

**EXPLORING MUSICAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT: PERSPECTIVES
OF STAGE THEORY, SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY,
AND LIFESPAN APPROACH**

*MÜZİKAL KİMLİK GELİŞİMİNİ KEŞFETMEK: SAHNE KURAMI,
ÖZ BELİRLEME KURAMI VE YAŞAM BOYU YAKLAŞIMINDAN
PERSPEKTİFLER*

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ABSTRACT: Music has a profound impact on a person's identity and has a complicated and deep relationship with the self. The psychological concept called "musical identity" includes a variety of elements derived from "personal, social, emotional, and musical competencies." It represents how people behave in a cultural and social context and is influenced by their involvement in music and practice. This study examines how people acquire musical knowledge and skills and also the cognitive, emotional and social aspects of this process. Trevarthen and Malloch's Stage Theory, which hypothesises that there are discrete transitions in musical development across the lifespan, is a well-known framework in this area. Another approach is Evans and McPherson's application of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasises the significance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in forming musical identity. Using a lifelong perspective, Lamont emphasizes the impact of social settings and cultural environments on the negotiation of musical identity. Her work emphasises the significance of early musical encounters, the influence of formal and informal musical interactions during infancy, and the development of musical identity during adolescence and maturity. Understanding these frameworks enhances our knowledge of how musical identities are formed and also has implications for music education, therapy, and the promotion of lifelong musical participation.

Key Words: Musical Development, Musical Identity, Music and Self, Self-Determination Theory, Lifespan Approach, Stage Theory.

ÖZ: Müziğin kişinin kimliği üzerinde derin bir etkisi olup; benlikle karmaşık ve derin bir ilişkisi vardır. "Müzikal kimlik" adı verilen bu psikolojik kavram, "kişisel, sosyal, duygusal ve müzikal yeterliliklerden" türetilen çeşitli unsurları içerir. İnsanların kültürel ve sosyal bağlamda nasıl davrandıklarını temsil eder ve

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onların müzik ve uygulamaya katılımlarından etkilenir. İnsanların müzik bilgi ve becerilerini nasıl edindiklerine ilişkin çalışma, bu sürecin bilişsel, duygusal ve sosyal yönlerini inceliyor. Trevarthen ve Malloch'un yaşam boyu müzikal gelişimde farklı geçişler olduğunu varsayan Sahne Kuramı ("Evre Teorisi" veya "Aşama Kuramı") bu alanda iyi bilinen bir çerçevedir. Diğer bir yaklaşım ise müzikal kimliğin oluşturulmasında özerkliğin, yeterliliğin ve ilişkililiğin önemini vurgulayan Evans ve McPherson'un Öz-Belirleme Kuramı uygulamasıdır. Yaşam boyu bir bakış açısı kullanan Lamont, sosyal ortamların ve kültürel ortamların müzikal kimliğin müzakere edilmesi üzerindeki etkisini vurguluyor. Çalışmaları, erken dönem müzikal karşılaşmaların önemini, bebeklik dönemindeki resmi ve resmi olmayan müzikal etkileşimlerin etkisini ve ergenlik ve olgunluk döneminde müzikal kimliğin gelişimini vurgulamaktadır. Bu çerçeveleri anlamak, müzikal kimliklerin nasıl oluşturulduğuna dair bilgimizi geliştirir ve müzik eğitimi, terapi ve yaşam boyu müzikal katılımın teşviki açısından etkileri vardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Müzikal Gelişim, Müzikal Kimlik, Müzik ve Benlik, Öz Belirleme Kuramı, Yaşam Süresi Yaklaşımı, Sahne Kuramı.

1. INTRODUCTION

Music and the self-share a profoundly intimate and complex relationship.¹ The role of music in shaping one's identity goes beyond any other human engagement.² Musical identity, a psychological construct,³ encompasses various components derived from personal, social, emotional, and musical competencies that shape the musical self. It pertains to the question of "who we are and who we are becoming" through all forms of musical engagement, including listening.⁴ Developing a unique sense of identity within the context of society is crucial for personal growth and education, enabling individuals to maintain a distinct sense of self in various circumstances. The formation of one's musical identity is influenced by factors such as motivation, practice, commitment, and individual personality traits.⁵ Musical

¹ Wilfried Gruhn-Kristel Täht-Kai Kiilu-Rein Ristmägi-Kai Pöder, "Musical Identity Formation: Investigating The Social, Personal, Musical and Educational Factors", *Finnish Journal of Music Education*, Vol 20, 2017, p. 8–21.

² Wayne Bowman, "The Role of Music in Constructing One's Identity", *International Journal of Music Education*, Vol 22, Issue 3, 2004, p. 189-202.

³ Mirjam Spychiger- Pascal Hechler, "Musical Identity as a Psychological Construct", *Psychology of Music*, Vol 42, Issue 2, 2014, p. 223-36.

⁴ Wayne Bowman, *ibid*, p.5.

⁵ Carol S. Dweck, "Motivation, Practice and Commitment in Shaping Musical Identity", *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, Vol 144, 2000, p. 59-66.

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identity encompasses both transient and enduring behaviors and attitudes, shaped by formal and informal education, and reflects how individuals present themselves within cultural and social contexts.⁶

Research has shown the complex interrelationships between individuals and music, showing how musical experiences impact one's sense of self and sense of belonging to the outer world. According to Baker and Wigram,⁷ a person's musical identity, which encompasses things like musical likes, talents, values, identity perception, and social interactions, is a reflection of their relationship with music and experiences. In their study, Hallam, Creech, and McQueen⁸ highlight the significance of music for self-expression, social interaction, and self-perception as they explore the development of a musical identity in young adulthood and the ways in which it contributes to identity building. In their discussion of the connection between musical identity and musical tastes, identity perception, and other factors, Hargreaves and MacDonald⁹ emphasize the importance of musical experiences in shaping one's identity.

The psychology of musical development is the study of the cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of how people develop their musical knowledge and abilities.¹⁰ According to Hargreaves and North¹¹ and Juslin and Sloboda,¹² it covers a variety of research topics, including the growth of musical abilities, cognitive

⁶ Pamela Evans-Gary McPherson, "The Influence of Musical Experiences on the Development of Musical Identity", *Music Education Research*, Vol 17, Issue 4, 2015, p. 474-488.

⁷ Freya Baker-Tony Wigram, *Musical Identity: A Framework, Musical Identities*, 1st Edition, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 1-20.

⁸ Susan Hallam-Andrea Creech- Helena McQueen, *Musical Identity and The Development of Musical Identity in Young Adults Vol 2*, The Oxford Handbook of Music Education, Oxford University Press, 1st Edition, England 2011, p. 313-26.

⁹ David J. Hargreaves-Raymond A. R. MacDonald, *Musical Identity and Musical Self: Psychological, Social and Cultural Perspectives*, Musical Identities, 1st Edition, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 1-20.

¹⁰ Susan Hallam, *The Development of Musical Competence and Expertise, Music, Health, and Wellbeing*, 1st Edition, Oxford University Press, England 2018, p. 80-97; Gary E McPherson- Graham F. Welch, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education*, 1st Edition, Oxford University Press, England 2006.

¹¹ David J. Hargreaves-Adrian C. North, "Individual Differences in Musical Taste", *The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology*, Vol 2, 2010, p. 430-9.

¹² Patrik N. Juslin-John A. Sloboda, *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications*, 1st Edition, Oxford University Press, England 2010.

processes associated with music perception and creation, musical memory and learning, and the influence of social and cultural variables on musical development. A well-known framework in the psychology of musical growth is the concept of developmental phases, which was informed by Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development. The aim here is to identify and describe the stages that individuals go through as their musical development progresses.¹³ According to Csikszentmihalyi and Swanwick,¹⁴ these stages entail learning specific musical techniques, comprehending and enjoying various musical genres and styles, and expressing music in progressively more complicated ways.

Individual differences in musical identity development have also been investigated. According to research¹⁵ intrinsic skill, motivation, and the quantity and quality of musical encounters all have a major impact on an individual's musical abilities and trajectory. A further factor influencing musical development is the social and cultural environment, which includes family, classmates, and formal music instruction.¹⁶

Research on the psychology of musical development tries to understand the complex interactions among cognitive, emotional, and social aspects that contribute to the development of musical abilities and knowledge.¹⁷ Researchers learn about the mechanisms underlying musical cognition, the influence of environmental

¹³ Susan Young-Jon Glover, *Musical Futures: An Approach to Teaching and Learning*, 1st Edition, Oxford University Press, England 2012; Keith Swanwick, *Music, Mind and Education*, 1st Edition, Routledge, England 1988.

¹⁴ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, 1st Edition, Harper & Row, New York 1990; Keith Swanwick, *Teaching Music Musically*, 1st Edition, Routledge, England 1999.

¹⁵ Jane W. Davidson, "Ecological and Perceptual Perspectives on Musical Development", *MENC Handbook of Research on Music Learning*, Oxford University Press, Volume 2 Applications, 2012, p. 149-177; Gary E. McPherson-Jane W. Davidson- Robert Faulkner, *Music in Our Lives: Rethinking Musical Ability, Development and Identity*, 1st Edition, Oxford University Press, England 2017.

¹⁶ Andrea Creech-Susan Hallam-Maria Varvarigou, "Identity, Creativity and Enjoyment in Instrumental Music Practice", *Music Education Research*, Vol 15 Issue 3, 2013, p. 334-349; Alexandra Lamont-Katrina Maton, "Music Education and The Experience of Music in Everyday Life: Australian Perspectives from Community Music", *International Journal of Community Music*, Vol 1 Issue 3, 2008, p. 317-34.

¹⁷ John A Sloboda, *Exploring The Musical Mind: Cognition, Emotion, Ability, Function*, 1st Edition, Oxford University Press, England 2005; Barry J. Zimmerman- Marta M. Pons, Individually Oriented Intervention to Support Self-Regulated Learning, *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, Academic Press, Vol. 54, 2010, p. 1-46.

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factors on musical development, and the potential applications of this knowledge in music education and therapy by examining the musical development of individuals.¹⁸ The idea of musical identity goes deeper into the internal representations of these changes and their connection to the social and cultural environment than Piagetian-style phases have in the development of music.¹⁹ Perspectives from Trevarthen et al.²⁰ provide valuable insights into the development of musical identity, drawing upon Erikson's²¹ psychosocial development stages, Marcia's²² identity development processes, and self-determination theory.

2. EXAMINATION

2.1. Trevarthen and Malloch's Stage Theory

Based on their idea of communicative musicality, Trevarthen and Malloch developed a stage theory of musical development.²³ In accordance with this idea, people go through specific stages of musical growth throughout the course of their lifetimes, denoting substantial shifts in their musical identities, preferences, and proclivities. In their explanations, the authors benefited from Erikson's and Marcia's theories. The authors borrowed Erikson's three steps (identification, individuation, integration) and Marcia's two main processes in identity development (exploration and commitment) to use in their explanations.

When infants develop the physical and motor ability to express themselves and interact musically with caretakers, the first transition point occurs.²⁴ Infants respond to music naturally and communicate with one another by moving and vocalizing. This stage demonstrates the intrinsic musicality that exists from the

¹⁸ Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, 1st Edition, Cambridge University Press, England 2000; Gottfried Schlaug-Andrea Norton- Katie Overy- Ellen Winner, "Effects of Music Training on The Child's Brain and Cognitive Development", *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Vol 1169 Issue 1, 2009, p. 195-209.

¹⁹ Susan Hallam, *The Development of Musical Competence and Expertise, Music, Health, and Wellbeing*, 1st Edition, Oxford University Press, England 2018, p. 80-97.

²⁰ Colwyn Trevarthen- Stephen Malloch, "The Dance of Wellbeing: Defining The Musical Therapeutic Effect", *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, Vol 9 Issue 2, 2000, p. 3-17.

²¹ Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 1st Edition, Norton, New York 1968.

²² James E. Marcia, "Identity in Adolescence", *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*, New York: Wiley, 1980, p. 159-187.

²³ Colwyn Trevarthen- Stephen Malloch, "The Dance of Wellbeing: Defining The Musical Therapeutic Effect", *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, Vol 9 Issue 2, 2000, p. 3-17.

²⁴ Colwyn Trevarthen- Stephen Malloch, *ibid.*

earliest stages of infancy as babies interact musically through cooing, babbling, and mimicking.

During early childhood, the second transition point occurs as children develop their own musical culture.²⁵ They include songs, rhymes, and musical games from their culture in their play and interactions with others. Children start to show preferences for particular musical genres or styles around this age, and they also start to learn the fundamentals of music, like how to sing and play rudimentary instruments. Their involvement in music-related social activities within their families and peer groups becomes increasingly formalized.

The third transition stage occurs as children enter later childhood and aligns their performance skills more closely with popular songs and established musical norms.²⁶ They get a stronger comprehension of melodic patterns, rhythms, and musical structures. Children may begin taking formal music lessons at this age or partake in more advanced musical activities. As they broaden their musical horizons and hone their technical abilities, they experiment with many musical genres and styles.

Adolescence marks the fourth and last transitional stage.²⁷ Taste in music and musical preferences become important markers of individual identity. By actively exploring and defining their musical identities, adolescents look for music that connects with their feelings, ideals, and modes of self-expression. They might take part in musical activities with their friends, join bands or ensembles, or try out different musical styles or instruments. Their development of self-identity is heavily influenced by music, which also serves as a social outlet and sense of community.

The stage theory developed by Trevarthen and Malloch emphasizes the impact of music on identity construction at various developmental stages.²⁸ It acknowledges the importance of social and cultural variables in the formation of music as well as the innate musicality present from early childhood. According to the theory, a person's musical identity and connection with music are shaped through a number of transitions rather than a continuous path through musical development.

The stage theory provides a framework for comprehending how people's musical aptitudes, preferences, and identities change throughout the course of their lifetimes. It highlights how musical development is dynamic and is influenced by both natural traits and the social and cultural environments in which people develop

²⁵ Colwyn Trevarthen- Stephen Malloch, *ibid.*

²⁶ Colwyn Trevarthen- Stephen Malloch, *ibid.*

²⁷ Colwyn Trevarthen- Stephen Malloch, *ibid.*

²⁸ Colwyn Trevarthen- Stephen Malloch, *ibid.*

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and engage with music. Recognizing these transitions allows teachers, parents, and music professionals to cultivate musical identities and encourage musical progress in accordance with each individual's developmental stage.

2.2. Evans and McPherson's Application of Self-Determination Theory

Evans and McPherson conducted a study where they applied Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to examine how musical identity develops during adolescence.²⁹ According to SDT, people have basic psychological requirements for relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Meeting these needs boosts motivation and well-being in a variety of contexts, including music.

Their research focused on teenagers' exploration of different musical identities and the long-term implications of this exploration on their future musical careers. The study revealed that identity processes play a critical role in shaping teenagers' engagement with music, even prior to formal music instrument learning. Teenagers who possess a forward-looking perspective on their musical involvement and develop a sense of autonomy and competence in their musical pursuits are more likely to sustain their engagement in musical activities.

According to the SDT, autonomy is the feeling of behaving in accordance with one's own goals, principles, and preferences.³⁰ Teenagers who feel in control of their musical tastes and who are encouraged to express their own musical preferences and genres are more likely to forge a strong musical identity, according to research by Evans and McPherson. Teenagers are encouraged by this sense of independence to explore and try new musical genres, instruments, and performance techniques, which aids in their overall musical growth.

Another psychological need identified in SDT is competence, which is the belief that one is capable and effective in one's behaviors.³¹ The research by Evans and McPherson stressed the importance of acquiring musical proficiency in forming musical identity. If teenagers believe they are talented musicians and get encouragement and recognition for their abilities, they are more likely to develop a strong sense of musical identity and pursue music as an important part of their lives.

²⁹ Pamela Evans-Gary McPherson, "The Influence of Musical Experiences on The Development of Musical Identity", *Music Education Research*, Vol 17, Issue 4, 2015, p. 474-488.

³⁰ Edward L. Deci-Richard M. Ryan, "The 'What' and 'Why' of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and The Self-Determination of Behavior", *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol 11 Issue 4, 2000, p. 227-68.

³¹ Edward L. Deci-Richard M. Ryan, *ibid.*

Relatedness, the third psychological need found by SDT, is concerned with an individual's feeling of community and connection to others.³² Evans and McPherson found that social interactions and positive relationships with classmates, families, and music mentors have a significant impact on youths' development of a musical identity. Teenagers who have the chance to sing, collaborate, and share their musical experiences with others grow to feel connected to and a part of the musical community. Their sense of community strengthens their musical identity and inspires them to keep listening to music.

The use of SDT provides insightful information about how relatedness, competence, and autonomy shape people's musical identities³³ This knowledge can help educators, parents, and musicians give teenagers enriching and meaningful musical development experiences. Teenagers can establish a solid and durable musical identity through fostering autonomy, offering chances for competence development, and fostering social connections within the musical community.

Application of the SDT gives a clearer understanding of the motivating mechanisms at play in the formation of musical identity.³⁴ Teachers and other professionals can create nurturing environments that foster teenagers' musical identities and promote their sustained involvement with music by acknowledging the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their musical experiences.

2.3. Lamont's Lifespan Approach

Lamont³⁵ takes a comprehensive approach to researching the emergence of musical identities, emphasizing the influence of social settings and cultural environments on people's behavior and identity construction. She underlines that a person's musical identity develops and changes over the course of their lifetime rather than being restricted to a set of developmental phases.

By observing how mothers sing to their infants, Lamont's research highlights the early stages of musical identity and emphasizes how natural and spontaneous musical interactions between caregivers and children are.³⁶ She makes the case that early musical exposure, such as lullabies and nursery rhymes, paves the way for the emergence of a musical identity. These musical exchanges not only bring happiness and emotional connection but also teach kids to different musical traditions from

³² Edward L. Deci-Richard M. Ryan, *ibid.*

³³ Pamela Evans-Gary McPherson, *ibid.*

³⁴ Pamela Evans-Gary McPherson, *ibid.*

³⁵ Alexandra Lamont, "Music in Everyday Life: The Role of Identity, Place and Emotions", *The Oxford handbook of musical identity*, Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 105-120.

³⁶ Alexandra Lamont, *ibid.*

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different cultures, helping them feel like they belong in their social and familial environments.

Lamont³⁷ continues to investigate how peer groups, school, and the home shape a child's musical identity. Children are exposed to a variety of musical experiences, genres, and styles as part of socialization processes in these settings, allowing them to explore and develop their preferences. Both formal and informal musical experiences have an impact on a child's developing musical identity. Building musical identities and acquiring musical talents is facilitated through extracurricular activities, school music programs, and interactions with peers. Lamont³⁸ claims that throughout youth and maturity, musical identity continues to change. Music tastes and inclinations play a significant role in defining a person during adolescence. People can mold and redefine their musical identities through exploring various musical genres, subcultures, and communities. Conformity and distinctiveness are both involved in this process as people want to fit in while still claiming their individuality within the musical environment.

Lamont³⁹ also highlights the advantages of music in older life, including its social component, favorable effects on wellbeing, and potential to overcome health issues. Indulging in music as an adult offers chances for self-expression, forming relationships with others, and developing personally. People can maintain their sense of identity, recall old experiences, and adjust to changing situations thanks to music.

Lamont emphasizes the dynamic nature of musical identity development by using a lifecycle perspective⁴⁰ Over the course of a person's life, their musical identity evolves and is shaped by a range of social, cultural, and personal factors. It is affected by how individuals interact with the people and environments in their immediate environment, including their families, friends, schools, and communities.

A complete knowledge of how musical identities alter and develop through time is provided by Lamont's lifetime approach to musical identity.⁴¹ It is possible to create environments that support lifelong musical engagement and the development of a strong and fulfilling musical identity when educators, practitioners, and policymakers take into account the importance of early musical experiences, the influence of social contexts, and the continuing relevance of music in later life.

³⁷ Alexandra Lamont, *ibid.*

³⁸ Alexandra Lamont, *ibid.*

³⁹ Alexandra Lamont, *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Alexandra Lamont, *ibid.*

⁴¹ Alexandra Lamont, *ibid.*

Lamont's lifespan approach to musical identity development illuminates how personal experiences, social circumstances, and cultural environments interact to shape and change musical identities throughout the course of a person's life.⁴² This method has implications for music education, therapy, and the encouragement of musical involvement throughout the lifetime by deepening our understanding of the complex processes involved in the development of musical identity.

3. CONCLUSION

The relationship between music and the self is profound and deep because of how much music shapes a person's identity. Taking into account the cognitive, emotional, and social factors that influence how one develops their musical self, researchers have looked at a variety of aspects of how musical identity develops. The stage theory developed by Trevarthen and Malloch, as well as the application of Self-Determination Theory by Evans and McPherson, and Lamont's lifespan approach to musical identity development, provide valuable insights into the dynamic nature of musical identity formation. These theories place a strong emphasis on how social and cultural circumstances, personal inquiry, independence, competence, and relatedness shape people's musical identities over the course of their lives.

Trevarthen and Malloch's stage theory of musical development emphasizes the changes people go through in terms of their musical abilities, passions, and identities. This approach recognizes the social and cultural influences on musical development as well as the innate musicality present from early childhood.

Evans and McPherson utilize Self-Determination Theory to investigate the consolidation of musical identity during adolescence. Their research underscores the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in shaping musical identity. By comprehending and supporting teenagers' psychological needs in the context of music, educators and practitioners can cultivate a positive and meaningful experience in their musical development.

Lamont takes a lifetime perspective to the formation of musical identity, emphasizing the influence of social settings and cultural environments on people's musical behavior and identity negotiation. She highlights that musical identity is a lifelong process that changes and develops as a result of interactions between people and their environment.

Researchers get insights into the complex dynamics of musical identity development by adopting these many techniques. Musical identities are shaped and reshaped over time by the interaction of personal experiences, social settings, and

⁴² Alexandra Lamont, *ibid.*

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cultural environments. The promotion of lifelong musical involvement as well as music education and therapy can all benefit from understanding these processes.

In conclusion, the exploration of musical identity development offers valuable insights into the multidimensional nature of the self in relation to music. Trevarthen and Malloch's stage theory, Evans and McPherson's application of Self-Determination Theory, and Lamont's lifespan approach contribute to our understanding of how musical identities form, evolve, and are influenced by various factors. By recognizing the significance of early experiences, psychological needs, and the lifelong nature of musical identity, educators, practitioners, and policymakers can create supportive environments that nurture individuals' musical growth and foster a strong sense of self through music.

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