The Musical Participation and Consumerism of Two Non-Music Majors Enrolled in a University Men’s Glee Club

The purpose of this study was to explore the music-related habits, attitudes, preferences and participation of two members of a university Men’s Glee Club. Fieldwork was conducted in twice-weekly meetings of a university glee club plus interviews and off-site observations with two non-music major participants. The participants’ experience in a collegiate glee club was a continuation of their previous histories of music making, yet different from how they consumed music outside of school. Consistent with previous research, they sometimes compartmentalized different forms of musicking in an attempt to differentiate musical styles and functions. They considered themselves to be “musicians.” These non-music majors were seeking musical expression that did not exist in their own academic programs outside the school of music building, which suggests the critical role of the university music program in serving the needs of the campus community.

Introduction and Review of Literature

Members of university-based Men’s Glee Clubs choose to participate for a variety of reasons. They are variously experienced and arrive to the ensemble from a spectrum of family, community, school, and social settings. As music participants, they are distinguished from audience members and have been defined as professionals, apprentices, amateurs, hobbyists, recreationalists, and dabblers (Gates, 1991). Defining who is a novice and who is trained can be problematic (Smith, 1997), but all musicians can find a place in community, educational, semi-professional and professional ensembles that serve the respective needs of their members. The attitudes and enculturation of young adults who extend music learning from school to college allow opportunities for understanding recreational music-making at this yet early stage of their development. Little is known about the experiences of students whose major areas of study lie outside the
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music department and who comprise a significant subset of collegiate ensemble enrollment. Two of these students are the focus of this study, which is grounded in research on the topics of musical participation and the historical status and function of collegiate ensembles over time.

Musical Participation

In comparing cultures from around the world, Turino (2008) described those in which music exists for presentation to audiences, as in Western art music or popular music. In other cultures, music is completely participatory and exists only for the musical or dancing involvement of everyone present. Turino described presentational music as “a field involving one group of people (the artists) providing music for another (the audience) in which there is pronounced artist-audience separation within face-to-face situations” (p. 51).

The role of the audience is significant, of course, and Small (1987) included the audience as prominent players in the broader and encompassing socio-musical phenomenon of musicking. Gates (1989) described participation in the context of music-makers in presentational cultures and claimed that studying the outcomes of music-making is key to motivating such participation, referred to by ensemble leaders as recruiting. This theory of participation applies the previous work of Stebbins (1996), who ascribed such categories as professional and amateur to sports teams. Gates excluded the audience primarily as a research function in order to emphasize the aesthetic benefit of participating in music-making and to define the participant roles listed above. The aim of this paper is to examine the musical participation of collegiate non-music majors.

Collegiate Ensembles

Campus-based ensembles represent an important opportunity for music-making, even for students whose majors lie outside music concentrations, and they represent a unique place for young adults to begin or to continue music participation. Franklin (1993) presented a modest history of the development of nonselective university concert bands in an effort to define the motivation and benefits of the nonselective nature of such courses. Over two thirds of responding universities offered a nonselective band and the majority of members of these bands were “nonmajors.” Participation in musical experiences after high school has been expressed as a hope of music educators and as an aim for music education. Conductors most frequently cited the desire to “encourage instrumentalists to be active performers after high school without the pressure of auditioning.”
A variety of collegiate singing organizations have existed since 1807 or earlier (Duchan, 2007) and have come to exist in various formats including student-led a cappella groups and single-gender Glee Clubs, which have existed since the mid-1800’s. Duchan cited the “a cappella craze of the 1930s and ‘40s” (p. 481) as the most recent contributing movement to collegiate singing clubs, — many of which were nonselective — and noted the inclusion of popular music at the Tanglewood Symposium in the 1960s (The Tanglewood Declaration, 1967). Additionally, the history of specific collegiate choirs has contributed to the traditions developed for a cappella singing (Van Camp, 1965).

Music majors have been a natural focus of studies in collegiate music participation, and the pedagogy for future music teachers has received much attention (see Nichols, 2013 for the development of a journal dedicated to this subject). Elective music ensembles are important to the music education field as educational ensembles where all students can find a musical home. As previously said, the study of those participants can offer insights in adult elective music-making, and collegiate non-music majors may be similar to secondary students in their motivation for musical participation. For example, high school participants’ constructs of meaning in choral ensembles have been shown to be complex and multidimensional (Hylton, 1981). Similarly, the ordered importance of safety, identity, enculturation, and transmission has been documented among singers in both auditioned and non-auditioned college choirs (Van der Vat-Chromy, 2010).

Another categorization of collegiate ensembles is that of faculty-led versus student-led ensembles. These two types of ensembles differ structurally, but studying these two distinct types of ensembles has revealed that both types are actually led by a leader-conductor figure, and that motivations for participation in each of these groups involve social and musical aims (Mantie, 2013). Some ensembles have been developed by conductors specifically to address the needs of students not majoring in music, and academic credit for ensembles such as glee clubs has long been commonplace (White & Heller, 1983). Data indicate that nonmajors make up 30% of total singing enrollment in collegiate ensembles and that nonmajors are very important to their respective choral programs. Conductors described their non-music major participants as dedicated, conscientious, and some of their best choir members, orienting readers to the importance of this topic for music education research.

**Purpose**

Scholars of popular culture have studied the general public as music consumers. Meanwhile, music educators have explored the variables of motivation
and other outcomes related to music, often with the aim of increasing future music involvement. Since participation through the secondary school years is seen as a gateway toward future curricular involvement, music education scholars have been increasingly interested in the participation of non-music major singers and players (Mantie, 2013), also referred to in the literature as collegiate recreational music-makers. However, previous studies have not generally included the unique experiences of students who will go on to have primary studies in areas outside of music. The purpose of this study was to survey the music-related habits, attitudes, preferences, and perceptions of two selected non-music major members of a Men’s Glee Club at a university on the American west coast. Specifically, there were three research questions:

1. What are the musical experiences of two university student singers who do not major in music?
2. How do two non-music majors enrolled in a collegiate choral ensemble relate to their voice as a musical instrument?
3. How does ensemble membership fit into the greater role of music in the lives of the participants?

Music participation is defined here as the music-making act, be it singing or playing musical instruments. As a corollary to music participation, music consumerism is defined as the processes of listening to, watching, discussing, and otherwise engaging as members of a music-listening audience. This research is grounded in theories of leisure and participation, and the aim is to continue the recent work of Paparo (2013) and Mantie (2013) in ensemble cultures by examining the unique experiences of two selected participants in a collegiate ensemble.

Method

This study integrated observation and interview techniques from narrative design methods. Interviews with selected participants were the primary source of data. Additionally, fieldwork consisted of two distinct observation domains, formal settings (chorus rehearsals) and informal settings (outside of chorus rehearsals), where data was collected in accordance with the work of Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995). These two observation settings served to triangulate the data mined from the interviews with selected participants from the chorus (Creswell, 2013). Once permissions were obtained from the Institutional Review Board, data collection consisted of twice weekly observations spanning the period.
from January to March in the middle of the academic school year. This fieldwork was conducted in rehearsals of a university glee club, which met twice weekly for 80 minutes.

*The Collegiate Ensemble*

I was a member of this ensemble as an assistant director. Thus the study design used opportunistic sampling, where I had a unique glimpse into the functioning of the chorus (Creswell, 2013). The non-auditioned chorus was open to members of the campus community and served approximately 55 singers of various ages and majors including undergraduate and graduate students during the fieldwork period. Some participants of the ensemble were music majors but many were not. The rehearsal space was located in the depths of the music building, three stories below the main floor of the building, in a multi-use rehearsal room with tiered floors and a grand piano. Chorus members generally came early to rehearsal and a festive atmosphere was present as members greeted each other and shared stories from the previous few days. Usually the members could be found chatting with a neighbor or in small groups, with some members seated in the rows of chairs or standing just outside the doorway. At least a few members usually gathered around the piano as someone played popular or classical music, although the accompanist frowned on this use of the piano prior to the start of rehearsal. The same scenario was often present following each rehearsal, in which some members lingered behind enjoying lively or serious conversation or gathering again around the piano.

*Participants*

The participants in this study were two members of a university-based Men’s Glee Club, which I observed in rehearsal twice per week. I identified one graduate student in a major outside the school of music who I often saw at the piano after rehearsal expressing interest in barbershop music. He expressed a willingness to be interviewed individually as a non-music major participant in this study. A snowball sampling method was used to identify and recruit other potential participants (Creswell, 2009). One additional participant was willing commit to interviews over a 3-month period, for a study of two participants sampled from a group culture of collegiate singing. These two individuals were observed during but also outside the formal rehearsal setting multiple times over the course of the school’s winter term.
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**Researcher's Role**

I was a participant in the Men’s Glee Club as an assistant conductor and a singer in the second tenor section. In this way, emic and etic approaches were considered complementary, revealing the researcher’s and the participants’ insights. In this role of participant-observer (Creswell, 2013), I conducted one song during a portion of each rehearsal and when not conducting, I sang in the ensemble. This “dual” role of leader and singer allowed me a unique perspective because when I was singing in the chorus, among the other singers, I was often related to as a fellow singer. For example, the singers around me made jokes or commented to me like a fellow singer. However, when I was in front of the chorus, the dynamic was that of a more typical teacher-to-student nature. Students were quiet when I spoke, they raised hands to ask questions, and they responded to positive and negative reinforcements of their musical output.

**Observations**

I journaled at the end of the day after rehearsals and interviews were completed, since jottings during the rehearsal period were nearly impossible due to my active participant role as a conductor/singer. Field notes were recorded in a journal over the course of 27 hours of rehearsals in a 10-week period. In addition to participation and observation of rehearsals in the music building, several concerts were given on- and off-campus over the course of ten weeks. On several occasions, the main participants and I met at music venues to hear live music. These observations helped to address Research Question 3, the greater musical participation and consumerism of these participants. Conversations between the participant(s) and the researcher were not recorded in these settings; therefore, this component of the data collection was considered to be observation, which consisted of jottings during the observation or field notes after the observation.

**Interviews**

Interviews were normally held immediately following the rehearsal in the rehearsal room or in a nearby office. The semi-structured interview format was chosen as the best method to allow for emerging themes and pre-selected questions were used to begin each interview (Creswell, 2013). An interview guide was prepared to allow for asking questions on a variety of topics related to each research question, sometimes rephrasing specific questions in different ways. The questions ranged from the topic of participants’ previous musical experience to the participants’ perceptions of the rehearsal that had just taken place. Interviews
were later triangulated using jottings and field notes from that day’s or previous observations (see next section). Since both participants were highly interested in the music-making process in the choir, the interviews became a collaborative process in which participants’ often asked questions of the interviewer. The term collaborative interviewing comes from the suggestion of Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) to address equality in questioning, interpreting, and reporting. However, the collaborative nature of the interviewing was not pre-planned as a part of this study. It should be noted that there is nearly always a power dynamic in the interviewer-interviewee relationship, which was further defined by the researcher’s role as participant-observer and assistant director of the choir in this study.

Analysis

After data collection ended, I transcribed the interviews. Next, I read and memoed the interview transcriptions and observation field notes. An open coding process was used for analyzing the data. As themes and categories were identified, they were labeled in the transcript or field notes. Changes to these labels or combinations of themes were made as a part of the process, rather than being determined in advance. As a narrative research design, the data were analyzed for stories the participants told and connections they made to previous and current musical experiences. Specifically, the three-dimensional space approach was used for analyzing the three elements of (1) interaction: personal and social, (2) continuity: past, present, and future, and (3) situation: physical places or the storyteller’s places (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Validity

Triangulation was the validation strategy chosen for making use of the multiple types of data collection used for this study (observation of rehearsals, observation outside of rehearsals, and interviews of participants). When themes in jottings and field notes corresponded to themes discovered in interviews, these were noted. This was an important part of validating the data, since rich observational experiences occurred before, during, and after each rehearsal. The two participants were often present for durations of time before and after rehearsals.

Two additional strategies were used for validation of the analyses. First, member checking was used to allow participants to review the research findings, but not jottings or field notes themselves (Carlson, 2010). Second, a peer review of the analysis provided an opportunity to revisit the data after the coding process was complete (Creswell, 2013). The peer review proved particularly helpful for
identifying and coding the sub-themes of assessment, including (1) assessment of the ensemble, (2) assessment of self, and (3) assessment of the leadership.

**Clarifying Researcher Bias**

Before presenting a discussion of the data, it is important to address the researcher’s role as a participant in the chorus and as an assistant conductor. This dual role presented the researcher sometimes in a peer role (a fellow singer in the chorus) and also in a role of authority (musical and administrative leadership). These roles are defined here to suggest the possibility that the researcher might wish for the participants to have a rich musical experience in the chorus as an outcome of their status as a student singing under the “baton” of a conductor. Additionally, the researcher might imagine that the glee club experience added to the musical history of participants only in positive ways, and might ignore the ways in which their previous musical experiences were more salient or special than the current one. I was aware of these issues as a participant-observer and interviewer. As I developed a relationship with these participants, I encouraged them to critique the ensemble’s efforts and outcomes, and I sought out their feedback on the usefulness of techniques and methods that were used in rehearsal. The participants freely offered frank opinions and suggestions, which was taken as a sign of trust between participant and researcher.

**Research Question #1: Profile of Selected Participants**

Two singers volunteered for extensive interviewing and observation in and outside the rehearsal setting. These students, Miah and Tyler (pseudonyms), were identified as non-music majors. They demonstrated an ability to provide a fair assessment of their singing skills (interview transcription, January 25, 2011), which indicated a reasonable awareness of their singing voice without under- or over-estimating their abilities (as indicated in evidence collected from field notes, January 13, 2011). Miah and Tyler were both first-year graduate students in the sciences during the period data were collected. The two participants indicated a particularly rich history of previous musical experiences, and while they represented the image of the typical graduate student in many ways, no attempts at generalizations will be made.

**Miah**

When asked why he decided to join the Men’s Glee Club, Miah replied, “To improve my voice and to have fun singing harmony.” Generally, he demonstrated
significant enthusiasm for music-making and music listening, and had once played the bass guitar in a band. Miah had taken lessons on various instruments, including oboe and piano during elementary school, bass guitar lessons and school band participation in middle school, tenor sax in the marching band in high school, as well as participation in a youth orchestra. In college, he played in the jazz band but chose not to continue playing once he moved to start his current academic program. Two friends from his academic major program were singing in the Men’s Glee Club, so after the first term Miah decided to join, too. He liked to sing with other voices, citing harmony in his response above, and he had taken an interest in barbershop music at the time of this data collection.

Tyler

Tyler came from a very musical family. His father had a master’s degree in music theory and encouraged him to take choir and piano lessons in elementary school. In middle school Tyler played saxophone in the school band and took guitar lessons. He chose to continue those activities in high school in addition to singing in an a cappella group. Thus, he shared an enthusiasm for a cappella singing with his friend Miah, and this type of singing was an important part of the Men’s Glee Club repertoire. Tyler related how his classmate Jon (pseudonym) got him involved in the chorus:

So, Miah and I had wanted to sing something. The second week, I met Miah (and) I just back-of-the-hand mentioned I always wanted to sing in a barbershop quartet and he said, “Me, too.” So we googled barbershop and found this group of old dudes and decided we’d just go hang out with them every Monday and uh, they kind of suck, to be perfectly honest. So, we were looking for something with more people our age and Jon was like, “Hey I sing in this group.”

When I asked Tyler about meeting the director for the first time, he replied:

Mm-hmm and he was cool and it worked well with our schedules and we just did it...cause we both had sung in groups before...Miah more seriously [than I]....

While Tyler related his motivation very nonchalantly, I began to understand how important singing was to him the day he auditioned for a solo. Despite what he said to me, he was visibly nervous. He was able to evaluate the singer who auditioned just before him and adjusted his own performance:
Poor Sam didn’t get a lot of prep time for the harmony part so I think he had a rough time with that. I think Kenny did very well. I thought he could put a little more energy, so when I heard him do that I tried to go out with a little more energy. I like that song a bit. It’s fun to sing. It suits my range well, and I think it fits me pretty well. I felt pretty comfortable about it in all honesty.

Research Question #2: Participants’ Voice as a Musical Instrument

To address Research Question #2, the participants knew their singing voices well and cared greatly about the quality and improvement of aspects of their singing. Tyler sings in the first tenor section and appreciates his singing range, “I like [my voice], have a good range, but mediocre tone…” He thought of his singing voice as higher pitched and more nasal, “like Ben Folds” (Ben Folds is a pop rock singer/songwriter). Tyler indicated he could generally always match a pitch when he hears it, but he often worries about how well he sings on pitch compared to playing an instrument. He identified the challenge in one of the songs as “where I go from the chest voice to the falsetto, which is like the weakest part of my range. F, G, E–F–G, right there. So I’m always kinda struggling to pick which one I should be singing.”

Whereas Tyler first mentioned the aspects of his voice he liked, Miah lamented that his range limits his ability to sing pop music. However, he was more confident about his ability to match pitches. He sang in the baritone section and said he can always match a pitch when he hears it and only sometimes worries about how well he sings on pitch. A part of his motivation for joining the chorus was to improve his voice and he appreciates the role of another assistant conductor doing warm-ups in helping him focus on technique:

Head-voice is easy for me, it’s kind of like all or none, right, and he can sort of mix his head voice and chest voice in a way I really can’t do, like ‘bah’ and ‘bah’ (he sings a high and low note), you know? So there’s this range in there, depending on my dynamic and my vowel shape, that’s usually a C or a D, where I’m more comfortable in my head voice but it doesn’t sound healthy – doesn’t sound solid.

This statement reveals the ease with which this non-music majors discusses vocal tone and singing technique. His rich singing experience allows him to express examples of what he means, and Miah demonstrates a vocabulary consistent with someone who has had years of private lessons or school instruction.
Research Question #3: Men’s Glee Club in Context

Choir participation did fit in with these participants’ previous musical histories. The two participants were active in vocal or instrumental ensembles throughout their school and college years and chose to join the university-based Men’s Glee Club in the middle of their first year as graduate students. I discovered that four of these students had formed a barbershop quartet when they stayed after rehearsal one day to practice together. The group consisted of Miah, Tyler, and the two classmates who recruited them to the glee club. The following fieldnotes are from an observation of this occasion, and they offer a glimpse of Miah and Tyler within the quartet’s practice time after one rehearsal.

I recall that Miah has thought about taking voice lessons (he told me how much Jeremiah charges). Miah is talking about a transition (“I think transitionally...”) and Tyler describes the Tenor 1 part in barbershop music. Miah plays a part for the Bass singer then the quartet prepares to start. Miah starts the group. It falls apart a bit and Tyler says, “Man, it’s dead....” Their pacing is slow but they are committed. The intonation is good. They sing a cadence and are pleased. They can tell when they do well and also when they don’t and are pleased after singing a cadence particularly well. In another spot Tyler says, “our parts are easy, our parts are easy.” They restart, and their eyes are trained on the music, which is sitting on the piano’s music stand. Miah “conducts” with his left hand at entrances/cadences. They negotiate a cut-off and who and how to do it and agree on how it should and try it once. “Hey that’s good.” “That’s not bad...I think we should take a breath there.” “Okay, once more through?”

Miah and Tyler were avid music consumers. In addition to making music, they spent time listening to live music and even more frequently to recorded music. They were willing to spend money on tickets to concerts or for live music in bars. They enjoyed pop and rock music styles, among others, and they agreed to be observed in a bar near the university where two musicians were playing funk music. On one post-rehearsal outing to a local bar and music venue, I observed the interactions between Miah and Tyler and two of their friends. Also, I observed how they interacted with an old video game box in the corner and with the funk band that was playing that night. I noticed how they attended to the video game for a while, only noticing (tapping along to) the music of the funk band. Other times they were attentive to the music, taking note of the video game players only when they achieved a high score. For them, the live music was sometimes in the background and sometimes in the foreground. An excerpt of fieldnotes offers
further description of the evening’s events:

*When Miah and Tyler arrive, we meet two of their friends. They are also bio-engineering guys and they have been drinking some of their moonshine stash. They promise to share. We chat for a bit and then the music starts. It’s fun, kind of groovy, and we like it. The guys find a video game box and TV in a little corner of a both next to the corner where we are stationed. They play Pac-Man and other old games on an old Sony box and they are having a blast. They invite me to play and occasionally one of the four of them ducks out to stand nearer the musicians. Miah is feeling good and talking a lot. He mentions occasionally how much he’d like to play bass with this funk band, ’cause he says they could use one and he likes to play.*

The participants later reflected on the experience in an interview and they demonstrated an ability to fully describe all aspects of the music consumption experience. They both appreciated the musicianship of the band members and noted their ability to play skillfully and also to enjoy their music-making. Tyler described the bandmates’ non-verbal communication and was able to tell when they were making musical decisions as they played. It reminded him of a previous musical experience:

*There was this bar back at UVA called Miller’s, it’s where Dave Matthews first started playing guitar, and every weekday night they’d have a different jazz group come in and jam. This one professor at UVA who was the state expert on jazz trumpet would bring a guy on traps and a bass player and just go nuts for like 4 hours on Thursdays. That’s what this reminded me of, and it took me back. I dug it.*

Miah stated, “Almost every time I go see live music, local or professional, it gives me a huge desire to play music again.” He seemed to compartmentalize the singing he did for the Men’s Glee Club – it was different from the kind of playing involved in rock band membership.

**Discussion**

Miah and Tyler each had a long history of music participation and music consumerism, both in classical and popular idioms. This musical history, combined with their current level of participation in the chorus, made the participants more than “dabblers” and could have been defined as “recreationalists” or as “hobbyists” by Gates (1991). During the member-checking process, Miah referenced his extensive background in music-making and reported that he felt like that made
him different from many of the less-experienced singers in the choir (personal
communication, August 7, 2014). Miah determined that individuals may experience
changing levels of music participation across the lifespan, and he reinforced that
his experience was probably not representative of other members in the ensemble.

Paparo (2013) described the rich tradition of fraternity in a self-run collegiate
a cappella ensemble. While the traditions of the conductor-led ensemble in the
present study may be expected to differ in some ways, Tyler spoke to the important
social aspect of his motivation to join the glee club. Tyler missed singing, but
he also was seeking to meet people as a new student at the school (personal
communication, July 7, 2014). While Tyler’s musical history contributed to
his motivation for participating, the social aspect of group singing was also an
important motivator.

As consumers, they purchased music online and in stores, and they set aside
money to see concerts and shows. These participants also cared greatly about
the quality and the improvement of their voices. They had normal frustrations
with their singing and their developing musicianship as singers. Additionally, the
general improvement of the Men’s Glee Club was important to them, like singers
in other kinds of male singing groups (Stebbins, 1996). They wanted to the group
to be “good.”

The term consumerism has not been used widely in the literature about
musical participation or motivation, but the use of this term confers significan
to the relationship between direct musical participation and the other ways
individuals express musical interest (i.e., listening at home, or listening at concerts).
Expressions of musical preference may be one way to identify with culture, and
participation in an ensemble may lead to a shared identity with other group
members, consistent with the findings of Mantie (2013). For the participants in
this study, it remains unclear how segmented the glee club experience was from
the other musical experiences, or whether their experience was in fact the kind of
experience they were seeking.

Three themes emerged from these participants’ involvement in the chorus:
evaluation, improvement and musical sensitivity. The participants were able
evaluators of their own voice and the vocal performance of others, including the
chorus as a whole. Given that they could assess singing and did indeed enjoy the
assessment of singing, they were quite interested in the improvement of singing,
their own and others’. Again, Miah and Tyler’s membership in the group was more
than dabbling participation because their aim was to be a part of a “good” group,
as evidenced by the quote from Tyler’s motivation to join after briefly participating
in another group. It was important to them that rehearsals were productive and
that the chorus refined or enhanced its work as they neared performances. Lastly,
they were musically sensitive. The participants possessed an ample vocabulary of musical terms, probably due to their previous musical participation combined with an enthusiastic pursuit of music consumerism. In regard to the popular music the chorus sometimes sang, the participants were seemingly as knowledgeable about style, history and performance practice as was I.

Figure 1. Relationship of Men’s Glee Club to Other Musical Experiences

The participation of Miah and Tyler in the Men’s Glee Club fit well with their previous histories of music-making and how they enjoyed music outside of school experiences (see Figure 1). They sometimes compartmentalized different forms of musicking (Small, 1987) in an attempt to differentiate musical styles and functions, and they perceived themselves to be “whole” musicians in that they could make music as well as evaluate others’ musical performances. These non-music majors were seeking musical expression that did not exist in their own academic programs outside the school of music building, which suggests the critical role of the university music programs in serving the needs of the campus community.

Limitations of the Study

Snowball sampling did not result in a greater number of potential interviewees (these were busy college students trying to find some time to be musical). The experiences of the two participants in this study can not be expected to be representative of other members of this or another collegiate singing ensemble. Both of these students were young graduate students in the sciences and their experiences are not representative of others, just their own. Specifically, these students had a notably rich musical history, which may not have been typical of other members of the ensemble. Future music education research could explore how participants’ music background influences their current musicking and in what ways they differ from undergraduates and from other graduate students with less musical experience.
Implications and Future Research

Music educators express desire for their students to continue musical participation in future years. The participants in this study had many previous positive musical experiences, which afforded them access to musical participation as a leisure activity. They were familiar with audition practices and had the confidence to sign up and sing in front of a director prior to joining the chorus. Future research could examine specific efforts that could increase musical participation after secondary schooling.

Finally, the implications for music education are that some collegiate-level music participants draw upon previous experience as well as current social involvement for motivation. Positive experience in music may lead to future musical participation, which may be intertwined with other aspects of a musically-rich lifestyle. Participants in this study had developed identities as musicians and hobbyists and consumers, and they enjoyed discussing all types of musical experiences, including music listening in all settings as well as direct musical participation. A greater appreciation of the formation of these experiences for non-music majors in collegiate ensembles can be beneficial for understanding their motivation for future participation.

References


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