

ARTICLE

“That’s what makes me authentic, because what we do makes sense” – Music professionals’ experiences of authenticity: A phenomenological, hermeneutical interview study

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ABSTRACT

Within music education, music therapy, and music performance theory, various perspectives on the concept of authenticity have been discussed and investigated. Authenticity seems to be a concept with wide possibilities for application and likewise wide definitional borders, which makes it hard to investigate. Drawing on the knowledge and framework developed by Bøtker and Jacobsen (2023), we wish to continue the investigation of authenticity within three music professions from a practice-based perspective. For this study, music therapists, music educators, and music performers (six participants) were interviewed twice about their experiences of their own authenticity when facilitating musical activities with children and adults (parents or teachers). The interviews were transcribed and analysed using a thematic coding analysis: deductively using the conceptual framework by Bøtker and Jacobsen as well as inductively by looking for new emerging themes across these three professions. The findings confirm the conceptual framework but also suggest an expansion, adding the element of ‘Values’. The new framework consists of six elements that all pertain to the experience of authenticity: relationship, role, context, professionalism, personality, and values. Furthermore, another theme appeared through the inductive analysis – ‘floating-anchoring’ – describing and synthesising the connection between the reflective and the sensorial awareness that supplement each other in the experience of authenticity within these three music professions. This floating-anchoring synthesis is suggested as a relevant framework for training and education within the three music professions.

KEYWORDS

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INTRODUCTION

The motivation behind this article is an aspiration to create an opportunity for professional reflection across three different music professions – music education, music therapy, and music performance – on the concept of authenticity. Though widely used across various disciplines, authenticity is an ubiquitous term that is elusive in nature with different local meanings, making it difficult to define and operationalise (Brüntrup et al., 2020; Elafros, 2014; Froehlich & Smith, 2017; Grazian, 2018; Kreber et al., 2007, 2013; Lacoste et al., 2014; Lewin, 2020; Parkinson & Smith, 2015; Pitchford et al., 2020; Safran, 2017; Schwartz & Williams, 2021).

Some scholars regard authenticity as a concept balancing on the limits of language or even being beyond the domain of objective language (Golomb, 1995; Kernis & Goldman, 2006) while others regard the concept as being “consigned to the intellectual dust-heap” (Born & Hesmondhalgh, 2000, p. 30). Nevertheless, many scholars still believe that the phenomenon of authenticity has its place within academia. Investigating ‘the authentic teacher,’ Laursen (2005) concludes that “the concept of authenticity is appropriate as a designation of teachers’ personal competence as a whole” (p. 210). In Laursen’s view, authentic teachers have personal, embodied, and realistic intentions concerning their teaching and work in contexts that are fruitful to these intentions.

Within music educational research, some scholars acknowledge the concept of authenticity despite all its paradoxes. As Dyndahl (2013) argues, “there is no option to reject the concept of authenticity either, no matter how many paradoxes and contradictions it may produce [...] notions of authenticity play key roles in the decisive relationship between music, meaning and identity” (p. 113).

There are several definitions, understandings, and applications of the concept of authenticity across music professions. Many scholars align with the music education scholar Merlin Thompson, initially describing the concept in terms of genuineness or realness, using related terms such as sincerity, truthfulness, honesty, originality, pureness, realness, rootedness, amicability, self-transparency, and being true to one’s (musical) self (Bingham et al., 2022; Ferrara, 2017; Hedigan, 2010; Johnson, 2022; Moore, 2002; Qirko, 2019; Ríos, 2017; Stamatis, 2019; Viega, 2015; Weisethaunet & Lindberg, 2010). However, further definitions, understandings, and perspectives split off into various directions and philosophical considerations. As Thom argues, “if the authentic may be defined as that which truly is what it purports to be, then the question of authenticity can be raised in relation to anything that purports to be anything” (2011, p. 91). Below follows a short introduction to authenticity as it can be applied and understood within the three musical professions.

Authenticity and music education

Within music education, many 'authenticities' co-exist. In their study on various perspectives on authenticity, Parkinson and Smith (2015) conclude that institutions and individuals connected with music education "have a responsibility to place the issue of authenticity at the center of pedagogy, curriculum design, institutional strategy and disciplinary knowledge share, in order for the field to develop in ways that are beneficial to all involved" (p. 93). However, when talking about authenticity within music education literature, it is important to notice the many different perspectives underlining this concept.

Amongst some of the conceptions within music education literature, there is the notion of 'authentic learning', referring to the use of real-world relevant resources, knowledge, procedures, and problem-solving when teaching music. Furthermore, authentic learning applies a student-centred approach and a focus on the process rather than the product (Crawford, 2019; Eiksund & Reistadbakk, 2020; Kallio et al., 2014; Ojala & Väkevä, 2015; White, 2021).

There seems to be a connection between authentic learning and a focus on the students' individual and extra-curricular musical interests being recognised in classroom activities. Creech et al. (2020) connects authentic learning with notions of 'informal learning' and 'non-formal teaching' "with the teacher modelling, supporting, advising, and guiding" (p. 66).

Authenticity is applied in other ways as well. On one hand, the concept of authenticity was used in relation to a preservation of the musical context or culture in a teaching situation; a 'music-in-culture'-perspective or 'context-authenticity' (Johansen, 2020). Some world music education scholars mention this notion of authenticity when teaching original genres of music using traditional instruments while also relating to the cultural context (Johnson, 2000; Palmer, 1992; Torchon, 2022).

On the other hand, we find a more subjective authenticity perspective focusing on "the experience and vitality of expression among the persons involved, a 'true-to-onself'-perspective" (Johansen, 2020, p. 158). However, Johansen further elaborates that "to enable a person to be acting like one's 'true self', they have to experience a bridge between subject and context authenticity" (p. 158). When it comes to this rather personal delineation of the concept, or what Johansen (2020) refers to as 'subject authenticity', Thompson (2016), drawing on the writings of both North American and European education scholars, argues that the 'teacher's authenticity' is an important and desirable feature within both music education and education in general. This, both in terms of students being interested in teachers "whose knowledge, competency, and credibility is held in place by an anchor of authenticity" (p. 173). But also in terms of the teacher, being true to themselves as "fundamental to the integrity and wholeness of the teacher's example" (p. 173). Thompson also refers to educator and scholar Parker J. Palmer, who calls teachers to listen to "the voice of the teacher within, the voice that invites me to honor the nature of my true self" (p. 173). Thompson (2018) describes how "musicians express who they are because music's technical, expressive, explorative, and formal demands prompt all varieties and intensities of personal involvement" (p. 12). He therefore argues how the music teacher, who teaches with personal authenticity, should likewise recognise the students' authentic selves in the music educational processes in terms of both "supporting and challenging students' true self" (p. 14). As Hendricks (2018) states, "authenticity on the part of the teacher is a prerequisite for modeling integrity and wholeness in our students"

(p. 148). This notion of 'authenticity on the part of the teacher' is what is aimed at investigating in this study.

Authenticity and music therapy

Within music therapy research, the notion of authenticity has been applied in terms of cultural and/or genre specific knowledge and competences which, in some cases, can cause challenges when it comes to musical authenticity (Viega, 2015; Yehuda; 2013; Young, 2016).

From a 'subject authenticity'-perspective, Ann Majerus (2018) describes how "authenticity is perceived as an important component of a music therapists' therapeutic identity [...] Being authentic as a therapist supports the creation of trust and safety in the therapeutic relationship" (p. 29). McGuigan (2020) describes how "heuristic research can provide a framework for the development of authenticity as a person, researcher, and music therapist" (p. 18). What he discovers is that both cognitive and embodied approaches are part of the therapeutic presence, and that these approaches are necessarily guided by a sincere intention to be authentic and open to experience. According to McGuigan, being authentic is felt "either consciously or unconsciously by the people we meet in our everyday interactions, our clients, and also in ourselves" (p. 15).

Inspired by Inge Nygaard Pedersen's (2007) notion of 'the music therapist's disciplined subjectivity', Dahl (2018) argues for the music therapist's 'disciplined authenticity' from an existential, psychological perspective. He also argues, drawing on Daniel Stern's 'vitality forms' (Stern, 2010) and in line with Mc Guigan (2020), that authenticity can be felt by others.

In an investigation of music therapists use of their voice in music therapy practice, Bingham et al. (2022) discover, through interviews with music therapists, that authenticity is regarded as an important element of the music therapeutic practice. Authenticity is described as a complex composition of personal and professional qualities embodying skills and engagement. It also includes the music therapists' "clinical stance (e.g., theoretical perspective), clinical consciousness (e.g., their awareness of all that is happening clinically), and self-awareness (e.g., reflexivity) of these therapists, reflecting the ways these therapists draw together their training, clinical and personal experiences" (p. 6). Furthermore, they describe how authenticity is considered to be "connected to professional and personal growth: an embodied experience of self that was deeply felt and simultaneously illusive and hard to define" (p. 6). Despite its simultaneously profound and illusive nature, authenticity is thus recognised as a valid element in relation to personal and professional development. Thus, we aim to investigate this notion of authenticity – this complex composition of personal and professional qualities.

Authenticity and music performance

Authenticity is considered an important artistic value by scholars, music performers, and listeners (Bertinetto, 2019; Froehlich & Smith, 2017). Within music performance theory, various definitions, discussions, and applications of authenticity co-exist.

There seems to be two main paradigmatic approaches to the concept of authenticity: 1) The realist point of view, where music is considered authentic in terms of it being “created by musicians whose cultural identities reflect the essence of the genre” (Elafros, 2013, p. 109). In this perspective, authenticity seems to be inscribed in the music and the performance. 2) The constructionist point of view purports that music is a tool in the continuous constructing of identities, such that authenticity is ascribed to the music or the musician (Elafros, 2013).

One realist approach to authenticity is Kivy’s (1995) four musical authenticities. These are rooted in Western classical music theory and relate mostly to different aspects of faithfulness to the intentions of the composer or to the aesthetic norms of the contemporary time of the composition. Kivy also touches upon ‘personal authenticity’ or ‘expressive authenticity’, which concerns a “personal style of originality in performance” (Thom, 2011, p. 96) in addition to “the faithfulness to the performer’s own self” (Kivy, 1995, p. 7).

From a constructionist point of view, Bertinetto (2019) argues that there could be a specific sense of authenticity in the performer being ‘true to the moment’. He calls this ‘artistic authenticity’ of which a key aspect is the musician’s “attentiveness and responsiveness to the moment of performance” (p. 10). This seems to be in line with Froehlich and Smith’s (2017) notion of ‘authenticity of purpose’, concluding that “what qualifies a piece as good lies in the way it is produced, composed, and brought to the audience’s attention. Again, the primary criterion for “quality” remains authenticity of purpose” (p. 71).

Authenticity is also an important aspect of Richter’s (2021) concept of *musical thinking* – a specific state of consciousness where the performing musicians must connect with their intuition and reduce their analytical thinking. “Authentic musical thought implies independence and freedom of play which in turn suggests limits to analysis” (Richter, 2021, p. 130). Musical thinking involves both intentionality, but also temporal, embodied ideas alongside an integration of both intuitive and literal dimensions of interpretations. The guiding principles of this musical thinking are “awareness, attention and presence rather than delivery, perfection or security of execution” (p. 129). This connects with McKinna’s (2014) research on the authenticity of the touring musician. One participant describes how focus is not on playing perfectly as there can be lots of mistakes during a performance, but more important is the “connection between yourself, the music and the audience and the room” (McKinna, 2014, p. 64). McKinna (2014) also describes how the participants seem to aim for a level where they can “communicate with sincerity and honesty – in other words, with authenticity - and this is more important to the audience and band than every correct note” (p. 64).

Within contemporary, popular music performance theory, Moore’s (2002) first-person, second-person, and third-person authenticity depict authenticity as ascribed to the performer from the outside by the listener. First-person authenticity, or ‘authenticity of expression’, is present when the performer “succeeds in conveying the impression that his/her utterance is one of integrity, that it represents an attempt to communicate in an unmediated form with an audience” (p. 214). Second-person authenticity, or ‘authenticity of experience’, “occurs when a performance succeeds in conveying the impression to a listener that that listener’s experience of life is being validated, that the music is ‘telling it like it is’ for them” (p. 220). Third-person authenticity, ‘authenticity of execution’, “arises when a performer succeeds in conveying the impression of accurately

representing the ideas of another, embedded within a tradition of performance" (p. 218). The former two, it seems, belong primarily within the constructionist approach to music performance, while the latter belongs primarily within the realist approach. For this study, we will focus on the former two. However, unlike Moore's (2002) theory, we examine authenticity from the music performer's perspective, that is: in terms of 'communicating in an unmediated form' and 'validating the listener's experience of life' and not only 'conveying an impression of' this.

FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

For this study, we focus on the subjective experience of authenticity, as well as the meaning and value embedded in this experience, from the perspective of music professionals. We do not attempt to clarify all the philosophical underpinnings of the concept of authenticity within music professions, genres, cultures, sub-cultures, and disciplinary fields, but rather seek to explore authenticity from a professional and practice-based point of view, as experienced by different music professionals. Considering the paradigmatic discussions of authenticity as having either a realist or constructionist view, we adopt a constructionist stance, examining how authenticity could be experienced from the inside of the music professional and not be ascribed from the outside. In that regard, we argue for a constructionist understanding of authenticity as being possible to 'ascribe from the inside' of the person performing the music for or with other people. The purpose of this is to seek new knowledge about how experiences of authenticity could be used to enrich our professional practices and reflections to the benefit of therapists, teachers, and performers as well as clients, students, and audiences.

Research question

How can experiences and understandings of the phenomenon of authenticity from music professionals across the three different professions of music therapy, music education and music performance be described? What are the possible applications of such descriptions?

Some reflections on terminology

The term 'music performer' is applied in this article to clarify that the focus of the study is related to these music professionals' experiences of and reflections on their music performance on stage in front of an audience. It could be argued that some music performers prefer the term 'musician' as they do not always identify as 'performers' as this term may have certain connotations. For instance, Bicknell (2015) connotes that "a performance is a special kind of event, one that, by its very nature, has elements of artificiality" (p. 57). The interviewees themselves applied the term 'musician' (Da.: 'musiker') in the interview, as the term 'music performer' (Da.: 'musikudøver'/'musikperformer') is not a widely used term in Danish. However, this English term is maintained to highlight that the notion of 'the musician' is an important part of all three music professionalisms. All three specialisations are centred around professionals who, in their professional work, draw on their own music, their own musicianship, their own musical expressions in different ways. Hence, even though

some of the music professionals are not ‘performing’ musicians, they are, in our opinion, still musicians.

METHOD

This study is part of a larger research project, MUFASA (Music, Families, and Interaction), researching the effect of different music activities with ‘regular’, non-referred families with children aged 7-10 years old. The MUFASA research project investigates how activities within music therapy, music education, and music performance with families can influence family well-being and communication. The research project adopts a resource-focused approach, focusing on strengthening family interaction, parental well-being, and child well-being (Jacobsen et al., 2022).

Benefitting from the research design of the MUFASA project, this study explores the different music professionals’ experiences of their own authenticity in professional practice. The primary research methodology is phenomenological, aimed at investigating music professionals’ experiences and understandings of the phenomenon of authenticity, but also hermeneutical in that the primary author is an insider-researcher, analysing and interpreting the data with a professional background as music therapist, music educator, and music performer.

The epistemological foundation of the collected knowledge is thus constructionist, considering that knowledge obtained was created through social interactions as well as through interactions between individuals and the surrounding world (Matney, 2019).

Data collection consisted of six semi-structured research interviews, which were transcribed verbatim, and analysed through a thematic coding analysis (Robson & McCartan, 2016). When analysing the data, a deductive approach was applied to search for specific, predetermined elements as well as an inductive approach was used to look for other themes appearing in the material. In the coming sections, the research process will be elaborated in greater detail.

Participants

In the MUFASA research project, three types of music professionals were included: music therapists, music educators, and music performers facilitating different kinds of music activities. This gave the possibility of looking across these three professions in different ways. Unfortunately, the shutdowns due to Covid-19 meant that it was not possible to launch family concerts. As a result, no music performers participated in the pilot project. However, the first author invited two music performers into the interview study to get their perspective on the subject. As part of their professional life, they facilitated concerts for and with children and parents, teachers, and caregivers (hence, the same population as in the MUFASA project). One music performer, K., made outdoors “corona-concerts” for children and adults in kinder gardens.

All in all, three music therapists, two music performers, and one music educator participated in this study. It should be mentioned that these music professionals had mixed professionalisms: two out of three music therapists also served as music performers in different settings, and one music therapist also worked as a music educator. The music educator also worked as a music performer, and the two music performers also worked as music educators. This disciplinary entanglement among the interviewees is described in Table 1.

Music therapists (E., R., T.)	Music educator (G.)	Music performers (K., O.)
Music therapist	Music educator (children + adults) + music performer	Music performer + music educator (children)
Music therapist + music performer		Music performer + music educator (children)
Music therapist + music performer + music educator (adults)		

Table 1: Professional profiles of the six interviewees

Procedure

A total of six semi-structured interviews were conducted, with a pre- and post-interview conducted within each music professional group. Two weeks prior to the first interview, interviewees were sent preparatory material containing general considerations regarding the concept of authenticity and questions to initiate reflections about their own experiences of authenticity and/or inauthenticity. The pre-interviews comprised two group interviews (one with music therapists and one with music performers) and one solo-interview (with music educator). These pre-interviews were conducted at least three weeks before the musical activities.

Only one music professional from each of the three groups facilitated the different musical activities. At least three weeks after the termination of the musical activities these three music professionals were then interviewed. Hence, all of the post-interviews were solo-interviews.

All the musical activities in the research project were video recorded. The video material was reviewed by the first author/reviewer before conducting the post-interviews to get an overview of the content of the music sessions and to inform the interview questions. Hence, during post-interviews, if reflecting upon specific moments in the sessions, the interviewees were given the possibility to watch the moment on video if they wished. The overall procedure is depicted in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Elements of the data collection process

The purpose of the pre-interviews was to initiate reflections among the music professionals about their own experiences of authenticity in relation to their professional work in general, and to activate awareness of this phenomenon for the musical activities that they would be facilitating later on. The overall design was therefore structured to activate as much reflection and awareness on their experiences of authenticity as possible, both in connection to general considerations and specific situations within a specific musical, practical framework.

Data collection

The interview questions for the pre-interviews were centred around the music professionals' experience of their own authenticity or inauthenticity in connection with their work life. It contained the following headings: 'the use and understanding of the concept of authenticity', 'the family perspective', 'the understanding of own professionalism', 'settings', and 'values'. Towards the end, interviewees were asked whether they resonated with selected quotes and statements from previous research about authenticity (e.g., Bøtker & Jacobsen, 2023).

The post-interview questions related to specific activities under the headings: 'experience and understanding of your own authenticity', 'settings: participation in a research project, 'moments of authenticity/inauthenticity', 'the relational aspect', 'wearing a mask or having a role', and 'advantages, disadvantages, relevance'. There were also clarifying questions regarding statements from the initial pre-interview.

All interviews were semi-structured to let interviewees formulate and describe their experiences as freely as possible, but within a specific framework and under the premise of looking for an understanding of this specific phenomenon (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). Consequently, questions could be answered on the interviewee's own initiative. Some questions were only briefly answered while other questions could take up a lot of the conversation.

All six interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed by the transcription programme 'Happy Scribe'. However, we ran into difficulties with this software as the interviews were not conducted in English. Consequently, the audio files were therefore revisited repeatedly while the transcriptions were carefully corrected. The interviews lasted an average of 1 hr 39 min.

The transcripts were sent back to the interviewees who were encouraged to correct or add if they wished. They were also given some follow-up questions if there were any doubts or if something needed further elaboration. All interviewees approved the transcriptions with some additions or corrections, but not all had the time to answer follow-up questions, which was of course respected.

Analysis

The analysis comprised five steps: the first four steps were carried out within each separate interview while the last step was carried out with material from all six interviews (see Table 2). The transcripts were analysed deductively using a conceptual framework regarding the experience of authenticity within music therapy, music education, and music performance developed by Bøtker and Jacobsen (2023; see Figure 2 and its accompanying textual elaboration). In the analysis, we looked for statements that could support and possibly develop this conceptual framework. The data was, thus, coded based on its five elements: relationship, role, context, professionalism, and personality.

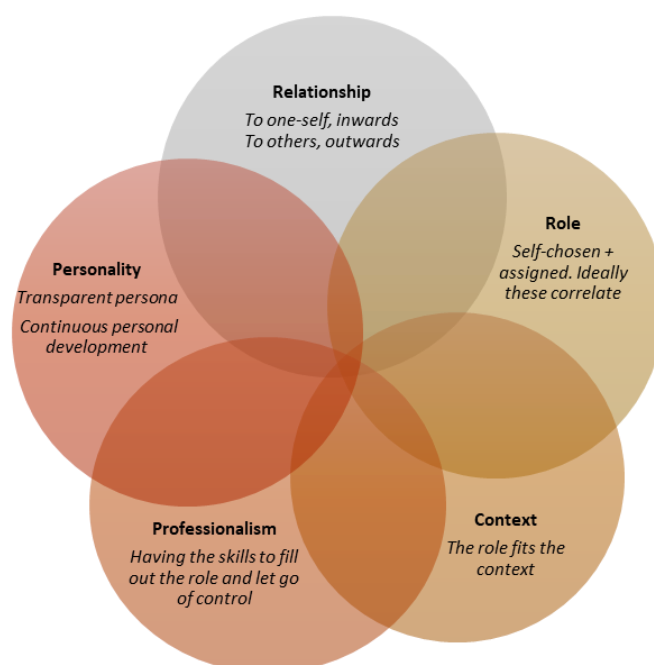
However, the transcriptions were also analysed inductively as we wanted to stay open to new themes that could either supplement the five elements or reveal new elements of interest and relevance for the study.

Analysis within each separate interview	
1 Coding	Deductively based on the five elements Inductively into emerging themes
2 Condensation	Coded text excerpts are written in a more readable prose
3 Compilation	Condensations are compiled in a coherent text, possibly organised in sub-themes
4 Extraction	Compilations are refined into short extracts
Analysis across all six interviews	
5 Cross-thematisation	Extracts are organised under sub-themes within each element and theme across the six interviews

Table 2: The five steps of analysis

The experience of authenticity within music therapy, music education and music performance is associated with several interconnected elements that must be related in a meaningful way for the experience of authenticity to arise and be experienced from within. The challenge, as a music professional, is to operate these different elements and navigate the span between authenticity and inauthenticity within these in an ever-evolving personal and professional learning process.

Figure 2: The interconnected elements of authenticity within music disciplines (Bøtker & Jacobsen, 2023)



The analysis commenced in Microsoft Word processing software by marking and coding statements in the transcripts and making notes in the margin. Next, the coded material was transferred to OneNote to monitor the six interviews and their themes as best as possible. Here, all excerpts from the transcripts were condensed into a more coherent and readable prose while keeping wording as close as possible to the interviewees' original statements. The condensations were then compiled into a new coherent prose. From these compilations, short sentences were extracted. In cases of themes with many extracts, these were further grouped in sub-themes. Finally, all the extracts from the six interview analyses were organised in a table in Word, adding new sub-themes to describe the essence of the different extracts across the six interviews.

The analysis process can be considered an initial process of decontextualisation, where “the analyst separates data from the original context of individual cases and assigns codes to units of meaning in the texts” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1375). This is reflected in steps one to four. This is followed by a process of recontextualisation where “he or she examines the codes for patterns and

then reintegrates, organizes, and reduces the data around central themes and relationships drawn across all the cases and narratives" (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, s.1375), as described in step five.

FINDINGS

In this section, we will elaborate the findings from the analysis of the six interviews. We commence with the elements from the conceptual framework (Figure 2) which was investigated through a deductive analysis. Next, we shed light on the findings that emerged through the inductive analysis.

The deductive analysis aimed at investigating, developing, and possibly confirming or rejecting the elements of the conceptual framework. All five elements from the framework were found in the analysis. Table 3 provides an overview of the number of coded excerpts in step one of the deductive analysis process, partly from the three pre-interviews, and partly from the three post-interviews after the music activities (in brackets).

	Music therapist		Music educator		Music performer		All in all
Relationship	30 + (27)	= 57	18 + (29)	= 47	50 + (23)	= 73	177
Role	11 + (2)	= 13	12 + (6)	= 18	8 + (5)	= 13	44
Context	8 + (6)	= 14	21 + (10)	= 31	8 + (5)	= 13	58
Professionalism	33 + (31)	= 64	21 + (37)	= 58	51 + (42)	= 93	215
Personality	15 + (12)	= 27	7 + (14)	= 21	27 + (23)	= 50	98

Table 3: Distribution of deductively coded excerpts

These elements will be elaborated later in this section. A sixth element, 'values', emerged through the inductive coding process. This was included as a topic in the pre-interview guide. However, in five out of six interviews, interviewees brought this up before being asked about it, either by reflecting explicitly about their values, or more implicitly by reflecting on the wishes, aspirations, and aims underpinning their professional actions. All interviewees often linked these values to their experiences of authenticity in connection with their professional work. The count of excerpts in this newly created element of 'values' can be seen in Table 4.

	Music therapist		Music educator		Music performer		Total
Values	8 + (1)	= 9	10 + (12)	= 22	39 + (14)	= 53	84

Table 4: Distribution of inductively coded excerpts

It is important to emphasise that this is not a quantitatively focused study and therefore the above figures have not been subject to further analyses. The tables merely demonstrate how the analysis confirmed and added another element to the conceptual framework (Figure 2).

During the qualitative analysis, the coded excerpts were further distilled and refined as to essentialise the content of the six elements. In the following sections we will explain these findings further.

The five – now six – elements

There is an incredible number of thoughtful and exciting statements and reflections in the six interviews that not only confirms the five elements, but also expands on them. As much as we would like to, we cannot convey all the material within the scope of this article. We therefore review the six elements in a rather general manner. More details can be found in the Supplementary Materials¹ which display all findings from step five of the analysis process.

When presenting the six elements, we include quotes to illustrate the content of these elements. Since many quotes were taken from conversations between two or more people, there will be several [...] markings, which illustrates that listening sounds and comments from others have been omitted to provide a better flow and to get the point across as clearly as possible. As an introduction to each element, we will briefly present the sub-themes that have emerged at step five of the analysis process.

Relationship

In the conceptual framework (Figure 2), this element is divided into 'Relationship to others – outward' and 'Relationship to oneself – inward'. However, through the analysis, we found a mix of these two perspectives where the music professionals described their attention as simultaneously outward and inward. The element 'Relationship' thus became threefold.

'Relationship – Outward'

The sub-themes related to this part of the element include: attention to the participant's needs, dynamics, and engagement; organising activities in relation to needs and motivation; and flexibility regarding methods and activities.

In their reflections, the interviewees describe a focus on 'the other', the participants, and their needs, dynamics, and engagement. There is a focus on the ability to organise activities based on the other's needs or motivation, which O., in the capacity of music educator, reflects upon:

But, but it's just like ... if it [a predetermined activity] somehow becomes the focus of the session, then we lose the opportunities to go where ... where the children also have some kind of fire burning, or a motivation of their own, because it's actually something they're interested in, musically.

The music performer, K., also stresses the importance of focusing on the audience, being very flexible in the planning of activities and in the choice of methods and songs, stating: "So, we only have a set list until we have a new one, you could say." Likewise, music therapist, R., reflects on authenticity in terms of 'being with the other':

it feels nice to go this way, we go together [...] if it's authentic or there's a flow in it, then ... it just works, and then there are some things that my consciousness kind of leaves out. [...] It doesn't mean much anymore. [...] Then I feel that I am with the other.

¹ The Supplementary Materials are available as a separate downloadable file on the article's webpage in Approaches.

'Relationship – Outward and inward'

This element is divided into the following sub-themes: contact outward, contact inward – sensing both own and others' boundaries; using one's own sense of humour, one's own experiences; using one's own energy and motivation – also in the music; and the outer relationship has inner implications.

The music therapist T. describes this simultaneous outward and inward contact: "Feeling the other particularly intensely can only happen when I am authentically present, right here and now. Tuned into the other and in touch with myself."

Many of the interviewees' reflections on this outward-inward relationship revolve around the ability to involve oneself and one's personal experiences to engage the participants and engage oneself. As music performer, K., describes it: "The children help to drive forward the pace, the experience, the action... each other ... us.... I don't think that is possible if the adult is not authentic. If you're not ALL into it, why should the kids be?"

Likewise, music therapists, E. and R., reflect upon disclosing personal experiences in the therapeutic work and how the connection with the client can disappear if just pretending:

E: [...] she needs me to show, also, that things can be difficult. [...] and that's where the authenticity comes in, right. [...] Because ... she also has that sense of bullshit, you know. So, she just shuts down if it's bullshit, you know. [...]

R.: Yes, because you very well know that this authenticity must be present.

E.: It must be there.

R.: You can't just make things up (laughs) [...] It needs to have some ... connection to reality.

In this borderland of both inward and outward attention, there is a focus on using one's own energy and motivation – in musical as well as non-musical activities. All interviewees reflect on the necessity to find the music activities meaningful to themselves, while ensuring that it also makes sense for the participants. Likewise, the element contains statements regarding how the external relationship with the other has internal implications for the experience of authenticity.

'Relationship – Inward'

This covers the following sub-themes: to be the person one is – also as professional. Trusting one's own instincts; attention to one's own energy, preferences, impulses; and attention to inner conflicts.

According to the interviewees, being an authentic music professional is deeply related to the person they are and their inner life and vitality. The experience of authenticity or inauthenticity can be used as a guiding tool, or a kind of barometer, according to music therapist, T.:

it can serve as a barometer, you know [...] authenticity, [...] that you can feel that you are actually being moved or... being in... you know, resonance [...] For me, it would be very easy to feel if I am in a situation where I experience myself as inauthentic [...] then it bounces off of me.

Authenticity, according to the interviewees, concerns the ability to listen to and trust their own instincts. This is something that music educator, G., tries to convey to her adult music students. "It's

very much focused on teaching them to trust ... their own instincts and to know themselves well enough so that what they do becomes authentic, because it IS them."

All the interviewees talk about being aware of their own energy, musical preferences, and impulses, exemplified here by music performer, O.: "when you can somehow feel 'this sounds good', or 'I feel like dancing to that', [...] clearly, it means a lot [...] So yeah, you must like it yourself."

Overall, the analysis of this element shows that the music professional's awareness of the relationship is an extremely significant element in the experience of authenticity in one's professional work. According to the interviewees, the music professional must be able to navigate between being very aware of what the participants say and communicate, and being very aware of how this is experienced in oneself. Furthermore, an inward attention and contact with one's own energy, preferences, and impulses supports the experience of authenticity, both in the musical relationship and in the relationship in general.

Role

In the conceptual framework (Figure 2), this element concerns the role taken on by the music professional and the role being ascribed from the outside by others. Ideally, these two correspond. The sub-themes that emerged in the analysis of this element are as follows: taking on a role outwardly; performing professionalism; settings and relationships can affect the role; different professions provide different roles; external as well as internal expectations can affect the role; navigating between several different professions; and stepping out of the role can create a shift in the relationship.

The interviewees agree, across professionalisms, on several different things. When they talk about 'role', it can be related to the role or function that they are assigned from the outside. But it can also be related to a role that they only presume they are assigned, as music educator, G., has experienced when conducting a certain adult choir:

[...] in reality it was probably because I didn't quite dare to be myself. I think. Surely, I thought I had to fill out a role that didn't really feel natural. [...] Perhaps there was an expectation of me being ... very charismatic, personality-wise, and I don't know if I was that (laughs).

The concept of 'role' is often linked to their own experience of the role that they take on and show outwardly, and the experience of authenticity that this can create or hinder. Music therapist, E., describes her 'therapist role' and the results of not taking on that specific role:

I started during this spring... uh... to allow myself to feel that tiredness. And then just be present with that. Uhm.... And something really good actually came out of that a couple of times. [...] Because... then I don't try to [...] put on that therapist role: "Ghhhrk, now I'll just put on this suit, um... and use the tools that I know... can give, can make sense..." [...] because then it ruins the authenticity.

Music performer, O., also expresses how she takes on a role in her professional work while also connecting it with being a 'genuine human being':

for me, quite personally ... it's very much about being ... being a present and genuine human being ... Also ... I mean ... even if, in some of the things I do, I take on a ... a role, in one way or another.

Several of the interviewees talk about how the role they take on can feel more or less correlating with the energy or motivation they have for their professional tasks at hand. For example, music therapist, E., at times, experiences herself as some sort of actor, putting on a 'therapist suit' and acting like a therapist but not necessarily experiencing herself as particularly convincing: "sometimes you must pull out that uhm 'therapist suit', right [...] so... it's kind of ... becoming a movie actor who isn't necessarily... A-class, but... maybe rather B-class.

In terms of taking on a role, many of the interviewees also describe distinguishing between private persons and professionals. For example, music performer, K., describes how she can enhance the features in herself necessary for her professional work – features that are also conditioned by the people she is with such as children:

My job as a musician is extremely outgoing, and I am not like that [...] In reality, I'm a very, very private person [...] I think, when standing on a stage, like that, and throwing my arms out and going "whoa whoa", then you'd think: "Wow, she's really an outgoing type of person", right. To some degree. And I really don't think I'm like that, privately. [...] but I AM like that ... in the company of children.

Almost all interviewees have a multidisciplinary profile, which can be an advantage in the professional work, giving the opportunity to be a role model, as music educator, G., states:

So, for me, I think that there is some authenticity in maintaining ... uh ... the musician, also when teaching. [...] that you are not afraid of using yourself [...] be a role model once in a while. [...] that you feel okay demonstrating something or doing things that they can engage in.

However, this multi-disciplinarity in professional profile can also give rise to internal conflicts, as music therapist, R., experiences when she is expected to do music therapy, but is also employed as a psychotherapist:

It just didn't work. [...] I remember sitting afterwards and being really frustrated... What had gone wrong for me in my work with that group? [...] It wasn't about me and that situation, actually. [...] It was really... that I did things I didn't wish to do or wasn't supposed to do.

Hence, the element of role, according to the interviewees, is connected to the role they take on - by virtue of their professionalism – and the role they are ascribed to from the outside. Furthermore, it is related to how they perceive themselves in that role, conditioned by a resonance within themselves, as well as the ability to be a present and genuine human being whilst maintaining their professional tasks.

Context

The sub-themes related to this element are as follows: new and unfamiliar settings can affect authenticity; good settings enhance professionalism; ignoring the contextual aspects, having 'binocular-vision'; and external demands, expectations, cultures, and challenges affect authenticity.

In the conceptual framework (Figure 2), the element 'context' is understood as how the role fits the context. The analysis shows that the experience of authenticity by the music therapists and music educators can be affected by contextual factors such as new and unfamiliar settings for their work (e.g., participating in this research project). New and unfamiliar settings did not seem to be an issue for the music performers. In addition, the music performers did not participate in the MUFASA-research project, and as such are not influenced by these research frameworks.

All interviewees reflect on how contextual factors such as external demands and expectations, organisational cultures and restructuring, or challenges in staff groups can affect their work and their experience of authenticity. Music therapist, E., shared:

I have simply been... pissed off during this reorganisation. Um... And then some days I've simply just thought: "Well that has to... that's deposited right there on the shelf and now I'm going in here". And I haven't been able to really involve myself emotionally, but I've been able to handle it and have this professionalism and be... how can you put it ... authentically professional. [...] but without being emotionally involved in it, you know.

Likewise, music educator, G., reflects on the variations in her work effort as a result of the conditions on her different workplaces:

[...] if you only talk about it all the time, and it always ends up with... we've spent seven meetings on this, and then: "No, we can't afford it anyway" [...] Well, that drains more than anything [...] Whereas the places, [...] where we get into action fairly quickly, [...] they get more out of their employees, and [...], you just give that thirty percent more. [...] Perhaps because then you're also allowed to do something where you... where you are passionate about it, and think that you can, indeed, really be allowed to be authentic in what you do.

All six interviewees reflect on the advantage of being able to ignore the disturbing contextual conditions by having a 'binocular view' and focusing on what is important in their professional work, related to their core competencies. As music therapist, T., describes it:

I get an image of ... you know, of the binoculars, right. That you just [...] zoom in and in reality leave everything else [...] outside. And if that zooming in somehow becomes... sincere, you know, then maybe it's easier to make space for the authenticity.

Music educator, G., talks about how this research project and the video recording can impact her:

So, the moment you sort of get into some kind of flow, it becomes very secondary, because then I'm really just in the room with them. So, I've kind of ... created a reality together with them, and then the other thing isn't really that important, because then my most important task, right there actually, is to have ... you know, to be present together with them. And if my head is there all the time, then I'm not present with them, and then somehow I think that I'm not actually authentic either.

Likewise, music performer, K., talks about how she can go on stage and forget about the serious illness of a loved one:

I can be on the phone with the hospital and doctors and everything ... six minutes before I go on stage. Then it's time, and I go on stage, and then it's just out of my head. [...] Because then it's about what's in front of me and the kids who are there, right. [...] fortunately, it's an ability I have, because otherwise I think it would be incredibly troublesome.

Based on the analysis, the contextual conditions for the music professionals can be considered a significant factor that influences their experience of authenticity. The analysis also shows that, across professions, they emphasise the ability to be able to focus on their practical work, to 'zoom in', set aside disturbing factors, and focus on what is right in front of them.

Professionalism

In the conceptual framework (Figure 2), 'professionalism' refers to having the skills to fill out the role and let go of control. This element contained many excerpts in the initial part of the analysis (see Table 2), which is perhaps not surprising, considering the focus of the interviews being the experience of authenticity in relation to professional work. Numerous interviewees' reflections relate to their professionalism: their competencies and skills, the content of their practical work, and what they find important in their work and in their way of being a music professional. The element contains many different sub-themes, not all of which can be elaborated within the scope of this article (please refer to the Supplementary Materials for more details). The coded interview excerpts about authenticity within this element are organised in the following sub-themes: focusing on what is needed, initiating relevant activities, setting oneself aside; balancing one's inherent personal qualities in the professional work; using one's skills to act and react flexibly and meaningfully for oneself and the participant; being aware of fatigue and low energy; being aware of one's inner life, one's own motivation, musicality, and creativity – and use it in a balanced way; having good colleagues and good facilities; balancing well-known experiences and routines with new material; knowing oneself and continuously developing one's professional skills; and taking responsibility, creating structure, setting limits, and ensuring basic trust.

Overall, there are many reflections concerning the importance of being flexible when initiating activities, and the ability to apply one's own skills to act and react meaningfully for both the recipient and the music professional. The music performer, O., talks about being able to organise musical activities for children and adults around a certain balance or 'bliss point':

... that bliss point between something familiar, implying that they don't get totally overwhelmed and confused, and something which in one way or another has a new taste to it, so that they become curious, and uhm ... and want it.

The music therapist, E., reflects on how the implementation of meaningful and relevant activities also affects her experience of authenticity: "Well, it's also about being able to ... ask the relevant questions or ... initiate the relevant activities or... you know. That's what makes me, or my way of being, authentic, because what we do makes sense."

In addition to this professional flexibility, most interviewees talk about being able to balance themselves and their own personality and energy in their professional work. They touch upon subjects such as fatigue and low energy, and how this can be either bypassed or applied in their professional work. Here, a rather big difference emerged between music professionals as the three music therapists found it necessary in their work to acknowledge this fatigue and occasionally show it or use it as T. describes: "I can register that "Oh, my God I'm tired," [...] but maybe that's also what's needed right now. Maybe that is also what is called for right now in the relationship, right."

On the other hand, music educator, G., mentions that even though she is tired, she can neither acknowledge it nor be tired when facilitating activities for a large group of people:

If I go into a room with 15 children, then ... you just can't do that, not in the same way [...] and even ... Without saying it, I actually can't BE tired either. So, you just can't do that. Then it just ... shatters. There is so much [...] about the flow that must be in the room, which relies on the fact that I'm the one who creates it.

G. also mentions how she, as both a music educator and as a music performer (see Table 1), can occasionally ignore her own lack of energy, and that the experience of authenticity can thus be distant:

The moment you walk into that teaching room or concert room to play a concert, you just have to pull it out of a hat somehow, whether you feel like it or not. [...] It might just be about, from how far away the authenticity must be retrieved.

The two music performers, O. and K., do not talk specifically about fatigue during concerts. Instead, they share that fatigue can show up after the concert, if it has been a "*heavy concert*", as K. labels it, where she has spent a lot of energy engaging children and adults. O. shares similar sentiments especially for concerts for parents of very young children: "I was completely exhausted when we finished. [...] I simply had to sit and stare straight into the air for two hours when we had played two or three concerts like those."

According to all six music professionals, the ability to establish a framework for social interaction and ensuring basic trust is considered essential. The analysis reflects that the way in which this is executed is related to personal ways of being a music professional. Music educator, G., talks about being able to set the necessary boundaries from the start and use music to 'play out' these boundaries. Music performer, O., spends time communicating verbally to make the adults and children feel safe whereas music performer, K., would rather show than tell. Music therapist, E., talks

about being able to 'take care of the space' and look after those who seek help while having an overview of the process.

Across the interviewees, there is consensus about how years of experience result in greater flexibility, a greater ability to have confidence in one's own expertise, and the ability to recognise what is important and what feels right for oneself. K., who works as both a music performer and music educator (see Table 1), reflects about becoming more aware of and clear about what she wants as a music professional as she becomes more experienced, stating: "I don't want to spend my time compromising with myself and the way I... and what I think the children should receive."

Overall, this element contains many different aspects of the different professionalisms in terms of competencies to act and react flexibly and meaningfully, follow where intuition and creativity leads, facilitate good frameworks for the activities, secure basic trust for the participants, and register one's own limits and energy. In music professional work, all interviewees recognise that fatigue is occasionally present but managed differently in practice.

Personality

In the conceptual framework (Figure 2), the key words for this element concern a continuous personal development as well as having a transparent persona. Through the analysis, the following sub-themes have been created: being oneself; being honest and 'in tune'; personal history and social preferences affect the personality and thus professionalism; doing things in one's own way; sharing one's own experiences and at the same time maintain one's own boundaries; personality being present in the musical material; personality affecting the professionalism; and setting aside one's own feelings, impulses, and preferences.

Having a transparent persona involves being able to express clearly to the outside what is experienced on the inside, thereby revealing one's personality. Across the interviewees, there is more or less attention to this element – the personality – to what it means for their music professional work, and their experience of their own authenticity. This is exemplified by music educator, G., who talks about being passionate about music: "if it's not something I'm passionate about, if it's not something where I feel I'm authentic, then it's hard for me to sell it." This is also reflected by music therapist, E., stating that: "[...] there must be some degree of me... now I'm E., but I am also the therapist... here... So, the balance of that, uhh... [...]. Without it becoming private-personal, but rather... more like ... overall personal-therapeutic."

This element of personality also contains statements regarding 'doing things in one's own way'. As music therapist, T., expresses: "If it feels right for you, then it's probably right for you." Music performer, K., also mentions this: "You know, what works for me doesn't necessarily work... for you and vice versa, right."

Music educator, G., and music performer, O., also advocate for being yourself and doing things in the way that suits you best:

G.: Because if anything, children can see right through you in no time, if you are not yourself.

O.: There is not like a one-size-fits-all [...] I have also seen people do things where I thought; Okay, I can see that it works. I simply can't see myself doing it.

Music performer, O., recalls experiences where she tried out the same material as another colleague: “[...] it always just fell to the ground with a BANG when I tried to do the same, right.”

In that sense, the analysis shows that musical activities and materials are often connected to the individual and might not work for another person despite being from the same profession. Within this element, there are also sub-themes related to how personality is present in the musical material and how professionalism can be affected by the personality. Music therapist, R., talks about using music to attune to others through sound, but at the same time also register and attune to her own feelings. She can put her personal experience into sound:

It feels like a coherent - authentic probably - expression. It gives me an experience of being in control - that the inner and the outer are connected; the fact that I am able to come up with a relatively precise musical expression of my own personal experience.

Also, music therapist, R., uses the phrase *“using authenticity therapeutically”*, stating that her authenticity can be applied in relation to her professional work. Music performer, K., is often, during interviews, considering what she thinks is fun and important and is aware of not compromising her own ideas and wishes:

It's damn fun to do a pirate concert, but you can ... but you don't have to be dressed up! So, there's something about ... that if children are going to catch it, and if children are going to be engaged and preoccupied by it, then somehow it must be ... a little silly and a little 'adult-haha'. And I really don't wanna do that.

Conversely, this element, 'personality', also concerns being able to disregard one's own feelings, preferences, and impulses. According to music therapist, R., there is a risk of losing track of what is happening in the music and the relationship when only focusing on one's own process and expression. She has concerns about losing the sense of the process when enjoying her music and 'being in a good place':

It's interesting if it puts ... puts my focus out of control, right. To be in a good place. [...] that's what the conflict is about when I sit at the piano. You know, if I disappear too much into my ... my own. Because I enjoy it so much.

Likewise, according to music educator, G., being a teacher requires the ability to confine the inner performer at bit: “you have to restrict yourself, because in teaching [...] even if you ARE the one, you're not the centre of attention.” On the other hand, when playing concerts and being on stage as a music performer, G. talks about consciously developing and displaying specific aspects of her personality:

I may have had to work a little on finding that diva side [...] which is sometimes required on a stage. [...] But I also think it's because I don't just go; “Hey! Look

at me!!" I think that perhaps if you feel that way, it might not be quite... quite the same difference. Maybe it depends on what you're coming from.

The music performer, K., has her own personal strategy when it comes to daring to stand on a stage: "You know, you have to arrive at some kind of ... "I don't freakin' care. I'll just do it", right."

In short, the element of personality concerns the possibility to apply personal expression, creativity, feelings, and preferences in professional work. This includes sharing personal experiences or presenting material in a personalised manner. However, the element of personality also includes statements regarding the music professionals' ability to either emphasise or tone down one's own impulses, personality traits, and feelings for the benefit of the process.

Values

The extracts that have emerged in the analysis have been organised under the following sub-themes: professional values; interpersonal values; and personal values. As previously mentioned, this element is new and has emerged through the inductive part of the analysis. Values are either expressed explicitly by the interviewees articulating values in their work, or not expressed explicitly as values but as essential focal points that have weight in their professional work or their understanding of music or children.

Professional values are related to the professional and/or methodical work and the professional context. The music educator, G., discuss the importance of creating something of value for the participants: "[...] I would like it to be something that could create value for them as child-parents together. [...] You know, something that did that, but also created a common value for the group."

Later in the interview, however, music educator, G., reflects more on 'creating something of value' and questions her earlier statement in the light of the concept of authenticity:

Well, it's a funny thing. I think those times when you are able to just let go of the idea of adding value that is probably where it IS authentic, because then you are beyond that. So, the problem is, I guess, if you start to think too much about it, and it seems that nothing is being added. Then it's probably precisely because it's not authentic, or because you're really out of the flow.

Likewise, music performer, O., talks about being able to let go of agendas and being able to let the music have value in itself, rather than facilitating music activities to train, for instance, the literacy of children:

[...] "now we're having music, because then we will be good at reading in five years" [...] I don't know ... It's such a ... a paradox in a way. I think it is Keld Fredens who once said that if music is to have ... all the good side effects that it can have, then it must have value in itself. [...] ... It is only when you treat the music as something that has value in itself that you actually have a CHANCE to get those side effects."

Music performer, O., will not make music with children just to improve their reading skills. The value for her is in the positive side effects of music that cannot be forced. This relates to music therapist, R., stating: "I think authenticity is also pretty much about... about living according to what you want, right. According to the principles you think are important in this context."

The interpersonal values are connected to statements that describe the relational aspects of the professional work. The music therapist, R., talks about equality and common understanding, about being a living human being who is influenced by and affects other people. Music educator, G., touches on topics such as equality, co-creation, participation, community, and *"creating a reality together with them."* The music performers, O. and K., touch on music as folk culture, an activating and involving get-together. They mention aspects such as community, participation, inclusion, fun, play, fantasy, and co-creation.

The personal values are rooted in statements regarding the interviewees' aim to maintain contact with themselves and their music in their work. For example, music therapist, E., wishes that *"there is something of me present in the music therapy"* and music therapist, R., emphasises being *"present and in a certain sense vulnerable."* For the music educator, G., there is a focus on being present, *"being there,"* and being in touch with her own desire to make music, to continue to develop musically, and have an active musicianship. For the music performers, O. and K., there is a focus on genuineness, credibility, and authenticity as a value in their work, being true to their own aesthetic values, not compromising with themselves, being open to many kinds of music, and not least to have fun.

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

This study has expanded on the initial conceptual framework (Bøtker & Jacobsen, 2023) by adding an extra element of values and supplementing with in-depth content for all elements. Many of the elements in Figure 3 are undeniably entangled. They have diffused boundaries, ambiguities, an enormous breadth, and a crisscrossing interconnectivity. The analysis and the above findings may therefore appear a bit forced but should be viewed as an attempt to separate things with the aim of understanding and offering the possibility of reflection.

Through the inductive analysis, another theme appeared which, under closer scrutiny, could prove to function as a synthesis. The theme appeared with the music educator, G., who referred to the ability to *"go in helicopter mode occasionally"* and get an overview of the activity while it was happening.

All six interview transcripts were analysed with this theme in mind and in five out of the six transcripts, text excerpts were coded for this emerging phenomenon. The term covers an aspect that can be found in quotes from all the music professionals: The twofold state of sustaining a musical or non-musical activity while also reflecting on the activity in progress and planning the further course of the process. Many excerpts from this theme could be categorised into one or more of the other six elements which made it appear as contained within all elements or, the other way around, encompassing all the six elements. Hence, it appeared as a relevant theme to use for further synthesis.

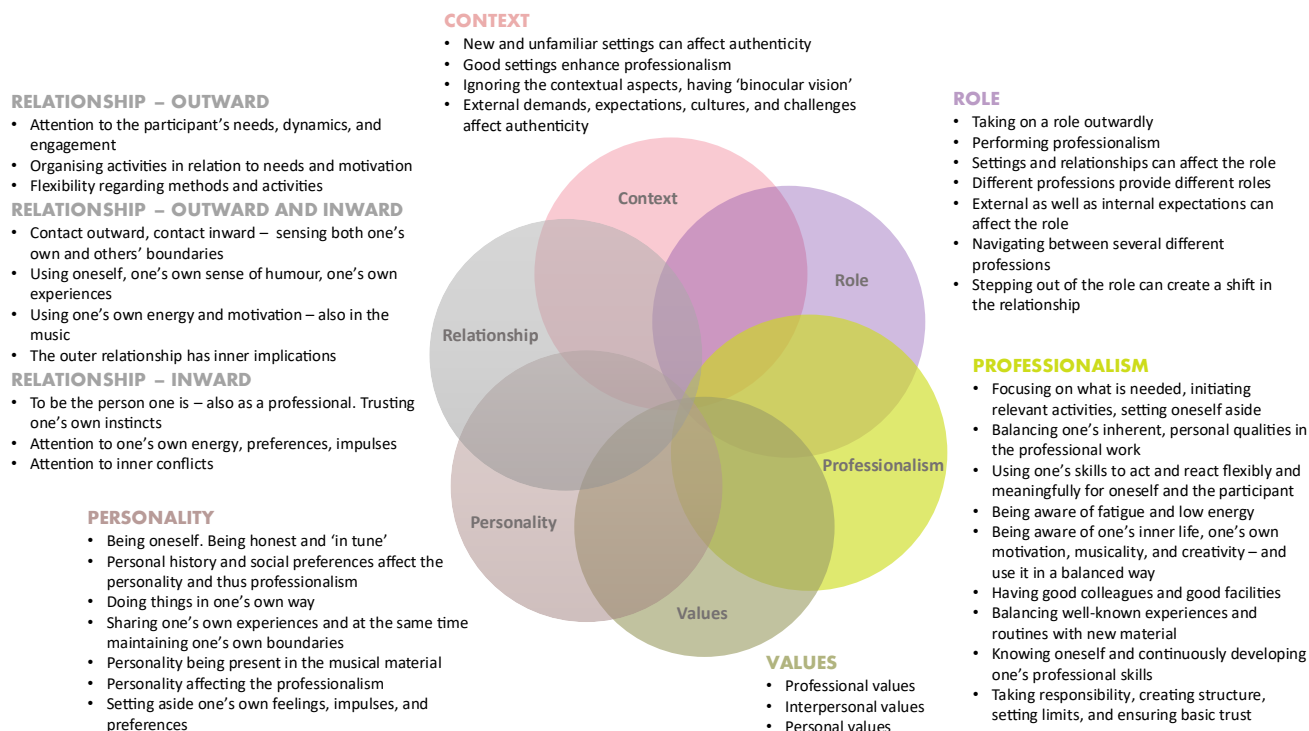


Figure 3: The elements of authenticity across three music professions

This theme, which was initially named 'helicopter-facilitator', appears as a significant part of the interviewees' experience of themselves as authentic professionals. The theme was later re-named 'floating-anchoring,' inspired by the water lily which manages to have a floating and flexible platform on the surface while being attached to and nourished by the bottom of the lake and water through its long stem. The metaphor is an attempt to give an impression of how a facilitator of musical activities can sustain engagement with the participants (anchoring) while having an analytical and reflective awareness at another level of consciousness (floating) at the same time.

The theme 'floating-anchoring' comprises of the following three sub-themes: a twofold awareness between sensations and analytical reflections; being able to assess the further progress of the activity; and dependent on an inherent balance of attention – inward and outward

Music educator, G., reflects on this phenomenon, which originated in the metaphor of a helicopter:

[...] I can't maintain that authenticity or that flow if I can't be both down ... but also be ... like, go in helicopter mode occasionally, because that's where I [...] have an overview of it; "Is now the good time to change?" [...] ... "Should we do this once more or shouldn't we?" So, it's always a 'sensing-feeling-thing', which I think will be connected to that 'helicopter'.

According to music educator, G., this experience comprises a state of sensing and having a professional reflective overview at the same time. Likewise, music performer, O., who also works as a music educator, mentions this dichotomy between the perception of what is happening here-and-now, and reflecting on how to respond to what is happening here-and-now:

There was always someone who fell out of the circle or didn't want to join us when we had to sing [...] And that just meant that my radar went like this; "Okay, who's sitting over there, how are they doing today, who's sitting over here, how are they doing today", while I was doing the first hello-song [...] And in some sort of... conglomerate of all possible sensations I've had, I decide if we're going this way or that way.

Music therapist, T., also mentions this duality in her attention and connects it with her own understanding and experience of authenticity:

So, I have a ... I have a professionalism running right next to ... like, just parallel to the presence, right, or ... or with the 'now'. ... And when they kind of complement each other, then it becomes – in the music therapy setting – for me, it becomes something where I can.. um... understand myself as being authentic.

Finally, music performer, K., also describes situations where she navigates between a sensorial and a reflective level whilst facilitating musical activities for a large group of people:

I make an effort of [...] putting them into a new context. [...] So, taking the 'troublemaker' M. on stage in front of 400 people, even though the adults are standing there thinking "OMG, she can't do that man, she can't control that!" [...] And then suddenly he stands there and finds out that [...] there is nothing he can do ... because I have one hand on his shoulder, and I know exactly what he must do. So ... so he can't freak out. So, the fact that you can actually... as an outsider, through music, give them a completely new role.

Despite all the non-verbal reactions from the participating adults in the audience, music performer, K., drawing on her many years of experience, is completely aware of what is going to happen, how it is going to happen, and why it happens.

As a synthesis combining the six elements included in the experience of authenticity across the three different music professions (with the phenomenon of "floating-anchoring", the first author created the following illustration (see Figure 4): The top part of the figure (REFLECTIVE) illustrates the previous conceptual framework of authenticity. The flower of the water lily and its six leaves illustrate the various elements that the interviewees have related to when reflecting on their experiences of authenticity in connection with their music professionalism. The flower also illustrates which elements could be activated and reflectively related to while simultaneously facilitating musical activities. These elements can of course have greater or lesser weight and focus for various reasons.

The bottom part of the figure (SENSORIAL) contains concepts and terms from the music professionals' descriptions of their experiences of authenticity from an active, musical perspective. These are some extremely lush and sensuous descriptions of being closely connected with intuition, of being dissolved and flowing into another soul, of meaningfulness, of coherence, of being absorbed in the relationship with children, of playfulness, imagination, and presence in a

bubble of shared energy. It is described as something almost magical, a feeling of something unhindered, a current you tap into, a feeling of inspiration, and of the music getting wings.

The phenomenon of 'floating-anchoring' can hereby be regarded as a fluctuating mode of consciousness enabling the music professional to observe the specific and also interconnected stances in the experience of authenticity as a music professional. This includes being in the creative, musical moment or in a position of reflection about what exactly encompasses and affects that actual moment, and from there on considering the next steps in the moments to come.

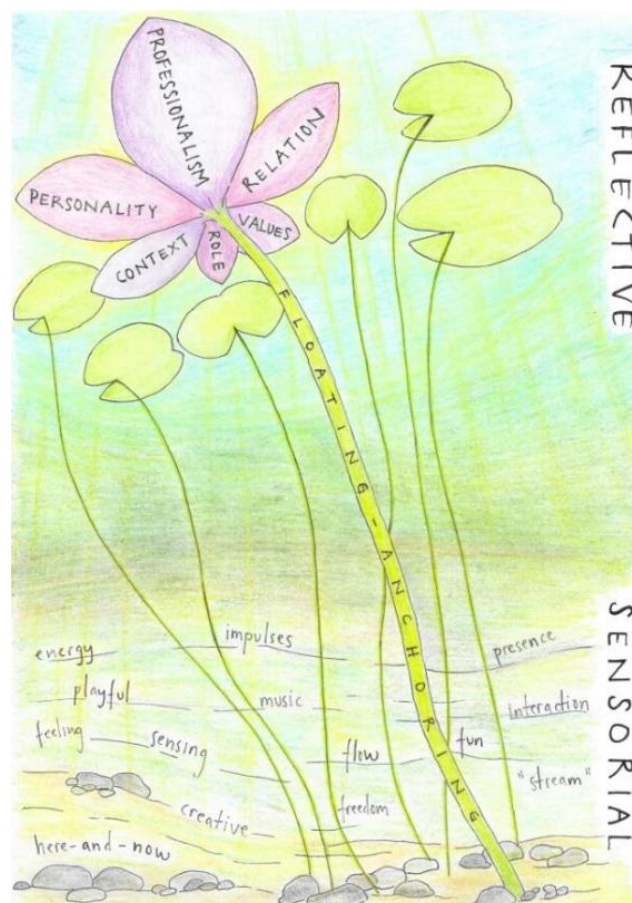


Figure 4: "Floating – anchoring"; The experience of authenticity as a fluctuating mode of consciousness

DISCUSSION

In this section, we will further discuss the findings in light of the theories mentioned in the introduction. We also wish to convey the limitations of this research study and discuss possible applications.

Many of the above synthesis elements can be related to Thompson's (2016) thoughts on authenticity, in particular his inward/outward awareness, stating that "authenticity always involves the individual's turning inward, and second, authenticity is always connected to its social context and how that social context takes its shape" (p. 172). Thompson's perspective aligns well with *the element of relationship*, in particular the inner/outer relationship where the music professional is aware of what is happening in the outside and inside relationship (e.g., being aware of one's own energy, feelings, and own impulses) at the same time. This also connects with McKinna's (2014) research showing a music performer's need to have "some kind of connection between yourself, the music and the audience and the room" (p. 64).

Thompson's thoughts also connect with *the element of context* and all the external factors that can influence the experience of authenticity. In this study, context is related to the frameworks and settings where the music professional work, the economic challenges, or the expectations from colleagues and leaders, and how this can interfere with the experience of authenticity.

Furthermore, Thompson (2016) states that “authenticity is distinguished by the consistency individuals have in aligning their actions or behavior with their ‘motivations or intentions’” (p. 172). This view relates to another element, *the element of values*, in terms of what drives, motivates, and influences on the choices of the music professionals in their work.

Looking at Figure 4, we can find many similar aspects to Bingham et al.’s (2022) description of authenticity as a complex constellation of personal and professional qualities. Authenticity, according to Bingham et al., embodies skills and engagement but also “expresses genuineness, reveals the personality, and personifies the unique relationship with clients” (Bingham et al., 2022, p. 6), which can be related to *the element of personality*. Bingham et al. (2022) also include a clinical stance which is something that interviewees in this study have not explicitly touched upon even though they have discussed their methods and their intentions behind their activities. Given that clinical stance was neither included in the interview guides, nor seemed important to the interviewees, it was not considered in the analysis either. Bingham et al.’s (2022) findings also include the notion of a clinical consciousness which is described as an “awareness of all that is happening clinically” (p. 6). This specific awareness of all that is happening is mentioned by all interviewees even though none of them use the term ‘clinically’. Hence, if we remove the term ‘clinically’ and replace it with ‘in practice’, this specific awareness, a ‘practice-awareness’, would also include all of the music professionals who participated in this study. It would then cohere, in a cross-professional perspective, that this specific intense attentiveness is needed to initiate and facilitate meaningful activities in their different music professional practices.

In this study, the experience of authenticity is also connected to *the element of role*, which is informed by both inside and outside expectations. It is inherent in the music professionals’ practical work that the role changes and the inner and exterior expectations towards the role changes as well. This could be connected to Bertinetto’s (2019) notion of authenticity as being ‘true to the moment.’ In that sense, authenticity would not be related to being true to oneself but being true to the specific music professional role in that moment. Bertinetto draws on the works of Dodd (2014) regarding improvisation, stating that improvisation is about “coping with challenges in the moment” (as cited in Bertinetto 2019, p. 11). This is also reflected in the statements of the interviewees which contained *the element of professionalism*: authenticity as a music professional is about being flexible, being able to change plans, facilitate relevant activities, and ask the relevant questions. Being a music professional is, in that sense, an improvisational act, being able to act and react sensibly and meaningfully for oneself and for the other.

Here it could be relevant to return to Richter and his notion of musical thinking. Richter (2021) argues for a connection to the intuition and a diminishing of the analytical side, with the guiding principles being awareness, attention, and presence. In his study, findings show that reflective awareness is part of the practical work of the interviewed music professionals, but they all emphasise that adhering solely to a cognitive, reflective awareness is unsatisfying. It could be argued, from this study, that in the in the music professional practice, there are degrees of analysis or reflective awareness, dependent on the needs of and the communication with the participants and the overall trajectory of the session. In this sense, the reflective aspect is regarded as something that can ideally enhance the creative flow and the authentic presence of the music professional. The

conception of floating-anchoring illustrates this two-fold attention and the simultaneous and fluctuating process between both the reflective and sensorial awareness.

Limitations

The intangible field of investigation

The theoretical concept and the lived experience of authenticity as a phenomenon can be difficult to describe and articulate. Analysing the transcriptions and their relation to the experience of authenticity has thus been strenuous. In the analysis, the experience of authenticity can seem somewhat concealed, as the word authenticity is not often mentioned. It calls for an acknowledgement of the fact that when searching for an understanding of this rather ambiguous phenomenon, it is essential to be able to reflect and analyse the periphery of it, and then, during further analysis and interpretation, apprehend the implicit meaning behind the explicit utterances as they come forward in a coherent complex. This has, at times, been challenging to capture and convey using interview quotes.

The process of decontextualising during data analysis has occasionally seemed forced. Many text excerpts are coded and categorised into several elements which are undeniably interconnected. It is all entangled in a kaleidoscopic jumble, which makes it difficult to separate and sort out to obtain clarity. There are many ways to perceive the phenomenon of authenticity and presumably more elements to support these perceptions. As an example, none of the interviewees talk explicitly about 'culture', or 'cultural identity', or about 'gender', 'minorities', or 'ethics'. Interviewing other music professionals from other professional or cultural contexts could presumably reveal other elements.

The empirical framework of this study consists of interviews with music professionals facilitating musical activities primarily for children and their parents, teachers, or caregivers. However, the theoretical framework does not solely comprise literature focusing on the experience of authenticity of music professionals within a family-oriented perspective. To the best of our knowledge, literature on that very specific topic is sparse. The theoretical framework is thus gathered from a broad range of literature on authenticity and music activities with many different kinds of human beings.

Researcher as interviewer

The interviews were conducted by the first author, whose professional identity consists of a mixture of all three professions. This can be an advantage, in terms of an insider-perspective to the life worlds of the interviewees and their professional experiences. However, if the researcher's own presumptions are not made conscious, it may inhibit in-depth questions and a more curious and open approach. Hence, shared and tacit knowledge may contribute to a deeper understanding of the music professionals' experiences, but at the same time cause premature categorisations of these experiences. To clarify my own presumptions, the first author made an extensive epoché at the beginning of the research process and attempted an open approach to the life worlds of the interviewees during data collection and analysis. Alongside the research process, the first author kept a research logbook to be aware of one's own reactions, reflections, and parallel processes during

the investigation. This was done not to avoid bias, but to be aware of bias, as Gadamer (1975) has argued: “prejudices are not only unavoidable, they are necessary, as long as they are self-reflectively aware” (as cited in van Manen, 2014, p. 354).

Participants

The selection of interviewees for the research project was mostly decided in advance, as the interviewed music therapists and the music educator were all participating in the MUFASA-project for which this study serves as follow-up research. The two music performers were invited to participate in this study based on their experience with musical performances for children and their parents, teachers, or caregivers.

More interviews and more interviewees could have added more perspectives to the study. However, interview data from just six interviewees enabled a thorough deductive as well as inductive analysis and avoided data overwhelm, which is in line with van Manen (2014) stating; “Too many transcripts may ironically encourage shallow reflection” (p. 353).

Only female music professionals participated in the interview study, and this may have given a skewed picture of the experience of authenticity. Interviewees of other genders might have provided different perspectives on the phenomenon. Returning to van Manen (2014), phenomenological research is not striving for empirical generalisations and so “it does not make much sense to ask how large the sample of interviewees, participants, or subjects should be, or how a sample should be composed and proportioned in terms of gender, ethnicity, or other selective considerations” (p. 353).

Several of the interviewees have mixed professional profiles (see Figure 1). They employ one specific music professionalism in the activities of this study, but they draw on several music professionalisms in their reflections during interviews. This multidisciplinary certainly reflects the reality of many music professionals today and is meaningful in terms of looking across professions. It does, however, challenge the possibilities of distinguishing between them.

Data analysis

The analysis was carried out by the first author. Validity of the analysis could have been improved by involving more collaborators. This could have been done by asking coauthors or other researcher colleagues to consider parts of the transcripts and let them code and analyse the text in order to compare and find nuances of understanding.

Although we primarily wanted to look for similarities across music professions and investigate the experience, understanding, and use of the phenomenon of authenticity, some small differences could be discerned. However, the data was insufficient to ascertain whether it was a significant difference or whether these differences were simply because of other factors such as the interviewees being different or the interviewees focusing on something specific.

Data saturation (Dai et al., 2019) is probably unobtainable in this context because the experience of authenticity is so individual, and the concept of authenticity is paradoxical (Dyndahl & Nielsen, 2013). As Bingham et al. (2022) describes it: authenticity is an embodied experience of self that is both “deeply felt and simultaneously illusive and hard to define” (p. 6). This was taken into consideration within the phenomenological methodology exemplified by van Manen (2014) describing the eidetic reduction, which is what happens while testing the meaning of a phenomenon

in order to grasp essential and meaningful insights about it: “the eidetic reduction makes the world appear as it precedes every cognitive construction: in its full ambiguity, irreducibility, contingency, mystery, and ultimate indeterminacy” (p. 230). According to van Manen (2014), the important thing to ask is, “does this textual portrayal of the eidos of this phenomenon or event point at a difference that makes a meaningful difference?” (p. 230).

Validity and transparency

Transparency can be hard to maintain given that the field of investigation is complex. It can be challenging to be explicit about all the little decisions during data analysis whilst maintaining focus and clarity in the dissemination. It is not possible to assess the value, strength, originality, and significance of a phenomenological study using procedural methods such as member’s check or triangulation. “The validity of a phenomenological study has to be sought in the appraisal of the originality of insights and the soundness of interpretive processes demonstrated in the study” (van Manen, 2014, p. 348). We cannot judge the originality of insights ourselves, however, we have tried to be thorough and provide as much information as possible regarding the research process. In the dissemination of the findings, we focused on giving voice to the interviewees through the many direct interview quotes. In the Supplementary Materials, we included the cross-disciplinary overview of all the extracts that developed through the analysis.

EPICURE, the qualitative research evaluation agenda developed by Stige et al. (2009) is often used when evaluating qualitative music therapy research. The acronym refers to various elements of importance in the research process: engagement, processing, interpretation, critique, usefulness, relevance, and ethics (p. 1504). Referring to the notion of “processing” (p. 1509), we would like to emphasise that this research has been conducted with the aim of exploring and grasping the phenomenon of authenticity, while at the same time conveying this descriptively. The research process has been thorough and systematic, presenting the empirical material and the findings both textually and visually. The position of the first author as interviewer and researcher as well as music therapist, music educator, and music performer has also been disclosed so as to be transparent about the fact that qualitative research, and the notion of processing, involves “appraisal and contextualized judgment” (Stige et al., 2009, p. 1509).

Application

Having the six elements framework (Figure 3) in mind, we would argue for authenticity as a valid, relevant, and possible starting point for reflection on our music professional practices. Asking questions such as, “When do I feel authentic as a music professional?”, “Why? Why not?”, and “Which elements influence my experience?”, could be helpful in approaching the core of one’s own professional practice and one’s interpretation of the profession. Allowing an openness towards the experience, accepting that sometimes it does not emerge, and growing in the knowledge about the many ways in which to approach the experience, could possibly enhance the understanding of our own agency and offer new perspectives on the kaleidoscopic experiences of authenticity.

Additionally, the phenomenon of ‘floating-anchoring’ could be valuable in terms of understanding and relating to the two modalities, the sensorial and the reflective, which complement

each other in the practical work, and which are connected by this notion of 'floating-anchoring' (Figure 4). From an educational point of view, the concept of floating-anchoring being at the core of one's music professional authenticity could presumably find application in the way we prepare, train, and educate students to become future music educators, music therapists, and music performers. This coheres with the aspiration of Parkinson and Smith (2015) stating that, in order for their field [music education] to develop for the benefit of all involved, authenticity should be "at the center of pedagogy, curriculum design, institutional strategy and disciplinary knowledge share" (p. 93).

With the knowledge now distilled from interviews with practitioners holding 10-20 years of experience, we would argue for a possibility to be more explicit about this phenomenon during training and ensure that students have the opportunity to incorporate an awareness of their own music professional authenticity even before they start their professional career. This could, in our view, have positive effects on their professional work and furthermore on their encounters with future students, clients, and audiences.

CONCLUSION

In this research study, we aimed to explore the phenomenon of authenticity as experienced in the professional practices of music education, music therapy and music performance. This study was conducted in an attempt to grasp and further understand the phenomenon of authenticity and convey this understanding to a broader community of music professionals. Hopefully, this could contribute to a deeper understanding of ourselves as music professionals.

The research questions guiding this investigation were as follows:

- How can experiences and understandings of the phenomenon of authenticity from music professionals across music therapy, music education and music performance be described?
- What are the possible applications of such descriptions?

A deductive and inductive analysis of six interviews with three different kinds of music professionals resulted in a framework (Figure 3) outlining six different elements affecting the experience of authenticity.

- *Relationship*: authenticity as deeply connected to the outward relationship that music professionals have with the participating students, clients, and audiences as well as the inward relationship that music professionals have with themselves. These relationships are ideally experienced and managed in a simultaneous inward and outward awareness, considering both the needs and reactions of the other and the instincts and impulses of themselves at the same time.
- *Role*: authenticity as related to the role that music professionals are taking on but also the role that music professionals are ascribed from the outside. External as well as internal expectations affect the role and the music professionals' experience of authenticity.
- *Context*: authenticity as affected by external demands, cultures, settings, and frameworks. It can, at times, be necessary to establish a 'binocular-vision' and ignore the contextual factors to enhance authenticity in the music professional practical work.

- **Professionalism:** authenticity as related to the (musical) skills needed to carry out the work. Being skilled and having the competence to flexibly act and react meaningfully for others and for oneself. Being able to balance one's own preferences, energy, inner life, and personal qualities into the professional work and thereby ensuring basic trust.
- **Personality:** authenticity as being honest and being oneself alongside the professional task. In this regard, the experience of authenticity as a music professional is about doing things in one's own way, letting the professionalism be affected by the personality, and letting the personality be present in the musical material and activities.
- **Values;** authenticity as guided and affected by the underlying values in the music professional work. These values can be related to professional perspectives, inter-personal perspectives and personal perspectives.

A reflective awareness regarding the above six elements can be carried out directly in the active, professional work, but also in retrospect. In an attempt to connect these six elements with the lived experience of authenticity, a synthesis of two positions is illustrated in Figure 4 suggesting the conception of 'floating-anchoring' as the connection between the reflective, cognitive awareness and the creative, sensorial presence of the music professional. It is important to state, though, that there is no favoured position to hold. Rather, the awareness of floating-anchoring could enable the unhindered fluctuation between these two, optimally simultaneous, attitudes that encompasses the music professional work.

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Ελληνική περίληψη | Greek abstract

“Αυτό είναι που με κάνει αυθεντικό, επειδή αυτό που κάνουμε έχει νόημα” – Οι εμπειρίες της αυθεντικότητας επαγγελματιών μουσικών: Μία φαινομενολογική, ερμηνευτική μελέτη συνέντευξης

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Στους χώρους της μουσικής εκπαίδευσης, της μουσικοθεραπείας και της θεωρίας για τη μουσική εκτέλεση έχουν συζητηθεί και διερευνηθεί ποικίλες όψεις της έννοιας της αυθεντικότητας. Η αυθεντικότητα φαίνεται να είναι μια έννοια με ευρείες δυνατότητες εφαρμογής και ομοίως ευρεία όρια ορισμού, γεγονός που καθιστά δύσκολη τη διερεύνησή της. Αντλώντας από τη γνώση και το θεωρητικό πλαίσιο που αναπτύχθηκε από τις Bøtker και Jacobsen (2023), επιθυμούμε να συνεχίσουμε την διερεύνηση της αυθεντικότητας εντός τριών μουσικών επαγγελματιών μέσα από μία προοπτική βασισμένη στην πράξη. Για την παρούσα μελέτη, μουσικοθεραπευτές, μουσικοπαιδαγωγοί και μουσικοί ερμηνευτές (έξι στο σύνολό τους) συμμετείχαν σε δύο συνεντεύξεις με θέμα τις εμπειρίες της δικής τους αυθεντικότητας όταν συντονίζουν μουσικές δραστηριότητες με παιδιά και ενήλικες (γονείς ή εκπαιδευτικούς). Οι συνεντεύξεις μεταγράφηκαν και αναλύθηκαν ακολουθώντας θεματική κωδικοποίηση και ανάλυση – απαγωγικά με βάση το εννοιολογικό πλαίσιο των Bøtker και Jacobsen, καθώς και επαγωγικά για την εύρεση νέων αναδυόμενων θεματικών σε αυτά τα τρία επαγγελματικά πεδία. Τα ευρήματα επιβεβαιώνουν το εννοιολογικό πλαίσιο,

αλλά επίσης υποδηλώνουν μία διεύρυνση, προσθέτοντας το στοιχείο των «Αξιών». Το νέο πλαίσιο απαρτίζεται από έξι στοιχεία που όλα αφορούν στην εμπειρία της αυθεντικότητας: η σχέση, ο ρόλος, το πλαίσιο, ο επαγγελματισμός, η προσωπικότητα, οι αξίες. Επιπρόσθετα, μέσω της επαγωγικής ανάλυσης, προέκυψε μία επιπλέον θεματική – «αιώρηση-αγκύρωση» – περιγράφοντας και συνθέτοντας τη σχέση ανάμεσα στην αναστοχαστική και την αισθητηριακή επίγνωση που αλληλοσυμπληρώνονται στην εμπειρία της αυθεντικότητας εντός αυτών των τριών μουσικών επαγγελμάτων. Αυτή η σύνθεση αιώρησης-αγκύρωσης προτείνεται ως ένα σχετικό πλαίσιο για την κατάρτιση και την εκπαίδευση ατόμων σε αυτά τα τρία μουσικά επαγγέλματα.

ΛΕΞΕΙΣ ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ

αυθεντικότητα, μουσική εκπαίδευση, μουσικοθεραπεία, μουσική εκτέλεση