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WHEN DID YOU STOP SINGING?:
ELEMENTARY BOYS' ATTITUDES AND SELF-EFFICACY
TOWARD THE ACT OF SINGING

by

Eric Wyler

A THESIS

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WHEN DID YOU STOP SINGING?:
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TOWARD THE ACT OF SINGING

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University of Nebraska, 2021

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The “missing males” epidemic is one which has baffled music educators and researchers for decades. Many research studies have been conducted to explore why boys choose to not be involved in choral ensembles at their middle and high schools. These studies list numerous retention/recruitment strategies; however, the problem remains. Many boys decide before they reach middle school whether they like to sing. The purposes of this study are to examine elementary age boys’ attitudes toward singing and determine at what grade level, if any, there is a significant difference in boys’ attitudes, to search for a relationship between boys’ attitudes and self-efficacy toward the act of singing, and to try to pinpoint reasons and factors contributing to boys’ declining interest in singing at a young age.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The Problem

For decades, vocal music educators have struggled with the problem of not having enough participation from boys at the middle and high school levels. Extensive research has identified several reasons for this phenomenon, and has proposed multiple strategies to help music educators increase enrollment. However, examining elementary age boys' attitudes toward singing may shed light on ways to reach boys before they decide to stop participating in singing at school. From a secondary music education perspective, elementary boys' negative attitudes toward singing could keep them from experiencing the many benefits and opportunities of singing in a choir in middle school, high school, and beyond. In a broader sense, a lost interest in singing, and potentially music altogether, could also result in a less-active musical society, which could lead to the diminished value we place toward singing as a vital part of our human experience.

Of many recommended recruitment and retention strategies, selection of repertoire to suit the interest of boys has been identified as a key component in providing a fun and inviting singing experience in the music classroom (Harrison, 2004; Freer, 2007). Repertoire should also allow boys to engage in singing using their comfortable singing voice (Rutkowski, 1981; Adcock, 1987; Demorest, 2000). “[It is important to] educate boys about their changing voices, both physiologically and musically” (Freer, 2007, p. 34). If students are provided musical literature that allows them to sing freely and confidently, and they are given more insight and knowledge into how their singing voice can be used effectively, they will be more apt to continue singing as they progress

through elementary school.

Another strategy to recruit and retain male singers is to provide opportunities for younger boys to sing with or watch older male singers—within the school system (high school singers) or the community (men’s chorus). The boys can see and interact with these role models, and this experience will give a new perspective about singing in choir (Harrison, 2004; Lucas, 2011; Mizener, 1993; Sweet, 2010). Demorest (2000) suggested “one may appeal directly to boys’ gender identity in a much more natural way—by providing them with opportunities to interact with other boys and men who are active in singing” (p. 38). 20 years later, our society and culture has become much more cognizant of gender identity and the amount of care necessary to not assume students’ gender. However, Demorest is arguing that it is important for young boys to see older boys and men sing in order to break the stereotype that singing is a feminine act. Regardless of gender, singing is an important part of the human experience and providing young boys with access to role models who sing is important to show them the potential that singing has in their own lives (Ashley, 2006).

Although these strategies have been suggested through research, the problem still remains. When it comes time for boys to choose whether to continue singing in school, the choice all too often is not to sing (Demorest, 2000, Freer, 2007). Much of the above research was conducted in a specific location that generalized success to other schools. However, Lucas (2011) admits the scope of his study cannot represent all demographics and indicates, “Further research in other areas of the country would be beneficial” (p. 52). Also, there is a lack of research concerning recruitment of male students to continue singing. Lucas (2011) again states about his own research, “To create viable recruitment

strategies for males this age, more research is needed concerning adolescent males who do not choose to enroll in choir as a class in Grades 7 or 8” (p. 52). Perhaps the root of the problem can be found at the elementary level, before boys are given the choice to continue singing in school.

The Purpose

The purposes of this study are to examine elementary age boys’ attitudes toward singing and determine at what grade level, if any, there is a significant difference in boys’ attitudes, to search for a relationship between boys’ attitudes and self-efficacy toward the act of singing, and to try to pinpoint reasons and factors contributing to boys’ declining interest in singing at a young age.

Research Questions

The following questions will be addressed:

1. Is there a significant difference between elementary grade level (grades one through five) and boys' attitudes and perceptions toward the act of singing?
2. Is there a relationship between positive singing self-efficacy and boys’ attitudes toward singing?
3. What are the reasons or factors as to why boys begin to lose interest in singing at a young age?

Definition of Terms

Self-efficacy is defined as “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives”

(Bandura, 1993, p. 118).

Delimitations

This study was delimited to include responses of male and female students in first through fifth grade in a large suburban Midwestern elementary school. This study will focus on boys' attitudes toward singing, aim to find a possible correlation between attitudes and singing self-efficacy and attempt to identify reasons or factors as to why boys begin to lose interest in singing at a young age.

Theory

It is in the elementary-age years that boys' attitudes toward singing appears to change. This study will aim to pinpoint at what grade level, if any, boys begin to lose interest in singing. In a related study, Abeles & Porter (1978) studied gender stereotypes between boys and girls regarding instrument choice. They found the difference between the sexes' choices maximized in the third and fourth grade. During the middle of their elementary school years, these students had already acquired a gender bias toward different musical instruments. Perhaps gender stereotyping is in effect when it comes to singing.

Students who have a strong sense of pride and confidence in their singing ability continue to sing throughout elementary school and beyond (Zimmerman, 1981). This confidence is established and reinforced at a very early age. The loss of interest in singing could be the result of a lack of self-efficacy toward singing. Mizener (1993) and Lucas (2011) varied in their conclusion regarding the connection between self-efficacy and student attitudes toward singing. Mizener found that there was no significant correlation between the two whereas Lucas concluded that there indeed is a connection between liking to sing (positive attitude) and knowing you are good at singing (positive singing

self-efficacy). In addition, a lack of support for singing shown by students' parents and families could pose as a potential reason for boys' lack of singing interest. Peer pressure may also result in fading interest as well.

Methodology

Subjects

The survey was administered to all first through fifth grade boys and girls a large suburban Midwestern elementary school.

Personnel and Facilities

Music teachers administered the survey during their music class. The teachers were instructed to read the directions as well as each question aloud to all classes and grade levels. Upon completion of the survey, teachers collected the materials and sent them back to the researcher.

Materials

A Likert scale questionnaire comprising eight statements was given to all students. This questionnaire, as well as the survey in its entirety, can be found in Appendix A. Items one through four pertain to singing self-efficacy and items five through eight pertain to student attitudes toward singing. A concluding open-ended question allowed the respondents to explain their answer to the eighth item, "I like to sing." The proper school authorities, including superintendent, school principals, and music teachers, checked the content validity of the survey to ensure it is appropriate for their students. No alterations were proposed to the principal researcher and the study and survey were approved for administration.

Procedure

The survey was administered to all students during a music class when it was convenient for the teacher. The survey instructions and each question were read aloud by the teacher for all classes and grade levels. The students were given up to 25 minutes to complete the survey. Upon completion, the vocal music instructor collected the surveys and returned them to the researcher.

Data Analysis

Data for each grade level were collected and analyzed. Focusing on items five through eight of the questionnaire, an F test was used to determine what, if any, grade level showed a significant difference in boys' attitudes toward singing. Items one through four pertain to questions regarding singing self-efficacy. In order to determine if a correlation exists between boys' attitudes toward singing and their singing self-efficacy, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze answers from all boys in grades one through five collectively. Although this analysis is not able to show a cause and effect relationship, testing for a correlation between attitude and self-efficacy can potentially shed important light on why boys may start to lose interest in singing at some point during elementary school.

One open-ended question was included at the end of the survey to allow students to write an explanation for their own answer to the eighth item, "I like to sing." The responses were then coded and analyzed based on common student responses. This data was then used to determine if there are any significant reasons or factors for boys to lose interest in singing.

Significance of the Study

For decades, researchers have struggled to understand the lack of middle and high school boys in the choir classroom. Various strategies have been discussed but the problem still remains and boys are missing out on the opportunity to experience music-making in the choral capacity. Even if certain strategies work for one region, they could have no effect on another. Much of the current research indicates that generalization to the general population will not necessarily provide successful results.

The information from this survey hopes to give insight into elementary boys' thoughts and apprehensions toward singing. This study aims to understand elementary age boys' attitudes toward singing, search for a correlation between attitudes and their singing self-efficacy, and try to pinpoint reasons and factors as to why boys begin to lose interest in singing at a young age. This study particularly aims to pinpoint at what grade level boys begin to lose interest in singing.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Brief History of the Missing Males

Lack of boys' participation in choir has long been a subject discussed and researched by vocal music educators. Although much literature exists regarding the “missing male,” the problem remains. This gender issue seems to have “roots in beliefs that can be traced back at least as far as the beginnings of the public school music movement” (Koza, 1993, p. 213). It appears vocal music educators have been dealing with this issue for over a century. In the September 1918 issue of the *Music Supervisors' Journal*, Fred Smith, a music educator from Arkansas, provided a recruitment idea in response to his observation that “the boys' attitude towards music is inclined to be contemptuous” (p. 12). In order to dispel the gender stereotype that music is feminine, Mr. Smith created flyers of prominent male musicians and used statements including, “All the great *composers* were *men*” and “The great Symphony Orchestras of the world are composed of *men players* and are conducted by *men*. The personnel of a modern Symphony Orchestra consists of 80 or 90 *men*” (p. 12).

Swanson (1984) described fewer males involved in vocal music during his early years of teaching, beginning in 1932. As an adjudicator during his middle years of teaching, Swanson observed “choir after choir had many girl singers, but pitifully few boys. . . . Compare the number of girls with boys electing vocal music. Don't be surprised to discover a five-to-one ratio of girls to boys in elective music” (p. 47). This ratio was later found to be quite accurate. Gates (1989) posits “the female percentage of the secondary school population involved in choral activities surpasses the male percentage

by greater than a 5:2 margin” (p. 37). Although her sample size was small, Nannen (2017) found:

In looking at the results from this study with a 7:1 ratio that favors female participation, it appears that the imbalance in this school not only continues to favor a higher number of girls participating in choral music programs, but that the disparity for this group of students has widened over time as well. (p. 121)

As students advance in their studies in school, there are more opportunities in the form of clubs, sports, and activities for them to participate. This could contribute to the decline in boys’ participation in choir rather than a negative viewpoint toward singing. Sweet (2010) posits “the boys’ lack of commitment to high school choir did not indicate a lack of interest in singing but a desire for a broader range of experiences” (p. 11). There is also the case of scheduling conflicts within the school day. Schools are adding more and more graduation requirements, which could lead to limiting students’ ability to take choir (Freer, 2007; Nannen, 2017). Harrison (2004) suggests “flexible scheduling, particularly in relation to conflicts with academic, sport, and work commitments” (p. 28) as a potential solution. If vocal music educators must resort to sharing limited rehearsal or classtime, it is paramount that vocal music educators focus on making the choral and singing experience one that is engaging and enjoyable while students are present. Based on her findings that boys worked harder when musically challenged in new ways, Sweet (2010) noted:

I developed a more comprehensive choral music program that provided additional singing opportunities, listening, movement, composition, closer attention to male and female voice change, and support so that, regardless of participation in high

school choir, my students left my choral program experienced, knowledgeable, and self-sufficient musicians. (p. 11)

Sweet's (2010) study focused on high school choir singers and her findings and explanation of what should be included in a successful choral program present valuable insight into retaining singers at the secondary level. This philosophy can be applied to elementary music as well as elementary-age singers. Harrison (2004) proposes "a developmental program that starts boys young and keeps them singing" as a way to naturally incorporate boys in a structured singing environment. Freer (2007) paints this picture of the missing male epidemic: "A boy faced with choral repertoire he doesn't like, a changing voice he doesn't understand, and instruction he finds boring will become a boy who proclaims he hates school music and disengages from choral music" (p. 32).

Gender Stereotypes in Singing and the Musical World

The missing males issue has centered around gender stereotyping and its effect on boys' willingness to continue singing as they get older. "In the first quarter of the twentieth century, boys' absence from music programs was explained by the assumption that music was inconsistent with male endeavors" (Szabo, 1999, p. 12).

Svengalis (1978) indicates:

It may be inferred that the arts often have been rejected as activities and possible career choices by adolescent and preadolescent males not because the arts are perceived as unmasculine activities but rather because athletics and career choices associated with the traditional masculine stereotype have been overemphasized as the normal route for the American male. (p. 4)

Contrary to Svengalis's inference, many have confirmed that elementary boys shy

away from singing due to the stereotype that singing is unmasculine (Costley, 1993; Ashley, 2006; Cramer, 2002; Harrison, 2004; Hall, 2005). One particular issue is how boys perceive their unchanged voice and compare it to the sound of girls' singing voices. Ashley (2006) argues that a fundamental concern about boys' lack of singing from ages eight to 14 deals with their high singing voice and the 'sing like a girl' factor. This vulnerability and perception of femininity of their own singing voice may lead many boys to be afraid to openly sing. The comparison of boy singing voices to girl singing voices is a major influence on boys if the learning environment allows it. However, if boys are challenged by their teachers to uphold a high standard of singing, coupled with demanding repertoire, they are much more apt to disregard the idea that singing in a high voice is a feminized performance (Ashley, 2006 p. 202). "If questions of sexuality and gender identity associated with the voice result in boys not singing . . . then males are excluded from the opportunity of developing a life-long and life-enriching interest in singing" (Ashley, 2006, p. 199).

Prior research admits that society guides boys and men away from music because of its ability to express emotions. For over a century, society has openly opposed music for boys because they felt it was too effeminate. A newspaper advertisement in 1919 warned fathers to consider the impact that music lessons could have on their son, "think this over, Mr. Business Man ... when refusing the son lessons in music or art under the misguided idea that music or art is effeminate and weak" (Campbell, 1919, p. 26). Hall (2005, p. 7) posits, "between the ages of five and seven children learn the constancy of their gender, and it is this realisation of permanence that makes them motivated to master the behaviours and attitudes typical of their gender." Therefore, students in the earliest

grades of elementary school may be forming gender bias based on societal and cultural stereotypes centered around the idea that singing is a feminine behavior.

In addition to singing, masculinity stereotyping is prevalent in the broader musical world. Abeles & Porter (1978) studied gender stereotypes between boys and girls regarding instrument choice. They found the difference between the sexes' choices maximized in the third and fourth grade. During the middle of their elementary school years, these students had already acquired a gender bias toward different musical instruments. In a study of perceptions toward musicians who played stereotypically masculine and feminine instruments, Cramer (2002) found "musicians who played feminine instruments were judged as more caring, sensitive, warm and better adjusted than musicians who played masculine instruments" (p. 171). It is important for music educators, vocal and instrumental alike, to acknowledge and rebuke the existence of these baseless stereotypes. In order to overcome gender-based stereotypes in music, we must teach our students to look past what society or culture has deemed acceptable (Harrison, 2007).

The United States is not the only country dealing with the missing male phenomenon and gender stereotypes associated with singing. Researchers in Australia have also investigated the gender stereotype of musical instruments as well as a decline in boys' singing behavior (Hall, 2005; Harrison, 2004, 2007). Harrison (2007) found that "masculine-feminine perceptions of musical participation continue to exist in the minds of both musicians and the broader population" (p. 278). Harrison (2007) identified these main themes from his subjects' interview answers:

- Participants' early experience of music

- Role models
- Music and sports
- The emergence of stereotyping and gender issues in musical activities (p. 273)

The most problematic gender-related issue in musical activities included harassment, particularly in relation to homophobic labels (Harrison, 2007, p. 273). “Gender stereotypes were evident in their beliefs that boys are supposed to do certain things . . . and in their attitudes about the inappropriateness of singing as an adult male behaviour, certain styles of singing, and males singing high” (Hall, 2005, p. 16). This study examined boys in their first year of school and Hall inferred that boys enter school with many of these stereotypes already assumed. It is clear that America is not the only country experiencing the ongoing societal issues of gender-stereotyping in the musical world.

Role Models and Parental Support

In contrast to America and Australia, the missing males phenomenon is not a topic of concern in South African culture. Demorest (2000) describes the South African cultural view of singing: “In cultures where male singing is the norm . . . there is no shortage of boys willing and eager to sing” (p. 39). This social/cultural viewpoint is determined by the older males in the society and culture. Demorest explains:

If we accept the idea that boys’ participation in singing is tied at least in part to the perception of singing as something men do, then our strategy as music educators is simple: give young boys opportunities to interact with other males who sing. (p. 39)

In order to begin this social/cultural viewpoint of singing among American society and culture, it should start in the elementary classroom by exposing boys to role

models, such as prominent boy choirs, older male students in high school, or men from the community. Szabo (1999) suggests using recordings and videos of boys' choirs to serve as models for singing. There are many prominent, historically revered boys' choirs in the Western musical tradition. Many American cities across the nation have children's choirs as well as boys' choirs. Exposure to these choirs can give young boys new perspectives of singing and show them that other boys are singing difficult, varied repertoire while traveling across the world (Bruno, 2009).

Providing the opportunity for men from the community to sing for students can add to boys' perspective of how music is a part of society and culture. Using male singers in classroom music listening activities and drawing attention to men participating in social singing activities could bring about more positive attitudes toward singing among boys at the upper elementary level (Mizener, 1993, p. 241).

These cultural influences can give the students an appreciation for singing and may show them how it can be a worthwhile, lifelong endeavor. We can hope that continued participation in singing as boys grow older will lead to a societal perspective that does not discern singing as masculine or feminine; rather, that singing is a normal, socially-acceptable way to enjoy music, regardless of gender. Showing older singers to elementary boys is a great way to support the notion that singing is an acceptable thing to do as we grow older; however, support for singing within the household can make an even bigger impact on young boys.

It is certainly important for general music educators at the elementary level to include opportunities for boys to sing with and be exposed to older role models, but parental support of music, particularly singing, is a major factor in some boys' success

and participation. In his study of adolescent male attitudes toward singing in choir, Lucas (2011) found, “the participants perceived support from their families, principals, and nonmusic teachers in their decision to take choir” (p. 46). Familial support of music and singing has a very important role in boys’ decision to continue to sing, whether it be in a school-organized activity or on their own in the home. Lucas (2011) also found the most positive answers from subjects in his study were to the statement “My family thinks it is good that I am in choir” (p. 51). These data suggest some males in choir feel positively supported by their family.

The results from Mizener (1993) suggest “the implementation of programs of family education in the schools, perhaps through community education, stressing the importance of positive parental attitudes toward music in developing positive attitudes toward music and singing in children” (p. 243). In order to change a social construct, it is important to educate the population and provide information that dissuades inaccurate stereotypes. “Music teachers may also wish to increase both written and personal communication with parents in order to encourage parents to take part in many singing and musical activities with their children as the children progress through the grade levels” (Mizener, 1993, p. 243).

Demorest et al. (2017) studied the singing ability and musical self-concept of middle school students to try to gauge future music participation.

For a student whose reported combination of musical self-concept, peer influence, and family engagement in music was one standard deviation above mean, the predicted probability of music participation was 84% . . . the predicted probability for music participation for students who reported both musical self-concept and peer influence one

standard deviation below mean as well as having no family involved in music was only 22%. (p. 411)

These data show the incredible importance that family support of music and singing has a profound effect on students' continued participation in music.

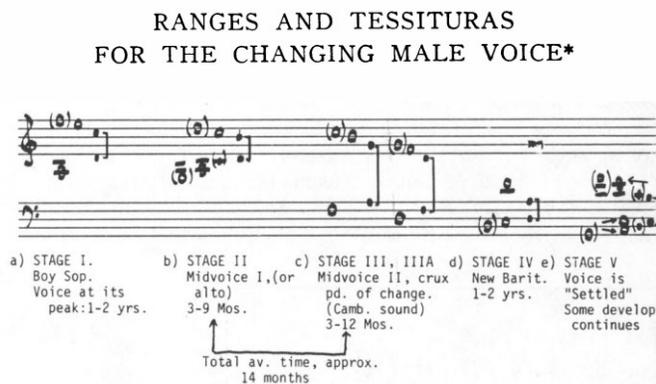
Adolescent Voice Change and Repertoire

In order to provide a comfortable yet engaging experience for young male singers, it is crucial for music teachers to understand the changes that happen to the singing voice of adolescent boys and choose repertoire that is appropriate for them to sing (Phillips, 2003). If older elementary school boys feel uncomfortable singing choral music, either because they cannot sing it correctly or because they do not like the music, they may be reluctant to participate in singing. Rutkowski (1981) claims "the declining interest of junior high boys in chorus and in singing is largely attributed to the fact that they feel insecure about their voices and do not experience success because they are asked to sing parts inappropriate to their vocal ranges" (p. 15). It is the duty of the music teacher to provide knowledge about the singing voice to the students and express understanding of frustration or confusion.

The Cooksey (1977) five stages of voice development has been widely viewed and accepted in vocal music education as a great guide for assessing the adolescent changing voice. The following figure (Cooksey, 1977, p. 12) presents the ranges and tessituras of the five stages of boys' voice development.

Figure 1.

Cooksey's Ranges and Tessituras for the Changing Male Voice



*Bracketed notes — tessituras

Cooksey's study, along with many other research studies that utilized Cooksey's research (Swanson, 1977; Hallam, 2010; Harrison, Welch & Adler, 2012; Beynon-Martinec, 2019) focus on middle school boys. The changing voice of middle school boys is certainly important to understand; however, the present study is focused on the elementary years. In his study, Coffman (1987) found an important change in vocal range between fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. "It was discovered that there is a difference of at least two semitones increase in range of boys' voices from fourth to fifth grade with an additional increase of two semitones from fifth to sixth grade" (Coffman, 1987, p. 5). Killian (1999) also found "many of the fifth- and sixth-grade boys in this study definitely were experiencing voice changes" (p. 364). Half of the fifth graders and over 80% of the sixth graders had already entered at least the second stage of Cooksey's voice-change stages.

Vocal music educators must consider the changing voice when making repertoire choices for multiple reasons. Swanson (1984) warns that boys not only must learn to sing through their voice change but are tasked with learning to read the bass clef and seldom

sing the primary melodic line. There are new harmonic and contrapuntal voice lines, and a new clef to read—in fact, two clefs, because tenors and basses sometimes sing from the bass clef and read the treble clef an octave lower than written. Young male students not only have a voice that is difficult to handle but a puzzling new type of singing to master. (p. 47)

Furthermore, Adcock (1987) adds “males are asked to read treble clefs, treble clefs with an 8 underneath, bass clefs, even C clefs” (p. 11). Singing the treble clef an octave lower than written is how a typical tenor line is written in most SAT and SATB music; however, having elementary boys sing the melody an octave lower as a solution to their voice change poses a problem. “Not until Stage IV and V would these boys be able to sing an alto part an octave lower. What would they sing in the meantime?” (Killian, 1999, p. 367).

Adcock (1987) suggests that keeping boys on the treble clef during the early stages of their voice change would be most advantageous.

“This clef has the advantage of [being] used throughout elementary school. Being familiar with something at a time when bodies and voices seem foreign . . . would be an asset. The treble clef requires only two ledger lines beneath the staff to accommodate their vocal range.” (p. 11)

In addition to considering the logistical aspect of deciding how to present repertoire on sheet music, vocal music educators “should select repertoire that adolescents find relevant, challenging, and satisfying” (Freer, 2007, p. 29). However, Kennedy (2002) warns that vocal music educators should be aware of student preferences, “while continuing to note the inherent challenges in allowing developing

adolescent voices to rehearse inappropriate (in the sense of vocally unhealthy) vocal behaviors” (p. 35).

Moreover, Mizener (1993) argues “if songs used in the music classroom are chosen without regard to age- and grade-appropriateness, then song repertoire in the music classroom may contribute to negative attitudes toward singing” (p. 241). It is apparent that a variety of age-appropriate repertoire (which includes student preference) is very important to keep boys active and engaged. “Music teachers should fit vocal capacity with interesting, challenging, and finest quality materials” (Adcock, 1987, p. 11).

Role of Singing Self-Efficacy

Mizener (1993) found most students at all grade levels like singing under certain circumstances. However, she also found subjects with more singing skill did not equate to a positive attitudes toward singing. “No significant relationships were found between self-perception of singing skill and assessed singing skill or between liking to sing or wanting to sing in choir and assessed singing skill” (p. 239). These results are in contrast with the findings of Lucas (2011), in which he states, “The participants agreed that they are good singers and that singing in choir is fun. This supports prior research that students who are confident in music because of success have a positive attitude toward music” (p. 51). Lucas was referring to research from Svengalis (1978) who found, “Attitudes affect both general and specific classroom behavior of students during music instruction . . . and they particularly determine which students will remain active in volunteer music groups—both vocal and instrumental—in junior high and high school” (p. 1).

It is important to understand if there is a relationship between elementary male singers' attitudes toward singing with singing self-efficacy. If students feel that they are good singers, they may be more likely to continue singing as they grow older. Even if boys do not feel they are good singers at an early age, Bandura (1977) postulates "persistence in activities that are subjectively threatening but in fact relatively safe produces, through experiences of mastery, further enhancement of self-efficacy" (p. 191). Although some boys lose interest in singing, or possibly they just become aware of the stereotype that boys should not sing, with continued involvement and eventual mastery, they may start to feel a greater sense of self-efficacy. Students who are able to read music well and those who like their singing voice will be more likely to continue to participate in music (Lucas, 2011; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011).

The factors that affect self-efficacy beliefs are, in order of largest effect on self-efficacy, mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and verbal persuasion (Bandura, 1986). Each of these categories plays a pivotal role in understanding how student self-efficacy is affected and the relationship self-efficacy has with attitudes toward singing. Ritchie & Williamon (2011) found that students who participate in voice lessons or music ensembles outside of school had a higher self-efficacy for music learning. This comes as no surprise as Bandura (1986) expressed major emphasis on the first factor, mastery experiences. In addition to musical involvement outside of the classroom, Demorest et al. (2017) suggest "students' view of themselves as musicians was a stronger predictor [of musical self-concept] than the teacher's assessment of a student's vocal or musical ability" (p. 415). In their study, the students' mindset had a larger effect on self-efficacy than the teacher's own assessment; however, Demorest et al. questioned middle school

students. It would be interesting to see if elementary students would provide the same perspective of their musicianship versus teacher assessment. Nonetheless, these results align with the order of effect of Bandura's (1987) self-efficacy factors; mastery experiences have more influence than verbal persuasion.

Furthermore, as McPherson & McCormick (2006) discuss, "teachers can influence their student's self-beliefs about their own ability if they provide them with challenging tasks and meaningful activities to master, actively support and encourage them along the way" (p. 334). Although there are many factors that lead to high self-efficacy, the teacher's role in building up young singers is paramount for elementary students. Even more meaningful, Fisher (2014) concludes "the finding that emerging adolescent males who have participated in a choral program for 3 or more years had a higher singing self-efficacy" (p. 286). If we are able to target elementary boys and give them the tools, guidance, and support they need, over time they may continue to not only participate, but do so with a high singing self-efficacy.

Summary

A review of the literature has provided a broader context to the problem at hand. For over a century, music educators have dealt with low numbers of male singers; a problem which has been traced to the onset of public school in America. Gender stereotypes play a critical role in boys' attitudes toward singing and these perceptions occur as early as elementary school. To counteract these stereotypes, male role models and parental support can have a tremendous positive impact on young male singers. Vocal music educators bear the responsibility to teach young singers about their voices, explain the changes that will take place as they mature, and choose literature that is

appropriate and engaging. If boys are given these tools and are shown support at an early age, their singing self-efficacy and attitudes toward singing could reach a high enough level to contribute to a life-long engagement with singing.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants included all students grades one through five currently participating in general music in two elementary schools within a large-sized school district in the central United States.

Materials

A survey was administered to all participants. The first eight items used a Likert scale and pertained to either students' attitudes toward singing or their singing self-efficacy. Possible responses for the Likert scale included:

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  | 2.  | 3.  | 4.  | 5.  |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Respondents circled the corresponding emoji they most closely related to for each statement. As noted above, each emoji corresponds with an emotion as well as a numeric value. In the analysis of data, the above numbers were used to quantify the responses.

The format of the questions can be seen in the following examples:

1. I like my singing voice.

Strongly Agree -----  -----  -----  -----  -----  ----- Strongly Disagree

8. I like to sing.

Strongly Agree -----  -----  -----  -----  -----  ----- Strongly Disagree

The rationale for the use of these emojis in the questionnaire was based on the Hall, Hume, & Tazzyman (2016) article in which the researchers created a Five Degrees

of Happiness Scale. The scale provides an effective method for children to provide judgments in response to quantitative questions. The emojis also speed up processing of questions, especially for respondents who may have low-literacy skills (Stange, Barry, Smyth, & Olsen, 2016).

Following the Likert scale questions, respondents were given the opportunity to give further explanation to their answer for Item #8 (I like to sing). This is the crux of the study so these answers can shed more light into why students do or do not like to sing.

Personnel and Facilities

The questionnaire was administered by the general music teacher to students during their general music class. The teacher was instructed to read aloud the directions for each question as the students circled their answers. Students were given up to 25 minutes to complete the survey. Once complete, the general music teacher collected the surveys, sealed them in an envelope and sent them back to the researcher immediately upon completion.

Procedure

A nine-item questionnaire was administered during music class to all students grades one through five in two elementary schools within a large-sized school district in the central United States. A Likert scale was used for the first eight items of the questionnaire. Items one through four of the questionnaire pertained to singing self-efficacy. These questions are focused on trying to gauge students' perception of themselves as singers. Items five through eight of the questionnaire focus on students' attitudes toward singing. The intent of these questions is to understand how the students feel about singing in general. After the Likert scale questions, a single open-ended

question was provided for students to elaborate on their answer to the eighth item, “I like to sing.” Due to the importance of their response to this particular question, it is crucial to gain specific reasoning for students’ answers. They were encouraged to list all reasons why they do or do not like to sing. These responses were coded based on students’ written answers.

Design of the Study

A Likert scale questionnaire comprising eight items was used to determine boys’ attitudes toward singing as well as their singing self-efficacy. An additional ninth question directed students to explain their answer to the most important of the questionnaire item: I like to sing. Data were separated and analyzed by each grade level.

Items five through eight of the questionnaire aim to determine what, if any, grade level shows a significant difference in boys’ attitudes toward singing. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was used to determine if a significant difference in boys’ attitudes toward singing exists between each grade level.

Items one through four pertain to singing self-efficacy. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was administered to determine if a correlation exists between boys’ attitudes toward singing and their singing self-efficacy. Although this relationship will not be able to show cause and effect, testing for a correlation between attitudes and self-efficacy can potentially shed important light on why boys start to lose interest in singing at some point during elementary school.

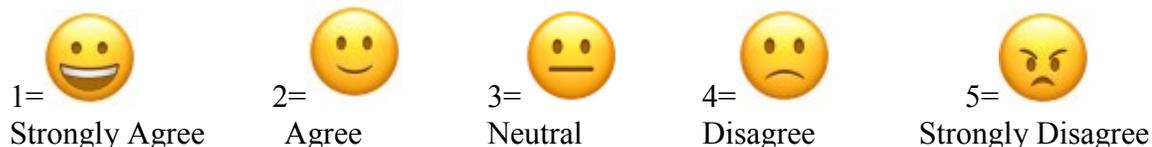
One open-ended question at the end of the survey directed students to write an explanation for their own answer to the eighth item, “I like to sing.” The responses were then coded based on tendencies found within the written answers, rather than grouped

using pre-determined codes. Responses for each code were tallied to show the level of occurrence of each code response.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purposes of this study are to examine elementary age boys' attitudes toward singing and determine at what grade level, if any, there is a significant difference in boys' attitudes, to search for a relationship between boys' attitudes and self-efficacy toward the act of singing, and to try to pinpoint reasons and factors as to why boys begin to lose interest in singing at a young age. A Likert scale questionnaire was administered to explore students' self-assessed attitudes toward singing as well as their singing self-efficacy. To determine the mean response for each of the subscales in the questionnaire, items one through four were averaged to determine the mean value for singing self-efficacy for each grade level. The same procedure was used for items five through eight to determine the mean value for attitude toward singing for each grade level. Each emoji was assigned a numeric value shown here:



Data were analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA), additional post hoc t-tests, and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. This chapter reports the findings from the data that were collected and analyzed for this study. The information was organized to answer each research question sequentially.

Research Question One: Is there a specific elementary grade level (grades one through five) that we see a significant difference in boys' attitudes and perceptions toward the act of singing?

Items five through eight of the questionnaire were designed to gauge attitudes toward singing. Answers to these items were separated by gender and grade level and then averaged together to produce the mean scores shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Mean Scores of Items Five through Eight by Grade Level of Boys and Girls

Grade Level	n	M	SD	Grade Level	n	M	SD
Boys				Girls			
Grade 1	35	1.806	0.951	Grade 1	23	1.707	1.115
Grade 2	35	2.464	1.117	Grade 2	53	1.774	0.788
Grade 3	44	2.355	1.085	Grade 3	33	1.924	0.865
Grade 4	33	2.492	1.094	Grade 4	31	1.726	0.693
Grade 5	51	2.216	0.911	Grade 5	41	1.787	0.830

To determine if there is a significant difference in mean scores for attitudes toward singing between grade levels one through five, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and the results can be found in Table 2.

Table 2
ANOVA Source Table - Boys' Attitudes Toward Singing

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between Grades 1-5	11.46	4	2.86	2.71*
Within Grades 1-5	203.69	193	1.06	

* $p < .05$

Analysis of variance revealed that a significant difference did exist. In order to determine if there was a significant difference between successive grade levels, post hoc

t-tests were conducted between grades one and two, grades two and three, and so on. The post hoc t-tests revealed there was a significant difference in boys' attitudes toward singing from grade one to grade two. This was the only significant difference in boys' attitudes toward singing between successive grade levels. Table 3 provides the post hoc results.

Table 3
t-test of Boys' Attitude Toward Singing (Grades 1 and 2)

Grade Level	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Grade 1	1.80	0.95	-2.66	66	0.004**
Grade 2	2.46	1.12			

** $p < .01$

Research Question Two: Is there a correlation between positive singing self-efficacy and boys' attitudes toward singing?

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was administered to determine if there was a correlation between positive singing self-efficacy and boys' attitudes toward singing. Items one through four of the questionnaire, pertaining to self-efficacy, were tested against items five through eight, boys' attitudes toward singing. This test was done using responses from all boys in grades one through five and was not divided by grade level. There was a positive correlation between singing self-efficacy and boys' attitudes toward singing, $r = 0.99$, $n = 198$, $p = 0.001$. The higher the boys' singing self-efficacy, the more positive their attitudes were toward singing.

Research Question Three: What reasons or factors prevent elementary boys from liking to sing?

Once students completed the eight items of the Likert survey, they were asked to

elaborate their answer for the eighth item, “I like to sing.” Respondents were directed to list as many reasons they did or did not like to sing. The data were grouped into two main categories: “Like to Sing” and “Do Not Like to Sing.” The following six codes were found within the “Like to Sing” category: fun, positive self-efficacy (i.e. students expressed that they felt talented, like their singing voice), family/friends, other social factors (i.e. radio, famous singers/songs, church), expression/emotion (i.e. happy, calm), and elements of music (i.e. beat, rhythm, lyrics). The following five codes were found within the “Do Not Like to Sing” category: singing in public/nervous, embarrassed, negative self-efficacy (i.e. bad singing voice), physical discomfort, lack of interest/boring. Table 4 shows the frequency of responses for each code.

Table 4

Code Frequencies for “Like to Sing” and “Do Not Like to Sing” for Boys Grades 1-5

“Like to Sing” Codes:	Grade 1:	Grade 2:	Grade 3:	Grade 4:	Grade 5:
Fun:	2	3	8	1	9
Positive Self-efficacy:	0	0	5	1	12
Family/Friends:	0	1	0	3	4
Other Social Factors:	1	6	5	4	2
Expression/Emotion:	6	4	7	8	11
Elements of Music:	6	6	2	0	12
“Do Not Like to Sing” Codes:	Grade 1:	Grade 2:	Grade 3:	Grade 4:	Grade 5:
Singing in Public/Nervous:	2	0	2	0	4
Embarrassed:	0	0	1	0	3
Negative Self-efficacy:	0	0	4	6	4
Physical Discomfort:	3	2	1	0	2
Lack of Interest/Boring:	0	3	1	2	2

Based on the number of responses for each category, it is clear that boys were much more open to talk about why they liked to sing. Many boys expressed how fun

singing is to them, how they enjoy various elements of music, such as beat and rhythm, and how singing to the radio, at church, or with family members provides a great environment to enjoy the act of singing.

Students were encouraged to list as many reasons as they felt necessary to answer the question. Some students listed numerous reasons they do or do not like to sing while others did not answer the question at all. However, in total, boys listed 139 reasons they like to sing in contrast to 42 reasons they do not like to sing. These frequencies do not necessarily reflect the same data obtained in the questionnaire portion of the survey. However, a deeper review of boys' written responses, including examples, is provided in the Discussion chapter.

Summary

Results from the survey paint a clear picture for each of the research questions posed in this study. It was found that there is a significant difference in boys' attitudes toward singing from grade one to grade two. In addition, a very strong correlation existed between boys' attitudes toward singing and boys' singing self-efficacy. A wide variety of reasons and factors detailing whether or not they like to sing were listed by the respondents.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSIC EDUCATORS

The significant change in boy's attitudes toward singing as early as second grade is very concerning. In my experience, the music education profession puts most of the focus on recruiting and retaining boys in middle and high school, not at the elementary level. My findings show that we may need to focus on the formative years when boys may begin to lose their interest in singing. Music educator conferences might consider including more sessions which emphasize creating and fostering a love of singing in our students from the very beginning. A collection of different resources, methods, and ideas centered around encouraging and empowering elementary boys to sing in class could prove useful to music teachers.

Research Question One: Is there a specific elementary grade level (grades one through five) that we see a significant difference in boys' attitudes and perceptions toward the act of singing?

Items one through four of the Likert scale aimed to gauge student attitudes toward singing. Student responses to these four items were averaged and through an ANOVA and series of post Hoc t-tests, it was determined that there was indeed a significant difference in boys' attitudes toward singing from grade one to two. This change in attitudes occurs at a very early age so intervention in the early elementary years is crucial.

There are many societal and social stigmas about singing which force us to develop ways to dispel the idea that singing is feminine (Ashley, 2006; Harrison, 2004; Abeles, 1978). "Unfortunately, singing in American society is viewed by many as a feminine behavior . . . Such boys may withdraw from singing rather than be made fun of

and suffer from embarrassment” (Phillips, 2003, p. 41). Perhaps including older male singers in the music classroom as often as possible would create the idea that it is okay to sing not only in elementary school but when students get older (Demorest, 2000; Bruno, 2009). Elementary music teachers could highlight music majors from local colleges/universities or middle/high school singers that could come perform or talk about what singing means to them. If bringing guests into the classroom is not a viable option, showing performances of male singers could help to provide a different aspect to male singing (Szabo, 1999).

The present study found that boys lose interest in singing between grades one and two and it is important that we acknowledge this with our students. Showing empathy and support will help them know they are not alone with their feelings toward singing. Providing an open and safe environment which always promotes singing can give boys the opportunity to experience singing and continue to try it (Phillips, 2003).

Elementary music teachers must find the right balance between singing every time students are in the classroom while also continually advocating for singing and completing all of the state/district requirements (Freer, 2006; Kennedy, 2002). Students in elementary music class learn many other musical skills besides singing. This is an incredible challenge considering the extremely limited amount of time students have in the music classroom. Perhaps overlapping other required activities, such as demonstrating rhythmic patterns, could be done simultaneously with singing. For instance, have students play an ostinato pattern on a drum while they sing a song. “Another possibility would be to include ‘songs’ with no words, as a development of the test battery elements and to provide opportunities for children to focus on pitch without the distraction of the words”

(Leighton & Lamont, 2006, p. 326). We must provide succinct opportunities and experiences which allow boys to see the benefits and values of singing while juggling the entire music curriculum. If our young students learn to love singing in the classroom right away, it could translate into a love that will follow them into middle and high school and hopefully continue throughout the rest of their lives.

Research Question Two: Is there a correlation between positive singing self-efficacy and boys' attitudes toward singing?

Using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, it was determined that there was a very strong correlation between positive singing self-efficacy and boys' attitudes toward singing. If boys feel like confident singers and are comfortable with singing, they have positive attitudes toward singing. This very strong correlation confirms previous research (Lucas, 2011; Ritchie & Williamon, 2011; Zimmerman & Ringle, 1981). "Though Klinedinst (1991) found students' "self-concept" in music to be a predictor variable of student retention in band, more research is needed to determine if singing self-efficacy plays a role in student retention in choral ensembles" (Fisher, 2014, p. 286). Results from the present study could help provide to the missing literature that Fisher suggests is not currently present.

It seems natural for students to be drawn to an activity they feel they are good at doing. The next question becomes: how do we empower our boys to feel like they are good singers? For much of the twentieth century, it was common for music educators to classify their singers as "musical" or "non-musical," even from an early age. This was primarily decided if a student showed they were not able to match pitch very well. However, in the 1970's there were two major studies by Davies and Roberts (1975, 1976)

which showed students who were initially classified as “non-musical” were able to develop skill and singing ability through training. More recently, we are much more cognizant of musical learning as a continuum and students can be anywhere in the process and still be successful (Leighton & Lamont, 2006). Thus, vocal music teachers should not give up hope that all students can learn to sing and overcome musical shortcomings. However, if students are told they are not musical, they may be much more likely to not give singing a chance (Roberts & Davies, 1976).

Bandura (1981) explains that self-efficacy is reliant on self-motivation and “self-motivation relies on the intervening processes of goal setting and self-evaluative reactions to one's own behavior” (p. 586). With this understanding, it is clear that no matter what the task, we must take personal responsibility to become self-motivated and confident in our abilities. However, when working with young children, it is very important for the music educator to teach the process of goal setting and self-evaluative reactions to students' behavior. Second graders showed a significant decrease in attitude toward singing and students this age have not yet mastered the ability to become self-motivated as Bandura explains it. Many students at this age tend to shy away from something they do not feel confident doing and although singing ability is based on talent, it is the skill of singing that truly dictates level of ability. If students are not given the tools needed to set realistic goals and learn how to be self-evaluative in a positive and worthwhile way, they may give up long before they are able to become confident singers.

What type of activities or methods are available to music educators to help them teach their students to become self-motivated singers? The same way classroom teachers use a weekly reading log to ensure continued reading at home, music educators could use

a weekly music/singing log with their students. This could look different for each teacher, class, or even student, but the idea is the same: give students small goals to achieve while building their confidence and keeping them singing. For most students, a music/singing log could be twenty minutes of singing or music-making but could be adjusted to accommodate for different musical levels of the students. Teachers could provide a playlist of preferred or classroom songs for students to access at home. The use of a singing log could also allow for students to explore and sing a variety of musical styles each week including jazz, musical theatre, folk, etc. Basing music selection on what the students enjoy could empower them to be excited to participate and reach their goals. Completing weekly music/singing logs could encourage students to learn how to set musical goals and motivate them to sing more frequently outside of the classroom.

Even though we have a much better understanding of the capabilities of young students to enhance their singing ability through training, many times we do not put enough time or focus on those students. Constant encouragement is paramount to keep them engaged and potentially learn to like singing. There have been many times I heard an adult say they were told by their music teacher that they were not good at singing. Those adults have gone through their lives feeling like they should not sing and never made an attempt to learn or improve their singing skill. Abril (2007) found that “teachers that propel the notion that singing ability is an inborn trait, which should be reserved for the talented few, may end up contributing to a society in which self-identified ‘non-singers’ experience singing anxiety and choose not to participate in music” (p. 13). Motivation and encouragement could go a long way in helping students achieve more musically as well as learn to love singing.

Research Question Three: What reasons or factors prevent elementary boys from liking to sing?

The final question of the survey allowed students to list all of the reasons they do or do not like to sing. Some students did not answer this question, others answered with a singular reason, and many answered with multiple reasons. These responses were then coded into separate categories based on commonalities. Apart from fourth grade, there was a large increase in responses from one grade level to the next. This may be attributed to students' confidence in their ability to write out their response. It could also indicate an increased willingness to participate in the study for older students.

A first grade respondent's written answer which was coded under "Expression/Emotion" simply stated, "Singing makes me happy." Another first grade respondent answered, "[Singing] makes me calm." The "Expression/Emotion" coded responses were also prevalent in fourth grade as well. Many of these responses were similar to the first grade answers using words like "happy" and "calm" but one boy wrote that he liked to sing, "because I can express my feelings." Fifth grade respondents also offered simple answers using "happy" or "calm" but one boy really expressed how music makes him feel, "I like to sing because I feel like I need to pour my heart out because when I'm stressed my heart is in my chest and when I'm stressed my chest hurts." Another fifth grade boy also explained he uses singing as a coping mechanism, "I like to sing because it makes me feel better when I'm sad or mad." Many times we assume that boys do not want to express their emotions or hesitate to show that behavior (Nannen, 2017). These results indicate that boys look to music and singing as a positive way to be able to express themselves.

Elementary boys' willingness to explain how music influences their emotions and expressions is a very important finding. In a culture and society driven by masculine and feminine stereotypes in music (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Svengalis, 1978; Cramer, 2002; Harrison, 2004), these boys were inclined to share that they like to sing because of how it makes them feel through emotions and expressions. In particular, one fifth grade student wrote, "People think that because I'm male I can't sing. So I try to prove them wrong and now I love singing, and I also like my voice." This student acknowledged the gender stereotype, although it is unclear who he means by "people." Nevertheless, the notion that males cannot sing was challenged by this student and resulted in his love of singing. Although the results of this study found that attitudes toward singing significantly dropped from first to second grade, these responses shed light on the importance of what music and singing can provide elementary boys.

As shown in the results to the second research question, self-efficacy may play an important role in growing and maintaining boys' attitudes toward singing. Among the eight fourth grade boys' responses who did not like to sing, six were coded as "Negative Self-Efficacy." This could further solidify the notion that attitudes and self-efficacy have a strong dependency on one another. Examples of these negative self-efficacy statements include, "I don't sound good," "I do not like to show my voice," and "I don't like to sing because I think I have a bad singing voice." These types of responses were given at almost all grade levels, which confirms the need to provide constant encouragement and help to overcome some boys' negative feelings toward their singing voices.

Looking at the frequency of "Do Not Like to Sing" codes, there is a rise from second to third grade and a very sharp rise from fourth to fifth grade. The older the

students, the greater number of written responses for “Do Not Like to Sing.” Responses coded as “Singing in Public/Nervous” and “Embarrassed” occurred sparingly throughout each grade level but were most prevalent in fifth grade. Performance anxiety can be tied to many factors and can affect students in different ways (Ryan, 2004; Kirchner, 2003; Osborne & Kenny, 2008). Perhaps boosting students’ self-efficacy and confidence in their ability to sing could help offset some of the fear associated with singing in front of others.

Respondents in all grade levels, except fourth grade, indicated they have physical discomfort while singing. Most concerning was that young, unchanged voice singers remarked that singing hurt their throat. Previous research surrounding adolescent male voice change studied students in fourth grade and older (Coffman, 1987; Killian, 1999). Repertoire usage and vocal ranges of classroom singing activities must be carefully chosen to accommodate the boys who experience vocal discomfort while singing (Swanson, 1984; Adcock, 1987; Mizener, 1993; Kennedy, 2002). Perhaps more research is needed to identify vocal discomfort in singers with the unchanged voice.

Suggestions for Future Study

This study was conducted in a large central United States public school district. Further research in varying demographics including smaller school sizes, locations other than the central United States, or private school districts would be appropriate.

The purpose of this study was to determine boys’ attitudes toward singing and determine if there was a specific grade level that boys began to lose interest in singing. Although it was found that a significant level of interest was lost from first to second grade for boys, a comparison between boys’ and girls’ attitudes toward singing would

offer another perspective of attitudes toward singing from all children. Do girls also lose significant interest in singing as boys do from first to second grade? Is it a different grade or do they lose significant interest at all during elementary school?

Although the focus of this study was specifically on the act of singing, a longitudinal study examining the correlation between self-efficacy and attitudes toward singing and its effects on retention of students once they enter middle school could prove useful. Do boys with a high singing self-efficacy go on to continue singing in a group setting, such as middle school choir, when they are given the choice? If not, are there other factors that may keep them from joining?

Allowing students to write out their reasons for liking to sing or not provided for a great opportunity to learn more about their attitudes toward singing. However, some students did not answer the question while others listed multiple reasons. Some student responses were illegible or were not clear enough to use in the coding process. Perhaps providing an opportunity for students to engage in an interview with the researcher or music teacher could allow for more elaborate answers and a more in-depth discussion about the factors that affect attitudes toward singing.

Conclusion

For many years, vocal music educators have struggled with keeping boys involved in their music programs and although much research exists to examine the reason, this problem remains. Many different factors have been discussed in previous literature, such as gender stereotyping, a lack of familial support, improper methods surrounding adolescent male voice changes, and singing self-efficacy. This study sought to examine elementary age boys' attitudes toward singing and determine at what grade

level, if any, there is a significant difference in boys' attitudes, to search for a relationship between boys' attitudes and self-efficacy toward the act of singing, and to try to pinpoint reasons and factors as to why boys begin to lose interest in singing at a young age.

It was determined that a significant change in boys' attitudes toward singing occurred from first to second grade. This change at such an early age may require teacher intervention sooner than previously thought. The relationship between boys' attitudes and self-efficacy toward singing was found to be very strong. In nearly every instance, high singing self-efficacy correlated with having positive attitudes toward singing. With the understanding that boys' self-efficacy toward singing directly correlates with their attitudes toward singing, it is imperative that we address the glaring need to give these older elementary boys the tools to feel comfortable and confident in their singing. Although multiple codes were identified during analysis, the most prevalent reason that boys did not like to sing was "Negative Self-Efficacy" found in third through fifth grade. It is also concerning to see that "Physical Discomfort" was a reason multiple boys in grades one through three do not like to sing. Meanwhile, the code "Emotions/Expressions" was the most prevalent reason boys like to sing, bringing to light the importance of music's effect on young boys' ability to emote and express themselves.

This study sheds light on multiple facets of boys' singing experience in elementary school. Although this study and the results may not apply to all, it is the hope that these findings can be useful to the music education profession and elementary music teachers. It is important that we provide continuous support and encouragement so that all young boys can learn to love their singing voices and continue to sing for the rest of their lives.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY

Grade in school (please circle): 1 2 3 4 5 Gender (please circle):
M F

Directions: Circle the emoji that you feel best represents your feelings toward each statement. Only circle ONE emoji per question.

1.  2.  3.  4.  5. 
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

1. I have a good singing voice.

Strongly Agree      Strongly Disagree

2. My friends, family, and/or teachers tell me I sing well.

Strongly Agree      Strongly Disagree

3. I feel comfortable singing in music class.

Strongly Agree      Strongly Disagree

4. I am involved in singing at church or in a choir outside of school.

Strongly Agree      Strongly Disagree

5. I think singing is fun.

Strongly Agree      Strongly Disagree

6. I enjoy singing along to the radio, phone, or streaming device at home or in the car.

Strongly Agree      Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX B
IRB APPROVAL DOCUMENT



January 10, 2020

Eric Wyler
 Glenn Korff School of Music
 WMB 113 UNL NE 685880100

Rhonda Fuelberth
 Glenn Korff School of Music
 WMB 347 UNL NE 685880100

IRB Number: 20200119946EP
 Project ID: 19946
 Project Title: When Did You Stop Singing?: Elementary Boys Attitudes and Perceptions Toward the Act of Singing

Dear Eric:

This letter is to officially notify you of the approval of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the Board's opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution's Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects under the 2018 Requirements at 45 CFR 46.

- o Review conducted using expedited review category 7 at 45 CFR 46.110
- o Date of Approval: 1/10/2020
- o Date of Expedited review: 1/8/2020
- o Date of Acceptance of Revisions: 1/10/2020
- o Funding (Grant congruency, OSP Project/Form ID and Funding Sponsor Award Number, if applicable): N/A
- o Consent waiver: Yes, parental consent waiver approved under 45 CFR 46.116(d)(1-4)
- o Review of specific regulatory criteria (contingent on funding source): 45 CFR 46
- o Subpart B, C or D review: Subpart D, Research involving children, not greater than minimal risk approved under 45 CFR 46.404

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Final Approval: 01/10/2020.

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:

- * Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
- * Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
- * Any protocol violation or protocol deviation
- * An incarceration of a research participant in a protocol that was not approved to include prisoners
- * Any knowledge of adverse audits or enforcement actions required by Sponsors
- * Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;

- * Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
- * Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

Any changes to the project, including reduction of procedures, must be submitted and approved prior to implementation. A change request form must be submitted to initiate the review of a modification.

For projects which continue beyond one year from the starting date, an annual update of the project will be required by informing the IRB of the status of the study. The investigator must also advise the Board when this study is finished or discontinued by completing the Final Report form via NUgrant.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 402-472-6965.

Sincerely,



Rachel Wenzl, CIP
for the IRB



APPENDIX C
PARENT/GUARDIAN COVER LETTER



GLENN KORFF SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian:

My name is Eric Wyler and I am currently pursuing my Masters Degree in Music Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am working on a research project and need your assistance. I have a questionnaire to measure student attitudes toward singing. Although the analysis of the data will focus primarily on boys' answers, both boys and girls will be given the questionnaire to compare the responses. I am hoping to learn about the students' thoughts and opinions about singing throughout their daily lives.

Participation in the questionnaire will only require 15 minutes of time and will be administered during general music class for all students in grades 1-5 at Leonard Lawrence and Bertha Barber Elementary Schools. All student names will be kept anonymous and, other than their answers to the questions, only their grade level and gender will be recorded. No publications or reports from this project will include identifying information on any participant.

Attached to this letter is a Parent/Legal Guardian Notification Form which outlines information about the study and also includes a portion to indicate if you would NOT like your student to participate in the questionnaire. It is presumed that your student will participate in the questionnaire if the Notification Form is not returned. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school office or the primary researcher.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

Eric Wyler
Graduate Student
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

APPENDIX D
PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION FORM



GLENN KORFF SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Parent/Legal Guardian Notification Form

Formal Study Title: When Did You Stop Singing?: Elementary Boys' Attitudes and Self-Efficacy Toward the Act of Singing

Authorized Study Personnel:

Principal Investigator: Eric Wyler (402) 315-7678

Secondary Investigator: Rhonda Fuelberth, Ph.D. Office: (402) 472-3349

Key Information:

The project will involve:

- Males and females in Grades 1-5
- Procedures will include completing an anonymous 9-item questionnaire during their music class one week from the issuance of this notification form
- General nature of items include responses to statements such as "I like to sing" or "I think singing is fun"
- The total time from participants needed for this study is 15 minutes
- There are no risks associated with this study
- Your child/legal ward will receive no compensation for participation
- You and your child/legal ward will be provided a copy of the opt-out form if you choose not to participate in the study

Invitation:

Your child/legal ward is invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to inform you of the study as well as help you decide if you do not want your student to participate. No response to this letter is required for your child's/legal ward's participation in this study. You may opt your child out of the study by returning the opt-out form at the end of this letter. If you have any questions, please ask.

Why is your child/legal ward being asked to be in this research study?

Your child/legal ward is being asked to be in this study because they participate in general music at their elementary school. All students Grades 1-5 are being asked to participate in this study.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

The purpose of this study is to examine elementary-age students' (particularly boys') attitudes toward singing, search for a correlation between attitudes and their singing self-efficacy, and try to pinpoint reasons and factors as to why boys begin to lose interest in singing at a young age.

What will be done during this research study?

Your child/legal ward will be asked to complete a 9-item survey using a paper and pencil

questionnaire. The survey will take 15 total minutes of class time during their general music class.

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. Your student will remain completely anonymous and no individual results will be posted.

What are the possible benefits to your child/legal ward?

Your child/legal ward is not expected to get any benefit from being in this study.

What are the possible benefits to other people?

The benefits to the music education field may include a better understanding of when elementary boys begin to lose interest in singing and the factors that lead to their loss of interest.

What are the alternatives to being in this research study?

Instead of being in this research study you can choose not to allow your child/legal ward to participate. They will be given independent reading time during the completion of the questionnaire.

What will being in this research study cost you or your child/legal ward?

There is no cost to you or your child/legal ward to be in this research study.

Will your child/legal ward be compensated for being in this research study?

There is no compensation awarded for the participation of your student/legal ward in this research study.

What should you do if your child/legal ward has a problem during this research study?

Your child's/legal ward's welfare is the major concern of every member of the research team. If there is a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the beginning of this notification form. As stated previously, this is a minimal risk study and there should be no cause for concern that there will be any problem during this research study.

How will information about your child/legal ward be protected?

Your child/legal ward will remain anonymous throughout the entire research process. The name of your student will never be collected, known, or used by the researcher(s).

The data will be stored in a locked cabinet at the principal investigator's office and will only be seen by the research team during the study and for 1 year after the study is complete.

The only persons who will have access to your child's/legal ward's research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law or contract. The information from this study may be published in professional journals or presented at conferences or meetings but the data will be reported as group or summarized data and your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

What are your child's/legal ward's rights as a research subject?

Your child/legal ward may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study related questions, please contact the investigators listed at the beginning of this form.

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research, contact the Institutional

Review Board (IRB):

- Phone: 1(402)472-6965
- Email: irb@unl.edu

What will happen if you decide not to allow your child/legal ward to be in this research study or decide they need to stop participating once they start?

You can decide your child/legal ward should not be in this research study, or you can have your child/legal ward stop being in this study (“withdraw”) at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to allow your child/legal ward to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect you or your child’s/legal ward’s relationship with the investigators, with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, their elementary school, or Bellevue Public Schools.

You and your child/legal ward will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

Participant Feedback Survey

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln wants to know about your research experience. This 14 question, multiple-choice survey is anonymous. This survey should be completed after your participation in this research. Please complete this optional online survey at: <http://bit.ly/UNLresearchfeedback>.



 GLENN KORFF SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Parent/Legal Guardian Notification Form

I have read the information about the research being conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Please check the box below **only if you do not** want your child/legal ward to take part in the research.

My child **does not** have permission to participate.

Name of Student:

 (Name of Student: Please print)

 Student Grade Level

Name & Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian:

 (Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian)

 Date

Please email this form to wylers.eric@gmail.com or have your child/legal ward return this form to his/her school office within one week ONLY if you DO NOT wish them to participate.

Thank you so much for your assistance with this important project. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a study participant that have not been answered by the investigators, or to report any concerns about the project, please contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at 402-472-6965.

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