

## THE FIELD OF PROFESSIONAL SKILL AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE GENERAL DISPOSITION OF THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF A MUSICIAN-PERFORMER

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**Abstract:** In the article, an attempt is made to outline the field of professional skills in frames of the effectiveness of professional training of musicians-performers. The pilot experiment aimed at researching the field of professional skills of university students and teachers, as well as performers who have experience both in concert and teaching activities is described. The results of experiment are presented and discussed, showing what qualities are professionally important for musicians-performers for the successful mastering of the profession and further work in a professional environment. Moreover, in particular, based on the results of the correlation and factor analysis, the conclusion is made that professional education proceeds as specified by the structure of the field of professional skill.

**Keywords:** artistic education; musician-performer; field of professional skill; dispositions of professional training.

### 1 Introduction

Higher art education is a complex system, which in current conditions requires constant improvement of all its components. All over the world, there is a noticeable tendency of decrease in the quality of higher education against the background of its "massiveness", which leads to the leveling of the level of training of specialists, that is especially evident in the field of training an "artificial product" - a musician-performer. In connection with the spread and blurring of certain professional boundaries of performing specialties, in order to successfully compete in the labor market, a graduate needs a broader training than it is required by the classic canons of the profession. His set of competencies should include best practice achievements.

In order to increase the effectiveness of a musician-performer professional training, a pilot experiment was conducted, which involved researching the field of professional skills of university students and teachers, as well as performers who have experience not only in concert, but also in teaching in the specified field.

To successfully master the profession and further work in a professional corporate environment, a musician-performer needs certain qualities that are professionally important for this specialty.

The problem of determining professionally important personality qualities is not new for psychological and pedagogical sciences. The works of such scientists as E. Zeyer, E. Klimov, A. Luk, S. Rubinstein, B. Teplov, V. Shadrikov, etc. are the theoretical and methodological foundations of research in this field. Of particular importance are the pedagogical systems of K. Stanislavskyi and M. Chekhov, which pursue the same result, but achieve it in different ways. There are also country specifics. In particular, in Ukraine, for objective reasons, the system of K. Stanislavsky is better known and widespread, however, in our opinion, the system of M. Chekhov (the path "from external to internal") for musicians-performers as for supporters of the "art of large gesture" can be even more understandable and acceptable.

The works of scientists who studied creative aspects of activity, in particular, B. Olmo, A. Luk, B. Teplov, etc., in the diagnosis of creative abilities are based mainly on the qualities inherent in the specifics of creative work. Analyzing in detail creative qualities from the point of view of thinking abilities, we believe that in the works of these scientists insufficient attention is paid to the social component of personality, which in modern conditions of globalization in all spheres of life significantly impoverishes the palette of qualities necessary for successful professional activity.

### 2 Materials and Methods

Analyzing the above-mentioned scientific fund and taking into account the specifics of the professional activity of musicians-performers, the professionally important qualities of musicians-performers were determined, which formed the basis of the field of their professional skill.

The field of professional skills was investigated using the "formalized interview" method, in which 262 respondents were interviewed. In the questionnaire, the interviewers recorded the following "objective" indicators: gender, age, professional status (student, teacher, artist), region, a sign of "professional gradualism" (origin from a family of creative intelligentsia, from a family of another socio-professional groups). Students, teachers of leading music universities and performing musicians working in all regions of Ukraine (Western, Eastern, Southern, Central, and Kyiv) were interviewed.

Building an adequate sample population model was not the goal of the study, however, the total number of respondents and the quality of filling out the questionnaires allow qualifying the information obtained as reliable for achieving the research goals.

The main purpose of the "pilot" study was to determine the parameters and contours of the field of professional excellence (FPE). In this regard, the following tasks were formulated: 1) to determine the structure of the field of professional expertise (excellence); 2) to reveal its main components in general and for different groups, highlighting their value in the general structure of the field; 3) to find out the general dispositions of professional training.

The basic parameters of the field are determined not only by the set of relevant components, but also by their structure - the relationship of interdependence, and the value that each component has in the structure of the field. This is a kind of "grid" in which the maintenance, establishment, and consolidation of those professional qualities that determine the nature and content of the field of professional skill of a musician-performer take place.

The comparison of FPE with a "grid" and the indication of a limited set of professional qualities are not accidental, since in this case we emphasize that the landscape of FPE contains both a "core" - a defining, root sphere, and a "periphery" - a relatively changing sphere. Separation of the "core" and "periphery" in the structure of the FPE allows recording both relatively stable, fundamental, and changing, situational components of the field. Comparing the value of these parameters in different groups will allow determining the prospects for the development and strengthening of the FPE and the main directions of professional training.

### 3 Results

In order to determine the structure of FPE, future musicians-performers were asked to evaluate on a 10-point scale a set of qualities that characterize the parameters of success and attractiveness of artistic activity, attractiveness of the profession as a whole, motivation of professional activity. The collected primary research material was mathematically and statistically processed: a correlation analysis was conducted and a "tree of connections" was constructed based on the Pearson coefficient (construction of a "tree of connections" - use of graph theory).

Pearson's correlation coefficient is a quantitative indicator that reflects the degree of interdependence between several variables. The higher the value of this coefficient, the more closely related these variables are. Building a "tree of connections" allows visualizing the degree of interdependence, as well as highlighting the "core" zone, that is, the highest value of the

coefficient, and the “periphery” - when the value of the coefficient is relatively small.

To distinguish the “core” and “periphery” of the professional excellence of musicians-performers, the average maximum value of the Pearson coefficient and the median (an indicator reflecting the “middle” of the correlation matrix) were determined. The value of these indicators, respectively, is as follows: average maximum – 53; the median is 32. Establishing these indicators made it possible to statistically distinguish the “core” and “periphery” in the structure of the FPE. “Core” is a sphere with a value of the Pearson coefficient no higher than 53; for “periphery”, it is not lower than 32. Signs that do not satisfy these quantitative parameters were not taken into account (with a few exceptions) during the construction of the “connection tree”.

The result of mathematical and statistical procedures is presented in Fig. 1, showing the structure of the field of professional excellence. The scheme of the “tree of connections” quite clearly represents which qualities form the “core” and which ones belong to “periphery” of professional excellence (see Figure 1).

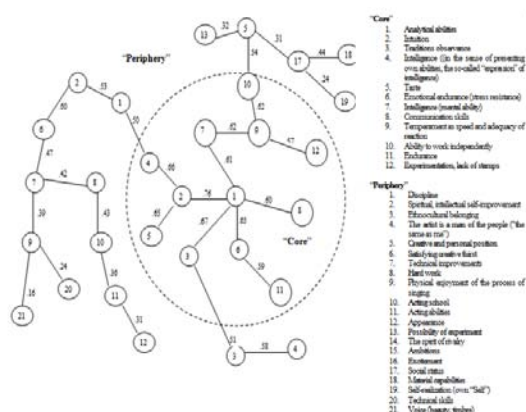


Figure 1. The structure of the field of professional excellence.

The parameters of the core and periphery outlined in the figure are not ranked: they collectively mark the “core” and “periphery” spheres.

As the “tree of connections” shows, the “core” is formed around the qualities that collectively determine the “intelligent” component of FPE. Despite the fact that both “analytical abilities” and “intelligence” are important in the structure of FPE, when we call this “core” as Smart, we do not mean only the mental component of professional skill. It is about the Mind, which:

- Is able to reflect, and not only determine, establishing and controlling already existing norms and rules; the ability to reflect is openness to experimentation, unconventional vision and performance; the ability to reflect is the presence of taste;
- Has taste, that is, is capable of feeling and appreciating what is pleasant or what brings pleasure, what is beautiful or what impresses, what is good; it is the capacity that opens access and measures the transition to consent; the presence of taste, after all, is the basis of sociability;
- Communicates, harmonizing the pleasant, beautiful, and good in itself; coordinates the efforts of communication participants to achieve agreement and understanding;
- Is emotional and adequate in terms of achieving understanding and agreement, but is not neutral and affective; its emotionality is intra-intellectual, i.e., internally characterizes it, and not super-intellectual - external and hysterical;
- Adheres to traditions, not only feeling the basis of native culture, but also the significance of world masterpieces;
- Is hardworking and ready to improve its ability to reflect, communicate, have taste, be passionate, emotional and faithful to national and world masterpieces;
- Is able to self presenting.

In general, it is about a smart “core” as a content-generating instance. Here - in the interweaving of all the qualities outlined above - respect for the profession, professional strength, the content of professional activity are born, that is, professional excellence, which, like a root system, is able to withstand any vicissitudes of fate.

“Periphery”, on the contrary, is not content-generating, but content-derived. Indeed, both technical skills, and acting abilities, and the possibility of self-realization in spiritual and intellectual terms can remain empty qualities if they are not filled with “smart” matter. In a certain sense, the “periphery” is a kind of abstract part of the “core”, which is meaningless without the latter. The pure quality of the “periphery” would be insignificant if it were not activated by matter of the “core”, would not be reactivated in experimentation (that is, in a kind of insatiable curiosity - the desire to make everything relevant as soon as possible), ambitions, excitement, and rivalry. Of course, the existence of a “periphery” without a “core” is impossible. They are complementary: the “core” actualizes creative potential; constituents of the “periphery” are implementers of current professional expertise.

In order to confirm the conclusions regarding the “core” and “periphery”, as well as to detail the idea of the structure of the field of professional excellence, another procedure of mathematical and statistical analysis was implemented - a factor analysis was carried out.

As it is known, factor analysis is a procedure by which a large number of variables are reduced to a smaller number of independent influencing variables called factors. At the same time, one factor includes variables that are closely correlated with each other, while the variables of different factors are weakly related to each other. The purpose of factor analysis is to find such complex factors that could most fully explain the relationships between variables.

Factor analysis was performed with the same data that were previously used in the correlation analysis. During the factor analysis, 4 factors were identified.

Factor 1 is “noematic” (to designate this factor, the ancient Greek word “nus” - mind) is used. This factor unites the components that, according to the results of the correlation analysis, were placed in the “core” of the field of professional excellence.

Factor 2 – “pragmatics”, it characterizes the possibility of use and improvement of professional skills by musicians-performers.

Factor 3 – “affective”: “excitement” and “spirit of competition”, those variables (they have the highest factor load) that determine the content of this factor.

Factor 4 - “personalistic” - is characterized by the need for self-realization of musicians-performers: the affirmation of own “Self”.

Factors 2, 3, 4 actually make up the “periphery” of the field of professional skill. However, the factor analysis made it possible to detail the sphere of the “periphery” to a certain extent by distinguishing the “pragmatic”, “affective”, and “personalistic” zones in the structure of the field of professional excellence of musicians-performers.

Isolated factors, which are nothing more than separately functioning zones in the overall FPE mechanism, are useful in two planes. Firstly, in a theoretical plane, as it opens up the perspective of the study of “professional mentality”; secondly – in practical or pedagogical plane, allowing improving the program of training performers, developing separate, special methods of “strengthening” a particular zone.

The contours of the field of professional excellence outlined above - the separation of the “core”, “periphery”, as well as four zones - make it possible to determine the value of the components of this field in different groups. This analysis allows

not only to determine the strength of the FPE structure, but also to single out the groups responsible for the monolithic nature of the field, as well as to establish a kind of “weak chain” of the field - groups with a rather “loose” structure.

Let us note that the array of data allows reaching statistically justified and correct conclusions only thanks to the comparison of two groups of respondents formed on the basis of their belonging to a certain professional status group: “students” and the group “with experience” (artists, teachers). The volume of the array does not allow drawing statistically justified conclusions, comparing the values of components in student groups of different courses, as well as a similar indicator in groups “with experience” (for example, the difference in the value of teachers and artists). Conclusions may also be ill-founded when comparing groups formed on the basis of regional affiliation.

The procedure for factor analysis involves the division of factor values into percentile groups. Three percentiles were distinguished: “weak”, “medium”, and “strong” value of each factor. Combining each factor with its threefold scale of percentiles with the variable, “professional status groups – “students” and “with experience” (teachers, artists)” obtained the following result: a “strong” value for Factor 1 (“noematic”) and Factor 2 (“pragmatists”) is characteristic of the group “with experience”; “strong” value for Factor 3 (“affective”) is inherent for “students”; “strong” value for Factor 4 (“personalistic”) is equal for the groups “with experience” and for “students”. The conclusion is clearly presented in Figure 2.

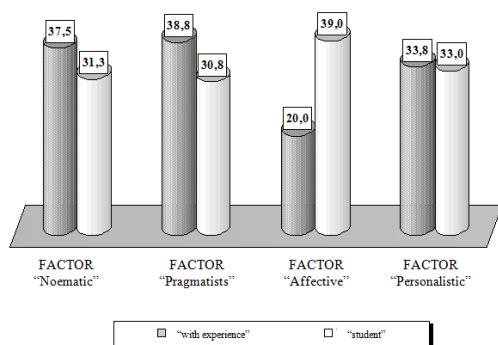


Figure 2. The strong value of the content of factors in different professional status groups (in %)

The conclusion actually indicates that for the “experienced” group, the components that form the “core” of the “professional mentality” and those components of the “periphery” that express the possibility and necessity of improving one’s professional excellence are most important. On the contrary, for “students”, the components that make up the “affective” zone of the “periphery” are of the greatest importance.

If to compare the indices that were calculated as the average value of points (on a 10-point scale) assigned to each component of the FPE, the picture will be similar. Compared to “students”, representatives of the “experienced” group attach more importance to the components that make up the “core” of FPE. For example, the “analytical abilities” index for the group “with experience” equals 7.5 units, and for “students” - 7.0 units; “intelligence”, respectively, is 8.4 and 7.8 units; “rivalry” - 4.8 and 5.8 units; “excitement” - 5.3 and 6.1, etc.

The conclusion about the “looseness” of the “core” in the student group seems banal and frivolous only at first glance. Allegedly, over time, the “core” will become stronger. However, firstly, students of music institutions, as a rule, are not debutants in their profession. They mostly have performance experience and continue to enrich it while learning. The range of questions arises: In the future, when they leave the daily care of their teachers, won’t they consolidate these “peripheral” components as the main ones in the field of professional skill? Secondly,

future musicians-performers are an integral part of the creative musical intelligentsia, while this is active part, adventurous and ambitious. Is the “experienced” part of artists, teachers in modern conditions (social, political, economic) able to cope with the approval of low requirements for professional skill - will the entire field of professional skill be impoverished?

#### 4 Discussion

All the issues outlined above require a separate, detailed and serious study. When answering them, one should keep in mind not only the possibility of reproduction of the so-called group of “musical intelligentsia”, but also talk about the prospects of preserving and developing the intellectual fund of Ukraine.

One of the most important components of the field of professional excellence is professional education. At the same time, it should be emphasized that professional education is not a certain propaedeutics - a process of introduction to the field; and a diploma of relevant education is not a ticket that gives the right to engage in professional activities. Admission to an educational institution and the process of obtaining an education is already a fact of belonging to a professional corporation and, accordingly, being in the field of professional excellence.

Vocational education can be viewed from different perspectives. On the one hand, one can talk about what it is known and what should be known. Here, the process of training professional artists, performers appears in the guise of programs, training courses, and the degree of assimilation of the presented material. On the other hand, attention can be paid to the formation of the ability to know. Indeed, not only the desire and aspiration to enrich own spiritual and intellectual potential and improvement of “technical” characteristics (voice data and acting abilities) is significant, but also the ability to enrich oneself and improve oneself. And another aspect is the explanation of the dispositions of professional education.

We will define the disposition of professional education (DPO) of performing musicians as the structure of instructions for the educational (and self-educational) process. So, analyzing the dispositions of professional education of future musicians-performers, we are dealing with the mechanism (albeit even partial) of self-reproduction of the field in its integrity.

Thus, based on the results of the correlation and factor analysis of the field of professional excellence of a musician-performer, we conclude: *professional education proceeds as it is determined by the structure of the field of professional excellence.*

This position can be confirmed by empirical data. Thus, the respondents were asked to evaluate on a 10-point scale a set of student characteristics that are decisive for successful professional training, as well as different forms of training from the point of view of their effectiveness. The same was offered to teachers and artists. Based on the general theoretical conclusion, it was not unexpected that representatives of the “experienced” group relatively higher evaluate those characteristics that are projections of the “core” components, while “students” per contra – focus on “periphery”.

So, for example, the “intellectual level” characteristic index for the group of performers “with experience” is equal to 9.0 units, for the group of “students” - 8.7 units; “thinking”, “intuition” for the group of performers “with experience” constituted 7.5 units, for “students” - 6.8 units; “flexibility of thinking”, respectively, is 7.6 and 7.3 units; “ability to work independently” - 8.6 and 7.9 units; “ability to “finish” details” (and this is a characteristic of flexibility of thinking, hard work, perseverance, and, to some extent, stress resistance) - 7.8 and 7.2 units.

Representatives of the student group of musicians-performers rate their “appearance” and “acting abilities” higher than their mentors: 6.5 and 6.0 units for the first characteristic; 7.6 and 7.3 units - for the second.

Future musicians-performers believe that “group classes” and learning technical methods are more meaningful forms. We called this form “tapping”. The representatives of the “experienced” group value personal contact with the teacher more and see in the voice, its “technical” perfection a continuation of what we called intelligence.

During the analysis of the forms of professional education, the question arises again about the “looseness” of the “core” “noematic” zone of the field of professional excellence of future musicians-performers, about the prospects of musical and artistic skill, and more broadly - about the fate of professionalism in the environment of the creative intelligentsia.

## 5 Conclusion

Determining the contours of the field of professional excellence, we outlined its “core” and “peripheral” spheres, detailed the picture of the field, distinguishing four zones – “noematic”, “pragmatics”, “affective”, “personalistic”; we set the values of FPE components for different professional status groups, and considered the dispositions of professional education as an integral part of the field of professional excellence.

The statements, which were formulated as conclusions of the content order, regarding the “looseness” of the “core” sphere in the group of “students” and the probability, in connection with this, of dissemination - dispersal of the field, of course require confirmation in further research. However, this does not unify our warnings regarding the prospects for the development of the field of professional excellence, the need to strengthen it. And above all, it is necessary to pay attention to the “core” sphere of the field. After all, the erosion of the foundation, the destruction of the root is not just deprofessionalization, but it is a general lack of prospects for reproduction of professional excellence.

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