

CORRELATES OF COMMITMENT AND JUDGED SELF COMPETENCE AMONG SOCIALLY ENGAGED MUSIC PRACTITIONERS

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A three-year international research project is examining musician experience of working in socially engaged participatory contexts in Belgium, Colombia, Finland, and the UK (1). The project examines how musicians conceive their contributions to this type of work, acquire the needed skills and motivation, and assess their effectiveness. One specific research question is how musicians feel empowered to continue work which is often challenging and underfunded. Primary project data is qualitative and is being reported elsewhere. This paper presents statistical analyses of selected quantitative data.

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1 Introduction

Recent decades have seen the growth of a new area of the global music industry. In addition to time-honoured practices such as performing, recording, composing, arranging, and teaching, there is now a growing and thriving sub-sector characterised by its social focus. Trained musicians work with volunteer groups of individuals of varied levels of prior musical skill and experience in pursuit of outcomes which go beyond the purely musical. This practice is sometimes characterised as Socially Impactful Music Making (SIMM). Much research exists on individual SIMM projects, focusing on the participants and the outcomes they experience. This research focuses on the musical practitioners who work in these projects in four selected countries, to understand the field and their role in it, as seen through their eyes.

2 Aims

Overall project: to undertake a systematic in-depth analysis of SIMM practitioners, exploring how their backgrounds, training, and beliefs affect the way they carry out their work and assess and improve its effectiveness.

This particular study: to examine patterns of response in quantitative data, looking for commonalities and contrasts in the different countries on perceived sources of support for commitment and skill development.

3 Method

- Online survey of 318 practitioners across the four countries (Belgium 47, Colombia 110, Finland 63, UK 97).
- Likert-scale questions rating the degree of importance practitioners place on this kind of work; and how well-equipped they feel to deliver this work.
- Questions assessing contextual factors (specific training received, size of project, perceived support for the work from different sectors of society).

4 Results

Figure 1 shows significant country differences on two contextual measures:

- The majority (75%) of Colombian respondents worked in large organisations employing more than 50 people. This contrasts with a small minority of respondents in the other countries ($p < 0.05$).
- The Colombian and Finnish samples contained significantly more respondents who had received specific training for their roles (81% and 87% respectively) compared to the Belgian or UK samples (53% and 69% respectively).

Figure 2 shows significant country differences on two self-perception measures:

- There are generally high scores on the statement "In terms of your artistic and work priorities, how important is this socially engaged type of work to you? 1 = interesting; 2 = important; 3 = essential", although Colombia and UK score significantly higher than the other countries ($p < 0.05$).
- The degree to which practitioners feel equipped or trained to carry out the work is more variable, with Belgian practitioners feeling significantly less well equipped than in the other three countries ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 3 shows significant ($p < 0.05$) positive correlations between the self-perception measures (Fig 2) and perceived support for SIMM work from different societal constituencies.

- Only for Music Higher Education is there a positive correlation for more than one country on the same variable. Respondents in Colombia and the UK who feel more equipped/trained for the work perceive greater support from higher education.
- Significant correlations mostly appear in those organisations/institutions that are potential sources of practical support (in funding, training, research, or advocacy).

Figure 1

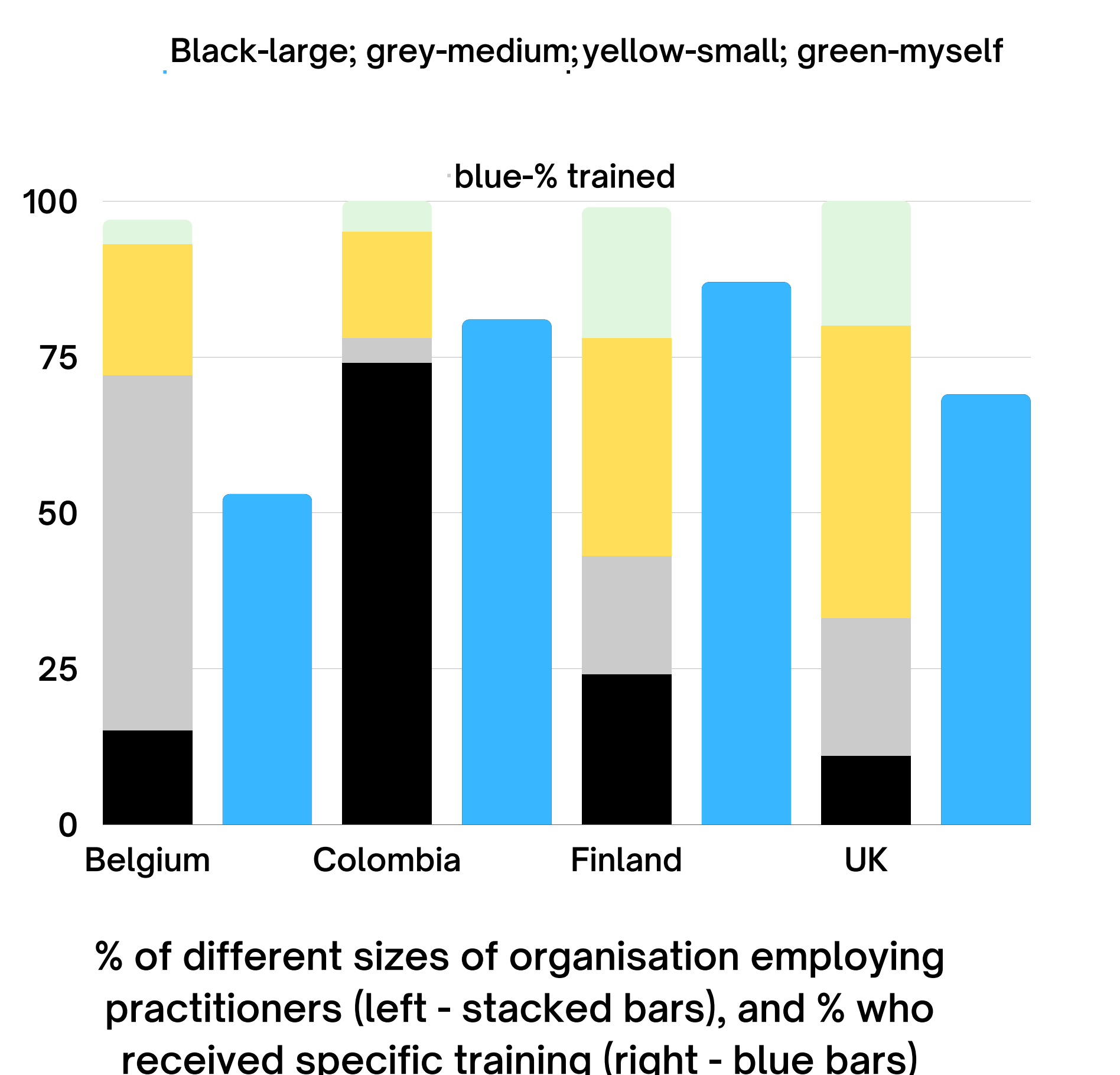


Figure 2

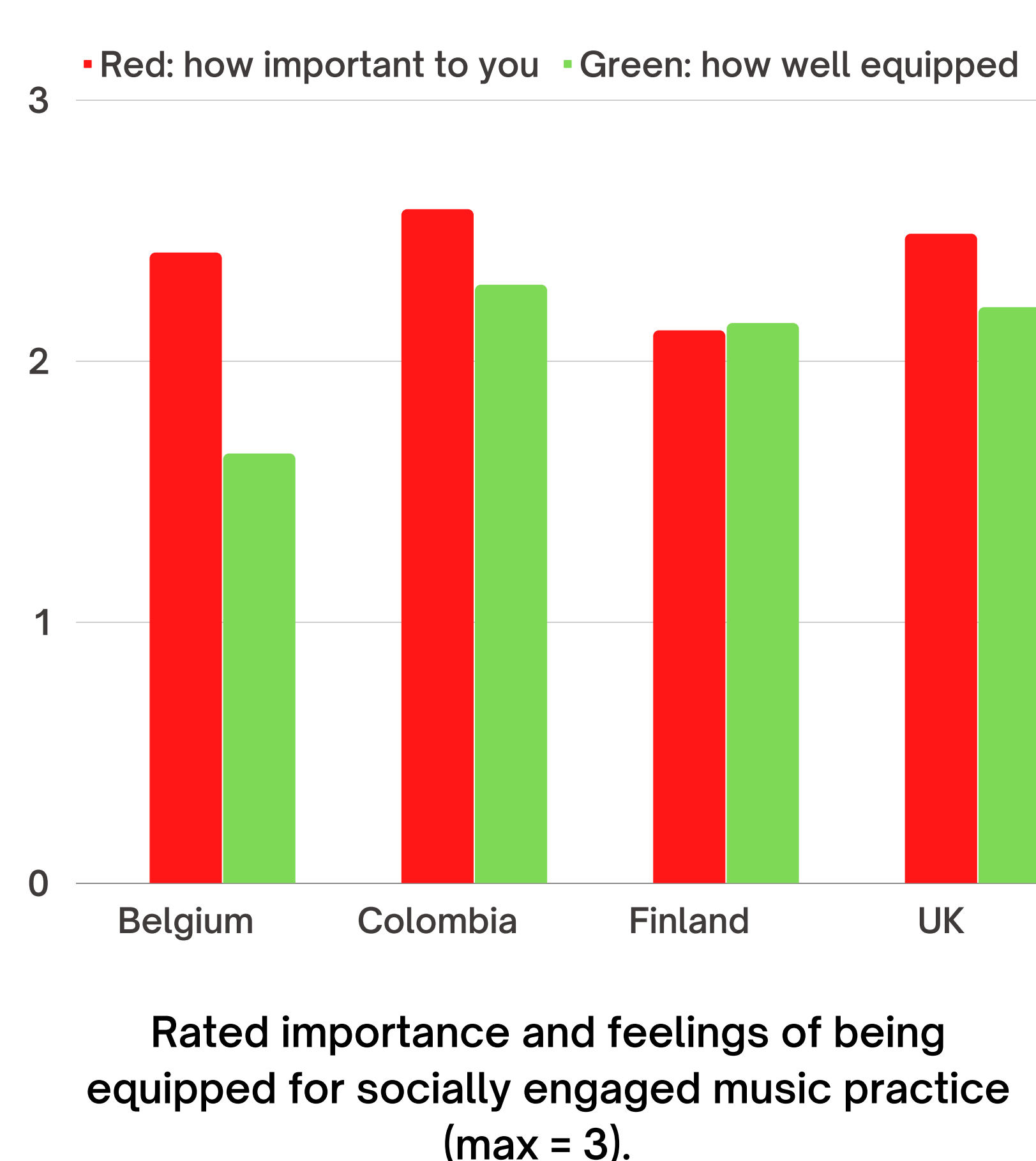


Figure 3

Perceived sources of support	Belgium	Colombia	Finland	UK
National Government				
Local Government	Red			Green
Press & Media		Green		
Music Higher Education		Green		Green
Music Industry			Green	
Charities & NGOs			Red	
Health & Social Organisations	Green		Red	
General Public				

Countries showing significant correlation between outcome variables and each source of support. Red - how important; green - how well equipped

5 Conclusions

- Respondents gave this kind of work high importance, many rating it essential to their artistic identity.
- Nonetheless, a sizeable minority have received no specific training for the work, and not all feel well-equipped to carry out the work.
- These self-perceptions are only weakly related to their perception of support from different sectors, with Music Higher Education being the only source of support showing a comparable relationship in more than one country.
- Plausibly, effective support for this activity is more ad-hoc and personal than systematic, as is perhaps typical in an emerging professional field with relatively few established developmental or progression routes.
- It is clear that country-specific factors are important in the dynamics of practitioner identity and development, despite international commonalities in broad aims and focus of the work.

Reference

(1) Sloboda, J., Baker, G., De bisschop, A., Karttunen, S., Mazzola, A., Rojas, J.S., Van Zijl, A., Westerlund, H., & Zapata Restrepo, G. (2020) Music for social impact: an overview of context, policy and activity in four countries. Belgium, Colombia, Finland, and the UK. *Finnish Journal of Music Education*, 23(1&2), 116-143.