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## Exploring Band Students' Motivations Regarding Instrument Selection

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**EXPLORING BAND STUDENTS' MOTIVATIONS REGARDING INSTRUMENT  
SELECTION**

A Master's Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of  
Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Music, Music Education

By

Aaron Scott Morley

August 2024

# **EXPLORING BAND STUDENTS' MOTIVATIONS REGARDING INSTRUMENT SELECTION**

Music

Missouri State University, August 2024

Master of Music

Aaron Scott Morley

## **ABSTRACT**

When choosing a beginning band instrument, students are faced with a choice that may be influenced by a variety of factors. These factors also interest band directors, who want students to choose an instrument that will be a good fit for their strengths while also being engaging to them. To assist directors in guiding students through instrument selection it is helpful to know what factors could influence students when they are choosing an instrument. To identify the factors that students report as impactful, beginning band students in five northwest Missouri school districts were surveyed about the influence of selected factors. Students reported being most influenced by their perceived enjoyment of playing their instrument, followed by instrument timbre. Other influential factors included the perceived ease of students' chosen instruments, parents and other family members, and band directors. Male and female students reported differing levels of influence from perceived ease, perceived challenge, and non-parental family members. Brass, woodwind, and percussion students reported varying levels of influence from the people in their lives and perceived enjoyment. These survey results suggest that students are particularly influenced by their perception that an instrument will be fun to learn and play. To best engage this reported influence, band directors should present every instrument as fun, particularly those that may be underrepresented in the band.

**KEYWORDS:** beginning band, instrument selection, instrument placement, instrument choice, survey, motivation, instrumentation

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In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

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## **OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

The process of students selecting their instruments is important to both beginning band students and their band directors. Generally, band directors believe that when students choose an instrument that is a good fit, it can help foster success and continued motivation in the process of learning a new instrument (Millican, 2012). Band directors also want students' choices to fit in the framework of an ensemble that incorporates a healthy balance of instruments. While band directors might hope that students are influenced most heavily by physical characteristics and aptitude tests, this is not always the case (Bazan, 2005). Instrument selection can also be influenced by a wide variety of other factors, ranging from gender stereotypes to timbre preference (Millican, 2017). If band directors fail to understand these influences, they may be unable to understand why students are unmotivated to play an instrument that is a good fit for them or highly motivated to play an instrument that is not a good match. Directors may also struggle to have effective and meaningful conversations with students regarding their choice of an instrument. By understanding the factors that influence students' decisions, band directors can more effectively guide students toward instruments that will maximize their individual potential while also meeting the needs of the ensemble.

### **Statement of the Problem**

While most band directors encourage students to consider factors such as embouchure shape and instrument aptitude tests, these factors are not the only influences on students. Robinson (2001) gave a group of students the opportunity to choose instruments with no guiding criteria. When left to their own devices, students often made instrument decisions based on



factors unrelated to their potential to play the instrument, and at times had difficulty explaining the reasoning behind their decision. Several pedagogues have argued that band directors cannot simply ignore the factors that may influence students if they want every student to feel satisfied and motivated by their instrument choice (Cooper, 2004; Feldman & Contzius, 2016; Jagow, 2007; Millican, 2012; Rush et al., 2014). Instead, it is better for directors to have a deeper understanding of students' motivations and respond accordingly.

There are several approaches that band directors can utilize during the process of beginning band students selecting their instruments. One approach is for students to be allowed to select instruments with little to no guidance from the band director. Robinson (2001) found that this approach resulted in severely unbalanced instrumentation. Percussion, flute, and saxophone were heavily chosen while clarinet and the brass instruments were selected by only a handful of students. On the other end of the spectrum, directors can place students on instruments without any input from students. While this approach may create more balanced instrumentation, many experienced band directors caution against it for other reasons. Rush et al. (2014) noted that one of the authors had many conversations with adults who left their band program because they felt forced to play a particular instrument by their director. Cooper (2004) and Millican (2012) both emphasized the value of students who chose an instrument they were excited to play and cautioned against forcing a student to play a specific instrument. Likewise, Jagow (2007) warned to never force a student to play a certain instrument and advocated that any student can succeed on their chosen instrument if their determination is strong enough.

Many experienced band directors opt to guide students through a deliberate process of selecting an instrument for beginning band instruction (Bayley, 2004; Cooper, 2004; Dangler, 2014; Feldman & Contzius, 2016; Fraedrich, 1997; Jagow, 2007; Millican, 2012; Rush et al.,

2014). These directors often (a) test students' initial abilities to make sounds on instruments or mouthpieces, (b) use recordings or live performances to model instruments, and (c) have individual discussions with students regarding their choice. Band directors often use these strategies to guide students toward an instrument that will be a good fit for them while also prioritizing the sense of ownership and enthusiasm that students get from making their own choice (Rush et al., 2014). In a survey of band directors in Canada, Bayley (2004) found that 95% of directors indicated they guide their students during instrument selection and only encourage students to choose a specific instrument in rare circumstances. A more recent study by Dangler (2014) came to a similar conclusion, with 90% of the participating band directors indicating that they guide students through the instrument selection process. It is important for these directors to consider the factors that may influence students so they can serve as effective guides during the process of instrument selection (Bayley, 2004; Cooper, 2004; Dangler, 2014; Feldman & Contzius, 2016; Fraedrich, 1997; Jagow, 2007; Millican, 2012; Rush et al., 2014).

A variety of researchers have found several factors that students identify as influential on their instrument selections (Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). Most often this research has taken place in the form of surveys, with some focusing on one or two factors (Chang, 2007; Delzell & Lelpa, 1992) and others asking respondents to assess a broader list of factors (Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). The results of this body of research have identified a number of factors that students report as having an influence on their decision when selecting an instrument. Among these factors are friends, family, band directors, timbre, the gender stereotypes surrounding instruments, the size and appearance of instruments, personality, cost, media influences, and the perceived ease and enjoyment of playing the instrument. Some of these factors, such as timbre and gender stereotypes, have been

addressed by a wide number of researchers, and the degree of influence that students ascribe to them is relatively consistent from study to study (Fortney et al., 1993; Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman 2005). Researchers have identified other influencing factors that were explored in a handful of studies but have not been examined with the same depth or attention. Katzenmoyer (2003) and Fortney et. al (1993) were the only researchers that considered the influence of television. No other form of media was examined by any study. Kuhlman (2005) and Kossler (2019) both found the perceived ease and enjoyment of playing the chosen instrument to be highly influential for students, but this factor was not considered in depth by any other studies.

Many of the most quantitative studies that examine students' motivations when choosing an instrument are anywhere from fifteen to thirty years old (Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). These studies utilized surveys that asked students to rate a number of factors using a Likert scale that asks students to identify the degree to which they felt the factors influenced their instrument decision. This survey model helped identify several factors that students reported as being significantly influential when they were choosing an instrument. While these surveys continue to hold value today, they reflect the perspectives of students from the times the surveys were conducted. There is a gap in the research of more modern studies that utilize this format.

The majority of studies on students' perceptions of the factors influencing their instrument choice were conducted in coastal, relatively urban areas. Fortney et al. (1993) surveyed 1000 middle school students in Dade County Florida. Katzenmoyer (2003) surveyed 750 students in a mid-Atlantic state. Kuhlman (2005) surveyed 225 beginning band students in New Jersey. Kossler (2019) surveyed the students at a large urban middle school in California. Conner (2019) surveyed beginning band students across Atlanta, Georgia. De Vous (2011)

surveyed 470 beginning band students in Folsom, California. Students in rural and landlocked environments have not been considered by the majority of research.

The more contemporary studies on the topic had more of a qualitative focus. Conner (2019) and Kossler (2019) utilized a mixture of surveys and interviews in their studies to ask students their reasons for choosing their instrument. This research was more focused on exploring the ways in which students are influenced rather than comparing the degrees of influence among several factors. This research provides valuable insight into students' thoughts on several factors that influenced their instrument choice but does not include the qualitative comparisons between various factors that are the focus of this research.

The existing body of research has provided a lot of insight into the need for this study, but I have also seen a need through personal experience. As a band director, I participate every year in the process of helping guide students during instrument selection. I often find it difficult to understand students' motivations and wish that I had a better understanding of the factors that might be influencing my students. It is not uncommon for students to gravitate toward instruments that they do not show an aptitude for during instrument testing, and these students sometimes find it difficult to express why they have such a strong desire to play that instrument. It is my hope that conducting a survey will help mitigate these issues by having students respond to a wide variety of factors they might not have otherwise considered.

Several problems exist that I aim to address with this study. Band directors serve as guides in the instrument selection process and would benefit from an understanding of the influences on students (Bayley, 2004; Dangler 2014). There are several factors that impact students' instrument choices that have only been considered by a handful of studies and could benefit from additional research (Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). The quantitative studies

that provide the most numerical data on a wide variety of factors were conducted several years ago and do not represent modern students (Katzenmoyer, 2003; Fortney et al., 1993; Kuhlman, 2005), and more recent studies have been more focused on qualitative data (Conner, 2019; Kossler, 2019). The studies that have been conducted have mostly surveyed students in urban, coastal areas and not rural or landlocked areas (Conner, 2019; De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). And like many band directors, I could benefit from a greater understanding of the factors that influence my students' selection of an instrument.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the factors that beginning band students considered most influential when choosing an instrument. The chosen factors that were examined were parents and other family members, friends and peers, band directors, gender stereotypes regarding instruments, the timbre of instruments, the shape and appearance of instruments, the perceived enjoyment of instruments, the perceived ease of playing instruments, the perceived challenge of playing instruments, television and other media, celebrities and influencers, the cost of instruments, and the size of instruments. The study aimed to gain meaningful data on each factor by examining the degree to which students considered each factor influential and assessing the impact of demographics (i.e., gender and chosen instrument) on those perspectives. To accomplish this purpose, a survey was distributed to beginning band students across several schools in northwest Missouri that asked them to rate factors on the degree to which they influenced their decision when choosing an instrument.

## **Research Questions**

1. What factors do beginning band students rate as influential as they are choosing an instrument?
2. Do the demographics of gender and chosen instrument have connections with any of the factors beginning band students report that they consider influential when they are choosing an instrument?

## **Research Design**

To collect the necessary data to answer my research questions, I distributed my survey to the beginning band students of a set of volunteer band directors in the northwest portion of Missouri where was teaching during this project. I personally administered the survey at each location to make sure this process was done consistently. Once the surveys were completed, I compiled the data into a spreadsheet and examined it to see how influential students considered each factor. I then compared subsets of the data from demographics of gender and chosen instrument for any relations between demographics and the factors surveyed.

## **Significance of the Study**

The data from this study was intended to help band directors in northwest Missouri better understand how their students experienced instrument selection. Understanding what factors may be having an influence on students' decisions allows band directors to consider how they guide students more effectively toward an instrument that is a good fit for them while also considering the factors that are important to students, especially in situations where the student may have a hard time expressing themselves in conversation. Band directors who have more information to consider can build more balanced ensembles and create a less stressful instrument selection process for students and directors alike.

## **Assumptions**

1. The band directors assisting me in the study by gathering data from their students will accurately portray the degree of choice that their students have in the instrument selection process.
2. Students will have awareness of the factors that influenced their instrument choice and will be able to identify and describe those factors.

## **Limitations**

1. The survey is limited to students' perceptions of influence.
2. The survey fails to account for the complexity of motivation and the decision-making process.
3. The survey cannot account for the unique context of each beginning band class that is being surveyed.
4. The survey does not provide insight on the specific reasons students reported certain factors to be influential.
5. There was a significant gap between the time students chose their instruments (August 2023) and the survey was distributed (March 2024).

## **Definitions of Terms**

1. Beginning band – The first year of band instruction. For all schools within the study, this occurred during the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
2. Instruments – The instruments students play in beginning band. This includes but is not limited to flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, horn, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, tuba, and percussion.
3. Instrument model – An individual who plays an instrument to demonstrate to students the instrument's timbre and capabilities. Depending on the circumstance, this could be in the form of a live demonstration or an electronic recording.
4. Factors – Elements that have an impact on students' instrument selections.
5. Perceived ease – How easy students perceive a particular instrument to be.
6. Perceived enjoyment – How fun students perceive a particular instrument to be.
7. Perceived challenge – How difficult students perceive a particular instrument to be.
8. Timbre – The specific sound quality of an instrument that distinguishes it from other instruments.
9. Influence – The degree to which students report they are impacted by various factors during the process of selecting a beginning band instrument.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Several researchers have studied the factors that beginning band students identify as influential during the process of choosing an instrument. This review will examine how students perceive influential people, various instrument qualities such as timbre and appearance, the ease and enjoyment of playing, and the gender stereotypes around instruments as impactful on their choice of a beginning band instrument. The review will also encompass the perspectives of experienced band directors and their pedagogical writings.

Most of this body of research has come in the form of surveys or interviews that ask students about one or more factors that influenced their choice of a beginning band instrument. Data collected using this method cannot be said to be an objective measurement of the factors influencing students but is instead a measurement of students' perceptions of these factors. It is important to be mindful of this limitation when examining the research that has been conducted on this subject.

### **Student Perceptions of People as Influences**

The research on friends as a factor influencing students' instrument choices has led to mixed findings (Conner, 2019; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). Some students have identified friends as an influential factor, but many others have indicated that friends were not. Fortney, Boyle, and DeCarbo (1993) found in their survey that only a few students indicated that their friends had "a lot" of influence on their instrument choice, but nearly half of students indicated "some" degree of influence. Katzenmoyer (2003) found that students identified friends as moderately influential, although a considerable portion



of students found them to have very little influence at all. Kuhlman (2005) conducted a survey and found that most students indicated their friends had limited or no influence on their decision.

The ways in which students were influenced by their friends were also considered by a small number of studies. Conner (2019) found a portion of surveyed students had a friend who played their chosen instrument. Kossler (2019) came to a similar conclusion, with one-quarter of her students indicating they were influenced by a friend playing their instrument.

Many band directors consider friends to be more influential than students have reported them to be. In a survey of beginning band directors in Canada, Bayley (2004) asked directors what they perceived as the most influential factors on student instrument choices. The responses indicated that band directors perceived friends as having the strongest degree of influence. Dangler (2014) conducted a survey in New York based on Bayley's design. The results matched Bayley's findings, with teachers identifying friends as the greatest influence on instrument choice. Similarly, Katzenmoyer (2003) found that most music teachers thought friends were highly influential on students' decisions.

Students have generally reported parents and other family members to be the most impactful people in the process of selecting an instrument (Conner, 2019; De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). Katzenmoyer (2003) found that students reported parents to be the most influential people included on the survey. Many students also identified other family members outside of parents as having an influence, although almost half did not consider these other family members to be influential. Kuhlman (2005) found that students identified family members as the most influential people in the process of selecting an instrument, and the third most influential factor overall. Kuhlman also suggested that future research ask students more broadly about the influence of relatives. Fortney, Boyle, and DeCarbo

(1993) found parents to be one of the most influential factors on students' instrument selections. Most students cited them as an influence on their instrument choice, although only a small portion of respondents said their parents had "a lot" of influence.

Several studies also provide insight into the ways in which students reported being influenced by their parents (Conner, 2019; De Vous, 2011; Kossler, 2019). Kossler (2019) reported that some band students at her school indicated they picked an instrument a parent wanted them to play. Conner (2019) found that a similar number of beginning band students reported choosing their instrument primarily because a friend or family member played it. This was the second most popular reason given for the choice of an instrument. De Vous (2011) found that one-quarter of her survey respondents had a family member who played their chosen instrument, and a small number of the survey group indicated that a parent wanted them to play their instrument.

Many students do not consider their band director to be a significant factor in their decision when choosing an instrument (Fortney et al., 1993; Hudson, 2004; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). Kuhlman (2005) found that students reported band directors were moderately impactful on their decisions, although half of students responded that band directors had no influence whatsoever on their decision. A similar pattern emerged in a survey by Fortney, Boyle, and DeCarbo (1993). A little less than half of the students indicated that their director had no influence on their instrument choice, while the other portion identified some degree of influence. Hudson (2004) came to a similar conclusion, as students indicated that directors were as likely as not to have suggested the instrument they chose. Nearly half of students in a survey by Katzenmoyer (2003) ranked directors on the lowest tier of influence, and only a handful of students ranked them on the highest tier.

The influence of media has only been considered by a handful of studies, and most of these studies have only considered television (Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). Kuhlman (2005) found that a strong majority of students indicated television had little to no influence on their decision. Fortney, Boyle, and DeCarbo (1993) found that nearly half of surveyed students reported television to have some degree of influence. Katzenmoyer (2003) asked students to consider both television and celebrities as influences. Television was the least significant factor identified by students on the survey, while celebrities were seen by students as marginally more influential.

Students have identified several groups of people as influential during instrument selection. A small number of students identified friends as particularly influential on their instrument choice, but many did not see them as influential (Conner, 2019; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). Students who were influenced by their friends may have had a friend who played the same instrument (Conner, 2019; Kossler, 2019). Students have generally reported parents and other family members to be the most impactful people in the process of selecting an instrument (Conner, 2019; De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). Some students indicated they had a family member who played their chosen instrument, and others indicated that their parents wanted them to select their chosen instrument (Conner, 2019; De Vous, 2011; Kossler, 2019). Many students do not consider their band director to be a significant factor in their decision when choosing an instrument (Fortney et al., 1993; Hudson, 2004; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). Media is not considered influential by students, but studies of these influences have been limited primarily to television (Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005).

## **Student Perceptions of Instrument Qualities**

Timbre preference has been shown by many studies to be the element that students report as most impactful on instrument selection (De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Graham, 2005; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005; Vickers, 2015). De Vous (2011) indicated that most students cited “instrument sound” as a reason for choosing their specific instrument. This response was the most popular by a wide margin. In a similar survey, Kossler (2019) found that most students identified sound as a factor that influenced their instrument choice. Once again, this was the most popular response. Most of the students surveyed by Fortney, Boyle, and DeCarbo (1993) indicated that timbre influenced their instrument choice, with more than half specifying it had “a lot” of influence. The students surveyed by Katzenmoyer (2003) identified “sound of the instrument” as the most influential reason for their instrument choice, with most students ranking it highly on a scale of influence. Kuhlman (2005) found that timbre was the second highest rated factor among students, just behind “it seemed fun and easy.”

Timbre preference has been shown by some studies to have an impact on groups outside of beginning band students as well (Graham, 2005; Vickers, 2015). Following a demonstration of a variety of different band instruments, Vickers (2015) asked students to choose their favorite instrument and indicate why it was their favorite. Most respondents indicated that the sound of the instrument was the reason for their choice. Graham (2005) found that college music students also mostly strongly associated their choice of instrument with a preference for its timbre.

Instrument size, shape, and appearance have been reported by students to have a notable but limited impact on instrument choices (De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). Kuhlman (2005) asked students to evaluate both the size and appearance of their instrument as influencing factors on their instrument choice. Students

indicated both factors to be moderately influential. Half of the students surveyed by Fortney, Boyle, and DeCarbo (1993) said that the size of their instrument factored into their instrument selection, but only a handful said this aspect had “a lot” of influence. The students surveyed by Katzenmoyer (2003) indicated that these factors were much more influential on their decisions. Instrument appearance was the second most impactful factor on the survey and instrument size was the third most impactful.

A few studies have suggested that instrument portability may be the most influential aspect of instrument size (De Vous, 2011; Kossler, 2019). Kossler (2019) found that many students indicated in interviews that they wanted a smaller instrument for ease of transportation. De Vous (2011) found that a third of her surveyed students indicated they chose an instrument that was lightweight and easy to carry.

The cost of instruments as an influencing factor has been considered by only a small number of studies, but these studies have consistently shown that students do not view cost as a highly influential factor (Chang, 2007; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003). Two-thirds of respondents to a survey by Fortney, Boyle, and DeCarbo (1993) said that cost had no influence on their instrument choice. Katzenmoyer (2003) also found that few students reported cost as a significant factor. Chang (2007) found cost to be the least influential among students of all the factors she included in her survey.

There are several qualities of beginning band instruments that students have identified as influential on their choice of an instrument. Timbre preference has been shown by many studies to be the element that students report as most impactful on instrument selection (Conner, 2019; De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Graham, 2005; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005; Vickers, 2015). Instrument size, shape, and appearance have been reported by

students to have a significant impact on a limited number of students making instrument choices (Conner 2019; De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). Students have reported that instrument portability may be the most influential aspect of instrument size and shape (De Vous, 2011; Kossler, 2019). Students do not generally see the cost of instruments as an influential factor (Chang, 2007; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003).

### **Personality, Identity, and Student Perceptions of Ease and Enjoyment**

A limited number of studies have considered the relationship between personality traits and instrument preference and choice. Chang (2007) conducted research that compared students' results on a personality test to their chosen instrument. She found that students who identified as highly conscientious were more likely to choose upper woodwind instruments and less likely to choose upper brass or percussion instruments. Payne (2014) conducted research that compared the results of the Adolescent Personal Style Inventory personality test to preferences for various timbres. The trait of openness was found to be a significant predictor for preferring the timbres of flute, clarinet, saxophone, and horn. Those with higher degrees of openness were less likely to prefer brass timbres. Extraversion functioned in almost the opposite way, with more extraverted listeners preferring brass timbres and being less likely to prefer clarinet, saxophone, and tuba.

Identity is another factor that researchers have identified as potentially impactful on students' instrument selections. Evans and McPherson (2017) emphasized the important role that music plays in the development of identity during adolescence. Many adolescents who engage in instrumental music during this timeframe begin to view themselves as capable musicians and may also identify strongly with their chosen instrument. Students who begin to identify with

their instrument during the process of instrument selection may find this impactful on their choice. Evans and McPherson (2017) also emphasize the role that interpersonal connections can have on the development of identity. The desire to form these connections may lead students to choose the same instrument as a peer, family member, or someone else they respect.

Surprisingly few studies have considered the perceived ease and enjoyment of the instrument as a factor when students select an instrument (Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). The studies that have investigated these factors have found them to be highly influential on students' decisions. Kuhlman (2005) found that students identified "it seemed fun and easy" as the most influential factor on her survey. Kossler (2019) found that nearly half the surveyed students found their selected instrument the easiest to play over the course of instrument testing.

### **Student Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes**

The influence of gender stereotypes on instrumental selection is one of the most researched factors impacting student instrument selections as well as one of the most influential. Several studies have affirmed that students' instruments selections tend to correspond with typical gender stereotypes of wind instruments in the United States (Chang, 2007; Fortney et al., 1993; Robinson, 2001). Upper woodwind instruments were stereotyped as feminine instruments while trumpet, low brass, and percussion were stereotyped as masculine. Male students tend to be more deeply impacted by these stereotypes, although they impact students of all genders (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Wrape et al., 2016). Most studies concerning the gender stereotyping of instruments have been confined to English speaking countries, so these findings cannot be assumed as universal (Eros, 2008).

Multiple studies have reaffirmed the continued existence of these gender stereotypes in the perceptions of students. Wrape, Ditloff, and Callahan (2016) asked students to categorize instruments as either boy instruments or girl instruments. Almost every instrument was clearly associated with a particular gender, with only saxophone and bassoon remaining relatively close to evenly split. De Vous (2011) found that one-fourth of students indicated that flute and clarinet were better suited for girls and trumpet and trombone were better suited for boys.

Some studies have offered potential explanations for the existence of gender stereotypes regarding instruments (Abeles & Porter 1978; Conway, 2000; O'Neill & Boultona, 1996). O'Neill and Boultona (1996) found that students assumed that the opposite gender would not be interested in playing the opposite stereotyped instruments because of its timbre. They also found this assumption to be supported by their data. Abeles and Porter (1978) found that adults preferred for their children to learn instruments corresponding with existing gender stereotypes. Conway (2000) interviewed high school students regarding instrument gender stereotypes. Some students speculated that society, parental influence, and the media were the most responsible for the prevailing stereotypes. Other students focused on timbre preference and physical characteristics as possible explanations.

Researchers have investigated the impact of modeling instruments with musicians of the gender opposite the existing gender stereotypes (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Harrison & O'Neill, 2000; Vickers, 2015). Abeles and Porter (1978) suggested that this type of instrument modeling may lead to students being open to a broader range of instrument choices, but this finding was contradicted by later studies. Vickers (2015) asked students to rate their preferences for various instruments before and after demonstrations on the instruments by instrument models of the opposite gender typically stereotyped with each instrument. The study concluded that student



preferences were in line with the existing research on these stereotypes and did not change significantly following the demonstrations. Harrison and O'Neill (2000) investigated this issue as well, having elementary aged students watch performances of instrument models performing on instruments opposite their gender stereotypes. The concert did not have a significant impact on students' preferences.

Some researchers have suggested that gender stereotypes may be lessening in influence over time (Abeles, 2009; Delzell & Leppla, 1992; Wiedenfeld, 2012). In a follow up to his study from 1978, Abeles (2009) concluded that the stereotyped instruments remained the same, but that the strength of these stereotypes had reduced to a degree, particularly among female students. Delzell and Leppla (1992) found that the instruments generally considered masculine and feminine had remained relatively stable over the last 20 years, but that the strength of these correlations had decreased. Wiedenfeld (2012) concluded that the students surveyed in her research were influenced by social perceptions regarding instrument gender stereotypes, but that a wider range of instruments were considered gender neutral than seen in previous studies.

Other studies have focused on the optimal age and method to combat gender stereotypes around instruments. Coffman and Sehmman (1989) concluded that young children do not hold to gender stereotypes regarding instruments but that they tend to develop around the third to fourth grade. Cannava (1994) found that utilizing an instrument selection test helped combat the impact of gender stereotypes around instruments. Bayley (2004) found that most directors made intentional efforts to address gender stereotypes during the process of selecting instruments.

The gender stereotypes concerning beginning band instruments have been shown to be persistent and impactful on student instrument choice (Chang, 2007; De Vous, 2011; Eros, 2008; Fortney et al., 1993; Robinson, 2001, Wrape et al., 2016). Students may be influenced by their

parents, social pressure, or timbre preferences to adopt these stereotypes (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Conway, 2000; O'Neill & Boultona, 1996). Early research suggested that gender models opposite of the stereotypes might be impactful in combating them, but subsequent research did not affirm this conclusion (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Harrison & O'Neill, 2000; Vickers, 2015). Some research suggested that these stereotypes might be lessening in influence over time (Abeles, 2009; Delzell & Leppla, 1992; Wiedenfeld, 2012). Other researchers found that stereotypes develop in younger students and instrument selection tests may be impactful in combatting them (Cannava, 1994; Coffman & Sehmman, 1989).

### **Pedagogical Recommendations**

Many experienced band directors have written books and articles that address the pedagogy of teaching beginning band. Within these materials, there are several discussions of the factors that these experts in the field perceive as being influential on students' instrument choices. Almost every author recommended guiding students through some sort of process that gives students a degree of choice in their instrument placement while also helping them to make an informed decision (Bayley, 2004; Cooper, 2004; Dangler, 2014; Feldman & Contzius, 2016; Fraedrich, 1997; Jagow, 2007; Millican, 2012; Rush et al., 2014). Rush, Scott, and Wilkinson (2014) emphasized the value of giving students a choice while ensuring that they are equipped with the additional knowledge that guidance from a band director will bring.

Many pedagogical experts recommend taking musical and physical aptitudes into account when having discussions about choosing an instrument with students (Cooper, 2004; McPherson, 2006; Millican, 2012; Rush et al., 2014). Millican (2012) encouraged directors to influence student choices by emphasizing their potential to succeed on an instrument that is well-matched

for their musical and physical aptitudes. Rush, Scott, and Wilkinson (2014) advocated for a focus on physical attributes to help eliminate options that may hinder students from succeeding. McPherson (2006) recommended warning students with physical characteristics that can negatively affect the embouchure on specific instruments. Cooper (2004) advocated for guiding students toward instruments that best match their physical characteristics. Feldman and Contzius (2016) recommended reacting with energy and positivity when students succeed on instrument aptitude tests. Rogers (1991) referred to this process as “sincere flattery,” encouraging students to pursue instruments that match their genuine strengths.

Several expert directors advocated for student choice during the process of choosing an instrument, even when this conflicted with physical or musical aptitude (Millican, 2012; Rush et al., 2014). Although Millican (2012) expounded upon the value of matching students to instruments that are physically a good fit for them, he also encouraged directors to take student desire into consideration even when it does not align with these aptitudes. Rush, Scott, and Wilkinson (2014) advocated that most students can be successful on multiple instruments, allowing for a significant focus on student choice.

The value of demonstrating instruments has also been emphasized by several teachers (Cooper, 2004; Fraedrich, 1997; Rush et al, 2014). Rush, Scott, and Wilkinson focused on portraying the band as a prestigious and exclusive organization and extended this same philosophy to advertising less popular instruments. Fraedrich (1997) emphasized the influence that instrument demonstrations can have on students’ interest in different instruments, especially instruments that students may be less familiar with. She recommended having students hear demonstrations of popular or familiar music played by their peers. Cooper (2004) recommended

the use of the Instrument Timbre Preference Test by Edwin Gordon along with instrument demonstrations and asserted that students are drawn to instruments with a sound they enjoy.

Conversations with both students and parents were also viewed as influential by several pedagogues (Feldman & Contzius, 2016; Rogers, 1991). Feldman and Contzius (2016) wrote that a thorough explanation of the challenges of each instrument and the need for balanced instrumentation has an impact on student selections. They also addressed how individual conversations, conversations with parents, and instrument cost can be utilized to guide students' selections. Rogers (1991) urged directors to encourage students toward instruments that are needed to maintain good instrumental balance in both the beginning band and the future ensembles the students may be a part of. He also encouraged communication with parents.

Experienced band directors have written several books and articles that give insight into how band directors perceive students' instrument choices and the factors that influence them. Many pedagogues recommended guiding students toward instruments that are a good fit for their aptitudes and physical characteristics (Cooper, 2004; McPherson, 2006). However, several directors also advocated that determined students can succeed even on instruments that are not an ideal fit (Millican, 2012; Rush et al., 2014). Multiple directors advocated for live instrument demonstrations and noted the influences of both timbre and demonstrations by students' peers (Cooper, 2004; Fraedrich, 1997; Rush et al, 2014). Pedagogues also cited the influence of conversations with students and their parents (Feldman & Contzius, 2016; Rogers, 1991).

## **Summary**

Students have identified several groups of people as influential during the process of instrument selection. Some students have identified friends as an influential factor on their

decision, but many others have indicated that friends were not (Fortney et al., 1993; Kossler, 2019). Family members were often cited as the most influential people on students when selecting an instrument (Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). Some students had a family member who plays their instrument or select an instrument that a family member wants them to play (De Vous, 2011; Kossler, 2019). Students usually see band directors as having a moderate amount of influence on their instrument selection, although many students perceive them as having no impact at all (Fortney et al., 1993; Hudson, 2004; Kuhlman, 2005). Television and celebrities were not identified as an influential factor for most students, but other forms of media were not considered. (Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer 2003; Kuhlman, 2005).

Students have reported several attributes of beginning band instruments to be influential on their instrument choice. (Chang, 2007; Conner, 2019; De Vous 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler, 2019). Timbre preference was shown by many studies to be perceived as highly influential by students (Conner, 2019; De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer 2003; Kossler, 2019; Vickers, 2015). The factors of instrument size, shape, and appearance were shown to have a significant but generally not highly influential role in students' instrument choices (Conner 2019; De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). Many students expressed valuing the way their instrument looks (Conner 2019; Kossler 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). Students also have identified the size and portability of their instrument as a significant factor (De Vous, 2011; Katzenmoyer 2003). Cost was not seen as a significant influence by most students but has not been considered by many studies (Chang, 2007; Fortney et al., 1993).

The influence of certain personality traits on instrument preference has been considered by a few researchers. Highly conscientious students were more likely to play an upper woodwind

instrument and less likely to play upper brass or percussion (Chang, 2007). Students with a high degree of openness showed a preference for woodwind and horn timbres, while extraverted students showed a preference for brass (Payne, 2014). Some researchers have suggested that adolescent students may begin to identify with their chosen instrument during the selection process or may choose their instrument to more closely identify with another individual (Evans & McPherson, 2017). The few studies that considered perceived ease and enjoyment as factors in students' instrument selections found it to be highly influential (Kuhlman, 2005; Kossler, 2019).

The impact of gender stereotypes on students' instrument selections is well-documented and influential (Chang 2007; Fortney et al., 1993; Robinson, 2001). These stereotypes often developed in early childhood and persisted into adulthood among both musicians and non-musicians (Abeles & Porter, 1978). Instrument models of the opposite gender stereotype had a minimal impact on students' instrument preferences (Harrison & O'Neill, 2000; Vickers, 2015). These stereotypes have remained consistent over the past several decades but have lessened in the intensity to which they are held (Abeles, 2009; Delzell & Leppla, 1992; Wiedenfeld, 2012).

Experienced band directors have also offered their perspectives on the factors influencing students' instrument choices in several books and articles. Many directors cited the influence of encouraging students toward instruments for which they show aptitude (Cooper, 2014; Feldman & Contzius, 2016; Millican, 2012; Rogers, 1991; Rush et al., 2014). However, several directors also addressed the value of empowering students to make decisions for themselves (Millican, 2012, Rush et al., 2014). Many advocated for the benefit of a well-run testing and demonstration process to spark student interest in different instruments (Fraedrich, 1997; Rush et al., 2014). Friends and family members were identified as influential people on students' decisions (Fraedrich, 1997; McPherson, 2006; Rogers, 1991).

## METHODOLOGY

To explore how students in northwest Missouri report on the factors that influence their instrument selection, beginning band students across five school districts completed a Likert scale survey. A blank copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A. The results of this survey were analyzed to see how influential students considered each individual factor, and which factors students considered particularly influential. The analysis also explored if there were any notable differences between student responses based on gender or chosen instrument. The results were used to make recommendations for band directors during the process of guiding students in their instrument choice, with the goal of making the conversations and processes involved more effective for students and teachers alike.

### **Research Design**

Beginning band students in the South Harrison R-II School District, Hamilton R-II School District, Gallatin R-V School District, Chillicothe R-II School District, and Cameron R-I School District were invited to participate in a survey. Administrative approval was granted for the study, and permission slips were sent home to the parents of participating students. Only students who received parental approval were allowed to participate in the study. The survey was proctored by the researcher during the students' respective beginning band hour. The demographic data collected by the survey was limited to gender and the students' chosen instrument. Students were asked to rate fourteen factors on a Likert scale based upon the degree to which each factor influenced their decision when choosing a beginning band instrument. Students were also given three blank spaces to include additional factors that were not included

in the survey. All survey materials were reviewed and approved by the Missouri State University Institutional Review Board. This study, Exploring Band Students' Motivations Regarding Instrument Selection (IRB-FY2024-274), was approved on March 4, 2024 (see Appendix B).

### **Site of the Study**

The study was conducted in the beginning band classes of five school districts across northwest Missouri. The South Harrison R-II School District serves 814 students, and the band program includes 129 students. The Hamilton R-II School District serves 636 students, and the band program includes 60 students. The Gallatin R-V School District serves 585 students, and the band program includes 91 students. The Chillicothe R-II School District serves 1,819 students, and the band program includes 226 students. The Cameron R-I School District serves 1,711 students and the band program includes 202 students.

### **Participants**

The participants in the study included 17 students in grade five from South Harrison, 13 students from grade six in Hamilton, nine students from grade six in Chillicothe, eight students from grade five in Gallatin, and 21 students from grade six in Cameron, for a total of 68 students. These students represented the first year of band instruction available in their respective districts, and as a result are considered beginning band students. Among the participants, 36 were male, 31 were female, and one identified as a different gender. Three students played the flute, 15 played the clarinet, eight played the alto saxophone, one played the horn, 12 played the trumpet, 13 played the trombone, one played the euphonium, three played the tuba, and 12 played percussion instruments.



## **Program Context**

The band directors from the five participating schools submitted written descriptions of the processes used at their school for instrument testing and selection. These descriptions provide details on the context of the band programs involved in the study. Several of the directors utilized a process where students ranked the top three instruments they would most like to play. A student's "first choice" refers to the instrument they indicated they would most like to play.

One of the directors at South Harrison wrote the following. "We test each incoming fifth grade student on the mouthpieces of all the instruments we offer for beginning band and use rhythmic call and response to test for percussion. Each student is scored one through five on each instrument test. We then ask students to identify the three instruments they would most like to play. The vast majority of the time, students are placed on their first choice of an instrument. If there are issues with unbalanced instrumentation or a student's first choice is an instrument they did not test well on, then we have an individual conversation with the student and ask them if they'd be willing to choose their second or third choice. No student is forced to play an instrument that they do not choose."

The director at Hamilton wrote the following. "We test each sixth grade band student on mouthpieces of select band instruments and do coordination and rhythm call and response for percussion. Students received a rating on a scale from one to four based upon their success on the mouthpiece. Students receive their sheets back and are told what each rating means for each instrument. After reviewing their scores, they make their first, second, and third choices for what instrument to play. If the director does not feel a student's first choice is a good fit for that student, they talk with the student first before the decision is made."

The director at Gallatin wrote the following. “For beginning band students, we bring in Palen Music Center to assist in testing students. All students rotate through five stations where they are tested on flute, clarinet/saxophone, trumpet, trombone, and percussion. Station heads assign students a grade based on how easy it was for them to produce a sound on the mouthpiece/head joint (i.e, how well they could keep time and match rhythm for percussion). Vowels indicate a potentially strong player, consonants A-M indicate a player who might have some struggles, and consonants N-Z indicate a potentially weak player. Following all five stations, students write down what top three instruments they would prefer. Once all students are tested, I gather the information and try to put together a balanced ensemble trying to get as many Vowel/Top Preference combinations as possible. I then meet with each one individually to see if they would like to sign up for band at all and if they are okay with their placement. If they are unhappy with their placement, they have the option of choosing a different instrument. If their preferred instrument has a consonant rating, they are warned of potential struggles.” It should also be noted that Gallatin experienced a change of band directors. The former director conducted instrument testing with the students in May of 2023, and the current director worked with students to choose their instruments in August of 2023.

One of the directors at Chillicothe wrote the following. “We demonstrate all of the starting instruments the first few days of sixth grade. Students then fill out a form with their top three choices. I test brass and percussion while the other director tests woodwinds. We try to place them on their first choice as much as possible. However, we may have conversations with students based on wanting them to be successful as well as what instrumentation is good for their band.”

One of the directors at Cameron wrote the following. “We do a day of mouthpiece testing with Palen Music and the Cameron fifth graders to assess the students’ natural abilities. We also do a grip and coordination test to evaluate potential percussionists. Our scoring system uses letters of the alphabet with the vowels being the higher performing scores. The letter E stands for exemplary. We have students write down their top three choices of instrument after they have tested on everything. We place as many students as possible on their first choice. If we have concerns about a student’s choice, we will consult with that student. We try to place every student on a high performing instrument within their top three choices.”

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection occurred in early March of 2024, and the students who participated in the survey chose their instruments several months prior in late August of 2023. The survey was distributed during each participating school’s beginning band class. I collaborated with the band directors of each participating school to ensure that administrative approval and students permission slips were secured before the date on which the surveys were distributed. I then traveled to each school to ensure that the survey was explained and distributed in a consistent manner and to answer any questions students might have. I also gave a brief explanation of each of the fourteen factors to ensure that students had a consistent understanding of each factor. All students completed the survey within the time period of their beginning band class.

### **Data Collection Tools**

A paper and pencil survey was used to avoid any technological problems that might hinder students from participating in the survey. The survey was based on similar Likert scale

surveys designed by Fortney et al. (1993), Katzenmoyer (2003), and Kuhlman (2005). Students indicated zero for factors that had no influence on their decision, one for factors with a small influence, two for factors with some influence, and three for factors with great influence. Several of the fourteen factors included in the survey were included in previous studies. Others were included based on factors identified within the research that had not been considered in this context.

### **Data Analysis**

Upon completion of the survey, each students' data was entered into a spreadsheet for analysis. This allowed for calculations based on the entire data pool and for the division of smaller subsets (only female students, only brass players, etc.) to look for relations within the data for specific demographics. The numbers generated by each response were used to find the mean and standard deviation for each factor. After calculations were made for the entire data set, this process was repeated for a number of subsets of data to look for emerging relations in the data of any of the subsets. The results of this process will be presented, analyzed, and discussed in the following chapters.

## RESULTS

The results of the survey have been divided into groups of similar factors. The first section addresses factors involving people as influences. The second section focuses on factors involving instrument qualities. The third section encompasses factors involving students' perceptions of instruments, and the fourth section includes additional factors listed by participants. The results also include the differences between male and female responses and the differences between brass, woodwind, and percussion responses. All survey responses can be seen in Appendix C.

### **Factors Involving People as Influences**

Students who participated in the survey were asked to rate the influence of several people or groups of people on their decision when selecting an instrument for beginning band. The factor "Parents/Family" was defined to students as their parents or the people in their lives who were closest to fulfilling a parental role. The factor "Other Family Members" was defined to students as any family member not indicated by the previous factor of "Parents/Family." The factors "Friends/Peers" and "Band Director" were self-defined. The factor "Media" was defined to students as anything they saw on TV, social media, or other media platforms that had an influence on their decision. The factor "Celebrity/Influencer" was defined to students as any famous person who made an impact on their decision. The mean of student responses for every factor can be seen in Table 1.

Students reported parents or parental figures to have a small but noticeable impact on their choice of an instrument. Other family members outside of parents or parental figures were

Table 1. Mean Response for Each Factor

Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Instrument Seemed Fun	2.22	0.91
Timbre	1.72	1.10
Instrument Seemed Easy	1.32	1.07
Band Director	1.26	1.20
Parents	1.19	1.12
Other Family	1.16	1.25
Instrument Seemed Challenging	1.00	1.11
Instrument Shape/Appearance	0.93	1.00
Friends/Peers	0.93	1.04
Instrument Size	0.85	1.12
Media	0.65	0.94
Cost	0.57	0.94
Celebs/Influencers	0.40	0.85
Boy/Girl Instrument	0.13	0.54

reported by students to be only slightly less influential. Students reported their friends and peers to have a small impact on their instrument selection.

Students reported band directors to be the most impactful people in the instrument selection process and the fourth most influential factor on the survey. This mean was also skewed downward by a noticeable outlier among Gallatin students, with only one of the eight surveyed students reporting the band director as an influence on their decision. Gallatin

experienced a change in band directors between instrument testing in May of 2023 and the time students chose their instrument in August of 2023.

Media and celebrities/influencers were considered some of the least influential factors by the surveyed students. Students considered media to be more slightly more influential than celebrities and influencers. Fifty-three of the 68 respondents reported that celebrities and influencers had no influence on their decision.

### **Factors Involving Instrument Qualities**

Students who participated in the survey were asked to rate the influence of several qualities of the instruments they selected for beginning band. “Timbre” was defined to students as the unique sound of the instrument. “Shape/Appearance of Instrument” was defined to students as what the instrument looks like. “Cost of Instrument” was defined as the amount of money required to rent or purchase the instrument. “Size of Instrument” was self-defined, and it was also mentioned that students should consider portability as a part of this factor.

Timbre was reported by students to be one of the most influential factors on their instrument choices. It was the second highest rated factor listed on the survey, behind only “Instrument Seemed Fun.” Of the 68 respondents, 45 rated timbre as either a two or three on the Likert scale, indicating that they reported it as having some or a great amount of influence on their decision.

Students rated the influence of the shape/appearance of instruments and size of instruments as similar, both possessing a relatively small degree of influence. The cost of instruments was rated as even less influential by students. Among the participating students, 44 of 68 indicated that cost had no influence on their choice of an instrument.

## **Factors Involving Students' Perceptions of Instruments**

Students who participated in the survey were asked to rate the influence of several perceptions they may have had when considering their choice of a beginning band instrument. "Instrument Is a Boy/Girl Instrument" was defined to students as any perception they may have had that their chosen instrument did or did not correspond with their gender. It was also explained that this factor should include any potential avoidance of a different instrument because of perceived gender associations. The other factors being considered in this section were self-defining. These include "Instrument Seemed Fun," "Instrument Seemed Easy to Play," and "Instrument Seemed Challenging."

Gender associations with instruments were not identified by students as an influential factor on their instrument selections. The factor of "Instrument Is a Boy/Girl Instrument" was indicated by students to be the least influential factor listed on the survey, and it was also the factor with the lowest standard deviation. Sixty-three out of the 68 total respondents indicated this factor had no influence on their choice of an instrument. The gender distribution of the instruments chosen by students in the study differed from gender stereotypes in some but not all cases. Only three flute students participated in the survey, with two female students and one male student. Clarinet students were more likely to be female, with ten female students and five male students. Trumpet students were predominantly male, with nine male students, two female students, and one student of another gender. Trombone students were split almost evenly, with six male students and seven female students. The only euphonium player was female, and all three tuba players were male. Percussion students were close to evenly divided, with seven male and five female students.



The perceived enjoyment of the students' chosen instrument was the most influential factor identified by students on the survey. The mean for "Instrument Seemed Fun to Play" was significantly higher than any factor, and the factor also had a low degree of variability. Of the 68 student responses, only three students indicated they were not influenced by the perceived enjoyment of their chosen instrument.

Students also identified the perceived ease of their chosen instrument as influential. "Instrument Seemed Easy" was the third most influential factor indicated by students, though its mean was notably lower than the two most influential factors. Many students also identified the perceived challenge of their chosen instrument as influential. There was also a noticeable relationship between the factors "Instrument Seemed Easy" and "Instrument Seemed Challenging." Among the surveyed students, 48 of 68 rated one of these factors as having no influence while ascribing some degree of influence to the other factor. Only a handful of students identified the factors as having similar levels of influence.

### **Additional Factors Indicated by Students**

Students were given three blank spaces at the end of the survey to identify any additional factors that they felt should have been included on the survey. There were 21 responses on these blank spaces among the 68 participants. Although these responses were wide ranging, several commonalities existed among them well. Two students commented on the history of their chosen instrument, with one respondent listing "its history" and another "the history of it" as their factor. Another group identified future opportunities on their instrument. One listed "a variety of instrument I can play later," another "I wanted to play a whole band with four people," and a third "play at a football game."

Three students were drawn to the perceived exclusivity of their instrument. One indicated “there is not a lot of my instrument.” Another wrote “made me look cool,” and a third “loudness/coolness.” Other students were influenced by a more specific aspect of the instrument testing process than what was indicated by the other survey factors. One student said “my band teacher played it,” and another said “testing instrument.”

Two students reported being influenced by the availability of their instrument. One reported they “already had bells and snare” and the other “already had instrument.” Two other students reported some sort of innate desire to play their chosen instrument. One said “when I was in first grade I wanted to play the trombone” and the other said it was the “first instrument I saw.” Another group of two students said they had prior experience, with one simply saying “experience” and the other writing “had some practice.” A final pair of students both wrote “weight,” indicating that the weight of their instrument influenced their decision.

A few responses did not closely correspond with any other students’ response. One clarinet player simply wrote “SpongeBob.” Another student wrote “time to play,” which may have been an indication that they felt they would be able to practice their chosen instrument more regularly. The final response was by a student who specifically wanted to avoid sitting by one of their peers and chose an instrument to be in a separate section from them.

### **Differences in the Responses of Male and Female Students**

There were several factors included on the survey on which male and female students reported noticeably different levels of influence from each other. A selection of these differing factors can be seen in Table 2. The factors of “Other Family Members” and “Instrument Seemed Easy” had the greatest differences between male and female students. Male and female students

reported similar levels of influence from their parents or parental figures but differed significantly in the reported influence of other family members. Female students reported being significantly more influenced by their other family members than male students. Female students also reported being significantly more influenced by the perceived ease of their instrument than male students.

Table 2. Notable Differences in the Responses of Male and Female Students

Factor	Male <i>M/SD</i>	Female <i>M/SD</i>	Difference in <i>M</i>
Other Family	0.92 (1.18)	1.39 (1.29)	0.47
Seemed Easy	1.11 (0.92)	1.55 (1.21)	0.44
Seemed Challenging	1.14 (1.15)	0.84 (1.10)	0.30
Size of Instrument	0.69 (1.09)	1.00 (1.15)	0.31

The factors of “Instrument Seemed Challenging” and “Size of the Instrument” also had notable differences between male and female students. Male students reported being more influenced than female students by the perceived challenge of their chosen instrument. Female students reported being more influenced by the size of their instrument.

### **Differences in the Responses of Brass, Woodwind, and Percussion Students**

Students’ survey responses were divided into the subgroups of brass students, woodwind students, and percussion students to see if responses differed among students who chose different instrument groups. This resulted in groups of 30 brass students, 26 woodwind students, and 12

percussion students. A selection of the differences in the responses of these subgroups can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Notable Differences in the Response of Brass, Woodwind and Percussion Students

Factor	Brass <i>M/SD</i>	Woodwind <i>M/SD</i>	Percussion <i>M/SD</i>
Parents	1.24 (1.12)	1.50 (1.10)	0.42 (0.90)
Other Family	1.48 (1.27)	1.00 (1.23)	0.58 (1.00)
Band Director	1.31 (1.17)	1.42 (1.24)	0.83 (1.27)
Seemed Fun	2.17 (0.80)	2.00 (1.06)	2.92 (0.29)

Woodwind students reported being more influenced by their parents or parental figures than brass and percussion students. Percussion students reported a low level of influence from this factor. Brass students reported being more influenced by other family members, and percussion students also reported a low level of influence from this factor. Both brass and woodwind students reported high levels of influence from their band director(s), with woodwind students reporting the highest level of influence. Percussion students reported a lower level of influence from their band directors.

While students from all instrument groups reported that perceived enjoyment of their instrument was a highly influential factor, this was especially true for percussionists. Of the 12 responses, 11 students rated the factor “Instrument Seemed Fun” with the highest level of influence, and the remaining student rated it with the second highest level of influence.

## Summary

Students identified several factors from the survey as particularly influential on their instrument selection. The perceived enjoyment of their chosen instrument was the most influential factor by a large margin. Timbre was the second most influential factor identified by students. Students reported the perceived ease of their chosen instrument as the third most influential factor, but also considered it noticeably less influential than the top two factors. Students considered band directors, parents and parental figures, and other family members all to have small but notable impacts on their choice of an instrument.

Students identified several other factors as having little influence on their instrument selection. Students reported the perceived challenge of the instrument, appearance of the instrument, students' friends/peers, and the size of the instrument all to have a small amount of influence. Most students thought that media, cost, and celebrities/influencers had very little influence. Gender stereotypes regarding instruments were the least influential factor as reported by students on the survey. Students' instrument selections corresponded with gender stereotypes for some instruments, but not for others.

Several factors had significant differences between the responses of male and female students. Female students reported being more influenced by non-parental family members as well as the perceived ease of playing their chosen instrument. Male students reported being more influenced by the perceived challenge of their instrument. Female students reported being more influenced by the size of their instrument.

Several factors had differences in the survey response of students choosing brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments. Brass students reported high levels of influence from non-parental family members. Woodwind students reported high levels of influence from their

parents or parental figures and high levels of influence from their band director(s). Percussion students reported low levels of influence from their parents or parental figures, other family members, and band directors. Percussion students reported strong influence from their perceived enjoyment of their chosen instrument.

## DISCUSSION

This study was designed to discover which factors beginning band students across five northwest Missouri schools reported to be the most influential on their decision of an instrument for beginning band. The study also explored differences in the responses of male and female students and students who chose different instruments. I hope that this knowledge can help me guide students toward instruments that are a good fit for them and make instruments that are underrepresented in my band program more appealing to students. I also hope that other band directors in the northwest Missouri area can benefit from this greater understanding of the factors their students report as influential, and that this study will lead to discussion and further exploration by directors and researchers outside the northwest Missouri area as well.

### **Factors Identified by Students as Most Influential**

Students identified the perceived enjoyment of their chosen instrument as the most influential factor on their choice of an instrument by a large margin. This factor was not directly considered by most previous researchers, but it was found to be highly influential in one previous study (Kuhlman, 2005). Possibly, many researchers chose to include specific aspects of instruments that students might perceive as enjoyable, such as timbre and appearance, rather than directly asking them about their perceived enjoyment. The results of my survey do not indicate why students perceived their chosen instrument to be enjoyable but do indicate that this perception was reported to be highly influential on their instrument choice.

Students identified timbre as the second most influential factor on their choice of an instrument. Many previous researchers also found timbre to be highly influential, with it being

the most influential factor reported by students in multiple studies (Conner, 2019; De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Graham, 2005; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005; Vickers, 2015). In most cases, the students who participated in my study were exposed to the timbre of their instrument through live or video demonstrations by instrument models. Students also reported influence from the perceived ease of their chosen instrument, though notably less than the two most influential factors. Previous researchers also found this factor to be influential, but it was often combined with perceptions of enjoyment into a single factor (Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). It is likely that students based their perceptions of ease on their experiences testing different instruments. In my own experience, beginning band students tend to select an instrument that they have successfully tested on. However, this perception may also have been influenced by students' experiences in band between the time of their instrument selection and the distribution of the survey. Students who were successful on their instrument in that timeframe may have been more likely to report perceiving their instrument as easy during the process of instrument selection.

The influence of band directors was higher than was noted by several previous researchers (Fortney et al., 1993; Hudson, 2004; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). Students may also have reported their directors as influential due to experiences they had in the classroom between the time they chose their instrument and the time the survey was distributed. Many students may have developed relationships and familiarity with their director that led them to view the director as more influential. This is especially likely when considering the outlier among the Gallatin students who experienced a change in band directors. These students did not develop a relationship with the director that tested them on instruments and did not consider this individual to be influential.



It is difficult to compare the results for parents and other family members to previous research, as some surveys only included parents or grouped all family into a single factor (Conner, 2019; De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). However, it does seem that the students in my study found their family members, particularly their parents, to be less influential than the students in previous studies. The students in my study also found other family members to be only slightly less influential than their parents or parental figures. This was different than the findings of Katzenmoyer (2003), who found that students reported other family members to be less influential than their parents.

Students reported the perceived challenge of their instrument to have a small influence. This factor was not considered by previous researchers. The inverse relationship between perceived challenge and perceived ease does make sense, as most students would not perceive an instrument to be both easy and challenging. This factor may also have been influenced by the timing of the survey. Students who found their instrument to be challenging in the months following their instrument choice may have been more likely to believe that they always perceived their instrument as challenging.

Students reported the shape and appearance of instruments to have a small influence on their instrument choices. This result is similar to the findings of previous researchers (Conner 2019; De Vous, 2011; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). Students also reported their friends and peers to have a small influence. While this reported influence from friends is similar to the findings of previous researchers, it does differ from the perspectives of many band directors who believe that students find their friends highly influential when selecting an instrument (Bayley, 2004; Conner, 2019; Dangler, 2014; Fortney et al., 1993;

Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kossler, 2019; Kuhlman, 2005). I experienced this personally when sharing the results with the directors of the schools who participated in my study, as several had assumed that friends would be one of the most influential factors.

Students identified instrument size as having a small impact on their instrument choices, though slightly less than instrument appearance and their friends and peers. Most previous researchers did not consider the influence of instrument size, although some suggested that instrument size and portability might be the most impactful element of instrument appearance (De Vous, 2011; Kossler, 2019). Some students in my sample agreed with this assertion, but not others. Several flute and clarinet players indicated that the size of their instrument was important to them and it is possible this was due to a preference for smaller, more portable instruments. However, there were also several students who chose trombone and tuba that indicated instrument size was important, implying a preference for larger instruments in some students.

### **Factors Identified by Students as Least Influential**

Students did not report media or celebrities and influencers to have a significant impact on their choice of an instrument. Although television was the only aspect of media considered by previous researchers, expanding the scope of the media considered did not make the factor more influential than what students had reported previously (Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). I believe it is likely that relatively few beginning band students who participated in the study consumed media that addressed or included beginning band instruments, so I do not find it surprising that these factors were not identified as influential.

Most students did not report cost to be an influential factor. This result was in line with the findings of previous researchers (Chang, 2007; Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003). I

think it is likely that most beginning band students do not pay for any portion of the cost of their instrument and would not consider cost as much as the adult that is paying for the instrument. Students may also attribute the influence of cost to the influence of their parents or parental figures. It is also notable that all the schools that participated in the sample provided school instruments at no cost to students who were unable to rent or purchase their own instrument. This likely had an impact on some students who may have perceived cost as influential if these instruments were not available for them to use.

The gender stereotypes regarding instruments were the least influential factor identified by students on the survey. This result is much different than what has been found by several researchers who have concluded that gender stereotypes have a strong influence on students during the process of instrument selection (Chang, 2007; De Vous, 2011; Eros, 2008; Fortney et al., 1993; Robinson, 2001; Wrape et al., 2016). However, it does correspond to the findings of some researchers who have indicated these stereotypes may be becoming less influential over time (Abeles, 2009; Delzell & Leppla, 1992; Wiedenfeld, 2012). The gender divisions of clarinet and trumpet corresponded with typical stereotypes. It is possible that gender stereotypes were impactful on more students' decisions than the survey indicated, but it is also possible that students accurately reported their perceptions, and the gender distributions of clarinet and trumpet players were the result of other factors.

### **Other Factors Identified by Students**

The additional factors listed by students on the survey provide some further insight into the factors that students view as influential when choosing their instruments. A few students mentioned the history of their instrument, which suggests the possibility that students in some

programs may have learned additional information about their instrument. Several students also reported being influenced by the future opportunities their instrument would provide, showing that they conceptualized their instrument choice as having an impact on their future. The research of Evan and McPherson (2017) suggests that these students may already be beginning the process of associating their instrument with their personal identity, which they found to be a significant influence on many adolescent musicians. Other students reported influence from their instrument being unique or special in some way, showing that some students may value exclusivity in their selection.

A few students chose an instrument as the result of availability, often because their family already owned the instrument. Others indicated some level of prior experience on their instrument, which may be referring to the instrument testing process or to more extensive experience on their chosen instrument. A few students mentioned the weight of their instrument, possibly because they conceptualized weight as a separate factor from size or they felt influenced specifically by weight and not by size.

Several students referenced factors related to the instrument testing process. One student reported that seeing their instrument demonstrated by their director was highly influential, while another listed the entire instrument testing process as an influence. While some students may have attributed the influence of instrument demonstrations and testing to other factors such as timbre and the perceived ease, enjoyment, or challenge of their chosen instrument, it is notable that these students seemed to view instrument demonstration and testing as their own unique factors.

## **Differences in Reported Influence Among Different Demographics**

The results of the survey showed several notable differences in the response of male and female students, as well as students who selected brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments. Female students reported being more influenced by the perceived ease of playing their chosen instrument, while male students reported being more influenced by the perceived challenge of their chosen instrument. While it is possible that this result shows a genuine difference in the way male and female students were influenced, it may also suggest that some students found it more appealing to view their instrument as challenging rather than easy or that their experience in band instruction led them to this conclusion. Without further research, it is difficult to say which, if either, of these possibilities is more accurate.

Female students also reported being more influenced by the size of their instruments. Several of the female students who ranked this factor as more highly influential played smaller instruments, particularly the flute and clarinet. These instruments were predominantly chosen by female students, with 12 out of the 18 surveyed flute and clarinet players being female. This suggests that some female students may feel that playing a smaller instrument is an aspect of their gender identity or that playing a smaller instrument is an expectation that is the result of their gender identity.

The differences among students of different instruments groups were seen to a degree in brass and woodwind students, but most predominantly among percussionists. Percussion students reported low levels of influence from their family members and band directors and very strong influence from their perceived enjoyment of their chosen instrument. It is possible that these results were due in part to the low number of percussion students when compared to the size of the brass and woodwind groups. The results may also have been influenced by the uniqueness of

percussion, as it is the only beginning band instrument that is not a wind instrument and typically the only choice that performs on multiple instruments during the first year of study. There may also be a connection between these results and the testing processes used by the directors at the participating schools. While all the participating directors used mouthpiece tests to evaluate students' aptitude for brass and woodwind instruments, aptitude for percussion was evaluated using tests focused on body coordination and rhythmic response.

### **Implications for Teaching Practices**

The results have several implications that may be useful to those who teach beginning band students. The most significant implication is that students report significant influence from the perceived enjoyment of their instrument. If band directors have a shortage of students interested in playing a particular instrument, they may be able to appeal to students by making that instrument seem fun and exciting to play. In my own experience I have found that students' perceptions of potential enjoyment of an instrument may be influenced by an exciting musical example featuring the instrument, emphasis from the band director on the unique qualities of the instrument, or overtly positive language toward the instrument from the band director. However, it should be acknowledged that the data from the survey did not provide any specific indications of what aspects of their instruments students perceived as enjoyable.

Directors should not discount the impact of the instrument testing process. The directors who participated in my study were all intentional and enthusiastic in their approach to this process, and their students reported many aspects of it to be influential. Many prospective beginning band students have not had much exposure to the beginning band instruments prior to their experiences in band, and their initial perceptions may be shaped by the processes of

instrument demonstration and testing. Timbres can be very impactful on their choice of an instrument, so it is important that students hear a quality, characteristic sound that makes each instrument seem appealing. Likewise, students report that their perceived ease of playing their chosen instrument was highly impactful. It is important that the process for testing each instrument is clearly explained to each student to give them the best chance for a successful instrument test (Cooper, 2004; McPherson, 2006; Millican, 2012; Rush et al., 2014).

While band directors are often aware of the influence of family and friends in their students' lives, they should not overestimate these influences or discount their own influence as a director. The students I surveyed identified band directors as the most impactful people within the instrument selection process. Band directors also have a significant impact on how students perceive several other factors, such as instrument timbre and students' perceptions of challenge, ease, and enjoyment (Cooper, 2004; Fraedrich, 1997; Rush et al, 2014). Directors should be aware of this influence and ensure that instruments are presented, demonstrated, and tested in an effective and unbiased manner that gives students the information they need to make an informed choice.

Band directors should emphasize that instruments can be played by any student regardless of gender (Bayley, 2004). All the directors that had students participate in my study told me they made an intentional effort to dispel any gender stereotypes their students might have regarding instruments, and this was likely influential on the way their students perceived this factor. However, directors should also be aware that students' perceptions of their gender identity may shape their choice of an instrument in ways outside the gender stereotyping of instruments (Abeles & Porter 1978; Conway, 2000; O'Neill & Boultona, 1996).

If a band director has an abundance of students who are interested in playing percussion, they may want to consider emphasizing how fun other instruments are to learn and play. The students in my sample who chose percussion reported being significantly less influenced by many factors than students playing other instruments but reported very high influence from the perceived enjoyment of their instrument. Students who are drawn to percussion may also be drawn to other instruments if they believe those instruments will be fun to learn and play.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

My experience in conducting this study has led me to several questions and recommendations for future research. I believe the most important question for additional research is “What makes students believe an instrument will be fun to learn and play?” While my survey did show that the students were highly influenced by the perceived enjoyment of their chosen instrument, it did not give much specific insight into why students thought their instruments would be fun. This makes it difficult to make specific, actionable recommendations to band directors looking to motivate students toward choosing certain instruments. A more qualitatively focused study that is centered on this question could potentially provide teachers with more specific ways to approach the processes of recruiting, demonstrating, testing, and guiding students during instrument selection. A study of this nature could include interviews of students asking them to identify what aspects of their instrument they perceived as fun during the instrument selection process or a survey asking students to list the factors that formed their perception of enjoyment.

Future research could explore the perspectives of a larger sample of percussion students. The survey responses of percussion students differed from the students who chose wind



instruments but having a survey size of only 12 percussionists may have been a significant reason for those discrepancies. A more representative sample of percussion students would reduce the discrepancy between their responses and the rest of the survey body.

Future researchers may want to consider exploring the additional factors identified by students in the study. The factor “Future Opportunities” could encompass students who consider how their chosen instrument may impact their future. The factor “Instrument Size” should be expanded to “Instrument Size and Weight.” A factor such as “Prior Knowledge and Experience” could incorporate any experiences or information students might have known about the instrument before instrument demonstration and testing. Researchers may also want to use a factor such as “Accessibility” for students who may have access to an instrument prior to their experience in beginning band. Researchers may also find it helpful to encourage students to consider what specific aspects of instrument testing they found the most influential, as some students may not consider the individual components of the instrument testing process without being prompted.

## **Limitations**

Several limitations exist that impacted the study. First, the timing of the survey was not ideal. Students were surveyed in March of 2024, several months after they made their instrument decision in August of 2023. Their survey responses could have been influenced by their experiences in band since that point, or some may simply not have remembered many of the reasons why they chose their instrument.

There are also limitations as the result of the design of the Likert scale survey. Notably, the survey only identified the factors students viewed as influential, not why they viewed them

this way. The survey revealed that students viewed the perceived enjoyment of their instruments as the most influential factor on their choice on an instrument but did not provide insight into the specific reasons why students viewed this factor (or any other) as influential.

The survey was also limited by students' interpretations of the degrees on the Likert scale. While an explanation to students to clarify the meaning of these degrees was provided, inconsistencies or unintentional bias in those explanations could have impacted the results. It is likely that what students intended to communicate through the Likert scale was not revealed through the survey.

All student responses on the survey were self-reported, which limited the results to students' perceptions and their own explicit knowledge and awareness. This is further complicated by the format of the survey, which only provided students with a list of factors and degrees on a Likert scale. It did not reflect the nuances that may have been involved in their decision. The results of the survey cannot be considered an objective record of how students were influenced, but instead a report of how students indicated they were influenced by various factors within the bounds of the survey format.

Students who participated in the survey may have conceptualized choice in different ways. While some students may have felt that they fully chose their instrument for beginning band, others may have been impacted by a circumstance, an individual in their life, or the context of their band program. The survey did not account for these varying perceptions of choice, and as a result it is difficult to conclude what students intended to communicate when they indicated that a factor was or was not influential on their choice of an instrument.

This survey did not account for many of the differences presented by the unique context of each beginning band class, particularly in their approach to instrument demonstration, testing

and selection. Although each school approached these processes in a somewhat similar manner, differences in these processes impacted the decisions students made when selecting instruments. Without discussing with each individual student the ways in which these differences may have been impactful on their decision, it is impossible to account for the full context of each of the five beginning band classes that were represented. The context of each program also likely had an influence on the students who chose to participate in beginning band. Band was not a requirement for students at any participating school, and the recruiting practices that were or were not used at each school varied considerably.

## **Conclusion**

This study was designed to discover which factors beginning band students across five northwest Missouri schools reported to be the most influential on their decision when choosing an instrument for beginning band. I have gained a lot of knowledge on the perceptions of my students and other students in the northwest Missouri area. I will continue to explore ways to make instruments seem more fun and appealing throughout the process of instrument and demonstrations, especially instruments that students are more hesitant to choose.

The process of instrument selection is complex and must fulfill multiple purposes. Band directors are faced with the challenge of guiding students toward an instrument choice that is a good fit for their interests and aptitude while also ensuring that the beginning band ensemble has reasonably balanced instrumentation. Balancing these priorities is not an easy task, and I am hopeful that the results of this study will provide more knowledge to contribute to the discussion. I have already had several productive conversations with my colleagues about the factors that their students reported as influential on the survey and the ways that we can use this knowledge

to be more effective in our approaches to instrument recruiting and testing. I am also hopeful that my research can serve as a starting point for other band directors to have discussions with their students and colleagues about the influences on students during the process of instrument selection.

Despite the limitations of the survey, the results demonstrated considerable consistency with the work of previous researchers on several influencing factors, while also raising questions about how perceptions may change over time. There is relative consistency of results across several factors with previous Likert scale surveys (Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). This consistency furthers the possibility that similar perceptions of the factors that influence instrument selection are shared by students from many backgrounds and across time, although a considerable amount of research is needed for this assertion to be made more concrete. Additional research in the future can help explore the meaning that students bring when they address the influence of particular factors, especially factors such as perceived enjoyment and timbre that students have consistently identified as particularly influential (Fortney et al., 1993; Katzenmoyer, 2003; Kuhlman, 2005). Research of this nature could provide more insight into the ways in which students are influenced during the process of instrument selection.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. Blank Survey Form

#### Beginning Band Instrument Survey

##### Gender

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

##### Instrument

Flute \_\_\_\_\_

Clarinet \_\_\_\_\_

Alto Saxophone \_\_\_\_\_

Horn \_\_\_\_\_

Trumpet \_\_\_\_\_

Trombone \_\_\_\_\_

Euphonium/Baritone \_\_\_\_\_

Tuba \_\_\_\_\_

Percussion \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_



Rate the following factors based on how influential they were on your decision to choose the instrument you are playing for band.

0 = No influence

1 = Small influence

2 = Some influence

3 = Great influence

1. Parents/Family	0	1	2	3
2. Other Family Members	0	1	2	3
3. Friends/Peers	0	1	2	3
4. Band Director	0	1	2	3
5. Instrument Is a Boy/Girl Instrument	0	1	2	3
6. Timbre (Sound of Instrument)	0	1	2	3
7. Shape/Appearance of Instrument	0	1	2	3
8. Instrument Seemed Fun	0	1	2	3
9. Instrument Seemed Easy to Play	0	1	2	3
10. Instrument Seemed Challenging	0	1	2	3
11. Media (TV, TikTok, Social Media, etc)	0	1	2	3
12. Celebrity/Influencer	0	1	2	3
13. Cost of Instrument	0	1	2	3
14. Size of Instrument	0	1	2	3
15. Other (Please Specify) _____	0	1	2	3
16. Other (Please Specify) _____	0	1	2	3
17. Other (Please Specify) _____	0	1	2	3

## Appendix B. Human Subjects IRB Approval

**To:**

Daniel Hellman  
Music

**RE:** Notice of IRB Approval

**Submission Type:** Initial

**Study #:** IRB-FY2024-274

**Study Title:** Exploring Band Students' Motivations Regarding Instrument Selection

**Decision:** Approved

**Approval Date:** March 4, 2024

This submission has been approved by the Missouri State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). You are required to obtain IRB approval for any changes to any aspect of this study before they can be implemented. Should any adverse event or unanticipated problem involving risks to subjects or others occur it must be reported immediately to the IRB.

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This study was reviewed in accordance with federal regulations governing human subjects research, including those found at 45 CFR 46 (Common Rule), 45 CFR 164 (HIPAA), 21 CFR 50 & 56 (FDA), and 40 CFR 26 (EPA), where applicable.

Researchers Associated with this Project:

**PI:** Daniel Hellman

**Co-PI:**

**Primary Contact:** Aaron Morley

**Other Investigators:**

## Appendix C. Survey Responses

### Appendix C-1. Student Responses for Each Factor

Factor	No Influence	Small Influence	Some Influence	Great Influence
Parents/Family	25	17	14	12
Other Family	32	9	11	16
Friends/Peers	31	19	10	8
Band Director	26	14	12	16
Boy/Girl Inst.	63	3	0	2
Timbre	15	8	26	19
Shape/Appearance	30	19	13	6
Seemed Fun	3	13	18	34
Seemed Easy	19	20	17	12
Challenging	33	11	15	9
Media	42	12	10	4
Celeb/Influencer	53	7	4	4
Cost	44	15	3	6
Size	38	12	8	10

### Appendix C-2. Mean Response for Each Factor

Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Instrument Seemed Fun	2.22	0.91
Timbre	1.72	1.10
Instrument Seemed Easy	1.32	1.07
Band Director	1.26	1.20
Parents	1.19	1.12
Other Family	1.16	1.25
Instrument Seemed Challenging	1.00	1.11
Instrument Shape/Appearance	0.93	1.00
Friends/Peers	0.93	1.04
Instrument Size	0.85	1.12
Media	0.65	0.94
Cost	0.57	0.94
Celebs/Influencers	0.40	0.85
Boy/Girl Instrument	0.13	0.54

**Appendix C-3. Differences in the Responses of Male and Female Students**

Factor	Male <i>M/SD</i>	Female <i>M/SD</i>	Difference in <i>M</i>
Parents	1.11 (1.21)	1.29 (1.04)	0.18
Other Family	0.92 (1.18)	1.39 (1.29)	0.47
Friends/Peers	1.03 (0.97)	0.84 (1.13)	0.19
Band Director	1.28 (1.28)	1.23 (1.15)	0.05
Boy/Girl Instrument	0.14 (0.54)	0.13 (0.56)	.01
Timbre	1.81 (1.12)	1.65 (1.11)	0.16
Shape/Appearance	0.89 (0.98)	0.94 (1.03)	0.05
Seemed Fun	2.31 (0.89)	2.16 (0.93)	0.15
Seemed Easy	1.11 (0.92)	1.55 (1.21)	0.44
Challenging	1.14 (1.15)	0.84 (1.10)	0.30
Media	0.72 (0.94)	0.55 (0.96)	0.17
Celeb/Influencer	0.42 (0.84)	0.32 (0.83)	0.10
Cost	0.56 (0.97)	0.61 (0.92)	0.05
Size	0.69 (1.09)	1.00 (1.15)	0.31

**Appendix C-4.** Differences in the Responses of Brass, WW and Percussion Students

Factor	Brass <i>M/SD</i>	Woodwind <i>M/SD</i>	Percussion <i>M/SD</i>
Parents	1.24 (1.12)	1.50 (1.10)	0.42 (0.90)
Other Family	1.48 (1.27)	1.00 (1.23)	0.58 (1.00)
Friends/Peers	1.00 (1.10)	0.88 (0.99)	0.92 (1.08)
Band Director	1.31 (1.17)	1.42 (1.24)	0.83 (1.27)
Boy/Girl Instrument	0.00 (0.00)	0.31 (0.84)	0.08 (0.29)
Timbre	1.38 (1.18)	1.92 (1.06)	2.08 (0.90)
Shape/Appearance	0.97 (1.05)	0.92 (1.06)	0.92 (0.79)
Seemed Fun	2.17 (0.80)	2.00 (1.06)	2.92 (0.29)
Seemed Easy	1.17 (1.14)	1.58 (0.99)	1.25 (1.06)
Challenging	1.07 (1.10)	0.73 (1.12)	1.25 (1.06)
Media	0.41 (0.87)	0.81 (0.94)	0.92 (1.08)
Celeb/Influencer	0.45 (0.83)	0.31 (0.84)	0.50 (1.00)
Cost	0.52 (0.91)	0.69 (1.01)	0.50 (0.90)
Size	0.97 (1.12)	0.92 (1.13)	0.50 (1.17)

### Appendix C-5. Other Factors Listed by Students

Its history

The history of it

Variety of instruments I can play later

I wanted to play a whole band with 4 people

Play at a football game

There is not a lot of my instrument

Made me look cool

Loudness coolness

My band teacher played it

Testing instrument

Already had bells and snare

First instrument I saw

Already had instrument

Experience

Had some practice

When I was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade I wanted to play the trombone

Not w/(student name)

SpongeBob

Time to Play

Weight

Weight