

Characterization of the Music Admission Requirements and Evaluation of the Relationship among Motivation and Performance Achievement

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Abstract : The music teaching is oriented towards offering formal music training. Due to its specificities, this vocational program starts at a very young age. Although provided by the State, the offer is limited to 6 schools throughout the country, which means that the vacancies for prospective students are very limited every year. It is therefore crucial that these vacancies be taken by especially motivated children grown within households that offer the ideal setting for success. Some of the instruments used to evaluate musical performance are highly sensitive to specific previous training, what represents a severe validity problem for testing children who have had restricted opportunities for formal training. Moreover, these practices may be unfair because, for instance, they may not reflect the candidates' music aptitudes. Based on what constitutes a prerequisite for making an excellent music student, researchers in this field have long argued that motivation, task commitment, and parents' support are as important as ability. Thus, the aim of this study is: (1) to prepare an inventory of admission requirements in Australia, Portugal and Ireland; (2) to examine whether the candidates to music conservatories and parents' level of motivation, assessed at three evaluation points (i.e., admission, at the end of the first year, and at the end of the second year), correlates positively with the candidates' progress in learning a musical instrument (i.e., whether motivation at the admission may predict student musicianship); (3) an adaptation of an existing instrument to assess the motivation (i.e., to adapt the items to the music setting, focusing on the motivation for playing a musical instrument). The inclusion criteria are: only children registered in the administrative services to be evaluated for entrance to the conservatory will be accepted for this study. The expected number of participants is fifty (5-6 years old) in all the three frequency schemes: integrated, articulated and supplementary. Revisiting musical admission procedures is of particular importance and relevance to musical education because this debate may bring guidance and assistance about the needed improvement to make the process of admission fairer and more transparent.

Keywords : music learning, music admission requirements, student's motivation, parent's motivation

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