

The Occupational Identity of In-Service Secondary Music Educators: Formative Interpersonal Interactions and Activities

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Joshua A. Russell¹

Abstract

In order to explore the factors that inform the occupational identity development of in-service music educators and to compare the identities of in-service teachers with those of preservice music educators as examined in previous research, the purposes of this study were to examine the reported occupational identity of in-service secondary music educators and identify the interpersonal interactions and activities that help form occupational identity. A stratified random sample of secondary music teachers ($N = 300$) completed a questionnaire based on previous research. Participants reported a majority of integrated (view of self and perceived view of others) professional roles, although participants believed themselves to be musicians more than they felt others believed them to be. Participants reported positive interactions with music students and other music educators and that directing ensembles and attending music conferences were the most positive experiences. Participants who reported positive relationships with other music educators and music students were likely to develop an educator identity. External musician identity was predicted by relationships with other teachers as well as with students outside of music. Participants with positive administration relationships were less likely to exhibit an internal musician identity. As teachers move from preservice to in-service, their musician identities may transform from being relatively integrated to becoming more differentiated.

Keywords

identity development, in-service, music educator, music teacher, occupational identity

¹The Hartt School, The University of Hartford, Hartford, CT, USA

Corresponding Author:

Joshua A. Russell, The Hartt School, The University of Hartford, 200 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117, USA
Email: jorussell@hartford.edu

Music education researchers continue to examine the identity development of future music educators (e.g., Austin, Isbell, & Russell, 2012; Austin & Miksza, 2009; Berg, 2010; Hourigan & Thornton, 2009; Isbell, 2008). These researchers have focused on the primary socialization process (Cox, 1997; L'Roy, 1983; Roberts, 2000) or secondary socialization (Hellman, 2007; Isbell, 2008; Miksza, 2007). Few music education scholars, however, have examined socialization beyond tertiary education. An increasing number of researchers outside of music have examined identity development among young adults and midlife adults. Kroger (2007) found that the adoption of senior roles in the workplace and community might lead to identity issues not experienced during childhood or in any initial secondary socialization. Kroger stated that,

In the area of vocation, a number of individuals at midlife will reevaluate their level of vocational satisfaction, and some will make new commitments to carry them through their remaining middle adulthood years. Those nearing retirement will often be making evaluation of the vocational paths they have chosen and considering different roles in the years that will lie ahead postretirement. (p. 179)

Despite the possible implications of identity development during young adulthood (Kroger, 2007), few researchers have explored what factors continue to influence the occupational identity of in-service educators. In a recent review of research, Pellegrino (2009) cited only one researcher who focused on in-service identity: Scheib (2003), who found that role conflict and role overload (i.e., experiencing the demands of too many concurrent role expectations) were the two most-cited causes of stress among teachers. Subsequent to Pellegrino's (2009) review, Draves (2010) examined the impact of student teacher supervision on the identity development of in-service music teachers. Participants reported expanded teacher identities (i.e., developed a role model identity, identified a desire to give back to the profession) due to the process of mentoring preservice music teachers. Participants indicated that mentoring preservice teachers encouraged more reflection on their own practice and created a sense of professional responsibility while helping student teachers develop their skills. Contrary to participants in Scheib's (2003) study, in-service music educators in Draves's study enjoyed and found meaning in having yet another role required of them.

By examining the continued identity development of in-service secondary music educators, music education researchers may better understand the social and psychological issues that influence secondary music educators' job satisfaction, career commitment, career plans, and even continued participation in music activities. More importantly, researchers may be able to provide secondary music educators concrete advice for enhancing their own job satisfaction and career commitment, allowing them to shape their own career and participation in music as they see fit and better negotiate the stresses found in their job. Secondary music educators can experience a variety of stresses that diminish their job satisfaction such as managing large classes (Heston, Dedrick, Raschke, & Whitehead, 1996), isolation (Scheib, 2003), the low curricular status or the elective nature of music classes (Heston et al., 1996; Scheib, 2003), the

public visibility of music teachers, administrative support (Krueger, 2000), and a lack of time to develop and foster personal music growth (Vartanian, 2001). Teacher age, school type (secondary and private schools), extracurricular requirements, lack of support from parents and administration, and salary may influence music teacher career decisions (Hancock, 2008). Similarly, Russell (2008) found that the immediate career plans of string music educators often were impacted by psychological factors such as commitment to teaching, self-efficacy, and enjoyment.

Notwithstanding such possible benefits for in-service music educators, researchers have focused primarily on the identity status and development of other populations within the field of music education including higher education performance faculty members (e.g., Mills, 2004), college and university music education faculty members (e.g., Rohwer & Henry, 2004), preservice music teachers (e.g., Teachout, 1997), and, to a lesser extent, in-service music educators (Draves, 2010). For example, Mills (2004) examined the benefits of integrating the teacher and performer identities and found that the majority of higher education performance professors surveyed believed that teaching was an integral part of their identities. The professors believed that their teaching role informed their role as a performer (i.e., analysis of their own performances, developing and maintaining their own technique, practice skills, and introducing them to more repertoire). Mills, however, made a distinction between performer-teachers who believed that teaching helped their performing and teacher-performers who felt that their playing skills improved their teaching. Music education professors responded to a survey regarding their perception of the importance of different skills or characteristics for music teachers (Rohwer & Henry, 2004), and although the differences were minimal, the researchers found that teaching skills were deemed most important, followed by personality and music skills. Other researchers examined the beliefs of in-service K–12 teachers and found similar results, in which music teachers valued teaching competencies over music competencies (Taebel, 1980; Teachout, 1997). Juchniewicz (2010), however, found that teachers valued social skills more than any identified teacher competencies or music skills.

Researchers who explored musicians' occupational identity development most commonly examined college-age students (Austin et al., 2012; Bouij, 1998; Haston & Russell, 2012; Isbell, 2008; Roberts, 1991) and often concentrated on the impact of role conflict on the preservice music educators' identity development (Scheib, 2003). Roberts (1991) found that music students felt negatively labeled as teachers and, therefore, strived to develop music expertise (rather than teaching expertise) as a means of gaining social clout with peers and faculty members. In an examination of the identity development of undergraduate music education majors over time, Froehlich and L'Roy (1985) found that more students wanted to be a professional performer as they neared their senior year. Froehlich and L'Roy concluded that teacher identity did not develop over the course of preservice education and that few students demonstrated a commitment to being a music educator. Bouij (1998) discovered that preservice teachers in Sweden struggled to develop a musician identity. These students developed a content-centered approach to teaching, which more closely modeled a performer identity (i.e., focus on artistic ideas) rather than a teacher identity.

More recently, however, researchers have found more positive integrations between performer and musician identities. Participants in Haston and Russell's (2012) study reported meaningful parallels between their teacher roles and musician roles and were able to draw upon one to inform the other (e.g., employing error detection and correction strategies used in the classroom in private practice situations). Other researchers who used symbolic interactionism as a lens found somewhat conflicting results. Although undergraduate music education majors reported overwhelmingly positive experiences and interactions (Isbell, 2008), participants in that study believed that a difference existed between their perception of their teacher identity and the perception of others, while their musician identity was integrated between self and others. Austin et al. (2012), however, posited that the occupational identity of undergraduate music majors was separated by different roles within music (i.e., musician, teacher, entertainer) rather than a difference between perceptions of self and others.

Theoretical Framework

Austin and colleagues (2012) based their definitions of socialization and occupational identity on previous research (i.e., Isbell, 2008). Austin et al. defined socialization as "the collective impact of people and experiences most connected to the individual or context," and claimed occupational identity is "a merger of teacher-musician and self-other dimensions" based on symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969). In order to frame their study, Austin et al. (2012) described symbolic interactionism as

the process of interacting with and defining the actions of others—is mediated by people's interpretations of their surroundings and the symbolic meaning derived from their experiences. This process is highly personalized in the sense that two people may draw distinct meanings about a particular occupation from the same situation or experience. (p. X)

For the purposes of this study, I used these definitions to provide a consistent framework in order to build and expand upon extant research (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2006). Similarly, I adapted research instruments from previously validated research measures (e.g., Austin et al., 2012; Isbell, 2008) in order to allow a logical comparison of the perceived occupational identity of undergraduate music majors (all majors), undergraduate music education majors, and in-service music educators.

Purpose and Research Questions

In order to explore the factors that inform the occupational identity development of in-service music educators and to compare the identities of in-service teachers with those of preservice music educators as examined in previous research, the purposes of this study were to examine the reported occupational identity of in-service secondary music educators and to identify the interpersonal relationships and activities that help

form occupational identity. More specifically, the research questions that guided this study were (a) What is the reported occupational identity of secondary in-service music educators using the lens of symbolic interactionism? (b) What professional interactions did secondary music teachers deem most important to remaining a music educator? (c) What professional activities did participants report as most important in their decision to remain a music educator? (d) Are any individual teacher characteristics or teaching contexts associated with secondary music teacher identity? and (e) Do any activities or interactions explain variance in reported occupational identity?

Method and Data Sources

Instrument

Participants responded to the Music Educator Career Questionnaire (MECQ), which was developed from previous research. I employed items that had been used in previous research (Austin et al., 2012; Isbell, 2008) to elicit information regarding occupational identity. Participants responded to two sets of items regarding their occupational identity: "I see myself as a(n) . . ." and "I believe others see me as a(n)" I altered items from previous research (Isbell, 2008) regarding the importance of different interactions and activities to better reflect the social interactions and professional activities of in-service music teachers (e.g., relationships with parents, administrators, colleagues). For example, participants responded to items using prompts such as "Since becoming a professional music educator, what type of influence (positive or negative) has each of the following people had on your decision to remain a music educator?" Participants could respond to these items on a 5-point scale (1 = *very negative*, 2 = *somewhat negative*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *somewhat positive*, 5 = *very positive*). Finally, I utilized items regarding career confidence and commitment from previous research (Isbell, 2006). I established the internal reliability of the subscales (occupational identity [$\alpha = .91$], interactions [$\alpha = .67$], activities [$\alpha = .84$], and career commitment [$\alpha = .29$]) using Cronbach's alpha. Due to the low reliability of responses regarding career commitment, these items were not used in subsequent analyses.

Procedure

I sent the MECQ and a self-addressed stamped envelope to a stratified random sample (by state) of 800 in-service secondary music educators who were members of the Southwestern Division of MENC: The National Association for Music Education (AR, CO, KS, MO, NM, OK, TX). I obtained the list and mailing addresses through The American List Counsel, a company that managed this service for MENC. Teachers in each stratum were listed alphabetically. I focused on this population (secondary ensemble teachers) due to the shared experiences and backgrounds often found with those working with similar job parameters (e.g., teaching secondary students, preparing large ensembles, etc.). The appropriate proportion of potential participants

from each state was selected using a computer-generated list of random numbers. Three hundred eleven participants returned questionnaires. Only 300 participants, however, returned complete and usable questionnaires (38% overall response rate, sampling error $\pm 5.5\%$ based on population of 4,890).

Participants

Survey participants were highly representative of the target population, in proportion to state affiliation ($r = .90$). The majority of participants were female (62.2%). The average participant was 49 years old with 23 years of teaching experience. The majority of participants reported their ethnicity as White (93.4%), received their initial teacher certification through a bachelor's degree program (89.7%), and did not participate in a mentor or induction program in their initial years of teaching (62.5%). Most participants were married (76.9%) with two to three children (54.2%) and reported growing up in a middle-class family (62%).

Teaching Context

Relatively equal proportions of teachers indicated teaching in a public (93.6%) middle school (32.8%), in a high school (34.8%), or in mixed levels (32.4%). Only 17.8% of participants taught in an urban setting while most participants worked in a suburban (41.6%) or rural (40.6%) setting. Almost half (41%) indicated that their primary teaching specialization was band, followed by choir (29.3%), general music (18%), and strings (11.6%).

Results

I employed an exploratory factor analysis of participant responses to items designed to elicit information about their perception of their own occupational identity. In this factor analysis, I used Promax rotation and Kaiser normalization, rather than an orthogonal rotation, which produces uncorrelated factors (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Costello and Osborne argued that "in the social sciences we generally expect some correlation among factors, since behavior is rarely partitioned into neatly packaged units that function independently of one another. Therefore using orthogonal rotation results in a loss of valuable information if the factors are correlated" (p. 3). Based on this information, I utilized a Promax rotation as it was possible that participants' experiences regarding various dimensions of identity may be highly correlated. This rotation required 16 iterations to converge. As a result of the factor analysis (using a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0), six factors emerged, accounting for roughly 69% of the systematic variance in responses. As evident in Table 1, the pattern is clear and interpretable; the majority of loadings exceeded .50 and only seven cross-loadings exceeded .30. I established sampling adequacy using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (.87) and the assumption of sphericity using the Bartlett Test of Sphericity, $\chi^2 = 4,256.25$,

Table 1. Pattern Matrix of Reported Occupational Identity via a Symbolic Interactionism Lens

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| 1. Educator identity (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$) | | | | | | |
| I see myself as a music educator | .864 | | | | | |
| I see myself as an educator | .810 | | | | | |
| I see myself as a teacher | .768 | | | | | |
| I see myself as a music teacher | .751 | | | | | |
| Others see me as a music teacher | .611 | | | | | |
| Others see me as a music educator | .539 | | .464 | | | |
| Others see me as an educator | .531 | | .370 | | -.320 | |
| Others see me as a teacher | .490 | | | | | |
| 2. Conductor identity (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$) | | | | | | |
| I see myself as a conductor | | .871 | | | | |
| I see myself as an ensemble director | | .801 | | | | |
| Others see me as a conductor | | .768 | | | | |
| Others see me as an ensemble director | | .638 | | | | |
| 3. External musician identity (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$) | | | | | | |
| Others see me as a musician | | | .831 | | | |
| Others see me as an artist | | | .811 | | | |
| Others see me as a performer | | | .798 | | .391 | |
| Others see me as a music scholar | | .311 | .564 | | | |
| 4. Creative business identity (Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$) | | | | | | |
| Others see me as a composer | | | | .878 | | |
| I see myself as a composer | | | | .870 | | |
| Others see me as an entrepreneur | | | | .757 | | |
| I see myself as an entrepreneur | | | | .656 | | |
| 5. Internal musician identity (Cronbach's $\alpha = .71$) | | | | | | |
| I see myself as a performer | | | | | .732 | |
| I see myself as an artist | | | | | .618 | |
| I see myself as a musician | .564 | | | | .565 | |
| I see myself as a music scholar | | .422 | | | .454 | |
| 6. Entertainer identity (Cronbach's $\alpha = .65$) | | | | | | |
| I see myself as an entertainer | | | | | | .811 |
| Others see me as an entertainer | | | | | | .804 |

Note: Cross-loadings under .30 have been omitted to improve readability of the table.

$p \leq .001$. Despite the use of an oblique rotation, no correlation above .51 existed and the average correlation was .26 (see Table 2).

The in-service music educator participants saw themselves, and believed that others saw them, as an educator, an ensemble leader, a creative businessperson, and an entertainer. However, two separate musician identities may be identified based upon participant responses: an external music identity, in which others saw them as a performer, an

Table 2. Occupational Identity Correlation Matrix

| Component | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1 | 1.00 | 0.50 | 0.47 | 0.02 | 0.10 | 0.16 |
| 2 | | 1.00 | 0.51 | 0.27 | 0.15 | 0.34 |
| 3 | | | 1.00 | 0.27 | 0.05 | 0.42 |
| 4 | | | | 1.00 | 0.18 | 0.30 |
| 5 | | | | | 1.00 | 0.10 |
| 6 | | | | | | 1.00 |

artist, or a scholar, or an internal identity, in which they saw themselves differently in the same roles. Music educators were more likely to believe themselves to be musicians ($M = 5.03$, $\sigma = .67$) than they felt others' believed them to be ($M = 4.80$, $\sigma = .88$).

Participants responded to several items on a scale of 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive) designed to elicit information about the importance of different interpersonal interactions (see Table 3). Participants indicated that their most positive interactions were with music students ($M = 4.63$, $\sigma = .61$) and other music educators ($M = 4.43$, $\sigma = .73$). Participants reported less positive interactions with district administrators ($M = 3.28$, $\sigma = .94$) and other students not involved in music ($M = 3.37$, $\sigma = .77$). Although participants indicated that interactions with building level administrators were among the least positive, responses to this item had a larger variance than any of the other items related to interpersonal interactions ($\sigma = 1.15$).

Participants also responded to several items on a scale of 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive) designed to elicit information about the importance of different professional activities. Secondary music educators claimed that directing ensembles ($M = 4.62$, $\sigma = .56$) and attending music conferences ($M = 4.61$, $\sigma = .58$) were the two most positively influential experiences, followed by performing in public ($M = 4.30$, $\sigma = .73$) and attending professional development ($M = 4.23$, $\sigma = .86$). Participants reported that the least influential activities were assessing and grading students ($M = 3.06$, $\sigma = .94$), and classroom management and discipline ($M = 3.09$, $\sigma = 1.13$), followed by continuing to take auditions ($M = 3.22$, $\sigma = .55$) and attending graduate general education courses ($M = 3.29$, $\sigma = .80$).

I conducted a series of bivariate analyses in order to examine the impact of different individual difference variables (i.e., gender, teaching experience, participation in a mentor or induction program, socioeconomic background, marital status, and number of children) and teaching context variables (i.e., school level and school setting) on participants' reported occupational identity. Male participants indicated a higher conductor, $t = 3.02$, $p = .003$, and creative business identity, $t = 2.52$, $p = .012$, than did female participants. No significant differences in identity based upon participants' teaching experience, participation in a mentor program, marital status, or number of children existed. Participants from higher socioeconomic backgrounds scored higher for educator, $F = 7.22$, $p < .001$, and conductor identities, $F = 4.36$, $p = .002$, than those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Participants who taught in a high school

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of Interpersonal Interaction and Activity Influences

| Interaction | Mean | σ |
|--|------|----------|
| Music students | 4.63 | 0.61 |
| Other music educators | 4.43 | 0.73 |
| Parents | 4.02 | 0.87 |
| Other teachers (not in music) | 3.82 | 0.82 |
| College music faculty | 3.71 | 0.85 |
| School administrators | 3.57 | 1.15 |
| Other students (not in music) | 3.37 | 0.77 |
| District level administration | 3.28 | 0.94 |
| Activity | Mean | σ |
| Directing music ensembles | 4.62 | 0.56 |
| Attending music conferences | 4.61 | 0.58 |
| Performing in public | 4.30 | 0.73 |
| Attending professional development | 4.23 | 0.86 |
| Taking students on music fieldtrips | 4.19 | 0.80 |
| Performing in ensembles | 4.15 | 0.80 |
| Attending live classical concerts | 4.07 | 0.68 |
| Attending graduate music education classes | 4.04 | 0.86 |
| Informal music making outside of school | 4.03 | 0.74 |
| Attending live college performances | 3.98 | 0.73 |
| Teaching private lessons | 3.98 | 0.86 |
| Attending live popular music concerts | 3.92 | 0.79 |
| Communicating with coworkers | 3.81 | 0.90 |
| Teaching music history and culture | 3.81 | 0.77 |
| Teaching music theory | 3.73 | 0.78 |
| Utilizing technology in the classroom | 3.71 | 0.82 |
| Teaching improvisation | 3.58 | 0.76 |
| Communicating with parents | 3.56 | 0.97 |
| Taking private lessons | 3.55 | 0.75 |
| Teaching music evaluation | 3.55 | 0.69 |
| Teaching music analysis | 3.52 | 0.71 |
| Communicating with administrators | 3.42 | 1.06 |
| Teaching composition | 3.42 | 0.69 |
| Attending graduate general education classes | 3.29 | 0.80 |
| Continuing to take auditions | 3.22 | 0.55 |
| Classroom management and discipline | 3.09 | 1.13 |
| Assessing and grading students | 3.06 | 0.94 |

Note: Scale: 1 = very negative to 5 = very positive.

reflected a higher conductor identity, $F = 7.94$, $p < .001$, than those who taught in middle school or in both high school and middle school. No significant differences in identities based upon school setting existed.

In order to reduce the large number of activities for further analysis, I conducted a factor analysis with an orthogonal rotation to produce variables that were not correlated and improve subsequent analyses (i.e., to meet the assumption of collinearity in regression analysis). Using a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0, eight factors emerged, accounting for roughly 62% of the systematic variance in responses. The rotated matrix is interpretable; no cross-loadings exceeded .40 (see Table 4). I established sampling adequacy using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (.80) and the assumption of sphericity using the Bartlett Test of Sphericity, $\chi^2 = 2,448.63, p \leq .001$.

Participants took part in eight types of professional activities. Based upon the factor analysis, I categorized these activities into comprehensive music teaching, live music experience, performance experience, and interpersonal experience components. Due to either a low internal reliability (<.70) or having only one variable in the factor, I did not include the other factors in subsequent analyses (i.e., professional development activities, general education courses, field trip activities, pragmatic activities).

I conducted a series of multiple regression analyses to determine if any interpersonal interactions predicted participants' occupational identities using composite subscale scores as predictor variables for activity types (due to the large number of activities) and simple item scores for the interpersonal interactions. These regression models met the assumption of multicollinearity as evidenced by tolerances no lower than .70 as well as variance inflation factors ranging from 1.09 to 1.43. An observation to predictor variable of 37.5:1 was sufficient for analysis. Due to the exploratory nature of the analyses and a lack of a previous theoretical model, I used an enter method and reported adjusted R^2 to reduce the bias of R^2 (Huck, 2007). Although Type I errors are possible given the number of analyses, some researchers have argued that "in exploratory studies, in which data are collected with an objective but not with a prespecified key hypothesis, multiple test adjustments are not strictly required" (Bender & Lange, 2001, p. 344).

Positive interpersonal interactions with other music educators, $\beta = .16, t = 2.35, p = .02$, and music students, $\beta = .22, t = 3.37, p = .001$, predicted an educator identity, accounting for a moderate amount of variance in the educator identity, adjusted $R^2 = .12, F = 5.27, p < .001$. Similarly, positive interactions with other music educators predicted a conductor identity, $\beta = .18, t = 2.69, p = .008$, but explained little variance, adjusted $R^2 = .07, F = 3.32, p = .001$. Not surprisingly, interactions with other music educators, $\beta = .15, t = 2.30, p = .02$, and students outside of music, $\beta = .19, t = 2.82, p = .005$, predicted external musician identity and explained a moderate amount of variance, adjusted $R^2 = .11, F = 4.76, p < .001$. No interpersonal interactions significantly predicted participants' creative business identity. Interactions with school administrators, however, were a significant negative predictor of an internal musician identity, $\beta = -.18, t = 2.45, p = .015$, but explained little variance, adjusted $R^2 = .04, F = 2.26, p = .024$. Finally, interactions with other teachers outside of music predicted participants' entertainer identity, $\beta = .21, t = 2.92, p = .004$, but explained minimal variance in the entertainer identity, adjusted $R^2 = .08, F = 3.78, p < .001$.

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix of Influential Activities

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|--|------|------|---|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Comprehensive teaching (Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$) | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching music analysis | .833 | | | | | | | |
| Teaching music theory | .796 | | | | | | | |
| Teaching composition | .781 | | | | | | | |
| Teaching music evaluation | .679 | | | | | | | |
| Teaching music history and culture | .640 | | | | | | | .312 |
| Teaching improvisation | .477 | .341 | | | | | -.313 | |
| Utilizing technology in the classroom | .374 | | | | | .353 | | |
| Live music experiences (Cronbach's $\alpha = .75$) | | | | | | | | |
| Attending live popular music concerts | .809 | | | | | | | |
| Attending college performances | .762 | | | | | | | |
| Attending live classical performances | .607 | .332 | | | | | | |
| Informal music making outside of school | .488 | | | | | .310 | | |
| Directing ensembles | .470 | | | | | | | |
| Performance experiences (Cronbach's $\alpha = .75$) | | | | | | | | |
| Performing in ensembles | | .776 | | | | | | |
| Taking private lessons | | .757 | | | | | | |
| Performing in public | | .724 | | | | | | |
| Continuing to take auditions | | .676 | | | | | | -.334 |
| Interpersonal experiences (Cronbach's $\alpha = .76$) | | | | | | | | |
| Communicating with administrators | | | | .748 | | | | |
| Communicating with parents | | | | .737 | | | | |
| Classroom management and discipline | | | | .714 | | | | |
| Communicating with coworkers | | | | .713 | | | | |
| Professional development activities (Cronbach's $\alpha = .58$) | | | | | | | | |
| Attending music conferences | | | | | .818 | | | |
| Attending professional development | | | | | .770 | | | |
| General education courses (Cronbach's $\alpha = NA$) | | | | | | | | |
| Attending graduate general education classes | | | | | | .861 | | |
| Field trip activities (Cronbach's $\alpha = NA$) | | | | | | | | |
| Taking students on music fieldtrips | | | | | | | .715 | |
| Pragmatic activities (Cronbach's $\alpha = .08$) | | | | | | | | |
| Attending graduate music education classes | | | | | | | | .607 |
| Assessing and grading students | | | | .324 | | .301 | .371 | -.484 |
| Teaching private lessons | | | | | | | | -.406 |

Note: Cross-loadings under .30 have been omitted to improve readability of the table.

I conducted a separate series of multiple regression analyses to determine if participants' professional activities predicted occupational identity. These regression models met the assumption of multicollinearity as evidenced by tolerances no lower than .98 as well as variance inflation factors ranging from 1.00 to 1.03. Participants who rated live music experiences highly, $\beta = .17$, $t = 2.75$, $p = .006$, and provided positive ratings for interpersonal experiences were more likely to foster a music educator identity. These factors, however, explained relatively little variance, adjusted $R^2 = .09$, $F = 7.21$, $p < .001$. Three activity types predicted a conductor identity: comprehensive music teaching activities, $\beta = .19$, $t = 3.12$, $p = .002$; live music experiences, $\beta = .20$, $t = 3.25$, $p = .001$; and positive interpersonal experiences, $\beta = .24$, $t = 4.00$, $p < .001$. These predictors explained a moderate amount of variance, adjusted $R^2 = .12$, $F = 9.30$, $p < .001$. Performance experiences, $\beta = .17$, $t = 2.77$, $p = .006$, and interpersonal experiences, $\beta = .30$, $t = 5.00$, $p < .001$, predicted external musician identity and explained a moderate amount of variance, adjusted $R^2 = .13$, $F = 9.11$, $p < .001$. Only comprehensive music teaching experiences, $\beta = .32$, $t = 5.31$, $p < .001$ predicted creative business identity and explained a moderate amount of variance, adjusted $R^2 = .14$, $F = 9.44$, $p < .001$. Live music experiences, $\beta = .15$, $t = 2.50$, $p < .013$ as well as performance experiences, $\beta = .27$, $t = 4.34$, $p < .001$, predicted internal musician identity. These two factors explained a modest amount of variance, adjusted $R^2 = .09$, $F = 7.30$, $p < .001$. No activities predicted an entertainer identity.

Discussion

In their investigation of the occupational identity of undergraduate music majors (all majors) at three institutions, Austin et al. (2012) found that occupational identity was multidimensional (i.e., different music roles) but integrated between self-perceptions and how participants felt that others saw their identity. Participants identified their roles as teacher, musician, conductor/composer, and entertainer/entrepreneur. Isbell (2008), in examining the occupational identity of preservice music educators, found that future music teachers possessed an integrated musician identity but differentiated teacher identity between their self-perceptions and others' perceptions. The in-service teacher participants in the current study indicated the opposite—an integrated teacher identity and differentiated musician identity (see Figure 1). Moreover, participants believed their identities to be different from those found by Austin et al. and indicated that conductor identity was a separate category, and composing was paired with entrepreneurship based upon their responses to questionnaire items. Furthermore, the current participants, based on their responses, assigned a separate entertainer identity.

Through their survey responses, in-service secondary music teachers indicated a multidimensional occupational identity consisting of six professional roles: educator, ensemble leader, creative businessperson, entertainer, and both an internal and an external musician identity. Participants indicated that how they perceived themselves as musicians was different from how they believed others saw them as musicians. The divergence between the internal musician identity and the external musician

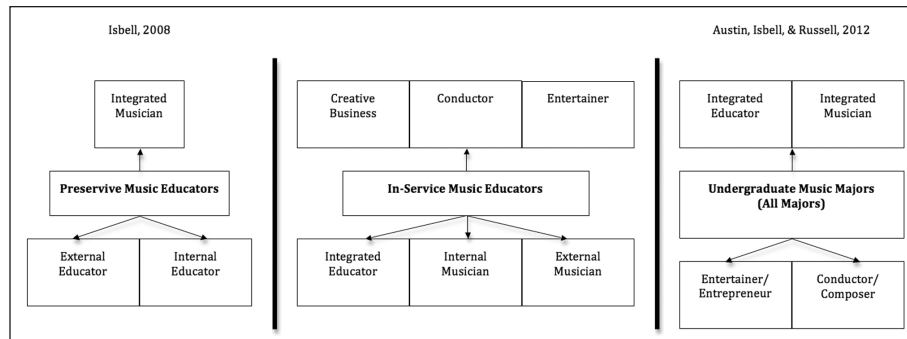


Figure 1. Comparison of reported occupational identities by research study and participants

identity may be due to music teachers' perception that others do not see them as active musicians.

Questions remain as to what identity or identities would best serve practicing music educators. Although researchers found that professionals in the field value teacher characteristics more than performer characteristics (Rohwer & Henry, 2004; Taebel, 1980; Teachout, 1997), it is unclear if teachers with a strong educator identity will experience greater job satisfaction, career commitment, or career longevity. Although Russell (2009) found that string teachers who thought of themselves more as teachers than musicians reported higher overall job satisfaction, Austin et al. (2012) posited that facilitating a holistic identity may be a means to combat the perceived adversarial relationship between musician and educator roles within music educators if not within their professional school settings.

Participants reported the most positive influential interactions with individuals within the music education world—music students and other music educators—while the least positive interpersonal interactions existed with district administrators and students not involved with music. Krueger (2000) found that music teachers often are influenced negatively by administrators, however, researchers have not explored the relationships with students outside of music. It should be noted that participants may not have been reacting to actual relationships; rather, the low ranking for “other students” may have been due to a minimum amount of contact with students not participating in music. In either case, participants' responses may reflect an ever-increasing isolation experienced by music educators. Researchers have found that isolation from other teachers and students could negatively impact work psychology (Minarik, Thornton, & Perreault, 2003; Russell, 2008; Shoho & Martin, 1999).

Participants indicated that the most positive professional experiences included directing ensembles and attending music conferences. Participants' most highly rated activities were grounded in music practice, as compared to other activities that may be less directly related to music and music teaching (e.g., attending graduate general education courses). Music teachers indicated less positive experiences with professional

development not focused on music specific topics (Russell & Isbell, 2009). Music teachers may have difficulty in making connections between general education activities and application in the music classroom. However, if music teachers adopt a more comprehensive view of their music curricula, for example better understanding how to help students write about music through attending general writing professional development, music educators may help students' music understanding. Not surprisingly, participants rated assessing students and dealing with classroom management as the least positive professional experiences. Recent researchers (Russell & Austin, 2010) found that music educators' assessment techniques emphasized attitudinal rather than achievement or knowledge based outcomes. If teachers receive better training in valid assessment techniques, their relative displeasure with the process may be mitigated as they improve their ability to give students meaningful feedback about their music achievement. Music teachers previously have claimed that classroom management had a negative impact on their professional lives (Heston et al., 1996).

Although few individual difference variables or teaching context variables were associated with occupational identity, male participants were more likely to develop conductor and creative business identities than were female participants. Participants who taught in a high school were more likely to develop a conductor identity than those teaching at other levels. Researchers have found that secondary instrumental music educators are predominantly male (Leonhard, 1991; Roulston & Mills, 2000), which may explain how the male and high school teachers in this study developed similar identities. Also, the high school music educator most often takes on the role of conductor while leading an ensemble, logically leading to a development of that identity. Interestingly, participants from higher socioeconomic backgrounds indicated higher educator and conductor identities through their survey responses. Although some researchers have found that teachers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to leave the profession (Bloland & Selby, 1980; Jianping, 1997), similar participants in this study developed identities that may help combat unwanted teacher attrition. This may help explain why Russell (2008) found that music teachers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to remain in the profession.

Music educators who experienced positive interactions with other music educators and music students were likely to develop an educator identity. Logically, such interactions can reinforce the role of teacher as one creates a community of practice with others directly involved in music teaching and learning. In contrast, self-perception of a conductor identity was predicted by interpersonal interactions with other directors. As secondary music teachers interact, compete, or share literature with other directors, they may spend more time in an ensemble conductor role, therefore gaining more of that identity. It is interesting to note that interactions with music students did not predict a conductor identity as they did the educator identity. It seems possible that interactions with students may ground professional identity more in the needs of the student rather than the needs of the ensemble, thus leading more to the role of educator rather than conductor. Music teachers' external musician identity was predicted by

interactions with other teachers as well as with students outside of music. Nonmusic students may see music teachers as classroom teachers because they do not witness the music activities (modeling, singing, etc.) that music teachers do each day. Conversely, those students who are not initiated into the world of secondary music education may see music teachers more as musicians *because* of their lack of participation in music (i.e., music is only for the talented, so the teacher must be talented). Moreover, as teachers establish a community of practice with other music educators, they may begin to feel a more integrated role of musician/teacher and feel more supported by peers because they have shared or similar performance backgrounds.

Individuals in the school not directly involved in music learning impacted participants' occupational identities. The more positive the interactions that participants reported having with school administrators, the less likely the teachers were to exhibit an internal musician identity. This may be explained by a shift in career focus from the music classroom to educational leadership. Teachers who hope to move into administrative positions or take on additional administrative roles may have a better interaction with school administrators and begin to see themselves less as a musician. Positive interactions with other teachers in the school, however, predicted an entertainer identity. Other teachers may primarily see the music program in a public relations and entertainment role (e.g., pep assemblies, formal concerts for parents) and not be aware of the role that music has in the school's overall curriculum, leading them to view music teachers as entertainment coordinators for the school. As music teachers interact with these teachers more often, they may develop similar feelings about the function of their program and, therefore, their professional role.

Participants' preferences for professional activities predicted some identity roles. Participants who valued live music experiences and interactions developed an educator identity. Interactions with several stakeholders involved in the school world (i.e., administrators, coworkers, parents) may lead music teachers to feel more involved in the education process as a whole and therefore may foster the educator identity. Moreover, those who value attending concerts and informal music making may wish to instill in their students an appreciation of music experiences and ability to participate in informal music making outside of school, in addition to developing student ensemble performance skills. Such informal music making, or vernacular musicianship, "may be more facilitative of active participation among adults once they have graduated beyond the structured environment of school music programs" (Woody & Lehmann, 2010, p. 113).

Participants who valued comprehensive music teaching activities, live music experiences, and interpersonal experiences developed a conductor identity. Individuals who appreciate teaching a wide range of music skills, continue to seek out live music experiences, and enjoy working with other individuals may be those best suited to conduct large ensembles in schools. Music teachers who valued performance activities and interpersonal experiences developed an external musician identity, perhaps because they were more likely to be seen as a musician by others in a performance setting and have this role bolstered by interactions with those who may see them as

performers. Interestingly, those who valued both performance activities as well as live music experiences were more likely to develop an internal musician identity. Not surprisingly, the external interactions with others did not influence internal musician identity as it did external musician identity. Those who were more likely to see themselves as a musician valued the experiences of performing and listening to others perform.

Music teachers who valued comprehensive music teaching activities developed a creative business identity. This connection is somewhat logical in that the role of composer was included in the creative business identity. Those who value teaching composition, theory, and analysis may take part in composition activities and the business activities often associated with composition (i.e., commissioning contracts, dealing with publishing houses).

As teachers move from preservice to in-service, their identities may transform from an integrated musician identity and segregated (self-perceptions and perceptions of others) educator identity (Isbell, 2008) to an integrated educator identity and segregated musician identity. This development may be a logical transition because as preservice teachers take on the role of professional educator, they are more apt to act as an educator and to be viewed by others as an educator. Unfortunately, professional music educators may no longer feel that others see them as musicians, or they may no longer see themselves as musicians. The problem of the public's perception of the music skill of educators is less of an immediate issue (aside from current advocacy needs) than the teachers' self-perceptions. If music educators no longer see themselves as musicians, their desire to remain involved in music performance may decrease in turn, limiting their enjoyment of teaching music to others as well as the personal joy of making and teaching music (Pellegrino, 2011).

Implications

In-service music educators may be able to take an active role in forming their midlife/midcareer identities. Music educators are leaving the profession or want to leave the classroom too early in their careers (Hancock, 2008; Russell, 2008). Teachers may hope to develop career commitment to combat unwanted teacher migration and attrition. Russell (2009), for instance, found a significant but modest relationship between commitment to teaching and job satisfaction of string music teachers. Although the career commitment items from the present study did not meet the assumptions required for analysis, previous researchers have found that both musician and teacher identities were the best predictors of career commitment (Austin et al., 2012). The participants in the present study provided data from which I extrapolated possible strategies for developing stronger educator and musician identities.

In order to develop a teacher identity, teachers should strive to develop positive relationships with two primary groups: music students in their school and other music educators. As music teachers combat the isolation within their own school, they may also experience isolation from other music educators, with whom they have little or no

opportunities for contact. Seeking opportunities to interact with other music educators both at formal music education functions (e.g., district meetings, music conferences) as well as informally may help create a community of practice with other music educators, which can encourage teacher identity development. Stanley (2009) found multiple benefits to creating a semistructured community of practice, including increased confidence in music teachers' professional knowledge, more frequent and meaningful self-reflection, and an enhanced understanding of a teacher's role(s) in the classroom.

Researchers found that dissatisfaction with students led to job dissatisfaction (e.g., Connors-Krikorian, 2004; Heston et al., 1996; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Creating a positive classroom environment in which positive relationships with students can thrive may be one of the most effective means of developing an educator identity, as well as retaining teachers. One way to improve teacher/student interactions is to give students the opportunity to act as teacher or leader in the classroom. Students who teach may see themselves as a teacher or identify with the music teacher (or at least music teacher role) prior to entering an undergraduate program, leading to an interest in teaching music (Duling, 2000; Gillespie & Hamann, 2002; Isbell, 2006). Assisting students with identifying with the role of the music educator may help teacher and student develop a meaningful relationship, thus augmenting the teacher's educator identity development.

Additionally, in order to develop an educator identity, music teachers could seek two types of positive experiences: live music experiences and positive interpersonal interactions. It may be easy for music educators to allow their students' music to become the primary music in their lives. As schedules get more demanding and familial responsibilities diminish the time allowed for music experiences, music teachers may disconnect from the social music experiences that instilled the desire to be a teacher. Attending live music performances may be influential to individuals in different ways from listening to recorded music. The primary difference may be the social interactions that occur during live music (e.g., interactions with other concert attendees, interactions between performer and audience members). Making time to socially interact with other musicians and audience members in an authentic music environment may be a key component to a music teacher's development of a music educator identity.

In order to continue to maintain and develop an *internal* musician identity, music educators should continue to seek live music experiences (as is the case for developing an educator identity) and opportunities to continue to perform. Interacting with other musicians to prepare for a performance (formal or informal) and performing music are obvious steps to develop the intrinsic musician identity. Moreover, music teachers who more highly value their own internal musician identity should be wary of taking on too many administrative roles, as improved interactions with administrators negatively impacted internal musician identity development. Teachers should make sure that enough time and energy are dedicated to developing both their educator and musician identities to increase career commitment before adopting more leadership or administrative roles.

In-service secondary music educators seem to develop a varied and diverse occupational identity that can encapsulate the myriad of roles they assume almost every day. Although participants in this study helped identify the activities and interpersonal interactions that may lead to different identities, it may be a challenge for teachers to take an active role in the formation of their identity development given the occupational pressures (e.g., time, resources, and environmental) they face. Due to these pressures and changes in everyday responsibilities, some music educators may experience an occupational identity shift in which they believe themselves to have a more integrated educator identity and a less integrated musician identity than they did as a pre-service music teacher. The implications of this shift may be positive, leading to greater job satisfaction and career commitment, or negative, leading to fewer personal performance activities and music enjoyment. More research is needed in which researchers explore the impact of these various identities on music educators' job satisfaction, career commitment, personal performance experiences, and overall enjoyment of their roles as educators and musicians. Although one's desired occupational identity may be an individual choice, a better understanding of what different identities may mean for us in our everyday professional lives may help music teachers work toward the occupational identity that will best support them in their own paths.

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Bio

Joshua A. Russell is assistant professor of music education at The Hartt School of The University of Hartford. His research interests include education policy, teacher education, string education, and psycho-social/cognitive development in music learning and teaching.

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