

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

**EFFECT OF VERTICAL ALIGNMENT ON ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH
SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAMS**

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Division of Music
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor in Music Education

by

Tamekia Holliday

Lynchburg, Virginia

August 5, 2022

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APPROVED BY

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of vertical alignment on elementary, middle, and high school music programs. Thirty-five ($n = 35$) elementary, middle, and secondary music educators participated in the study. Of the 35 participants, 41% ($n = 15$) were high school music educators, 25% ($n = 9$) were middle school music educators, 27% ($n = 10$) were middle and high school music, and 2% ($n = 1$) taught elementary, middle, and high school. Analysis of survey data revealed significant relationships related to vertical alignment. The most significant relationship was between vertical alignment and retention ($r = .643, p < .01$), suggesting that student retention increases as vertical alignment increases. As well, results indicated that as vertical alignment decreases, the number of students “who wish to continue in music classes but cannot” increase ($r = -.530, p < .01$). Analysis of open-ended survey questions revealed valuable themes related to consistent band participation, music teacher expectations, and the effect of vertical alignment on music programs. Applying the results of this study may improve understanding of the effects of vertical alignment and enhance effective teaching and learning in music.

Keywords: Music education, vertical alignment, curriculum, communication, student retention, teacher certification, socioeconomic status, musical skills

DEDICATION

I want to thank my Lord and savior Jesus Christ for giving me the strength to make it. There were times when the only thing I could do was seek his face through prayer and he always was there to give me peace of mind.

I am dedicating this thesis to my parents. Although they are not here physically, I can still feel your presence with me. Thanks for always motivating and loving me unconditionally. You molded me into the person I am today and for that I am truly grateful. To my mom I say, “It is Paid in Full”, I have completed this chapter of my life in your honor.

I also dedicate this thesis to my children Jiren and Alfred. Thank you both for your understanding and support throughout this doctorate program. I know it’s been a rocky road but now its clear highway ahead.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Adequate Yearly Progress – AYP

Every Student Succeeds Act - ESSA

Free or Reduce Lunch – FORL

Institution Review Board - IRB

No Child Left Behind Act - NCLB

Social Economic Status - SES

Statistical Package for Social Sciences - SPSS

Student Success and Academic Enrichment Grant - SSAEG

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Elementary music education forms the foundation of musical knowledge for adolescent minds.¹ The grade level that instrumental music initially starts plays a role in the percentage of students who want to participate, the rate of accomplishment in learning and performance, and student retention in music programs.² A crucial part of the educational process is preparing students to transition smoothly from one grade level to the next, and that process should extend to music education. As students progress through elementary school and enter middle school, they must gain a broad range of skills and musical comprehension. As students move to high school, this musical knowledge and understanding should also be evident.³ An effective vertically aligned system helps to provide consistent expectations and a learning environment through all grade levels. A gap in student knowledge forms when elementary and middle school programs are missing vertical and horizontal alignment.⁴ Vertical alignment is when teachers who teach the same content area meet across grade levels. Horizontal alignment is when teachers at the same grade level meet to coordinate learning activities.⁵ The absence of a comprehensive

¹ Kelli King, "A Comparison of a School District's Music Curriculum and Ensemble Directors' Expectations of Preparedness within a Feeder Pattern," (dissertation, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, 2018), 1.

² Judith K. Delzell and Paul F. Doerksen, "Reconsidering the Grade Level for Beginning Instrumental Music," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 16, no. 2 (1998): 17.

³ King, "A Comparison," 1.

⁴ Joseph Martineau et al., "Integrated, Comprehensive Alignment as a Foundation for Measuring Student Progress," *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice* 26, no. 1 (2007): 29.

⁵ Martineau et al., "Integrated," 29.

curriculum in music classrooms creates a lack of musical skills and student interest.⁶ This study investigated how vertical alignment for music programs affected elementary, middle, and secondary music education participation, motivation, and musical skills development.

Background

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was enacted in 2001 to increase student achievement by using standardized testing as the foundation to measure student academic achievement.⁷ States, districts, and schools had to show adequate yearly progress (AYP) in assessments to demonstrate that content standards and assessment of student proficiency were consistent for all students. State policymakers attempted to align state standards with state assessments by clarifying academic expectations to meet the alignment requirements. Policymakers used vertical alignment in curriculum design to encourage common goals, objectives, activities, and assessments within school districts.⁸

President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December 2015.⁹ This legislation ended the 13-year run of NCLB and changed K-12 school accountability back to the states.¹⁰ The most impactful component for music education in ESSA was Title IV, Part A of the legislation known as the Student Success and Academic Enrichment Grant (SSAEG).¹¹ This

⁶ Martineau et.al., "Integrated," 1.

⁷ Taylor V. Gara, Liane Brouillette, George Farkas, "Did the Frequency of Early Elementary Classroom Arts Instruction Decrease During the No Child Left Behind Era? If so, for whom," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 45 (2018): 264.

⁸ Chandler and Mizener, "Perspectives," 14.

⁹ John Portz and Nicholas Beauchamp, "Educational Accountability and State Essa Plans," *Educational Policy* 36, no. 3 (2020): 718.

¹⁰ Portz and Beauchamp, "Educational," 719.

¹¹ Tooshar Swain, "Music Education Advocacy Post ESSA - JSTOR," ProQuest, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26870084>, 20.

grant was designed to ensure local school districts could provide students with a well-rounded education through technology and arts education funding.¹² When SSAEG is fully funded and administered with the intentions set forth through ESSA, every school district in the country will receive funding for music education to be available in all grade levels.¹³

Chandler and Mizener define vertical alignment as the practice of scaffolding a curriculum for a specific subject so that objectives and learning expectations are clear and focused.¹⁴ The common goal of vertical alignment in education is to build academic growth and student achievement. With academic growth on all grade levels, there must be a collaboration between educators. This collaboration is integral to education because it allows sequential curriculum and instruction for more comfortable transitions for students from one grade to the next.¹⁵ Teachers often feel they have little guidance from schools and districts regarding how to teach from state standards due to a lack of uniformity in vertical alignment, which declines student expectations.¹⁶

Statement of Problem

Vertical alignment does not exist efficiently in some school systems. There is a lack of uniformity in vertical alignment, teacher retention, resources, and philosophical differences within some district curriculums and standards.¹⁷ The lack of vertical alignment could stem from

¹² Swain, "Music Education," 20.

¹³ Swain, "Music Education," 20.

¹⁴ Chandler and Mizener, "Perspectives," 14.

¹⁵ Chandler and Mizener, "Perspectives," 20.

¹⁶ Lisa Carter, *Total instructional Alignment: From Standards to Student Success*, (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2011), 113.

¹⁷ King, "A Comparison," 9.

numerous factors such as lack of communication between grade levels, teacher certification, and the social-economic status of the schools.¹⁸ This lack of alignment can cause low retention in band programs, low student motivation, limited musical knowledge, and diminished performance quality of musical ensembles.¹⁹

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of vertical alignment on elementary, middle, and high school music programs. This study explored the potential decline of student motivation, music skills, and retention in schools that lack alignment. Due to elementary music being the first official form of formal music education, the strength of the elementary program plays a significant role in students' decision to continue their musical experiences.²⁰ The information may increase awareness of the importance of vertical alignment for music programs across grade levels.

Significance of Study

This study may improve curriculum and student motivation. Schools absent of vertical alignment can use this study's results to enhance skills and music knowledge taught across grade levels in band instruction. Early studies of vertical alignment research focus on core subjects such as math, science, and language arts. Most research does not emphasize the advantages of vertical alignment in music education or its effects on student motivation and participation.²¹

¹⁸ Phillip M. Hash, "Student Retention in School Bands and Orchestras: A Literature Review," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 40, no. 3 (2021): 14.

¹⁹ Hash, "Student," 14.

²⁰ Chandler and Mizener, "Perspectives," 14.

²¹ Norman L. Webb, "Determining Alignment of Expectations and Assessments in Mathematics and Science Education.," NISE Brief (National Institute for Science Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1996), 3.

Still, effective vertical alignment can close knowledge gaps for students if applied correctly. Due to limited resources and research on alignment, many educators are left without knowledge of how to improve vertical alignment resulting in adverse effects on students and teachers. Improving vertical alignment may enhance student learning in band classes and increase student retention in each grade level.²²

Research Questions

Vertical alignment is one of many significant factors contributing to student participation in secondary school music programs.

The following questions address the problem and need for study:

RQ1: Do statistically significant relationships exist between vertical alignment, communication level, certification level, and socioeconomic status?

RQ 2: Do statistically significant relationships exist between vertical alignment, communication, teacher certification, socioeconomic status, retention, and musical skill expectation?

Null Hypotheses

H₀1: There are no relationships between vertical alignment, communication level, certification level, and socioeconomic status. H₀1: $p = 0$

H₀2: There are no relationships between vertical alignment, communication, certification level, socioeconomic status, retention, and musical skill expectation. H₀2: $p = 0$

Operational Definitions

The study employs a survey data collection tool with a Likert-type scale and open-ended question responses to measure each variable.

²² Tyler Renninger, "Examining Factors of Student Retention in a Middle School Band Program" (Dissertation, EWU Masters Thesis Collection, 2021), 18.

Vertical Alignment - A categorical variable to describe the level of students' ability to continue instrumental instruction between grade levels.

Level of Communication - A categorical variable to describe the level of communication between elementary, middle, and high school educators.

Certification Level - A categorical variable to describe the level of teacher certification.

Socioeconomic Status - A categorical variable to describe socioeconomic status through participation in free or reduced lunch programs.

Student Desire - A categorical variable to measure student desire to participate in music study from grade to grade.

Student Desire/Choice - A categorical variable to measure the level of student desire and ability to participate from year to year.

Student Retention - A categorical variable to measure the level of student retention.

Expectation of Musical Skills of Students Entering Sixth Grade - A categorical variable to measure the expected level of musical skill for students entering the sixth grade.

Expectation of Musical Skills of Students Entering Ninth Grade - A categorical variable to measure students' expected level of musical skill entering the ninth grade.

Expectation of Overall Musical Skill - A categorical variable to measure the expected level of musical skill for all students and performing ensembles.

Definition of Terms

Advocacy - The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal.

Aligned Curriculum - An organized and purposefully designed curriculum that facilitates learning, free of academic gaps and needless repetitions, and is aligned across lessons,

courses, subject areas, and grade levels.²³

Cultural Diversity - Curriculum that offers students opportunities to develop their linguistic and cultural resources, build an awareness of self and one's own culture, make connections to the culture of others, and apply knowledge to solve real-world problems that impact issues important to them and make choices for themselves and their future roles in the world.²⁴

Curriculum - Standards-based sequence of planned experiences where students practice and achieve content and applied learning skills. The Curriculum is the primary guide for educators on the essential resources for teaching and learning.²⁵

Disparity - A noticeable and usually significant difference or dissimilarity.²⁶

Diverse Learners - Range of students with different belief systems, values, attitudes, abilities, and learning styles.²⁷

Feeder School - A school from which many or most students progress to a particular higher level educational institution.²⁸

Horizontal Alignment - Curriculum where the same material is taught across different classrooms in each grade level. The material taught aligns with the learning standards and

²³ “The Glossary of Education Reform - Coherent Curriculum,” *The Glossary of Education Reform*, last modified March 3, 2014, accessed November 16, 2020.

²⁴ “Instruction and Assessment,” Instruction, Assessment & Curriculum - RIDE Offices - Inside RIDE - Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) (Rhode Island Department of Education), accessed November 16, 2020, <https://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/RIDEOffices/Instruction,AssessmentCurriculum.aspx>.

²⁵ “Instruction and Assessment,” 1.

²⁶ Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “disparity,” accessed December 15, 2020.

²⁷ “Instruction and Assessment,” 1.

²⁸ “Feeder School - Meaning and Definition,” Teachmint, last modified August 21, 2021, <https://www.teachmint.com/glossary/f/feeder-school/>.

assessments established by the district or state.²⁹

Inequality - The quality of being unequal or uneven, such as (a) social disparity or (b) unequal distribution of opportunity.³⁰

Music Education - A field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music and musical concepts. Music Education focuses on all domains of learning, including the development of skills (psychomotor domain), the acquisition of knowledge (cognitive domain), and significant ways of (affective domain) the learner's willingness to receive, internalize and share what is learned, including music appreciation and sensitivity.³¹

Recruitment - To increase or maintain the number of students in the music program.³²

Retention - The act of keeping someone or something in the musical program.³³

Socioeconomic Status (SES) - An economic and social combined total measure of a person's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. Socioeconomic status is categorized as low, medium, or high to describe the three places a family or an individual may fall in relation to others.³⁴

²⁹ Stephanie Elsworth, "The Definition of Curriculum Alignment," Classroom, November 9, 2016.

³⁰ Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. inequality, accessed December 15, 2020.

³¹ G.C. Abiogu, I.N. Mbaji, and A.O. Adeogun, "Music Education and Youth Empowerment: A Conceptual Clarification," *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 5, (2015):118.

³² Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "recruit," accessed September 4, 2021.

³³ Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "retention," accessed February 27, 2021.

³⁴ Lisa Worthy, Trisha Lavigne, and Fernando Romero, *Culture and Psychology* (Phoenix, Arizona: Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International, 2020), <https://open.maricopa.edu/culturepsychology/>, 302.

Vertical Alignment - A curriculum scaffolded to teach information in a lower grade or a previous course. It prepares students for more advanced grades and more challenging work.³⁵

Vertical Collaboration - Planning and implementing the curriculum sequence from one grade level to the next in Pre-Kindergarten to grade twelve. This integral part of the educational process points to using a collaborative approach of sequential instruction to enable students to transition from one grade level to the next.³⁶

Chapter Summary

Many factors contribute to student participation in secondary school music programs. At the district level, vertical alignment significantly impacts a music program's success because it provides consistency in student progress in all grade levels.³⁷ Most related research does not emphasize the advantages of alignment in music education nor its effects on student motivation and participation.³⁸ It does, however, examine the continual closing of student learning gaps. This qualitative mixed-methods study may reveal the lack of cohesive alignment in some music programs. Schools may use this study's results to improve the vertical alignment of skills and music knowledge taught across grade levels in band instruction.

³⁵ Stephany Elsworth, "The Definition of Curriculum Alignment," Synonym, accessed June 5, 2020, <https://classroom.synonym.com/definition-curriculum-alignment-6616423.html>, 1.

³⁶ Chandler, and Mizener, "Perspectives," 20.

³⁷ King, "A Comparison," 1.

³⁸ Webb, "Determining," 3.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to survey in-service music teachers regarding vertical alignment in their current programs. The researcher reviewed curriculum samples and other contributing factors that affect music programs to address the purpose and research questions. The curriculum section covers research on vertical alignment, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). These curricular components are essential to the country's success and understanding of the decline of music programs. In the final section, the researcher evaluated other contributing factors that affect music programs, such as communication, socioeconomic status, teacher certification, retention and motivation, and cultural diversity.

Curriculum

The curriculum is crucial in educational policies because it specifies what achievements must happen at a particular grade level. These achievements include learning objectives, content, methods (including assessment), materials for teaching and learning, and arrangements for teacher training and professional development. There are two main focuses of curriculum alignment in the education system: vertical and horizontal alignments. A curriculum aligned vertically gives students educational content in a previous grade that helps prepare them for more challenging and advanced work in the next grade. This alignment is done from grade to grade by relating textbooks, curriculum, and lessons to student achievement. A horizontally aligned curriculum allows teachers teaching the same grade and content to teach the same material, standards, and assessments established at the district or state level. Both horizontal and

vertical curriculum alignment help to form the foundation for measuring students' progress by working towards a common goal.³⁹

Vertical Alignment

In the educational paper titled “Curriculum Alignment and Progression between Early Childhood Education and Care and Primary School in Paris,” by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, researchers explained why curriculum alignment is essential to continuity and progression from early childhood to primary education.⁴⁰ The writers examined the early adventures of students in educational systems, how governments could achieve consistent high-level alignment across all curriculums and grade levels, and how the training of teachers could enhance student experiences.⁴¹ The insight from this research exposed the potential of the curriculum in facilitating transitions and improving the academic progressions of children through their academic journey. This article also revealed how aligning standards and curriculum across grade levels help increase students' long-term learning experiences and motivational outcomes.

Squires has conducted numerous studies on the effects of curriculum alignment in schools and districts. In his book titled *Curriculum Alignment: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*, he explained that curriculum alignment might improve curriculum, instruction, and test scores for low socioeconomic and minority students by reducing

³⁹ Martineau et al., “Integrated,” 29.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth A. Shuey et al., “Curriculum Alignment and Progression between Early Childhood Education and Care and Primary School: A Brief Review and Case Studies. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 193,” (OECD Publishing, 2, rue Andre Pascal, F-75775 Paris Cedex 2019), 8.

⁴¹ Shuey et al., “Curriculum Alignment,” 8.

the achievement gap.⁴² Squire explained that curriculum alignment could help improve a school system's effectiveness and efficacy by providing feedback on standards that need improvement. He offered examples of systematic curriculum development by demonstrating how alignment was defined and used in teaching and learning. He further explained that aligning standards to curriculum ensured that students would have the opportunity to master the content found in state standards.⁴³

Squires provided additional insight into successfully implementing vertical alignment in school districts and schools. He discussed curriculum alignment and its relationship between the written curriculum, the taught curriculum, and the tested curriculum.⁴⁴ Squires explained that districts must align tasks to multiply curriculum standards and focus on student achievement.⁴⁵ Further, he suggested that although there is no official way to write a curriculum, the tasks must encompass the objective and teaching strategy used to accomplish that task.

"A Road Map: Montessori Curriculum and Learner Outcomes" by Sharon Damore is a roadmap built to design learner outcomes. She discussed how learner outcomes could give a balanced approach to student achievement.⁴⁶ Damore explained that learning outcomes would create a more authentic way to ensure educational growth.⁴⁷ Districts and schools can strengthen

⁴² David A. Squires, *Curriculum Alignment: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2009), 3.

⁴³ Squires, *Curriculum Alignment*, 209.

⁴⁴ David Squires, "Curriculum Alignment Research Suggests That Alignment Can Improve Student Achievement," *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas* 85, no. 4 (2012): 134.

⁴⁵ Squires, "Curriculum Alignment Research," 134.

⁴⁶ Sharon Damore, "A Road Map: Montessori Curriculum and Learner Outcomes," *Montessori Life* 16, no. 4 (2004): 30.

⁴⁷ Damore, "A Road Map," 30.

teacher credibility and communicate to parents how their children can grow academically by outlining what their children should know and can do.

Lisa Carter suggests that schools could accomplish alignment by applying three broad and interconnected steps.⁴⁸ The steps included (1) alignment of the system, (2) alignment of standards, curriculum, and assessments, and (3) alignment of instructional practices in the classroom.⁴⁹ These steps would help build a conceptual framework for the entire alignment process. The author guided teachers and administrators to create an educational system with benchmarks, assessments, state and national standards, and individual learning goals.⁵⁰ Carter also provided insight into the pros and cons of aligning curricula in schools and districts to build a conceptual framework for the entire alignment process. Carter offered a clear vision to educators and administrators on effectively aligning curriculums using quality practices and principles for implication.⁵¹

Martineau, Paek, Keen, and Hirsch gave a comprehensive alignment model as a foundation to report student progress over time. Their article explained the importance of integrating comprehensive alignment into the foundational aspects of forming a curriculum. By creating a comprehensive curriculum, students' progress gives foundational and future guidance in incorporating alignment in school curriculums.⁵² Their comprehensive model used horizontal

⁴⁸ Damore, "A Road Map," 30.

⁴⁹ Lisa Carter, *Total Instructional Alignment: From Standards to Student Success* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2011), 23

⁵⁰ Carter, *Total Instructional*, 23.

⁵¹ Carter, *Total Instructional*, 115.

⁵² Martineau et al., "Integrated," 28.

and vertical alignment as essential factors in developing content standards, test blueprints, and instructional instruments.⁵³ The authors further explained how the integration of alignment helps strengthen the validity of student achievement.

A research-based view of factors that could determine when grade-level instrumental music should begin was presented by Delzell and Doerksen.⁵⁴ In their study, *Reconsidering the Grade Level for Beginning Instrumental Music*, they examined districts in Ohio. They chose the grade levels to start instrumental music based on grade-level configuration shifts in schools, the increase or decrease in the number of instrumental teachers, the implementation of new academic scheduling models, recruitment and retention, and the satisfaction level of instructional outcomes.⁵⁵ The authors based their study on existing research on grade-level selection in public school instrumental music programs. Their research supported the concept that instrumental music should begin at the elementary level and apply vertical alignment in subsequent grades to ensure the development of students' musical knowledge and retention in music programs. Delzell and Doerksen explained that the National Association for Music Educators (NAFME) recommended beginning instrumental classes in the third and fourth grades. Ultimately, it was up to the school districts to weigh the outcomes when deciding which grade level to start beginning band.⁵⁶

⁵³ Martineau et al., "Integrated," 28.

⁵⁴ Judith K. Delzell and Paul F. Doerksen, "Reconsidering the Grade Level for Beginning Instrumental Music," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 16, no. 2 (1998): 18.

⁵⁵ Delzell and Doerksen, "Reconsidering," 18.

⁵⁶ Delzell and Doerksen, "Reconsidering," 18.

No Child Left Behind

The struggles in school reform led to increased standardized testing and improvements in state and national education standards, referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act.⁵⁷ Testing became the main emphasis in school districts, forcing music education curricula to be removed from some schools.⁵⁸ The removal of this curriculum caused music programs to decrease in numbers and students to lose interest.⁵⁹

Tina Beveridge explored the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and how it affected non-tested subjects, especially music.⁶⁰ She looks at how NCLB affected scheduling and funding and how music educators approached advocacy. Beveridge also examined the changes that could occur to NCLB due to the election of President Obama.⁶¹ She believed that if NCLB succeeds in its original purpose, which was to close the achievement gap in education, we must not focus on high-stakes testing as our sole measurement of success.⁶² Her theory was that tests do not measure anything that helps educators close the educational gap, nor do they reveal circumstances beyond the teacher's control that can affect the test outcome.

In a study by Gara, Farkas, and Brouillette, the authors analyzed data before and after NCLB implementation in the article “Did Consequential Accountability Policies Decrease the

⁵⁷ Taylor V. Gara, et. al., “Did the Frequency of Early Elementary Classroom Arts Instruction Decrease during the No Child Left Behind Era? If so, for Whom?,” *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 45 (2018): 264.

⁵⁸ Gara, et. al., “Did the Frequency,” 264.

⁵⁹ Gara, et. al., “Did the Frequency,” 265.

⁶⁰ Tina Beveridge, “No Child Left behind and Fine Arts Classes,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 111, no. 1 (2009): 4.

⁶¹ Beveridge, “No Child,” 4.

⁶² Beveridge, “No Child,” 5.

Share of Visual and Performing Arts Education in U.S. Public Secondary Schools During the No Child Left Behind Era?” They found an increase in teacher employment, with a consistent percentage of reading and math educators, but a decrease in music and visual arts educators.⁶³ To measure the percentage of teachers in reading, math, and the arts Gara, Farkas, and Brouillette examined information from the Schools and Staffing Survey collected by NCES.⁶⁴ They compared the school years 1999-2000 and 2007-2008 to gain data.⁶⁵ The NCLB Act claimed to increase instruction and accountability in test-based subject areas such as reading and math and decreased instruction in the arts.⁶⁶ The research supported the concept that the implementation of NCLB significantly affected visual and performing arts.⁶⁷

Gara, Brouillette, and Farkas researched NCLB by reviewing the components that caused the reduction of arts in the elementary classroom in another article titled “Did the Frequency of Early Elementary Classroom Arts Instruction Decrease During the No Child Left Behind Era? If so, for Whom?” Their article gave insight into the school curriculum and accountability changes after the No Child Left Behind Act passage in 2001.⁶⁸ The authors analyzed data from an Early Childhood Longitudinal Study that looked at the changes in arts instruction in the elementary

⁶³ Taylor V. Gara, George Farkas, and Liane Brouillette, “Did Consequential Accountability Policies Decrease the Share of Visual and Performing Arts Education in U.S. Public Secondary Schools during the No Child Left Behind Era?,” *Arts Education Policy Review*, (2020): 2.

⁶⁴ Gara et al., “Did Consequential,” 2.

⁶⁵ Gara et al., “Did Consequential,” 2.

⁶⁶ Gara et al., “Did Consequential,” 1.

⁶⁷ Gara et al., “Did Consequential,” 2.

⁶⁸ Taylor V. Gara, Liane Brouillette, and George Farkas, “Did the Frequency of Early Elementary Classroom Arts Instruction Decrease during the No Child Left Behind Era? If so, for Whom?,” *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 45 (2018): 1.

classroom from 1999 to 2000 and 2011 to 2012 school years.⁶⁹ They used the same database utilized by Bassok et al. in 2016 but examined the variables more deeply. The study revealed a decrease in-class instructional time in music, art, dance, and theater classes, but music instruction was the most used form of arts instruction. The most significant decrease in instructional time for fine arts classrooms was for students in low socioeconomic schools.⁷⁰ Schools removed students from elective classes and placed them in remedial courses due to failing test scores which caused an interruption in their music study. The results from this data helped explain the gaps in alignment between grade levels due to the implementation of the NCLB act.

Kenneth Elpus described the nationwide enrollment of high school music courses from 1982 to 2009 in his study “Evaluating the Effect of No Child Left Behind on U.S. Music Course Enrollments.” The study also focused on the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and its effect on music enrollment. He examined ten high school transcript studies by the National Center for Education Statistics.⁷¹ Elpus' study illustrated gaps in music classes for lower socioeconomic students and how these schools lacked curricular alignment due to NCLB.⁷² Elpus concluded that the NCLB did not significantly affect music enrollment.⁷³ However, the NCLB affected students with Individualized Education Plans, English Language Learners, and Hispanic students.

⁶⁹ Gara et al., “Did the Frequency,” 1.

⁷⁰ Gara et al., “Did the Frequency,” 7.

⁷¹ Kenneth Elpus, “Evaluating the Effect of No Child Left behind on U.S. Music Course Enrollments,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 62, no. 3 (2014): 215.

⁷² Elpus, “Evaluating,” 215.

⁷³ Elpus, “Evaluating,” 228.

Kathie Kratochvil conducted a study investigating the successes, challenges, and processes of arts education in a California K – 8th-grade dependent public charter school during the NCLB era.⁷⁴ The researcher used a two-phase qualitative process to collect data. Phase 1 used surveys, interviews, observations, and other documents as the primary data sources to identify the arts incorporated in the school curriculum.⁷⁵ Phase 2 utilized focus groups with the administration and faculty to collect data. The focus groups allowed the participants to collaboratively identify the challenges and successes found in their current art programs.⁷⁶ Kratochvil’s study revealed that despite the constraints that came with the NCLB Act, this school still maintained four art disciplines (music, dance, theatre, and visual arts).⁷⁷ This was done by shared goals, visions, and community partnerships with parents and local businesses.⁷⁸ The data in this study shows that although there was still a focus on mathematics and reading, arts education can still be incorporated into the school curriculum and taught through interdisciplinary methods.

Every Student Succeeds Act

President Barak Obama passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) on December 10, 2015.⁷⁹ This act reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 to replace the heavily

⁷⁴ Kathie R. Kratochvil, “The Survival of Arts Education in the NCLB Era: A Case Study of One k-8th Grade Arts-Focused Charter School in a California Program Improvement School District” (Dissertation, ProQuest, 2009), 3.

⁷⁵ Kratochvil, “The Survival,” 3.

⁷⁶ Kratochvil, “The Survival,” 44.

⁷⁷ Kratochvil, “The Survival,” 187.

⁷⁸ Kratochvil, “The Survival,” 188.

⁷⁹ Derek W Black, “Abandoning the Federal Role in Education: The Every Student Succeeds Act.,” *California Law Review* 105, no. 5 (2017): 131.

criticized No Child Left Behind Act.⁸⁰ This new law helped reverse the federal government's role in education and return it to the states. The ESSA brought significant educational changes by eliminating the No Child Left Behind Act's strict testing and accountability measures. State and district-led accountability were now at the forefront of educational reform, especially testing.⁸¹ This legislation allowed states to place some of the focus back on arts education and establish their own curricular goals.

Derek W. Black reported a comprehensive examination and critique of the ESSA in the article "Abandoning the Federal Role in Education: The Every Student Succeeds Act."⁸² This article focused on improving the learning gaps due to unequal funding to low socioeconomic schools and the lack of early childhood education due to the need to resolve the No Child Left Behind Act. Black explained that ESSA attempted to place equity in the educational system but failed to put it into practice.⁸³ He suggested that Congress could fix the flaws in the ESSA by increasing how the federal government invested in the educational system, meeting the needs of low socioeconomic students, improving early childhood education, and allowing states more ways to accept federal laws on unequal funding practices.

The Every Student Succeeds Act changed many aspects of the educational framework by NCLB. Darrow explained how the ESSA affected students with disabilities and music educators in the article "The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): What It Means for Students with

⁸⁰ Alice-Ann Darrow, "The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)." *General Music Today* 30, no. 1 (2016): 41.

⁸¹ Darrow, "The Every," 42.

⁸² Black, "Abandoning," 131.

⁸³ Black, "Abandoning," 131.

Disabilities and Music Educators.” She explained that the ESSA wanted to guarantee that every child received a “well-rounded education.”⁸⁴ The “well-rounded education” included placing music and the arts alongside math and reading in classrooms and giving protected time to music and the arts in school curriculums.⁸⁵ The ESSA legislation also allowed states to select state-wide music assessments and determined that students with disabilities could participate in music classes. Darrow further explained that ESSA allowed more opportunities for musical growth in low socioeconomic communities and disabled students, both frequently underserved populations.

In the article “The Good Fight: ESSA Passage Provides Opportunities to Expand Music Learning During the School Day: A Call to Action,” Mary Luehsen described the inclusion and expansion of music education in implementing the national educational legislation named ESSA.⁸⁶ This article explained how ESSA allowed more opportunities for musical growth to underserved students such as low socioeconomic and disabled students. Luehsen gave strategies she named “Three R’s of ESSA Advocacy.”⁸⁷ The R’s stand for reinforcing, reminding, and requesting to increase equity and access to music education by involving schools and community leaders.⁸⁸ The three strategies aimed to increase equity and access to music education by involving schools and community leaders. The article stressed that music could affect students’ lives beyond the classroom.

⁸⁴ Darrow, “The Every,” 41.

⁸⁵ Darrow, “The Every,” 43.

⁸⁶ Mary Luehsen, “The Good Fight: ESSA Passage Provides Opportunities to Expand Music Learning during the School Day: A Call to Action,” *School Band & Orchestra Magazine* (2016): 38.

⁸⁷ Luehsen, “The Good Fight,” 38.

⁸⁸ Luehsen, “The Good Fight,” 38.

Contributing Factors

Communication

Collaboration between educators has shown positive outcomes for professional development in curriculum and alignment.⁸⁹ Collaboration is the most promising strategy for consistent school improvement because it allows educators to function as a professional learning community.⁹⁰ Studies have shown that student learning is purposeful when teachers collaborate and the curriculum aligns with a shared vision and goals.⁹¹

A dissertation by Kelli King examined directors' expectations of musical knowledge and skills for fifth, seventh, and ninth-grade students.⁹² King adapted the study from previous studies by Wesolowski, Macleod, and Walter.⁹³ The study consisted of full-time music teachers in a North Texas school district.⁹⁴ Participating directors were asked about the characteristics and methods of music necessary for students to succeed. Results from the study showed that there were areas of alignment and goals for musical expectations but an overall lack of consistency.⁹⁵ This research provided insight into educator standards and expectations of students entering

⁸⁹ Joke M. Voogt, Jules M. Pieters, and Adam Handelzalts, "Teacher Collaboration in Curriculum Design Teams: Effects, Mechanisms, and Conditions," *Educational Research and Evaluation* 22, no. 3-4 (2016): 121.

⁹⁰ Richard DuFour and Robert E. Eaker, *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement* (Bloomington, IN: Hawker Brownlow Education, 2009), xi.

⁹¹ Kristine A. Hipp and Jane B. Huffman, "How Leadership Is Shared and Visions Emerge in the Creation of Learning Communities.," *ERIC*, (2000): 9.

⁹² King, "A Comparison," 14.

⁹³ King, "A Comparison," 14.

⁹⁴ King, "A Comparison," 16.

⁹⁵ King, "A Comparison," 14.

music programs and how they do not meet expectations due to a lack of vertical alignment and communication between grade levels.

A related study by Bergman, Calzada, LaPointe, Lee, and Sullivan investigated if the vertical alignment of curriculum and teacher collaboration would increase student performance on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills Test (TAAS).⁹⁶ The researchers created this study to determine the correlation between vertical alignment and collaboration and the increase in student test scores.⁹⁷ Researchers examined the growth of 23 schools in various South Texas school districts by calculating the difference between the 1994 and the 1997 tenth grade passing percentiles of the TAAS.⁹⁸ Test scores used to analyze results were from the Academic Excellence Indicator System report.⁹⁹ The analysis demonstrated no significant correlation between vertical alignment, collaboration, and academic growth.¹⁰⁰

G.C. Abiogu and A.O. Adeogun examined the connection between music education and youth empowerment in their article “Music Education and Youth Empowerment: A Conceptual Clarification.”¹⁰¹ The article discussed music education as a performance-based curriculum. The educational lessons taught in the curriculum were designed to allow students to achieve self-realization and life skills for living in society today. The authors found increased youth

⁹⁶ Donna Bergman et al., “Vertical Alignment and Collaboration,,” *ERIC*, (1998): 4.

⁹⁷ Bergman et al., “Vertical Alignment,” 4.

⁹⁸ Bergman et al., “Vertical Alignment,” 4.

⁹⁹ Bergman et al., “Vertical Alignment,” 22.

¹⁰⁰ Bergman et al., “Vertical Alignment,” 22.

¹⁰¹ Abiogu et al., “Music Education,” 121

empowerment and participation in the arts through performance-based music education.¹⁰² Abiogu and Adeogun stressed the importance of collaboration and partnerships with various organizations to gain opportunities for musical growth and unity among the youth in the community.¹⁰³ Their concept revealed a need for community-based organizations and educational institutions to work as partners. This partnership would allow music education to gain interest and growth in the community by collaborating to create free music workshops, lessons, master classes, and performance opportunities.¹⁰⁴ The opportunities gained from these partnerships allow assistance when closing the gaps missed by music programs not offered in schools.

Socioeconomic Status

In the book “Socioeconomic Status, Parenting, and Child Development,” Bornstein and Bradley defined socioeconomic status as the relative position of individuals, groups, or families in a social system with unevenly distributed societal values.¹⁰⁵ Socioeconomic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group by a combination of education, income, and occupation.¹⁰⁶ These factors often alter a student’s choice of participating in school activities and the quality of instruction given for that activity.

¹⁰² Abiogu et al., “Music Education,” 121.

¹⁰³ Abiogu et al., “Music Education,” 120.

¹⁰⁴ Abiogu et al., “Music Education,” 120.

¹⁰⁵ Marc H. Bornstein and Robert Bradley, “Socioeconomic Status, Parenting, and Child Development,” Google Books (Routledge, April 4, 2014), https://books.google.com/books/about/Socioeconomic_Status_Parenting_and_Child.html?id=ZLyQAqAAQBAJ.

¹⁰⁶ Bornstein et al., “Socioeconomic Status,” 2.

Ann Deisler provides insight into factors that make a successful high school band program in her dissertation titled “A Comparison of Common Characteristics of Successful High School Band Programs in Low Socioeconomic Schools and High Socioeconomic Schools.” Deisler compared programs with a high ratio of economically disadvantaged students to those with a low percentage of economically disadvantaged students.¹⁰⁷ She examined the characteristics influencing successful high school band programs with economically disadvantaged students by looking at how the stakeholders valued the program.¹⁰⁸ Deisler utilized data collected through seven-point Likert questionnaires and interviews. This research showed that the band director’s expectations for their students were the most significant factors influencing a program’s success.¹⁰⁹ Other characteristics contributing to the success of band programs were the band director's knowledge, private student lessons, and the program's tradition of success.¹¹⁰

Adria Hoffman examined schools and classroom practices to meet low-socioeconomic students' needs.¹¹¹ Titled “Compelling Questions about Music, Education, and Socioeconomic Status,” Hoffman reviewed two case studies on inequalities found in low socioeconomic schools regarding scheduling, electives offered, and school structures. She used results to describe how music educators could impact students in low-socioeconomic classrooms. Hoffman determined that scheduling and funding significantly affect student participation in school music programs,

¹⁰⁷ Ann M Deisler, “A Comparison of Common Characteristics of Successful High School Band Programs in Low Socioeconomic Schools and High Socioeconomic Schools” (Dissertation, Liberty University, 2011), 62.

¹⁰⁸ Deisler, “A Comparison,” 62.

¹⁰⁹ Deisler, “A Comparison,” 97.

¹¹⁰ Deisler, “A Comparison,” 100.

¹¹¹ Adria R. Hoffman, “Compelling Questions about Music, Education, and Socioeconomic Status,” *Music Educators Journal* 100, no. 1 (2013): 63.

recruitment, retention, school support, and student attitudes for instrumental music.¹¹² She recommended that music educators make their programs academically and financially appealing to their students to be more inclusive to underserved students.¹¹³

“Socioeconomic Status and Instrumental Music: What Does the Research Say about the Relationship and Its Implications?” by Daniel Albert was a published literature review describing student participation in instrumental music programs.¹¹⁴ Albert’s purpose of the published literature review was to bring awareness to issues in music education due to students’ socioeconomic statuses. He provided recommendations based on the literature to address the inequities in various socioeconomic areas. The proposals included offsetting student participation costs, forming booster organizations, formulating creative strategies to retain students in the programs, and increasing parental participation due to students’ socioeconomic status.¹¹⁵

Vincent Bates examined the stereotypes found in the public-school environment in his study titled, “Equity in Music Education: Back to Class: Music Education and Poverty,”¹¹⁶ Bates described issues related to poverty, music, and school. Further, he examined stereotypes and suggested embracing students’ musical traditions, teaching for lifelong music-making, making

¹¹² Hoffman, “Compelling,” 68.

¹¹³ Hoffman, “Compelling,” 67.

¹¹⁴ Daniel J. Albert, “Socioeconomic Status and Instrumental Music: What Does the Research Say about the Relationship and Its Implications?,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 25, no. 1 (2006): 39.

¹¹⁵ Albert, “Socioeconomic Status,” 39.

¹¹⁶ Vincent C. Bates, “Equity in Music Education: Back to Class: Music Education and Poverty,” *Music Educators Journal* 105, no. 2 (2018): 72.

school music accessible, and allowing music to address economic disparities. Bates provided valuable suggestions to help music educators make music accessible and equal for all students.

Teacher Certification

Dan D. Goldhaber and Dominic J. Brewer studied the effects of students' performance based on teacher certification in the article "Does Teacher Certification Matter? High School Teacher Certification Status and Student Achievement." The researchers compared how student test scores varied based on the certification level of the teacher and if state-by-state differences in teacher certification requirements also affected student success.¹¹⁷ The data revealed that the type of certification a teacher holds plays a significant role in student outcomes.¹¹⁸ Goldhaber and Brewer also found little evidence that supported student outcomes from different state teacher certification requirements.¹¹⁹ This research gave insight into the effects of student outcomes based on the type of certification a teacher holds and state-to-state teacher certification requirements.

Retention and Motivation

Kathryn Strickland investigated factors relating to the retention of instrumental music students in her thesis "Why They Stay and Why They Go: A Study of Retention and Attrition During the Transition from Middle to High School in the Large-Ensemble Instrumental Music Classroom." The researcher studied three eighth-grade instrumental music students, their parents (one of them), and the band director to determine if they would stay in the band through high

¹¹⁷ Goldhaber and Brewer, "Does Teacher," 129.

¹¹⁸ Goldhaber and Brewer, "Does Teacher," 139.

¹¹⁹ Goldhaber and Brewer, "Does Teacher," 139.

school.¹²⁰ The study categorized students by their intention to continue.¹²¹ The study consisted of a questionnaire, interviews, and rehearsal observations of each participant.¹²² Strickland's results revealed that all students required different motivation levels regardless of their intentions.¹²³ The student committed to not continuing had strong external motivations. Results indicated that all students were internally motivated.¹²⁴ Strickland's study revealed that all students desired increased challenges in the instrumental music classroom, and this desire affected their motivation to participate.

The dissertation "The Effect of an Attrition Intervention Program on Middle School Band Students: An Action Research Study" by Albert Jackson examined the variables that may cause middle school band students not to participate in high school band programs.¹²⁵ He performed a qualitative study that included interviews, questionnaires, and observations to collect his data. Jackson found that personal issues such as academic failures, administrative issues such as scheduling conflicts, home issues with students, and teacher problems such as lack of instructional methods affected student participation in the high school band.¹²⁶ The results

¹²⁰ Kathryn Strickland, "Why They Stay and Why they Go: A Study of Retention and Attrition during the Transition from Middle to High School in the Large-Ensemble Instrumental Music Classroom" (Dissertation, Louisiana State University, 2010), 11.

¹²¹ Strickland, "Why They," 11.

¹²² Strickland, "Why They," 13.

¹²³ Strickland, "Why They," 47.

¹²⁴ Strickland, "Why They," 47.

¹²⁵ Albert Jackson, "The Effect of an Attrition Intervention Program on Middle School Band Students: An Action Research Study," (Dissertation, Academia.edu, 2018), 1.

¹²⁶ Jackson, "The Effect," 143.

provided insight into internal and external reasons that may cause students not to transition into high school music programs.

Chandler and Mizener conducted a related study on retention titled “Perspectives of Elementary General Music Teachers on Factors Influencing Student Participation in Secondary Music Ensembles. They developed a comprehensive survey and examined 195 general elementary music teachers in Southeast Texas.¹²⁷ The authors explored general elementary music teachers' characteristics and how their programs and point of view influenced their students to participate in secondary music programs.¹²⁸ The survey results revealed that elementary educators had meaningful connections with their students and could help motivate students to participate in music at all educational levels.¹²⁹ Chandler and Mizner’s study discovered that programs at the elementary level are essential to vertical alignment because they forge the foundational support for middle and secondary school programs.

Adrian Barnes investigated how Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), and institutions seeking HSI status recruited students in marginalized groups in his dissertation titled “Recruitment Strategies Employed by Instrumental Music Ensemble Directors at Minority Serving Institutions by Member of Marginalized Populations.”¹³⁰ Barnes surveyed participants to examine recruitment strategies and activities of instrumental music ensemble directors. The results showed that collaboration and outreach by

¹²⁷ Chandler and Mizener, “Perspectives,” 15.

¹²⁸ Chandler and Mizener, “Perspectives,” 15.

¹²⁹ Chandler and Mizener, “Perspectives,” 21.

¹³⁰ Adrian D Barnes, “Recruitment Strategies Employed by Instrumental Music Ensemble Directors at Minority Serving Institutions by Members of Marginalized Populations,” TTU DSpace Home, August 1, 2016, <https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/handle/2346/68070>.

directors with communities and participants increased music program enrollment. Barnes's study demonstrated that collaboration is essential in maintaining and recruiting students for ensemble membership.

“Motivation and Retention of Instrumental Music Students in A Suburban School District” by Megan Dray is a quantitative and qualitative data study investigating students' motivation to join and stay in instrumental music programs in suburban school districts. This mixed-methods study investigated students in the fourth through twelfth grades.¹³¹ She explored students' motivations by measuring student involvement and retention in instrumental music programs. Areas of motivation were the relationship between student and teacher, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, peer involvement, parental involvement, and financial issues.¹³² Although the motivational components in this study were different based on student grade levels, the financial issues were consistent throughout. The results and format of this study revealed the motivational elements that affect students' participation in music programs.¹³³

Schmidt's additional study, "Relations among Motivation, Performance Achievement, and Music Experience Variables in Secondary Instrumental Music Students,” reexamined student motivations related to academic achievement, self-efficacy, and attitude towards instrumental music performances. Participants for his study were students between the seventh and twelfth grades enrolled in band and six music educators, all having a minimum of three years

¹³¹ Dray, Megan M. “Motivation and Retention of Instrumental Music Students in a Suburban School District.” (Thesis, State University College at Buffalo, 2014), 71.

¹³² Dray, “Motivation,” 71.

¹³³ Dray, “Motivation,” 72

of teaching experience.¹³⁴ The researcher developed and employed instruments for this survey using a 20-point ordinal scale and a 5-point Likert-type scale. Participants rated students' performance achievement and overall effort. The study showed that students considered their best motivations to come from intrinsic or cooperative aspects of instrumental music.¹³⁵ The researcher concluded that although motivation is an essential element in music education, the variables that dictate motivation in students are consistent on all grade levels. The motivation variables included intrinsic orientation, self-concept, and commitment to the band.¹³⁶ The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) published an article titled "Bridging the Gap between Middle School and High School: Tips for Ensuring a Seamless Music Education Experience." This article provides tips on recruitment and retention for all stakeholders to combat this loss of student participation. The focus was to keep students motivated to stay in music from the first time a student picked up an instrument to post-graduation.¹³⁷ This article stressed that active communication and collaboration between educators at different levels enhance the effectiveness of vertical alignment.

Cultural Diversity

Shelley Griffin described how deepening the understanding of informal music composition impacted students' lives in her article "The Fluid Infusion of Musical Culture:

¹³⁴ Charles P. Schmidt, "Relations among Motivation, Performance Achievement, and Music Experience Variables in Secondary Instrumental Music Students," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 53, no. 2 (2005): 137.

¹³⁵ Schmidt, "Relations," 144.

¹³⁶ Schmidt, "Relations," 144.

¹³⁷ "Mac: Bridging the Gap Between Middle School and High School," NAMM Foundation. Music Achievement Council, May 29, 2018, <https://www.nammfoundation.org/educator-resources/mac-bridging-gap>.

Embodied Experiences in a Grade One Classroom."¹³⁸ Griffin identified the ties between music research and having a community art zone. Stakeholders gain a more in-depth understanding of music, literature, and literacy development by learning and applying these components. This research revealed how children embrace formal and informal musical experiences throughout their daily environments.¹³⁹ These musical experiences play an essential part in how children view and function by opening their minds to the various aspects of music.

“Equity and Music Education” by Juliet Hess supported ways to advocate for race-related issues and the significance of utilizing language to recognize auxiliary and precise prejudice in music education.¹⁴⁰ According to her article, advocating for race-related issues must be done in and outside the classroom to address the current issues we face.¹⁴¹ Hess’s study suggests that supervisors, teachers, and lawmakers help to address race issues to close the nation's educational gap.

Kelly and Weldon back Hess's comments and theory in the article "Connecting Meaningful Music and Experiences in a Multicultural Classroom." They stated, "Educators who have a socially diverse classroom allow students to build relationships with their culturally different classmates and be more involved in the classroom."¹⁴² This article described how

¹³⁸ Shelley M. Griffin, “The Fluid Infusion of Musical Culture: Embodied Experiences in a Grade One Classroom,” *The Art and Craft of Literacy Pedagogy*, (2020): 21.

¹³⁹ Griffin, “The Fluid,” 22

¹⁴⁰ Juliet Hess, “Equity in Music Education: Why Equity and Social Justice in Music Education?,” *Music Educators Journal* 104, no. 1 (2017): 71.

¹⁴¹ Hess, “Equity,” 72.

¹⁴² Steven N. Kelly and Kimberly Van Weelden, “Connecting Meaningful Music and Experiences in a Multicultural, Multimusical Classroom,” *Music Educators Journal* 90, no. 3 (2004): 36.

diversity and cultures in America have evolved and how teachers are a powerful resource for building multicultural and multi-musical students in the classroom.

"Enhancing Intercultural Engagement through Service-Learning and Music-Making with Indigenous Communities in Australia" by Bartleet, Sunderland, and Carfoot investigated potential ways to create music activities to enhance intercultural connections and relationships.¹⁴³ Employing findings from the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University service-learning program study, the authors concluded that music allows students to develop a practical view of cultures, a mutual appreciation for other cultures, and an understanding of international connections.¹⁴⁴ The study viewed international perspectives on service-learning and how theoretical and practical outcomes interfered with intercultural engagement.

Jennifer Walden gave music educators ways to make better school and community bonds by having formal and informal culturally diverse performances while including global perspectives in music curriculums by incorporating culturally diverse music.¹⁴⁵ She bases "A Pile of Drums: Putting Theory into Practice in Culturally Diverse Music Education" on research exploring the benefits of a diverse music curriculum. Walden suggested that students could appreciate and understand cultures worldwide and spread knowledge to the community when implementing a diverse curriculum. This article focused on the importance of advocating for culturally diverse music by building communities while raising awareness of diverse cultures worldwide.

¹⁴³ Bartleet et al., "Enhancing Intercultural Engagement through Service Learning and Music Making with Indigenous Communities in Australia," *Research Studies in Music Education* 38, no. 2 (2016): 173.

¹⁴⁴ Bartleet et al., "Enhancing," 174.

¹⁴⁵ Jennifer Walden, "A Pile of Drums: Putting Theory into Practice in Culturally Diverse Music Education," *International Journal of Music Education* 38, no. 1 (2019): 79.

Chapter Summary

Vertical alignment is one aspect of curriculum design that builds knowledge and content in a specific area across different grade levels. It allows for better transitions for students from elementary to middle grades and promotes a greater chance for achievement and success in high school. The elementary program's strength plays a significant role in students' decision to continue their musical experiences because it is the first official form of formal music education. The common goal of vertical alignment in education is to build academic growth and student achievement.

School curriculum has evolved throughout the years. It has been through major changes that have altered how schools approach music education. The NCLB Act caused the arts to suffer due to the focus of education shifting to standardized testing in core subjects. Students often lose their fine arts elective class due to a failed state test and are placed in remedial math or reading class.¹⁴⁶ Students who are withdrawn from these classes lose a way to express their creativity through the arts.¹⁴⁷ ESSA changed the educational framework of NCLB and allowed for more musical inclusion in the curriculum for low socioeconomic communities and disabled students. This legislation allowed states to implement their standards and objectives for curriculum. ESSA encouraged the return of music education to schools.

Academic growth is necessary at all grade levels. There must be a collaboration between educators to create positive outcomes in curriculum and alignment. This collaboration is integral to education because it allows sequential curriculum, instruction, and effective transitions for

¹⁴⁶ Beveridge, "No Child," 5

¹⁴⁷ Beveridge, "No Child," 5

students from one grade to the next. By using everyday language and terms to guide instruction, educators communicate more effectively and assist in developing an understanding of common instructional issues. Studies have shown that communication plays an essential part in the overall success of vertical alignment and student growth.

The development of the public school system created a standard path that allowed teachers to receive a certification/license to teach. Certification or licensure ensured that schoolteachers would have some skill or training to teach in the classroom. Many states require teacher candidates to achieve a minimum grade-point average and pass a standardized test to receive the credentials to teach. The research on certification has shown that teacher level of certification has the greatest influence on student achievement in standardized testing scores.

Socioeconomic status and cultural diversity explain factors that affect educational learning, student retention, and motivation. Students must feel that their culture is relevant and appreciated in and out of the classroom. Student retention and motivation are higher when their culture is appreciated and understood. Studies have shown that school and community bonds form with formal and informal culturally diverse performances and increased parental involvement.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Walden, "A Pile of Drums," 79.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The vertical alignment of elementary and middle school music programs plays a significant role in curricular goals for students who enter secondary music programs. Besides developing basic musical knowledge and skills, music educators at elementary and middle schools encourage future student success in secondary music programs. The goal of vertical alignment is to set a list of common goals and indicators of success that all music educators can use on every grade level and ensemble type to promote fluidity of musical knowledge and skills.

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used in this study by reviewing the research design, research questions, and hypotheses that helped guide the research. Also, this chapter discusses the setting of the study, participant selection, the instrumentation, and the study's procedures. This chapter ends with the data analysis plan that the researcher followed.

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design to survey in-service music teachers on the effects of vertical alignment in their current programs. The researcher chose the design to explore grade-level instruction, student motivation and retention, certification level of music teachers, socioeconomic status, level of program expectations, and communication level between programs at various grade levels. Participants were selected employing elements of criterion and convenience sampling methods.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Anthony J Onwuegbuzie and Kathleen M.T. Collins, "A Typology of Mixed Methods Sampling Designs in Social Science Research," *nsuworks.nova.edu*, (2007), 286.

Research Questions

The following questions explore potential relationships:

RQ1: Do statistically significant relationships exist between vertical alignment, communication level, certification level, and socioeconomic status?

RQ 2: Do statistically significant relationships exist between vertical alignment, communication, certification level, socioeconomic status, retention, and musical skill expectation?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses predict no relationship between variables:

H₀₁: There are no relationships between vertical alignment, communication level, certification level, and socioeconomic status. H₀₁: $p = 0$

H₀₂: There are no relationships between vertical alignment, communication, certification level, socioeconomic status, retention, and musical skill expectation. H₀₂: $p = 0$

Participants

The researcher recruited elementary, middle, and high school music teachers in Southwestern Louisiana by sending letters and email messages explaining the study's purpose and requirements to participate in the survey. Participants for this study included elementary, middle, and high school music classroom teachers ($N = 35$).

Setting

The study was conducted in a metropolitan school district in Southwest Louisiana. The district explored in this study was the fifth largest district in Louisiana, consisting of thirty-five elementary schools, eleven middle schools, and eleven high schools.¹⁵⁰ 100% of the elementary,

¹⁵⁰ "Calcasieu Parish Public Schools / Homepage," Calcasieu Parish Public Schools / Homepage, accessed February 2, 2022, <https://www.cpsb.org/>.

90% of the middle schools, and 72% of the high schools were designated as Title I schools within the district. The district employed 51 instrumental and vocal educators. Instrumental and vocal educator positions were as follows:

Elementary School Vocal Teachers - 11

Elementary School Instrumental Teacher - 0

Middle School Vocal Teachers - 5

Middle School Instrumental Teachers - 15

High School Vocal Teachers - 5

High School Instrumental Teachers -15

Instrumentation

The study employed a data collection tool created by the researcher consisting of Likert-type scales and open-ended questions. Data collection involved an online survey for teacher participants. The survey contained eighteen questions. Ten were five-point Likert-type scale items, and eight were open-ended questions.

Questions for Likert-type Scale Responses

1. Students in my classes desire to continue music study from year to year.
2. Students in my classes desire to continue from year to year but cannot.
3. I retain a large number of students from year to year in my program.
4. Students and band ensembles in my school perform at a high level.
5. Students in my school can continue instruction between grade levels without problems in class scheduling.
6. Music teachers in my school communicate between grade levels.

7. Music teachers in my school possess state certification to teach subjects at the grade level they are assigned to teach.
8. Music teachers in my school possess a high level of expectation for students entering the sixth grade.
9. Music teachers in my school possess a high level of expectation for students entering the ninth grade.
10. Students in my school require free or reduced lunch.

Questions for Open-Ended Responses

1. What are your expectations for students entering the sixth grade?
2. What are your expectations from students entering the ninth grade?
3. Why do your students choose to continue from year to year?
4. Why are students unable to continue?
5. Why do students choose to quit?
6. What are some issues that cause students not to continue music instruction between grade levels?
7. Describe the communication between music teachers of different grade levels?
8. How does socioeconomic status affect your students?

Procedures

The researcher obtained approval from Liberty University Institution Review Board (see Appendix A), the thesis chair (see Appendix B), and the school district (see Appendix C). To recruit participants, letters and email messages explained the study's purpose and participation requirements. Once the invited individuals agreed to participate in the study, a survey link was emailed. Participants responded to questions through an online survey instrument designed by

the researcher. Each participant voluntarily completed the online survey by following a link to a Microsoft Forms document sent through email. Names were not required when completing surveys to ensure anonymity.

Data Analysis

Data analysis employed the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS) to illustrate descriptive statistics and explore potential relationships between variables. Additionally, the analysis employed NVivo software to code data. This study used the Pearson correlation to determine significant relationships between vertical alignment, communication, certification level, socioeconomic status, retention, and musical skill expectation. Furthermore, the researcher explored coded categories to identify themes present in participant responses.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

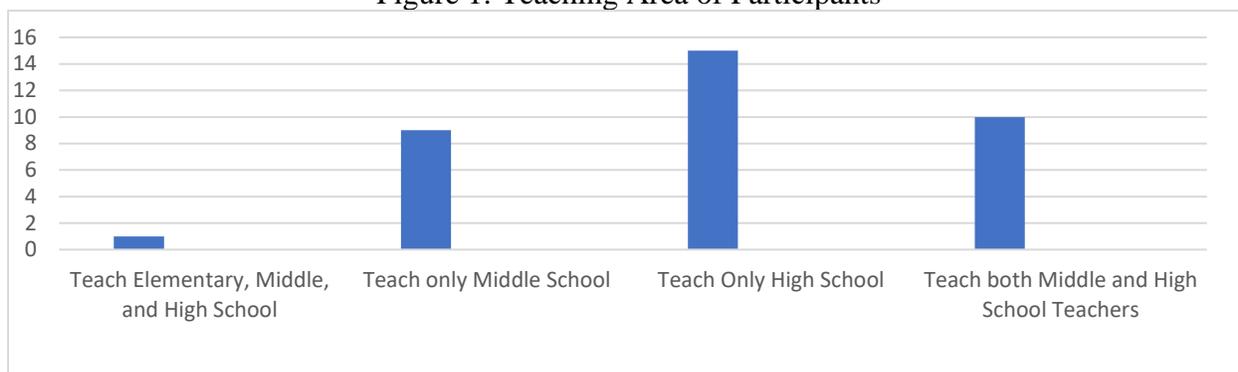
Introduction

This mixed-methods study aimed to survey in-service music teachers regarding vertical alignment in their current programs. The researcher developed survey instruments consisting of Likert-type scale and open-ended questions. The Likert-type scale and open-ended questions explored grade-level instruction, student motivation and retention, certification level of music teachers, socioeconomic status, level of program expectations, and communication at different schools. Elementary, middle, and high school music teachers in Southwestern Louisiana responded to the online survey.

Demographic Profile of Participants

Thirty-eight elementary, middle, and secondary music educators received invitations to complete the study survey. Of those receiving the survey, thirty-five music educators completed the survey. Three decided not to participate, resulting in a response rate of 92%. Participants included representatives from middle and high school instrumental and vocal music programs. Of the 35 participants, 41% ($n = 15$) were high school music educators, 25% ($n = 9$) were middle school music educators, 27% ($n = 10$) were middle and high school music, and 2% ($n = 1$) taught elementary, middle, and high school (Figure 1). High School music teachers comprised the most significant percentage of respondents, while elementary school vocal directors had the lowest response rate. The participants were also categorized by classroom subject area (Figure 2). Participants included 25 instrumental educators, three vocal educators, and seven who taught both instrumental and vocal classrooms.

Figure 1: Teaching Area of Participants



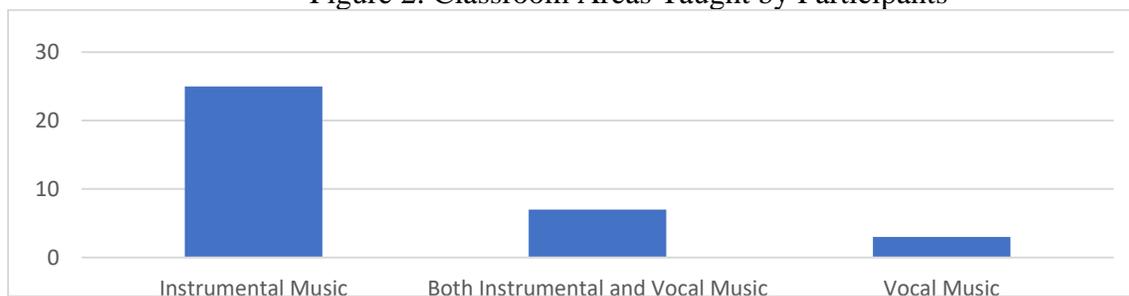
Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers - 1

Middle School Teachers - 9

High School Teachers - 15

Middle and High School Teachers - 10

Figure 2: Classroom Areas Taught by Participants



Instrumental Music Classroom - 25

Both Music and Instrumental Classroom - 7

Vocal Music Classroom - 3

Results

Table 1 describes the descriptive statistics of this study's ten quantitative survey responses. The sample consisted of thirty-five participants ($N = 35$). Mean values ranged from 1.71 (Free or Reduced Lunch) to 4.37 (Desire to Continue). Table 1 shows that Teacher

Certification (-1.5) and Free or Reduced Lunch (1.88) were the only two categories possessing a skewness greater than one. Thus, eight of the ten data distributions were dispersed normally.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Data

	Vertical Alignment	Communication Level	Certification Level	Free or Reduced Lunch	Desire to Continue	Desire to Continue but Cannot	Retention Level	Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Student Performance Level
N	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Mean	2.71	3.17	4.37	1.71	4.23	3.06	3.57	3.57	3.00	3.74
Median	2.00	4.00	5.00	1.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
SD	1.274	1.317	.942	1.202	.770	1.282	1.119	1.170	1.534	.980
Skewness	.122	-.499	-1.508	1.884	-.836	-.112	-.256	-.824	-.156	-.437
Std. Error	.398	.398	.398	.398	.398	.398	.398	.398	.398	.398

Reliability

In 1951, Lee Cronbach created a system to explain the internal consistency of a scale or test by using a number between zero and one.¹⁵¹ Internal consistency describes how all items in a test measure the same concept and compares how they are interrelated. An acceptable value of alpha measures between 0.70 to 0.95. A low alpha value could result from a low number of questions or poor inter-relatedness between survey items.¹⁵² Table 2 below reveals a moderate reliability level for the survey ($\alpha = .476$).

Table 2: Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.476	10

¹⁵¹ Mohsen Tavakol and Reg Dennick, "Making Sense of Cronbach's Alpha," *International Journal of Medical Education* 2 (2011), 54.

¹⁵² Tavakol et al, "Making," 54

Likert-Type Scale Survey Results

The researcher used a five-point Likert-type scale to measure responses to ten questions in the survey. The operationally defined concepts measured participation, vertical alignment, communication level, certification level, free or reduced lunch, retention, student expectation, scheduling, and performance level. Data were analyzed using SPSS software to provide results for discussion.

Desire to Continue

Survey question one addressed students' desire to continue their music study from year to year (Table 3). The results showed that most students desired to continue (40%; $n = 14$), many desired to continue (45.7%; $n = 16$), some desired to continue (11.4%; $n = 4$), and only one response indicated that few desired to continue (2.9%; $n = 1$).

Table 3: Desire to Continue

	N	%
Few Want to Continue	1	2.9%
Some Want to Continue	4	11.4%
Many Want to Continue	16	45.7%
Most Want to Continue	14	40.0%

Desire to Continue but Cannot

Survey question two explored students' desire to continue their music study from year to year but cannot. In Table 4, participants equally reported that many and some students desired to continue but cannot (25.7%; $n = 9$). The following highest percentage was few who desire to continue but cannot (20%; $n = 7$), and the lowest percentage was most who desire to continue can (14.3%; $n = 5$) and most desire to continue but cannot (14.3%; $n = 5$).

Table 4: Desire to Continue but Cannot

	N	%
Most Who Desire to Continue Can	5	14.3%
Few Who Desire to Continue Cannot	7	20.0%
Some Who Desire to Continue Cannot	9	25.7%
Many Who Desire to Continue Cannot	9	25.7%
Most Desire to Continue but Cannot	5	14.3%

Retention

Survey question three investigated educators' retention of students from year to year.

Table 5 illustrates that 37.9% ($n = 13$) of educators retained many of their students from year to year. However, 25.7% ($n = 9$) retained few students, 22.9% ($n = 8$) retained most students, and 14.3% ($n = 5$) indicated that only some students continued.

Table 5: Student Retention Level

	N	%
Few Continue	9	25.7%
Some Continue	5	14.3%
Many Continue	13	37.1%
Most Continue	8	22.9%

Student Performance Level

Survey question four addressed perceptions of overall student musical performance levels at the various schools involved in the survey. Table 6 reveals that 42.9% ($n = 15$) of teachers felt that students performed at a high overall level. In contrast, fewer teachers felt that students performed at a very high overall level (22.9%; $n = 8$). Also, 20.0% ($n = 7$) of teachers perceived that students performed at an average overall level, while only 4.3% ($n = 5$) felt that students performed at a low overall performance level.

Table 6: Student Performance Level

	N	%
Low Overall	5	14.3%
Average Overall	7	20.0%
High Overall	15	42.9%
Very High Overall	8	22.9%

Vertical Alignment

Survey question five reviewed students' ability to continue music instruction between grade levels due to vertical alignment. Table 7 illustrates that 31.4% ($n = 11$) of educators reported that few students could continue from year to year. Similarly, 31.4% ($n = 11$) of educators reported that many could continue. Unfortunately, 20% ($n = 7$) reported that students could not continue from year to year, and only 5.7% ($n = 2$) of teachers reported that most could continue from year to year.

Table 7: Vertical Alignment

	N	%
Most Cannot Continue	7	20.0%
Few Can Continue	11	31.4%
Some Can Continue	4	11.4%
Many Can Continue	11	31.4%
Most Can Continue	2	5.7%

Communication

Survey question six addressed teacher-to-teacher communication between grade levels. Table 8 reveals that 42.9% ($n = 15$) of teachers experienced frequent communication between grade levels. In contrast, 17.1% ($n = 6$) of teachers found no communication between grade levels while 11.4% ($n = 4$) noted constant communication between grade levels.

Table 8: Communication Level

	N	%
No Communication	6	17.1%
Little Communication	5	14.3%
Some Communication	5	14.3%
Frequent Communication	15	42.9%
Constant Communication	4	11.4%

Teacher Certification

Survey question seven explored the certification level of music teachers. Table 9 illustrates that most music teachers were state-certified (60%; $n = 21$) and many were state-

certified (25.7%; $n = 9$). In contrast, only 8.6% ($n = 3$) of those surveyed noted that few teachers were state-certified, while 5.7% ($n = 2$) reported that some music teachers were state-certified.

Table 9: Certification Level Certification Level

	N	%
Few Teachers State Certified	3	8.6%
Some Teachers State Certified	2	5.7%
Many Teachers State Certified	9	25.7%
Most Teachers State Certified	21	60.0%

Expectations Sixth Grade

Survey question eight explored performance level expectations for students entering the sixth grade. Table 10 shows that 42.9% ($n = 15$) of teachers held high expectations for the musical performance of sixth-grade students. Additionally, teachers indicated very high sixth-grade expectations (20%; $n = 7$) and average sixth-grade expectations (20%; $n = 7$).

Alternatively, 8.6% ($n = 3$) noted low sixth-grade expectations and 8.6% ($n = 3$) suggested very low expectations for sixth-grade musical performance.

Table 10: Sixth-Grade Music Expectations

	N	%
Very Low Sixth	3	8.6%
Low Sixth	3	8.6%
Average Sixth	7	20.0%
High Sixth	15	42.9%
Very High Sixth	7	20.0%

Expectations Ninth Grade

Survey question nine explored performance level expectations for students' musical performance entering the ninth grade. Table 11 reveals that 28.6% ($n = 10$) of teachers held very low musical expectations for students entering the ninth grade. In direct contrast, 25.7% ($n = 9$) of teachers expressed high expectations. Teachers also indicated very high ninth-grade

expectations (20.0%; $n = 7$), average ninth-grade expectations (17.1%; $n = 6$), and low ninth-grade expectations (8.6%; $n = 3$).

Table 11: Ninth-Grade Expectations

	N	%
Very Low Ninth	10	28.6%
Low Ninth	3	8.6%
Average Ninth	6	17.1%
High Ninth	9	25.7%
Very High Ninth	7	20.0%

Socio-economic Status

Survey question ten addressed socio-economic concerns by considering the number of students enrolled in free and reduced lunch programs. In Table 12, teachers reported that most students were not enrolled in free or reduced lunch programs (62.9%; $n = 22$). However, three teachers indicated that most students enrolled in free and reduced lunch programs (8.6%; $n = 3$), and three indicated that some participated in free and reduced lunch programs (8.6%; $n = 3$).

Table 12: Free and Reduced Lunch

	N	%
Most No Free/Reduced	22	62.9%
Few Free/Reduced	7	20.0%
Some Free/Reduced	3	8.6%
Most Free/Reduced	3	8.6%

Research Questions

Pearson coefficients provided quantitative data analysis results to guide discussion of research questions. The Pearson correlation coefficient depicts the strength of linear association between two variables. Philip Sedgwick states, “The coefficient is measured on a scale with no

units and can take a value from -1 through 0 to +1.¹⁵³ Pearson correlation indicators are r for effect size, and p for significance value of correlations.¹⁵⁴

Research Question One

RQ 1: Do statistically significant relationships exist between vertical alignment, communication level, certification level, and socioeconomic status?

Table 13 illustrates relationships between vertical alignment, communication, certification, and free and reduced (SES). Only vertical alignment and certification level shared a statistically significant relationship ($r = .336, p < .05$). The relationship was positive and of moderate strength.

Table 13: Vertical Alignment, Communication, Certification, and SES Correlations

		Vertical Alignment	Communication Level	Certification Level	Free or Reduced Lunch
Vertical Alignment	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
	<hr/>				
Communication Level	Pearson Correlation	.240	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.164			
	N	35	35		
<hr/>					
Certification Level	Pearson Correlation	.336*	.303	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	.077		
	N	35	35	35	
<hr/>					
Free or Reduced Lunch	Pearson Correlation	.214	.162	.200	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.217	.353	.249	
	N	35	35	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

¹⁵³ Phillip Sedgwick, "Pearson's Correlation Coefficient," *BMJ* 345, no. 1 (July 4, 2012), 1.

¹⁵⁴ Susan E. Morgan, Tom Reichert, and Tyler R. Harrison, *From Numbers to Words: Reporting Statistical Results for the Social Sciences* (New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 33.

Research Question Two

RQ 2: Do statistically significant relationships exist between vertical alignment, communication, teacher certification, socioeconomic status, retention, and musical skill expectation?

Table 14 shows correlations between vertical alignment and retention in music programs. Desire to continue ($r = .548$), desire to continue but cannot ($r = .530$), and retention level ($r = .634$) were each positively correlated at the .01 level. The strongest relationship in this study was between vertical alignment and retention ($r = .643$), suggesting that the retention of students from year to year increases as vertical alignment increases. A negative relationship existed between vertical alignment and desire to continue but cannot ($r = -.530$), suggesting the number of students who wish to continue but cannot significantly increases as vertical alignment decreases.

Table 14: Vertical Alignment and Retention Correlations

		Vertical Alignment	Desire to Continue	Desire to Continue but Cannot	Retention Level
Vertical Alignment	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Desire to Continue	Pearson Correlation	.548**	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001			
	N	35	35		
Desire to Continue but Cannot	Pearson Correlation	-.530**	-.133	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.447		
	N	35	35	35	
Retention Level	Pearson Correlation	.634**	.526**	-.413*	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.014	
	N	35	35	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 15 reveals correlations between vertical alignment and musical skills. Sixth grade music skills expectation ($r = .547$) and student performance ($r = .481$) were both positively

correlated with vertical alignment at the .01 level. Thus, vertical alignment may be a predictor of musical skills performance level.

Table 15: Vertical Alignment and Musical Skills Correlations

		Vertical Alignment	Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Student Performance Level
Vertical Alignment	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Pearson Correlation	.547**	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001			
	N	35	35		
Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Pearson Correlation	-.301	-.311	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.079	.069		
	N	35	35	35	
Student Performance Level	Pearson Correlation	.481**	.619**	-.156	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	.369	
	N	35	35	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 16 illustrates a positive correlation between communication and retention ($r = .371$, $p < .05$). This evidence suggests that retention may increase as the communication level increases. Thus, communication between grade levels may affect student retention.

Table 16: Communication and Retention Correlations

		Communication Level	Desire to Continue	Desire to Continue but Cannot	Retention Level
Communication Level	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Desire to Continue	Pearson Correlation	.221	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.202			
	N	35	35		
Desire to Continue but Cannot	Pearson Correlation	-.285	-.133	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.097	.447		
	N	35	35	35	
Retention Level	Pearson Correlation	.371*	.526**	-.413*	--

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.001	.014	
	N	35	35	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 17 illustrates that no significant relationships existed between communication and musical skill/performance expectation measures.

Table 17: Communication and Musical Skill Correlations

		Communication Level	Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Student Performance Level
Communication Level	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Pearson Correlation	.278	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.106			
	N	35	35		
Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Pearson Correlation	.087	-.311	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.618	.069		
	N	35	35	35	
Student Performance Level	Pearson Correlation	.172	.619**	-.156	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.324	.000	.369	
	N	35	35	35	35

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 18 shows a positive correlation between certification level and desire to continue ($r = .407, p < .05$). Perhaps student desire to continue increases with a higher level of teacher certification. Therefore, certification level may affect student achievement.

Table 18: Certification and Retention Correlations

		Certification Level	Desire to Continue	Desire to Continue but Cannot	Retention Level
Certification Level	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Desire to Continue	Pearson Correlation	.407*	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015			
	N	35	35		
Desire to Continue but Cannot	Pearson Correlation	-.262	-.133	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.129	.447		
	N	35	35	35	
Retention Level	Pearson Correlation	.267	.526**	-.413*	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.121	.001	.014	
	N	35	35	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 19 reveals that no significant relationship existed between teacher certification level and expectations for the music skills performance of students.

Table 19: Certification and Musical Skills Correlations

		Certification Level	Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Student Performance Level
Certification Level	Pearson	1	.309	-.020	.298
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.071	.908	.083
	N	35	35	35	35
Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Pearson	.309	1	-.311	.619**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.071		.069	.000
	N	35	35	35	35
Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Pearson	-.020	-.311	1	-.156
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.908	.069		.369
	N	35	35	35	35

Student Performance Level	Pearson Correlation	.298	.619**	-.156	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.083	.000	.369	
	N	35	35	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 20 shows no significant relationships existed between socioeconomic status, as measured by free or reduced lunch, and retention measures.

Table 20: SES and Retention Correlations

		Free or Reduced Lunch	Desire to Continue	Desire to Continue but Cannot	Retention Level
Free or Reduced Lunch	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Desire to Continue	Pearson Correlation	.009	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.959			
	N	35	35		
Desire to Continue but Cannot	Pearson Correlation	-.313	-.133	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.067	.447		
	N	35	35	35	
Retention Level	Pearson Correlation	.300	.526**	-.413*	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.080	.001	.014	
	N	35	35	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 21 shows that no significant relationships existed between socioeconomic status, as measured by free or reduced lunch, and student's musical skills.

Table 21: SES and Musical Skills Correlations

		Free or Reduced Lunch	Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Student Performance Level
Free or Reduced Lunch	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
	Pearson Correlation	.078	--		

Music Skills Expectation	Sig. (2-tailed)	.658			
Sixth	N	35	35		
Music Skills Expectation	Pearson Correlation	.016	-.311	--	
Ninth	Sig. (2-tailed)	.928	.069		
	N	35	35	35	
Student Performance Level	Pearson Correlation	-.014	.619**	-.156	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.935	.000	.369	
	N	35	35	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Open-Ended Questions

The data collected from the open-ended questions was analyzed using NVivo software and sorted into code categories (Table 22).

Table 22: Coded Open-Ended Questions

Open-Ended Question	Code Categories
What are your expectations for students entering the sixth grade	Fundamental/General Knowledge No Prior Knowledge
What are your expectations from students entering the ninth grade?	Characteristic Sound How to Read Music Music Fundamentals Interpret Music Notation
Why do your students choose to continue from year to year?	They Love/Enjoy Playing and Performing Make Friends/Relationships with Others Experience Culture In Classroom
Why are students unable to continue?	Scheduling Conflicts Relocation Parental Restrictions Loss Of Interest Work Finances Interest Goes to Other Enrichments
Why do students choose to quit?	Work Schedule Loss of Interest No Longer Enjoy Playing Lack of Support Lack of Success on Instrument Lack of Social Life

What are some issues that cause students not to continue music instruction between grade levels?	Grades Band Director Turnover Scheduling Program Shutdown Obligations to Other Activities Too Many Electives Offered Peer Influence
Describe the communication between music teachers of different grade levels?	Email Phone Call Face to Face No Communication Minimal Communication Not Consistent
How does socioeconomic status affect your students?	Cannot Afford to Participate No Personal Instruments/Use School Lack of Parental Involvement No Private Lessons Minimal Affect

Theme Development

In the analysis process, common ideas were found. Further analysis of code categories generated themes for subsequent discussion. Four main themes and twelve sub-themes emerged. The main themes are (1) Consistent Band Participation, (2) Music Teacher Experiences in Band Instruction, (3) Scheduling Concerns Related to Band Instructions, and (4) The Effect of Vertical Alignment in Band Instruction. The four main themes and twelve sub-themes are displayed in Table 23.

Table 23: Themes

Main Themes	Sub-Themes
Consistent Band Participation	Atmosphere Bonds Enjoyment of Music/Playing Outlet Performances
Music Teacher Expectations	Fundamental Knowledge Desire to Learn New Things
Scheduling Concerns Related to Band Instructions	Too Many Other Elective Options Students Placed in Incorrect Band Class

The Effect of Vertical Alignment on Band Instruction	Shared Student Growth Higher Student Expectations Aligned Curriculum
--	--

Understanding Consistent Band Participation

Three teachers felt that the atmosphere set forth by the director gives students a reason to continue participation from year to year and grow bonds with other students. One teacher believed “When students enjoy playing their instruments and performing at events such as pep rallies, football games, festivals, and parades, they continue to participate yearly.” Another teacher felt that band offers students a creative outlet from the basic curriculum. By allowing students to express themselves in and outside a typical classroom setting they can be more creative and interactive.

Understanding Music Teacher Expectations

An educator stated, “I spent a lot of time closing musical gaps, their tone to be improved tenfold, and by the end of the year have all 12 major scales in one octave mastered.” Music teacher expectations for students entering their programs in the sixth or ninth grade spanned from no expectations to students should have fundamental musical knowledge and a desire to learn new things. They suggested that fundamental knowledge should include knowledge of treble clef, bass clef, basic note notation, and rhythmic patterns prior to entering their programs.

Understanding Scheduling Concerns

Five teachers felt too many other elective options were offered to students, which caused a decline in students enrolling in a band class. Eighteen teachers felt that students were placed into incorrect band classes due to schedule conflicts. For example, one teacher stated “As students begin to move up through other grade levels their scores on standardized testing allow for them to take high school credit classes which are offered during their elective time. In most

cases I can get parents to have their child continue with band but in some cases parents choose for their child to take the year off. However, those students end up not coming back for fear that they are too far behind beginning students and would be placed in an advanced band class which affected learning for all students.”

Understanding the Effect of Vertical Alignment

One teacher felt that vertical alignment affects music instruction positively because it allows all grade level teachers to experience shared student growth from year to year. A teacher stated “I believe that a strong connection is needed between music teachers. Middle school and high school directors should collaborate to make the transition from middle school to high school band smoothly.” Another teacher also felt that student expectations would become higher with an aligned curriculum that fits the needs of all programs.

Summary

In-service music teachers completed a survey to explore data on grade-level instruction, student motivation and retention, certification, socioeconomic status, program expectations, and communication in their current programs. After data was collected, it was input into the NVivo and SPSS software to be analyzed. The results of this research revealed significant relationships related to vertical alignment. The strongest relationship was found between vertical alignment and retention suggesting that as vertical alignment increases student retention increases from year to year. Other relationships were found between vertical alignment and certification level and vertical alignment and musical skills performance levels. Both positive relationships suggested that certified teachers increase vertical alignment in their schools and that vertical alignment may be a predictor of student performance levels.

More correlations were also found in the data results. Student desire to continue, teacher certification, communication level, and retention were all positively correlated. Results from these correlations suggest that students' desire to continue increases with a higher level of teacher certification. It also suggests that as communication increases between grade levels retention level of students also increases.

Four main themes and twelve sub-themes emerged based on responses from the open-ended survey questions. The main themes were (1) Consistent Band Participation, (2) Music Teacher Experiences in Band Instruction, (3) Scheduling Concerns Related to Band Instructions, and (4) The Effect of Vertical Alignment on Band Instruction. Sub-themes included atmosphere, bonds, outlet, and student desire to learn new things. These themes reveal significant concerns and opinions of the participating teachers in this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This study offers practical implications for music education and may enhance instruction by considering several key areas. This chapter summarizes the purpose, procedures, and findings of this study. It discusses research limitations and recommendations for future research and concludes with implications for improving vertical alignment and student retention in music programs.

Summary of Study

This study explored vertical alignment in current music programs of in-service music teachers. The researcher used an ordinal scale and open-ended survey questions to explore grade-level instruction, student motivation and retention, certification level, socioeconomic status, level of program expectations, and communication between programs at various grade levels. The problem central to the study was the lack of vertical alignment in many school systems. This lack of vertical alignment could stem from numerous factors such as limited communication between grade levels, teacher certification, and the social-economic status of the schools. Poor alignment can cause low retention in band programs, low student motivation, limited musical knowledge, and diminished performance quality of musical ensembles.

Summary of Purpose

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to survey in-service music teachers regarding vertical alignment in their current programs. This study investigated how vertical alignment for music programs affected elementary, middle, and secondary music education participation, motivation, and musical skills development. Study findings support the theory that as vertical alignment increases, so does student retention in music programs.

Summary of Procedures

Following approval from Liberty University Institution Review Board (IRB), the thesis chair, and the school district, the researcher began to recruit participants via letters and email messages explaining the study's purpose and participation requirements. Participants responded to questions through an online survey instrument by following a Microsoft Forms link designed by the researcher. Names were not required when completing surveys to ensure anonymity.

Summary of Analysis

This mixed-methods study examined the correlations between grade-level instruction, student motivation and retention, certification, socioeconomic status, program expectations, and communication level between programs at various grade levels. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS) examined quantitative data to illustrate descriptive statistics and explore potential relationships between variables. The NVivo software examined qualitative data to identify themes in participant responses. Surveys consisted of ten questions Likert-type scale response questions and eight open-ended questions.

Summary of Results

The first research question explored statistically significant relationships between vertical alignment, communication level, certification level, and socioeconomic status. The Pearson Product-Movement Correlation was used to explore six possible relationships. However, only vertical alignment and certification level shared a statistically significant correlation ($r = .336, p < .05$).

The second research question explored significant relationships between vertical alignment, communication, certification level, socioeconomic status, retention, and musical skill expectation. The strongest relationship identified was between vertical alignment and retention (r

= .643, $p < .01$). Retention of students from year to year may increase as vertical alignment increases. As well, a negative relationship was found between vertical alignment and desire to continue but cannot ($r = -.530, p < .01$). Thus, the number of students who wish to continue but cannot, may significantly increase as vertical alignment decreases. Both sixth grade music skills expectation ($r = .547, p < .01$) and overall student performance ($r = .481, p < .01$) were positively correlated with vertical alignment. Therefore, vertical alignment may be a predictor of musical skills performance level. Communication and retention shared a moderate relationship ($r = .371, p < .05$) As well, a positive correlation existed between certification level and desire to continue ($r = .407, p < .05$).

Analysis of open-ended questions led to the discovery of important themes for consideration and discussion. Themes of consistent band participation, music teacher expectations, and the effect of vertical alignment evolved from coding data and subsequent analysis of code categories. Teachers reported that consistent band participation resulted from the learning atmosphere created by the teacher, bonds held between teachers and students, enjoyment of music, student sense that music provided a personal outlet, and satisfaction gained from musical performance. Teachers indicated development of fundamental musical knowledge and fostering a student desire to learn were firm expectations for instruction. Teachers also reported that band programs faced scheduling concerns because schools frequently offered too many electives. Another scheduling concern was simply the frequent placement of students in incorrect band classes, thus not matching student level of advancement. Finally, teachers agreed that vertical alignment profoundly impacted band instruction and achievement. Vertical alignment promoted shared student growth and led to higher expectation levels for student performance. As well, teachers felt that an aligned curriculum fostered a broad array of benefits.

Discussion of Results

Null hypothesis one was rejected because a significant relationship existed between vertical alignment and certification level ($r = .336, p < .05$). This relationship was positive and of moderate strength. Vertical alignment may increase as certification increases.

Null hypothesis two was rejected because significant relationships existed between vertical alignment, communication, teacher certification, retention, and musical skill expectation. Retention may increase as vertical alignment increases ($r = .643, p < .01$). As vertical alignment decreases the number of students who cannot continue but want to continue may increase ($r = -.530, p < .01$). The overall musical skill expectations of band students may increase with vertical alignment ($r = .481, p < .01$). As well retention may increase as strength of communication ($r = .371, p < .05$) and certification level of music teachers ($r = .407, p < .05$) increase in schools.

The themes identified through qualitative data analysis support the quantitative data's statistically significant findings. Teacher discussion of consistent band participation illustrates the importance of vertical alignment to create a learning atmosphere, bonds between teachers and students, enhance the enjoyment of music, and increase satisfaction from musical performance. Ideas for developing fundamental musical knowledge and student desire to learn may explain factors that affect the perception of student performance skills. Further, scheduling concerns linked to excessive course requirements and improper placement of students in courses support correlations between vertical alignment and retention elements.

Limitations

A literature review revealed few existing studies on vertical alignment in music education. Time constraints also affected the availability of participants and made it difficult for them to participate. The Covid-19 pandemic was a factor during the period involved in the data

collection. Most schools worked from a hybrid or virtual schedule, and successfully contacting band directors to request participation was challenging. Music teachers held busy teaching schedules and time constraints often affected decisions to participate in the survey. Therefore, the survey was concise so teachers could complete it promptly. The initial response was limited and below the desired number of participants. An email was sent three weeks after the initial survey to encourage music teachers to participate.

Implications for Practice

This research focused on determining the effect of vertical alignment on elementary, middle, and high school music programs. The findings indicated that vertical alignment strongly correlates with retention, and many students wish to continue but cannot. Retention may increase with higher levels of vertical alignment. Lower levels of vertical alignment may also exclude from music classes students who want to participate in musical performance. The implications of this study are practical and may assist the state board of education, superintendents, district administrators, and music educators in making curricular decisions.

State board members and superintendents may consider the results of this study to make informed decisions to establish or modify music education programs in elementary, middle, and high school settings. The most obvious implication is that increasing vertical alignment in schools and districts may significantly increase the retention of students in music classes from year to year. Results also indicated that communication and retention share a positive correlation. Since districts offer music courses at different grade levels, communication between grade levels could improve retention. As well, vertical alignment and performance skills share a positive relationship. Therefore, improved vertical alignment could raise expectations for student achievement and promote a more well-rounded musical experience.

School administrators can work together to increase students' musical growth and success by employing certified music educators. Eliminating scheduling issues and allowing students to enroll consecutively in music courses would reduce the number of students who must discontinue music classes against their wishes. Each student, school, and community will benefit from higher retention and music program strength gained from music instruction at each grade level.

Music educators should collaborate to design curriculums across grade levels and advocate for students to take music classes consecutively from grade to grade. A vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum would increase student participation and retention. Teachers' expectations for students' music performance may also increase by sharing common goals with all the teachers involved in a feeder system. Education programs across the nation will be enhanced if all students have access to quality music programs in early grades. Vertical alignment and teacher certification are crucial elements.

Recommendations for Future Study

This study should be replicated on a larger scale. Increasing the number of participants and the overall scope of research would offer a broader view of vertical alignment. Research could gather data from different regions of the country, grade levels, and demographics. Participation from the National Association for Music Education (NAFME) and other professional music organization memberships could help to enrich data collections.

Future studies with similar research questions and surveys should explore public, private, and magnet schools and compare the findings. Additional studies could explore other subjects such as visual art, physical education, career and technical education, and foreign languages.

Findings from studies of other subject areas may be compared to studies of music instruction to identify similarities and differences.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 18, 2021

[REDACTED]

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY20-21-558 "Student Motivation in Music Programs: The Effect of Vertical Alignment Between Elementary, Middle, and High School Music Program

Dear [REDACTED]

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: May 18, 2021. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B: Doctoral Thesis Proposal Decision

DOCTORAL THESIS PROPOSAL DECISION		
<p>The thesis advisor has rendered the following decision concerning the proposal status for Tamekia Holliday on the research topic title of THE EFFECT OF VERTICAL ALIGNMENT BETWEEN ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAMS as submitted on May 6, 2021:</p>		
<p>a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Approval to proceed with no proposal revisions. The student may fully engage the research and writing process according to the established timeline. Upon full approval, the student may apply for IRB approval, if applicable (see STEP 4 concerning IRB approval process).</p>		
<p>b. <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Approval to proceed with proposal pending cited revisions. (This is the most common decision). The student must resubmit the proposal with cited revisions according to the established timeline. The Advisor will indicate the committee's status on your response to the required revisions. The student may NOT apply for IRB approval until full approval is granted.</p>		
<p>c. <input type="checkbox"/> Redirection of Proposal. The student is being redirected to develop a new proposal, as minor revisions will not meet the expectations for the research project. The student may NOT apply for IRB approval.</p>		
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	May 6, 2021
Print Name of Advisor/Mentor	Signature	Date
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	May 6, 2021
Print Name of Reader	Signature	Date

Appendix C: District Consent Letter

March 31, 2021

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As a graduate student in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree in Music Education. The purpose of my research is to see if statistically significant relationships exist between vertical alignment, communication level, certification level, and socioeconomic status between elementary, middle, and high schools effect student motivation and retention. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

I am writing to request your permission to contact members of various schools in the parish to invite them to participate in my research study.

Participants will be asked to click on the link provided [REDACTED]. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

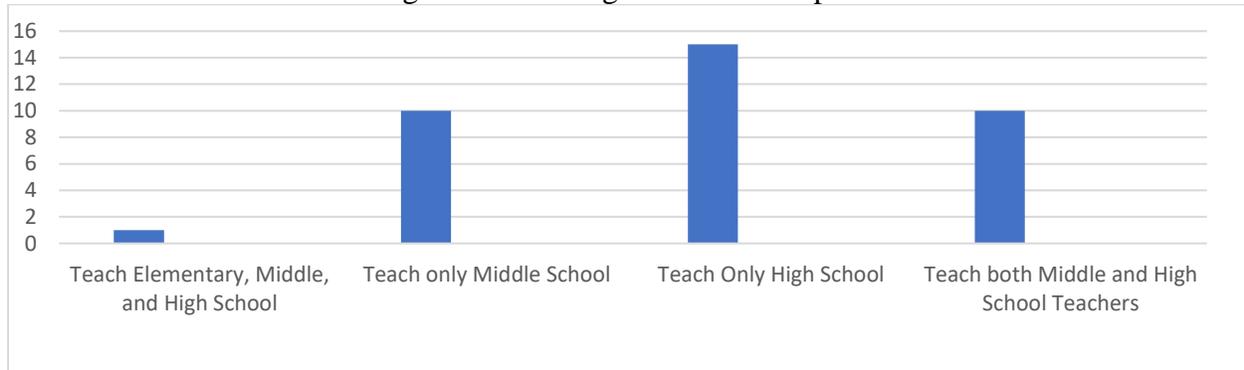
Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

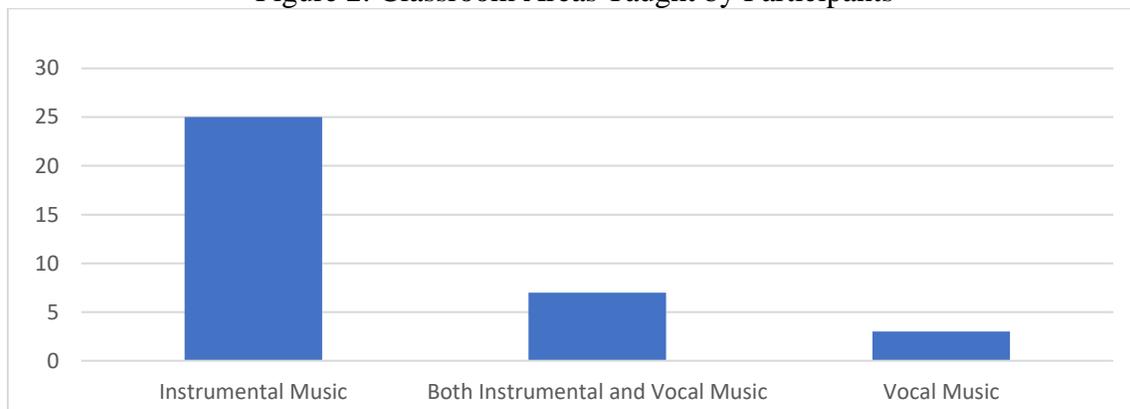
Appendix D: Teaching Area of Participants

Figure 1: Teaching Area of Participants



Appendix E: Classroom Areas Taught by Participants

Figure 2: Classroom Areas Taught by Participants



Appendix G: Reliability Statistics

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.476	10

Appendix H: Desire to Continue

Table 3: Desire to Continue

	N	%
Few Want to Continue	1	2.9%
Some Want to Continue	4	11.4%
Many Want to Continue	16	45.7%
Most Want to Continue	14	40.0%

Appendix I: Desire to Continue but Cannot

Table 7: Desire to Continue but Cannot

	N	%
Most Who Desire to Continue Can	5	14.3%
Few Who Desire to Continue Cannot	7	20.0%
Some Who Desire to Continue Cannot	9	25.7%
Many Who Desire to Continue Cannot	9	25.7%
Most Desire to Continue but Cannot	5	14.3%

Appendix J: Student Retention Level

Table 5: Student Retention Level

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Few Continue	9	25.7%
Some Continue	5	14.3%
Many Continue	13	37.1%
Most Continue	8	22.9%

Appendix K: Student Performance Level

Table 6: Student Performance Level

	N	%
Low Overall	5	14.3%
Average Overall	7	20.0%
High Overall	15	42.9%
Very High Overall	8	22.9%

Appendix L: Vertical Alignment

Table 7: Vertical Alignment

	N	%
Most Cannot Continue	7	20.0%
Few Can Continue	11	31.4%
Some Can Continue	4	11.4%
Many Can Continue	11	31.4%
Most Can Continue	2	5.7%

Appendix M: Communication Level

Table 8: Communication Level

	N	%
No Communication	6	17.1%
Little Communication	5	14.3%
Some Communication	5	14.3%
Frequent Communication	15	42.9%
Constant Communication	4	11.4%

Appendix N: Certification Level

Table 9: Certification Level

	N	%
Few Teachers State Certified	3	8.6%
Some Teachers State Certified	2	5.7%
Many Teachers State Certified	9	25.7%
Most Teachers State Certified	21	60.0%

Appendix O: Sixth-Grade Music Expectations Levels

Table 10: Sixth-Grade Music Expectations

	N	%
Very Low Sixth	3	8.6%
Low Sixth	3	8.6%
Average Sixth	7	20.0%
High Sixth	15	42.9%
Very High Sixth	7	20.0%

Appendix P: Ninth-Grade Expectations Levels

Table 11: Ninth-Grade Expectations

	N	%
Very Low Ninth	10	28.6%
Low Ninth	3	8.6%
Average Ninth	6	17.1%
High Ninth	9	25.7%
Very High Ninth	7	20.0%

Appendix Q: Free and Reduced Lunch Levels

Table 12: Free and Reduced Lunch

	N	%
Most No Free/Reduced	22	62.9%
Few Free/Reduced	7	20.0%
Some Free/Reduced	3	8.6%
Most Free/Reduced	3	8.6%

Appendix R: Vertical Alignment, Communication, Certification, and SES Correlations

Table 13: Vertical Alignment, Communication, Certification, and SES Correlations

		Vertical Alignment	Communication Level	Certification Level	Free or Reduced Lunch
Vertical Alignment	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Communication Level	Pearson Correlation	.240	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.164			
	N	35	35		
Certification Level	Pearson Correlation	.336*	.303	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	.077		
	N	35	35	35	
Free or Reduced Lunch	Pearson Correlation	.214	.162	.200	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.217	.353	.249	
	N	35	35	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix S: Vertical Alignment and Retention Correlations

Table 14: Vertical Alignment and Retention Correlations

		Vertical Alignment	Desire to Continue	Desire to Continue but Cannot	Retention Level
Vertical Alignment	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Desire to Continue	Pearson Correlation	.548**	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001			
	N	35	35		
Desire to Continue but Cannot	Pearson Correlation	-.530**	-.133	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.447		
	N	35	35	35	
Retention Level	Pearson Correlation	.634**	.526**	-.413*	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.014	
	N	35	35	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix T: Vertical Alignment and Musical Skills Correlations

Table 15: Vertical Alignment and Musical Skills Correlations

		Vertical Alignment	Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Student Performance Level
Vertical Alignment	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Pearson Correlation	.547**	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001			
	N	35	35		
Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Pearson Correlation	-.301	-.311	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.079	.069		
	N	35	35	35	
Student Performance Level	Pearson Correlation	.481**	.619**	-.156	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	.369	
	N	35	35	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix U: Communication and Retention Correlations

Table 8: Communication and Retention Correlations

		Communication Level	Desire to Continue	Desire to Continue but Cannot	Retention Level
Communication Level	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Desire to Continue	Pearson Correlation	.221	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.202			
	N	35	35		
Desire to Continue but Cannot	Pearson Correlation	-.285	-.133	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.097	.447		
	N	35	35	35	
Retention Level	Pearson Correlation	.371*	.526**	-.413*	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.001	.014	
	N	35	35	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix V: Communication and Musical Skill Correlations

Table 17: Communication and Musical Skill Correlations

		Communication Level	Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Student Performance Level
Communication Level	Pearson	--			
	Correlation				
	N	35			
Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Pearson	.278	--		
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.106			
	N	35	35		
Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Pearson	.087	-.311	--	
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.618	.069		
	N	35	35	35	
Student Performance Level	Pearson	.172	.619**	-.156	--
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.324	.000	.369	
	N	35	35	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix W: Certification and Retention Correlations

Table 18: Certification and Retention Correlations

		Certification	Desire to	Desire to	
		Level	Continue	Continue but	Retention Level
				Cannot	
Certification Level	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Desire to Continue	Pearson Correlation	.407*	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015			
	N	35	35		
Desire to Continue but Cannot	Pearson Correlation	-.262	-.133	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.129	.447		
	N	35	35	35	
Retention Level	Pearson Correlation	.267	.526**	-.413*	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.121	.001	.014	
	N	35	35	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix X: Certification and Musical Skills Correlations

Table 19: Certification and Musical Skills Correlations

		Certification Level	Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Student Performance Level
Certification Level	Pearson	1	.309	-.020	.298
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.071	.908	.083
	N	35	35	35	35
Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Pearson	.309	1	-.311	.619**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.071		.069	.000
	N	35	35	35	35
Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Pearson	-.020	-.311	1	-.156
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.908	.069		.369
	N	35	35	35	35
Student Performance Level	Pearson	.298	.619**	-.156	1
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.083	.000	.369	
	N	35	35	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix Y: SES and Retention Correlations

Table 20: SES and Retention Correlations

		Free or Reduced Lunch	Desire to Continue	Desire to Continue but Cannot	Retention Level
Free or Reduced Lunch	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Desire to Continue	Pearson Correlation	.009	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.959			
	N	35	35		
Desire to Continue but Cannot	Pearson Correlation	-.313	-.133	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.067	.447		
	N	35	35	35	
Retention Level	Pearson Correlation	.300	.526**	-.413*	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.080	.001	.014	
	N	35	35	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix Z: SES and Musical Skills Correlations

Table 21: SES and Musical Skills Correlations

		Free or Reduced Lunch	Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Student Performance Level
Free or Reduced Lunch	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	35			
Music Skills Expectation Sixth	Pearson Correlation	.078	--		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.658			
	N	35	35		
Music Skills Expectation Ninth	Pearson Correlation	.016	-.311	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.928	.069		
	N	35	35	35	
Student Performance Level	Pearson Correlation	-.014	.619**	-.156	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.935	.000	.369	
	N	35	35	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix AA: Coded Open-Ended Questions

Table 22: Coded Open-Ended Questions

Open-Ended Question	Code Categories
What are your expectations for students entering the sixth grade	Fundamental/General Knowledge No Prior Knowledge
What are your expectations from students entering the ninth grade?	Characteristic Sound How to Read Music Music Fundamentals Interpret Music Notation
Why do your students choose to continue from year to year?	They Love/Enjoy Playing and Performing Make Friends/Relationships with Others Experience Culture In Classroom
Why are students unable to continue?	Scheduling Conflicts Relocation Parental Restrictions Loss Of Interest Finances Interest Goes to Other Enrichments
Why do students choose to quit?	Work Schedule Loss of Interest No Longer Enjoy Playing Lack of Support Lack of Success on Instrument Lack of Social Life
What are some issues that cause students not to continue music instruction between grade levels?	Band Director Turnover Scheduling Program Shutdown Obligations to Other Activities Too Many Electives Offered Peer Influence
Describe the communication between music teachers of different grade levels?	Email Phone Call Face to Face No Communication Minimal Communication Not Consistent
How does socioeconomic status affect your students?	Cannot Afford to Participate No Personal Instruments/Use School Lack of Parental Involvement No Private Lessons Minimal Affect

Appendix BB: Themes

Table 23: Themes

Main Themes	Sub-Themes
Consistent band participation	Atmosphere Bonds Enjoyment of music/playing Outlet Performances
Music teacher expectations	Fundamental Knowledge Desire to learn new things
Scheduling concerns related to band instructions	Too many other elective options Students placed in incorrect band class
The effect of vertical alignment on band instruction	Shared student growth Higher student expectations Aligned curriculum

Appendix CC: Questions for Likert-type Scale Responses

Questions for Likert-type Scale Responses

1. Students in my classes desire to continue music study from year to year.
2. Students in my classes desire to continue from year to year but cannot.
3. I retain a large number of students from year to year in my program.
4. Students and band ensembles in my school perform at a high level.
5. Students in my school can continue instruction between grade levels without problems in class scheduling.
6. Music teachers in my school communicate between grade levels.
7. Music teachers in my school possess state certification to teach subjects at the grade level they are assigned to teach.
8. Music teachers in my school possess a high level of expectation for students entering the sixth grade.
9. Music teachers in my school possess a high level of expectation for students entering the ninth grade.
10. Students in my school require free or reduced lunch.

Appendix DD: Questions for Open-Ended Responses

Questions for Open-Ended Responses

1. What are your expectations for students entering the sixth grade?
2. What are your expectations from students entering the ninth grade?
3. Why do your students choose to continue from year to year?
4. Why are students unable to continue?
5. Why do students choose to quit?
6. What are some issues that cause students not to continue music instruction between grade levels?
7. Describe the communication between music teachers of different grade levels?
8. How does socioeconomic status affect your students?