

Psychological predictors of artistically gifted students' motivation to pursue achievement in an international career

Barbara Cichy-Jasiocha, Andrzej E. Sękowski, Martyna Płudowska

Institute of Psychology, The John Paul II Catholic University, Lublin, Poland

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Abstract

Introduction: Nowadays, it is much easier to plan an international career and put those plans into action than it used to be many decades ago, though the process is not entirely free of difficulties, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aim of the research: Determination the level and structure of artistically gifted students' motivation to pursue achievement in an international career and to identify the psychological predictors of this type of motivation.

Material and methods: Surveys were conducted in 2020–2021. The sample consisted of 154 artistically gifted students and 184 students who did not display artistic ability. Five measures were used: Bańka's Scale of Achievement Motivation in an International Career, Schuler *et al.*'s Achievement Motivation Inventory adapted into Polish by Klinkosz and Sękowski, Judge *et al.*'s Core Self-Evaluations Scale adapted into Polish by Walczak and Derbis, Makarowski's Stimulating and Instrumental Risk Questionnaire, and Plopa and Makarowski's Perception of Stress Questionnaire.

Results and conclusions: The general level of fine arts students' motivation to pursue achievement in an international career was low, but it was still significantly higher than in the comparison group. The level of the general motivation for success in both groups was average compared to norms. Motivation associated with performance-approach goals was above average in both groups. The global Perception of Stress, Ambition, and Instrumental Risk scores were found to be positive predictors of aspects of motivation to pursue achievement in an international career in artistically gifted students.

Introduction

The European Commission Report on the Impact of Demographic Change [1] says that “the movement of people, both within and beyond Europe's borders, is a key driver of demographic change”. As globalisation progresses, the issue of pursuing an international career is turning into a civilisational problem [2]. Nowadays, it is much easier to plan an international career and put those plans into action than it used to be many decades ago, though the process is not entirely free of difficulties, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are over 16% of artistically gifted people in the general population, of whom approx. 13% are people of outstanding talent whose work can add new value to culture and art [3]. It is hard to disagree with the fact that the best way for visual artists to build their careers is to participate in international art exhibitions and competitions. According to Tharenou [4], young people are increasingly aware of the benefits of having a career outside their home country, and they often make plans for such a career on their own initiative. With this in mind, we came to the conclusion that in discussing the problem of artistically gifted persons' motivation to achieve success, it is not enough to examine the level and structure of achievement motivation. It is necessary

to take the discussion to the next level by searching for more precise motives for undertaking an international career and their psychological determinants.

A review of psychological literature shows that the issue of achievement motivation has a rich history of research based on numerous notable interpretations and conceptualisations [5–13]. One of them is Elliot and McGregor's [14] four-factor theory of achievement motivation known as the 2×2 Achievement Goal Framework, which presents a hierarchical model of approach and avoidance motivation based on two processes: approaching a goal and avoiding a goal, and which discerns two dimensions of competence – and thus also two achievement motives – intrapersonal and normative. The results of the factor analysis conducted by the authors of the theory confirmed the independence of the four constructs. According to the 2×2 Achievement Goal Framework, achievement motivation may be driven by one of the two types of goals: *mastery-approach goals* (to strive for mastery as an individual path to success, to get better and better results for self-improvement) or *performance-approach goals* (to achieve a certain level of task performance in relation to an external standard of performance set by others, to perform equally well or better than others – a competitive aspect), and can take one of the two directions:

mastery-avoidance goals (to avoid mastery as one focuses on possible failure, which reduces one's self-esteem) or *performance-avoidance goals* (to avoid the performance of a task for fear of being embarrassed, even if one has all the abilities and skills the task requires) [2, 14].

On the basis of Elliot and McGregor's theory [14], Bańka [2] developed a theoretical concept of achievement motivation in an international context, which constitutes a point of departure for the present study. Bańka [2] assumes that the motivation to pursue achievement in an international career is a form of specific motivation that describes how hard young adults (individuals between 20–25 years of age) strive to go abroad to attain their basic life goals related to personal development and the life tasks related to work, family, free time and recreation. Defined in this way, achievement motivation seems to be a concept that can be applied in international career planning/counselling and one that may be related to personality variables which play a role in decision-making, in particular, self-evaluation of competency and a sense of autonomy at work. Bańka distinguishes four motives that can prompt a person to pursue an international career: (1) the need to gain and deepen one's understanding, knowledge and experience in order to further one's career and personal development – *mastery-approach goals*; (2) the need to meet one's career goals and personal-development goals in direct competition with the best and in doing so to confront the highest (labour market) requirements – *performance-approach goals*; (3) the need to go abroad for fear of losing self-esteem and self-respect as one feels one will not be able to fulfil one's own ambitions in the home country – *mastery-avoidance goals*, and (4) the need to go abroad for fear of failure and losing social respect in the family, among relatives, friends or peers – *performance-avoidance goals*.

Achievement motivation can be defined as proneness and readiness to overcome one's own limitations and obstacles in order to meet and exceed standards of excellence, and to draw positive emotions from the use and development of one's own competencies [15]. Students' achievement motivation, both its level and structure, plays a vital role in their academic achievement and success because "it requires personal involvement that simultaneously influences their educational outcomes" [16, 17]. The structure of achievement motivation has been described by Schuler and Prochaska [18, 19]. They examined employees' motivation to achieve success in professional contexts. Based on a comprehensive review of numerous theories and many years of research and analysis, Schuler created the onion-ring model of achievement motivation consisting of various dimensions of personality. He discerns four groups of characteristics: core facets – the most basic and deepest components which are not very sensitive to change, such as goal setting, persistence, and hope of success. Peripheral

facets are more external to them and represent certain behavioural trends that can be incorporated into the broader construct of achievement motivation, such as independence or status orientation. The next layer consists of the theoretical compounds that interact with achievement motivation or aspects thereof, e.g. locus of control, attribution style, or self-confidence. The outermost layers of achievement motivation are layers of personality as background variables, e.g. neuroticism, or conscientiousness. Schuler and Prochaska [18] view achievement motivation as a personality variable which is an important indicator, for instance, in the process of selection and recruitment of employees. Their model takes into account aspects of social and cognitive psychology, including variables related to self-concept, self-esteem, and attribution (seeing oneself as being responsible for one's successes and failures) [16].

In the present research project, visual arts abilities are understood as a type of special abilities [20], which allow individuals to have above-average achievements in visual arts. Visual arts abilities are a relatively constant property of personality, and they can be developed and enhanced through education. Among the achievements of artistically gifted people, a key role is played by their academic achievements. However, other achievements, especially those in an international arena, such as participation in international individual and collective exhibitions and artistic projects, awards and honourable mentions obtained in international competitions, are also vital for furthering an artist's career path [21, 22], and they can be gained already during university studies.

In the literature on the psychology of creativity, the issue of the type of motivation that drives individuals who decide to become artists and create works of art is a recurrent one. Various authors argue that it is intrinsic motivation that plays the most important role here, and that artists have high levels of it [23]. Intrinsic motivation is not a uniform construct and it may be related to the desire to express oneself or develop one's skills, but also to confirm one's own value, etc. [24]. Of course, artists are also driven by extrinsic motivation, which, however is weaker. Ryan [25] cites a study by Elias and Berg-Cross, who in 2009 [26] examined the motivation of 75 painters. They identified three motivational constructs: (1) the visionary artist model, which encompasses the motivation of those artists who harness artistic expression to cope with suffering and mental difficulties; (2) the self-actualised artist model, which asserts that those who create art seek fulfilment, health, skill development and happiness; and (3) the commodity model which concentrates on the motivation of those people who seek monetary gain from their work. The motivational aspect of pursuing a career in visual arts is therefore quite complex and can be considered from many perspectives.

Shigemura *et al.* [27] emphasise that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic results in more people suffering from mental health problems than the actual infection, and that the psychological consequences of the outbreak of the virus may last longer than the pandemic itself. The effects include increasing levels of uneasiness and anxiety, and fear for or preoccupation with one's and one's family's health and life. The World Health Organization (WHO) along with other health and medical authorities and governments all over the world advocate measures such as social distancing and quarantine to combat the various variants of the virus. However, these measures are stressful in themselves and can aggravate people's psychological difficulties leading to the development of mental disorders and diseases. Research by Charkazi *et al.* [28] shows that there is a significant positive correlation between fear of COVID-19 and preventive behaviours. There may develop a feedback loop in which anxiety may increase the frequency of protective behaviours, which in turn may generate an increasing level of anxiety, but also other mental problems. Ryan [25] emphasises that a large part of artists and arts students are highly motivated people, but they are also less likely to want to understand how their motivations could potentially relate or lead to mental health challenges. In the present paper, which focuses on the study of the motivation to pursue achievement in an international career, the following predictors were investigated: Core Self-Evaluations, Stimulating and Instrumental Risk, and Perception of Stress.

Since participation in international projects and events helps visual artists develop their career and there is a relatively limited number of studies on the motivation of students in visual arts programmes [26], we wanted to investigate the following research question:

What are the psychological predictors of artistically gifted students' motivation to pursue achievement in an international career?

This problem was operationalised in the form of the following detailed questions:

1. What is the level and structure of achievement motivation in artistically gifted students compared to students who do not display artistic ability?
2. What are (some of) the psychological determinants of artistically gifted students' general motivation to achieve success in an international career and what are (some of) the psychological determinants of their motivation with regard to the four areas of motivation: mastery-approach goals, performance-approach goals, mastery-avoidance goals and performance-avoidance goals?

The first question is an exploratory one. We assumed that the group of artistically gifted students we surveyed were likely to have an above-average level of motivation to pursue achievement in an interna-

tional career, but due to the ongoing pandemic, this level might be lower than average as a consequence of the increased tension and anxiety they probably felt due to the pandemic [29].

Core Self-Evaluation, understood as a higher order construct composed of four individual dispositional variables: self-esteem, locus of control, self-efficacy and emotional stability, is positively associated with the motivation to pursue achievement in an international career. Therefore, it can be assumed, with caution, that people with high Core Self-Evaluation scores are also likely to seek to further their personal development at work and strive for achievement and success, even if this requires intense effort [30] such as going abroad. Bandura [31], in his self-regulation theory, explains why there exists a relationship between self-esteem and the complexity of work. A person's belief in their own efficacy and the ability to perform a task they have been assigned motivates them to perform it. The explained variable has a similar positive relationship with instrumental risk, i.e. the type of risk that an individual has to take to achieve an intended goal. This type of risk is controlled, rational and calculated [32].

We assumed that emotional tension, external stress and intrapsychic stress were positively associated with artistically gifted students' motivation to pursue achievement in an international career, but we also hypothesised that this motivation was related to anxiety and that the students were motivated by *mastery-avoidance goals* and *performance-avoidance goals*.

Material and methods

Participants

The survey was conducted in 2020-2021 during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Two groups of students participated in the research project. The first group consisted of 154 people (129 women and 25 men) aged 19–26 ($M = 22.23$; $SD = 1.70$) who were developing their artistic talents at Fine Arts Academies or at university fine arts departments. The second group consisted of 184 people without artistic abilities (156 women and 28 men) aged 19–26 ($M = 22.45$; $SD = 1.55$) who were enrolled in programmes unrelated to art. Respondents from the two groups differed in marital status. In the group of artists, the largest number of individuals were single (50.65%), followed by those who lived in an informal relationship (46.75%), and the fewest lived in a formal relationship (2.6%). In the group of non-artists, the largest number of individuals were in an informal relationship (52.18%), followed by singles (44.02%), and then married individuals (3.8%). The group of artists differed from the group of non-artists in the type of study programme they followed and in having artistic achievements which, in accordance with the psycho-pedagogical criterion, we took to be indicative of artistic giftedness. Detailed

Table 1. Descriptive statistics – artistically gifted participants ($N = 154$)

Type of visual arts specialisation	<i>N</i>	%
Painting	23	14.94
Sculpture	9	5.84
Graphic art	55	35.71
Design	23	14.94
Product design	22	14.29
Animation art	2	1.29
Fine arts education	7	4.55
Textiles and garments – stage costumes	3	1.94
Conservation and restoration of works of art	4	2.6
Interior architecture	6	3.9

characteristics of the group of artists by type of visual arts specialisation are given in Table 1.

The young artists reported the following achievements: active participation in individual and collective national exhibitions (44.81%), positive reviews of artistic work (38.96%), awards and honourable mentions in national competitions (29.87%), artistic scholarships (22.08%), awards and honourable mentions in international competitions (8.44%), active participation in individual and collective international exhibitions (7.79%), and others – original publications (1.3%) and participation in international artistic projects (1.3%).

Measures

Motivation to pursue achievement in an international career

The Scale of Achievement Motivation in an International Career (SAMIC) by Bańka [2] was used. This instrument is composed of 36 items: eight mastery-approach goals items (e.g. “I can work abroad for some time for a very low salary, in exchange for experience which will bring me closer to fulfilling my passion”), nine performance-approach goals items (e.g. “I view a career abroad as an opportunity to satisfy my aspiration to stand out above others”), 13 mastery-avoidance goals items (e.g. “I am considering the possibility of going abroad to avoid the feeling of having failed in life”), and six performance-avoidance goals (e.g. “I believe that the greatest risk of a career abroad is the possibility of embarrassing oneself in front of people from other countries”). Participants respond to each item using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (I completely disagree) to 7 (I completely agree) to indicate what they generally think. The scale has satisfactory psychometric properties – a high reliability

and criterion validity in all subscales [33]. The reliability coefficient for the total scale is high ($\alpha = 0.93$).

Achievement motivation structure

A Polish adaptation by Klinkosz and Sękowski [34] of Schuler, Thornton, Frintrup and Prochaska's Achievement Motivation Inventory (AMI) was used. The AMI measures achievement motivation, considering its various components such as Preference for Difficult Tasks, Dominance, Confidence in Success, Goal Setting, Flow, Competitiveness, Persistence, and others, thus enabling a profile diagnosis. It contains a total of 170 items (e.g. “When I have a difficult task to do, I like to work on it for a long time”) constituting 17 scales. Scores can be also expressed in three factor scales: Self-Confidence, Ambition, and Self-Control. Participants respond to each item using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (This doesn't concern me at all) to 7 (This fully concerns me). The AMI has a high internal consistency for the total score ($\alpha = 0.96$) and satisfactory internal consistency coefficients for the individual scales. The test-retest stability r ranges from 0.71 to 0.94 (depending on the scale).

Core Self-Evaluations

The Core Self-Evaluations Scale (CSES) by Judge, Erez, Bono and Thoresen was used, as translated and adapted into Polish by Walczak and Derbis [30]. The scale measures the general level of self-evaluation. It comprises 12 items (e.g. “I manage to fulfil the tasks I've been entrusted with”). The participants respond to each item on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (I definitely disagree) to 5 (I definitely agree). The Polish translation of the scale, similarly to the original instrument [35] has good psychometric properties (Cronbach's α internal validity in the range from 0.77 to 0.83 and test-retest stability $r = 0.87$).

Stimulating and Instrumental Risk

The Stimulating and Instrumental Risk Questionnaire (SIRQ) by Makarowski [32] was used. This tool allows to measure two types of risk: Stimulating Risk and Instrumental Risk. It comprises 7 items (e.g. “When I pursue my interests, I like those moments when I'm balancing on the verge of risk”) which respondents rate on a 5-point scale from A (True) to E (Not true). The questionnaire has satisfactory reliability coefficients for both scales (Cronbach's α ranging from 0.76 to 0.78 depending on the scale).

Perception of Stress

The Perception of Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) by Plopa and Makarowski [36] was used, which measures three dimensions of stress: Emotional Tension, External Stress, and Intrapsychic Stress. The total score

on this instrument reflects the general level of stress. The PSQ consists of 27 items (e.g. "Thinking about my problems makes it hard for me to fall asleep"). The respondents rate the answers on a 5-point scale from 1 (True) to 5 (Not true). The internal consistency coefficients for the three scales (dimensions) obtained in an adult sample are within Cronbach's α range of 0.70 to 0.81.

Statistical analysis

This study used the SPSS 27.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software for statistical analyses, including analysis of variance, regression analysis, and *t*-tests.

Ethics

The research protocol was in accordance with the international ethical standards of the Declaration of Helsinki. The anonymity of the participants was ensured, and informed consent was obtained from all of them.

Results

Descriptives

The mean level of the visual artists' motivation to pursue achievement in an international career was low (Table 2). Taking into account the value of $SD = 37.5$, it can be concluded that this group consisted of artists with both average and very low achievement motivation scores, which reflected the level of their determination and readiness to go abroad for some time to work there and realise their life tasks and goals. The mean level of the motivation to pursue achievement in an international career was lower in the comparison group than in the group of artistically gifted individuals, and this difference was statistically significant ($t = 2.164$; $p < 0.05$). Cohen's effect size $d = (114.97 - 124.27)/39.221 = 0.25$ showed that the difference was relatively small.

The scores for each of the four types of achievement goals (subscales) covered by the SAMIC were

divided by the number of subscale items to compare between these goals.

Both artistically gifted students and students in the comparison group were the most strongly motivated to achieve success outside their home country by the need to pursue excellence in social competition (performance-approach goals). Their will power and determination to go abroad in order to achieve their career objectives and personal-development goals most often shows in direct competition with rivals and when they are confronted with high requirements. In relation to Polish norms, the level of this form of motivation was above-average in both surveyed groups [2]. Both visual artists and non-artists were the least strongly motivated by the fear of losing their self-esteem and self-respect as a result of not being able to fulfil their ambitions in their home country: both groups scored low on mastery-avoidance goals in relation to norms. They also both displayed a low level of motivation caused by the fear of failing in the eyes of others and losing social respect among family members, relatives, friends or peers (performance-avoidance goals).

The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences in mastery-approach goals between the groups compared. The readiness and determination to go abroad driven by the desire to deepen and acquire one's knowledge, understanding and experience was statistically significantly higher in the group of artists than in the comparison group ($t = 3.556$; $p < 0.001$). Cohen's effect size $d = (3.18 - 3.64)/1.186 = 0.39$ indicated that this difference was relatively low. When, however, the participants' SAMIC scores were compared to the norms determined by Bańka [2], artists were found to have a below-average – and non-artist a low – level of mastery-approach goal motivation. The AMI scores indicated that participants in both groups had an average level of general motivation to achieve success [34] and did not differ statistically significantly in this respect (Table 3).

Out of the three achievement motivation factors, Ambition had the highest scores and Self-Control had the lowest scores in both groups, and it was with regard to this latter factor that differences between the groups were found. The artists were characterised

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and Student's *t*-test for the general SAMIC score and for the SAMIC subscales in the groups of artists and non-artists

Achievement motivation in an international career	Artistically gifted group (<i>N</i> = 154)	Comparison group (<i>N</i> = 184)	Difference		
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i> -value
General score	124.27 (37.5)	114.97 (40.87)	2.164	336	0.031
Mastery-approach goals	3.64 (1.13)	3.18 (1.24)	3.556	336	0.001
Performance-approach goals	4.07 (1.18)	3.95 (1.42)	0.912	336	0.362
Mastery-avoidance goals	3.07 (1.43)	2.82 (1.32)	1.633	336	0.103
Performance-avoidance goals	3.1 (1.28)	2.89 (1.23)	1.515	336	0.131

M – arithmetic mean, *SD* – standard deviation, *df* – degrees of freedom.

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and Student's *t*-test for the general AMI score, 3 AMI factors and 17 AMI scales in the groups of artists and non-artists

Achievement motivation	Artistically gifted group (<i>N</i> = 154)	Comparison group (<i>N</i> = 184)	Difference			Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i> -value	
AMI (global score)	751.71 (108.35)	766.11(93.11)	−1.314	336	0.19	–
Self-Confidence	249.68 (48.52)	255.73 (43.77)	−1.206	336	0.229	–
Ambition	382.01 (56.99)	380.96 (52.21)	0.177	336	0.86	–
Self-control	120.03 (21.41)	129.41 (20.65)	−4.093	336	0.001	0.45
Persistence	37.56 (10.05)	40.58 (9.2)	−2.872	336	0.004	0.31
Dominance	44.91 (12.25)	47.11 (10)	−1.817	336	0.07	–
Engagement	41.49 (12.96)	40.26 (10.75)	0.951	336	0.342	–
Confidence in success	43.36 (11.03)	46.24 (9.84)	−2.531	336	0.012	0.28
Flexibility	44.79 (9.4)	43.81 (8.34)	1.011	336	0.313	–
Flow	52.79 (9.87)	50.02 (9.49)	2.618	336	0.009	0.29
Fearlessness	30.7 (10.44)	32.71 (11.05)	−1.704	336	0.089	–
Internality	43.69 (7.18)	45.77 (7.89)	−2.518	336	0.012	0.28
Compensatory effort	46.26 (9.64)	48.96 (9.06)	−2.653	336	0.008	0.29
Pride in productivity	55.77 (8.41)	55.92 (7.93)	−0.171	336	0.864	–
Eagerness to learn	45.1 (8.32)	45.39 (7.45)	−0.342	336	0.732	–
Preference for difficult tasks	42.26 (8.99)	42.42 (9.74)	−0.154	336	0.877	–
Independence	43.66 (9.29)	43.45 (8.93)	0.206	336	0.837	–
Self-control	38.77 (10.16)	43.07 (8.67)	−4.197	336	0.001	0.46
Status orientation	48.69 (10.72)	50.66 (10.23)	−1.718	336	0.087	–
Competitiveness	45.17 (10.51)	43.11 (10.75)	1.773	336	0.077	–
Goal setting	46.75 (8.35)	46.64 (7.9)	0.126	336	0.9	–

by a significantly poorer ability to organise and perform tasks ($t = -4.093$; $p < 0.001$).

As for the AMI scales, the highest scores in both groups were recorded for Pride in Productivity, but a comparison with Polish norms showed that they had an average level of positive feelings derived from good performance outcomes. The lowest scores in both groups were obtained on the Fearlessness scale, and they were lower than the Polish norms, showing that the participants had a reduced sense of fearlessness of failure in difficult tasks. The following statistically significant differences in the structure of achievement motivation were found between visual artists and non-artists: non-artists showed a higher level of entrepreneurship and effort put into the performance of tasks (Persistence Scale) ($t = -2.872$; $p < 0.01$) and were more likely to believe that their actions and the effort they put into achieving goals would lead to success (Confidence in Success Scale, $t = -2.531$;

$p < 0.05$); they were also more likely to ascribe the consequences of their own actions to internal causes (autonomy) (Internality Scale, $t = -2.518$; $p < 0.05$), more willing to put in additional effort for fear of failure (Compensatory Effort Scale, $t = -2.653$; $p < 0.01$), and showed a higher level of self-control (Self-Control Scale, $t = -4.197$; $p < 0.001$), with this last difference being the largest (Cohen's $d = 0.46$). Artistically gifted students scored statistically significantly higher only on the Flow Scale ($t = 2.618$; $p < 0.01$), which demonstrates that they were better able to focus very intensively on problems without being distracted by external or internal stimuli.

The results of the regression analysis showed that two independent variables explained the general level of motivation to pursue achievement in an international career in the group of artistically gifted students (Table 4): in the MR model, Perception of Stress (global score) ($b = 0.345$; $p < 0.001$) and Ambition ($b = 0.194$;

Table 4. Predictors of the general level of motivation to pursue achievement in an international career in artistically gifted students

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i> Standard error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig
Constant	20.688	22.345	–	0.926	0.356
Perception of stress (global score)	0.801	0.174	0.345	4.611	0.001
Ambition	0.128	0.049	0.194	2.603	0.01

Note: $R = 0.396$; corrected $R^2 = 0.146$; $F = 6.774$; $p = 0.01$.

Table 5. Predictors of mastery-approach goals in achievement motivation in an international career in the group of visual artists

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i> Standard error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig
Constant	17.167	4.859	–	3.533	0.001
Ambition	0.031	0.013	0.197	2.482	0.014

Note: $R = 0.197$; corrected $R^2 = 0.033$; $F = 6.161$; $p = 0.014$.

Table 6. Predictors of performance-approach goals of achievement motivation in an international career in the group of visual artists

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i> Standard error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig
Constant	9.766	6.659	–	1.467	0.145
Ambition	0.049	0.014	0.265	3.422	0.001
Instrumental Risk	0.702	0.345	0.158	2.037	0.043

Note: $R = 0.315$; corrected $R^2 = 0.088$; $F = 4.149$; $p = 0.043$.

Table 7. Predictors of mastery-avoidance goals of achievement motivation in an international career in the group of visual artists

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i> Standard error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig
Constant	5.402	5.913	–	0.914	0.362
Perception of stress (global score)	0.505	0.084	0.437	5.993	0.001

Note: $R = 0.437$; corrected $R^2 = 0.186$; $F = 35.91$; $p = 0.001$.

Table 8. Predictors of performance-avoidance goals of achievement motivation in an international career in the group of visual artists

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i> Standard error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig
Constant	3.394	2.401	–	1.413	0.160
Perception of stress (global score)	0.222	0.034	0.466	6.500	0.001

Note: $R = 0.466$; corrected $R^2 = 0.212$; $F = 42.245$; $p = 0.001$.

$p = 0.01$) explained 14.6% of the variance in the dependent variable. There was a positive correlation between these variables and the dependent variable.

In artists, 3.3% of the variance in scores on the SAMIC Mastery-Approach Goals subscale was explained by the Ambition factor ($b = 0.197$; $p < 0.01$). There was a very slight positive correlation between this variable and the analysed area (Table 5).

Two independent variables explained 8.8% of the variance in scores on the SAMIC Performance-Approach Goals subscale in the group of artistically gifted students (Table 6). They were Ambition ($b = 0.265$; $p < 0.001$) and Instrumental Risk ($b = 0.158$; $p < 0.05$).

There was a very slight but positive correlation between these variables and the dependent variable.

In the group of artistically gifted students, 18.6% of the variance in scores on the SAMIC Mastery-Avoidance Goals subscale (Table 7) was explained by one variable – Perception of Stress (global score) ($b = 0.437$; $p < 0.001$). There was a positive correlation between this variable and the dependent variable.

The Perception of Stress variable (global score) ($b = 0.466$; $p < 0.001$) also positively explained the variance in scores on the SAMIC Performance-Avoidance Goals subscale in the group of artistically gifted students (Table 8). It explained 21.2% of the variance in

the MR model, which was the highest percent of variance explained of all the investigated areas of achievement motivation in an international career.

Discussion

Our analysis showed that fine arts students had a low level of motivation to pursue achievement in an international career during the COVID-19 pandemic, but this level was still significantly higher than in the comparison group of non-artists. The general level of motivation for success in both artists and non-artists was average, with no statistically significant differences between groups. The pandemic and various forms of restrictions introduced in numerous European countries during its outbreak, including restrictions on travelling and crossing national borders and lockdowns may have considerably undermined the students' plans to achieve success in the international arena. The level of general motivation for success was not low, but moderate, which may indicate that the visual arts students had a slightly stronger drive for success – perhaps they wanted to achieve success in local or national projects.

Differences in the structure of general achievement motivation were noted. Compared to the individuals without artistic achievements, the artistically gifted students had a significantly lower level of faith in their own success and a weaker conviction that they would be able to use their abilities, skills and knowledge when faced with obstacles or competition. They were also less persistent than the participants in the comparison group. The external difficulties related to the pandemic can significantly reduce visual artists' commitment and effort. They may find achieving goals, which requires discipline and concentration, more difficult, especially when they are characterised by a significantly lower level of internalisation, i.e., when they are not entirely convinced that their professional success depends mostly on themselves, their behaviour and effort.

The very low score on the AMI Fearlessness scale in both groups indicates that in the face of difficulties, new events and important tasks, the respondents may have tended to give up on achieving goals, feel a stronger fear of failure [9] and be intolerant to frustration. However, visual artists ($M = 68.29$; $SD = 16.13$) had a statistically significantly higher overall level of perceived stress ($t = 2.901$; $p < 0.01$; $d = 0.32$) than non-artists ($M = 63.01$; $SD = 17.1$). Particularly, the two groups differed statistically significantly in the level of emotional tension ($t = 3.075$; $p < 0.01$; $d = 0.34$) and intrapsychic stress ($t = 3.132$; $p < 0.01$; $d = 0.34$). Artistically gifted students showed a higher level of emotional tension ($M = 25.17$; $SD = 6.03$) than the individuals without artistic achievements ($M = 23.04$; $SD = 6.6$), which may have given rise to a stronger anxiety and difficulty relaxing in the former. Emotional tension

deprives individuals of the energy to act, makes them back out from various tasks and plans, and causes excessive irritability and a sense of fatigue for no apparent reason [36]. Artistically gifted students ($M = 22.44$; $SD = 6.56$) also experienced higher levels of intrapsychic stress than the participants in the comparison group ($M = 20.24$; $SD = 6.3$). This type of stress is primarily associated with anxiety and worrying about difficulties in achieving goals and performing tasks. It is very often caused by the sense of being mentally weak, not very gifted, or having insufficient resources. Intrapsychic stress is related at source to three temporal perspectives [37]. It involves ruminating over the past, which leads to a sense of loneliness and emotional anxiety. In the present, it manifests in a sense of losing something or someone important, which makes it impossible to come to terms with this subjectively and/or objectively difficult experience. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people have been exposed to various types of losses, especially the loss of one's own or one's family members' health and/or life [38], but also the fear of infection and the fear of contact with a suspected person. From the future perspective, intrapsychic stress is associated with anxiety, tendency to resign, and pessimistic evaluation of the self and the world [36]. The sense of being mentally weak, not very gifted or inadequate affects, among others, a person's self-image. The group of visual artists ($M = 34.86$; $SD = 8.03$) had significantly lower core self-evaluations scores ($t = -4.642$; $p < 0.001$; $d = 0.50$) than the comparison group ($M = 38.7$; $SD = 7.17$). The difference between the groups was quite large. Core self-evaluations as a personality trait that is superordinate to the four individual dispositional variables: self-esteem, locus of control, self-efficacy and emotional stability, turned out to be a good predictor of job satisfaction and task performance [39]. Core self-evaluation is not, however, a predictor of motivation to pursue achievement in an international career. Our hypothesis was not confirmed.

The global score on the Perception of Stress scale was a positive predictor of the general level of motivation to pursue achievement in an international career and aspects of mastery-avoidance and performance-avoidance goals in artistically gifted students, which confirmed our hypothesis. The feeling of stress motivates artistically gifted people to pursue achievements in the international arena, but this is anxiety-driven motivation, which comes very close to the general trait of neuroticism [9]. On the one hand, fine artists may be motivated to go abroad by stress and the fear of losing self-esteem and self-respect as an effect of not being able to fulfil their ambitions in their home country, and on the other hand, they may be driven by the fear of being a failure in the eyes of others and losing social respect among family, friends or academic teachers [2]. Striving for achievement can therefore become a specific form of personal transgression, going beyond oneself and constantly reaffirming one's own value

which one has doubts about. Koziński [24], the author of the transgressive concept of creativity calls this type of motivation “hubristic motivation”.

Ambition, one of the factors in the structure of achievement motivation is, next to Perception of Stress, a positive predictor of the general level of motivation to pursue achievement in an international career in artistically gifted people, but its predictive power is weaker ($b = 0.194$; $p = 0.01$). This factor is also a positive predictor of motivation associated with mastery-approach goals and performance-approach goals. This means that ambition is positively related to the pursuit of achievements in the international arena, and that this relationship is associated with the desire to acquire and deepen one's own knowledge, understanding, skills and experience in order to further one's career and personal development. This also indicates that ambition is associated with the need to meet one's artistic goals in direct competition with the best and in doing so to confront the highest requirements. The variable of performance-approach goals is also positively predicted by instrumental risk taking, which can help one compete with others and take on new challenges. This form of risk taking is controllable and it is dominated by cognitive processes and negative arousal. Contrary to stimulating risk, it focuses on potential losses and a long-term perspective.

In the investigated group of artistically gifted people, Ambition was the most strongly developed factor compared to the remaining ones: Self-Confidence and Self-Control. In our opinion, ambition, as well as stress and a low self-evaluation, may lead to intrapsychic conflicts and, consequently, to anxiety [40]. The results of studies on the effects of the spread of previously unknown infectious diseases show that the presence of an epidemic increases the level of anxiety, depression and PTSD in the general population. And so, during the Ebola virus epidemic, single symptoms of anxiety-depression occurred in 48% of the population, and single symptoms of PTSD in 76%. Symptoms of PTSD and anxiety-depression were common 1 year after the outbreak of the epidemic [41]. Mental health of artistically gifted people should become the subject of in-depth research, scientific reflection and active care, especially in relation to depressive and anxiety disorders. Young creators should have adequate access to psychological support to be able to obtain help in coping with the stressors associated with pursuing and sustaining an artistic career.

Conclusions

Our research has expanded the knowledge about selected psychological predictors of artistically gifted students' motivation to pursue achievement in an international career. Given the importance of international achievements for career planning, these results have significant practical significance. Importantly,

the COVID-19 pandemic may have significantly undermined planning efforts to develop careers abroad.

The interpretation of the results should take into account the limitations of the study. The study was conducted during the difficult period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic and the introduction of online education, we noted the difficulty in accessing the study groups. There is a gender disproportion in the two study groups. In future studies, it would be good to take care to maintain the proportion in this aspect. The fact that the survey was conducted in Poland limits the possibility of generalizing the results to representatives of other cultures.

It might be an interesting direction to study the selected psychological predictors of motivation of artists, who have already developed their international careers, and we are also interested in deepening our understanding of the personality determinants of the four types of achievement motivation in international careers. Perhaps it would be appropriate to conduct the study again after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Ethical approval

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Address for correspondence

Barbara Cichy-Jasiocha
Institute of Psychology
The John Paul II
Catholic University
Lublin, Poland
E-mail: bcichy@kul.pl

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