PERCEPTION AND REALITY: THE FACE OF ATTRITION

by

Dylan T. Edwards

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music

Spring 2017

© 2017 Dylan T. Edwards
All Rights Reserved

PERCEPTION AND REALITY: THE FACE OF ATTRITION

by

Dylan T. Edwards

Approved: _____
Matthew L. Williams, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
Russell E. Murray, Ph.D.
Chair of the Department of Music

Approved: _____
George H. Watson, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Approved: _____
Ann L. Ardis, Ph.D.
Senior Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this thesis was possible due to the support provided from family, mentors, and colleagues. The following people helped make this happen:

Matthew L. Williams, Ph.D., for his continual guidance during the thesis process. He has put considerable time and effort into improving this research with me, and it is appreciated.

Suzanne L. Burton, Ph.D. and Jennifer M. Barker Ph.D., for participating on my research panel and providing me with further learning opportunities to be a better educator.

Alden H. Snell, II, Ph.D. for his time and effort in helping me focus my research and beginning the process for this thesis.

My colleagues, Aneysha, Maddy, Scott, Leslie, Taritta, Joanna, Emily, and Josh: for their assistance in completing this project.

Lastly to my family, my parents Kevin and Sheri, brother Logan, and pets Drake and Storm: thank you for always being there when I need you and believing in me. You are the force that motivated me to complete this research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES vii
ABSTRACT vii

Chapter

1 INTRODUCTION 1

Statement of the Problem 1
Purpose of the Study 2
Research Questions 2

2 RELATED LITERATURE 3

Perceptions of Administration and Teacher Perspective 3

Summary 9

Career Cycles 9

Summary 12

Attrition/Mobility 13

Summary 22

Retention 22

Summary 29

3 METHODOLOGY 30

Participants 30
Survey Construction 30
Pilot Test 31
Procedure 32

4 DATA ANALYSIS 33

Descriptive Results 33
Perceptions 34

5 DISCUSSION 40

Limitations 43
Suggestions 44
Implications 45

REFERENCES 47

Appendix

A IRB EXEMPTION FORM 52
B SURVEY INSTRUMENT 53

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Overall Participant Data 34

Table 2 Gender Differences 37

Table 3 Importance of Administration 38

Table 4 Importance of Parents 39

Table 5 Importance of Peers 39

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate trends of retention in music education by determining how teachers' perceptions and expectations may affect retention. The following research questions guided this study: What effect do teacher characteristics have on perceptions of support? and What effect do job responsibilities have on perceptions of support? To answer these questions, a unique survey was created and distributed using Qualtrics. Participants were alumni teachers of a mid-Atlantic university (*N*=83). Three common constructs found in previous research studies were chosen for inclusion on the survey, consisting of administrative support focusing on assistance that administrators provided in a school environment, peer support focusing on assistance provided by colleagues outside of a mentor program, and parent support focusing on parent involvement and assistance in music programs in a school environment. Researchers have found these support systems to be related to both teacher characteristics, such as age and gender, as well as job responsibilities, such as the number of classes taught. Consequently, these constructs became a primary focus for this research. Overall, participants indicated that of the three measured constructs of administrative, peer, and parent support, administrative support was the most important. Additionally, differences were found among genders with females rating administrative support more important and males receiving parent support more often. Itinerant status and degree level obtained were also examined using Mann-Whitney U tests, revealing no differences between participants based on

these factors. Comparisons based on participants' years of experience resulted in a difference in the ratings of peer support with no other differences being discovered. This study reinforces findings of existing research regarding teacher retention in music education while also highlighting focused areas for possible future research studies.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Teacher attrition has been a concern for many years. Researchers have examined a wide range of perspectives regarding the topic, including trends over the first few years of teaching (Edgar, 2012; Roulston, Legette, & Womack, 2007); career plans of teachers regarding teacher career cycles (Eros, 2011; Robinson, 2010; Russell, 2008; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001); and factors influencing attrition, retention, and mobility (Gardner, 2010; Hancock, 2008; Hughes, 2012; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Scheib, 2006). Much research is compartmentalized, engaging only in these specific interactions regarding attrition or retention and their overall effect on the teaching field. To better understand the underlying causes of teacher retention, connections must be made between these disparate foci, so that administrators, teachers, and members of the educational system may find potential factors which enhance retention.

Statement of the Problem

Previous research has revealed that attrition is not limited to one grade level or specialization (Gardner, 2010; Hughes, 2012; Robinson, 2010). To improve retention of teachers in the music field, it is vital to examine individual factors and their connection to each other. This study is a contribution to the body of research on retention, teacher perspectives, and their connection to personal, job, and school characteristics.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate trends of teacher retention in music education by determining what the expectations of teachers are regarding their jobs, as well as examining the effects of support systems, job responsibilities, and other school characteristics on teacher retention.

Research Questions

Research questions guiding this study were:

1. What effect did teacher characteristics have on perceptions of support?

2. What effect did job responsibilities have on perceptions of support?

Chapter 2

RELATED LITERATURE

In this literature review, research on teacher perceptions of the music teachers' job, teacher career cycles, attrition and mobility of the music teacher, and teacher retention will all be discussed. Research regarding expectations and perceptions of teachers is limited in current bodies of music attrition research. This focus on teachers' expectations or perspectives as well as examining administrator perspectives can provide valuable clues to different school environments. These school environments have the potential to create attrition or foster retention and are therefore important to consider (Edgar, 2012: Roulston, Legette, & Womack, 2005).

Perceptions and Expectations

Perceptions of the school environment through the lenses of teachers and administrators have been shown through existing research to affect school environments. One such study is that of Edgar (2012). Edgar explored the relationship between administrators' expectations and entry-year teachers' perceptions of these expectations. Through interviews at three separate schools, a stark contrast between what each administrator expected as well as how each entry-year teacher interpreted these expectations was found. Administrators were consistently concerned with interpersonal and general teaching skills over musical ability, whereas teacher responses stated more communication was the key to succeeding, especially regarding musical guidance. In only one example were the expectations effectively

communicated, which was attributed to the administrator's prior experience as a music educator. Edgar proposed that more communication was necessary to facilitate positive relationships and help improve teacher environments in a school setting (2012).

Regarding teacher perceptions, Andrews, Gilbert, and Martin (2007) wanted to determine what beginning teachers deemed as valuable support for starting their careers. Of the twelve support strategies included on the researchers' survey, only four were provided for half or more of the responding teachers. These four supports were having a mentor, having an orientation session, being given guides or handbooks, and having new teacher professional development sessions. Four other supports were highly valued by teachers but less than half received them. These supports were observing other teachers, co-planning time, smaller classes, and feedback on non-evaluative classroom observations. Interestingly, administrator accounts did not align with beginning teachers' perceptions of what was being offered. An example of this disparity can be seen by examining the reports of observing other teachers. Beginning teachers felt they were given this opportunity 41.9% of the time while 84.8% of administrators reported providing this support system. Also of note is that while teachers did value mentoring for the most part, comments made by teachers regarding mentoring varied widely. Some teachers were very happy with their mentor while others had mentors they deemed to be of no help (Andrews et al., 2007). The findings from this study indicate that perceptions between teachers and administration often do

not align regarding support being offered and strongly shows the importance of communication between administration and beginning teachers.

Similarly, Roulston et al. (2005) interviewed beginning music teachers to uncover perceptions of both their transition from university to the professional field and how they perceived the professional field in their first year. Like Edgar (2012), Roulston et al. found there was a strong consideration for communication to be overly successful. Three additional factors Roulston et al. found to be important were the usefulness and applicability of coursework, the challenges experienced in their first year, rewards of the first year, and the perceptions of these teachers regarding their personal professional needs (2005).

Another study in the vein of perceptions is that of Olsen and Anderson (2007). The researchers investigated teachers' reasons for entry into teaching, their preparation experiences, workplace conditions, professional development opportunities, and their future career plans. Teachers were classified into three groups based on data collection: stayers, uncertain, and leavers. Overall, Olsen and Anderson (2007) found several reasons teachers considered shifting within or leaving education. Common responses were stagnation/hitting a plateau, wanting to achieve their original goal for entering education in a new format, seeking higher education, family pressure to do something different, wanting to start a family, having a time-consuming job, not earning enough money, and poor school environments.

Miller, Brownell, and Smith (1999) examined attrition, mobility, and retention regarding special education teachers. Results revealed that certification, perceived stress, perceived school climate, and age were the significant factors between stayers, leavers, and transfers. Stayers were found to be older, have significantly less perceived stress, rated school climates higher, and had higher certification than the other groups. It should be noted that differences between transfers and leavers were not significant except for certification.

An additional study regarding perceptions is that of Shann (1998), who examined the professional satisfaction of urban middle school teachers. Results from teacher interviews revealed that teachers were least satisfied with parent-teacher relationships and participation in decision-making. Teacher-pupil relationships were ranked most important by teachers during the interviews. The lack of parent involvement was found to be the largest source of dissatisfaction with parent-teacher relationships through teacher responses. Notably, Shann (1998) found that teachers deemed parent-teacher relationships to be equally important to administrative support, student achievement, and curriculum in the school.

The research of Rhodes, Nevil, and Allen (2004) provides a unique perspective into the school systems outside the United States. The focus of this research was the job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of teachers in the United Kingdom. While this fact does limit its ability to be generalized for the United States school system it does provide valuable insight to consider. Overall, workload was found to be the most

likely to elicit dissatisfaction, followed closely by work and life balance. Friendliness of staff was seen by 97% of respondents as the most satisfying aspect of their jobs. Interestingly, professional development was found to lead to more dissatisfaction in the sample of this study. The top five factors found to lead to dissatisfaction were administration, workload, student discipline and behavioral issues, work and life balance, and lastly constant changes and initiative overload.

Krueger (2000), much like Rhodes, Nevil, and Allen (2004), researched the relationship between job satisfaction and attrition factors of teachers with a special focus on music teachers. To accomplish this, thirty music teachers in their first ten years of teaching were interviewed. The teachers came from a variety of backgrounds in the K-12 setting to provide a sample of all possible types of music teachers. During the interviews, five teachers expressed a desire to leave immediately or within the next few years due to lack of administrator support. Krueger also found that many of the teachers felt that the administration was shaping their peers' view of the music program poorly, which negatively affected their colleagues' expectations of the music program. Additionally, teachers expressed feelings of isolation, lack of proper facilities, and an immense workload as most were itinerant and had conflicting schedules between buildings. Contrary to this, however, some teachers did express having effective support systems that allowed them to focus on student accomplishments.

Fantilli and McDougall (2009) approached the research in this vein from the lens of the challenges faced by novice teachers. Results of two surveys administered to former graduate students indicated that many teachers experienced unexpected duties and lack of time to meet the needs of individual students. Many teachers expressed a lack of classroom materials to do their job effectively and they often felt isolated from other teachers. The teachers also expressed a lack of support from administration as being frustrating. Many teachers felt unprepared with the practical aspects of the job they had been hired for as their pre-service program did not introduce them to this side of education. Mentoring was also found to be lacking with many promised programs not being initiated. Some teachers did express support from colleagues, parents, and family and stated it was essential to their transition into teaching.

In a unique angle of research regarding administrator and teacher perspectives of the school environment, Shen, Leslie, Spybrook, and Ma (2012) focused their research on the effect of principal background and school processes on teacher job satisfaction. Elementary teachers were found to have the most job satisfaction, as well as teachers with more experience. Teachers with more advanced certification also experienced higher rates of satisfaction. School factors that positively affected job satisfaction were small class size and lower percentages of free and reduced lunch students. Shen et al. (2012) discovered that principals who had more experience in the current school led to higher teacher satisfaction levels, while these administrators' prior experiences as past department heads significantly reduced job satisfaction.

Additional factors that positively affected job satisfaction were teacher empowerment, positive student behavior, administrative support, staff collegiality, and good working conditions. These findings by Shen et al. (2012) strongly indicated that school processes have a much greater impact than factors such as administrative background on teacher's job satisfaction.

Summary

Research regarding perceptions and expectations focuses on communication between teachers and support systems such as administration or parents. Through this research, it is shown that the experiences teachers have with these support systems greatly affects them. Due to the weight these support systems carry it is imperative to include these factors when considering attrition and retention (Andrews, Gilbert, and Martin, 2007; Edgar, 2012; Olsen and Anderson, 2007; Roulston et al., 2005).

Career Cycles

Equally important to attrition research is career cycles, or life cycles of teachers that help determine the stages of teaching that an educator will experience in their career. Steffy & Wolfe (2001), for instance, described six phases of teaching. In the first phase, or novice phase, are pre-service teachers who have begun preparation for student teaching. This phase continues until the end of the student teaching experience. The second phase is apprentice learners, or teachers in their first few years of teaching. The third phase, known as the professional phase, is marked by a newfound self-confidence in the teacher where they are no longer trying to stay afloat

and begin to experiment with new strategies of instruction. The fourth phase is known as the expert phase and is reached when an educator consistently meets national standards without consciously focusing solely on these elements of instruction. The fifth phase is regarded as the distinguished phase and is when a teacher exceeds expectations and has become a driving force in their field. The final phase is known as emeritus and marks a lifetime of teaching followed by retirement (Steffy & Wolfe, 2001). By seeking to understand this model in addition to other models one may begin to pinpoint where in teachers' careers they are more prone to instances of attrition. One such study is by Eros (2011).

Eros (2011) reviewed Steffy and Wolfe's phases of teaching as well as various models such as Fessler and Christensen's 1992 eight-stage model (preservice, induction, competency building, enthusiastic/growing, career frustration, career stability, career wind-down, and career exit) or Huberman's 1993 seven-stage model (career entry, stabilization, experimentation and diversification, reassessment, serenity and relational distance, conservatism, and disengagement). Regardless of the model used, Eros suggested that personal and educational factors were driving forces for development in each stage (2011). Eros then focused on what he defined as the second stage of each model. Eros noted that common elements to each second stage teacher were an interest in their students and a need to see the bigger picture in education. Through this review, Eros consistently noted that many career cycles are cut short in

the first five years (2011). Through studies such as Miksza and Hime (2015), career paths were also researched with a focus on early career teachers.

Miksza and Hime (2015) examined career paths of undergraduate music education and performance alumni. To collect data for this study Miksza and Hime (2015) drew data from the 2010 national survey conducted by the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP). Results from the SNAAP survey revealed that 52.6% of education alumni found work and began their early teaching careers less than four months after graduation. Education alumni indicated their first job fit well with what they wanted to do 44.8% of the time. Overall, participants reported a lack of satisfaction with their income and career opportunities. Low levels of satisfaction were also reported for networking opportunities and career advising support during their time at their undergraduate institution.

Like Miksza and Hime (2015), Gonzalez (1995) also analyzed teachers' career decisions, but with a distinct focus on three types of factors: external, employment, and personal. Through an analysis of existing research, Gonzalez determined that economic trends, societal factors, and institutional factors were all external factors that caused attrition. Regarding employment factors, lack of administration support, lack of collegial and parental support, and lack of involvement in decision-making greatly affected teacher attrition. Alternatively, positive experiences with students, recognition from colleagues, parents, and administration were found to increase job satisfaction.

Important personal factors contributing to attrition were age, family factors such as marriage or children, or relocation.

In addition to these three factors, urban and rural settings were examined for environmental differences. Urban settings were found to cause teacher attrition due to limited resources, greater bureaucratic constraints, large class sizes, and students with behavioral problems. Rural schools on the other hand caused attrition based on low salary and benefits, multiple teaching assignments, and lack of control over school policy. Through this analysis, Gonzalez (1995) reveals not only teacher factors that can cause early career attrition but environmental factors that teachers face daily which greatly shape their career choices. By bearing in mind these factors, a focused understanding of attrition and retention of teachers can be possible.

Summary

Researchers investigating teacher career cycles often categorize teachers into phases or stages of their careers to better understand at which points teachers achieve certain marks of mastery. Many models exist, suggesting the complexity of the career life cycle, and Eros' (2011) review confirms similarities between each model. By examining these models regarding attrition, it becomes possible to determine how these factors may relate to retention as well.

Attrition and Mobility

Multiple researchers have examined the attrition, mobility of teachers, and teachers who stayed in their current position. This research bears importance as it can compare the three groupings of teachers and determine why they choose to either stay, move, or leave the field altogether. Though these research studies presented perspectives on attrition and mobility, important factors to consider when discussing each of the three groups becomes clear.

Gardner (2010) investigated data sets from the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey, or SASS, (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000) and compared this data with the 2000-2001 edition of the Teacher Follow up Survey (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001) with the intent to analyze the results regarding both public and private school teachers in a K-12 setting. Gardner found that teachers would move to other schools if the assignment was better or if there was dissatisfaction with current workplace conditions (2010). Gardner also identified a disparity between teachers who leave regarding sex, age, certification, and years of experience, among other factors. For example, Gardner found that older teachers with more degrees were less likely to leave their current teaching position and that male teachers were more affected by administrator and parent support than female teachers when choosing to leave teaching. Gardner suggested that these factors have a strong connection to not only attrition but mobility as well and suggested that examination of multiple

iterations of the SASS would provide a more comprehensive picture of attrition (2010).

Hancock (2008) created a study that predates Gardner's (2010) study, which used the same SASS data but focused on music educators specifically. Hancock (2008) examined the effects of various teacher characteristics, school conditions, teacher efficacy, and external support and remuneration in connection with music educators' chances of experiencing the effects of attrition and migration. Overall findings indicated seven percent of all teachers left and eight percent migrated in the SASS sample. Beginning teachers fared worse in that 20% left within the first three years, followed by an increase to 40-50% of the remaining beginning teachers in the first five years. In music, the overall trend is that nine percent would leave in the first five years. Hancock focused the analysis of the data regarding potential factors that could cause these rates of attrition in music educators. Age was the largest predictor of attrition, increasing odds by three times in younger teachers. Age was followed by private or public setting, extracurricular hours given, school concerns, administrator support, parental support, and salary satisfaction. Through this focus on potential contributing factors Hancock highlighted the complexity and multifaceted nature of this issue.

Madsen and Hancock (2002) focused their research on attrition with a concentration in the first ten years of teaching. The researchers found four categories that caused attrition were administrative support, parental support, financial issues,

and personal issues. A second phase of the study was initiated six years later when each participants' occupational status was determined using national and state music organization lists. The researchers found that attrition increased from 12.5% of the total participants to 24.3% of the total participants. Males' attrition rates increased from 14.9% at the time of the first phase to 31.3% at the time of the follow-up phase, while women's rates remained consistent. Madsen and Hancock noted lack of support as one of the most influential concerns with many teachers leaving due to unsupportive views of their music program in the school community.

Robinson (2010) examined teacher mobility from the lens of instrumental teachers moving to elementary general music. Robinson determined that primary reasons for moving from an instrumental position to an elementary position included a preference for working with young children, concerns of work/life balance based on band teaching demands, an aversion to the perceived culture of competition in the band realm, and a concern over perceived limitations of music teaching and learning in its current instrumental form. Robinson suggested that individual personalities are a large factor when educating upcoming music teachers to ensure the best fit in the current education system (2010). While mobility is unlike attrition in that the teacher continues teaching but in a different building or district, it is important to note that it also causes a similar effect to attrition in the school the teacher moved from. It creates a hole that needs to be filled by a new teacher and can affect the student's education

the same as if the teacher left teaching entirely. This mobility has also been observed as a research topic regarding string players.

Russell (2008) examined the rates of string teacher attrition based off the 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-up Survey (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). Russell noted that 84% of teachers remained in their school setting while 8% moved and 8% left teaching altogether, with these numbers showing signs of a continual increase (2008). Based on survey responses, teachers were mostly influenced in their decisions to stay, move, or leave based primarily on work culture and music education philosophy among a few other considerations. Russell then analyzed these factors to classify participants as either *stayers* or *movers/leavers*. The results strongly indicated that predicting stayers is easier than predicting movers or leavers. Russell also suggested that movers and leavers may turn into stayers when given opportunities for collaboration and decision-making participation (2008).

Shen (1997) compared teachers who voluntarily moved or left the field to stayers to highlight differences between the groups. To examine these groups Shen (1997) used the results of the 1992 Teacher Follow-Up Survey (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992). The variables affecting the stayers, movers, and leavers were grouped into three categories, consisting of personal characteristics, school characteristics, and perceptions. Shen (1997) found that stayers taught longer than movers or leavers, while leavers taught longer than movers in a single job. School characteristics revealed that movers and leavers were often in schools where most of

the teachers had less than three years' experience, many minority students, more students receiving free lunches, and a lower salary. Perceptions of the teachers who stayed focused more on the advantages of their job, often citing influence over school and teaching policies and helpful administration as major advantages (Shen, 1997). Overall these findings indicate that teachers with less experience will more often leave or move. Salary was found to be positively correlated to retention, and giving teachers some power over school and teaching policies was well received by teachers and helped increase retention.

Borman and Dowling (2008) did a meta-analysis consisting of 34 studies measuring 63 attrition moderators to seek what causes teacher attrition. The researchers found that teacher characteristics affecting attrition and retention were gender, age, marital status, school level taught, education level, experience, certification, ability/achievement, subject taught, and salary. School variables consisted of location, sector, enrollment, teacher support, and student population. The analysis of data showed gender playing an important role in attrition. Women were found to be 1.3 times more likely to leave than men. It was also shown that white teachers were 1.3 times more likely to leave than minority teachers. Older teachers were found more likely to stay with younger teachers being 5.32 times more likely to leave. When a teacher reached fifty-one years of age however, their odds of leaving were shown to sharply increase by 2.5 times that of teachers fifty or younger. Contrary to Hancock (2008) and Madsen and Hancock (2002), Borman and Dowling (2008)

found that teachers in their fifth or sixth year experience were more likely to leave teaching than teachers in their first five years. Elementary teachers were also found to be more likely to leave than other teachers at other levels. Regarding school setting, private school teachers experienced increased attrition rates than that of public school teachers. Administrative support was shown to reduce odds of attrition in all settings and school based teacher support was shown to further reduce this risk. Student characteristics had varying effects on attrition. Regarding low socio-economic status and poor achievement, attrition was increased, whereas high achievement was shown to decrease odds of attrition. Borman and Dowling's analysis revealed that teachers who are primarily female, white, young, and married with a child are the ones with the greatest odds of leaving. However, instances of school support and communication with administrators combatted attrition. Student factors such as achievement were also shown to carry great weight and have potential for creating both attrition and retention.

Like Gardner (2010), Ingersoll (2001) designed a study to examine teacher attrition using both the Schools and Staffing Survey and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000-2001). Using data obtained from the Bureau of National Affairs (1998), Ingersoll discerned that attrition per year is stable at around 11% in other fields outside of teaching, while teaching showed rates closer to 15%. In the analysis of attrition predictors, it was found that age played a significant role. In teachers thirty years or younger and teachers fifty-one years or

older the odds were found to be greater than middle-aged teachers. Small school size was found to increase attrition rates, however, for every 100 students gained that attrition chance dropped by 4%. Teacher support was a third factor affecting attrition in that for every instance a teacher received support by administration, teachers experiencing attrition dropped by 23%. Increased teacher decision-making had a similar effect on teacher attrition. Lower rates of student discipline problems also reduced attrition rates. Notably, job dissatisfaction accounted for 42% of all attrition cases in this study. Teachers' reasons for this dissatisfaction consisted of low salary, lack of administrative support, student discipline problems, and lack of influence on decision making.

Ingersoll (2002) also initiated a follow-up analysis to his previous study. In this follow-up examination, previous data were viewed from an organizational lens. This analysis revealed that 90% of new hires in the teaching field were replacements for recent leavers who did not retire. It was also determined that after the first year, 11% of beginning teachers will leave, after two years another 10% will leave, after three years the total percentage increases to 29%, and after five years this total percentage increases to 39%. The sources of this turnover were found to be cutbacks, school closings and reorganizations, personal reasons, job dissatisfaction caused by low salary, lack of administrative support, and other factors such as lack of influence.

Important to the attrition of teachers are the workplace conditions and other factors that affect their environment within the school systems. One study that

examined these processes is that of George, George, Gersten, and Grosenick (1995). In this research, George et al. (1995) focused on the working conditions that affected attrition and retention of special education teachers. Results revealed that 61% of potential leaver participants planned to look for other school-based positions in the future, such as being an administrator or counselor. An additional 39% of the potential leaver participants indicated a desire to pursue career options outside education. Overall, 38% of teachers reported feeling worn out and 25% stated that lack of support and understanding from administration were at the basis of their career choices (George et al., 1995). Participants in both stayer and leaver groups indicated their undergraduate schooling poorly prepared them for situations encountered daily and students acting out often made them think about future career choice changes. Support from colleagues, parents, and the community were examined as well. Overall, colleague support, parental support, and aid from community agencies were found to be the main concerns of those who had left teaching. Through this research, George et al. (1995) revealed that special education teachers have many factors that affect their decision-making. The most important factors discovered in this research were behavioral issues, lack of support on multiple fronts, and poor pre-professional preparation. These results resonate with other studies regarding general and music teachers in that lack of support is a common theme.

Another study involving workplace conditions and external factors is that of Harrell, Leavell, van Tassel, and McKee (2004). In this study, Harrell et al. focused

their research on attrition using four broad categories consisting of salary, students, collegial support, and workplace conditions. A survey of graduates from a five-year period revealed that 79.1% teachers continued teaching while 20.9% left teaching. Income was cited as the top reason for leaving teaching, followed by discipline, raising a family, and lastly problems with parents of students. An important finding of this study is that 72.5% mentioned lack of a mentor as a reason for leaving, while 74.4% cited problems with district administrators as a reason they also left. When asked about what would make them return to teaching, 39% stated higher income, 22% stated better administrative support, and 21% mentioned better workplace conditions. The remaining percentages were split between factors such as student behavior and parental support. Through this research, Harrell et al. (2004) revealed factors of attrition found in many other studies such as Gonzalez (1995), Shann (1998), and Ingersoll (2001). Unique to this research however is that it successfully revealed factors that could bring back teachers to a dwindling workforce if policies were implemented to address these factors.

Like the studies of George et al. (1995) and Harrell et al. (2004), Certo and Fox (2002) explored organizational factors and their effects on attrition and retention. To determine the important factors in this regard, focus groups were created from randomly selected elementary, middle, and special education teachers. The teachers reported staying in teaching for three reasons: commitment to teaching, quality administration, or positive relationships with colleagues. The administrative support

discussed was that of policies or practices implemented specifically in their buildings that allowed for environments where teachers thrived. Many focus group members made a point to state this kind of administrative support was rare. When asked about leaving, teachers indicated salary was a primary concern, other opportunities a close second, and building administration third. The administration was listed as a major factor as many teachers felt their colleagues were denied decision-making power and their time was unvalued. Lack of time for planning and completing work as well as class size were also stated as reasons for leaving during follow-up exiting teacher telephone interviews (Certo & Fox, 2002).

Summary

Current attrition research often focuses on trends of attrition such as Gardner (2010) and Hancock (2008). Through use of large data sets such as that of the SASS, estimates can be made about attrition rates so that these rates may be counteracted. By gathering such large samples of data, information on how attrition affects teachers may be gleaned to help promote more retention in the education field.

Retention

An additional component to consider regarding the effects of attrition is that of retention. While attrition and retention are similar in that both affect the rate at which the teacher population is influenced, retention has been shown to be caused by different conditions than those of attrition, and as such is looked at separately. In this

regard, there are many research studies that investigate teacher characteristics in relation to retention. Among them are the studies of Hughes (2012) and Scheib (2006).

Hughes (2012) focused on examining retention through teacher characteristics, school characteristics, organizational characteristics, and teacher efficacy. Of 789 participant surveys, 83.5% participants expressed a desire to stay in teaching until retirement, 6.91% wanted to advance in an educational setting, 3.5% wanted to move outside of education, 3.5% wanted to take care of family, and 2.4% specified other reasons for having to leave. Overall 16.3% had planned to leave prior to retirement. Hughes then used teacher characteristics in four separate models to predict retention rates, finding that overall major predictors were years of experience, SES, salary, workload, parents and students, and technology. Hughes also found that teachers in the first ten years were more likely to leave teaching, with teachers after ten years being three times as likely to stay. These numbers are roughly consistent with previous research (Eros, 2011; Gardner, 2010; Hancock, 2008). Satisfaction with workload and salary doubled retention rates. Parent and student support also increased retention rates. While Hughes' research was not focused on music education specifically, it strongly indicated that years of experience, parental and student support, salary, workload, SES, and technology all play pivotal roles in the retention of teachers in the field of education (Hughes, 2012).

Scheib (2006) analyzed existing literature in the realm of music education regarding retention. He begins by stating that, overall, 11.5% of arts and music

teachers moved in 2000-2001 for “better assignments,” with teachers also indicating better opportunities outside education (2006). Paired with research on burnout, job dissatisfaction, and teacher attrition, these movers led Scheib to discuss existing research regarding educational policy implications. He notes three factors that heavily influence teachers’ choices to stay or leave. One factor in this vein is known as human capital theory in which there is a positive correlation between investment in their career and the teacher’s willingness to stay. A second factor is alienation, in which findings indicated that the unique nature of the music educator often leads to isolation, which negatively impacts job satisfaction. Scheib discussed how the performance-centered identity most incoming music teachers have in current undergraduate institutions compounded this issue. This performance identity is often unsupported by the school system, which leads to a conflict between personal identity and the school-desired identity. As a third factor, teachers are also expected to fill a multitude of roles from conductor to administrator. Each role comes with a different set of expectations and often results in additional issues for the teacher when two or more of these roles have conflicting expectations. Scheib specifically noted an absence in current professional development regarding meeting the dual identity needs of art educators such as an artist-in residence program. Like Edgar (2012), Scheib suggested an increase in the level of communication practiced, to encourage retention.

Theobald (1990) analyzed variables within school districts such as the socio-economic status of students, their race, and overall working conditions as well as

salary, gender, and degree held that affected retention. The data spanned three school years from 1984-1987 and showed that women have higher attrition rates early in their careers (20's and 30's) than males but as the teachers reached age 45 men had slightly higher attrition rates. Notably, the researcher found no statistical difference between female teachers with and without graduate degrees, however males with graduate degrees were 50% more likely to leave teaching. Variables of age, years of experience, salary, and elementary teaching assignment were found to be statistically significant. Two additional factors that affected retention were the pupil-staff ratio and the assessed valuation per pupil. Interestingly, age was significant for retention regardless of gender while years' experience and an elementary placement were positively correlated for a stay decision for women. Salary was positively correlated with a stay decision for men (Theobald, 1990).

Like Scheib (2006), Chapman (1983) analyzed multiple studies regarding retention. This analysis differed however in that it focused on creating a model of variables that affected retention. Through this analysis, Chapman discovered four major categories that notably affected retention consisting of personal characteristics, teaching training and early teaching experience, professional and social integration into teaching, and career satisfaction. The analysis of personal characteristics revealed that gender was not directly related to retention and instead reacts to other variables such as career satisfaction. Women were consistently found to have more career satisfaction than men. Regarding socio-economic status, teachers who came from

lower socio-economic classes during childhood were found more likely to stay in teaching and define their job as successful. Race was an important variable as teachers who were of a different race than their administration and colleagues were more likely to leave teaching. In the category of teacher training, it was found that as teachers gained more education, their career mobility increased to match this new level. An additional factor affecting this was their initial commitment as they began their university training. More commitment at the start of training was significantly related to their persistence in teaching. The analysis of early teaching experience showed that many teachers felt unprepared due to educational gaps, which was noted to increase job dissatisfaction. In the realm of professional and social integration, four factors related significantly to retention professionally. These consisted of salary, assigned importance to the skills and accomplishments of the teacher, the extent to which they achieve something deemed important, and the extent to which they feel they have the proper skill set. Socially, teachers were found to consistently feel isolated from peers leading to greater turnover. It was also noted that a teacher who was married to another teacher was more likely to stay in teaching. The last category of career satisfaction was affected by gender, career persistence, self-rating of skills and accomplishments, and satisfaction in their general life.

Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2011) approached their research in retention through the effect of school contextual factors and how they affected teachers' decisions to stay in a school setting. To collect data, Boyd et al.

issued a survey in 2005 to all first-year teachers in New York City, then issued a follow-up survey in 2008 to teachers who had taken the first survey and stayed in teaching. This was paired with a separate survey issued to all teachers who had left teaching during 2004-2005 in New York City. Boyd et al. estimated the relationship between teacher and school characteristics and the teachers' retention. Overall, teachers were more likely to leave schools with a higher percentage of black and Hispanic students, and older teachers were more likely to leave the school. Important to note is that the administration factor was the only one of the six school factors to significantly predict retention. Teachers who were less satisfied with administration were much more likely to transfer or leave entirely. Alternatively, a teacher who perceived administration positively showed an increased tendency to stay by 44%. Regarding the survey group who left teaching, the researchers found that job dissatisfaction was the primary cause for their leave. Staggeringly, 40% of respondents in both the group that stayed and the group that left indicated job dissatisfaction as their primary consideration for leaving teaching, showing how imperative this factor is in influencing retention.

Another study regarding retention is that of Odell and Ferraro (1992). Through their research, they wanted to observe the effects having a mentor would have on a beginning teacher. Four years after the initial mentoring sessions, retention data were collected for the teachers. Results revealed a 4% attrition rate overall. Including participants who could not be contacted as part of the attrition rate bumped this

percentage to 16%. Attrition for female participants was determined to be 17% and was noticeably higher than the male rate of 6%, although this difference may be attributed to sample bias (Odell and Ferraro, 1992). In addition to this data collection, a twelve-question survey was sent to each participant to gauge their perceptions of mentor support and their plans for their teaching career. Seven percent predicted they would stop teaching in the next five years, with some stating they would go into administration or were unsure what they would do upon leaving. When asked how positively the mentoring affected their view of teaching on a 5-point scale, the participants indicated it greatly affected their view in a positive manner. Regarding how helpful the support was, Odell and Ferraro discovered that most participants found this support to be very helpful. Of the support these teachers received, they placed a large value on the instructional strategies and emotional support in their first years of teaching. Support in disciplining students was deemed less valuable and hardly any value was placed on support of managing the school day.

Like Odell and Ferraro (1992), Ingersoll and Smith (2004) created a study to investigate beginning teacher induction programs on a national level and determine the effects of receiving such assistance. The data for this study were drawn from the Schools and Staffing Survey and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000-2001). The data drawn from these sources focused strictly on beginning teachers resulting in a sample of 3,235 teachers. Numbers showed that eight out of every ten beginning teachers in the survey issued during 1999-2000 were

receiving some form of mentoring, however these systems in place varied widely per teacher. To measure the effects of the mentoring program on retention and attrition more accurately, background characteristics were controlled such as the field of teaching, gender, age, school sector, and population of the school. Ingersoll and Smith discovered that having a mentor in the same field, having common planning time with colleagues, regular collaboration, and having part in an external teacher network were the strongest factors affecting retention. The weakest factors found were those of a reduced teaching schedule, extra classroom assistance, and a reduced number of preparations. These findings strongly indicated that while offering support systems won't eliminate attrition rates, they still have a large impact on turning cases of potential attrition into retention.

Summary

Existing research on music teacher retention touches on many elements such as teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and predictors of retention such as age, gender, and support systems in the form of mentor programs or administrators (Boyd et al., 2011; Hughes, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Scheib, 2006). Additionally, SES and the student population were related to retention rates in some studies (Chapman, 1983; Theobald, 1990). While retention research focusing on strictly music is important, many research studies exist outside music. Through these studies additional viewpoints may be used to expand the music literature in this regard.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants (*N* = 83) were music education alumni from a mid-Atlantic university that graduated between 2001 and 2016. Participant ages spanned from 22 to 38 (*M* = 28.4, *SD* = 4.0). Overall 59 of the participants were female and 24 were male. Of the 83 initial teacher responses, only eight were no longer teaching. There were 43 teachers who had a four-year degree (51.8%), 37 (44.6%) had at least a master's degree, and three had above a master's degree (3.6%). While this is partially a convenience sample, these participants were chosen to represent a large cross-section of teaching experience. Appropriate IRB approval was gained before contacting participants (see Appendix A). An alumni email list was acquired through the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences.

Survey Construction

The survey consisted of 29 questions for participants designed to gather desired information while still being sensitive to time restrictions of the survey taker (Appendix B). Questions focused on topics of support, job responsibilities, class size, and other factors. Support from administration and parents was notable in studies such as Edgar (2010), Madsen & Hancock (2002), Gardner (2010), and Hancock (2008), and therefore was deemed important to include on the survey instrument. Other

questions regarding topics such as communication or expectations from administration were included based on the research of Edgar (2012), Hughes (2012), & Scheib (2006), as examination of these factors is currently limited in the field of music education research. Additionally, a question regarding peer support was added to include that element as well (George et al.,1995). Factors of job responsibility and class size were found in studies such as Gardner (2010), Hughes (2012), and Scheib (2006) and were therefore included to gauge how many classes were being taught by the participant (if they were a teacher), as well as how many students they have/had to provide a clearer picture of their overall workload. Demographic questions were of relation to attrition and retention in most of the research studies reviewed and were therefore taken into consideration when making the survey instrument (Edgar, 2012; Gardner, 2010; Hancock, 2008; Hughes, 2012; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Roulston et al., 2007; Scheib, 2006).

Pilot Test

A pilot test of the survey was administered to graduate students in a collegiate music education program (*N = 6)*. Participants completed the pilot test in about 10 minutes. To establish content validity for the survey, questions were chosen regarding teacher demographics, support systems, and organizational factors based on previous research on attrition, mobility, and retention. Face validity was established through conversations with pilot test participants. Through the pilot test, a need was determined to limit responses per participant to prevent duplicate submissions. The

logic used following the consent form was fixed to split respondents into teachers who had taught and those who hadn't. This was done in response to participant comments about this portion being absent or not working as intended. No other problems or issues were reported.

Procedure

After the pilot test, a list of alumni emails was input into the Qualtrics system to allow the survey to be sent out via email directly from Qualtrics. Participants received an email explaining why they had been chosen and provided details about the contents of the survey. If they chose to take part in the survey they would click a link provided at the bottom of the email. This link brought them to an electronic consent form at the beginning of the survey where they were fully informed of the survey and its contents, as well as being asked if they wished to continue. By clicking yes, they would begin the survey. Upon submission of their responses they would be informed that their responses had been collected and their link to the survey would become inactive allowing for only one response per participant. Settings on Qualtrics were set to ensure that all responses would be anonymous. The survey remained open for three weeks. After the first two weeks, a reminder email was sent to all participants. After the third week, the survey closed and responses were no longer accepted. Participants on average took 10 minutes to complete the survey.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive Results

Overall 310 surveys were sent out with a total of 96 survey results being collected, however nine were unfinished and four respondents had never taught music. These respondents were therefore excluded, leaving 83 complete responses for a usable response rate of 26.8%. Respondents were grouped based on their years of teaching experience into one of three groups. Thirty-four (41%) members taught less than five years, 33 (40%) members taught between five years and nine years, and 16 (19%) taught ten years or more (M = 5.9, SD = 3.6). 59 (71%) of participants were female and 24 (29%) of participants were male. Grade levels taught varied widely with teachers teaching K-12, college, and any mix between. The biggest group of teachers was the group who taught K-8 at 25 (30%) members, followed closely behind by 20 (24%) members teaching 9-12. The 5-8 group was next with 14 members (17%), 9 (11%) members taught K-12, 6 (7%) members taught K-4, 5 (6%) members taught grades 5-12, and 4 (5%) members taught college or K-4 and 9-12. The clear majority of teachers taught general music at 53 (64%) members, however this was often only part of their schedule with many teaching band or choir as well as other classes such as theory, history, other non-music courses such as science, and other music courses such as piano. Each teacher's workload varied widely and in one instance a teacher taught solely science. Itinerant teachers accounted for 23 (28%) of

the responses with class sizes ranging anywhere from one for an average small class size to 105 for a large average class size depending on the class being taught. These differences in class size are likely due to classes such as private lessons and large ensembles.

Perceptions of Support

Multiple-choice responses were converted to values on a scale of one to four with one being never/not at all important and four being always/extremely important. Overall, teachers indicated that the constructs of administrator support, teacher support, and parent support had varying degrees of importance. Administrator support, parent support and teacher support all were rated well above the 2.0 midpoint indicating that these constructs were all above moderate importance. Teacher support fell just below a 3.0 rating while parent and administrator ratings were above a 3.0 (Table 1). On average, administrator support was found to be the most important of the three constructs. In all participant response categories, other teachers accommodating for class schedules showed the lowest variance, which indicates that this factor was moderately important for most respondents and would have a bearing on how they perceived teacher support.

Table 1

Overall Participant Data

Measurement Question	*M*	*SD*
How often do/did you feel supported by administration?	3.02	.64

Do/did you feel your budget was sufficient in relation to other teachers?	2.90	.80
Do/did your administration communicate expectations clearly?	3.05	.68
Do/did your administration take your perspective into consideration?	2.88	.84
How important is/was administrator support to you?	3.30	.69
Do/did other teachers outside of a mentor program offer you help?	2.95	.88
Are/were other teachers accommodating to the music class schedule?	2.89	.57
Do/did other teachers show up to music events at your school?	2.51	.82
How important is/was teacher support to you?	2.96	.67
How often do/did parents voluntarily get involved in your program events?	2.70	.86
Do/did parents seek you out to discuss ways to get involved in the program?	2.27	.84
How often do/did parents positively respond to your requests for help?	3	.75
How important is/was parental support to you?	3.09	.75

Note. Values were determined through coding of participant multiple choice answers. 1= Never/Not at all Important, 2= Rarely/ Slightly Important, 3= Usually/ Very Important, and 4= Always/ Extremely Important.

A Kruskal-Wallis test was used to compare the teaching experience groups on responses of administrator, parent, and peer support. Results indicated a significant difference in perception of peer help outside of a mentor program $H(2)=20.016$, $p<.001$. Subsequent Mann-Whitney U tests indicated that teachers who taught less than five years were offered help more often than teachers who taught 5-9 years (U=266 $N_1=34$; $N_2=33$; $p<.001$, $r=.68$) and teachers who taught ten years or more (U=105 $N_1=34$; $N_2=15$; $p=.001$, $r=.70$). There was no difference between the 5-9 years' experience group and the 10 years or more experience group. To account for multiple comparisons, the Bonferroni adjustment was applied for an alpha level of .016. No

other significant differences were found between group responses based on years of teaching experience.

Responses were also compared based on grades taught. Because of the limited sample size and the unusual nature of their teaching assignments, the four participants who indicated they taught college and/or elementary and high school combined were excluded from this comparison. The remaining respondent groups consisted of K-4, 5-8, 9-12, K-8, and lastly K-12. These groups were chosen to help categorize responses based on typical work environments to which a music teacher would be exposed. A Kruskal-Wallis test indicated significant differences in smallest class size $H(5)=12.059$, $p<.05$; largest class size $H(5)=13.822$, $p<.05$; volunteering parents $H(5)=13.896$; $p<.05$; parents looking to get involved $H(5)=21.434$, $p=.001$; and the importance of parent involvement $H(5)=18.624$, $p<.05$. Subsequent Mann-Whitney U tests indicated that largest class size occurred more frequently for teachers who taught only high-school compared to the teachers who taught a combination of elementary and middle school ($U=56$ $N_1=20$; $N_2=15$; $p=.002$, $r=.54$). Another significant difference was the amount of parent volunteers for each group with the high school-only teachers getting parent volunteers more often than the elementary/middle teachers ($U=111$ $N_1=19$; $N_2=25$; $p=.001$, $r=.48$). A third significant difference was found in relation to parents seeking involvement. The high school-only teachers had parents seek involvement more often than the elementary/middle combination teachers ($U=81$ $N_1=19$; $N_2=25$; $p<.001$, $r=.59$). The final significant difference was found in

the importance of parent involvement with the high school-only group placing more importance on this involvement than the elementary/middle combination group (U=90 N_1=19; N_2=25; p<.001, r=.57). To account for multiple comparisons, the Bonferroni adjustment was applied for an alpha level of .003.

Further comparisons on responses of administrator, parent, and peer support were done based on teacher characteristics of gender, degree attained, and itinerant status as an educator. Mann-Whitney U tests indicated females rated administrator support as more important than males (U=500 N_1=59; N_2=22; p<.05, r=.36). Males were found to have parents volunteer to get involved in program events more frequently (U=412 N_1=59; N_2=22; p<.01, r=.42), and males were also found to be approached more often from parents seeking ways to get involved (U=385 N_1=59; N_2=22; p<.01, r=.47). Descriptive responses based on gender may be seen in Table 2. No other differences based on gender were found to be significant, and there were no significant differences found between degree attained or itinerant status in any of the participant responses.

Table 2

Gender differences

Measurement Question	Female *M*	*SD*	Male *M*	*SD*
Support Admin.	3.0	.66	3.1	.56
Budget Admin.	2.8	.83	3.2	.66
Communication Admin.	3.1	.63	2.9	.81
Perspective Admin.	2.8	.82	3.0	.84

Importance Admin.	3.4	.67	3.1	.68
Help Peer	2.8	.89	3.2	.85
Schedule Peer	2.8	.57	3.0	.49
Attend Peer	2.5	.86	2.5	.60
Importance Peer	3.1	.70	2.7	.48
Volunteer Parent	2.6	.82	3.1	.77
Seek Involvement Parent	2.1	.80	2.7	.77

Correlations were calculated to determine the overall relationship of each sub-category to the constructs of the Importance of Administration (see Table 3), the Importance of Parents (see Table 4), and the Importance of Peers (see Table 5). Each sub-category examined showed a positive relationship with its construct in varying degrees of magnitude. The sub-category that showed the strongest positive relationship with its construct was that of parents volunteering to get involved (see Table 3).

Table 3

Correlation to Importance of Administration

Measurement Question	Correlation	Significance
How often do/did you feel supported by administration	.45	<.001
Do/did you feel your budget was sufficient in relation to other teachers	.06	.607
Do/did your administration communicate expectations clearly	.38	<.001
Do/did your administration take your perspective into consideration	.39	<.001

Table 4

Correlation to Importance of Parent

Measurement Question	Correlation	Significance
How often do/did parents voluntarily get involved in your program events	.49	<.001
Do/did parents seek you out to discuss ways to get involved in the program	.46	<.001
How often do/did parents positively respond to your requests for help	.41	<.001

Table 5

Correlation to Importance of Peer

Measurement Question	Correlation	Significance
Do/did other teachers outside of a mentor program offer you help	.27	.015
Are/were other teachers accommodating to the music class schedule	.05	.648
Do/did other teachers show up to music events at your school	.23	.040

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The focus of this research was to examine teacher characteristics, job responsibilities and support systems in relation to job retention. Participant responses based on factors of gender, degree obtained, itinerant status, and years' teaching experience were compared to determine differences. Correlations were then calculated to determine relationships between examined factors and the constructs of the importance of administration, parent, and peer support.

Through the collection and analysis of the overall data, administrator support was the most important (M=3.30). These results are expected regarding the importance of parent and administrator support as they align with multiple existing studies such as Borman and Dowling (2008), Boyd et al. (2011), Certo and Fox (2002), Shann (1998), and Shen (1997). Like the results found in studies such as Edgar (2012), Gardner (2010), Hughes (2012), and Roulston et. al. (2007), many participants saw administrator support as the most important of the three regarding teacher retention. The likely reason for this rating is that first and foremost administrators are the ones who hire teachers. While administrators communicating with their teachers and taking perspectives into account are important, it is likely that the importance of these factors is due to the fact that administrators are the figures in charge.

Peer support was rated the least important construct (M=2.96). The environment experienced by teachers in the less than five-year group was different than the five to nine and ten or more years' experience groups as they were offered

more help outside of a mentor program more consistently. This finding is reflected in studies such as Andrews et al. (2007), and Odell & Ferraro (1992) as peer importance was deemed more important in the early teachers' groups of these studies. A possible explanation for the importance of peers is overall school environment. In a supportive school system, newer teachers are more likely to be offered help outside of a mentor program by more experienced teachers because they are new and may need the help. These more experienced teachers will seek out and help these new teachers without being prompted because they remember being new and were most likely helped during a time of need by a more experienced teacher. An additional finding regarding peer support is that 41 (49%) participants indicated that their peers either rarely or never showed up to musical events at their school. While this finding is certainly interesting and peers not showing up to events may influence the perception of support, this may not be the case for all participants.

Perhaps the most unique discovery from this research are the differences between the high-school only teacher group and the K-4, 5-8, 9-12, K-8, K-12 groups regarding overall school environment. Responses from the different categories of teachers indicated that the high-school only group experienced larger class sizes but also had a larger number of parent volunteers and parents looking to get involved. This parent involvement seemed to have a greater impact on these teachers' experiences in their school environment as the high-school only group rated parent involvement of higher importance in their experience. This finding is likely due to the fact that high school programs often have parent programs such as the band boosters and parent

teacher associations that will assist the band program with any needs it may have. This gives the parents involved in these programs more importance in the high school teachers' minds as the parents help the program run smoothly. These findings are important as they branch off in a new direction from the existing literature that was reviewed for this research and should certainly be considered for new research possibilities.

Accounting for the demographic questions explored in the research studies of Edgar (2012), Gardner (2010), Hancock (2008), Hughes (2012), Madsen & Hancock (2002), Roulston et al. (2007), and Scheib (2006), data were collected regarding the differences in responses based on gender. Two important distinctions were discovered from the participant responses. The first was that females indicated an overall greater importance of administrator support than did males, and the second was that males often had more parent volunteers. These findings are unexpected as they differ from studies such as that of Gardner (2010), in which males were found to be more affected by both parental and administrator support. This is an interesting finding in this research as no immediate explanation for the female rating of administration being higher was apparent. As there were less high school-only male teachers in this sample, males receiving more volunteers in this sample is also not immediately explainable. Regardless of which gender is more affected, however, these two variables appear influential when examining the retention of both genders.

Degree level obtained and itinerant status were found to have no significant impact on any of the participants in this study. These findings were unexpected as

degree level obtained consistently demonstrated an influence on retention and attrition, although the direction of this influence was inconsistent (Gardner, 2010; Krueger, 2000; Miller, Brownell, and Smith, 1999; Shen et al., 2012; Theobald, 1999). Perceptions of support had similar responses regardless of degree, with participants of all degree levels indicating perceptions of support that were never, rarely, usually or always present equally. This is likely due to the amount of retention responses from this participant group and their overall school environments. If the teachers are staying, then it is likely a good school environment. Perhaps with more participant responses from teachers who were no longer teaching, the findings regarding degree obtained and its effect on perceptions of support may have been found to have a deeper connection.

Limitations of the Study

Response rates in both the less than five years' experience group and five to nine years' experience group were almost identical. In the ten years or more group the amount of responses dropped by half. Due to the limited number of responses from participants no longer teaching, no comparisons could be made, resulting in no conclusive data on attrition rates between the three groups of teachers. The limited and unequal sample sizes required the use of nonparametric tests, excluding comparisons across variables to check for interaction effects. The sample size, as well as the participants being alumni from one university, also limit generalizability.

Suggestions for Future Research

In future research, a focus on obtaining more responses from teachers who left the profession would be helpful to determine the effect of each construct in relation to both attrition and retention. A similar spread of participants from beginning teachers to teachers with ten or more years of experience is suggested as it will help distribute responses and help provide data on which factors affect teachers as they progress through their careers. Given that the support systems remained above the midpoint for importance, they should be considered in future studies in this vein. Like studies done by Ingersoll and Smith (2004), Harrell et al. (2004), Borman and Bowling (2008), Boyd et al. (2011), and Hughes (2012), participants in the current study indicated that administrator support, peer support, and parent support all were important. As administrator support was deemed most important by participants, a deeper exploration into its overall effects on teacher attrition rates and teacher retention rates is certainly warranted. Additionally, future research could seek to examine differences in gender regarding administration ratings. Studies such as those done by Borman and Dowling (2008), as well as Boyd et al. (2011), examined administrative views regarding teacher attrition and retention, but the finding that females rated administrative support higher than males is unlike any finding in previous research reviewed for this study. Further investigation is warranted. Relationships between variables such as SES and school size were not examined in this study. However, it is likely such factors influenced these findings and could be pursued in future research.

Implications for Music Education

This research revealed several interesting discoveries regarding the constructs of administrator support, parent support, and peer support. Notably, it showed the influence administrators may have on teachers' experiences in their school environment. Most participants noted that this support was very important with females consistently rating it more important than males. These findings bear importance as administrators should be aware of the power they hold in shaping teachers' experiences, especially when interacting with female teachers. Through this research administrators may be made aware of their importance in teachers' careers and perhaps open more opportunity for communication with their teachers to help create an environment committed to working as a team that fosters teacher growth.

Equally important are teachers reaching out to newer teachers. Through this research, it was shown that teachers can have a significant impact on the experiences of teachers with less than five years' experience. This research may therefore provide guidance in getting more experienced teachers to reach out and help newer teachers during a time of transition and learning.

Additionally, this study has the potential to guide teachers to seek out and foster working relationships with parents at any level, bearing even greater importance for teachers involved in high school environments who have access to programs such as band boosters. These parents have the potential to be great assets to the teacher. It is important to open lines of communication and reach out to this support base.

This study sought to gauge the effect factors such as job responsibility, teacher expectations, and support systems had on retention rates of music teachers. Studies like this one are important as they can help to understand what leads to retention. It also has the potential to help determine factors that affect attrition so that they may be counteracted in future educational reform.

REFERENCES

Andrews, S. P., Gilbert, L. S., & Martin, E. P. (2007). The first years of teaching: Disparities in perceptions of support. *Action in Teacher Education, 28*, 4-13. doi:10.1080/01626620.2007.10463424

Borman, G. D., & Dowling, N. M. (2011). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, 78*, 367-409. doi:10.3102/0034654308321455

Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Ing, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2011). The influence of school administrators on teacher retention decisions. *American Educational Research Journal, 48*, 303–333. doi:10.3102/0002831210380788

Certo, J. L., & Fox, J. E. (2002). Retaining quality teachers. *The High School Journal, 86*, 57-75. doi:10.1353/hsj.2002.0015

Chapman, D. W. (1983). A model of the influences on teacher retention. *Journal of Teacher Education, 34*, 43-49.

Edgar, S. (2012). Communication of expectations between principals and entry-year instrumental music teachers: Implications for music teacher assessment. *Arts Education Policy Review, 113*, 136-146. doi:10.1080/10632913.2012.719426

Eros, J. (2011). The career cycle and the second stage of teaching: Implications for policy and professional development. *Arts Education Policy Review*, *112*, 65-70. doi:10.1080/10632913.2011.546683

Fantilli, R. D., & McDougall, D. E. (2009). A study of novice teachers: Challenges and supports in the first years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *25*, 814-825. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2009.02.021

Gardner, R. D. (2010). Should I stay or should I go? Factors that influence the retention, turnover, and attrition of K-12 music teachers in the United States. *Arts Education Policy Review*, *111*, 112-121. doi:10.1080/10632910903458896

George, L. N., George, M. P., Gersten, R., & Grosenick, J. K. (1995). To leave or to stay? An exploratory study of teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Remedial and Special Education*, *16*, 227-236. doi:10.1177/074193259501600406

Gonzalez, P. (1995). Factors that influence teacher attrition. *Networking System for Training Education Personnel*, *1*, 1-9.

Hancock, C. B. (2008). Music teachers at risk for attrition and migration: An analysis of the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *56*, 130-144. doi:10.1177/0022429408321635

Harrell, P., Leavell, A., van Tassel, F., & McKee, K. (2004). No teacher left behind: Results of a five-year study of teacher attrition. *Action in Teacher Education*, *26*, 47-59. doi:10.1080/01626620.2004.10463323

Hughes, G. D. (2012). Teacher characteristics, school characteristics, organizational characteristics, and teacher efficacy. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *105*, 245-255. doi:10.1080/00220671.2011.584922

Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, *38*, 499-534. doi:10.3102/00028312038003499

Ingersoll, R. M. (2002). The teacher shortage: A case of wrong diagnosis and wrong prescription. *NASSP Bulletin*, *86*, 16-31. doi:10.1177/019263650208663103

Ingersoll, R. M., & Smith, T. M. (2004). Do teacher induction and mentoring matter? *NASSP Bulletin*, *88*, 28-40. doi:10.1177/019263650408863803

Krueger, P. J. (2000). Beginning music teachers: Will they leave the profession? *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 19(1), 22-26. doi:10.1177/875512330001900105

Madsen, C. K., & Hancock, C. B. (2002). Support for music education: A case study of issues concerning teacher retention and attrition. *Arts Education Policy Review*, *104*, 19-24. doi:10.1080/10632910209600035

Miller, D. M., Brownell, M. T., & Smith, S. W. (1999). Factors that predict teachers staying in, leaving, or transferring from the special education classroom. *Exceptional Children*, *65*, 201-218. doi:10.1177/001440299906500206

Miksza, P., & Hime, L. (2015). Undergraduate music program alumni's career path, retrospective institutional satisfaction, and financial status. *Arts Education Policy Review*, *116*, 1-13. doi:10.1080/10632913.2014.945628

Odell, S. J., & Ferraro, D. P. (1992). Teacher mentoring and teacher retention. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *43*, 200-204. doi:10.1177/0022487192043003006

Olsen, B., & Anderson, L. (2007). Courses of action: A qualitative investigation into urban teacher retention and career development. *Urban Education*, *42*, 5-29. doi:10.1177/0042085906293923

Rhodes, C., Nevill, A., & Allan, J. (2004). Valuing and supporting teachers: A survey of teacher satisfaction, dissatisfaction, morale, and retention in an English local education authority. *Research in Education*, *71*(1), 67-80. doi:10.7227/RIE.71.7

Robinson, M. (2010). From the band room to the general music classroom: Why instrumentalists choose to teach general music. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, *185*, 33-48.

Roulston, K., Legette, R., & Womack, S. T. (2007). Beginning music teachers' perceptions of the transition from university to teaching in schools. *Music Education Research*, *7*, 59-82. doi:10.1080/14613800500042141

Russell, J. A. (2008). A discriminant analysis of the factors associated with the career plans of string music educators. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 56,* 204-219. doi:10.1177/0022429408326762

Scheib, J. W. (2006). Policy implications for teacher retention: Meeting the needs of the dual identities of arts educators. *Arts Education Policy Review, 107,* 5- 10. doi:10.3200/AEPR.107.6.5-10

Shen, J. (1997). Teacher retention and attrition in public schools: Evidence from SASS91. *The Journal of Educational Research, 91,* 81-88. doi:10.1080/00220679709597525

Shen, J., Leslie, J. M., Spybrook, J. K., & Ma, X. (2012). Are principal background and school processes related to teacher job satisfaction? A multilevel study using Schools and Staffing Survey 2003-04. *American Educational Research Journal, 49,* 200–230. doi:10.3102/0002831211419949

Steffy, B. E., & Wolfe, M. P. (2012). A life-cycle model for career teachers. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 38,* 16-19. doi:10.1080/00228958.2001.10518508

Theobald, N. D. (1989). An examination of the influence of personal, professional, and school district characteristics on public school teacher retention. *Economics of Education Review, 9,* 241-250. doi:10.1016/02727757(90)90005-P

Appendix A

IRB EXEMPTION LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE Research OFFICE

210 Hullihen Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551
Ph: 302/831-2136
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE:	October 14, 2016
TO:	Dylan Edwards
FROM:	University of Delaware IRB
STUDY TITLE:	[971711-1] The Face of Attrition
SUBMISSION TYPE:	New Project
ACTION:	DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE:	October 14, 2016
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Exemption category # *(2)*

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office. Please remember to notify us if you make any substantial changes to the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Farnese-McFarlane at [redacted] or [redacted]. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

- 1 -

Generated on IRBNet

Appendix B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Teacher Survey

Q1 Do you consent to taking this survey?
- ❍ Yes (5)
- ❍ No (6)

Q2 Are you currently teaching?
- ❍ Yes (1)
- ❍ No (2)

Q3 Have you ever taught?
- ❍ Yes (1)
- ❍ No (2)

Q4 How many years have you taught?

Q5 Are/were you itinerant?
- ❍ Yes (1)
- ❍ No (2)

Q6 How many periods are in a normal school day?

Q7 How many periods do/did you teach?

Q8 As an itinerant teacher please indicate the following information about the schools you teach/taught at. (If more schools are listed than what you teach/taught at please leave the extra(s) unmarked)

	Average class size for each school		# of periods for each school	
	Smallest avg. class size	Largest avg. class size	# of periods during the school day	# of periods you teach/taught at that school
School #1				
School #2				
School #3				
School #4				
School #5				
School #6				

Q9 What grade levels do/did you teach? Select all that apply:

- ❑ Elementary K-4 (1)
- ❑ Middle 5-8 (2)
- ❑ High 9-12 (3)
- ❑ College (4)

Q10 In what area(s) of music do/did your classes fall? Check all that apply:

- ❑ Aural skills (7)
- ❑ Band (2)
- ❑ Choir (4)
- ❑ General (1)
- ❑ History (6)
- ❑ Orchestra (3)
- ❑ Theory (5)
- ❑ Other (Music) (8) _____
- ❑ Other (Non-music classes) (9) _____

Q11 On average what is/was your smallest class size?

Q12 On average what is/was your largest class size?

Q13 How often do/did you feel supported by administration?
- ❍ Never (1)
- ❍ Rarely (2)
- ❍ Usually (3)
- ❍ Always (4)

Q14 Do/did you feel your budget was sufficient in relation to other teachers in the school?
- ❍ Never (1)
- ❍ Rarely (2)
- ❍ Usually (3)
- ❍ Always (4)

Q15 Do/did your administration communicate expectations clearly?
- ❍ Never (1)
- ❍ Rarely (2)
- ❍ Usually (3)
- ❍ Always (4)

Q16 Do/did your administration take your perspective into consideration when setting expectations?
- ❍ Never (1)
- ❍ Rarely (2)
- ❍ Usually (3)
- ❍ Always (4)

Q17 How important is/was administrator support to you?
- ❍ Not at all important (1)
- ❍ Slightly important (2)
- ❍ Very important (3)
- ❍ Extremely important (4)

Q18 Do/did other teachers outside of a mentor program offer you help during your transition into your career?
- ❍ Never (1)
- ❍ Rarely (2)
- ❍ Usually (3)
- ❍ Always (4)

Q19 Are/were other teachers accommodating to the music class schedule?
- ❍ Never (1)
- ❍ Rarely (2)
- ❍ Usually (3)
- ❍ Always (4)

Q20 Do/did other teachers show up to music events at your school?
- ❍ Never (1)
- ❍ Rarely (2)
- ❍ Usually (3)
- ❍ Always (4)

Q21 How important is/was teacher support to you?
- ❍ Not at all important (1)
- ❍ Slightly important (2)
- ❍ Very important (3)
- ❍ Extremely important (4)

Q22 How often do/did parents voluntarily get involved in your program events?
- ❍ Never (1)
- ❍ Rarely (2)
- ❍ Usually (3)
- ❍ Always (4)

Q23 Do/did parents seek you out to discuss ways to get involved in the program?
- ❍ Never (1)
- ❍ Rarely (2)
- ❍ Usually (3)
- ❍ Always (4)

Q24 How often do/did parents positively respond to your requests for help with program events?
- ❍ Never (1)
- ❍ Rarely (2)
- ❍ Usually (3)
- ❍ Always (4)

Q25 How important is/was parental support to you?
- ❍ Not at all important (1)
- ❍ Slightly important (2)
- ❍ Very important (3)
- ❍ Extremely important (4)

Q26 What is your gender?
- ❍ Male (1)
- ❍ Female (2)
- ❍ Choose not to answer (3)

Q27 How old are you?

Q28 What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- ❍ 2-year College degree (1)
- ❍ 4-year College degree (2)
- ❍ Masters degree (3)
- ❍ Doctoral degree (4)
- ❍ Other (5) _____

Q29 In what year did you graduate from your undergraduate college program?