



Gender-Specific Socialization Influences on Men's Experience of Art

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Abstract

Fear of femininity, a central part of men's gender identity, might discourage boys from participating in art-related activities from a very young age, as artistic activities have feminine connotations in western culture. The consequence is a gender gap in arts participation. This study went beyond this gap in participation and investigated whether there is also a gender imbalance in the experience of art. In contrast to other studies, this study did not adopt a binary gender approach. Instead, a voluntary sample of 24 men was examined concerning two aspects of a multidimensional model of gender identity: 'perceived pressure for gender conformity' and 'gender typicality'. In a between-subjects correlational study, participants listened to five instrumental songs and shared their thoughts about them in a think-aloud task. This part was conceptualized as an 'art experience'. The responses were coded using cognitive discourse analysis. The more superficial levels of art experience were contrasted with the more profound, meaningful responses to the music, defined as artistic experiences. The results showed that higher masculine felt pressure correlated with less intense artistic experiences and a reduced sharing of self-referential emotions. This demonstrates that masculine felt pressure can also influence the intensity with which men experience art as something meaningful. The study concludes that it is crucial to be aware of gender stereotypes' effects to counteract the consequences for the development of children and young people. Great emphasis should be placed on teaching all children about art and how they can make sense of it.

Keywords: gender roles, multidimensional gender identity, gender conformity pressure, gender typicality, artistic experience, arts participation

Introduction

Being born into the world as a boy or a girl already seems to determine an essential part of a child's identity (e.g., Athenstaedt et al., 2009). Even before birth, many parents have certain expectations of their future son or daughter, assuming a girl to behave femininely and a boy masculinely (Kane, 2006). Society associates the concepts of masculinity and femininity with certain attributes related to appearance, personality traits and values (Kachel et al., 2016). For example, men are expected to hide their feelings and emotions and instead be strong, distant, and dominant (e.g., Hess et al., 2000). Femininity, on the other hand, is associated with emotionally expressive behavior and sensitivity towards others. Children are exposed to these gender stereotypes from a very young age and are influenced by societal expectations of the ideal man and woman (e.g., Perry et al., 2019). As a result, children often already have accurate gender schemas that provide information about typical characteristics of their gender and the other gender (Bem, 1981). These include definitions of typically masculine and feminine leisure activities. Children, therefore, tend to choose their activities according to what fits their own sex schemas (Martin & Halverson, 1981). Correspondingly, research has shown that more girls participate in highbrow culture activities (incl. music, arts, literature, etc.) than men (Bihagen & Katz-Gerro, 2000). This thesis explores the influence of these gender stereotypes and gender schemas on the individual experience of art.

Towards a Multidimensional Model of Gender Identity

It is common for people to experience gender role conflicts as they grow older, where their self-concepts are challenged by society's expectations of them based on their biological sex (e.g., O'Neil et al., 1986). Research has shown that these conflicts are more pronounced in men, with avoidance and fear of femininity often being a central component of men's gender identity (Messerschmidt, 2012). This fear manifests itself in strong negative emotions towards stereotypical feminine behaviors and values, as well as the active suppression of

femininity in one's gender identity (O'Neil et al., 1986). A person's gender identity describes a "complex system of beliefs about the subjective self-concerning masculinity and femininity, maleness and femaleness, and culturally prescribed roles assigned to those categories" (Ault & Brzuzy, 2009, p. 178). Traditional approaches to examining a person's gender identity have been based on their own identification with predefined stereotypical gender characteristics (Liben & Bigler, 2002). However, researchers have argued that stereotypes are subjective, and people differ in what traits and behaviors they would describe as typically feminine or masculine (e.g., Spence, 1993). Additionally, the traditional approach neglects essential cognitive elements that need to be taken into account when assessing a person's gender identity (Egan & Perry, 2001).

Therefore, Egan and Perry (2001) defined a multidimensional model of gender identity consisting of the concepts of perceived gender-typicality, felt pressure for gender conformity and intergroup prejudice. These different aspects of gender identity have been found to differentially predict psychosocial outcomes in children (Egan & Perry, 2001).

Perceived gender typicality is defined as the extent to which one perceives oneself to meet societal expectations of their biological sex. *Felt pressure for gender conformity* describes the pressure to behave and act according to the stereotypical expectations of the two sexes.

Finally, *intergroup prejudice* refers to the attitudes one holds towards the two gender groups, whether it be men or women (Egan & Perry, 2001). This model was extended by Martin et al. (2017) to assess a person's perceived same-gender typicality and other-gender typicality. In line with the idea of including both gender groups in the assessment, Jackson and Bussey (2020) also introduced a measure of felt pressure for gender conformity to one's own gender and the other gender. Although all three aspects of a multidimensional gender identity contain essential information, most attention has been paid to perceived gender typicality and

felt pressure for gender conformity (Perry et al., 2019). These will also be the most important concepts for this thesis.

Felt Pressure for Gender Conformity

Men or women whose gender identities do not conform to the expectations of their social environment often experience difficulties and conflicts in their families, become socially isolated, and feel discriminated against (Ault & Brzuzy, 2009). Therefore, felt pressure for gender conformity is widespread (e.g., Tobin et al., 2010). Studies have shown that this pressure is higher for men than women (Vantieghem & Van Houtte, 2015). This could be due to the finding that typically masculine behavior is more socially acceptable for women than typically feminine behavior is for men (Braun & Davidson, 2017). To illustrate, parents of girls often support and encourage their daughters to participate in masculine typical activities such as competitive sports (Kane, 2006). In contrast, Kane (2002) found that many parents of boys feel responsible for raising their sons to behave masculinely in order to withstand the pressures of society and fit in.

Gender and the Arts

Felt pressure for gender conformity may limit individuals in their participation and preferences in leisure activities. Accordingly, previous research on cultural participation in the United States has found a higher distribution of girls in art, music and dance classes, library visits, concerts and museums (Dumais, 2002). These activities are part of highbrow culture, which has feminine connotations. Masculine felt pressure in men could make it more difficult for them to like but also to engage with highbrow culture (Christin, 2012). This, in turn, could prevent them from developing essential skills such as creativity and self-expression (Lagaert et al., 2017). Linking these findings to the research field of art raises the question of whether the influence of gender roles goes beyond the arts participation gap and also affects the way individuals experience and make sense of art.

Different Layers of Experiencing Art

The study of art reception encompasses numerous theories, definitions, and discussions by a wide range of art theorists. However, they all seem to have one thing in common: Art can be moving and meaningful, even if it has “no immediate or direct value for survival or the satisfaction of basic needs” (Vessel et al., 2012, p.1). Thus, art in any form seems to satisfy a critical need, namely that people can “attribute form and meaning to their experience of life” (Heusden, 2015, p.5). Reviewing approaches from art theorists such as Carbon (2019) and Consoli (2015), art can be experienced on different levels or layers. For example, art perceivers might reduce an artwork, be it music or a painting, solely to its beauty and therefore use only aesthetic descriptors to depict their experience of it. Evaluating an artwork on the basis of the criterion of beauty limits the art reception to the perceptual level; liking or disliking the work is not mediated by knowledge about the artwork (Carroll, 2001). Another way of responding to art is to make sense of it from the perspective of its craft and skill involved in the creation of the work. This type of response would be limited to the technological qualities and utility of a work, which is mainly expected from people with expertise in the arts field (Bullot & Reber, 2013; Hickman, 2005).

On the other hand, art can be experienced and evaluated in a more complex, elaborated, and art-specific way (e.g., Bullot & Reber, 2013). This form of experience, where the perceiver engages with the artwork and tries to make meaning of it on a deeper level, is defined by several terms that seem to explain similar phenomena. Carbon (2019), for example, uses the term 'epiphanizing' to define an artistic experience that triggers deep involvement and the experience of meaning-making processes, and has the power to alter a person's consciousness. Other terms used to describe similar phenomena are 'artistic understanding' or 'top-down' perception (Leder et al., 2004; Bullot & Reber, 2013). On the other hand, terms such as 'processing', 'basic exposure', or 'bottom up' perception are used for

more superficial perception of an artwork (Carbon, 2019; Bulot & Reber, 2013; Leder et al., 2004). How a person experiences art is assumed to be influenced by factors such as personality, expertise, mood, expectation and purpose (Carbon, 2019).

Gender and Experience of Art

Beyond these factors, this thesis aims to take a step forward and explore whether different multidimensional gender identity aspects also play a role in how art is experienced. So far, the influence of gender on the individual experience of art has hardly been studied. One of the few studies that have investigated this relationship was conducted by Tröndle et al. (2014), who examined gender differences in emotional engagement and evaluation of different aspects of artworks in an art museum exhibition. In addition to physical measurements, participants were also asked to complete a survey before and after the exhibition to report on their experiences. The researchers found that women prioritized understanding the art they perceived and being part of the exhibition with all their senses. Furthermore, "women were more often emotionally moved, and they were experiencing the artworks as 'strong' more often" (Tröndle et al., 2014, p. 90). Such responses to art would be classified as artistic experiences, characterized by self-referential mental processing, introspection, memory recall, and more intense emotions (Vessel et al., 2013). However, research lacks explanations for such findings that move away from the binary view of gender toward a multidimensional model of gender identity.

Current Study

The present study was conducted as part of Héctor Gallegos González's (MA, Faculty of Arts) interdisciplinary Ph.D. project on artistic experience and gender identity.¹ It connects

¹ In collaboration with the Psychology department, the project seeks to understand how movement, heart rate, brain activity, appraisals, and meaning-making processes contribute to the experience of digital visual artworks and instrumental music. Predominantly, the research aimed to examine how different levels of gender typicality and felt pressure for gender conformity might influence these experiences to explore when a certain multidimensional gender identity is likely to predict a particular reaction.

the research fields of art perception and gender identity by investigating differences between men with different multidimensional gender identities and their experience of art. More specifically, the study connects participants' scores on perceived gender typicality as well as felt pressure for gender conformity to what types of descriptors they use for sharing their experiences of different instrumental songs. This is done in a think-aloud task, one of a few possible ways to make mental processes explicit (Tenbrink, 2015). It is distinguished between aesthetic, artistic, craft/skill experiential descriptors and the expression of self-referential emotions. The main reason for focusing on individuals who identify as men is that previous research has shown that they experience higher felt pressure for gender conformity (Vantieghem & Van Houtte, 2015). This could influence men's participation in the arts and also their way of experiencing art and talking about their experience. As gender identities develop and change with age, this study also explores possible differences between older men over 50 and younger men between 18 and 25 (Tobin et al., 2010). The instrumental songs were selected to cover a variety of styles, this way, they had the potential to invoke various emotions or meaning-making processes. Ultimately, this thesis deals with the research question: How do men's felt pressure for gender conformity and perceived gender typicality influence their artistic experience, specifically of instrumental music?

Based on research on expressiveness and gender, it is expected that men with higher masculine felt pressure will be less emotionally and artistically expressive when sharing their experiences with the instrumental songs (Chaplin, 2015). They would probably use aesthetic experiential descriptors, which would represent a perceptual experience of art on the basis of liking or disliking, when sharing their thoughts about the songs rather than giving them meaning and sharing self-referential emotions (Vessel et al., 2013). Also, it is hypothesized that masculine pressure is more strongly connected to less intense artistic experience and

emotional expressiveness than male typicality. To our knowledge, this study is the first of its kind and, therefore, exploratory.

Methods

Participants

The present study was conducted among a voluntary response sample of 24 men divided into two different age groups: 14 men were between 18 and 26 years old, and 10 men were 50 years or older. One participant was born female but identified as a man and was therefore included in the analysis. Participants differed in terms of their highest level of education (Secondary education N =10, Bachelor N =10, Master N = 3, Doctorate N =1). Twenty-three participants had a Dutch nationality; one had an Armenian nationality. Inclusion criteria were that their mother tongue had to be Dutch. Participants were made aware of the study through posters in supermarkets and at the university in Groningen or through a Facebook campaign tailored to the respective age groups. Those interested contacted us by email to reserve a time slot at the laboratory and received the information letter for the study. In return for participation, each participant received a compensation of 25 euros.

Materials

For Gallegos González's Ph.D. data collection, the participant's postural sway, heart rate, and brain activity were measured during the study. Thus, they had to wear a polar waistband, a NIRS cap² and were asked to stand on a Wii Balance Board. The participant's speech was recorded through a small lavalier microphone attached to their clothes. The data were recorded simultaneously with the program 'Labstreaminglayer' and afterwards extracted through 'MatLab'.

² NIRS is short for near-infrared spectroscopy and is a non-invasive neuroimaging technique used to measure regions involved in emotion functions (Westgarth et al., 2021). It emits "near-infrared light into the cortex, whereby it is either absorbed, scattered or reflected, and detecting the amount of light which is redirected back towards the skull (Westgarth et al., 2021)

Auditive task with Instrumental Songs

Fifty-nine instrumental songs from the instrumental, experimental, classical, and jazz music sections were randomly downloaded and obtained through the website "Free Music Archive". Afterwards, they were grouped into ten different categories depending on their genres. Finally, two songs were randomly selected from each category. Later, one song had to be removed because it was incompatible with the software 'OpenSesame' used to conduct the study. It was not replaced because these same songs were used in a previous online study by Gallegos González. He wanted to use the same set of stimuli for both projects. Therefore, 19 instrumental songs remained, which are presented in Appendix A. From these, each participant listened to five songs that were randomized with 'OpenSesame'.

Questionnaire

In the second part of the study, the participant had to rate several Likert-scale statements, of which 32 were based on a multifactor adult gender identity scale (MAGIS) by Jackson and Perry (n.d.). Instead of using the original male questionnaire, parts of both the female and male questionnaires were merged into a combined questionnaire suitable for both sexes (Appendix D). This way, a complete perspective on gender identity could be gained. The results could tell us about the participants' female and male typicality and feminine and masculine felt pressure. Seven questions were included for demographics, the participants' artistic interests, and art background, and one attention check question. The questions of the MAGIS were in English because it was a standardized questionnaire.

Self-Perceived Gender Typicality. The MAGIS gave insight into a participant's self-perceived gender typicality through their ratings on how true statements such as "I feel I am more similar to women than to men" were on a 4-point Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". Each participant rated their similarity to male and female peers in 16 statements (8 for female gender typicality and 8 for male gender typicality). Items were

scored such that '1' represented a response of 'Strongly Disagree', '2' corresponded to a 'Disagree', '3' to an 'Agree' and '4' to a 'Strongly Agree'. Four questions had to be scored reversely. The scores were added together, and an average for each subscale was computed. Scores could range between 1 and 4, with higher average scores indicating stronger male or female gender typicality.

Felt pressure for gender conformity. This aspect was measured by participants' ratings on a further 16 statements such as "It would bother me if my friends say I was acting masculine". This way, we could measure how participants anticipated their parents, peers, and themselves would feel if they engaged in typical masculine or feminine behaviors. The scores were computed in the same way as for "Gender Typicality". Again, higher average scores indicated higher feminine felt pressure or masculine felt pressure.

Procedure

The study took place in a laboratory room at the University of Groningen. Data was collected over a period of 25 days. Potential participants were sent the information letter of the experiment for them to make an informed decision on their participation. As the participant arrived at the lab, they signed the informed consent and had another chance to ask clarification questions on the procedure. The physiological measures were explained again in more detail. Afterwards, participants were helped into the measurement equipment (polar band and NIRS cap). The study was divided into two parts: the measurement and a questionnaire.

A big screen on the wall, 2 meters from the participant, displayed the instructions for the study in Dutch. First, the participant completed a practice round to get acquainted with the procedure and avoid misunderstandings later in the task. During the task, the participant was not allowed to speak unless a sign appeared on the screen indicating it was time for the

think-aloud task. A visual task³ was followed by an auditive task in which the participant was presented with five one-minute-long instrumental songs, during which they closed their eyes. After each song, the participant had to open their eyes and complete a think-aloud task in which they could share any thoughts, feelings, or associations they experienced while listening to the music. There was as much time available as needed for the think-aloud task. After this part of the study, the participant was helped out of the equipment and followed the researcher to a separate room where they had to complete a digital questionnaire about gender identity aspects, demographics, and the participant's interests and background in art. Afterwards, the participant was debriefed about the study's aims and could write down his email in case they wanted to be informed about the results.

Data Analysis

CODA Analysis

The data from the think-aloud task were transcribed and coded using cognitive discourse analysis (CODA) (Tenbrink, 2015). CODA is a tool for analyzing a speaker's natural speech, allowing researchers to gain insights into mental representations and high-level cognitive processes. The think-aloud task lent itself to this analysis because participants were asked to express their thoughts without any constraints. CODA involves three main steps, namely transcription, segmentation, and coding. The audio recordings were *transcribed* at the content level using Amberscript software and then corrected by two Dutch students to ensure accuracy.

As each participant listened to and shared thoughts about five randomized instrumental songs from the pool of 19, each transcript was *segmented* into five text units, one per song. The *coding* was based on recognizing the participant's speech, descriptors and

³ During the visual task, which was part of Gallegos González's Ph.D. project, the participant had to stand on the balance board and look at five randomized digital artworks for 30 seconds each. After every image, they were instructed to share their thoughts in a think-aloud task scheduled after each image. After the visual task, there was a short break to drink some water and sit down.

word combinations belonging to predefined theory-based categories each corresponding to a different layer of art reception. The categories of the experiential descriptors could be 1) aesthetic, 2) artistic, 3) remarks about the craft and skill involved in the creation or performance of the song and/or 4) including self-referential emotions. Appendix B provides more specific operationalizations of each experiential category along with examples. To summarize, a segment was coded as containing aesthetic experiential descriptors if the participant responded to the material elements of the experience, e.g., commenting on the 'beauty' or the rhythm of the song. Artistic experiential descriptors were defined as responses to the cognitive elements of the experience, reflections on life experiences connected to the piece and meaning making processes. Craft and skill experiential descriptors refer to technical remarks and judgments about the piece's quality. Lastly, self-referential emotions were identified in participants' speech if they specifically referred to the song as eliciting a strong emotion or feeling in them.

The results were collected to specify which experiential descriptors each participant used for the five instrumental songs independently. Each descriptor category was allocated its own variable: 'Artistic', 'Aesthetic', 'Craft/Skill' and 'Self-Referential Emotions'. Either 0 (= No) or 1 (= Yes) was indicated for each category, depending on whether the participant's expressions could be classified to the respective art descriptor.

Results were recorded by indicating which experiential descriptors each participant used independently for the five instrumental pieces. Art descriptor categories were assigned their own variables: "Artistic", "Aesthetic", "Craft/Skills" and "Self-Related Emotions". For each category, either 0 (= No) or 1 (= Yes) was indicated depending on whether the participant's utterances could be assigned to the respective art descriptor. Which song corresponded to which descriptor was not important. Instead, the focus was on the participant's use of language to describe (auditory) experiences of art. A participant could

have a final score between 1 and 5 for each of the category, where '1' means that one of five segments was assigned to the category and '5' means that all segments were assigned to the category. Other variables were created to indicate the intensity with which an aesthetic, artistic or craft/skills descriptor was used. Table 1 shows the coding scheme for the different intensities for artistic experiential descriptors. Low intensity was indicated with a '1', medium intensity with a '2', and high intensity with a '3'. The final scores for intensity in each category were weighted averages, meaning they were computed in relation to the frequency of artistic experiential descriptors in each category. They could range from 1 to 3, where '1' indicates all statements in that category were coded as 'low intensity' and '3' meaning all statements in that category were coded as 'high intensity'.

Table 1

Intensities of artistic experience

Low intensity	Medium intensity	High intensity
Reminds of ...	Personal meaning	Same as medium intensity but transcendental
Sounds like ...	Intention of the artist	Very long and detailed
Music for...	Societal meaning	
Makes me think of...	Says something about oneself/life	
	Constructs a detailed fiction	
Wonder what is it about and a tentative idea	Detailed reflection	

For craft/skill and aesthetic experiential descriptors, intensities were determined depending on how much detail the participant has gone into and whether they have used simple terms or more specific terms when referring to the music. For these categories, it was only distinguished between high and low intensity, with '1' indicating 'low intensity' and '3' indicating 'high intensity'.

Spearman's rank order correlation

To connect the experience of art with multidimensional gender identity factors, scores from the questionnaire were correlated with scores from the cognitive discourse analysis using Spearman's rank order coefficient. This allowed us to correlate non-continuous data for a rather small sample.

Results

The results of the demographic questions show that among the 24 men, seven were artists, and one was an art student. Moreover, 17 participants said they were interested in art, while seven said they had no interest in art. The results for female and male gender typicality, as well as feminine and masculine pressure are presented in a table in Appendix C and are sorted by age. The scores for female typicality ranged from 1,5 to 3, whereas male typicality scores ranged from 2 to 3,88. Feminine pressure scores ranged from 1 to 2,63, and masculine pressure scores ranged from 1 to 3,63. Five men had a higher perceived female typicality score compared to their perceived male typicality score, and seven men had a higher feminine felt pressure score than their masculine felt pressure score. Three men had identical scores for both masculine and feminine felt pressure. Mean scores across the two age groups differed and are presented in Table 2. Masculine pressure, feminine pressure, and female typicality scores were on average higher for men aged 50 or older than for the younger age group. Male typicality scores were, on average, slightly higher for the younger age group.

Table 2

Mean Scores for the Different Age Groups

AgeGroups		Fem_Typicality	Male_Typicality	Fem_Pressure	Masc_Pressure
18-26	M	1,98	2.85	1.60	1.87
(N=14)	SD	0.45	0.44	0.37	0.46
50+	M	2.19	2.56	2.12	2.40
(N=10)	SD	0.46	0.34	0.35	0,59

Cognitive Discourse Analysis

Because of bad sound quality, two of the audio recordings could not be transcribed with 'Amberscript'. They were still coded directly from the recording. The transcriptions differed in word count such that the transcript of the participant with the lowest word count contained 56 words and the transcript of the participant with the highest word count contained 922 words. The mean word count was 333,23, with a standard deviation of 218,26. Every participant used aesthetic experiential descriptors; in 33,3% of the cases, they were used five times, i.e., for all five songs. Two participants did not use any artistic experiential descriptors. Nevertheless, 45,8% used them for all five songs. Eight participants did not use craft and skill experiential descriptors but 8,3% used them for all five songs. Finally, nine participants did not share any self-referential emotions, while 20,8% shared them in response to all five songs.

On average, artistic experiential descriptors ($M = 3,75$, $SD = 1,62$) and aesthetic experiential descriptors ($M = 3,42$, $SD = 1,44$) were used most frequently. The weighted intensities in each category varied with $M = 1,62$ and $SD = ,53$ for 'Intensity Aesthetic', $M = 1,49$ and $SD = ,5$ for 'Intensity Artistic' and $M = 1,63$ and $SD = ,71$ for 'Intensity Craft and Skill'. In addition, self-referential emotions were expressed by 13 participants with $M = 2,09$ and $SD = 2,09$.

Artistic Experience and Aspects of a Multidimensional Gender Identity

Spearman's rank-order correlations were run to examine various relationships between the questionnaire variables and the scores in the different categories that emerged from the qualitative analyses. Spearman's rho was also appropriate for computing possible differences between age groups. Belonging to the younger or older age group (1 = young, 2 = old) was positively correlated with feminine pressure with $r(22) = .589$, $p = .002$ and

masculine pressure, $r(22) = .460, p = .024$. Additionally, it was negatively correlated with the use of self-referential expressions with $r(22) = -.439, p = .032$.

Table 3 shows the correlations between the multidimensional gender identity scores from the questionnaire and the frequency with which the different experiential descriptors were used. Masculine pressure was negatively correlated with the intensity of artistic experiential descriptors, $r(22) = -.498, p = .022$ and the expression of self-referential emotions, $r(22) = -.433, p = .035$. No significant correlation could be found for perceived male typicality. Figure 1 visualizes the relationship between masculine felt pressure and the intensity of the artistic experiential descriptors compared to the relationship between male typicality and the intensity of the artistic experiential descriptors. Moreover, masculine felt pressure was also positively correlated with craft/skill experiential descriptors with $r(22) = .512, p = .011$. No significant correlations were found with feminine felt pressure, except for a positive correlation with craft and skill experiential descriptors, $r(22) = .475, p = .019$.

Table 3

Correlations between Perceived Male and Female Typicality, Masculine and Feminine Felt Pressure and Experiential Descriptors

Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Female Typicality	24	2.07	.45				
2. Male Typicality	24	2.73	0.42	-.811**			
3. Feminine Pressure	24	1.84	0.43	.567**	-.699**		
4. Masculine Pressure	24	2.09	0.43	-.101	.013	.500*	

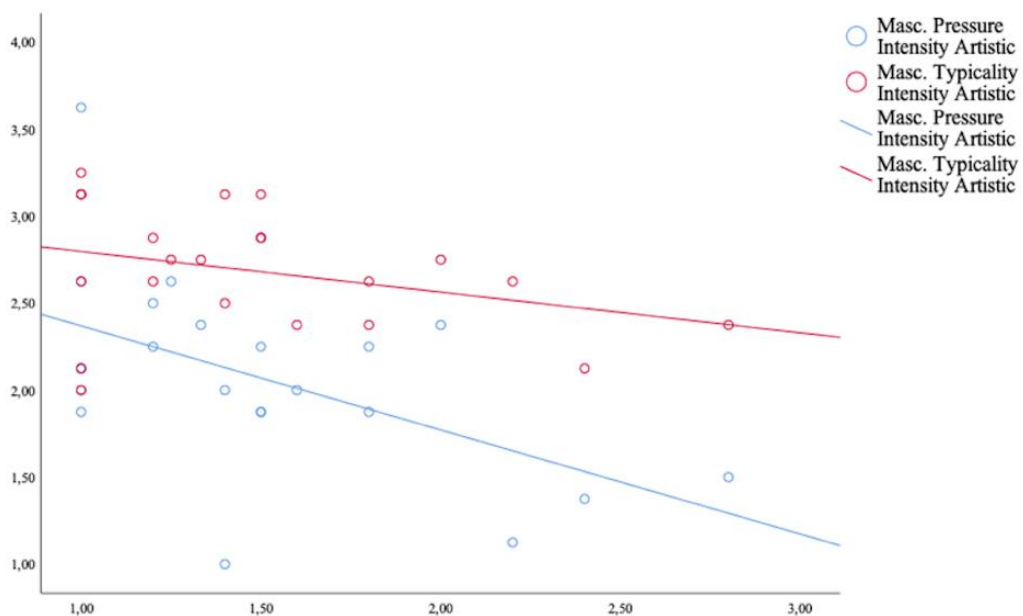
5. Aesthetic	24	3.42	1.44	-.218	.301	-.078	.307
6. Artistic	24	3.75	1.62	.276	-.191	-.134	-.147
7. Craft/Skill	24	1.87	1.75	.263	-.366	.475*	.512*
8. IntensityAesthetic	24	1.62	0.53	.215	-.089	-.058	.099
9. Intensity Artistic	24	1.49	0.5	.383	-.292	-.058	-.486*
10. Intensity Craft/Skill	24	1.63	0.71	.011	-.239	.231	-.092
11. Self-Ref. Emotions	24	1.90	2.08	.251	.012	-.185	-.433*

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Figure 1

Relationships between Intensity Artistic and Masc. Pressure/Male Typicality



Note. This scatterplot compares the relationship between masculine typicality and artistic intensity with the relationship between masculine pressure and artistic intensity. The values on the X-Axis represent the intensity scores.

Other correlations with demographics

Being an artist was positively correlated with the intensity of craft/skill experiential descriptors, $r(22) = .658, p = .006$. Moreover, being interested in art was positively correlated with the intensity of aesthetic experiential descriptors, $r(22) = .577, p = .003$.

Discussion

This qualitative and correlational study aims to better understand the multidimensional aspects of gender identity and their influence on the individual experience of art. The research question was “How do men's felt pressure for gender conformity and perceived gender typicality influence their artistic experience, specifically of instrumental music?” To answer this question, this study was based on research findings that point to the existence of a gender gap in arts participation (e.g., Lagaert & Roose, 2018). In exploring a possible gap in the experience of art, it was assumed that it might exist between individuals with different levels of masculine felt pressure.

The interdisciplinary and exploratory approach that combines psychological and art-related research makes this study the first of its kind. The results support the hypothesis that the higher the felt masculine pressure, the less intense the artistic experience, or at least the use of experiential descriptors and self-referential emotions expressed in response to music. Also, as hypothesized, perceived male typicality was unrelated to the frequency of artistic experiential descriptors used and their intensities. The intensity with which aesthetic experiential descriptors were used was found to be correlated with a participant's interest in art. Being an artist, on the other hand, was found to be positively correlated with the intensity of craft/skill experiential descriptors. This finding supports the assumption that craft/skill experiential descriptors are often used by people who are knowledgeable in the field of arts (Hickman, 2005). Some findings were unexpected, such that masculine and feminine felt

pressure were positively correlated with the age group the participant belonged to.

Participants in the older age group perceived higher masculine and feminine pressure scores.

Even though artistic experiential descriptors were used by almost every participant, the intensity with which they were used varied. To put these results into context, we must first take a closer look at what this study's artistic layer of experiencing art encompasses. While participants listened to the songs, they went through different cognitive and emotional processes which they were asked to share in the think-aloud task. More superficial layers of artistic experience were identified as low intensity, and deeper layers of artistic experience were categorized as medium intensity or high intensity. Compared to low-intensity responses, medium-intensity responses were classified as such if the participant attached personal meaning to the song, made guesses on the intention of the artist and the societal meaning, reflected on the piece by referring it to his life or life in general, and/or constructed a detailed fiction based on the song. In very few cases, statements in the artistic experiential descriptor category were coded as high intensity. This layer of artistic experience is similar to the medium intensity layer but is further characterized by almost transcendental experiences conveyed with many words, emotions, and impressions. Our results show that the intensity with which artistic experiential descriptors were used, as well as the expression of self-referential emotions negatively correlated with masculine pressure. What role could masculine pressure play in this?

People can express their gender identity to others in a variety of ways. In addition to a person's appearance, interests, and non-verbal behavior, language is a fundamental medium by which people show essential features of their gender identity (Palomares, 2004). In line with this, there is a widespread belief in society that men are less emotionally expressive than women (Brody, 2010). Biological theorists often consider biological explanations responsible for this discrepancy (Chaplin, 2015). These could be "boys' greater reactivity and energy

level and girls' greater language skills" (Chaplin, 2015, p. 10). However, it was found that it is not so much about emotional arousal but more about how emotions are expressed (Chaplin et al., 2008). In concordance, men might rather suppress emotions as they arise. This could be due to early gender socialization processes in which men learn to hide their feelings while women learn to express them more freely (Simon & Nath, 2004). Accordingly, someone whose language use is characterized by talking a lot about feelings and emotions would fulfill a stereotypical female-linked language characteristic (Palomares, 2004). Since fear of femininity is often a core component of men's gender identity, men might use their language so that they do not risk being associated with femininity (Messerschmidt, 2012). Accordingly, a higher masculine pressure likely reinforces this effect. Instead of being emotionally expressive, they might therefore speak more distantly and superficially so as not to give others access to their emotions and feelings. In relation to the research question, these findings about expressiveness could provide a possible explanation for our results, but one that is more concerned with the verbalization of the artistic experience than with the artistic experience itself.

Moreover, it should again be emphasized that the gender gap in highbrow culture reflects unequal societal expectations for men and women. Accordingly, this gender gap mirrors society's definition of highbrow culture as "belonging to the feminine sphere" (Lagaert et al., 2017). Just like participation in competitive sports promotes skills like "leadership and competitive or group-oriented behaviors" (Katz-Gerro et al., 2015, p. 3), participation in arts could promote creativity, self-expression, imaginative and emotional skills (e.g., Hickman, 2005). Interestingly, these skills seem related to experiencing art on a deeper level. In the think-aloud task, for example, if someone shared an imaginative scenario, it would have been coded as an artistic experiential descriptor with medium or high intensity. At the same time, society links these abilities to the concept of femininity. This entails that

participating in stereotypically feminine activities could help a person develop skills that are connected with high-intensity artistic experiences. On the other hand, participating in stereotypical masculine activities like competitive sports teaches a person skills that are evaluated as desirable masculine characteristics. This suggests that participants who scored relatively high on masculine felt pressure might have had less opportunity to develop skills that are connected to artistic experience and femininity. Taken together, the skills a person possesses may greatly depend on the activities the individual engaged in and thereby cultivated over their lifetime. Tröndle et al. (2014) conducted one of few studies investigating differences in art experiences between the genders. They found that women were often more emotionally moved and affected by an artwork. They concluded that "sex makes a difference when it comes to art" (Tröndle et al., 2014, p. 91). We should interpret the results of this study with caution, but if we were to contrast their conclusion, we could say that it is gender conformity pressure that might make a difference when it comes to art.

Arts Education for everyone

Therefore, it seems necessary to introduce all children to the arts and teach them to appreciate and make use of them (Van Heusden, 2015). Instead of actively having to sign up for art-related activities, thereby seemingly participating in a feminine activity, it would be easier for boys to learn about art and develop interests and talents in this field in an environment where they do not feel judged. Arts education could help young people become aware of their preferences, regardless of gender, and even "find and eventually construct their identity as members of one or more communities" (Van Heusden, 2015, p. 7). Perhaps this could also help them to experience less gender conformity pressure. Moreover, it could give them the ability to gain more than one perspective on challenging situations and problems and improve their imaginal skills tremendously (Hickman, 2005). There are several other valuable benefits to be gained from arts education and art participation. Eisner (2003),

for example, argues that "some of the most complex and subtle forms of thinking occur when one is engaged in art-making and appreciating" (Hickman, 2005, p. 43). Art is also seen as a form of therapy that teaches people to explore feelings and release emotions or blockades. Moreover, art, regardless of its form, often deals with challenging life topics such as love and death and could provide people with some answers they are struggling to find by themselves (Hickman, 2005). This shows how valuable arts education can be beyond the classroom. It can contribute not only to the intensity with which people experience art but also to how they deal with the challenges of daily life.

Age Factors

This study chose to explore possible differences between both younger and older men. It was found that the older age group (50+ years) perceived higher feminine and masculine pressure compared to the younger age group (< 26 years). Also, the former group used less self-referential expressions in the think-aloud task. Research on aspects of gender identity mainly focuses on younger people and their development from being born to moving through adolescence. It has rarely been studied how gender identity changes in older individuals that have long outpaced young adulthood. Some previous findings indicated that, particularly in men, aging leads them to reconstruct their beliefs about masculinity (Herreen et al., 2021). On the other hand, existing research emphasizes that some older men who still feel strongly committed to their masculine identity try to conserve their masculinity through the way they behave (Vafaei et al., 2016). However, our sample of older men is relatively small, making it difficult to draw definite conclusions from it. Further research is needed to establish well-founded conclusions.

Limitations

Although the results presented here support the hypothesis that masculine felt pressure, rather than perceived masculine typicality, is related to the intensity with which

artistic experiential descriptors are used, several potential limitations must be considered. First, causality cannot be inferred from a correlational study. We can only conclude that the variables are related, but not that one causes the other. One main reason for this is that it cannot be ruled out that there is a third variable that affects the two variables that are correlated. For example, we cannot know about our participants' level of self-esteem, mental health state and other components that might play into their use of language and expressiveness. In addition, the researcher was present during the measurements, which could have made some participants feel more inhibited in expressing themselves.

Another important limitation refers to the relatively small sample size of our study. Especially when calculating correlations, the smaller the sample size, the higher the probability that the correlation coefficient overrepresents the true relationship in the population. Moreover, participants of this study knew it was investigating the perception of music and digital images. Even though the word 'art' was deliberately left out of the advertisement and the information letter, 'digital images' and 'music' could have indicated that it was related to the field of arts. After seeing the advertisement, they decided to book a time slot for the experiment. Therefore, it was a voluntary decision that was likely made because of initial interest in the topic. This is supported by the results, showing that most participants later in the questionnaire indicated they were interested in art. Added to that, the sample included seven men who identified as artists and one art student. Still, they were unaware that the study's main interest was about gender identity aspects. However, since the majority was either interested or at least had a professional background in the field of art, this could have resulted in a sample less representative of the general population of men – considering the gender gap in arts participation.

Another limitation worth mentioning is that although the instructions were written down on the slides, it was sometimes not clear enough what the participants were supposed to

share in the think-aloud task. Often, participants wanted clarity about what the task entailed and the researchers gave them an answer that may have given different cues to different participants. For example, the researchers may have inadvertently used words that made the participant think they needed to focus on and share the emotions and feelings that could come up while listening. On the other hand, the researchers could have given answers such as 'describe what you heard', which would have led the participant to focus on describing rather than communicating any emotions.

Finally, methodological choices were constrained by subjectivity in the qualitative part of this study. The codings were compared and corrected with three people but might have still been subjective to some degree. Especially at the beginning of the coding process, there were many discrepancies between coders. Over time, the quality improved and the coding process became more efficient.

Implications and Future Research

Even though a multidimensional approach to gender identity is receiving increasing attention in the public and educational spheres, the traditional, binary approach is still very prevalent (Lagaert et al., 2017). It would be interesting to study participants exclusively based on their multidimensional gender identity and not based on their biological sex. Instead of then classifying people as men, women or non-binary, participants would be perceived as genderfluid with different levels of same- and other perceived gender typicality and felt pressure for same- and other gender conformity. Gender fluidity ideally gives more people who feel uncomfortable with the traditional gender roles they are assigned to the opportunity to feel seen and tolerated.

This study showed that there is a lot to explore about how different multidimensional gender identities in men influence social behavior. To put these results into perspective, it would be exciting to embed the aforementioned results into the Ph.D. project results of

Gallegos González, in which he takes this topic one step further by also including physiological measures and having a bigger sample of men, women, and non-binary people. The outcomes would allow us to put our findings into perspective by including additional, more precise measures (e.g., of brain activity) of artistic experience, beyond the analysis of language use. Added to that, it is recommended to do further research and explore other fields in which gender socialization processes could play an important role. For example, it was found that men are less likely than women to seek help themselves when challenged with mental health problems (Cusack et al., 2004). This seems to be another result of gender-socialization processes, in which men are taught to stay strong and not open up.

Conclusion

This study has shown that the way men experience art, or at least express their experiences of art, seem to be related to different levels of masculine felt pressure. It was found that this relationship is not between masculine felt pressure and the general use of artistic experiential descriptors, but with the intensity with which they are used. Higher intensities are characterized by greater engagement and deeper meaning-making processes. Furthermore, the results indicated that all participants used aesthetic experience descriptors, but the participants who reported being interested in art used them with a higher intensity. This underlines that finding beauty in a work of art is something quite natural, but the intensity with which it is perceived seems to depend on other factors. Lastly, we are all affected by stereotypical thought patterns and culturally shaped ideas of gender roles. When learning about a person's interests, we almost automatically evaluate a person's behavior against the background of their gender. Therefore, to promote equal opportunities for children and young people, stereotypes must be made conscious, reconsidered, and critically questioned, and one's actions must be adapted accordingly. This is not about completely letting go of the concepts of femininity and masculinity but being able to identify with both

and feel encouraged to do so. Because the fear of femininity is so strong in many men, the pressure to conform to gender norms is an obstacle to closing the gender gap in arts participation and art experience.

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Appendix A

Instrumental Songs

Table A1

List of All Instrumental Songs

Title	Artist	Album	Year	Genre
Dreizehn	Nin Martoize	Digittoe Air	2018	Blues
Für Elise	Allie Automne (prod. by Meera)	Masters Remastered	2016	Contemporary/Classical
Los muy honorables	Amanda Irarrazabal; Cecilia López; Cecilia Quinteros;	La Corporacion	2016	Experimental
Aural Shoehorning: I. Plainsong	Barbara Benary	Aural Shoehorning: I. Plainsong	2011	NA
Festoon	Bio Unit	Content	2019	Soundtrack
Few Survivors	Blear Moon	Split	2019	Electronic
Dew on the grass	Dee Yan-Key	Late Summer	2018	Classical
Essentuki 1917	Janne Nummela	Movements	2014	Experimental
Parenthetically	JD Parran	Window Spirits	2017	Free Jazz
Wormhole	Juno Lazermachine	S27-X (II)	2019	Electronic
Sugar doesn't replace you, at all	Livio Amato;	So much love to give	2019	Instrumental
Easy Night (ID 1203)	Lobo Loco	Mr Tachyon	2019	Blues
Hitchcock Etudes	Nicole Lizée / Bozzini Quartet		2015	Avant Garde
Nocturne Op 9 No 2	Podington Bear	Nocturnes	2015	Minimalism
Habu	Silicon Transmitter	Best	2019	Soundtrack
Fresh In	The Tleilaxu Music Machine;	Baltdub	2019	Dub
Raptor Lovers	Trokai	Raptor Lovers	2013	Avant Garde
Synchronicity	Unheard Music Concepts	The Lasso of Time	2019	Jazz
Phase 4	Xylo-Ziko	Phase	2019	Minimalism

Appendix B

Experiential Descriptors

Table B1*Descriptors – Categories, Explanations and Examples*

Category	Explanation	Examples
Aesthetic	<p>Aesthetic Perceptual and motor responses to the material elements of the experience. Basic emotional reactions that are concerned with the beauty of the piece. No interpretation or imagination that goes beyond the aesthetic value.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - About the sound and melody - About the structure - About the tempo 	<p>"Nice piece of music" "Changes nicely in tempo" "I found it relaxing" "Not chill to listen to" "Not pretty" "I don't like it myself" "It is a bit monotonous"</p>
Artistic	<p>Responses to the cognitive elements of the experience. Reflections on life experience(s) connected to the piece. Meaning-making. Feelings if they describe judgments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Imagination (creative, metaphorical) - Self-reflexive, recursive art - Interpreting artist's intention 	<p>"Modern music that reminds me of David Glass" "Silence before the storm, like something epic is going to happen" "Overwhelming feelings that someone is expressing" "This music pulls me into a fantasy landscape and I see a camera swinging over a very quiet lake and slowly towards the shore..."</p>
Craft/Skill	<p>What you see with first-order semiotics, how well is the work crafted/manipulated. Quality of the piece. Technical remarks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of Media - Technique - Evaluation of the skills used 	<p>"Does not fit well together, no melody, no rhythm" "It seemed to sound a bit out of tune" "Certain sounds are interrupted or supplemented by other ambient sounds and a horn"</p>
Self-Referential Emotions	<p>What you feel while listening to the music. Emotions/Feelings/Sensations that come up and that are connected to the song.</p>	<p>"This made me happy" "This one stresses me out" "It makes me restless" "It takes me along" "The music makes me feel a bit higher in energy"</p>

Appendix C

Multifactor Adult Gender Identity Scores

Table C1

MAGIS Scores Sorted By Age

Participant	Age	Fem_Typicality	Male_Typicality	Fem_Pressure	Masc_Pressure
34	18	1,75	2,63	1,75	2,63
28	18	1,5	2,88	1,13	1,88
10	21	3	2,63	1,88	1,88
3	21	2,13	2,63	1,5	1,13
49	21	2	2,88	1,88	2,25
36	21	2,13	2,38	2,25	2,25
43	22	2,13	3,13	1,38	1,88
54	23	1,5	3,25	1,63	2,13
53	23	1,5	3,88	1,38	1,63
46	24	2,25	2,75	1,75	2,38
52	25	2,25	2,5	2,25	2
50	25	1,63	3,13	1	1
37	25	2,5	2,13	1,75	1,38
20	26	1,5	3,13	1,38	1,88
16	52	2,63	2,38	2,13	2
32	57	2,13	2,63	2	2,5
8	57	3,13	2	2,38	2
26	58	1,88	2,88	1,5	2,25
39	65	2,13	2,38	2	1,5
11	66	2,63	2,13	2,38	2,13
15	67	1,63	3,13	1,75	3,63
42	68	1,88	2,75	2,5	2,63
7	78	2	2,63	2,63	3

Appendix D**MAGIS – Merged Questionnaire**

Below are statements you may or may not agree with. Please indicate your level of agreement to each statement. If you strongly agree with the statement, choose SA. If you agree, choose A. If you disagree, choose D. If you strongly disagree, choose SD.

1. I relate better with men.
2. It would bother me if my friends say I was acting masculine.
3. I think it would be okay for me to engage in male specific activities.
4. I feel like I fit in more when I am with my male friends.
5. People I know would be upset if I wanted to participate in masculine hobbies.
6. I feel I am more similar to women than to men.
7. I have the same interests that men usually have.
8. I get upset when someone says that I am acting masculine.
9. My family would disapprove if I wanted to engage in a predominantly men's activity.
10. I am similar to the ideal female.
11. I feel that the things I like to do in my spare time are similar to what most women like to do in their spare time.
12. I don't feel that I fit in a group of women.
13. My personality is similar to men's personalities.
14. I do not want people thinking I am too masculine.
15. My family would disapprove if I wanted to engage in a predominantly masculine activity.
16. The people I know wouldn't like it if I wanted to learn an activity that men usually do.
17. My personality is similar to women's personalities.
18. I relate better with women.

19. It would bother me if my friends say I was acting feminine.
20. I think it would be okay for me to engage in female specific activities.
21. I feel like I fit in more when I am with my female friends.
22. People I know would be upset if I wanted to participate in feminine hobbies.
23. I feel I am more similar to men than to women.
24. I have the same interests that women usually have.
25. I get upset when someone says that I am acting feminine.
26. My family would disapprove if I wanted to engage in a predominantly women's activity.
27. I am similar to the ideal male.
28. I feel that the things I like to do in my spare time are similar to what most men like to do in their spare time.
29. I don't feel that I fit in a group of men.
30. I do not want people thinking I am too feminine.
31. My family would disapprove if I wanted to engage in a predominantly feminine activity.
32. The people I know wouldn't like it if I wanted to learn an activity that women usually do.

Scoring

Questions belong to the subscale indicated; Each person's scores are the average of the items in each subscale. Asterisks denote reverse scoring.

Each answer is equal to the following number: SD=1, D=2, A=3, SA=4

Female typicality	6	10	11	12*	17	18	21	24
Male typicality	23	27	28	29*	1	4	7	13
Feminine felt pressure	2	3*	5	8	9	14	15	16
Masculine felt pressure	19	20*	22	25	26	30	31	32