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The Influences of a Mariachi Education on Student Perceptions of Academic Achievement, Academic Attainment, and Student Engagement

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THE INFLUENCES OF A MARIACHI EDUCATION
ON STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT,
ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT, AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

by

Victoria Lynn Smith

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Music Education

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Stockton, California

2018

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by

Victoria Lynn Smith

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to all of my students – past, present, and future – and to my nieces, Natalie and Amelia. You are the inspiration behind my purpose. Never let your dreams fall aside. Go forth and conquer the world.

Be brave. Be strong. Be courageous.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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To my friends and family who have felt my absence the last three years. Thank you for your love and support, even when I had to back out of our plans in order to work on more research or another paper.

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Natalie and Mia, LaLa is ready for some big adventures! The two of you inspire me to find the fun in every moment and to love completely. You are both my whole heart.

And, finally, to Niko. It's time to play, little man.

The Influences of a Mariachi Education
on Student Perceptions of Academic Achievement,
Academic Attainment, and Student Engagement

Abstract

by Victoria Lynn Smith

University of the Pacific
2018

The purpose of this research study is to examine the influences of mariachi education on student perceptions of their academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement. The study involved students attending schools in California, Oregon, and Texas with mariachi programs that consented to be a part of the study, whose districts approved their participation. The students were approached to participate in this study, as they are a part of their school's mariachi program in middle or high school throughout the Western half of the United States. A convergent parallel (mixed-methods) design and descriptive statistical analyses were used to investigate the influence of mariachi education on student perceptions of their academic achievement, academic attainment and student engagement. Within each strand, the three short-answer questions were analyzed for emergent themes.

Within this study, the results and their implications will be beneficial for both mariachi educators and music administrators as they begin to build a foundation of evidence as to the influences of mariachi education as they relate to the academic achievement, academic attainment, and engagement of students. Influenced by their

experience, fifty percent of participants identified mariachi as having a positive influence on their other classes, with almost another fifty percent acknowledging mariachi's influence on their grades. Additionally, the largest portion of respondents indicated mariachi influenced them to pursue music after high school, with almost ninety percent stating they will be graduating from high school; an increase of seventeen percent over the national average for Latinx students. Eighty-two percent of students indicated that mariachi helps them connect more with their friends, while over seventy-one percent of respondents stating that mariachi helps them connect with their family. Finally, the largest portion of participants (96.1%) indicated that mariachi enables them to express pride in being Latinx.

The study also provides a foundation for researchers who wish to continue to study the influences of mariachi education on academic achievement and attainment, as well as student engagement. Through a future doctoral dissertation, the researcher herself plans on further studying via statistical examination, influences of mariachi education on students, in comparison to students not involved in mariachi, with a focus on Latinx students.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Pursuing new methods of education is usually a response by educators to “cultural diversity and multicultural mandates” (Abril, 2009, p. 78). As Williams reported (2013), stress is placed on teachers and administration to improve achievement and engagement of students. A common reaction to such educational mandates is to focus on the repertoire of band, orchestra, or choir ensembles. Abril maintains that an increased care in the selection of music has been occurring with the objective to uphold an encouraging and accurate illustration of the culture’s music (Abril, 2006). Shehan (1988) poses a set of techniques when approaching the integrating of a multicultural, multiethnic curriculum with the traditional music curriculum.

1. Lessons in geography, including the study of cultural characteristics found within local communities, ethnic foods, and festivals.
2. Presentations of ethnic culture, including songs or recordings by local community members.
3. Museum visits.
4. Listening and discussing music of famous performers from the country being studied.
5. Composing music that can be used in performances of tales from culture being studied.
6. Examining similarities between ethnic instrument and Western instruments.
7. Examining and identifying ethnic elements in Western music (p. 25).

A second, more in-depth, solution is to move beyond just considering the repertoire and enclosing ways that “can be contextualized in the curriculum, but [that go] further by creating inquiry-based spaces where learners are invited to discuss, question and interrogate the music experience from different social and cultural positions” (Abril, 2009, p. 78). Through the inclusion of mariachi into the school music program, such methods can be contextualized.

Music teachers across the United States have come to view mariachi as a worthwhile educational genre, though they may themselves have little experience in the field. In reaction to seeing an increase in Latinx populations, music educators seek out new methods of supporting and encouraging their students through music and alternative ensembles. Latinx refers to those from South America, while removing gender as an identifier. Additionally, Hispanic is not generally used as it references the invasion and conquering of the Spaniards. The diversity of the United States’ population makes the inclusion of more alternative ensembles significant. Through the inclusion of mariachi into the school music program, such methods can be contextualized.

Music and Common Core Standards

With the introduction of the Common Core standards into the public education system in 2014, more emphasis was put on the integration of all subjects to ensure students were college and career ready (2017). Focused more on retaining and developing the skills and understandings necessary for mastery of the disciplines, Common Core established that “students need to ability to gather, comprehend,

evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze” (2017). In essence, students are no longer compelled to simply memorize facts, but they to create, synthesize, and evaluate throughout their educational experience.

In 2014, the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards also adopted a new set of music standards, which likewise promoted literacy and integration in the students (National Association for Music Educators, 2014). Emphasis was placed on creating, performing, and responding.

Students need to have experience in creating, to be successful musicians and to the successful 21st century citizens.

Students need to perform – as singers, as instrumentalists, and in their lives and careers.

Students need to respond to music, as well as to their culture, their community, and their colleagues (2014).

Between the two sets of standards, three themes are evident: creation, synthesis, and evaluate. Through the Units of Study, students are encouraged to create and produce to show their mastery in language arts and mathematics. The same is seen in the music standards, as students are inspired to compose and create their own music experience. Through synthesis and performance, students demonstrate their mastery to themselves and others. Finally, students evaluate and respond to the diversity of the classroom and society. Though the music standards reflect a need for diversity and an updated experience, changes are

needed in the music curricula to demonstrate changes and the global experience of the students.

A Call for New Music Curricula

As current students have grown up with a heavier presence of technology and social media, society has become more global. With this multicultural, multiethnic diversity, curriculum in general, music specifically in the case of this research, must be changed or adapted to meet this greater experience. Educators and those in the professional world of education have already begun to work to establish new curriculum at both the elementary/secondary stage, as well as the postsecondary university stage.

In her master's thesis, Fortune examined how the students from two of Seattle, Washington's public middle schools viewed and showed interest in music of different styles, from listening to performing (2011). A purpose of her study was to explore how lifelong lovers and players of music were created. Her study demonstrated that there was a distinct interest by the students of experiencing a wide variety of music and that the establishment of alternative ensembles such as Eclectic Strings could help foster a continuation of musicians beyond the classroom. With this in mind, Fortune concluded that a "redesigned curriculum and approach to instruction" was needed in Seattle and the American public school system. Though this study looked at the secondary level of instruction, this theme of change is also seen as necessary at the collegiate and university level.

Established by the President of the College Music Society, Patricia Shehan Campbell, in 2013, a task force was established with the specific purpose of clarifying what makes well-rounded musician, with recommendations as to how to achieve that at

the college and university level (Campbell, Myers, Sarath, Chattah, Higgins, Levine, Rudge, & Rice, 2014). Several overarching recommendations were given. Amongst the suggestions, the Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major (TFUMM) established a change in the music curriculum was necessary for:

Students to engage with music of diverse cultures...students must experience, through study *and* direct participation, music of diverse cultures, generations, and social contexts, and the primary locus of cultivation of a genuine, cross-cultural musical and social awareness is the infusion of diverse influences in the creative artistic voice (2014).

Challenges Facing Latinx Students

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (WHIEEH) was established in 1990 by President George H.B. Bush to address the educational inequalities in the Latinx community (2015). Their mission was “improving available of and access to high quality...early learning programs; increasing the number of Hispanic high school graduates; ensuring more Hispanics students enroll in and...complete college.” The commitment of the WHIEEH was to combat the low number of Latinx students graduating high school and advancing to a vocational or university.

In the 2014-2015 school year, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that the graduation rate for Latinx students in the United States was at seventy-eight percent; a difference of five percent in comparison to the overall graduation rate for the country (2017). The dropout rate for Latinx students in the same year was the highest of any ethnicity group at 9.2 percent, though this is a significant drop from 2000

when the dropout rate was 18.6 percent. Consequently, Latinx students only made up between eleven and sixteen percent of undergraduate students in the same year: private nonprofit four-year institutions (11%), private for-profit four-year institutions (15%), and public four-year institutions (16%).

In a report by the National Education Association (NEA), the unique challenges facing Latinx students were presented and educational strategies were discussed to address them. The organization reported that the challenges facing the students are founded in the high poverty rates of the Latinx community, the high percentage of students who do not speak English or speak it well, and the fact that forty percent of Latinx students are born outside of the United States (2006). However, the committee also listed and discussed educational methods and strategies to combat the challenges facing Latinx students: culturally-responsive teaching; cooperative learn; instructional conversations; cognitively-guided instruction, and technology-enriched instruction.

Statement of the Purpose

Therefore, the purpose of this research study is to examine the influence of mariachi education on student perceptions of their academic achievement, academic attainment, and their engagement at school. Academic achievement concerns the success of students with their education, including grades and test scores. Academic attainment refers to the ability of the students to establish and seek out goals for their future. Engagement for this research study is looking at the students' abilities to connect with their friends, family, and culture. In addition, the secondary purpose of this study was to begin to build a research-based foundation of evidence to support the

inclusion of mariachi education to increase academic achievement, academic attainment, and engagement of students.

Rationale for the Study

The importance of the study lay in the need for new research into the influences of mariachi education on academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement. The study's purpose is to add to the body of knowledge on mariachi music education. In addition, this study will serve as catalyst for additional examination by the researcher and others in the music education field, to focus more intently on student data through the examination of test scores and other indicators of academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement.

Research Questions

The purpose of the research study was to answer the following research questions:

1. What influence does a mariachi education have on student perception of academic achievement?
2. What influence does a mariachi education have on student perception of academic attainment?
3. What influence does a mariachi education have on student perception of engagement at school?
4. What influence does a mariachi education have on student perception of engagement/connection to family and heritage/culture?

Summary and Organization of the Study

Chapter One served as an introduction to the background to the problem, expounding on the development of mariachi music education and concerns of current music educators regarding the implementation of ensembles outside of the trilogy of music education: band, orchestra, and choir. Additionally, information regarding the research problem, statement of purpose, and the rationale for the study were examined. The chapter concluded with four research questions used to guide study of the influence of mariachi education on student perceptions of academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement at school.

Following this chapter, the rest of the study will be organized into four chapters: Chapter Two provides a review of the literature regarding music's influence on the whole child, music's influence on academic achievement, and an examination of multicultural/multiethnic music education; Chapter Three discusses the methodology employed by the research to collect and analyze the data, including the development of the questionnaire; Chapter Four will present the results of the study; and, finally, Chapter Five will include an interpretation and recommendations by the researcher for future research and study.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the influence of mariachi education on academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement. The researcher sought to collaborate with current scholarship on the influences and benefits of an integrated, multicultural/multiethnic curriculum. Researchers have provided evidence through comprehensive studies about the importance of the arts, specifically music, in the public school curriculum. Beyond music in the classroom, music integration with core subjects, or the importance of music in schools in general, mariachi music represents a culturally-responsive educational genre, by providing students who have not prospered in the traditional public school setting a motivation to succeed.

Music's Positive Influence on the Whole Child

On the National Association for Music Educators (NAfME), formerly the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), website lists an increasing, and ever updating, amount of evidence to provide proof and advocacy of the benefits of a music education. Following Bryant's (2014) research published on the NAfME site, several critical aspects exist that show the benefits a child's education in music, and the arts:

- Americans believe music to be part of a complete education.
- Music motivates students to attend and stay in school, helping to increase overall attendance.

- Music allows students to connect with others, classmates and peers – helping to decrease fighting and bullying.
- Music has a large and lasting influence on nonmusic academics, helping to achieve better and increase their cognitive abilities.
- Students of low socioeconomic status (SES) are helped by the inclusion and participation in a music program.
- The skills learned in music, such as discipline and dedication, help students far beyond the music classroom.

Beyond the research Bryan conducted, a numerous other investigations have been conducted to support these claims (Albright, 2011; Andrews, 1997; Angle, 2002; Bryant, 2014; Dublar-Moss, 2015; Eason & Johnson, 2013; Hixson, 2007; Horton, 2012; Kurt, 2010; McDaniel, 2011; Miller, 2013; Philpott & Spruce, 2012; Rossini, 2000; Zellner, 2011). Quantitative, statistical studies have gone on to provide supportive evidence.

Researchers, educators, and music advocates have provided evidence through comprehensive studies about the importance of the arts, specifically music, in the public school curriculum. Music aids in language development, increases IQ, teaches the brain to work harder, provides spatial-temporal skills, and improves test scores. As a multifaceted subject, music provides skills beyond simply playing music. Additionally, breathing and the mechanics of the instruments themselves, the way the instruments function, lend to an environment that teaches how science lends a better playing technique. The sheer physical connection students have with the instruments and with their own bodies enable a better connectedness to their physical world (Williams, 2016).

Through the discipline required to learn how to play an instrument or to sing, students dedicate hours of study and practice, creating a work ethic that sustains them in other subjects and other areas of life. The care and commitment required to play an instrument teaches responsibility and gives a sense of pride. With rhythmic study comes an increase in mathematical comprehension; the division of notes, for example, equal to the division of a fraction. Phrasing and structure of music contributes to students struggling with reading comprehension or those who are Latinx students, a venue for comprehension with the work they do in the classroom. In her presentation to the Stockton Unified School District, Williams discusses the importance of rhythm and keeping a steady beat to schoolchildren.

Specifically, children who cannot keep a steady beat (untimed) have problems reading, and move through space having or causing problems. Timed students are more successful. There appears to be a direct link between the abilities to keep a steady beat and reading competency (Williams, 2016).

In his article, noted music educator Tim Lautzenheiser (2011) states, that music educates students in creativity, communication, critical assessment, and commitment.

Creativity: Creativity is the source of all possibilities...The study of music supports wonderment, imagination, appreciation, and sensitivity. Music allows us to experience creativity as an inventive thinking style.

Communication: ...If we do not expose our students to music, we are depriving them of an array of personal understandings that cannot be found in any other part of the school curriculum.

Critical Assessment: ... the individual must be able to access the cognitive (factual) and affective (emotional) sides of the mind. Music is one of the few academic disciplines that develops this ability and reinforces learning patterns to allow for greater critical assessment.

Commitment: Success is not measured by what we start, but rather by what we complete. In music students are required to perform the entire composition from beginning to end; to complete the given task.

In his text expounding on the multiple ways a child learns, *Multiple Intelligences*, Howard Gardner (1993) dedicates a noteworthy section of his groundbreaking work to discussing the importance of music as one of the intelligences necessary for individual competence. Unlike other influences in the educational system that view music as an afterthought to a thorough education, Gardner expounds on the notion there are multiple component to a child's education, and that music is an essential part of that. He saw that the multiple intelligences of children do not lie just in the language arts and mathematics (linguistic and logical-mathematical) emphasized in schools, but includes musical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal/naturalistic intelligence (Anderson & Lawrence, 2010).

Music's Positive Influence on Academic Achievement

The impact of music on student achievement has been well documented, with a multitude of research papers on the subject. Active in the performing arts, music students

show a consistent growth in overall achievement. In 2013, the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, in collaboration with Music Makes Us, released a 52-page qualitative report that listed, in detail, the data from its students, showing the influence music had on test scores, attendance, GPA, on-time graduation rates, achievement in minority groups, as well as discipline referrals (Johnson & Eason, 2013). In every category, students who had participated in music for longer than one year had significant increases across the key indicators, with a decrease in the number of reported discipline referrals. As part of the document, the researchers broke down the students' ACT results in English and Mathematics by ethnicity. On the ACT-English, African-Americans scored over 2 points higher, Whites scored over 3, Latinos scored almost 1 ½, and Asian students scored almost one point. On the ACT-Mathematics, African-Americans scored almost a full point higher, Whites scored 2, Latinos scored almost 1, and Asian students scored 1 1/2 points (Eason & Johnson, 2013).

Literacy achievement is expanded with the increase in years of music studied. Studies show that students who participate in music over several years in performance ensembles demonstrate a marked increase towards literacy mastery (Kurt, 2010; Eason & Johnson, 2013). In her 2015 study of orchestra students, Dublar-Moss' analysis showed a significant difference in math and language arts between those students who studied music verses those had no instrumental music. Her study gauged the progress of students, from 3rd to 8th grade, who elected to join the orchestra program against those who had not. After six years, the students who remained in the music program scored consistently higher on their state tests. With music having such a direct influence on the lives of students, even those who have little feel the impact.

The benefits of a music education move across socioeconomic and ethnic borders. Students who are often left out because they cannot afford to participate can often find a place in a music ensemble. Instruments at most schools are checked out under the care and responsibility of the child and the child's family. To be trusted with something as precious as an instrument can change a child's viewpoint on his life. It gives him a sense of pride. The self-esteem children receive carries over into the classroom, giving students a reason to put effort into their work. In his 2011 study of Title I students, McDaniel studied the influence music has on students, regardless of demographics, by using two groups of students – those active in music and those who were not. Another study focusing on sixth grade African American students showed a marked increase in mathematics scores when those students also participated in a music instruction class (Miller, 2013).

Though some studies examine utilize a small sample of convenience for their experiments – sometimes only one or two classes under the direct instruction by the researcher – there exists evidence provided over a much broader sampling. Through an expansive study of over 35,000 10th and 11th grade students over two large districts in Texas, Robert Wayne Horton (2012) questioned music's influence over a larger number of individuals, studying test scores over mathematics and literature, while controlling for gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Across all categories measured, Horton's found that the scores of the thirty-five thousand 10th and 11th graders were statistically higher than their non-music peers.

Aside from language arts, mathematics test scores and academic achievement, music provides a situation for students to develop their critical thinking skills. Students

who spend multiple years in a music program develop the techniques needed to problem solve and are able to strategize outside of a classroom and away from filling in a bubble. In a 2011 study, Zellner used the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) to analyze the critical thinking skills of students who had been in music for five years and again for eight years. In his data collection, Zellner saw results as much as four times higher than students who did not take part in a music program. The results continued increasing the longer the student participated in music.

As academic achievement and test scores direct public policy, researchers and educators must look at new and different educational environments to provide the best situation for all students. Music, as well as the other fine and performing arts, provides paths to improving achievement in language arts and mathematics by providing brain training to the engaged students. In addition, music has the ability to deliver new pathways for students to understand and learn other content areas. According to the Maryland Fine Arts Education Instructional Tool Kit (2006), integrating across disciplines may have different forms depending on the needed outcomes:

- Incorporation of a content standard (i.e., learning outcome) from one content area to enhance that in another;
- Identification of universal themes and commonalities between and among content areas to enhance knowledge and skills in each;
- Application of skills, materials, and processes from one content area to create a product that will have meaningful application in another; and,
- Use of knowledge about something in one content area (declarative knowledge) to shape a creative product or process in another.

The Influence of Music Integration

While music does show a direct influence in the areas of Language Arts and Mathematics, the area that shows the greatest growth and the greatest potential for change in the music education world is through music integration. Music, in general, has a positive effect in all educational genres. However, when combined with reading, music shows a significant increase in reading scores when both instructional approaches are used (Andrews, 1997). When Albright (2011) used Baroque and Classical music in her classroom lesson plans as well as background music for math lessons, she saw a meaningful increase in the students' achievement on their math assessments. A more meaningful method to arts integration is to approach it as a co-equal learning environment. Instead of using art or music to supplement core subjects, providing equal emphasis in the learning environment shows great statistically significant results (Hixson, 2007).

However, if a sustainable integration of the arts is to occur, care must be taken to ensure the correct implementation. Appropriate and in-depth training in arts integration is the primary way of insuring the success of any program. According to Williams, teachers, once trained and given adequate support and materials, are more inclined to support any change, including the implementation of an arts integrated system. Williams goes on to claim that without the support and proper training, teachers will feel put upon with just one more idea from the administration to make their lives harder. However, if teachers are given the necessary tools, they will be more inclined to perform at their highest capabilities in a new teaching/learning environment. In her 2013 study, Sara Williams evaluated the positions of teachers who had participated in the 2013 Whole

School Summer Institute versus those who had not. Of those who received the training, participants were enthusiastic and well prepared to take on arts integration in their classrooms. In contrast, teachers who had not received that specialized training were loath to add something new to their already cumbersome workload.

As evidenced by the referenced works of this research paper, many studies have focused on and proven the benefits of music education on academic achievement. In contrast, a few findings do exist that provide contradictory results. In a 2015 presentation at the California All-State Music Education Conference by the researcher, Grand Prairie Fine Arts Academy was examined to gauge the influences of an arts-integrated school on academic achievement. GPFAA, in Grand Prairie, Texas, uses a dual-emphasis learning environment where the curriculum focuses upon both core subjects and the arts. In all classes, integration is important and key to the school's process. The study showed that a statistically significant difference was present when comparing the reading test scores of students enrolled in Grand Prairie Fine Arts Academy against the reading test scores of neighboring high schools. Though, in studying the Mathematics test scores, no statistically significant difference was found. However, the researcher believes further study may indicate an eventual increase in test scores across the curriculum and grade levels as the school is in its infancy and will possibly show a statistical difference in the future.

Some studies, though they start out with the hopes of providing more proof as to the efficacy of music on student achievement, end up providing data that suggests otherwise. Even if they do not support the positive influences of music, it is important still to examine the results and to describe possible reasons for them. In many cases, the

researchers realized they failed to account for the effectiveness of the testing used (Angle, 2002) or for the variability of their environment (Rossini, 2000). In the case of environment, Rossini noted that to ensure the consistent success of an integrated music program within the classroom, the classroom teachers must be invested in the venture. He found that once the influence of administration had waned and he no longer was in the classroom, the teachers rarely carried out the detailed lessons he provided to ensure the continued integration of music. In Angle's (2002) study, he acknowledged in his summary that the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) was perhaps not a good indicator for predicting passing science or math tests.

Aside from studies that reflect opposing views on the effect of music on academic achievement, ample evidence still exists that shows the growing and lasting effect the arts have in the academic environment. Music, specifically, benefits a wide range of facets within a student's life, academically, physically, and spiritually. One of the most impactful ways music has of creating a positive influence on students is through creating a culturally-responsive education using more alternative ensembles, such as mariachi.

Multicultural/Multiethnic Music Education

Beyond music in the classroom, music integration with core subjects, or the importance of music in schools in general, music represents a more culturally-responsive education genre, by providing students who have not prospered in the traditional public school setting a motivation to succeed. Miralis (2006) explores the use of multicultural education to effect change in education. "Most of the scholars from the field of education...further support the idea that multicultural education is concerned with the inequalities occurring inside and outside the school environment" (p. 4). As she

evaluates the differences between the terms ‘multicultural’ and ‘multiethnic,’ Miralis describes multiethnic education as an “education that incorporates ethnic content in the total curriculum of the school, from preschool through adult education” (p. 5). With this concept in mind, the use of an ethnic music education would find the same value of generating change and creating a school curriculum where “ethnic groups will no longer be viewed as separate, distinct, and inferior to the dominant group” (p. 5).

In Anderson and Campbell’s *Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education*, they posit that the benefits of a multicultural music education move beyond simply fostering “intercultural and interracial understanding” (p. 3). To nurture musical expression, students need to be exposed early on to the extreme diversity of the world’s music. The authors claim that this will lead to an expansion and development of their understanding of the limitless experiences music provides. Secondly, Anderson and Campbell affirm that the music of differing cultures has as much validity and complexity as Western cultures. By being exposed to such differences, students gain the understanding and knowledge to accept others from unique cultures and backgrounds. The third benefit is how the exposure to multiple cultures and their specific ways of structuring music develops the elasticity of students’ minds to understand form and theory, specifically how those forms may diverge from a traditional Western style of composition. Finally, one of the influences of a multicultural music education lies in the students’ musical flexibility or polymusicality. “They increase their ability to perform, listen intelligently to, and appreciate many types of music” (p. 3). With this multicultural music experience, students have a more complex grasp of the intricacies of their own music.

A rich, prosperous education, heedless of race and ethnicity, gender and social class, is at the core of a multicultural/multiethnic education (Henry, 2013). Similarly, Moore (2007) indicates a multicultural education is necessary as the demographics of the United States are rich in its diversity. Patricia Wheelhouse (2009) notes in her dissertation that state and national interest is increasing when considering the participation of those in minority groups (p. 1). In fact, it is the responsibility of educational assemblies at the local, state, and federal levels to “adapt and change” to help best serve the needs of the varied population (p. 2). Such recommendations and proposed changes to the curriculum were proposed at the 1967 Tanglewood Symposium. What came out of the conference was titled the Tanglewood Declaration. While the Tanglewood Symposium was held sixty years ago, the statements made by that counsel still hold true today. Notably, the second item in the declaration addresses the need for diverse musical opportunities.

Music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures belong in the curriculum.

The musical repertory should be expanded to involve music of our time in its rich variety, including currently popular teenage music and avant-garde music, American folk music, and the music of other cultures. (Choate, Fowler, Brown, & Wersen, 1967).

To deeply change and engage a student’s education, Kevin Mixon (2009) maintains that teachers must seek to provide musical opportunities, which connects more with what they have experienced. Mixon highly illuminating study does not limit culture just to a person’s heritage. He envelopes age, geography, economic class, and religion under the definition of culture. Mixon describes how a multicultural, or culturally-

responsive, experience can be achieved through a variety of conditions: use of multiple ethnicities when programming music; use of multiple sources for choosing music; and specialized and alternative ensembles, such as mariachi. Also called “the youth mariachi movement,” mariachi education enforces characteristics that educators view as not only important for students, but necessary: “connection, education, and [students’] personal best” (Peterson, 2015).

Mariachi as an Educational Genre

Either during school or after, participation in mariachi music serves as a vehicle to connect and engage Latinx students (Fogelquist, 2001). As programs expand across the United States, mariachi music is consistently being affirmed as a positive educational genre that connects not only students of Latinx ethnicity, but also those outside of that culture who find a meaningful connection to the passion represented. In her dissertation examining issues of identity and school success, Neshyba (2012) notes a distinction between students at risk who participated in extra-curricular activities, such as mariachi, and those who did not: the dropout rate was significantly lower for those participating in extra-curricular options (p. 4). Along a similar vein, Wheelhouse states, “minority students who choose to participate in school music programs are also high achievers in other academic areas” (p. 2).

As an alternative approach, the method of including mariachi as a meaningful educational genre can often be met with interest to skepticism (Colley, 2009). In her article regarding transforming the trilogy – band, orchestra, and choir – Colley discusses the journey schools are taking to move away from the traditional, toward more alternative ensembles using an instrumentation or instrumental style not found in Western schools

(p. 57). In truth, a push towards these more unconventional ensemble settings already exists, promoted through a changing demographic population and the deepening examination by ethnomusicologists. When approaching the implementation of a new method, specifically mariachi, educators must take care to approach the curriculum in a culturally-responsive manner.

Concerns and Solutions to Implementing Mariachi Curriculum

The diversity of the United States' population makes the inclusion of more alternative ensembles essential (Fogelquist, 2001). However, some lack of response from music teachers to this new blossoming of music education is evident through the absence of more alternative ensembles. Colley focuses the need for more culturally-responsive music education by stating, "If music making is to thrive in learning environments and *music* itself is to be valued as a school subject, the music education community would do well to expand its definition of *music ensembles* in teacher education programs" (p. 57).

Culturally-responsive teaching connects children education to their culturally diverse backgrounds. Abril (2009) summarizes culturally-responsive teaching to be "a concept that has brought awareness of the need for teachers to be sensitive and responsive to the cultures of their students" (p. 79). In response, the need for such ensembles has been established through all of the programs forming in numerous school districts in the United States, from Washington to Texas, from Kansas to New England (Sullivan, 2008, p. 55). Henry (2013) describes how culturally-responsive teaching allows students to relate to their teachers where there was only disconnect before.

Initial reactions among music teachers and arts administrators to the term *alternative* prefixed to *school ensembles* can range from enticing to

threatening, depending on one's experience, situation, and point of view (Colley, 2009).

Despite the benefits of including more culturally-responsive ensembles into music education, a few hurdles against their creation exist through resistance from teachers and disagreement from those in the mariachi performance field concerning the use of mariachi in traditional Western-style music classrooms. The concerns demonstrated by teachers can easily be addressed with the appropriate evidence.

First, some teachers, vested in the orchestra or wind ensemble genres, are concerned whether learning mariachi music will somehow negatively affect a student's ability to play classical music. Many professionals who perform in both mariachi groups and traditional orchestral ensembles see a genre agreement between the two genres in regards to the fundamental technique and style. A renowned mariachi performer, composer, and educator, Jeff Nevin remarks that "mariachi violinists should have the same good posture as [other] violinists, the same left-hand technique (good intonation, vibrato, etc.), they need to read well, etc." (as cited in Sullivan, 2008, p. 56). On occasion, violinists do use a heavier bow in mariachi, but that is only used in specific styles.

Mariachi trumpet technique, as with violin, is precisely aligned with the technique of classical players. Celebrated mariachi performer and educator Jose Hernandez began his training on the trumpet at the age of ten, studying with Dave Evans, currently a member of the brass faculty at the Conservatory of California State University, Long Beach. When leading his own trumpet masterclasses, Hernandez emphasizes the importance of good technique through warm-ups, lip flexibility, articulation exercises,

and work from H.L. Clarke's *Technical Studies for Trumpet*. During his 2015 trumpet masterclass, Hernandez discussed the differences between mariachi and classical trumpet performance, mainly surrounding the articulation of the syllable 'tat' to make crisper sounds in styles like the *ranchera* and the use of vibrato in mariachi trumpet, which are not found in classical performances. In his experience, students are flexible enough to be able to distinguish between the playing styles, even if they do need occasional reminders.

Secondly, to teach mariachi requires specialized content knowledge. As reported by Ricketts (2013), mariachi teachers should know, or at least be able to pronounce, Spanish, and they also need to know the technique and style of traditional mariachi instruments. In addition, instructors need to have a thorough "content knowledge of mariachi repertoire, mariachi history, and mariachi traditions." In order to fill in the lack of experience in the style, classically trained teachers can seek out professional development opportunities for the needed training. Two options for the crucial instruction are the National Mariachi Workshop for Music Educators and the Chacala Mariachi Institute, both of which are held in June.

The National Mariachi Workshop for Music Educators (<http://www.musicedconsultants.net/>) takes place at the end of June in Las Vegas, Nevada. The weeklong clinic is broken into three sections – Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Mariachi styles – and focuses on specific mariachi pedagogy across the grade levels on the different mariachi instruments, including voice. Occurring earlier in the month, the Chacala Mariachi Institute (<http://www.chacalamariachiinstitute.org>) holds their workshop in Chacala, Nayarit, Mexico. Like the previous clinic, Chacala Mariachi focuses on mariachi pedagogy and includes opportunities for participants to have

experience on the instruments. The two workshops are taught by leading mariachi educators and both focus on the promotion of culturally-responsive music education.

A third concern of music education professionals relates to the numbers of students available for participation in the music ensembles. Teachers of the trilogy have been seen to become territorial when recruitment for alternative ensembles begins. In his 2008 article, Patrick Sullivan quotes an interview with Mark Fogelquist, founder of two prosperous mariachi programs in Chula Vista, California and Wenatchee, Washington, saying “When I came to Chula Vista, one of the band teachers said, ‘Hey, if you take any of my students, I’ll break your legs’ ... ‘He said it with a laugh, but he was not kidding’” (p. 56). However, mariachi ensembles have been shown to recruit students who would otherwise not have an interest in music.

In his article, Keith Ballard (2002) summarizes how the use of mariachi in music education can be used to not only attract students not normally interested in joining band, orchestra, or mariachi, but can also be used to fight high student dropout rates. As the Latinx population rises, the draw of mariachi encourages those students to stay in school and continue with their education (Ballard, 2002). Sylvia Clark (2005), in her article about the use of mariachi music as a symbol of Mexican culture, also concludes “students not involved in traditional music programs” (p. 232) are the children who join mariachi, not taking away from the recruitment within the trilogy (band, orchestra, or choir). However, some crossover from ensemble to ensemble does occur as the interest in mariachi music goes beyond a traditional cultural barrier.

In an interview with author Daniel Sheehy (2006), Mark Fogelquist speaks to how it does not matter what style or ensembles the students perform in, but that they learn and

learn how to learn. The interviewee continues his praises of mariachi to describe how the students transform through their time in the mariachi ensembles, concluding by stating most of those students graduated from high school. In his book, *Mariachi music in America: experiencing music, expressing culture*, Sheehy outlines various points of mariachi: the history, the development of the modern mariachi, its social and economic values, and finally ending with how change, though inevitable, most do so with an eye for keeping what is at the core of mariachi unchanged. In fact, his text is written with designs to be a textbook for professional development training or collegiate training in mariachi, through an in-depth education and history.

Another challenge facing the inclusion of mariachi music in music education occurs in the setting of the standard classroom. When a large number of students learn a specific style of music – in this case, mariachi – the preservation of the tradition is at risk. In order to translate specific characteristics across the ensemble, certain techniques or style could see degradation from the tradition. For example, mariachis learn how to read music with a fixed do (C). If a leader tells the ensemble to play in re, the group would know Concert D for the key. However, Western music uses a movable do, where the doh moves up and down the staff, based on the key. Educators, facing the situation of utilizing either the fixed do or moveable do, will have to make the decision to either teach a single method or to possibly teach the students both ways; a possibly difficult challenge for younger players.

A final obstacle with mariachi as an educational genre concerns the professional mariachis, those who are steeped in the tradition of the folk music of Mexico. As mariachi in schools grows in popularity across the United States, it enters into the

Western method of classical learning. Some of the characteristics of mariachi music go against the customs and traditions found in that style of education. In a paper discussing mariachi as postmodern music education, doctoral student José Torres-Ramos (2014) discusses the paradox of mariachi within the concept of Western education: traditionally, “music making was collective, informal, and generationally passed down through oral transmission” (p. 11). Classical music – Western music – leans toward being focused on the author in written compositions with a more formal setting.

Traditionally an ensemble of men, young boys would sit at the feet of their fathers, grandfathers, and uncles, learning by ear the folk music of their heritage. Formal training was unheard of with this style. Additionally, mariachi ensembles did not perform traditional concerts, where a few songs were learned and presented. Instead, they learned hundreds of songs to play *al talón*, referring to “musicians soliciting song requests from patrons for a tip or fee, usually in a bar or restaurant venue” (Torres-Ramos, 2014). The more songs a mariachi knew, the more readily they would be able to perform what the customers demanded. Traditionally, mariachi is regarded as repertoire driven, something lacking the traditional Western music classroom. With this in mind, Torres-Ramos states, “Ear playing and memorization are the foundational skills for mariachi performance. Transposition skills and improvisation of ‘formulaic structures’ are essential to meet the expectation of the *al talón* context” (p. 18). As Western music characteristics have begun to pervade the ensembles, the emphasis put on participation in events such as competitions have caused many professional mariachis to worry that it may come at the expense of the tradition of mariachi.

Torres-Ramos likens the heightened importance put on winning mariachi competitions to the emphasis schools have put on testing. “The intensive focus on competitions mimics the high stakes testing culture in the core areas of education and excludes the socio-cultural diversity of ethnic folk music” (p. 20). Instead of working on the core of mariachi music, the tradition and techniques, more emphasis is put on extending the technical range of the instruments, the complexities of the harmonies of the ensemble, the demanding intricacies of the *armonia*’s strumming patterns.

In an interview with Daniel Sheehy (2006), Mariachi Cobre’s Randy Carrillo refers to the evolution of mariachi music as an enhanced version of the traditional:

We haven’t changed the core, the heart of a melody, or formats of certain songs. That tradition – the forms, the lyrics, all that – still are there, however, there are some very subtle harmonic devices...that make us have a little different sound. To me that’s more true to evolution than playing American music with this instrumentation (p. 80).

Whatever changes are employed, the core traditions of mariachi should remain intact. Nati Cano, creator of Los Camperos de Nati Cano, uses the metaphor of using salsa or ketchup on tacos.

There is a limit which says, “This just is not how it should be. It is now something else.” Here is how I put it. The taco, apart from the mariachi and tequila, is the worldwide image of Mexico, right? On the taco, put *salsa de tomate, salsa verde, salsa de chipotle*, put whatever salsa you like. But just don’t put ketchup” (Sheehy, 2006, p. 79).

Within this metaphor, Cano likens ketchup on tacos to the Westernization of mariachi music, which includes the utilization of classical music education techniques and structure, as well as the emphasis put on mariachi competitions.

Summary of Mariachi Music Education

Beyond the classroom, integration with core subjects, or the importance of the arts in schools in general, music represents a more culturally-responsive education subject, by providing students who have not prospered in the traditional public school setting motivation to succeed. Music teachers across the country have come to view mariachi as a worthwhile educational genre, though they may themselves have little experience in the field. These instructors are seeing an increase in Latinx populations. In reaction, they search out a new method of supporting and encouraging those populations through music, which leads them to mariachi. The diversity of the United States' population makes the inclusion of more alternative ensembles essential.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of the current investigation is to examine the influences of mariachi education on student perceptions of their academic achievement, academic attainment and student engagement. The students were selected to participate in the study because they are a part of their school's mariachi program in middle or high school in the Western half of the United States.

Participants

This study involved students attending grades 6th to 12th grades (Appendix L), from schools in California, Oregon, and Texas with mariachi programs that consented to be a part of the study, whose districts approved their participation. The students were approached to participate in this study because they are a part of their school's mariachi program in middle or high school in the Western half of the United States. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, students completed the questionnaire at home.

Through a comprehensive search of state music education websites, school district websites, online Google keyword searches, and email requests on behalf of the researcher by those in charge of mariachi education in their states or organizations, students were recruited from the following states in the Western half of the continental United States: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Despite the in-depth search, several states did not produce any active programs of mariachi education for the research to recruit: Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

From the list of active mariachi programs, the researcher contacted teachers listed as mariachi teachers through email (Appendix F). If the teacher or district responded, follow-up emails were sent for confirmation, as well as for demographics information (Appendix G and H). If an educator was not readily apparent, an email to the principal or music coordinator was sent out (Appendix I). Aside from the emails sent out on behalf of the research, 44 emails were conveyed to mariachi educators in the Western half of the United States. Of those as well as others who responded to the email requests from the leaders of mariachi education in their states or organizations, twenty-six teachers and administrators responded as of 10/15/16. Following the approval of the Institutional Review Board, the researcher began to apply for permission through each district to approach for participation. Of those applications, seven school districts approved the study moving forward to the students.

The schools included three high schools (hereby identified as H1, H2, and H3), two middle schools (M1 and M2), and one combination middle/high school (MH). The following demographics were examined from each school: location of school (state), school designation (urban, suburban, rural), number of students, Title 1 status, and percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch. Possessing a high number or percentage of students from low-income families, schools that are designated as Title 1 receive financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education.

The two middle schools were from California, both identified as urban, and both were Title 1 schools. M1 had seven hundred and fifty-one students, with over eighty percent (81.6%) receiving free or reduced lunch. M2 had one thousand, six hundred and

seventy-seven students, with over ninety percent (91.1%) qualifying for free or reduced lunch.

The three high schools were more varied in their demographics. Though both H1 and H2 were from Oregon and identified as suburban, H1 was not a Title 1 school, while H2 was. H1 had one thousand, six hundred and one students, with over thirty-six percent (36.1%) receiving free or reduced lunch. H2 had one thousand, five hundred and twenty students, with almost fifty percent (47.2%) receiving free or reduced lunch. From Texas, H3 was from an urban city and identified as a Title 1 school. It had two thousand and ninety students, but no information was available for the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch.

MH was a combination middle and high school, with grades 6 to 12. In a suburban city, it was not identified as Title 1 and had seven hundred and forty-one students. Like H3, MH did not provide the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch.

Measurement Instrument

Questionnaire development. A pool of items was developed through similarly designed, published research studies, through discussions with the researcher's advisor, as well as conversations with the mariachi education community. Items chosen were selected due to their relevance to the research study and modified to the needs of the researcher. The preliminary questionnaire was subjected to review by three music researchers in the fields of music education, music therapy, and music history – all of who suggested modifications to ensure the viability of the instrument being used (Appendix A).

Questionnaire description. The questionnaire was constructed and distributed using SurveyMonkey.com and consisted of seven pages. The survey was divided into three sections: Demographics (10), Multiple Choice (26), and Short Answer (3). All participants were given the option to skip any item listed. The first two pages contained a welcome message from the researcher and the passive parent/guardian consent (passive indicating a click of consent verses signing a release), with one page in English, the second in Spanish. The third page was the passive assent to be completed by the student participant, also a passive indication. Demographics consisted of items related to the student's musical instrument, their grade, how long they have been playing an instrument and playing in the mariachi ensemble. There was an optional item for the participants to list their school, but the responses were only used to monitor the schools/districts who were participating. The given answers were only seen by the researcher and were not used for analysis in the research.

The Multiple Choice statements consisted of Likert-style options for statements designed to discover student's belief in: their ability to do well in school, their ability to graduate, their ability to go to college or vocation school after high school, whether mariachi serves as motivation for attending school, and how mariachi relates to the rest of their life. The final Short Answer section allowed the students to put in their own words how mariachi impacts their lives. The questions featured responses to the following: why did they join mariachi and what they enjoyed about it; what appeals to being a part of a mariachi ensemble and how it feels to be a part of one; how has mariachi affected school life (grades, motivation, relationships) and home life; how participating in mariachi helps to express pride in being Latinx or how the cultural values influences them (in the cases

where they are not Hispanic); what their goals are; and how mariachi has influenced them overall.

Data Collection and Analyses

Fieldwork for the study was conducted from April to May 2017. Eligible participants were given the link to the survey through a forwarded email from the researcher via their music teacher or by a printed introduction also distributed by their music teacher, which contained the link to the survey.

The researcher used descriptive statistics for the development of the questionnaire and the examination of the subsequent results. Descriptive research is used to describe *what is* and is used to “focus in...on prevailing conditions in music or musical situations or on how a person or group behaves in a present musical situation” (Yarbrough, 2009, p. 110). Through the investigation of other questionnaires that examined a similar vein of research and analysis, the investigator cultivated a series of questions that were designed to elicit responses from the participants that would allow an examination of the influences mariachi had upon students. At the conclusion of the questionnaires, the researcher gathered the responses to interpret the results by the use of frequency distributions were employed to see the distribution of scores (Patten, 2012). Utilizing those distributions, the researcher was able to draw conclusions from the analysis.

Furthermore, Convergent Parallel Design, a mixed methods approach, was performed within the study, which “results in data that provide a more complete understanding of a phenomenon by combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data” (Burns & Masko, 2016, p. 602). Convergent Parallel Design is useful when both quantitative and qualitative data is collected at the same time. The two sets of

data are first analyzed by each strand – in the case of this study, the three research questions - then combined in the final explanation. In Chapter 5, the researcher discusses the examination done by studying the correlation between the data gathered in the distribution scores, as well as the written responses of the short answer section, where the researcher examined and extracted common themes within the participants' responses.

Role of the Researcher

When Ms. Smith began teaching in her last school district, she noticed a lack of connection between the Latinx students and the music being taught. While they loved being in band or orchestra, they did not engage at a level as other students. In order to reach these students, the researcher sought out alternative methods to create more culturally-responsive opportunities. This search led her to the National Mariachi Workshop for Educators; a conference she has attended for the last five years, with the sixth time this summer. The workshop provided her the opportunity to train with some of the top mariachi educators in the country, including Jose Hernandez, the founder and director of Sol de Mexico.

Through her work at the National Mariachi Workshop for Educators conference, subsequent training with professional mariachi educators, as well as several discussions with José Hernández, the founder of Sol de México, and Marcia Neel, the President and Founder of Music Consultants, Inc., the researcher decided to contribute to the body of research and establishment of mariachi as a worthwhile music education genre. The research in the topic is presented in this research.

Assumptions

As there are limits to the range of the study's access to respondents, certain assumptions are acknowledged. For this study, the researcher assumes that participants are able to read and understand the Student Assent Form and the Questionnaire. This study also assumes the parents/guardians of the participants are able to read and understand the Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form, in either English or Spanish. For the questionnaire, the study assumes participants have access to the Internet and SurveyMonkey in order to complete the questionnaire. This study assumes participants will answer honestly and truthfully. Finally, the researcher will have minimal contact with participants to ensure there is no outside influence.

Delimitations

Existing as a means of focusing the study, delimitations are established before beginning (Pyrzczak, 2000). To ensure that the findings were extended to the population most appropriate to the study, delimitations were established. The researcher established that participants were members of a mariachi ensemble at their school. Secondly, the researcher established that participants were studying mariachi music at the time they completed the survey. Finally, the researcher established mariachi programs were found through searches of state music educator sites, searches of school districts, and through members active in the mariachi community.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this study is to examine the influences of mariachi education on student perceptions of their academic achievement, academic attainment and student engagement. The study involved students attending schools in California, Oregon, and Texas with mariachi programs that consented to be a part of the study, whose districts approved their participation. The students were approached to participate in this study because they are a part of their school's mariachi program in middle or high school in the Western half of the United States. For the length of time needed, participants completed the questionnaire in an average of 10 minutes, 7 seconds ($M = 607.07$ s; $SD = 309.69$ s or 5 m, 10 s).

Results will be presented in this chapter, including an analysis of the data. Analysis of the data will be comprised of: (a) descriptive statistics used in demographic section including grade, ethnicity, years in music, years in mariachi, what instrument(s) they play; (b) inferential statistics to compare the independent variables to the dependent variables on the questionnaire; and (c) results of the three short answer, open-ended questions. The data were collected by the researcher for statistical analysis through a questionnaire constructed using SurveyMonkey.com. Items were specifically designed for their relevance to the research study and modified to the needs of the researcher. Not all items from the survey will be reported out in Chapter 4, but are reported out in Appendices L, M, and N.

Demographics

Demographics consisted of items regarding the student's musical instrument, how long they have been playing an instrument, and playing in the mariachi ensemble. There was an additional optional item for the participants to list their school, but the responses were only used to monitor the schools/districts who were participating. The given answers were only seen by the researcher and were not used for analysis in the research.

Ethnicity and culture. Ethnicity and culture were divided into seven sections, with students able to choose multiple choices in order to thoroughly answer their heritage. Five participants chose to skip this item. The majority of participants selected Latino/Latina or a combination of Latino/Latina with another ethnicity/culture, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Item 3: What is your ethnicity/culture?

	<i>n</i> *	%
Ethnicity/Culture of Respondents		
Latino/Latina	72	91.4
White/Caucasian	7	8.86
African-American/Black	2	2.53
Asian	3	3.80
American Indian/Native	1	1.27
American		
Alaskan Native	0	0.00
Pacific Islander	0	0.00

**N* = 79

Musical instrument. The fourth item examined the different instrumentation of music ensembles. Specifically, the researcher wished to see if participants learned and performed on multiple instruments. Of the eighty-three respondents, one person having skipped, several students selected more than one instrument.

The instruments with the largest representation for respondents were the guitar (38.5%), violin (30.12%), trumpet (19.28%), guitarrón (15.66%), and the vihuela (10.48%), as seen in Table 2. Five respondents wrote in additional instruments the researcher did not add in the list: guitarra de golpe ($n = 3$) and voice ($n = 2$). As the options were not there and may not have been apparent to most of the participants, the researcher did not factor in those responses within the analysis. Of the eighty-four responses, twenty-two participants (26.2%) indicated that they played on more than one instrument.

Table 2

*Item 4: What instrument do you play? (Please choose all that apply).
(Instrument choices with no responses have been removed.)*

	<i>n</i> *	%
Instrument Choice		
Flute	4	4.82
Oboe	1	1.20
Clarinet	2	2.41
Alto Saxophone	1	1.20
Trumpet	16	19.28
Percussion	2	2.41
Piano	2	2.41
Violin	25	30.12
Viola	2	2.41
Cello	2	2.41
Harp	5	6.02
Vihuela	9	10.84
Guitar	32	38.55
Guitarrón	13	15.66

* $N = 83$

Music class choices. To further explore the variety of performance opportunities the respondents had joined, Item 5 asked participants to choose what music classes in which they were enrolled. The researcher wished to examine if the students were joining

a multitude of music offerings. No respondent opted to skip this item. No additional class choices were entered into the comments section.

Table 3

Item 5: Please select your music class. (Choose all that may apply).

	<i>n</i> *	%
Music Class Choice		
Band	11	13.10
Orchestra	10	11.90
Mariachi	81	96.43
Jazz Band	0	0.00
Guitar	6	7.14

**N* = 84

Length of time in mariachi. As seen in Table 8, the students' length of time in mariachi ranged from first year players to those playing an instrument for more than four years. One respondent skipped the item. The mean of the students' length of time in mariachi was 3.35 (*SD* = 1.54).

Table 4

Item 9: If you are in a mariachi class, how long have you been playing mariachi?

	<i>n</i> *	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	%
Length of Time in Mariachi				
Less than 1 year	14	3.34	1.54	16.87
1 year	16	3.34	1.54	19.28
2 years	11	3.34	1.54	13.25
3 years	11	3.34	1.54	13.25
4+ years	31	3.34	1.54	37.35

**N* = 84

Time of day for mariachi. Students were able to select all or none of the following: Before School, During School, and After School. All participants provided a response, as seen in Table 5.

Table 5

Item 10: My mariachi class is: (Please choose all that may apply).

	<i>n</i> *	%
Class Time		
Before School	0	0.00
During School	71	84.25
After School	27	32.14

**N* = 84

Research Questions

The Multiple Choice statements consisted of Likert-style options for statements designed to discover student's perception in the following three strands: Strand 1, the influence of mariachi education on their academic achievement; Strand 2, the influence of mariachi education on their academic attainment; and Strand 3, the influence of mariachi education on their engagement. Though the majority of the statements related to only one, two statements (Item 36 and Item 38) were applicable to all three strands. Item 36 will only be reported out in Strand 1, though a more thorough discussion will happen in Chapter 5. As it differs in significance to each Research Question, Item 38 will be reported out for each Strand. Not all items from the survey will be reported out in Chapter 4, but will be used in further discussion for future research.

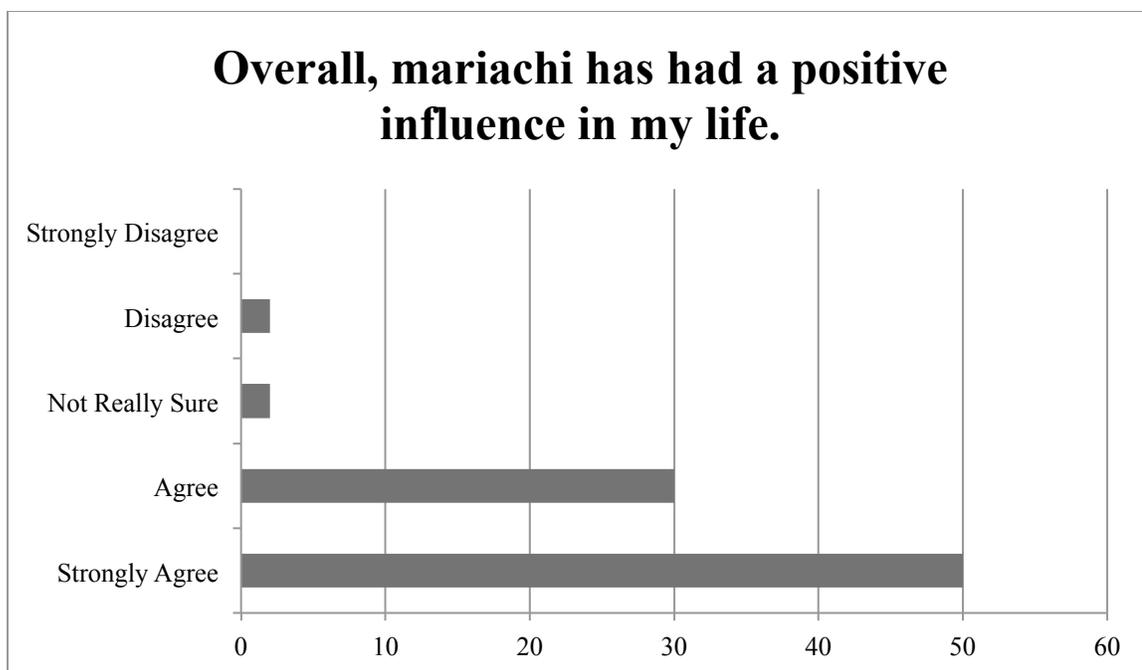


Figure 1. Frequency distribution of Item 36: Overall, mariachi has had a positive influence in my life.

Research Question 1: What Influence Does a Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Academic Achievement?

In Research Question 1, The Influence of Mariachi Education on Student Perception of Their Academic Achievement, the statements were designed for respondents to consider the impact the membership in a mariachi ensemble has on their academic achievement.

Item 11: I think I will do well in school this year. Designed to examine respondents' perception on how well they will do with academic achievement, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. No participant skipped the item.

Table 6

Item 11: I think I will do well in school this year.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	30	35.71
Agree	45	53.57
Not Really Sure	8	9.52
Disagree	1	1.19
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 84

Item 26: Mariachi helps me in my other classes at school. Designed to examine their perception how mariachi helps them in other subjects at school, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. No respondent skipped the item.

Table 7

Item 26: Mariachi helps me in my other classes at school.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	17	20.24
Agree	25	29.76
Not Really Sure	33	39.29
Disagree	8	9.52
Strongly Disagree	1	1.19

**N* = 84

Item 27: I believe mariachi has helped me with my grades in school. Designed to examine their perception how mariachi helps their grades at school, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. One respondent skipped the item.

Table 8

Item 27: I believe mariachi has helped me with my grades in school.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	22	26.51
Agree	20	24.10
Not Really Sure	33	39.76
Disagree	7	8.43
Strongly Disagree	1	1.20

**N* = 83

Item 32: Mariachi has helped me to become more disciplined. Designed to examine their perception on how mariachi helps teach discipline, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. One respondent skipped the item.

Table 9

Item 32: Mariachi has helped me to become more disciplined.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	28	33.73
Agree	43	51.81
Not Really Sure	9	10.84
Disagree	2	2.41
Strongly Disagree	1	1.20

**N* = 83

Item 36: Overall, mariachi has had a positive influence in my life. Designed to examine their perception on the overall influence of mariachi on their life, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. No respondent skipped the item.

Table 10

Item 36: Overall, mariachi has had a positive influence in my life.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	50	59.52
Agree	30	36.59
Not Really Sure	2	2.38
Disagree	2	2.38
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 84

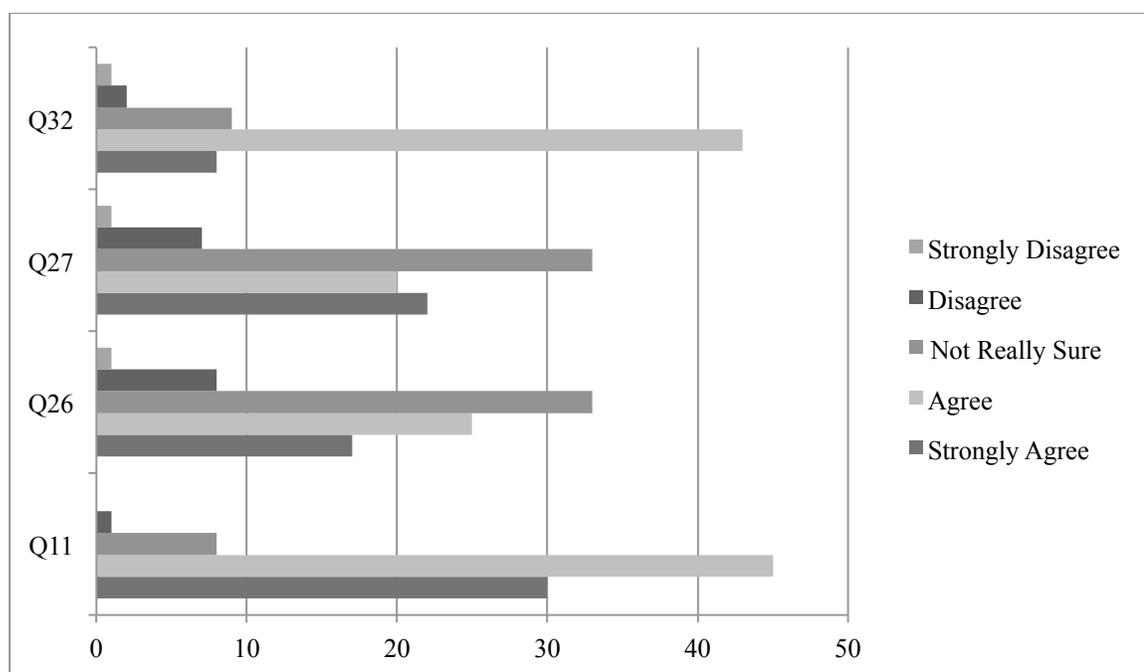


Figure 2. Frequency distribution of items relating to Research Question 1: *What Influence Does Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Academic Achievement?*

Item 38: How has playing in mariachi influenced your life at school? This item was presented as an open-answer question in the final section of the questionnaire. Of the eighty-four respondents, seventy-six answered this question, with eight choosing

to skip. The researcher coded the responses, looking for keywords and trends in the provided phrasing. As shown in Table 15, the most frequently used words or phrases were: Friends, Fun, Love, Connect/Connection, Grades, Discipline, Helped Me, and Excite.

Table 11

Item 38: How has playing in mariachi influenced your life at school?

	<i>n</i> *	%
Frequently Used Words		
Friends	12	15.8
Fun	3	4.0
Love	2	2.6
Connect/Connection	6	7.9
Grades	6	7.9
Discipline	2	2.6
Helped Me	12	15.8
Excite	2	2.6
Academics	2	2.6

**N* = 76

Within the quotes, any misspellings, grammar issues, or punctuation problems are kept by the researcher as they appear in the responses left by the participants to keep true to their intent.

In relation to Research Question 1, two themes were prevalent in the responses: Helped Me and Grades (Appendix O). 15.8% of the responses for Item 38 referenced how being in a mariachi ensemble has helped them. For Item 38, 7.9% of the responses referenced how their grades or school was affected by being in a mariachi ensemble. It is also useful to note that two other themes produced responses that are similar to the Grade theme: Academics and Discipline.

Research Question 2: What Influence Does Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Academic Attainment?

In Research Question 2, The Influence of Mariachi Education on Student Perception of Their Academic Attainment, the statements were designed for respondents to consider the impact the membership in a mariachi ensemble has on their academic attainment.

Item 12: I believe that I will graduate high school. Designed to examine their perception on the probability they will graduate from high school, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. No respondent skipped the item.

Table 12

Item 12: I believe that I will graduate high school.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	58	69.05
Agree	25	29.76
Not Really Sure	1	1.19
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 84

Item 13: I believe that I will go to college or a vocational school after high school. Designed to examine their perception on the probability they will attend a college or vocational school after high school, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. One respondent skipped the item.

Table 13

Item 13: I believe that I will go to college or a vocational school after high school.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	40	48.19
Agree	27	32.53
Not Really Sure	15	18.07
Disagree	1	1.20
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 83

Item 33: I believe mariachi has helped prepare me for the future. Designed to examine their perception on how mariachi helps prepare them for the future, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Two respondents skipped the item.

Table 14

Item 33: I believe mariachi has helped prepare me for the future.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	25	30.49
Agree	35	42.68
Not Really Sure	19	23.17
Disagree	2	2.44
Strongly Disagree	1	1.22

**N* = 82

Item 34: My mariachi class has influenced me to pursue music after I graduate. Designed to examine their perception on how mariachi has influenced them to pursue music after they graduate from high school, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. One respondent skipped the item.

Table 15

Item 34: My mariachi class has influenced me to pursue music after I graduate.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	19	22.89
Agree	33	39.76
Not Really Sure	22	26.51
Disagree	8	9.64
Strongly Disagree	1	1.20

**N* = 83

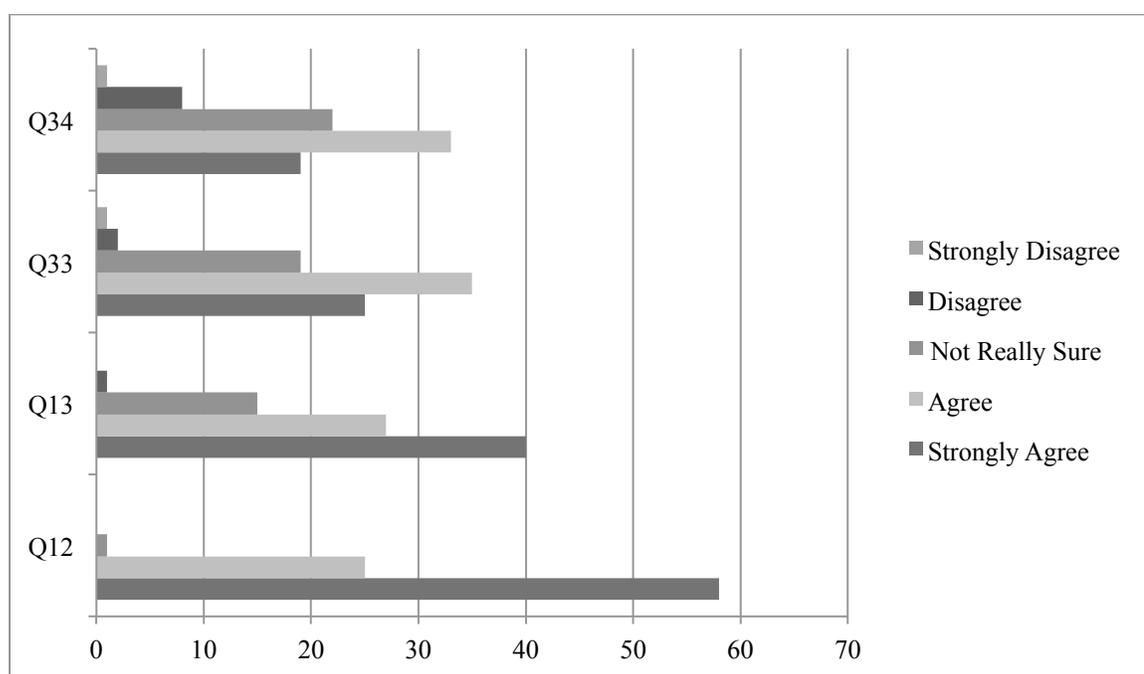


Figure 3. Frequency distribution of items relating to Research Question 2: *What Influence Does Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Academic Attainment?*

Item 38: How has playing in mariachi influenced your life at school? This item was presented as an open-answer question in the final section of the questionnaire. Of the eighty-four respondents, seventy-six answered this item, with eight choosing to skip. The researcher coded the responses, looking for keywords and trends in the

provided phrasing. As shown in Table 21, the most frequently used words or phrases were: Friends, Fun, Love, Connect/Connection, Grades, Discipline, Helped Me, and Excite.

Table 16

Item 38: How has playing in mariachi influenced your life at school?

	<i>N</i>	%
Frequently Used Words		
Friends	12	15.8
Fun	3	4.0
Love	2	2.6
Connect/Connection	6	7.9
Grades	6	7.9
Discipline	2	2.6
Helped Me	12	15.8
Excite	2	2.6
Academics	2	2.6

**N* = 76

Within the quotes, the researcher retains any misspellings, grammar issues, or punctuation problems as they appear in the responses left by the participants to keep true to their intent.

With Research Question 2, the theme within the open-ended questions was working toward the future, attaining goals, was observed (Appendix P).

Research Question 3: What Influence Does a Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Student Engagement at School?

In Research Question 3, The Influence of Mariachi Education on Student Perception of Their Engagement at School, the statements were for respondents to consider the impact the membership in a mariachi ensemble has on their academic achievement.

Item 24: I enjoy playing in mariachi at school. Designed to examine their perception on their enjoyment of being in a mariachi class, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. No participant skipped the item.

Table 17

Item 24: I enjoy playing mariachi in school.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	51	60.71
Agree	31	36.90
Not Really Sure	2	2.38
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 84

Item 25: I am more likely to come to school knowing that I will get to go to mariachi. Designed to examine their perception on how mariachi influences their attendance at school, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. No respondent skipped the item.

Table 18

Item 25: I am more likely to come to school knowing that I will get to go to mariachi.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	37	44.05
Agree	31	36.90
Not Really Sure	14	16.67
Disagree	1	1.19
Strongly Disagree	1	1.19

**N* = 84

Item 30: Mariachi has helped me connect more with my friends. Designed to examine their perception how mariachi helps them connect with their friends, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. No respondent skipped the item.

Table 19

Item 30: Mariachi has helped me connect more with my friends.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	37	44.05
Agree	32	38.10
Not Really Sure	11	13.10
Disagree	3	3.57
Strongly Disagree	1	1.19

**N* = 84

Item 31: Being in mariachi has helped me learn how to be a team player.

Designed to examine their perception on how mariachi helps them work well with others, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. No respondent skipped the item.

Table 20

Item 31: Being in mariachi has helped me learn how to be a team player.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	36	42.86
Agree	42	50.00
Not Really Sure	5	5.95
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly Disagree	1	1.19

**N* = 84

Item 35: Being involved in mariachi helps me to feel like I belong. Designed to examine their perception on how mariachi helps them feel like they belong, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. One respondent skipped the item.

Table 21

Item 35: Being involved in mariachi helps me to feel like I belong.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	29	34.94
Agree	41	49.40
Not Really Sure	10	12.05
Disagree	3	3.61
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 83

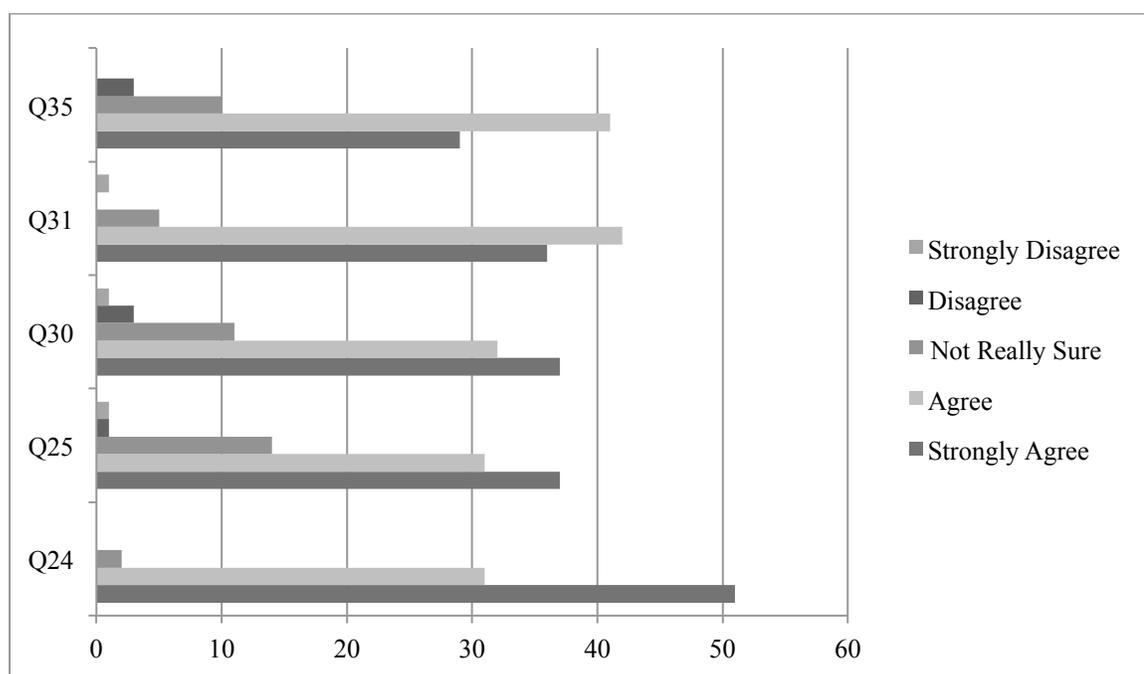


Figure 4. Frequency distribution of items relating to Research Question 3: *What Influence Does Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Student Engagement at School?*

Item 38: How has playing in mariachi influenced your life at school? This item was presented as an open-answer question in the final section of the questionnaire. Of the eighty-four respondents, seventy-six answered this question, with eight choosing to skip. The researcher coded the responses, looking for keywords and trends in the provided phrasing. Shown in Table 27, the most frequently used words or phrases were: Friends, Fun, Love, Connect/Connection, Grades, Discipline, Helped Me, and Excite.

Table 22

Item 38: How has playing in mariachi influenced your life at school?

	<i>n</i> *	%
Frequently Used Words		
Friends	12	15.8
Fun	3	4.0
Love	2	2.6
Connect/Connection	6	7.9
Grades	6	7.9
Discipline	2	2.6
Helped Me	12	15.8
Excite	2	2.6
Academics	2	2.6

**N* = 76

Within the quotes, the researcher keeps any misspellings, grammar issues, or punctuation problems as they appear in the responses left by the participants to keep true to their intent.

For Research Question 3, several themes were prevalent: Friends, Fun, Connect/Connection, and Excite (Appendix Q). 15.8% of the responses for Item 38 referenced their engagement with other students/friends at school. When responding, 4.0% of participants referenced fun as part of their engagement motivation at school. Nearly eight percent of respondents referenced connect/connection with other students or

mariachis as an important part of their engagement motivation at school. For Item 38, 2.6% of the responses referenced their excite/excitement as an important part of their engagement motivation at school.

Research Question 4: What Influence Does a Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Engagement/Connection to Family and Heritage/Culture?

In the last question, Research Question 4, the statements involved were designed to elicit respondents to consider the impact the membership in a mariachi ensemble has on the students' engagement/connection to family and their culture. To best answer the item, participants were instructed to choose from the following options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

Item 28: Playing in mariachi helps me express pride in being Latino/Latina. (If you do not identify as Latino/Latina, please go to the next question.) Designed to examine their perception on how mariachi helps them work well with others, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Seven respondents skipped the statement. Though the term most agree to use in referencing those from South America is Latinx, the researcher decided to use Latino and Latina as the students may not be familiar with the new term. Confusion could result from the introduction of new terms.

Table 23

Item 28: Playing in a mariachi helps me express pride in being Latino/Latina. (If you do not identify as Latino or Latina, please go to the next question.)

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	48	59.74
Agree	28	36.36
Not Really Sure	2	2.60
Disagree	1	1.30
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 77

Item 29: Mariachi has helped me connect with my family. Designed to examine their perception on how mariachi helps them work well with others, participants were instructed to choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Really Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. No respondents skipped the item. The data points show a normal curve.

Table 24

Item 29: Mariachi has helped me connect more with my family.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	25	29.76
Agree	35	41.67
Not Really Sure	22	26.19
Disagree	1	1.19
Strongly Disagree	1	1.19

**N* = 84

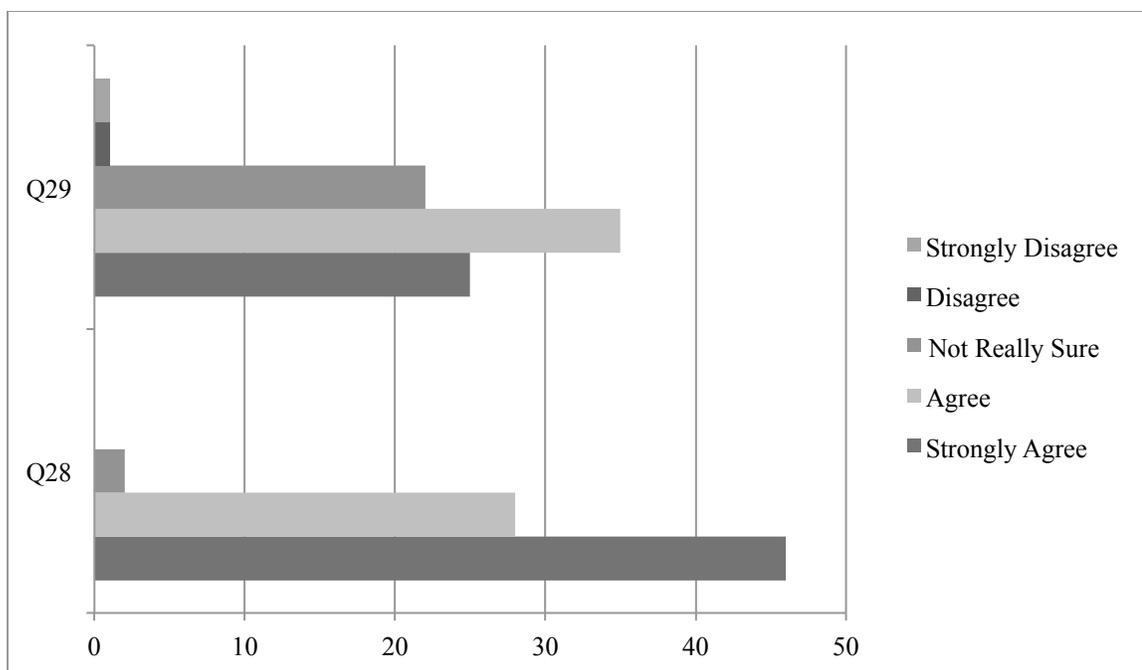


Figure 5. Frequency distribution of items relating to Research Question 4: *What Influence Does Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Engagement/Connection to Family/Culture?*

Item 39: How has playing in mariachi influenced your life at home? This item was presented as an open-answer question in the final section of the questionnaire. Of the eighty-four respondents, seventy-seven answered this question, with seven choosing to skip. The researcher coded the responses, looking for keywords and trends in the provided phrasing. Laid out in Table 30, the most frequently used words or phrases were: Culture/Heritage, Family, Latino/Latina/Reference to Mexico, Fun, Love, Connect/Connection, Enjoy, and Helped Me.

Table 25

Item 39: How has playing in mariachi influenced your life at home?

	<i>n</i> *	%
Frequently Used Words		
Culture/Heritage	7	9.1
Family	39	50.7
Latino/Latina/Reference to Mexico	6	7.8
Fun	2	2.6
Love	4	5.2
Connect/Connection	11	14.3
Enjoy	4	5.2
Helped Me	6	7.8

**N* = 77

Within the quotes, the researcher keeps any misspellings, grammar issues, or punctuation problems as they appear in the responses left by the participants to keep true to their intent.

Within Research Question 4, the most prominent themes were: Culture/Heritage, Family, and Connect/Connection (Appendix R). 9.1% of the responses for Item 39 referenced their culture or heritage. The theme of family had the largest percentage of responses (50.7%) of any theme represented in any of the three short-answer questions. The last major theme in Item 39 was Connect/Connection at over fourteen percent.

Summary of the Findings

The research study's findings were arranged by examining the data with each of the research questions, with additional analysis of the demographics of the participants. First, the demographics of the respondents were presented, which included examining grade, ethnicity/culture, instrument, type of class students participated in, how long they have played an instrument, how long they have been in music, what time of day their

music class was held, how long they have been in mariachi, and what time of day the mariachi class took place. In the subsequent sections, the statements and questions found in the questionnaire were organized and examined through each of the research questions. Descriptive statistics and convergent parallel design were used in the investigation, with additional review of the responses to the short-answer questions at the end of each section. The final chapter of this research study, Chapter 5, will include a summary and discussion of the findings, implications for practice, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of the Chapter

Using the results from the quantitative and qualitative sections of the questionnaire, the researcher will discuss conclusions from the study's findings, suggest implications for practice, and provide recommendations for future research. In addition, the researcher addresses findings that were not applicable to the research questions, but provided interesting possibilities for prospective study.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to examine the influences of mariachi education on students' perception of their academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement. The study involved students attending schools in California, Oregon, and Texas with mariachi programs that consented to be a part of the study whose districts approved their participation. The students were approached to participate in this study because they are a part of their school's mariachi program in middle or high school in the Western half of the United States. The researcher used a convergent parallel design and descriptive statistical and thematic analyses to examine the influence of mariachi education on students' perception of their academic achievement, academic attainment and student engagement. Within each strand, the three short-answer questions were analyzed for emergent themes.

Limitations

Limitations are restrictions placed upon the researcher and can develop before, during, or even after the research has been completed. Several limitations came about in the course of the study: subject motivation, social desirability, sampling bias, and response variability.

Subject motivation and social desirability created a similar limitation on the study. Subject motivation is “the extent to which subjects are motivated to respond in certain ways,” while social desirability is “the tendency of subjects to respond to items in ways that will seem desirable to others” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). As the study required a complete lack of contact by the researcher, the music teacher presented the study to the participants. Students could be influenced to respond as they think their teachers would want them to respond or possibly how their peers would answer. The influence of the teacher could also be felt if the student wants to respond in a more positive manner for the instructor because the student identifies with them. They could possibly be influenced to respond how they believe the teacher wants them to because they someone who looks or has a similar history as them.

As the participants were members of a mariachi ensemble, a selection bias occurred in relation to the difference between those who took the survey verses those who did not or chose not to participate. “Sampling bias occurs when the researcher consciously or unconsciously selects subjects that result in an inaccurate finding” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Response variability is the “need to sample a sufficient number of participants so that adequate variability of responses is obtained” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Limitations were placed on the researcher with the districts/schools and being able to participate in the study. After the approval of the Institutional Review Board, the researcher submitted the applications for the different districts. However, some districts required active consent and the applications could not be completed, as the study would use passive consent. Active consent refers to the parents/guardians signing a hardcopy form. Passive consent would have the parents/guardians clicking “next” or “accept” to indicate their approval. The IRB required passive consent in order to ensure anonymity of the participants. Finally, some districts require approval at least one year before, which put it outside of the timeline of the study. These two situations created a limitation in the response variability as the number of possible participants was reduced.

Research Findings

The research study involved a 39-item questionnaire. Though most of the statements utilized a 5-point Likert-type design, the study included a section with demographics and three short-answer questions. Item 36, the last of the Likert-type items, informed upon all three research questions and will be addressed in the implication section. The open-ended questions provided an opportunity for students to voice their own opinions on the influence of mariachi education and were designed by the researcher to provide a space for the students to respond more thoroughly. The first question was designed for participants to discuss their engagement at school through mariachi. The following question had stimulated reflection across all three research questions by allowing the respondents to explore how mariachi education influences different aspects of their school career. Finally, the last question addressed the further influence of mariachi beyond school and into the home situation. Though not specifically relevant to

the research questions, Items 37 and a few statements in the Likert-style sections, help inform future research. Tables of the data can be found in Appendices L, M, and N.

Demographics

As the largest proportion of the respondents designated “Latino/Latina” for their ethnicity/culture, no conclusions can be drawn as to the influence of mariachi education on Latinx students, especially as the researcher was unable to do a comparison to non-Latinx students with a sample size large enough to establish reliability and accuracy. One possible explanation for the high proportion of Latinx students was explored in Chapter 2: Review of the Literature. Teaching alternative ensembles, such as mariachi, connects children education to their culturally diverse backgrounds. With mariachi being the folk music of Mexico, students of Mexican descent are more likely to participate in the ensemble.

Referencing students as performers, participants were largely characterized as guitar, violin, trumpet, guitarrón, and the vihuela. As all of the respondents were mariachi players, the fact that the five instruments who represent the core of the mariachi ensemble were the largest represented in the study was not surprising. From their answers, the researcher was able to determine that twenty-two players perform on more than one instrument. While membership in mariachi was represented at 96.43%, 24 participants indicated that they performed in more than one ensemble, a combination of mariachi with band, orchestra, or guitar.

As seen in Table 3, 24 (28.6%) students indicated that they participated in more than one ensemble class. Ten (11.9%) were in both band and mariachi. Nine (10.7%) of the respondents were in orchestra and mariachi. Finally, five (6.0%) were in both

mariachi and guitar class. Without knowing the details of the structure of each music program, a few possibilities exist to explain this. First, the programs could be structured in much the same way as the researcher had structured her own ensembles: membership in the mariachi also required membership in either band or orchestra. A second possibility is that the twenty-four students who were a part of more than one ensemble are exceptionally engaged students who want to participate in as much music as possible.

The mean length of time students had played an instrument was 3.68 years ($SD = 1.46$), while the mean length of time in mariachi was 3.82 years ($SD = 1.44$). As the length of time in music is slightly longer than the length of time on an instrument, one possible explanation is that students began in classroom music, an outside performing ensemble, or a choir group. Another possibility for the difference in the mean between the two lengths of time is that students switched instruments within that timeframe. In addition, the length of time respondents indicated they had been in a mariachi class had a mean of 3.34, with a standard deviation of 1.54.

Finally, respondents indicated that the majority of their music classes took place during the school day (96.43%), which also produced consistent results, though of a lesser amount, for when their mariachi classes took place (84.25%). No student indicated that any of their music classes were held before school, though the remainder disclosed that their groups met after school (music, 29.76%; mariachi, 32.14%). Furthermore, twenty-two students had ensembles that met both during and after school for music. Additionally, fourteen respondents indicated that their mariachi classes met both during and after school as well.

Before the institution of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) in 2015, many music and art administrators were faced with the challenge of justifying the curricular importance of the arts to their school districts. In many cases, districts were requiring music programs to be held after school, relegating them to a subject of lesser importance and regulated to an after-school program. However, these results suggest that more music programs are being held during the day, establishing access to the arts and music, in particular, for all students. Armed with this data and the requirements for a well-rounded education as defined by ESSA (2015), music administrators will have supporting documentation for the establishment of music programs during the regular school day.

Findings for Research Question 1: What Influence Does a Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Academic Achievement?

Overall, respondents had a positive response to their academic achievement, though many could not point towards mariachi as having an influence in their grades or their other classes. According to the review of the literature, music students show a consistent growth in overall achievement (Johnson & Eason, 2013). Within the study of Metropolitan Nashville schools, students who participated in music for longer than one year had significant increases across test scores, attendance, GPA, and on-time graduation rates (2013). In accord with that statement, eighty-nine percent of the students in the study believed that they will do well in school this year, with over half of all participants agreeing with the statement.

When asked specifically if mariachi influenced their grades or their other classes, almost 40% of respondents, thirty-three in both statements, were unsure; 39.29% as it relates to mariachi influencing their other classes and 39.76% as it relates to mariachi

influencing their grades positively. However, 50% of respondents indicated that they Agreed or Strongly Agreed with mariachi's positive influence on their other classes, while slightly over 50% indicated the same in reference to their grades. In support of this, Respondent #19 in Item 38 says, "It pushes me to have good grades in my classes." Respondent #11 concurs: "Mariachi is the reason I'm in a school with advanced academics." Another student made reference to mariachi's influence in their math classes: Respondent #62, "It's help in math," while Respondent #27 stated, "Mariachi has helped me at school by solving problems." Mariachi serves as a culturally-responsive avenue for music educators to continue to see these positive influences over students who may not be otherwise served in a more traditional ensemble. Colley describes how the national understanding of ensembles is shifting to accommodate more alternative ensembles (2009). By removing the limitation of only the trilogy of music ensembles – band, orchestra, and choir – teachers are able to expand the influences of music over academic achievement.

One possible explanation for the thirty-three respondents who were unsure of mariachi's influence is that the students may be unaware of how music impacts grades or other classes. In Item 38, Respondent #51 stated, "Im [sic] not really sure but I know that its [sic] not a negative thing."

Amongst several benefits of music on a child's overall education, Bryant lists the skills of music with regards to discipline and dedication influencing the students beyond the music classroom (2014). Seventy-one participants (85.54%) did agree that mariachi helped them to become more disciplined with 10.84% unsure. In Item 38, Respondent #14 provided a response on mariachi's influence by indicating, "With well centered [sic]

discipline.” Respondent #3 expounded on this concept: “Most of the time it’s hard to balance Mariachi and School but I believe if you really apply yourself then everything works out at the end.” Music enables the students to create a work ethic that will continue to serve them through adulthood.

Findings for Research Question 2: What Influence Does a Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Academic Attainment?

In Item 12, participants responded in a heavily positive manner (98.89%) to the statement referencing their likelihood to graduate from high school. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, eighty-three percent of students graduated with a regular high school diploma in 2015 (2017). To the specific states involved in this research study, California was eighty-two percent, Texas was eighty-nine percent, while Oregon was seventy-four percent. Though there is no available evidence for students who believe they will graduate, this is a percentage difference of almost seventeen points in the results from the study. Furthermore, over eighty percent of respondents indicated in Item 13 that they would possibly go to a college or vocational school following high school. As seen in Chapter 2, the review of the literature demonstrated that only eleven to sixteen percent of Latinx students going onto a college or university. With leaders in education across the nation concerned about the numbers of Latinx students graduating high school and going onto high education for the last 25 years (The National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), understanding the students’ own beliefs of their academic attainment is essential to reversing the negative flow of graduation rates to a more positive one. However, not all respondents were necessarily as sure that mariachi prepared them for the future, a similar result as Research Question 1.

Examined in the review of the literature, the establishment of alternative ensembles – such as mariachi and Eclectic Strings as seen in Fortune’s (2011) thesis – fosters the continuation of students in music beyond the public school classroom. Culturally responsive education sees the establishment of alternative ensembles as a way of providing students who have not prospered in the traditional public school setting a motivation to succeed. Mariachi music has been shown to provide that setting to students of Latinx descent (Miralis, 2006). With the largest portion of respondents (62.56%) indicating that mariachi had influenced them to pursue music after high school, the study provides further evidence of this. This would include participation at the collegiate or professional level, as Respondent #43 described: “It has also made me want to pursue music in the future.” Respondent #49 gave a powerful, albeit simple explanation on mariachi’s influence on their academic attainment: “It gave me purpose.”

Findings for Research Question 3: What Influence Does a Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Engagement at School?

Research Question 3 provided some of the most numerous comments from the participants, particularly in the third short-answer question. The enjoyment of participating in mariachi had the largest proportion of responses (97.61%) with either Strongly Agree or Agree, with 82% of participants indicating Strongly Agree or Agree that they are more likely to come to school because they will have mariachi class that day, which is in agreement with the findings of the National Association for Music Educators that showed music provides motivation for students to come and stay in school (Bryant, 2014).

Concerning student engagement, being a part of a team or belonging to something received strongly positive results. When asked if mariachi helps them connect more to their friends, over eighty-two percent of participants responded with either Strongly Agree or Agree. Again, this is in concurrence to the study provided by NAFME that discussed music's influence with students to connect with others (2014). As students seek a way of connecting with others in their peer group on a meaningful level, mariachi music provides an avenue for students underserved in more traditional educational settings. In Item 38, Respondent #30 provides a statement to this: "It has made me make new friends." Respondent #42 states, "I have made new friends through mariachi, and intruduced [sic] others to mariachi." Respondent #17 also expounded on the impact mariachi had on their relationships: "It has helped me connect with my fellow mariachi and to meet new people that would become my friends."

With the item referencing learning how to work with others, respondents indicated mariachi's positive influence (92.86%), either by choosing Strongly Agree or Agree. Regarding teamwork, Respondent #6 provides agrees saying, "Mariachi also helps me realize how important team work [sic] is and helps me show it in my other classes." Respondent #66 states, "It has let me connect with other people who have the same interest." As Fogelquist concurs, participation in mariachi music serves as a vehicle to connect and engage Latinx students, as explored in the literature review (2001). Consequently, mariachi connects not only participants who identify as Latinx, but also those of differing cultures who find a connection to the passion of the music.

Finally, Item 35 received almost eighty-five percent of respondents indicated the strength of mariachi's influence of the student's perception of belonging by selecting

Strongly Agree or Agree. Neshyba provided evidence of this by examining the distinction between students at risk who were a part of extra-curricular subjects and those who did not. The dropout rate decreased for those who participated in activities such as mariachi. For some students who have had a difficult finding a place in the school's society, it would seem mariachi has had an influence in the student's connection to others: Respondent #8 states, "It has brought me close to the members of the group, a struggle I had growing up." In agreement with this theme, Respondent #17 responds with, "It has helped me connect with my fellow mariachi." Respondent #76 describes the changes mariachi has affected in their life: "It has brought my friends and I closer, and I feel like mariachi has helped me be more of a person who participates."

Findings of Research Question 4: What is Student Perception of the Influence of Mariachi on Engagement/Connection to Family and Heritage/Culture?

As with Research Question 3, Research Question 4 also provided some of the most responsive comments from the participants, particularly in the third short-answer question. All items were not evenly distributed (see Figure 5).

Students expressed the positive influence mariachi education had on their connection and engagement to their family and to their culture/heritage. Over ninety-six percent of respondents selected Strongly Agree or Agree to indicate that mariachi helps them to express pride in being Latinx. In Item 39, Respondent #48 aptly expresses the theme by saying, "I get to experience the music of my parents home country and interact with them." In agreement, Respondent #44 explained, "I am more influenced with my culture at home and I have a new way of expressing my culture." In the researcher's experience, one of her mariachi trumpet players wrote, "Ms. Smith, thank you so much

for teaching me trumpet and mariachi, it has also got me closer to my heritage” (personal correspondence, 05/30/2017).

Item 29 delved into the influence mariachi had in developing the connection the participants had with their family. Though a little over twenty-six percent of responses showed respondents unsure whether mariachi helps them to connect with their family, over seventy-one percent selected Strongly Agree or Agree. With a following response in Item 39, Respondent #5’s statement provides a powerful example: “I connect more with my mom because she loves Mariachi music and making her happy is always my goal.” Respondent 63’s statement shows the increased engagement parents and family have in their child(ren)’s lives: “It helps me connect more with my family because they always want to come and see me.” In a conversation three years ago, the researcher also experienced the power of this connect when a student approached her after a mariachi concert to thank her for teaching him mariachi because it gave him something to talk about with his father.

Implications for Practice

Findings from this study may be beneficial for both mariachi educators and music administrators as it begins to build a foundation of evidence as to the influences of mariachi education as it relates to the academic achievement, academic attainment, and engagement of students. In addition, the study provides a foundation for researchers who wish to continue to study the influences of mariachi education on the academic achievement and attainment, as well as student engagement. Through a future doctoral dissertation, the researcher herself hopes to investigate the relationship between

participation in mariachi and specific educationally-related constructs, with a possible additional focus on Latinx students.

As evidenced by Item 36: Overall, mariachi has had a positive influence in my life (see Figure 1), the responses were not evenly distributed with the influence of mariachi education on student perception of academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement.

Implications Resulting from Research Question 1: What Influence Does a Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Academic Achievement?

Regarding student perception of academic achievement, the researcher saw a positive response overall. The majority of students believe that they will do well academically at school, though almost 40% of respondents were unclear how mariachi helps them in their grades or in their work in other classes. This is evidenced in Respondent #52's statement, "Im [sic] not really sure but I know that its not a negative thing." However, over eighty-five percent did agree that mariachi helps them become more disciplined.

Implications Resulting from Research Question 2: What Influence Does a Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Academic Attainment?

In general, student perception on the influence of mariachi education on academic attainment showed a largely positive pattern. Almost ninety-nine percent of respondents (98.99%) indicated that they would likely graduate from high school. The researcher saw this response as a great gauge of student perception on their academic attainment. However, there is no direct evidence yet as to mariachi's influence on this perception. Again, participants were not clear as to how mariachi affected this. In addition, a

comparison study was not done, as there was no control group with which to compare. If clarification is needed, further information provided to the students about the effects of music education in general to cognitive processes and the continuation of the skills developed in music as it translates to other academic subjects would be helpful.

Another positive gauge of student perception on their academic attainment was the percentage of respondents indicating they would likely attend a college or vocational school after high school: 80.72%. Finally, the large number of students stating that they want to pursue mariachi or music after high school (62.56%) may provide some hope for the future of the students and music education. Respondent #43's statement attests to this: "It has made me want to pursue music in the future." In conclusion, Respondent #49's declaration shows the powerful need for culturally-responsive educational opportunities for students: "It gave me purpose."

Implications Resulting from Research Question 3: What Influence Does a Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Student Engagement at School?

Evidence provided by the examination of Research Question 3 shows the importance of providing culturally-responsive educational opportunities to students, not just in a musical setting. Eighty-two percent of participants indicated that mariachi provides a situation where they can establish relationships to their peers, as evidence by Respondent 17's response: "It has helped me connect with my fellow mariachi and to meet new people that would become my friends." This helps to reinforce the idea that when students find a connection to a music or subject that is culturally relevant to them they are more likely to seek academic achievement. In addition, the largest proportion of

students responded in a positive manner that mariachi has taught them how to work in a team; a skill highly sought after by employers and universities (92.86%).

As a music educator of students designated as low socioeconomic status, the researcher's main motivation for the research was to provide evidence as to mariachi's influence on the academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement. Though the other research strands also contributed to this, Research Question 3 provided affirmation to the need of culturally-responsive education opportunities as it provides outlets for students who lack connection in more traditional social settings. Respondent #8's statement is evidence of this need: "It has brought me close to the members of the group, a struggle I had growing up."

Implications Resulting from Research Question 4: What Influence Does a Mariachi Education Have on Student Perception of Engagement/Connection to Family and Heritage/Culture?

When looking at the influence of mariachi education on student perception of their engagement or connection to their family and/or to their heritage and culture, the researcher noted an overall positive response. Culture is not necessarily limited to a person's heritage, as Mixon demonstrated (2009). For the purposes of the study, culture includes the effects of age, geography, economic class, religion, and the life-experience of participants. Of those who responded to the statement about expressing pride, seventy-six agreed with the relationship, though three did not and seven chose not to respond. Respondent #44's statement is evidence of this: "I am more influenced with my culture at home and I have a new way of expressing my culture." Though the

relationship between mariachi and students' connection to family was overall positive, twenty-two students were not sure, with two students disagreeing with the statement.

As a music educator, the researcher was interested in the statement of Respondent #63: "Since mariachi is part of my culture, my family always enjoys talking to me about it and loves coming to the mariachi concerts at school." From her experience, the researcher has noted many parents and guardians absent from concerts and performances. In contrast, the study has shown the possibility that an alternative ensemble such as mariachi could influence the increase of concert attendance by utilizing music that establishes a greater connection to the families.

Recommendations for Future Research

The need for an increase of the body of research into the influences of mariachi education on academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement is evident through the presentation of the research study. To build upon the evidence provided, the researcher recommends the following for future research:

1. Further research examining the influence of mariachi education on students who participate in mariachi verses students who do not is encouraged in the development of a body of research, looking again at academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement at home and at school, with additional work in the data that could be provided by school districts: test scores, GPA, attendance rates, college/vocational attendance, discipline rates, and dropout rates.
2. Further examination of the influence of mariachi education on students who participate in mariachi verses students who do not is encouraged in the

development of a body of research, looking again at academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement at home and at school, with a specific focus on the Latinx student population is also encouraged.

3. Because of the limitations placed upon the researcher with regard to access to different school districts and sites, a more fine-tuned approach is required, possibly looking at one school district or even one state at a time to widen the sample size available from which to pull participants.
4. If the questionnaire is utilized again, the addition of statements regarding gender and size/location of school district (rural, suburban, urban) would be beneficial.
5. An educator questionnaire could also be developed and distributed concurrent to the student questionnaire to explore the teachers' perception of the influences of mariachi education.

Conclusion of Research Study

The need to create a more inclusive multicultural/multiethnic environment is becoming more evident with the ever-increasing diversity of the classroom – and of society overall. As the Tanglewood Declaration stated in 1967, “Music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures belong in curriculum;” a statement with which the researcher agrees. Establishing comprehensive instruction to educate the whole child is paramount in the current state of education. Though some professional mariachi ensembles fear the integration of the traditional mariachi music into a more traditional Western method of classical learning, approaching the folk music in a culturally-responsive manner will not only help to challenge the assimilation of mariachi music, but also provide an avenue for students to learn who may not have the opportunity. The traditions of the mariachi will

be preserved by those who work to ensure they provide a complete education to the students.

The primary focus of this study was to examine the influences of mariachi music on student perception of academic achievement, academic attainment, and engagement at school and at home. The researcher believes the qualitative evidence laid out in Chapter 5 demonstrates this. Combined with data, the qualitative responses presented in Items 38 and 39 provide further evidence as to the influence of mariachi education. The secondary focus of the study was to begin to build a foundation of evidence to the efficacy of mariachi as a valid music education genre with the purpose of stimulating further study. As districts seek to provide opportunities to reach their marginalized populations, alternative ensembles such as mariachi may provide those experiences. However, data drives those decisions and more research needs to be done. Educators and researchers need to consider what is holding districts back from approving atypical methods and what other evidence is needed.

With conscious thought toward a culturally-responsive method of music education, mariachi music provides an avenue to reach a portion of the population vulnerable to poor academic achievement, academic attainment, and student engagement. Connecting to students through their culture establishes a link, which will allow music teachers to positively influence the futures of those in their ensembles. Additionally, a multicultural/multiethnic education contributes to students outside of the culture by influencing their ability of students to accept others from unique cultures and backgrounds. “The growth of mariachi programs throughout the United States needs to be recognized by music educators and administrators as a valid musical genre and

promoted as a means to allow for cultural expression and linguistic diversity” (Neshyba, 2012, p. 139). A thoughtful and thorough approach to the curriculum and to the tradition of mariachi will enable teachers to successfully foster positive change in their student population. This research study sought to supply evidence and to help provide a catalyst for that movement of change.

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APPENDIX A. MARIACHI MUSIC STUDENT SURVEY

Mariachi Music Student Survey

Dear Music Student,
Thank you for participating in this survey.

Background Information

Instructions: Tell me a little about you and your music/mariachi program.

1. What is the name of your school?

2. What is your grade?

5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th Other _____

3. What is your ethnicity/culture? (Please choose all that apply).

Latino/Latina	White/Caucasian	African-American/Black	Asian
American Indian	Alaskan Native	Pacific Islander	Other

4. What instrument do you play? (Please choose all that apply).

Flute Oboe Clarinet Bass Clarinet Bassoon Alto Saxophone Tenor Sax
Bari Sax Trumpet Horn Trombone Baritone/Euphonium Tuba Percussion
Piano Violin Viola Cello Double Bass Harp Vihuela Guitar Guitarrón

5. Please select your music class. (Choose all that may apply).

Band Orchestra Mariachi Jazz Band Guitar Other

6. How long have you been playing an instrument?

Less than 1 year 1 year 2 years 3 years 4+ years

7. How long have you been in music?

Less than 1 year 1 year 2 years 3 years 4+ years

8. My music class is: (Please choose all that apply)

Before School During School After School

9. If you are in a mariachi class, how long have you been playing mariachi?

Less than 1 year	1 year	2 years	3 years	4+ years	I am not involved in mariachi
------------------	--------	---------	---------	----------	-------------------------------------

10. My mariachi class is: (Please choose all that apply)

Before School During School After School

Section 1

Instructions: Please select the answer that most closely matches how you feel. If a question doesn't apply to you or you don't want to answer, you may skip it.

1. I think I will do well in school this year.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------
2. I believe that I will graduate high school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------
3. I believe that I will go to college or a vocational school after high school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------
4. I enjoy playing in band/orchestra/jazz band/guitar at school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------
5. I am more likely to come to school knowing that I will get to go to music.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------
6. Music helps me in my other classes at school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------
7. I believe music has helped me with my grades in school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------
8. Being in music has helped me learn how to be a team player.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------
9. Music has helped me to become more disciplined.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------
10. I believe music has helped prepare me for the future.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------
11. My music class has influenced me to pursue music after I graduate.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

12. Being involved in music helps me to feel like I belong.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

13. Over all, music has had a positive influence in my life.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

The following questions relate specifically to mariachi. If you are not in a school mariachi program, you are finished with the questionnaire.

14. I enjoy playing in mariachi at school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

15. I am more likely to come to school knowing that I will get to go to mariachi.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

16. Mariachi helps me in my other classes at school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

17. I believe mariachi has helped me with my grades in school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

18. Playing in mariachi helps me express pride in being Latino/Latina.
(If you do not identify as Latino or Latina, please go to the next question.)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

19. Mariachi has helped me connect more with my family.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

20. Mariachi has helped me connect more with my friends.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

21. Being in mariachi has helped me learn how to be a team player.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

22. Mariachi has helped me to become more disciplined.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

23. I believe mariachi has helped prepare me for the future.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

24. My mariachi class has influenced me to pursue music after I graduate.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

25. Being involved in mariachi helps me to feel like I belong.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

26. Over all, mariachi has had a positive influence in my life.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Really Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------------------

Section 2

Instructions: In this section, you may use your own words to express how mariachi has influenced your life.

1. What do you like about playing in a mariachi and playing this style of music?
2. How has playing in mariachi influenced your life at school?
3. How has playing in mariachi influenced your life at home?

APPENDIX B. PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMED CONSENT: ENGLISH

INFORMED CONSENT

*The Influences of a Mariachi Education Program on
Academic Achievement and Student Engagement, with a Focus on Latinx Students*

Your child has been invited to participate in a research study which will involve music and attention. My name is Victoria Smith, and I am a Music Education Graduate Student at the University of the Pacific, Conservatory of Music in _____, California. Your child was selected as a possible participant in this study because he/she is a part of music at school. The research study has been tentatively approved by _____ School District.

The purpose of this research is to see whether being involved with music, specifically mariachi, has positive influences on a student's academic achievement and student engagement. If you decide to allow your child to participate, your child will participate in a questionnaire about their involvement in music. His/her participation in this study will last approximately 30-40 minutes.

There maybe risk involved with your child's participation, involving the possible risk of loss of confidentiality and the possible discomfort (anxiety, for example), as the questions may have students experience emotional responses. There are potential benefits to this research, particularly that the study seeks to provide evidence as to the benefits of mariachi education and will help students to recognize their powerful response to the music.

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please call me at _____ or my advisor, Dr. Brittin _____. If you have any questions about your child's rights as a participant in a research project, please call the Research & Graduate Studies Office, University of the Pacific at _____. In the event of a research-related injury, please contact your regular medical provider and bill through your normal insurance carrier, then contact the Office of Research & Graduate Studies.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Measures to insure confidentiality involve not using your child's name on the questionnaire. Computerized data, used in analyzing the data, will be password protected. All data obtained will be maintained in a safe, locked location and will be destroyed (shredded or deleted) three years after the study is completed.

Your consent for your child's participation is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not he/she will participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you or he/she are otherwise entitled. If you consent for him/her to participate, you are free to discontinue his/her participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you/he/she are otherwise entitled.

By completing and submitting this survey, you indicate that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to have your child participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue his/her participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you/he/she are otherwise entitled, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

You will also be informed when the study has concluded and when the results are available for you to review.

Victoria Smith
University of the Pacific

APPENDIX C. PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMED CONSENT: SPANISH

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO***Las Influencias de un Programa de Educación Mariachi sobre Logro Académico y Participación Estudiantil, con énfasis en Estudiantes Latinx***

Su hijo ha sido invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación que incluirá música y atención. Mi nombre es Victoria Smith, y soy un estudiante de posgrado de Educación Musical en la Universidad del Pacífico, Conservatorio de Música en Stockton, California. Su hijo fue seleccionado como posible participante en este estudio porque es parte de la música en la escuela. El estudio de investigación ha sido aprobado tentativamente por el Distrito Escolar Unificado _____.

El propósito de esta investigación es ver si estar involucrado con la música, específicamente mariachi, tiene influencias positivas en el rendimiento académico del estudiante y el compromiso estudiantil. Si usted decide permitir que su hijo participe, su hijo participará en un cuestionario sobre su participación en la música. Su participación en este estudio durará aproximadamente 30-40 minutos.

Es posible que el riesgo involucre la participación de su hijo, que involucra el posible riesgo de pérdida de confidencialidad y la posible incomodidad (ansiedad, por ejemplo), ya que las preguntas pueden hacer que los estudiantes experimenten respuestas emocionales. Hay beneficios potenciales para esta investigación, particularmente que el estudio trata de proporcionar evidencia sobre los beneficios de la educación mariachi y ayudará a los estudiantes a reconocer su poderosa respuesta a la música.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre la investigación en cualquier momento, por favor llámeme al _____ o a mi consejero, Dr. Brittin _____. Si tiene preguntas sobre los derechos de su hijo como participante en un proyecto de investigación, llame a la Oficina de Investigación y Estudios de Posgrado de la Universidad del Pacífico al _____. En el caso de una lesión relacionada con la investigación, comuníquese con su proveedor de servicios médicos regular y facture a través de su compañía de seguros normal, luego comuníquese con la Oficina de Investigación y Estudios de Posgrado.

Cualquier información que se obtenga en relación con este estudio y que pueda identificarse con su hijo permanecerá confidencial y será revelada solo con su permiso. Las medidas para asegurar la confidencialidad implican no usar el nombre de su niño en el cuestionario. Los datos computarizados, utilizados en el análisis de los datos, estarán protegidos por contraseña. Todos los datos obtenidos se mantendrán en un lugar seguro y bloqueado y serán destruidos (tritutados o suprimidos) tres años después de que el estudio esté terminado.

Su consentimiento para la participación de su hijo es totalmente voluntario y su decisión de participar o no involucrará ninguna penalidad o pérdida de beneficios a los cuales usted o él / ella tiene derecho. Si usted da su consentimiento para que él / ella participe, usted es libre de interrumpir su participación en cualquier momento sin penalización o pérdida de beneficios a los cuales tiene derecho.

Al completar y enviar esta encuesta, usted indica que ha leído y entiende la información proporcionada anteriormente, que acepta de buen grado que su hijo participe, que puede retirar su consentimiento en cualquier momento y discontinuar su participación en cualquier momento sin penalización o pérdida de beneficios a los cuales tiene derecho, y que no está renunciando a reclamaciones legales, derechos o recursos.

También se le informará cuando el estudio haya concluido y cuando los resultados estén disponibles.

Victoria Smith
University of the Pacific

APPENDIX D. STUDENT ASSENT FORM

ASSENT FORM

**The Influences of a Mariachi Education Program on
Academic Achievement and Student Engagement, with a Focus on Latinx Students**

Dear Music/Mariachi Student,

We are studying the influence of music and we'd like you to help us. We'd like you to a quick survey. It will take about 30-40 minutes, but you can rest as much as you'd like and you can stop the survey whenever you want.

If you want to rest, or stop completely, just tell your teacher – you won't get into any trouble! In fact, if you don't want to take the survey at all, you don't have to. Just say so. Also, if you have any questions about what you'll be doing, or if you can't decide whether to do it or not, just ask your teacher if there is anything you'd like him/her to explain.

If you do want to try it, click below to start. Your parent(s) have already told us that it is okay with them if you take the survey. Remember, you don't have to, and once you start you can rest or stop whenever you like.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/mariachieducation>

APPENDIX E. PROPOSAL LETTER

Study Title: The Influences of a Mariachi Education on Academic Achievement and Student Engagement

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Victoria Smith, and I am a music teacher in California, where I teach band, orchestra, and mariachi. Simultaneously, I am completing my master's at the University of the Pacific. Inspired by my relationships with mariachi educators and my own experience in the field, my thesis will be studying the effects of a mariachi education on student engagement and student achievement, focusing on the influence on Latinx students.

When I began to research for my thesis, I reached out to mariachi educators to find programs, schools, and districts who would be interested in participating in this research study. I was encouraged by the amount of music teachers interested in contributing to this examination of the influences of mariachi education.

Many music programs are at a crossroads for providing evidence of legitimacy. By participating in this study, students will be able to have their programs supported by research and evidence to show that what they do, what they experience has value. In addition, the questions are also designed to help students discover the reasons behind their responses and reactions to their performance in mariachi. Students will complete a survey of ten demographics questions, twenty-six Likert-style questions, and three short answer questions. The survey will be distributed online and all responses will remain completely anonymous.

The primary objective of this study is to provide possible scholarship into the benefits of mariachi education. I will be developing the hypothesis concerning the influences of a Mariachi Education Program, from academic achievement to student engagement.

If you have any questions about this research study, I would be more than happy to answer them. You may contact me _____, or my faculty advisor _____, if you have study related questions or problems.

With kind regards,

Victoria Smith

APPENDIX F. EMAIL TO MARIACHI EDUCATOR

Good afternoon, _____. My name is Victoria Smith, and I am a music teacher in California, where I teach band, orchestra, and mariachi. Concurrently, I am completing my master's at the University of the Pacific. Inspired by my relationships with mariachi educators and my own experience in the field, my thesis will be studying the effects of a mariachi education on student engagement and student achievement, focusing on the influence on Latinx students.

I'm starting to send out feelers to find districts and schools interested in participating in the research study. The quantitative section of the research will be looking at student data for key indicators: attendance rates, discipline reports, grade point averages, and graduation rates. Other key indicators I am considering are dropout rates and college attendance. The qualitative portion will be a brief survey for the students to complete, including a section of Likert-style questions and a section of short answer questions.

I am seeking out your school's participation because of the success of your program. If you are interested in your students' participation, please email me at _____. Thank you for considering my proposal.

Victoria Smith

APPENDIX G. EMAIL FOLLOW-UP #1 TO MARIACHI EDUCATOR

_____,

thank you so much for responding to my research request. Can you tell me a little about your program? How many students are in the mariachi program? What are their age ranges? How long have they been playing? I am very excited to have your group as a part of this project. I will be submitting the IRB soon, and I will be able to submit the request to your district after that is approved.

Again, thank you. And I look forward to communicating with you soon.

Victoria Smith

APPENDIX H. EMAIL FOLLOW-UP #2 TO MARIACHI EDUCATOR

_____ ,
I am very impressed with your numbers of students participating in mariachi. It sounds like the programs are flourishing there.

The survey I will be asking the students to complete will have about 10 Likert-type questions and a handful of short answer. Will it be easier for your students to complete it as an online survey, or will it be best to have it as a physical questionnaire? I will be mailing off consent forms when the IRB is approved, so I want to make sure the packet will be complete.

Thank you again for joining this project,

Victoria Smith

APPENDIX I. EMAIL TO PRINCIPAL/MUSIC COORDINATOR

Good afternoon, _____. My name is Victoria Smith, and I am a music teacher in Stockton, California, where I teach band, orchestra, and mariachi. Concurrently, I am completing my master's at the University of the Pacific. I am trying to make contact with your music/mariachi teacher as I am researching the effects of a mariachi education on student achievement and engagement, with a focus on EL students.

The _____ website mentions that _____ schools have mariachi programs. Do you still have a mariachi program at your school? If so, would it be possible to get your music/mariachi teacher's email address?

Thank you for your time,
Victoria Smith

APPENDIX J. EMAIL TO NOTIFY MARIACHI MUSIC

TEACHER/PRINCIPAL/MUSIC COORDINATOR OF RESEARCH APPROVAL

Good morning, _____.

I am excited to say that the research study has been approved for your district. Below you will find the email to be forwarded to your music students. If your students do not have an email you can easily send this to, I am willing to make copies of the letter to send home. I just need to know the quantity needed and where to send them.

I am excited to begin this final stage of the project. Thank you again for volunteering to participate in my master's thesis.

Gratefully,
Victoria Smith

**The Influences of a Mariachi Education Program on
Academic Achievement and Student Engagement, with a Focus on Latinx Students**

Dear Parents/Guardians of _____ Music Students,

Your child has been invited to participate in a research study, which will involve music and school. My name is Victoria Smith, and I am a Music Education Graduate Student at the University of the Pacific, Conservatory of Music in _____, California. Your child was selected as a possible participant in this study because he/she is a part of music at school.

The purpose of this research is to see whether being involved with music, specifically mariachi, has positive influences on a student's academic achievement and engagement. If you decide to allow your child to participate, your child will do a questionnaire about being in music. His/her participation in this study will last about 30-40 minutes.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/mariachieducation>

Victoria Smith
University of the Pacific

APPENDIX K. FOLLOW-UP EMAIL TO RESEARCH APPROVAL

Good evening, _____.

I hope this message finds you well.

I am sending this email as a follow-up to the one I sent on _____. How has distribution gone on your end? Do you need me to mail hard copies of the study?

I know that the end of the school year is upon us, including numerous concerts. However, my thesis committee has set May 25th as the conclusion of the data collection. I am hoping that your students will still be able to participate in the questionnaire.

Thank you again for your time,
Victoria Smith

APPENDIX L. ADDITIONAL TABLES FROM SECTION 1

Grade level. The grades of the students approached to participate were 6th-12th.

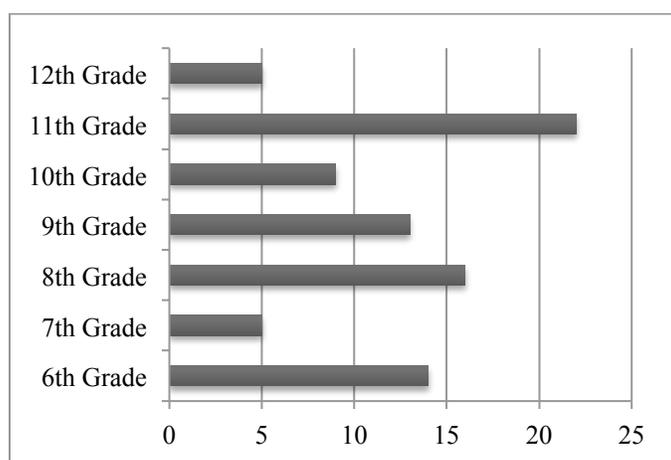
One participant chose to skip this item.

Table 26

Item 2: What is your grade?

	<i>N</i> *	%
Grade Level of Respondents		
6 th Grade	14	16.87
7 th Grade	5	6.02
8 th Grade	16	18.07
9 th Grade	13	15.66
10 th Grade	9	10.84
11 th Grade	22	26.51
12 th Grade	5	6.02

**N* = 83



**N* = 83

Figure 6. *Item 2: Graphic distribution of participants' grades.*

Length of time on instrument. The mean for the length of time students had studied their instrument was 3.68 (*SD* = 1.46).

Table 27

Item 6: How long have you been playing an instrument?

	<i>n</i> *	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	%
Length of Time on Instrument				
Less than 1 year	11	3.68	1.46	13.10
1 year	11	3.68	1.46	13.10
2 years	9	3.68	1.46	10.71
3 years	16	3.68	1.46	19.05
4+ years	37	3.68	1.46	44.05

**N* = 84

Length of time in music. The mean of the students' length of time in music was 3.82 (*SD* = 1.44).

Table 28

Item 7: How long have you been in music?

	<i>n</i> *	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	%
Length of Time in Music				
Less than 1 year	11	3.82	1.44	13.25
1 year	6	3.82	1.44	7.23
2 years	11	3.82	1.44	13.25
3 years	14	3.82	1.44	16.87
4+ years	41	3.82	1.44	49.40

**N* = 83

Time of day for music.

Table 29

Item 8: My music class is: (Please choose all that may apply).

	<i>n</i> *	%
Class Time		
Before School	0	0.00
During School	81	96.43
After School	25	29.76

**N* = 84

APPENDIX M. ADDITIONAL TABLES FROM SECTION 2

Table 30

Item 14: I enjoy playing in band/orchestra/jazz band/guitar at school.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	41	48.81
Agree	41	48.81
Not Really Sure	2	2.38
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 84

Table 31

Item 15: I am more likely to come to school knowing that I will get to go to music.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	30	35.71
Agree	42	50.00
Not Really Sure	10	11.90
Disagree	1	1.19
Strongly Disagree	1	1.19

**N* = 84

Table 32

Item 16: Music helps me in my other classes at school.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	19	22.62
Agree	32	38.10
Not Really Sure	30	35.71
Disagree	3	3.57
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 84

Table 33

Item 17: I believe music has helped me with my grades at school.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	19	22.62
Agree	28	33.33
Not Really Sure	31	36.90
Disagree	4	4.76
Strongly Disagree	2	2.38

**N* = 84

Table 34

Item 18: Being in music has helped me learn how to be a team player.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	34	40.48
Agree	40	47.62
Not Really Sure	9	10.71
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly Disagree	1	1.19

**N* = 84

Table 35

Item 19: Music has helped me to become more disciplined.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	32	38.55
Agree	37	44.58
Not Really Sure	10	12.05
Disagree	3	3.61
Strongly Disagree	1	1.20

**N* = 83

Table 36

Item 20: I believe music has helped prepare me for the future.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	21	25.30
Agree	39	46.99
Not Really Sure	22	26.51
Disagree	1	1.20
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 83

Table 37

Item 21: My music class has influenced me to pursue music after I graduate.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	16	19.28
Agree	36	43.37
Not Really Sure	23	27.71
Disagree	8	9.64
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 83

Table 38

Item 23: Overall, music has had a positive influence in my life.

	<i>n</i> *	%
Likert-style Selections		
Strongly Agree	49	59.76
Agree	30	36.59
Not Really Sure	2	2.44
Disagree	1	1.22
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00

**N* = 82

APPENDIX N. ADDITIONAL TABLE FROM SECTION 3

Table 39

Item 37: What do you like about playing in a mariachi and playing this style of music?

	<i>n</i> *	%
Frequently Used Words		
Culture	5	6.25
Family	7	8.75
Latino/Latina/Reference to Mexico	5	6.25
Proud	4	5.00
Express	7	8.75
Team	3	3.75
Friends	6	7.5
Fun	14	17.5
Love	7	8.75
Sounds	2	2.5
Tradition	2	2.5
Feeling	6	7.5
Connect/Connection	6	7.5
Enjoy	5	6.25
Challenge	2	2.5

**N* = 80

APPENDIX O. RESEARCH QUESTION 1: OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

In relation to Research Question 1, two themes were prevalent: Helped Me and Grades. 15.8% of the responses for Item 38 referenced how being in a mariachi ensemble has helped them.

Respondent #6: *When I had Spanish class, I recognized some words and it helped me with the vocabulary.*

Respondent #7: *It helped me get in a good school.*

Respondent #27: *Mariachi has helped me at school by solving problems.*

Respondent #45: *It has helped me read quicker.*

Respondent #58: *It's helped me [sic] understand things better and to keep trying so I could play.*

For Item 38, 7.9% of the responses referenced how their grades or school was affected by being in a mariachi ensemble.

Respondent #18: *If I don't get good grades I can't play mariachi.*

Respondent #19: *It pushes me to have good grades in my classes.*

Respondent #26: *...playing in mariachi has made me more confident and makes me want to do many good things in school.*

Respondent #29: *Keep my grades up.*

Respondent #31: *...it influenced a lot because my grades improved a lot.*

Respondent #41: *I would say a little bit, it just kind of helps keep my grades up.*

Respondent #55: *It helps me in school and in my grades because I stay positive.*

It is also useful to note that two other themes produced responses that are similar to the Grade theme: Academics and Discipline.

Academics

Respondent #11: *Mariachi is the reason I'm in a school with advanced academics.*

Respondent #63: *It's made me want to be better at my academics.*

Discipline

Respondent #14: *With well centered [sic] discipline.*

Respondent #32: *It has made me more disciplined.*

APPENDIX P. RESEARCH QUESTION 2: OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

With Research Question 2, the theme within the open-ended questions was working toward the future, attaining goals, was observed.

Respondent #3: *Most of the time it's hard to balance Mariachi and School but I believe if you really apply yourself then everything works out at the end.*

Respondent #43: *It has also made me want to pursue music in the future.*

Respondent #49: *It gave me purpose.*

APPENDIX Q. RESEARCH QUESTION 3: OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

For Research Question 3, several themes were prevalent: Friends, Fun, Connect/Connection, and Excite. 15.8% of the responses for Item 38 referenced their engagement with other students/friends at school.

Respondent #9: *More friends.*

Respondent #17: *...to meet new people that would become my friends.*

Respondent #21: *It helps my life because of new friends.*

Respondent #24: *Its [sic] helped my life because I made friends.*

Respondent #30: *It has made me make new friends.*

Respondent #36: *...because some people and my friends always ask me how to play guitar a lot of questions and now i have more friends than before.*

Respondent #39: *It makes it stress-free while I'm taking classes. Able to talk about it with the teacher making special as well with my classmates.*

Respondent #42: *I have made new friends through mariachi, and intruduced [sic] others to mariachi.*

Respondent #43: *...and it helped me make new friends.*

Respondent #44: *My friends like to ask me about it and I have made more friends by being in it.*

Respondent #52: *It's been really good and i've [sic] made new friends.*

Respondent #56: *Makes me wanna [sic] be here all day and spend most of my time with my friends.*

Respondent #60: *It helped me get more friends.*

Respondent #65: *Mariachi has influenced my life at school because I get close to my classmates.*

Respondent #76: *It has brought my friends and I closer, and I feel like mariachi has helped me be more of a person who participates.*

When responding, 4.0% of participants referenced fun as part of their engagement motivation at school.

Respondent #12: *It has made it more fun.*

Respondent #22: *I have more fun.*

Respondent #53: *It is the most fun thing here.*

Nearly eight percent of respondents referenced connect/connection with other students or mariachis as an important part of their engagement motivation at school.

Respondent #8: *It has brought me close to the members of the group, a struggle I had growing up.*

Respondent #17: *It has helped me connect with my fellow mariachi...*

Respondent #42: *It has made us all more connected.*

Respondent #43: *It has helped me connect with a few more people.*

Respondent #59: *It has helped me connect with people.*

Respondent #66: *It has let me connect with other people who have the same interest.*

Respondent #74: *It helped me connect more with kids at my school.*

For Item 38, 2.6% of the responses referenced their excite/excitement as an important part of their engagement motivation at school.

Respondent #40: *I become recognized as a Mariachi, and people get excited because Mariachi brings in the groove and fiesta.*

Respondent #70: *It get me excited to get to the class.*

APPENDIX R. RESEARCH QUESTION 4: OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

Within Research Question 4, the most prominent themes were: Culture/Heritage, Family, and Connect/Connection. 9.1% of the responses for Item 39 referenced their culture or heritage.

Respondent #8: *It connects me with my parent's heritage and culture.*

Respondent #17: *It helped me discover my culture and embrace it.*

Respondent #44: *I am more influenced with my culture at home and I have a new way of expressing my culture.*

Respondent #48: *I get to experience the music of my parents home country and interact with them.*

Respondent #57: *I have learned about my culture.*

Respondent #77: *Since mariachi is part of my culture, my family always enjoys talking to me about it and loves coming to the mariachi concerts at school.*

The theme of family had the largest percentage of responses (50.7%) of any theme represented in any of the three short-answer questions.

Respondent #1: *It has so much influence in the life of my grandfather that it helps me see the way he feels.*

Respondent #4: *I get to bond with my family members because of the style od [sic] music.*

Respondent #11: *Mariachi has brought me closer to my family and culture.*

Respondent #16: *It makes my mom proud.*

Respondent #21: *My parents encourage me to keep playing.*

Respondent #24: *My parents and grandparent encourages me to keep playing.*

Respondent #26: *The influence mariachi has had in my home life is that i [sic] can sing and play with more confidence in front of my family members.*

Respondent #29: *Together with my family.*

Respondent #31: *Im [sic] more respectful with my family and i [sic] pay more attention on my family than at my phone.*

Respondent #36: *...my dad like guitar him always ask me how to play a song because he want to learn guitar a little bit and my mom she likes to listen to me.*

Respondent #37: *My family and I we became more closer [sic], they spend time with me practicing.*

Respondent #39: *My family is fascinated because of the fact that I've found a hobby that is attracted to me and also that they enjoy what i [sic] do play.*

Respondent #40: *My parents are happy that I am in Mariachi, especially my Mother, she is very very proud that I am in Mariachi and loves how I sing the songs that she grew up with.*

Respondent #41: *My dad is a musician and it helps us connect by showing him new things I learn.*

Respondent #43: *I sometimes sing or play the songs at home, which is fun because my big sister and little brother sometimes join in too. It has helped me get closer to my siblings too.*

Respondent #58: *I influence my sister to start playing when she's older so it's a great influence.*

Respondent #59: *I can talk to my parents more.*

Respondent #60: *It shows everyone in my family that I enjoy it.*

Respondent #61: *Since my family is involved in mariachi they're really proud of me.*

Respondent #62: *They like me more.*

Respondent #64: *I feel that being in mariachi makes my parents feel proud of me of having a big heart towards Mexicans and I feel that I get a really stronger bond with them.*

Respondent #65: *Mariachi has influenced my life at home because I get to get closer with my family.*

Respondent #67: *My parents care for me and make sure that I practice my music.*

Respondent #68: *My parents are proud I can play and sing hispanic [sic] songs.*

Respondent #70: *I can talk about it to my parents.*

Respondent #71: *It make me close to my grandfather.*

Respondent #72: *My dad is proud that I'm successfully in school and my sport and this.*

Respondent #75: *My mom is proud of me and my family enjoys coming to my concerts.*

The last major theme in Item 39 was Connect/Connection at over fourteen percent.

Respondent #2: *It connects me with my family.*

Respondent #5: *I connect more with my mom because she loves Mariachi music so much and making her happy is always my goal.*

Respondent #6: *My family speaks Spanish and I would connect more to my dad especially because he likes telling me the story behind the music.*

Respondent #27: *Mariachi has helped me at home because our family connects more.*

Respondent #33: *Made me connect with my family more.*

Respondent #41: *My dad is a musician and it helps us connect by showing him new things I learn.*

Respondent #46: *I play for my family and we connect a lot better.*

Respondent #52: *It connects me with y family because they are Mexican and they like me singing that kind of music.*

Respondent #63: *It helps me connect more with my family because they always want to come and see me.*

Respondent #66: *It has influenced me by making me connect more to my family.*