efficacy levels and the severity of performance anxiety among theatre artists and musicians, ii) there is a significant impact of fear of failure on self-efficacy & performance anxiety among theatre artists & musicians. The data analysis primarily involved the Pearson correlation and Multiple Regression on normality testing which showed that the data was normally distributed.

Table 1: Shows the Correlations Analysis between self-efficacy and performance anxiety

	N	Mean	Sd	1
Self-efficacy	200	28.69	4.82	-
Performance anxiety	200	29.00	17.64	.083

$p > 0.05$

Table 1 shows the Mean, standard deviation and correlation of Self- efficacy and Performance anxiety. Self- efficacy has a mean of 28.69 and standard deviation of 4.82, while performance anxiety has a mean of 29.00 and standard deviation of 17.64. For self-efficacy and performance anxiety, the correlation coefficient is found out to be 0.083 which is not significant at 0.05 level. Thus, the hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between self-efficacy levels and the severity of performance anxiety among theatre artists and musicians is accepted. These findings suggest that self-efficacy alone may not be a strong predictor of performance anxiety in this population, and other factors may play a more significant role in influencing anxiety levels during performances.

Table 2, which shows the results of a multiple regression analysis with Fear of Failure as the dependent variable and Performance Anxiety and Self-Efficacy as independent variables. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for Performance Anxiety is 0.39, indicating that for each unit increase in Performance Anxiety, there is a corresponding increase of 0.39 units in Fear of Failure, holding other variables constant. The unstandardized coefficient for Self-Efficacy is -0.212, suggesting that for each unit increase in Self-Efficacy, there is a decrease of 0.212 units in Fear of Failure, holding other variables constant. The standardized coefficient (Beta) for Performance Anxiety is 0.032 and for Self-Efficacy is 0.116. The overall model's F-value is 76.549, with a significant p-value of 0.000, indicating that the model as a whole is

statistically significant in predicting Fear of Failure. The R-square value (R^2) of 0.432 indicates that approximately 43.2% of the variance in Fear of Failure can be explained by the combined influence of Performance Anxiety and Self-Efficacy in the model. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.437 suggests a moderate positive correlation between the independent variables (Performance Anxiety and Self-Efficacy) and the dependent variable (Fear of Failure). Thus, the hypothesis that states there is a significant impact of fear of failure on self-efficacy & performance anxiety among theatre artists & musicians. Thus, the findings suggest that both Performance Anxiety and Self-Efficacy play a significant role in predicting Fear of Failure among the study participants, with Self-Efficacy showing a stronger influence.

Table 2: Showing multiple regression of Performance Anxiety, Self-efficacy, Fear of Failure

Variable	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardized coefficients	Model summary
	B	Std. Error	BETA	
Performance anxiety	0.39	0.032	0.662	F= 76.549 T=12.347 -1.831 P= .000 R= 0.437 R ² = 0.432
Self -efficacy	-0.212	0.116	-0.098	

Dependent variable- fear of failure

DISCUSSION

The results of the correlational analysis between self-efficacy and performance anxiety. It is notable that the relationship between self-efficacy levels and the severity of performance anxiety among theatre artists and musicians was found to be non-significant. Thus, the hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between self-efficacy levels and the severity of performance anxiety among theatre artists and musicians is accepted. This finding aligns with previous research, such as McQuade's investigation [7] which has no significant relationships among performance anxiety, perfectionism, optimism, and self-efficacy in student performers. McQuade's study sheds light on the multifaceted nature of performance-related psychological states, suggesting that while self-efficacy is an important factor, it operates within a broader context of variables that influence performance anxiety. The study's findings emphasize the importance of considering a range of factors, including external interventions, coping mechanisms, and cognitive strategies, in addressing performance anxiety effectively. It emphasizes the dynamic nature of performance anxiety, acknowledging that anxiety levels can fluctuate based on situational demands, audience expectations, and individual experiences. This aligns with the hypothesis that self-efficacy levels alone may not significantly predict the severity of performance anxiety among theatre artists and musicians. Several factors could contribute to this finding. The complexity of performance anxiety itself suggests it's influenced by multiple variables beyond self-efficacy, including situational demands, audience presence, and event significance. Individual differences in coping strategies and cognitive appraisals also play a role, shaping how performers interpret and manage anxiety. External factors like social support, training, and feedback interact with self-efficacy, influencing anxiety experiences. Timing and context of self-efficacy assessments relative to performances further impact observed correlations, highlighting the nuanced nature of these relationships. The results from the multiple regression analysis provide compelling evidence regarding the impact of fear of failure on self-efficacy and performance anxiety among theatre artists and musicians. The hypothesis (Ha2), which posited a significant influence of fear of failure on both self-efficacy and performance anxiety, is supported by the findings. The model's overall significance and R-square value indicate its predictive power, with Fear of Failure variance explained by Performance Anxiety and Self-Efficacy. The moderate positive correlation further supported these findings. Drawing on theoretical foundations, particularly Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory [2], we can justify and explain these findings. This aligns with our

research findings, where higher levels of self-efficacy were associated with lower levels of fear of failure among theatre artists and musicians. In simpler terms, believing in your abilities can help alleviate fears and anxieties, enabling individuals to perform better under pressure and navigate challenges more effectively. The study emphasizes the impact of fear of failure on self-efficacy and performance anxiety; we can infer that fear of failure acts as a catalyst that shapes artists' self-beliefs and emotional responses to performance challenges. The impact of fear of failure can be attributed to various factors: individuals under its influence experience heightened psychological pressure, leading to increased awareness of potential errors and fostering perfectionistic tendencies common among artists, which in turn contributes to elevated levels of performance anxiety and self-criticism. Moreover, fear of failure diminishes performers' self-efficacy beliefs, reducing their confidence in achieving desired outcomes and increasing concerns about meeting expectations and facing criticism. This fear also prompts negative self-evaluation, amplifying self-doubt and exacerbating performance anxiety. Anticipation of criticism from external sources further intensifies anxiety levels, impacting emotional well-being and fostering a pessimistic outlook on performance outcomes. Additionally, fear of failure can lead to cognitive distortions and physical manifestations of anxiety, such as increased heart rate and perspiration, further perpetuating heightened stress during performances.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, examining self-efficacy, fear of failure & performance anxiety in theatre artist and musicians requires a comprehensive approach that considers all the findings mentioned below.

- The study delved into the relationships among self-efficacy, fear of failure, and performance anxiety in theatre artists and musicians.
- Findings revealed that self-efficacy interacts with various factors, including fear of failure, perfectionism, coping strategies, cognitive processes, and external influences, impacting performance anxiety levels.
- Self-efficacy alone is not a sole predictor of performance anxiety; its role is part of a complex interplay of psychological variables.
- The research highlights the intricate dynamics of psychological factors in high-pressure performance environments.
- It underscores the need for comprehensive support systems tailored to address the multifaceted nature of performance-related psychological states among theatre artists and musicians.
- The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the performing arts landscape and advocates for holistic approaches to support performers' mental and emotional well-being.

Limitations

- The study's reliance on self-report measures may introduce response biases, potentially affecting the accuracy of data collected.
- The cross-sectional design of the study limits the establishment of causal relationships between self-efficacy, fear of failure, and performance anxiety.
- Longitudinal research would be beneficial to understand how these psychological states evolve over time and their developmental trajectories.
- The study's sample predominantly consisted of theatre artists and musicians, which may restrict the generalizability of findings to other performing arts disciplines or diverse populations.
- Including a more diverse and representative sample in future research would enhance the external validity of the results.
- The study did not investigate the impact of specific interventions or contextual factors on performance-related psychological states, leaving gaps in understanding the efficacy of intervention strategies in real-world performance settings.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the limitations identified, several avenues for future research are suggested.

- Conduct longitudinal studies to explore causal relationships between self-efficacy, fear of failure, and performance anxiety over time.
- Employ experimental designs to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions like cognitive-behavioral techniques or performance psychology training in reducing performance anxiety.
- Conduct comparative studies across various performing arts disciplines to understand discipline-specific factors influencing performance-related psychological states.
- Utilize qualitative research methods such as interviews or focus groups to delve deeper into performers' subjective experiences and coping strategies.

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