

**Effects of Stereotypes, Visibility, and Pop Culture on the Recruitment and Retention in the
Middle School Orchestra**

By

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A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

IN

MUSIC EDUCATION

College of Fine Arts

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Stevens Point, Wisconsin

May 2022

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the effects of stereotypes, visibility, and pop culture on the recruitment and retention on a string program. The sixth-grade students at two middle schools in the Fond du Lac School District were surveyed to better understand why or why not they decided to join an ensemble class and their perceptions of string instruments. Mixed methods research was used to get a better understanding of current perceived stereotypes of string instruments and players, the technology usage of a sixth grader, and how visible the music offerings are in the district. Findings revealed the importance of parental support, visibility of existing programs, and the impact that an elementary general music education can have on a student's interest in music.

Keyword(s): Technology, Stereotypes, Recruitment, Retention, Visibility, Orchestra, Middle School.

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I: Introduction

In my 12 years of teaching, I have spent hours debating with band and choir teachers about what recruitment strategies are important for a string program. Most of my rationale came down to asking why string programs are not as successful as band and choir programs in many districts. Growing up, I had the opportunity to be a part of both a band and orchestra program that was supported and successful. I knew there was no excuse for it not to be common practice.

During my first year of teaching, I was both the band and orchestra teacher at a Title I middle school of 900 students in Phoenix, AZ. When it came time to start planning for the next school year's recruitment, my principal, whose opinion I respected very much, stated, "I don't even know why we offer a string class. Kids don't find orchestra interesting anymore." This two-sentence statement prompted me to prove that strings did have a place in school and there was interest for it in our school and community. Over the next four years, I increased enrollment from 22 students and one offered class to 63 students and two classes offered: one for beginners and a class for students that had played for two or more years. After five years in that school, I changed districts and states, but my mission remains the same.

Demonstrating to our students, families, and community how important and relevant strings are in our schools and communities will be a continuous project for me. This is also important for the future of movie scores and professional orchestras, for the kids that want to be the next Lindsey Sterling or Black Violin and for the student who just loves to play. There is work to be done to build strong quality string programs as an option for all students, but it needs to start somewhere.

Purpose Statement

The main research question this thesis seeks to answer: What are the effects of program visibility, stereotypes, and pop-culture influences on the choices of beginning string players at the middle school level? Other questions important to this study include:

1. How do students use technology? How available is it to each individual student?
And how much time is devoted to technology use?
2. What musical background and experiences do sixth graders have before they enter middle school?

Importance of the Study

The information in this thesis will be of value to orchestra students, strings teachers, general music teachers, parents of music students, high school and collegiate programs, and professional orchestras. These groups will find this information important because of the external forces that can contribute to interest and long-term commitment to learning an instrument. Knowing what the influences are gives teachers the ability to provide a more positive and meaningful experience for younger students and parents. Providing a strong background in string experiences, such as elementary general music lessons and ukulele, will inspire students to try playing a string instrument. Being able to understand strategies to increase enrollment is of importance to local school boards and administrators for use in future budget talks. It is in their best interest to be able to provide a quality strings program for their community.

Definition of Terms

Here I have provided definitions of terms that may facilitate ease of understanding for readers from a variety of academic backgrounds.

Visibility: For the purposes of this document, visibility refers to the degree to which the orchestra has attracted general attention within the school and community.

Recruitment: This refers to the process of attracting new members to join the orchestra.

Retention: This is in reference to the ability of music teachers to keep students interested and a part of the orchestra.

Stereotype: A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of someone who participates in orchestra.

Attrition: This refers to the action or process of gradually reducing the strength or effectiveness of an orchestra through sustained attack or pressure.

Passive Recruitment: This is in reference to the act of recruiting someone who is not actively looking to join orchestra.

In conclusion, Chapter One discussed the purpose of understanding stereotypes, visibility, and pop culture for string programs. The goal is to better understand the effects that these have on recruitment and retention. My research question was shared, the importance I believe this study will have for students, teachers, and stakeholders in a successful program was stated, and I defined key terms that will be found throughout. In Chapter Two, I will provide my review of literature relevant to this study.

II. Review of Related Literature

In the previous chapter, I introduced this study about the effects of stereotypes, visibility, and pop culture on the recruitment and retention of middle school orchestra and gave some information about what inspired me to do this research. In this chapter, I will review the literature related to my study pertaining to the influences on middle school orchestra students. Many scholars agree that a lack of visibility for orchestras in the popular domain hinders its popularity among middle schoolers who are choosing their instruments for the first time. I have organized my review of the literature into the following sections: recruitment and retention, visibility, and stereotypes and media. In the first section, I will include scholarship that relates to recruitment and retention of middle school music ensemble participants. In the second section on visibility, I will introduce authors who discuss the importance of outreach for orchestra programs. In the third section, I will examine sources that relate to stereotypes and media in terms of orchestra instruments and the middle school music ensemble.

Recruitment and Retention

Some scholars discuss the status of string programs around the country (Davis, 2021; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Gillespie & Hamman, 1998; Kuehne & Harrison, 2016; and Smith, Mick, & Alexander, 2018), whereas other authors have focused on specific recruitment strategies that have worked in band, choir, and string ensemble programs (Ammerman, 2016; Ammerman & Wuttke, 2014; Cole, 2010; Davis, 2009; Davis, 2021; Dilmore, 2017; Lang, 2015; Stefanova-Mar, 2016; and Sussman, 2012).

Smith, Mick, and Alexander (2018) did a study entitled *The Status of Strings and Orchestra Programs in U.S. Schools*. They observed, using three studies in string program sizes plus a study of their own, that there was an overall increase in enrollment for string programs

over a period of 20 years. The retention percentage during this time was reported as “73% of students continued from first to second year of instruction, 69% continued from elementary to middle/junior high, and 69% continued from middle/junior high to high school,” (p. 22). Despite these findings and retention percentages, Gillespie & Hamman (1998) found that students who are playing string instruments is low in comparison to students who have access to learning a string instrument, stating, “...the majority of teachers stated that 10% or less of elementary, middle school, and junior high school students were playing stringed instruments in their schools, while less than 5% of those eligible were playing at the high school level” (p. 9). These retention percentages pale in relationship to the small number of eligible students participating in string programs from the outset.

During a 2016 study, Kuehn et al surveyed 89 members of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) organization to better understand music educator views on string programs in four southern states. “Our results suggest that at least some NSO [non-string-orchestra] teachers chose program preservation over music program diversification, and increased student opportunities for music participation,” (p.93). Music educators in other specializations may be concerned about numbers in their own ensembles; this may contribute to a lack of support for pre-existing string programs and discourage expanding to offer a string option in districts that do not currently have a string program.

Socioeconomic status has also shown to have a large impact on a student’s ability to participate in music programs. Elpus and Abril wrote, “Music students tended to come from families with higher socioeconomic status than non-music students. Those in the highest SES quartile were 1.71 times more likely to have participated in music than those from the lowest SES quartile” (2011, p. 138). Davis, K. (2021) further recognizes the issue by writing “Schools

that typically serve a high number of minority students are often forced to eliminate or scale back arts programs...” (p. 17). Students who are in low socioeconomic areas and are minorities find themselves at a disadvantage by not having the opportunity to learn a string instrument if they are interested.

Davis, K. (2021), an orchestra director at H.W Grady High School in Atlanta, Georgia, observed how the changing demographics of students in schools was not being represented in the orchestra classroom in regards to recruitment and retention:

... the majority of the population of the United States will be made up of racial minority groups or reach “majority-minority” status. Therefore, the recruitment and retention of Black and Latinx students will be key to the survival of ensemble music programs...with such a racially and socioeconomically diverse population, it is crucial that the orchestra program reflects the overall population of the school and community it serves, and that all my students see themselves represented in the curriculum (p. 17).

Davis, K. further observes that students who do not feel represented often will not try to engage in an ensemble situation. Additionally, Ammerman (2016) draws attention to the disparity between low socioeconomic status and high socioeconomic status and its relation to recruitment and retention in an orchestra program.

Cole (2010), a string educator who has increased enrollment in their school orchestra program from 210 to over 700 participants during his tenure, explains the importance of recruitment in orchestra as thus “As orchestra and music teachers in general, [recruitment] is what we do every year. If students don’t sign up for our program we wouldn’t have an orchestra. Let alone jobs. The day-to-day operations of our programs are important, but there is nothing more crucial than getting students into our classroom. Recruitment is where it all starts,” (p.

108). Not only is recruitment important but a student's continued participation in a string program is essential. “Low enrollment and massive attrition rates are significant factors in the stability and growth of school orchestra programs,” (Ammerman, et al, 2014, p. 22). Recruitment and retention need to support each other to strengthen the experience for all students.

A way to support recruitment is to incorporate students who are already a part of the program, which also strengthens a program's retention. Recruitment and retention work together with proper planning. Many articles have been written describing ways to successfully recruit for strings; several incorporated strategies that include students already enrolled in the program. Lang (2015), Sussmann (2012), Dilmore (2017), and Stefanova Mar (2016) suggested recruitment strategies for string and orchestra programs that can be boiled down to 3 categories: create community within your program, put instruments in students’ hands, and be a presence in the school and community.

Ultimately, it is the teacher’s strengths in recruitment and retention that make these factors work. Ammerman, et al (2014) describes the teacher’s role in recruitment and retention “The survival and success of the school orchestra program depends upon the teacher’s ability to understand why students join their program, why students stay and why they choose to leave,” (p. 22). A teacher who is a presence in the school is going to understand this and be an ambassador for their program and students.

Recruiting with the other musical ensembles in the school has its benefits. However, proper planning and strategizing is important for string recruitment to be a success in this situation. Davis, S. (2009) writes “When band and orchestra teachers recruit together, the band inherently gets more time and attention due to the number of instruments that need to be presented. This can make the orchestra programs seem smaller than it really is – remember that

perception is reality with young children” (p. 60). Giving equal time to all ensembles participating in recruitment also means showing the same enthusiasm for each group.

Although it was shown that numbers in string programs have gone up, the amount of participants in string ensembles overall is low compared to students who have access to be a part of one. A string program's recruitment and retention are linked to socioeconomic status, representation in the ensemble, and the teacher's understanding of the students in their district.

Visibility

This section discusses literature concerning a string program's need for visibility in schools and the community that it serves. I will present a brief overview of literature on visibility (Abril & Gault, 2008; Albert 2006; Cole, 2010; Davis, K. 2021; Mark 2008).

Abril and Gault (2008) sent a survey to 1,000 secondary school principals across the United States. Part of the survey looked at what the percentage of music class offerings were: “The most commonly offered music course in secondary schools was band, which was offered in 93% of schools. Other common offerings included chorus (88%) and jazz/rock ensemble (55%). Other, less common courses (in fewer than 50% of the schools) included general music (45%), orchestra (42%)...” (p. 72-73). It is no surprise that the band has the highest percentage in this study based on the history of how the band and orchestra serve their community needs. “Bands like Gilmore's and Sousa's entertained their audiences with superb showmanship. They met the popular needs of the people while the orchestra maintained the traditions of the Old World,” (Mark, 2008, p. 123).

Albert (2006) wrote “Positive personal contact and visibility... can heighten awareness and anticipation of an instrument music program” (p. 65). An orchestra teacher who creates relationships and connections with students in their school outside of their string classes will

encourage more participation in the program. This transcends a desire to just play an instrument. Cole (2010) strengthens this argument by writing “My primary purpose is to make orchestra look attractive to the student who hasn’t given any thought to being in the program” (pg. 108). Cole continues in their article with examples of passive recruitment: word of mouth, unexpected places for concerts, notoriety of the orchestra teacher within the school community, and recognizing students in the program for their progress and individualism (pg. 108-109). This form of visibility builds positive interactions not only for students who are in strings, but also for the avenues that can support a positive program and future growth.

Feeling a sense of community and belonging in a program also translates into seeing representation of oneself and cultures. In Davis, K.’s (2021) article *Recruiting and retaining Black and Latinx students in string orchestra programs*, the representation of minority students in the string classroom is addressed. “With the increasing racial diversity in our school population, it is imperative that music educators work to ensure their programs reflect the demographics of their schools and surrounding communities” (p. 17). This form of visibility helps students to know that they will be welcome in the string classroom.

Visibility in a string program promotes its own kind of recruitment especially if it is positive. Having concerts with some recognizable music, positive and personal interactions between students and strings teachers, and representation within a program should be a staple of every program.

Stereotypes and Media

In this section, I review literature on stereotypes and social media. The literature explores media and its influence on stereotypes (Anderson & Cavallaro, 2002; Kirsh, 2010; Warnock, 2009), as well as more specific examples of how media has influenced participation in music

ensembles (Bolden, 2010; Hartwig & Riek, 2015; Warnock, 2009). It is also important to present literature on the influence of name calling and the effects that were observed in band (Abramo, 2016; Adderly, Kennedy & Berz, 2003; MacLellan, 2011).

In Warnock's (2009) article, *Gender and Attraction: Predicting Middle School Performance Ensemble Participation*, it is stated that “the decision to participate in a middle school music performance ensemble may be one that is more socially influenced by others, rather than one that is made solely by oneself” (p. 59). Warnock also wrote “Gender and sex identity beliefs about instrument selection and potential ensemble participation may curb many students’ interest in ever enrolling in a school music ensemble” (p. 73). Having a positive role model who also plays and supports music can have a major impact on students' decisions to participate in music. Anderson and Cavillaro (2002) found “children most frequently (34 percent) named their parents as role models and heroes” (p. 166).

Media uses stereotypes to advertise and sell an idea. “Children’s play behavior does in fact mirror the types of products advertised to them” (Kirsh, 2010, p. 115). An example Kirsh gives in their article is how commercials targeted at boys will advertise toys that promote independence or weapons, such as guns and swords. They will also contain loud music, quick scene changes and depict high energy activities. They contrast this example with the characteristics given to commercials advertising to girls which often contain domestic tasks, exploring feelings, and relationships. The music used will often be soft, images do not move in quick scene cuts, and have a gentler feeling to them (p. 115). The way the media presents an idea has a strong impact on those that consume it. This will also apply to specific instruments, ensemble choices, and musical preferences.

The power of media's influence and stereotypes can be seen in the many vocal tv shows that have aired in the last 20 plus years: The Voice, American Idol, and the Masked Singer to name a few. In reference specifically to Glee, Bolden (2010) identifies a common problem with how vocal singing is depicted in this show. "While acknowledging the increased interest in coming out to join choir... [It's] challenging to introduce the Glee-struck choir members to varied repertoire, and difficult to meet the Glee-provoked expectations that students will sound and feel like rock stars" (p. 3). Bolden also states "Unlike shows about sports that tend to emphasize hard work, Glee ignores it, or worse still, pretends it isn't necessary" (p. 4).

Similarly, Hartwig and Riek (2015) wrote "The theme most obvious in their responses is that problems may arise when choristers obtain the view that what they see on these shows is easy to achieve and is good quality" (p. 43). These shows are giving unrealistic expectations to young musicians, creating retention issues and low motivation to learn things other than what they see on these shows, for choirs.

Social media takes these stereotypes and can use them for positive or negative influence. In Abramo's (2016) research he looked into the impact that a tweet by a sports commentator, Jim Rome, had on the marching band community. Rome's Tweet read "is there anyone not in a marching band who thinks those dorks running around with their instruments are cool" (p. 113). Abramo concluded that "many social media users proudly embraced being called a dork by Rome as an act of defiance, and this response was the most prominent theme" (p. 120). This same thing was observed by Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz (2003), "The labels were viewed with both humor as well as with considerable negativity. The students seemed to imply that it was okay to use these labels for one another, but not so from those outside of the program" (p. 197). Abramo was able to sum up the power that one public figure had with one tweet. "Jim Rome's

tweet brought questions of marching band identity and music education into a wider public forum” (p.124). This tweet along with the vocal tv shows are bringing attention to both band and choir ensembles, creating an impact on how these ensembles are viewed by participants and potential members.

Personality types can also have an impact on students' participation in different ensembles. In MacLellan’s (2011) article the personality traits of choir, band, and orchestra members were broken down. Taking note of the similarities and differences between the ensemble members’ personality traits and that of non-musician personality traits, MacLellan writes “While maintaining a certain social climate within our ensemble can be a positive thing, we must be careful not to turn away potential ensemble members who might not fit the mold of a typical band, orchestra, or choir student” (p. 40). This mold may often resemble stereotypes, which can often reflect negative ideas that they represent causing students not to consider being a member in an ensemble.

Stereotypes and Media affect how different things are perceived as well as our feelings towards them. How the media portrays singers and musicians is having an effect in music classrooms and what students expect to be able to accomplish, while other people using stereotypical terms can have an impact on an entire musical culture. Catering too much to a personality type can push away interested students who don’t see themselves fitting into those classifications.

In conclusion, Chapter Two includes scholarship concerning Recruitment and Retention, Visibility, and Stereotypes and Media. To better understand the relationship between pop culture, stereotypes, visibility, and the middle school string ensemble, it is important to research how it affects recruitment and retention in order to know more about how to increase student

participation in middle school strings programs. The literature included here forms the foundation of this research because it helps to better examine my research question: What are the effects of stereotypes, visibility, and pop culture on the recruitment and retention of middle school orchestra students? Next, in Chapter Three, I will describe the methodology I used to collect data for my research question, the design of the study, as well as the process used for analysis.

III. Design and Methodology

Last chapter I reviewed the preexisting literature about Recruitment and Retention, Visibility, and Stereotypes and Media. I will now explain how I designed this research project and share my methods of analysis. I have created the following subsections for the ease and understanding of the reader: Process, Participants, Mixed Methods Research, Data Collection, and Approach to Analysis. As I noted in Chapter One, the research question driving this study is: What are the effects of stereotypes, visibility, and pop culture on the recruitment and retention of middle school orchestra students?

Process

My process for conducting this research began with trying to understand how stereotypes, visibility, and pop culture affect a student's interest in joining an orchestra ensemble class. I knew I wanted to investigate using a survey about past musical experiences; both as a participant and an audience member. I also wanted to understand the different kinds of access to technology that current sixth graders had.

I reached out via email to sixth grade homeroom teachers at Sabish and Woodworth Middle School in the Fond du Lac, WI school district where I teach orchestra. We scheduled a day to administer the survey so that all students participated at the same time. Parents were notified via email of the date and purpose of the survey a week prior, with the option to opt out if they did not want their child participating. No parent chose to opt their child(ren) out of the survey. The students accessed the online survey through the district learning management system. The first page of the online survey was an informed consent document (see Appendix A), which students signed by clicking the Next button on the form. Students were also advised to

read or do other work if they were opting out of participating in data collection. I was able to review each participant's anonymous answers through the district learning management system and compare it to other students' surveys in the same program.

Participants

My participants were selected as a sample of convenience. The sixth-grade students participating were already in the Fond du Lac, WI school district at the schools where I teach. Creswell (2018) described a convenience sample as "respondents are chosen based on their convenience and availability" (pg. 150). I needed a sample of participants that had similar elementary experiences and the same music options when signing up for music classes at the middle school level. In order to help answer questions about the effects of stereotypes, visibility, and pop culture on recruitment and retention in sixth grade orchestra, I needed participants who were new to sixth grade and these participants needed to have similar experiences through elementary school.

Demographically, both of the middle schools in this study are considered suburban schools. As of the 2019-2020 school year one middle school was comprised of a student body that was 77% White, 10% Hispanic, 7% Black, 4% two or more races, 2% Asian, and less than 1% Native American/Pacific Islander. At this same school 52% of students were female and 48% were male. Additionally, 47% of students were from low-income families as measured by the number of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. In the same school year, the student body at the other middle school where I teach was 62% White, 18% Hispanic, 9% Black, 4% two or more races, 5% Asian, and less than 1% Native American/Pacific Islander. At this location, 54% of students were male and 46% were female, and 55% of students were from low-income families qualifying for free or reduced lunch.

Mixed Methods Research

This study uses Mixed Methods Research. Creswell (2014) wrote “the core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone” (pg. 4). By using mixed methods research, I was able to collect data regarding the frequency that a student uses electronic devices and specific applications they use which is important when analyzing the impact of pop culture and social media, as well as to gather some written feedback to get a more precise idea of the student’s answers.

Data Collection

My research process required me to select a group of students within a certain grade (sixth grade) at the middle school level. These participants took an anonymous survey while in their daily homerooms, and the survey was administered by the students’ homeroom teachers using the students’ school issued devices. The homeroom teachers used a script (see Appendix B) to help students understand directions for the survey, and helped students sign into a designated location on the school learning management system so that all students would have the same ability to access the survey. Homeroom teachers had been provided with the script via email which also contained the code students would use in order to access the survey.

Students went to their homeroom and logged into their school provided computer. Homeroom teachers read the script and walked students through the login process for the survey. Page one of the survey (see Appendix C) contained the students' informed consent (see Appendix A), which they went through and clicked Next, acknowledging their consent to take or opt out of the survey. The survey took students 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Once students

completed the survey, or opted out of the survey, they were invited to work on something quietly until everyone had finished.

Students who were absent from school or homeroom the day that the survey was administered were not given the opportunity to take it at a later date. The survey was conducted at two schools, so scheduling was done to ensure that the survey was given to the sixth grade students on the same day. However, it was not possible to have it administered at the same time of day.

Approach to Analysis

My approach to data analysis was as follows: first I downloaded the data from the survey into a spreadsheet, then I cleaned the data by reading through the responses and removing any that did not follow the prompts correctly. An example of this would be when the directions stated “If you answered ‘yes’ to the previous question, answer the next two questions” and the respondent still answered the next two questions when they answered ‘no’. After the data was cleaned, I broke the questions into categories based on what the questions were asking: Technology Use, Musical Background, Pop Culture References, and Visibility. I used the software to quantitatively analyze the data and count other categories by hand, such as instruments, because students can have very imaginative ways of spelling. I coded the questions that asked for a deeper response such as “When you think of an orchestra performer what characteristics do you think of?”

In Chapter Three, I described how I designed this research project. I explained each step of my process and shared my method of analysis. In Chapter Four, I will report my findings from the survey that was administered.

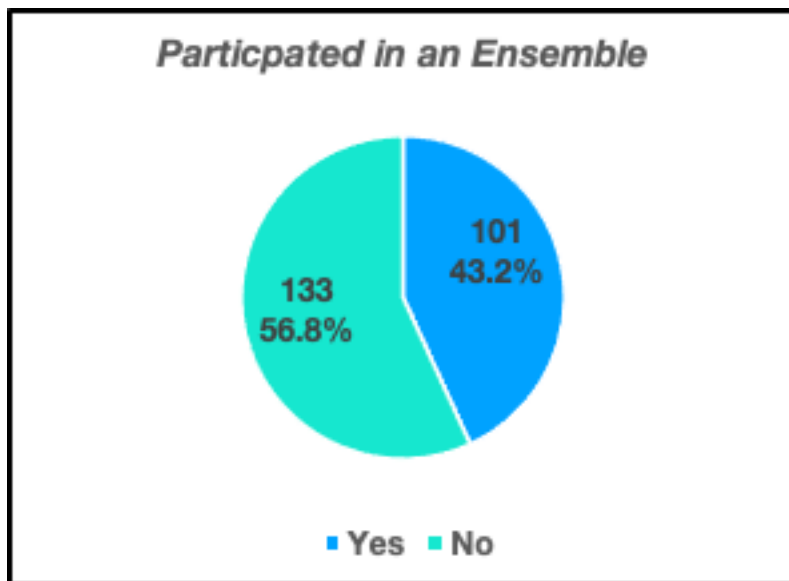
IV. Findings

In the previous three chapters I introduced this study about the Effects of Stereotypes, Visibility, and Pop Culture on Recruitment and Retention of the Middle School Orchestra, a review of literature related to the study, and a description of the methodology and my approach to analysis. As described in Chapter Three, I surveyed middle schoolers from two schools about their perceptions of strings and the orchestra. In Chapter Four, I will report the findings from the survey.

Background and Technology

This survey was taken by 234 students. When asked if they had participated in an ensemble in a previous grade, 101 students (43.2% of respondents) responded yes, they had participated in an ensemble. Conversely, 133 students (56.8% of respondents) indicated that no, they had not participated in ensembles in a previous grade.

FIGURE 1.

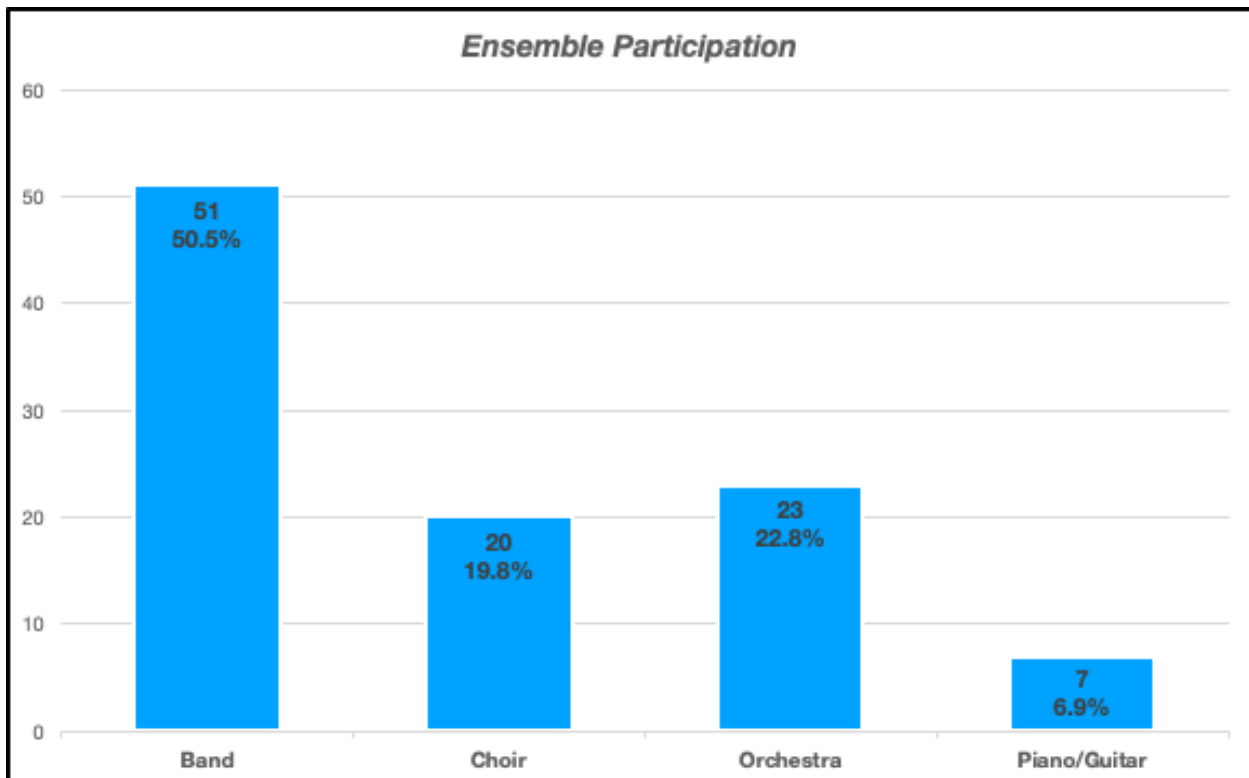


The 101 students who had participated in an ensemble were instructed to answer the next three questions. First, they were asked how many years they had participated in an ensemble: 73

students (72.3% of respondents) responded one year of ensemble participation, while 16 students (15.9% of respondents) answered two years of participation, four students (4.0% of respondents) answered three years of participation, three students (2.9% of respondents) answered four years of participation, four students (4.0% of respondents) answered five years participation, and one student (0.9% of respondents) answered they had six years of ensemble participation.

Students who indicated that they had participated in an ensemble indicated what type of instrument they played. Respondents were able to indicate if they played more than one instrument as well as participated in choir. Of the 101 students who answered, 20 students (19.8% of respondents) participated in choir, 51 students (50.5% of respondents) participated in band, 23 students (22.8% of respondents) participated in orchestra, and 7 students (6.9% of respondents) participated in piano or guitar.

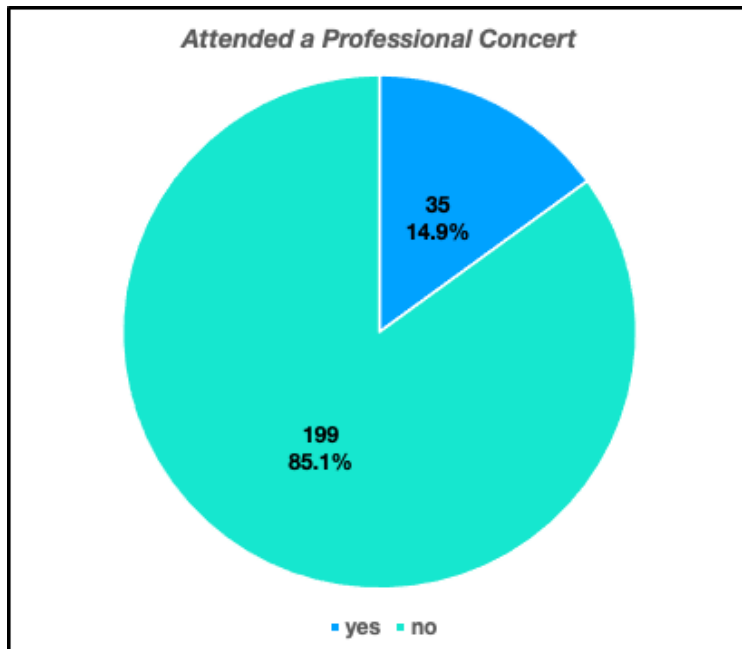
FIGURE 2.



The final question in this section asked respondents to write why they initially chose to participate in an ensemble. Of the 80 students who responded to this question, 29 students (36.2% of respondents) indicated they initially signed up because they thought it would be fun. There were 21 students (26.2% of respondents) who wrote that they initially signed up for an ensemble because a family member and/or friend had been a part of an ensemble. Thirteen students (17.3% of respondents) initially signed up to try something new or avoid taking a general music class. Ten students (12.5% of respondents) signed up because they like/love music. Six students (7.5% of respondents) initially signed up because they believed they could be good at an instrument/singing.

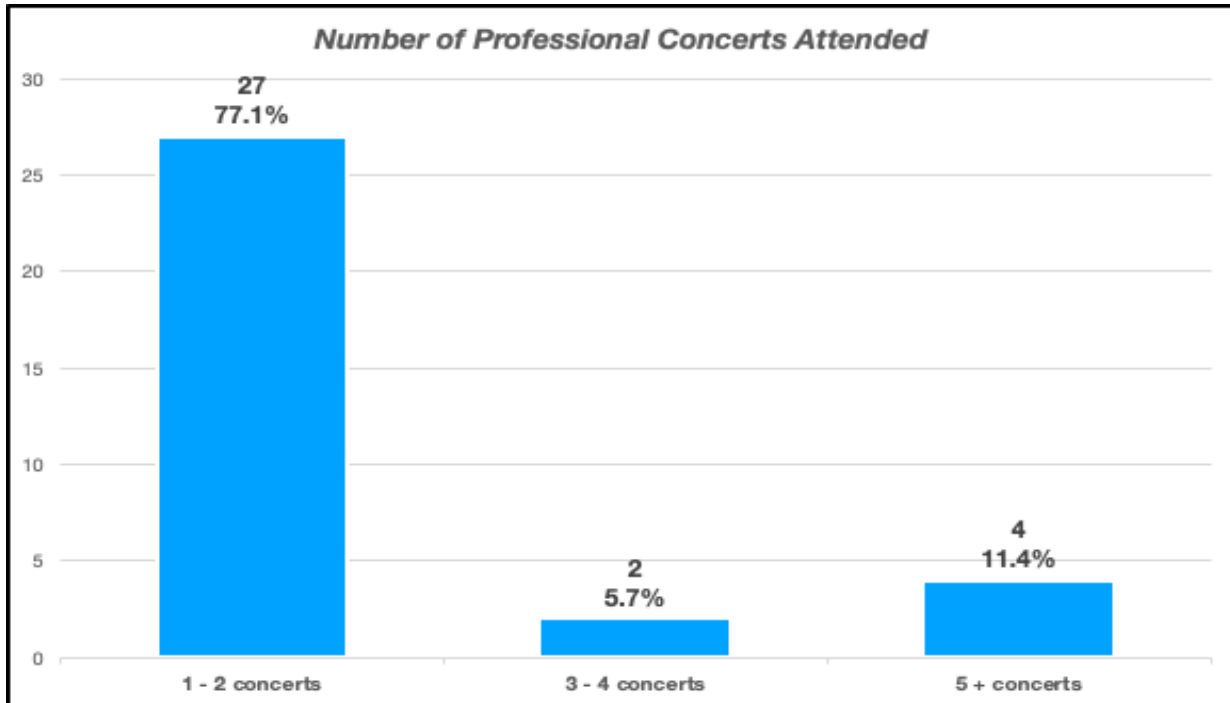
All respondents were asked to answer the remaining questions. They were asked if they had been to a professional orchestra concert where strings were present. There were 234 students who responded. A majority of the students, 199 (85.1% of respondents), answered “No, I have never been to a concert” whereas 35 students (14.9% of respondents) responded “Yes, I have been to a professional orchestra concert.”

FIGURE 3.



Of the 35 respondents who indicated they had been to a concert, 27 students (77.1 % of respondents) had been to one or two performances, two students (5.7% of respondents) had been to three or four performances, four students (11.4% of respondents) had been to five or more, and two students (5.7% of respondents) did not respond with a number of concerts attended.

FIGURE 4.



A strikingly small number of students, only seven, responded with a memorable moment that stuck with them from a performance. These responses included “When it would be quiet and it would start being loud and then quiet” and “it was like it was vibrating in my head”.

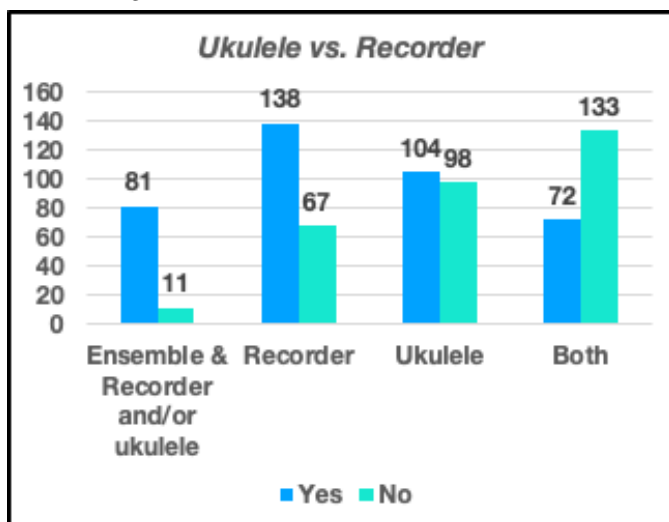
Of the 184 respondents who answered the question “Do your parents play an instrument?” only about a quarter (24.4%) responded that their parents play an instrument. Conversely, three quarters of the respondents (75.6%) responded that their parents do not play an instrument.

Next, respondents were asked if they learned the ukulele or the recorder in their elementary general music classes. In regards to playing the recorder, 138 students (58.9% of

respondents) replied “Yes” and 67 students (28.6% of respondents) replied “No”. Likewise, when asked about playing the ukulele, 104 students (44.4% of respondents) replied “Yes”, and 98 students (41.8% of respondents) replied “No”. There were 72 students (35.1% of respondents) who played both the recorder and the ukulele.

Furthermore, 92 students responded to both the “I participated in an ensemble” question and to the “I played a Ukulele/Recorder” questions. Of those responses, 81 students (88.0% of respondents) replied “yes” to both questions. Whereas, 11 students (12.0% of respondents) replied that they participate in an ensemble but did not learn the Ukulele and/or Recorder in elementary school.

FIGURE 5.



Of the 227 respondents who answered the question asking “During the day do you have access to your own technology?” 205 students (90.3% of respondents) responded “Yes”, and 22 students (10.7% of respondents) responded “No”, they did not have access during the day to their own technology.

Students were then asked to rate the amount of time they spend on different activities on their electronics using a Likert scale of one “not a lot of time” to five “most of my time.” They rated the amount of time spent on Email first, with almost three quarters of the students

responding with a one at 94 (43.9% of respondents), or a two at 50 students (23.4% of respondents). Another 39 students (16.8% of respondents) responded with a three, ten students (4.7% of respondents) responded with a four, and 21 students (9.8% of respondents) responded with a five “most of my time”.

Students ranked their time on Reddit next with a majority, 134 students (80.7% of respondents), responding one “not a lot of time”. The rest of the breakdown is as follows: 13 students (7.8% of respondents) responded two, nine students (5.4% of respondents) responded three, three students (1.8% of respondents) responded four, and seven students (4.2% of respondents) responded five.

Blog sites ranked similarly with over three quarters of students, 115 students (69.7% of respondents), responding one “not a lot of time” and 22 students (13.3% of respondents) responding two. The rest of the responses broke down as follows: 16 students (9.7% of respondents) responded three, six students (3.6% of respondents) responded four, and six students (3.6% of respondents) responded five.

Students were asked about time spent on homework. The responses were as follows: 29 students (13.4% of respondents) responded one, 27 students (12.5% of respondents) responded two, 76 students (35.2% of respondents) responded three, 48 students (22.2% of respondents) responded four, and 36 students (16.6% of respondents) responded with a five.

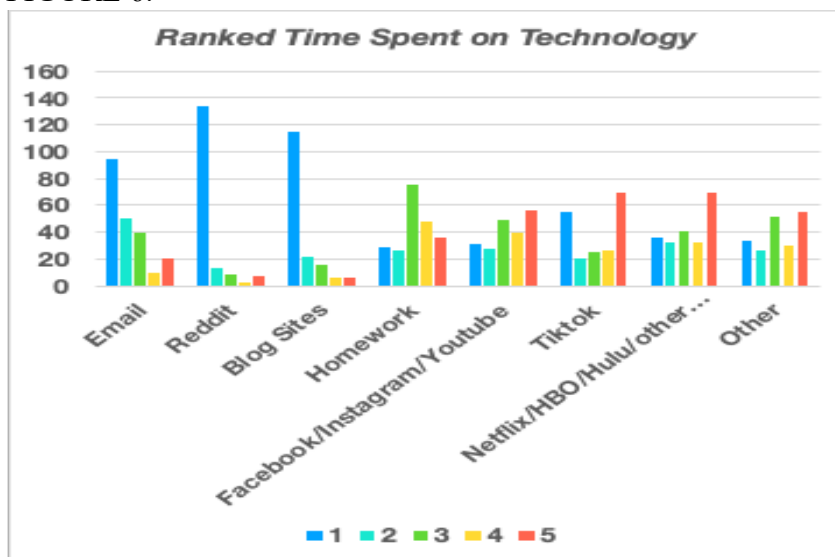
The responses were more spread out when asked how much time was spent on Facebook/Instagram/YouTube. Of the responses 31 students (15.2% of respondents) indicated a one “not a lot of time”, 28 students (13.7% of respondents) responded with a two, 49 students (24.0% of respondents) responded with a three, 40 students (19.6% of respondents) responded with a four, and 56 students (27.4% of respondents) responded with a five.

Students indicated next how much time they spent on TikTok with 55 students (27.9% of respondents) responding with a one, 20 students (9.8% of respondents) responding with a two, and 25 students (12.7% of respondents) responding with a three. Students responding with a four or higher took up almost half of the results with 27 students (13.7% of respondents) responding with a four, and 70 students (35.5% of respondents) responding with a five.

Students then ranked the amount of time spent on Netflix, HBO, Hulu, or other movie streaming services. This resulted in 36 students (17.1% of respondents) responding with a one, 32 students (15.2% of respondents) responding with a two, 41 students (19.5% of respondents) responding with a three, 32 students (15.2% of respondents) responding with four and 69 students (32.8% of respondents) responding with a five.

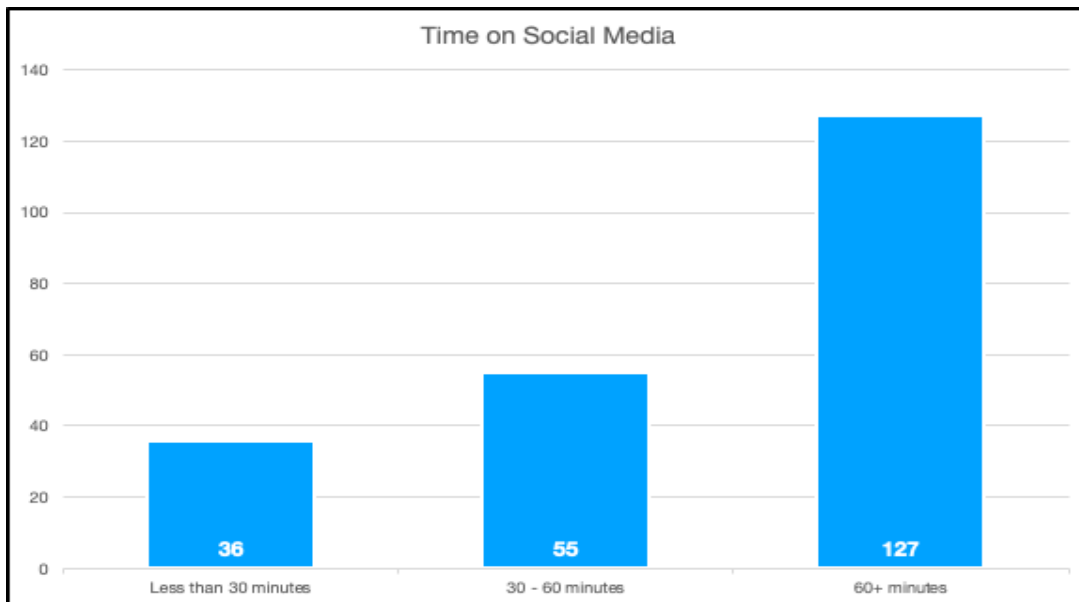
Finally, students ranked the amount of time spent on other sites. They responded as follows: 34 students (17.2% of respondents) responded with a one, 27 students (13.6% of respondents) responded with a two, 52 students (26.3% of respondents) responded with a three, 30 students (15.2% of respondents) responded with a four, and 55 students (27.8% of respondents) responded with a five.

FIGURE 6.



To finish the section of the survey on Background and Technology, students were asked how much time they estimate they spend on social media each day. Of the 218 students who responded, 36 (16.5% of respondents) indicated spending less than 30 minutes a day and 55 students (25.2% of respondents) responded with spending 30 - 60 minutes. Over half of the students, 127 students (58.2% of respondents), responded that they spend 60+ minutes a day on social media.

FIGURE 7.



Visibility and Knowledge of School Music Programs

Respondents then answered questions about their knowledge of their district music programs. Students rated whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about seeing different musical ensembles in the district on a Likert scale of one “don’t agree” to five “strongly agree.” Of the 211 students who responded to the question “I have seen a marching band performance,” 40 students (18.9% of respondents) responded with a one, 13 students (6.1% of respondents) responded with a two, and 38 students (18.9% of respondents) responded with a

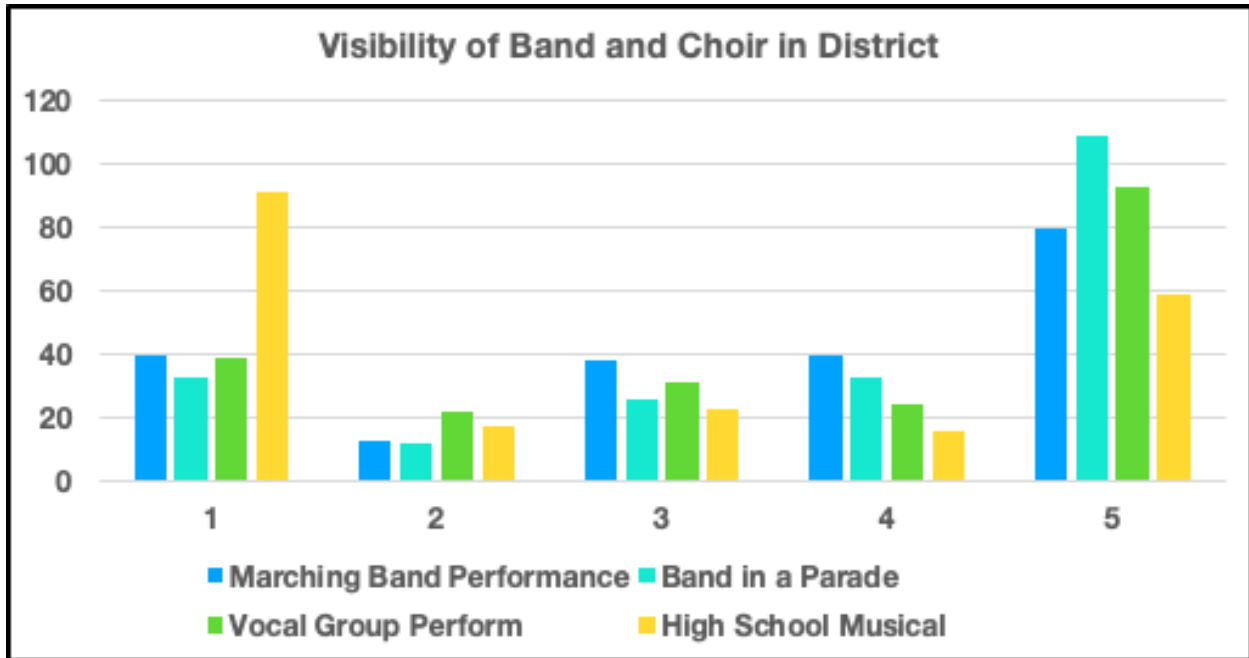
three. Responding positively to the question, 40 students (18.9% of respondents) responded with a four, and 80 students (37.9% of respondents) responded with a five.

Of the 213 students who responded to “I have seen a band in a parade,” 33 students (15.5% of respondents) responded with a one “don’t agree,” 12 students (5.6% of respondents) responded with a two, and 26 students (12.2% of respondents) responded with a three. A majority of responses were agreeing with the statement: 33 students (15.4% of respondents) responded with four and 109 students (51.2% of respondents) responding with a five.

Next, students were asked to respond to “I have seen a vocal group perform at school.” There were 39 students (18.6% of respondents) responding with a one “don’t agree,” 22 students (10.5% of respondents) responding with a two, 31 students (14.8% of respondents) responding with a three, 24 students (11.5% of respondents) responding with a four, and almost half, 93 (44.5% of respondents), responding with a five.

The responses flipped for the question “I have seen a live musical performance at the high school,” with over half, 91 students (44.2% of respondents) answering one, and 17 students (8.3% of respondents) answering two. This leaves 23 students (11.2% of respondents) responding with a three, 16 students (7.7% of respondents) responding with a four, and 59 students (28.6%) responding with a five.

FIGURE 8.



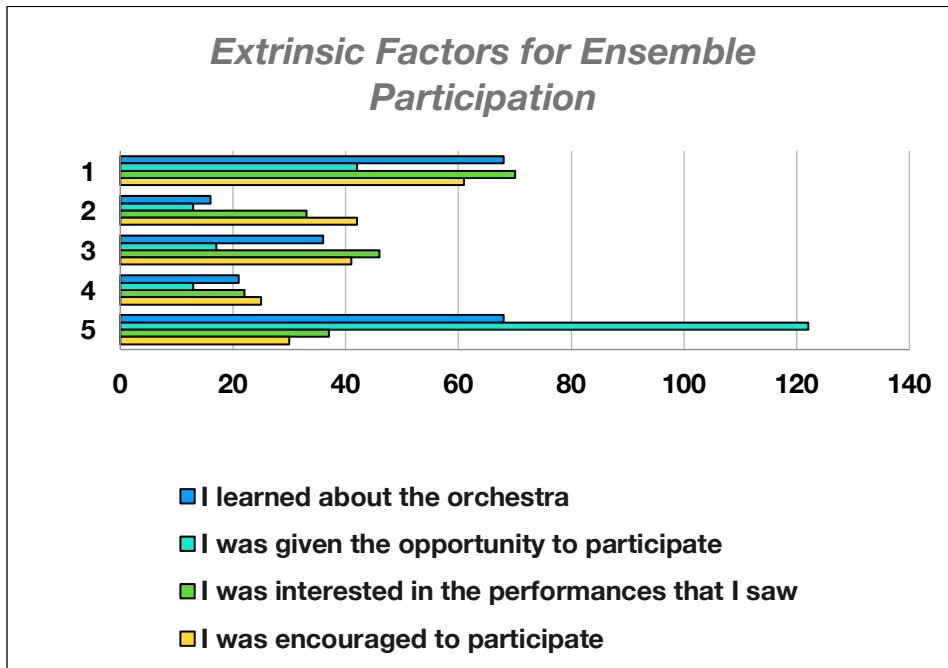
The next series of questions asked about the students' elementary experiences starting with the question “I learned about the orchestra (violin, viola, cello, and bass) in elementary school.” Respondents were still using the Likert scale one “Don’t Agree” to five “Strongly Agree.” Students’ responses were nearly evenly distributed for this response: 68 students (32.5% of respondents) responded with a one, 16 students (7.7% of respondents) responded with two, 36 students (17.2% of respondents) responded with a three, 21 students (10.0% of respondents) responded with a four, and 68 students (32.5% of respondents) responded with a five.

Students responded next to the question “I was given the opportunity to participate in band, orchestra and/or choir in elementary school.” The responses were as follows: 42 students (20.3% of respondents) responded with a one, 13 students (6.3% of respondents) responded with a two, 17 students (8.2% of respondents) responded with a three, 13 students (6.3% of respondents) responded with a four, and 122 students (58.9% of respondents) responded with a five.

To further understand the students' early musical experiences they were asked "I was interested in the performances that I saw at school." Nearly half of the students answered that they disagreed: 70 students (33.7% of respondents) responded with a one and 33 students (15.9% of respondents) responded with a two. The remaining half of the responses break down as follows: 46 students (22.1% of respondents) responded with a three, 22 students (10.6% of respondents) responded with a four, and 37 students (17.8% of respondents) responded with a five.

Next students were asked "I was encouraged by teachers and peers to participate in music." Again, half of the respondents were on the disagree side of the scale with 61 students (30.7% of respondents) responding with a one and 42 students (21.1% of respondents) responding with a two. The remaining responses were: 41 students (20.6% of respondents) responding with a three, 25 students (12.6% of respondents) responding with a four, and 30 students (15.1% of respondents) responding with a five.

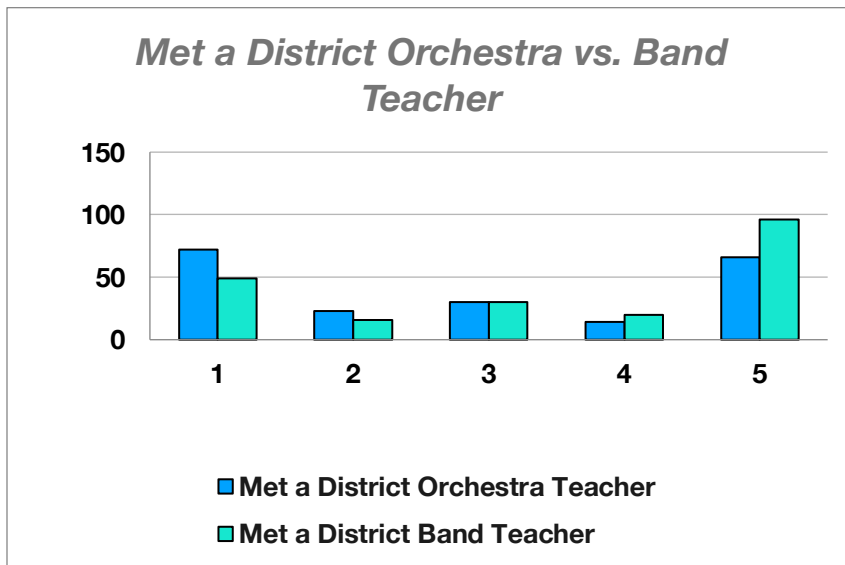
FIGURE 9.



The following two questions asked if students have met a band or orchestra teacher. In regard to a district orchestra teacher, 72 students (35.1% of respondents) responded with a one, 23 students (11.2% of respondents) responded with a two, 30 students (14.6% of respondents) responded with a three, 14 students (6.8% of respondents) responded with a four, and 66 students (31.7% of respondents) responded with a five.

The responses to meeting a district band teacher broke down as follows: 49 students (23.2% of respondents) responded with a one, 16 students (7.6% of respondents) responded with a two, 30 students (14.2% of respondents) responded with a three, 20 students (9.4% of respondents) responded with a four, and 96 students (45.5% of respondents) responded with a five.

FIGURE 10.

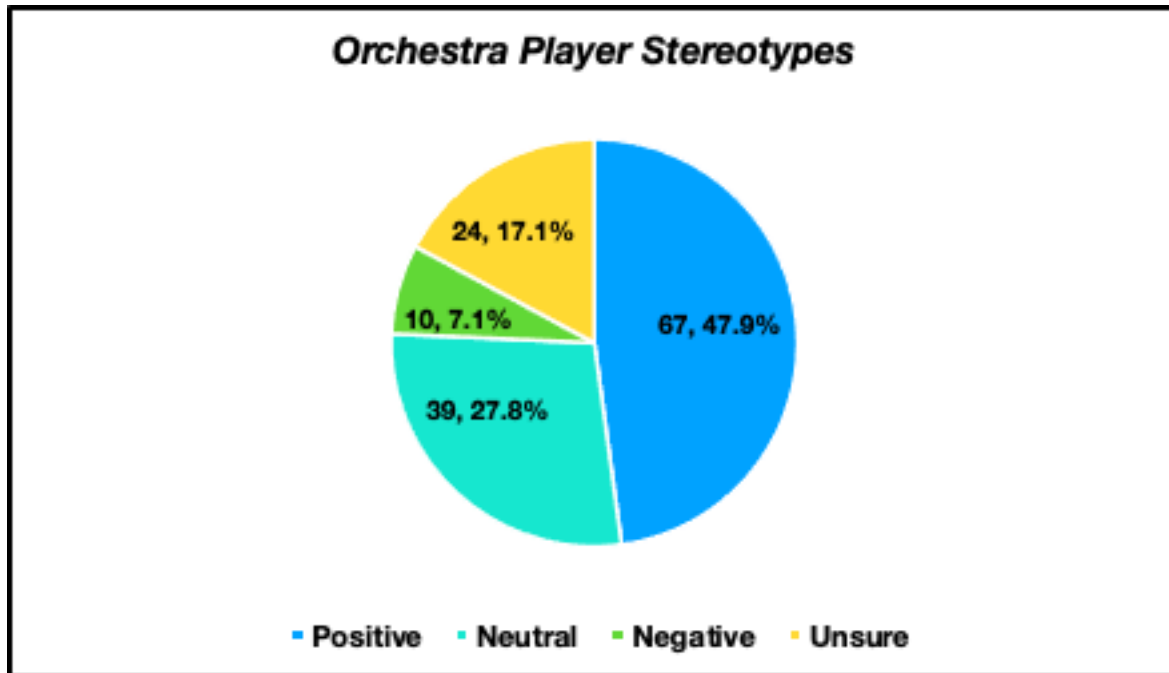


Stereotypes

To start the section on stereotypes, students were asked to write a characteristic they think of in relation to an orchestra performer. Positive characteristics were nearly half of all responses at 47.9% and ranged from “Smart,” “Wise,” “Talented,” and “Hard Worker.” A much smaller percentage at 7.1% responded with more negative characteristics: “boring” and “weird.”

There were 27.8% of respondents answering with neutral characteristics such as “plucked strings” and “posture” and 17.1% of respondents answered with unsure responses such as question marks or “IDK.”

FIGURE 11.



Respondents were asked about common excuses heard in regard to not joining an orchestra class. Using the Likert scale with one “Strongly Disagree” and five “Strong Agree” students ranked the statement “string instruments are hard to play.” They responded as follows: 20 students (9.9% of respondents) responded with a one, 30 students (14.9% of respondents) responded with a two, 77 students (38.1% of respondents) responded with a three, 33 students (16.3% of respondents) responded with a four, and 42 students (28.8% of respondents) responded with a five.

Next students responded to “If I play a sport, I can’t play an instrument.” A majority 120 students (59.4% of respondents) responded with a one, and 21 students (10.4% of respondents) responded with a two. There were 22 students (10.5% of respondents) responding with a three,

12 students (5.7% of respondents) responding with a four, and 34 students (16.2% of respondents) responding with a five.

Students were then asked the question “If I sound good on an instrument right away, I will be successful at playing it.” The response breakdown is as follows: 56 students (26.9% of respondents) responded with a one, 43 students (20.7% of respondents) responded with a two, 78 students (37.5% of respondents) responded with a three, 14 students (6.7% of respondents) responded with a four, and 17 students (8.2% of respondents) responded with a five.

The next question asked “It’s not common for my gender to play an instrument.” The responses broke down as follows: 129 students (65.2% of respondents) responded with a one, 16 students (8.1% of respondents) responded with a two, 31 students (15.7% of respondents) responded with a three, five students (2.5% of respondents) responded with a four, and 12 students (6.1% of respondents) responded with a five.

Students were asked to respond to the statement “It costs too much to play an instrument.” A majority of students responded with one, 59 students (29.2% of respondents) or two, 52 students (25.7% of respondents). There were 56 students (27.7% of respondents) who responded with a three, 15 students (7.4% of respondents) responded with a four, and 20 students (9.9% of respondents) responded with a five.

Finally, students were asked to rate this statement “Only students who have good grades play in orchestra.” Over three quarters of respondents disagreed with this statement, 145 students (70.0% of respondents) responded with a one and 15 students (7.2% of respondents) responded with a two. The rest of the responses were: 24 students (11.6% of respondents) responded with a three, ten students (4.8% of respondents) responded with a four, and 13 students (6.3% of respondents) responded with a five.

Pop Culture

On a Likert scale of one “strongly disagree” to five “strongly agree” respondents answered the following questions on their perceptions of strings in the media that they are exposed to. This section started with the statement “Watching sports or hobbies in videos and movies encourages me to try them.” Students responded as follows: 31 students (14.2% of respondents) responded with a one, 29 students (13.2% of respondents) responded with a two, 64 students (29.2% of respondents) responded with a three, 38 students (17.4% of respondents) responded with a four, and 57 students (26.0% of respondents) responded with a five.

Secondly, students responded to the statement “When I see string instruments in videos and movies it is shown in a positive way.” A quarter of respondents answered with a one, 32 students (15.1% of respondents) or a two, 22 students (10.4% of respondents). Slightly more responded with a three, 71 students (33.5% of respondents), and a majority agreed with 45 students (21.2% of respondents) responding with a four and 42 students (19.8% of respondents) responding with a five.

Next students responded to “I watch YouTube videos that feature string instruments.” Over half of the responses were for one, 114 students (53.8% of respondents) or two, 39 students (18.4% of respondents). The remaining breakdown was: 32 students (15.1% of respondents) responding with a three, 14 students (6.6% of respondents) responding with a four, and 13 students (6.1% of respondents) responding with a five.

Then students rated “I recognize string instruments (violin, viola, cello or bass) when I see them on TV/movies/cartoons.” The breakdown of responses was as follows: 47 students (21.9% of respondents) responded with one, 36 students (16.7% of respondents) responded with a two, 46 students (21.4% of respondents) responded with a three, 39 students (18.1% of

respondents) responded with a four, and 44 students (20.5% of respondents) responded with a five.

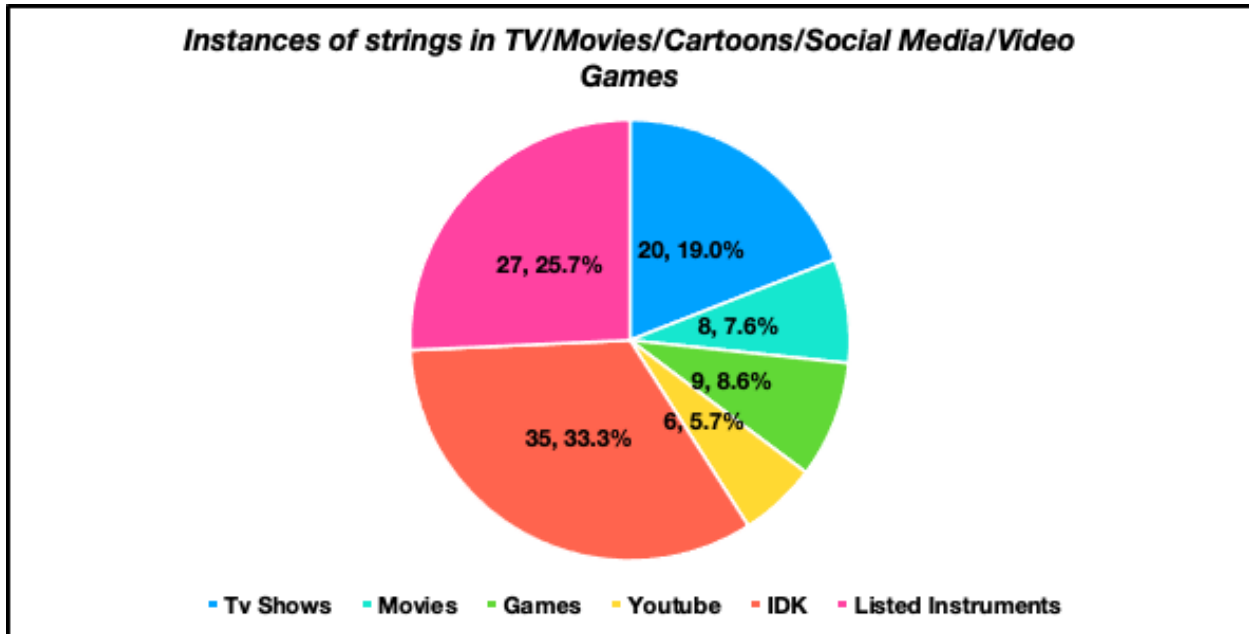
Next students were asked to rate the following statement, “I have heard a song on the radio that has a string instrument in it.” Responses were as follows: 26 students (12.5% of respondents) responded with a one, 29 students (13.9% of respondents) responded with a two, 35 students (16.8% of respondents) responded with a three, 38 students (18.3% of respondents) responded with a four, and 80 students (38.5% of respondents) responded with a five.

Students were then asked to rate “I play a video game that uses string instruments during game play or in the soundtrack.” Responses were as follows: 94 students (45.9% of respondents) responded with a one, 20 students (9.8% of respondents) responded with a two, 35 students (17.1% of respondents) responded with a three, 19 students (9.3% of respondents) responded with a four, and 37 students (17.0% of respondents) responded with a five.

The following statement “I can name a famous person who plays a string instrument” was rated next. Only 57 students (26.1% of respondents) responded “Yes,” where 158 students (73.5% of respondents) responded “No.”

The final question on the survey asked students to “please list any instances of strings that you can think of in TV/movies/cartoons/social media/video games.” Students answered with TV shows such as “SpongeBob,” “Vampire Diaries,” and “Bunk’d.” They also responded with some movies like “Hamilton,” “Titanic,” and “Twilight” and the video games “Fortnite,” “Minecraft,” and “Tony Hawk.”

FIGURE 12.



In this chapter I organized the data relating to students' availability of technology, the amount of time they use it, and what they spend their time on technology doing. I also sorted through the survey results pertaining to students' perceptions of orchestras and string instruments, and their knowledge and understanding of these things in their everyday existence. In the next chapter I will provide a discussion of my findings and their implications for music education in terms of future recruitment and retention of orchestra students.

V. Discussion and Implications

In the previous four chapters I introduced this study about the Effects of Stereotypes, Visibility, and Pop Culture on Recruitment and Retention of the Middle School Orchestra, a review of literature related to the study, a description of the methodology and my approach to analysis and reported the results from the survey that was given to 234 sixth graders. In Chapter Five I will discuss my findings and share the implications that this will have for music teachers, students, and future research.

Visibility in school and community

In any class that is dependent on recruitment for numbers or funding, visibility and word of mouth is essential. Frequently an orchestra needs to work harder than a choir or band program just based on opportunity and culture. Bands and choirs often have more opportunities to engage with their community. Bands participate in parades and play at football games, and choirs tour the community during the holiday season or put on large musical productions yearly. Figuring out how to engage an orchestra in the school and community takes forethought and creativity. This includes helping to educate elementary students and parents about string instruments in a fun and exciting way, being encouraging and supportive when students express interest in a string instrument and giving them opportunities to experience orchestras in a semi-professional to professional setting.

Interest in music starts at home. Only 24% of students indicated on their survey that their parents played an instrument. With this response it was not surprising that only 26% of students indicated that they joined an ensemble because they had a family member or friend who played. This correlation tells me that these positive perceptions and close role models are predictors in ensemble participation. This is reinforced from the literature review from Anderson and

Cavillaro (2002) when they wrote “children most frequently (34 percent) named their parents as role models and heroes” (p. 166). A parent or close friend participating in an ensemble would give an inside view into how fun and rewarding being a part of an ensemble can be. This has a long-term effect on the community’s perception of a group, and, if done well, has a positive influence for decades to come.

Visibility of an ensemble is not just what kids know or experience in their home. Not surprisingly in the study 66% of students could identify that they have seen a band in a parade and 56% of students had seen a vocal performance at school; whereas only 15% of students said they had seen a professional orchestra perform. Traditionally in the Fond du Lac School District, and in many other districts around the country, band and choir visibility and recruitment are higher than that of orchestra. These numbers show why giving the orchestra performance opportunities in the schools and community is so important. This is mind-boggling that something we have control over is not being paid more attention to by the string teachers. This seems especially important after seeing these results. If we want to encourage interest in any music class, especially in orchestra, we have to be better at exposing students to positive events in the school day and in their community.

When students are in elementary general music classes, part of their curriculum is learning about the instruments of the orchestra. However, in the survey less than half of students said they had learned about string instruments. This is concerning knowing that these lessons are covered but were not memorable enough for a student to remember what they learned. These same students are also visited in fourth grade by both the band and orchestra teacher, who share the opportunity to join either performing group. Students indicated that they had met a band teacher in the district far more often than they had indicated meeting an orchestra teacher.

Making memorable connections with teachers increases a performing group's visibility and awareness throughout the school. This is also reinforced by Albert (2006) who wrote "Positive personal contact and visibility... can heighten awareness and anticipation of an instrument music program" (p. 65).

In the elementary general classroom, there are grading standards that ask for students to play on a classroom instrument. The instruments played range from drums and Orff instruments to recorders and ukuleles. Having an elementary curriculum that includes the playing of these latter instruments can do a lot for interest in band (recorder) and orchestra (ukulele). Seeing in the responses that more students learned recorder was not surprising. The 88% of students who played in an ensemble had learned at least one of these instruments in general music. Giving students the opportunity to play is essential to future interest in playing strings. Having a positive experience with either of these instruments can increase interest in the learning of other instruments in these instrument families.

In the future, there needs to be more opportunities for the strings to be visible in schools and the community. Visibility in the elementary school when students are just starting to find interest in new things is essential; meaning elementary curriculums need to have positive ways to introduce string families to students and have students try recorder or Ukulele. Proper recruitment at the elementary and middle school level can have long-lasting results. Students are more likely to play instruments in high school and into adulthood when they see the life-long benefits and enjoyment from playing. When they have children, they will be more likely to be supportive and encourage their students to also learn an instrument in school. This process cannot start or continue without strong recruitment and retention to begin with.

Technology

As a society, we have become increasingly more dependent on our technology. There is an increasing number of children who have access to their own technology: cell phones, tablets, and school supplied devices. This is reflected in my survey when 90% of students indicated they have access to their own technology throughout the day, resulting in more children having access to social media and video sharing sites. Students are spending a large amount of time on these devices with 58.2% of students saying they spend 60 or more minutes a day on social media. This allows for more opportunities for students to hear and see string instruments in their everyday interactions on technology. Pop culture has represented musicians in a variety of ways causing both positive and negative perceptions of our performing arts classes.

Students are spending more time on technology, not just at home, but in the classroom, and out with friends. New *TikToks* and social media reels use sound clips and music to create user content and encourage views. This increases the chance of hearing a string instrument at some point throughout the day. Students taking the survey indicated that they were using TikTok, social media sites, and streaming services more than anything else on their devices. However, they are not seeking out videos with strings featured with only 12.5% of students saying they actively watch videos that have strings in them.

Knowing that students are spending a significant amount of time on their personal technology and that such a significant amount of time is spent on sites that use music in a variety of ways, the next logical question would be if they recognize what is a string instrument. As I noted before, students were more likely to identify bands or choirs than strings. This is clear in the students' final response where 19% identified TV shows that they have seen strings in, including *SpongeBob*, which does feature a band in some episodes that the characters are a part

of. Followed by identifying movies, 7.6%: *Twilight*, which has a piano featured, *Hamilton*, which doesn't feature strings but uses a violin and banjo in the musical score, and *Titanic*, the only movie listed that shows an example of a string quartet on screen.

The amount of time that is spent on personal technology devices, specifically on video media platforms, means there is more that can be learned here. Knowing how strings are portrayed on these platforms, and how often, is important too. From experience I know of many teens shows who have a band or orchestra student being the geeky outcast, or the socially awkward friend/sidekick. Further research is needed to understand what kind of impact this may be having on interest in a string instrument or if it is causing a negative impact on student interest in music.

Stereotypes

Differing stereotypes and perceptions that are shared through different media types can affect a child's interest in considering an instrument. Often when hearing about a string instrument, you have a preconceived idea of what characteristics someone has that plays it. These can relate to gender, how well a student does in other classes, and even what extracurriculars someone is involved in. While digging through the data in the survey I was pleasantly surprised at the number of positive characteristics that were referenced in regard to string players, as opposed to negative characteristics.

Just under 40% of students responded that they see strings represented in a positive way. This is further supported when asked what positive characteristics string players have. Using words such as "Smart," "Wise," and "Talented" are huge positives to describe string players even considering that 47.6% understood that they will not sound good right away on an instrument and 77.2% disagreed that only kids with good grades can play a string instrument.

As a string teacher, I feel that it is important to disprove the negative stereotypes that I am aware of. Students in the survey shared some common ones. However, after reading the characteristics that these students wrote, I feel the image of string players has changed or is in the process of changing somehow. The stereotypes that I remember hearing when I was in school were “quiet,” “weird,” “nerdy,” “antisocial,” and “not athletic.” The survey results that shocked me the most was that nearly 69.8% of students strongly disagreed with the statement that if they played sports then they couldn’t play an instrument. Along the same lines, 65% of students strongly disagreed that gender played a role in playing an instrument. As ensemble teachers we should embrace this shift and continue to encourage our students to be multi-talented. This also means not to be afraid of our students' other interests and how it will affect their continued participation in our string classes.

An important discussion with administration, parents and students at the beginning of every year is about instrument rental and the overall cost per student. More importantly, we are trying to make class accessible and affordable for all students. Surprisingly over half of students surveyed didn’t see the cost of playing an instrument as a factor against learning one. However, the literature review shared evidence that socioeconomic background had a factor in ensemble participation. My survey only saw 17.3% of students indicating that cost would be a factor. This lower percentage could be related to an increase in parental support or programs put in place to get instruments to students that otherwise would not be able to afford them.

A missed opportunity in this survey was asking questions about racial identity and the stereotypes that go along with string instruments and musicians in general. During the literature review, I found quite a bit of information pertaining to students and feeling drawn to places where they are represented. In both of the schools that the survey was given there is a diverse

population, and though the music programs have students that show our diversity, I wonder if students see themselves represented in these programs. I will make this the focus of my future research.

Implications for Future Research

The implications of this study can benefit orchestra students, strings teachers, general music teachers, parents of music students, high school and collegiate programs, and professional orchestras. The implications that I see for this study going forward in the field of music education is that we need to do more from an early age. Students should be able to identify instrument families. They see them in many different forms of media, they hear the sounds in the music they listen to, and students should be able to explain and understand, even at a basic level, music that they hear.

String and general music teachers can take from this that perceptions of strings and playing are changing, adapt to students, and encourage them to play string instruments by making connections, teaching ukulele, and making lessons pertaining to strings engaging. String programs also need to find ways to be more visible to the community and to students.

Orchestra students and their parents can take advantage of this study by sharing what they love about orchestra with their friends and family. They can be encouraging to younger students who might be interested in playing and talk about the positives they see in the program that they are a part of. Create or join a booster organization to support the music teacher and help with visibility in the community that a performance might not be able to reach.

High school, collegiate, and professional orchestras can use this information to see where they can increase interest in younger orchestras. Perhaps having a free weekend concert at a local school or park or renting a trailer and performing while being pulled through a parade are two

ideas. In order to have successful upper-level string programs help is needed to get the interest of younger players. Think outside of the box when engaging string players of all levels. Also try to incorporate technology knowing that this is how a lot of information is being shared and consumed by students.

In conclusion, I shared the reason this study is important to me and string education. I shared a sampling of the literature that has already been written on the varying parts of this study and the method I used to obtain my data. I provided the data that was collected, and I shared how the data collected started to answer my research question.

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Appendix A
Informed Consent Form

University of Wisconsin Stevens Point

Assent to Participate in Research

Title of Research Study: The Effects of Stereotypes, Visibility, and Pop-Culture have on Recruitment in the Middle School Orchestra

Researchers: Dr. Rachel Brashier and Samantha Hart

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?

A research study is usually done to find a better way to treat people or to understand how things work. You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are a 6th grader in the Fond du Lac School District who was given an option last fall to participate in Orchestra, Band, Choir, or General Music

What should I know about a research study?

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to do so. It is up to you if you want to participate. You can choose not to take part now and change your mind later if you want. Your decision will not be held against you. You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Why is this research being done?

In this study, I want to find out more about what influences 6th graders' decisions to learn or not learn specific instruments.

How long will the research last?

I expect that it will take you 20 minutes or less to complete this survey through google classroom.

What happens if I say "Yes, I want to be in this research"?

If it is okay with you and you agree to join this study, you will be asked to complete a 20 minute survey during your homeroom time.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

There is nothing bad that will happen to you although you may feel uncomfortable with some of the questions that I will ask. You can skip any questions you do not want to answer and you can stop at any time.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Efforts will be made to limit the use of your personal information, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. We will not be collecting your name or any other identifying information.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, about the research, talk to the research team at Harts@Fonddulac.k12.wi.us or Rachel.Brashier@uwsp. This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). You may talk to the IRB chair at (715) 346-3799 or irb@uwsp.edu if: your questions or concerns are not being answered by the research team; you want to talk to someone besides the research team; or you have questions about your rights as a research participant.

By clicking the “NEXT” button you agree to take this anonymous survey. If you choose not to take it, please work quietly on your *chromebook* until your peers are done. If you have any questions, raise your hand and ask your homeroom teacher before you begin.

If you choose to take this survey, thank you for helping me with my research!

Sincerely,

Appendix B

Teachers Script

Good Morning/Afternoon. Mrs. Hart, our school's orchestra teacher, is currently trying to learn more about how social factors influence 6th grade students' decisions in signing up for an orchestra class. In a minute, you will log into your computers and get access to the survey questions. No need to put your name in any of the answers and you can skip any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. Remember, Mrs. Hart and her professor at the university are the only people who will see your responses, and she won't know who wrote what responses.

Please log into the google classroom, and click on the link marked "6th grade music survey." When you log into the survey, please complete the first page assent form if you wish to participate and begin taking the survey. If you wish to not take the survey please work quietly on your computer until your peers are finished. Please raise your hand if you have any questions that I can help answer.

Appendix C
Survey Questions

Part 1: Background and Technology

1. In a previous grade did you participate in band, choir, or orchestra?
Yes _____ No _____

If you answered YES above, please complete the following questions:

- How many years did you participate? _____
- If you played an instrument, which one? _____
- Why did you choose to participate in band, choir, or orchestra?

1. Have you ever attended a professional orchestra concert where strings were played
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, answer the following questions:

- How many have you attended?
1-2 3-4 5+
- Are there any moments that stuck with you?
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what were they?

1. Do your parents play instruments?
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, What instrument(s)? _____

1. In elementary music did you play recorder?
Yes _____ No _____

1. In elementary music did you play the ukulele?
Yes _____ No _____

1. During the day do you have access to your own technology? (Phone, Tablet, computer)
_____ Yes _____ No

b. Please rate each activity on how much time you spend on them

- i. Email
- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|---|---|-----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Not a lot of time | Average amount | | | Most of my time |

1. I have seen a musical (Live) performance at the high school
 1 2 3 4 5
 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1. I learned about the Orchestra (Violin/Viola/Cello/Bass) in elementary school
 1 2 3 4 5
 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1. I was given the option to participate in orchestra, band, and/or choir in elementary school
 1 2 3 4 5
 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1. I was interested in the performances that I saw during school
 1 2 3 4 5
 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1. I was encouraged by teachers and peers to participate in music
 1 2 3 4 5
 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1. I have met an orchestra teacher in the district
 1 2 3 4 5
 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1. I have met a band and/or choir teacher in the district
 1 2 3 4 5
 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1. Share a memory you have of seeing a performance that included string instruments during your school day.

Part 3: Stereotypes

1. When you think of an ORCHESTRA performer, what characteristics do you think of?

Please tell me to what degree do you agree with each statement

1. String instruments are hard to play
 1 2 3 4 5
 Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1. If I play a sport, I can't play an instrument

1. I can name a famous person who plays a string instrument
1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1. I pay a video game that uses string instruments in game play or the soundtrack
1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1. Please list any instances of strings that you can think of from Movies/TV/social media or video games.