“YOU’RE THE MAN”: THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN FORMER BAND DIRECTORS

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Music Education —Doctor of Philosophy

2024

ABSTRACT

Music education researchers have fully established that many women band directors experience toxicity as a part of their work. The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of women former high school band directors who chose to move out of high school teaching and into collegiate music education. Research questions were: (1) What factors or elements of women band director experiences influenced women's decisions to move from high school band directing to collegiate music education? (2) What were the women band directors' experiences of psychological constructs such as, but not limited to impostor phenomenon (IP), vulnerability, perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem? (3) How do women former band directors make meaning of their experiences? Participants (N=9) were women who left high school band directing and moved into higher education as either music education Ph.D. students or university music education faculty members. All participants had at least five years teaching experience as a high school band director. Using phenomenology as a theoretical framework and methodology, I explored the lived experiences of participants by analyzing their responses from three, semi-structured interviews. Findings indicated that challenges related to the old boys' club, the need to police gender, being stereotyped into other roles based on gender, and time commitments as a barrier to work-life balance were influential in women band directors' desires to leave high school band directing. Women were also motivated to leave based on their desire to seek new challenges and their love of working with student teachers. Based on women's experiences of psychological constructs, findings indicated that IP, perfectionism, vulnerability, and self-efficacy/self-esteem immensely influenced the experiences of women high school band directors in their K-12 work, but also in some of their graduate school and collegiate work experiences. IP helped explain some women's insecurities regarding their band directing abilities

and in combination with perfectionism provided insight into some participants' needs for validation in their work. Some participants found the perceptions of others to be a hindrance to their ability to be vulnerable, creating further needs to take on a different persona. Self-efficacy/self-esteem influenced the work of women band directors based on their feelings of needing to trust themselves more, how their self-worth influenced their work, and frustrations about the title of "doctor" not being honored outside of the academic community. Participants also discussed meaning-making through various kinds of reflection, reflection over time, and working through stages of grief and acceptance. Critical reflective processes allowed participants to use their meanings made in their collegiate work educating preservice and new teachers. Findings further indicated that patriarchal power was a harmful negative influence on participants' band directing experiences, in some cases prompting their career moves into higher education. Suggestions for future practice included further work to understand psychological constructs and the impact of oppressive systems so that teacher educators can decide on the most crucial information to include in their teacher preparation. I also provided suggestions to aid music teacher educators in helping preservice teachers learn to identify and work against the negative manifestations caused by psychological constructs such as those discussed in this study.

To Women Band Directors, Past and Present.
I see you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I reflect on this project and the process, I realize how much gratitude I have for those who have supported me on this journey. First, I would like to thank my husband, Andrew. You have supported me in this dream from the very beginning. Thank you for loving me through the most difficult thing I have ever done. I cannot imagine this journey without your listening ear, hugs, patience, and encouragement. I am so thankful for you and all that you do for me. I love you ALL the much!

Thank you to my parents. You have always believed in me and taught me to stand up for what is right. Thank you for sharing life and for supporting me through my music education. This journey began with all of those trips to trumpet lessons, youth orchestras, festivals, and marching band rehearsals. Who would have thought that a Ph.D. would be part of the journey? I cannot thank you enough for making all of those opportunities possible. Thank you for being a phone call or Zoom away, and being so willing to support me in my dreams. I love you!

Thank you to my committee members: Dr. Juliet Hess, Dr. Karen Salvador, Dr. Ryan Shaw, and Dr. Arris Golden. Thank you for your support in my education and in this dissertation process. Your feedback and encouragement have been an invaluable part of my music education and this project. Thank you for challenging me and pushing me to grow outside of my comfort zone. I will always treasure my time at Michigan State University.

Finally, a special thanks to my family and friends, both near and far. You make my life sweeter and richer every day. Thank you for always being there for me, but especially for loving me through this process. Thank you for your encouragement, phone calls, text messages, prayers, and funny videos. I am blessed to share life with each of you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Vignette 1

As we finished talking about my career aspirations, goals for the program, and what I had been reading for professional development, I was formally offered the job. It seemed like a logical progression in my mind. After all, I had graduated from this high school. These men knew me and knew the high expectations to which I held myself. They knew from my resume and job application that I still upheld those high standards as I completed my undergraduate work with academic and music-based scholarships. The principal thought I would be a great fit for what had been a very traumatic staffing turnover for the high school band program. As we finished a discussion of onboarding and what would happen next, I could barely contain my excitement—I had just been offered my first teaching job! As I stood, picked up my portfolio from the table, and turned to leave, one of them looked at me and said, "You're the man!"

I truly believe the administrator who told me that I was "the man" meant it in a lighthearted fashion and as a way of communicating that I had just stepped into a huge job of rebuilding a program. However, what he did not realize was that such a statement devalued what I brought to the table as a woman. It was like there was an unspoken assumption that I would act, speak, communicate, establish discipline, and handle everything exactly as a man would do. As I made this realization for myself, I wondered how many other women directors had similar experiences—both in blatant offenses and subtle remarks or actions.

At the point of my entry into the profession, however, I had no idea that this simple three-word statement would foreshadow a plethora of experiences over the next eight years that ultimately led to my feelings of burnout and inspired my move into graduate school. Eleven years later, in my doctoral studies, I began to process my experiences—problematizing the situations and learning new lessons as I fueled a growing desire to figure out why this had

happened to me, if I was the only one, and how I could help preservice teachers avoid the same situations in their future teaching careers.

Around the time that I started to process my situation through a feminist lens, I also started thinking about the impostor feelings that I experienced on a regular basis. I believed that I had experienced impostor phenomenon in my early career, but because I lacked the experience and knowledge, I was not able to identify what I felt. The realization that I may not have been valued for my feminine characteristics made me feel like I was successful in being hired for my job in a situation where I was in the right place at the right time, rather than earning the opportunity based on my own merit and ability. Again, I wondered how many other women had similar experiences and if impostor phenomenon was a factor in how women perceived themselves in their jobs as band directors. If impostor feelings are present for these women, how do those feelings manifest and influence their experiences while in the field and in retrospect?

Vignette 2

It was Saturday morning in mid-September. I had just started my first graduate degree. As I scrolled through social media, I came across a post written by a familiar name—the new music teacher at the school from which I had resigned. With curiosity, I opened the posting to read further. The post was specifically about me and the new director's frustration with a certain situation. Drama had been stirred up about me and how I had supposedly not disciplined my students appropriately. Because I had established rapport with my students, I had very few, serious issues with discipline. As I finished reading, I felt humiliated. I wondered how many people that knew both of us would read the posting and what they must be thinking about me after reading it. I was angry, hurt, and I felt like a terrible teacher—like my efforts and what I brought to the table weren't good enough.

In retrospect, I felt that this experience was connected to my authentic, true self as a teacher. I had used rapport to support classroom management and relationships rather than aggressive authority to support my ability to be vulnerable and real with my students. As I read women band director studies, I started to realize that my experiences of feeling devalued for what I brought to the table as a woman were shared by many other women directors. I felt that my vulnerability and my femininity were not valued. The comments of that posting made me feel that these characteristics and my actions had been stifling to me as a member of the profession in my relationships with students and in what others would think of me after having read this man's comments.

This project was fueled by curiosities that resulted as I unpacked and processed my personal experiences as a middle school and high school band director. In the previous paragraphs, I shared two specific narratives from my time teaching high school band. By sharing these experiences and analyzing them, I aimed to help the reader understand my positionality as I came to this work. I hoped to help the reader understand the personal experiences and questions that prompted this study.

A Note About Terminology

In this study, I have intentionally chosen to use the words "man" and "woman" in place of "male" and "female." Opening study participation to any person who identified as a woman at the time of their work as a band director, I was interested to learn about participant experiences based on their gender identity. I recognize that gender is on a spectrum that sometimes includes characteristics that do not conform to societal definitions for binary sex. The study was about gender identity rather than biological sex.

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation was to understand how women former high school band directors who have since moved into collegiate music education made sense of their experiences as high school band directors. Utilizing phenomenology as both a theoretical framework and methodology along with feminism as a tool for analysis, I examined participants' band directing experiences. I worked to understand participants' experiences and their motivations for moving out of high school band teaching and into collegiate music education. I also explored how participants' experiences as women band directors may have included psychological constructs such as impostor phenomenon, perfectionism, vulnerability, and self-efficacy/self-esteem.

In this chapter, I introduce constructs and issues that underpin the need to explore women band directors' experiences. Discussing stress, accountability, and work-life balance, I highlight the literature surrounding music teacher burnout. These topics are relevant to this study as I aimed to understand the reasons that women high school band directors are choosing to leave K-12 teaching and moving into higher education. I also delve into socialization as a topic that may influence the experiences of women high school band directors through their identities as women, music teachers, and conductors. Because socialization is so integrated into teaching experiences (i.e., preservice preparation, entry into the profession, experiences while in the profession), this process may be influential on women band directors' decisions to leave high school teaching and move into collegiate music education. I then explain how I used feminism as an analytical tool for this work. I define feminism and identify two facets of oppression that I used to explore women high school band directors' experiences. I conclude the chapter by sharing the specific research questions that guided this study.

Setting the Context: Music Teacher Attrition

Many researchers have explored music teacher attrition. These researchers have specifically aimed to determine the reasons teachers are leaving the profession (Gardner, 2010; Hancock, 2016; Scheib 2004; Taft, 2022). Some talked to music teachers about specific elements of their work situations and sources of job stress (Bley, 2015; Shaw, 2014, 16). Other researchers have chosen to investigate burnout (Kertz-Welzel, 2009; Bernhard, 2016). Robinson (2010) and Shouldice (2013) also explored how some preservice teachers chose to leave band teaching prior to career entry.

Statistics over time reveal that music teacher attrition has been and still remains a serious issue. Gardner (2010) explored music teacher retention and attrition among K-12 music teachers as compared to those teachers who taught other subjects. He found that music teachers had a higher rate of turnover and attrition than other teachers between the 1998-99 and 1999-2000 school years with 17.8% either moving within the profession or leaving. Acknowledging the age of this study, I have chosen to include these statistics as they represented movement and attrition in the profession—the specific statistics that are most salient to the participant qualifications for the current study. Gardner provided a baseline for movement and attrition in music education beginning more than 20 years ago. Russell (2012) studied secondary music teachers' career plans and found that of 321 teachers, 12.3% indicated that they planned to leave the profession permanently within one year and 27.2% indicated planning to leave the profession in five years. When comparing these numbers to the national statistics for all K-12 teachers, the proportions were nearly the same (Russell, 2012). Taft (2023) also studied attrition and found that among 1,576 middle school and high school music teachers, 18.2% intended to leave their current teaching positions. These findings suggest that causes of attrition may not be unique to music

educators or secondary school teachers. Additionally, these studies confirm that attrition persists as an issue across time in music education. Acknowledging that intent to leave and actual attrition are different, both serve as indicators for job dissatisfaction and may be warning signs for systemic problems in music education.

Several researchers investigated the reasons for music teacher attrition and turnover. Gardner's (2010) results indicated that music teachers' reasons for moving within the profession often had to do with perceiving the new position as better than the current and dissatisfaction in their current workplace conditions. Stressors related to job roles (i.e., the specific duties required of one's job), role conflict (i.e., incompatible or interfering expectations for multiple roles) (Creary & Gordon, 2016), and role overload (i.e. having too many roles without sufficient resources to complete all of them) (Creary & Gordon, 2016) played an impact on music teachers' levels of satisfaction as well as their decisions related to retention and attrition (Taft, 2022). The most common reasons for attrition among music teachers were personal reasons, personnel actions, college enrollment, and retirement. Teacher turnover was often the result of "personnel actions, desire for a better assignment, and dissatisfaction with administrators and school conditions" (Hancock, 2016, p. 431) as well as "retirement, better salary or benefits, pregnancy or child rearing, and pursuit of another career" (Gardner, 2010, p. 116). Band directors who were planning to move into a new job or leave the profession indicated difficult working conditions, low salary, public perceptions of teaching, and low priority music education within the school curriculum as their reasons for leaving their current positions (Scheib, 2004). Even though this article was written 20 years ago and the results were based on a small sample of participants (N= 8), these potential causes of attrition remain relevant. On surface level, the reasons seem self-explanatory, but because many were not specifically defined, I question whether factors such as

"personal reasons" might also include elements of dissatisfaction or how "personnel actions" may be connected to work performance or problematic working conditions.

In Hancock's (2016) study, many of the music teachers who left the profession indicated positive changes in their work-life balance and workload one year after leaving. The majority of those former teachers also indicated that they would be willing to return to the profession. These conflicting results bring into question the true motivations behind the former teachers' reasons for leaving. The findings also bring into question whether teachers' love of music and music teaching may be overshadowed by poor working conditions or even challenges related to professional identity or efficacy.

Robinson (2010) and Shouldice (2013) studied preservice teachers' movement out of band directing and into general music. Participants discussed preferences for working with younger children, desire for work-life balance, disagreement with the value often placed on competition in band, and value differences regarding performance as the only form of learning in many school band programs (Robinson, 2010). In her study of one preservice teacher, Shouldice (2013) found that early discussion and practicum-based music education coursework may be influential in shaping the teaching decisions of preservice teachers. Additionally, the preservice participant talked about his desire to become a student-centered teacher, and how he saw that as a challenge in band directing with so much focus on learning pieces and what a "director" could do with "their" program. Corroborating Robinson's (2010) results, Shouldice (2013) found that her participant also disapproved of the culture that has become a part of many band programs (i.e., the focus on learning solely through performance and competition).

The literature on music teacher movement and attrition points to the need for further exploration. Most of the literature on music teacher attrition does not provide statistics for

attrition based on gender or even acknowledge women band directors leaving K-12 music as a form of attrition. There is need for further exploration of the reasons for this movement out of high school band directing. Acknowledging that preservice teachers are moving away from band directing even prior to profession entry should be alarming and a cause for further examinations of problematic issues in band directing.

While attrition still seems to be a problem in the music education profession, it is intriguing that the majority of the most recent literature is from the early 2000s. It seems that recent music education scholars have shifted their efforts from discussing attrition and movement in the profession to a focus on the broad concept of music teacher burnout. In the next section, I discuss the research on music teacher burnout and its potential causes.

Music Teacher Burnout

Since the 1970s, burnout has been a topic of interest among music teachers in terms of practitioner self-help as well as music education research.

> Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions: 1) feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; 2) increased mental distance from one's job or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and 3) reduced professional efficacy. (World Health Organization, 2019, para. 3)

Scholarly research includes exploration of music teachers' perceptions of burnout (Bernhard, 2016; Kertz-Welzel, 2009; Shaw, 2014, 2016) and differentiation of burnout experiences based on teacher gender (Kertz-Welzel, 2009). Other topics include the pursuit of work-life balance (Bley, 2015; Shaw, 2014, 2016) and analysis of how teacher accountability has increased music teacher stress, creating more potential for burnout (Shaw, 2016).

Because burnout is a result of chronic stress, work-life balance is an essential topic to this discussion. Music educators experience many different kinds of stress. Shaw (2016) examined stress among music teachers as it related to various forms of accountability. Sources of stress related to accountability reform have impacts not only based on how they manifest in the school-wide setting, but also based on their connections to teachers' "personal and professional values, beliefs, and emotions" (Shaw, 2016, p. 112). Examples of these stressors include, but are not limited to tenure, school performance ratings, teacher evaluations, administrative tasks, festival performances tied to evaluation, and increased workload (Shaw, 2016). Further, music teachers identified pressures from self, parents, and colleagues as being inhibitive of work-life balance—especially when the pressures reflected expectations of self and others to maintain specific status or traditions of "the program" (Shaw, 2014, pp. 69-70). Music educators' scores on a work-life balance inventory indicated that work-life balance often increased with age, experience, and education (Bley, 2015).

Time management was another topic related to music teachers' work-life balance (Bley, 2015; Shaw, 2014). Music teachers acknowledged their abilities to set boundaries and incorporate strategies for managing their commitments (Shaw, 2014). However, based on individual teacher demographics and teaching assignments, boundaries and strategies are not one-size-fits-all. Bley (2015) shared that among the K-12 music educators in their study, on average, teachers worked 14.16 hours outside of their school day contract each week. These hours accumulated to an average work week consisting of 51.11 hours. On average, men, younger educators, and those teachers with the least amount of experience tended to work more hours outside of the contract day. Accounting for the gendered differences, men may be more likely to work in content areas and grade levels of music education that require more after school

commitments (e.g., middle school and high school music teachers, band directors) (Bley, 2015). Fitzpatrick (2013), however, talked about work-life balance from the perspective of high school band directing, providing insight into the guilt and societal expectations surrounding the work-life balance of women high school band directors who were also mothers. While work-life balance does not have direct ties to attrition in these particular studies, there are implications for career sustainability, mentorship, and preservice teacher training to better prepare incoming teachers for the work-life realities that they may experience while in the profession (Bernhard, 2016; Shaw, 2014). Based on the results of these studies, I was interested to learn more about the realities of work-life balance among women high school band directors.

Bernhard (2016) studied burnout among music educators as a replication of their 2006 study. Overall, levels of burnout were more intense among music teachers in 2016 than in 2006. Beginning teachers, those who teach in multiple specialization areas simultaneously (i.e., instrumental, choir, general), and those teachers who taught a combination of age levels (i.e., elementary, middle, high) scored higher for burnout than those teachers who were more experienced, those who taught in one music specialization, and those who taught students in a single age level (Bernhard, 2016). The ten-year span between Bernhard's studies points to the fact that burnout is increasing over time. There is a need for further study to understand the reasons. I wonder if women music teachers' feelings of burnout may differ from individuals of other gender identities.

One researcher looked at burnout specifically from the perspective of women in music education. Burnout among teachers is a warning sign for needed systemic changes that "take into account the perspectives of women in order to change schools and universities into places where everyone can learn and develop a sense of identity" (Kertz-Welzel, 2009, p. 158). Kertz-Welzel

(2009) further explained that burnout is a result of music education playing out in the lives of individuals and how it is often contradictory with societal expectations. I argue that this contradictory relationship often requires women to "learn" not to let their true music education philosophies and their true characteristics as music teachers show. In other words, women cannot be vulnerable to show their true selves and must often assume masculine personas that may differ vastly from their authentic individuality—a position that may lead to frustration, dissatisfaction, and an inclination toward moving out of music teaching. As researchers continue exploring the impacts of stress, work-life balance, and burnout, it is important to acknowledge the different ways that teacher gender may account for understanding the emotional connections between teachers' job demands and personal connections to value. Systems of oppression, such as those of patriarchal power may play a role in how women band directors perceive the need to work harder and prove their abilities in addition to the workload and work-life balance challenges that are often an inherent part of the job. Learning of this potential connection, I worked to understand how patriarchal oppression further influenced the experiences of women band directors.

In this section, I discussed music teacher attrition. I began by sharing statistics that help contextualize the seriousness of this situation. Further exploring music teacher job movement, I focused on the causes of attrition and turnover among music teachers. Then, I delved into the literature about music teacher stress, work-life balance, and burnout. I concluded the section by discussing gender and patriarchal oppression in relation to burnout among women music educators.

Socialization

Socialization is defined as "the process by which individuals acquire social skills, beliefs, values, and behaviors necessary to function effectively in society or in a particular group (American Psychological Association, n.d.). Socialization happens throughout all stages of an individual's life. Because this study focuses on women high school band directors, I highlight multiple forms of socialization as they potentially impact women music teachers and conductors. These socialization processes include gender socialization, music teacher socialization, and conductor socialization.

Gender Socialization

"Gender socialization is a process by which individuals develop, refine and learn to 'do' gender through internalizing gender norms and roles as they interact with key agents of socialization" (Dipti, 2022, p. 9). Key agents are often people and influences on which individuals place personal value and validation. For gender socialization, these influences often include "family, the media, school and peers" (Dipti, 2022, p. 9). Socialization is the process by which these agents teach, normalize, reinforce, and police gender roles based on familial and societal expectations (Dipti, 2022; Schroeder & Liben, 2021). Gender socialization takes a variety of forms (e.g., men vs. women characteristics and personas, clothing expectations, expectations of occupational choice, family and relationship expectations). It is also important to note that the societal norms and familial expectations that drive gender socialization are not a fixed set of standards. These standards have undergone major shifts throughout history and continue to change and morph within society (Johnson, 2022).

The pressures that individuals feel to conform to gender expectations are referred to as *felt pressure* (Schroeder & Liben, 2021). In their work on felt pressure and cultural gender roles,

Schroeder and Liben (2021) discussed how differences in children's preferences and their parents' or peers' expectations can create gender conflict. The researchers found that the more felt pressure a child experienced, the less likely they were to confront peers' sexist comments. Interestingly, parents' gender expectations were not associated with children's felt pressure, which brings into question whether peers' expectations are valued more beyond a specific age. This finding also brings into question what other ways parental expectations may manifest in gender socialization and what other agents of socialization are most impactful for children (Schroeder & Liben, 2021).

Addressing some of the familial factors that impact gender socialization of children, Bertrand (2019) studied what the author referred to as non-traditional family structures (i.e., family social units where parents do not assume historically prescribed gender norms within a two-parent partnership) and how the experience of growing up in one of these families impacted gender socialization. The researcher found that family situations that children encountered between age six and 15 shared a strong relationship with the gender socialization that manifested when the children became young adults (Bertrand, 2019). Additionally, the results indicated that those children who grew up in homes where "mothers display greater labor market power move children's views on gender roles in a more liberal direction" (Bertrand, 2019, p. 119). These findings suggest that family characteristics and circumstances, as well as parental influences may be impactful not only through childhood, but into adulthood. In response to these findings, I wondered how much parental and family expectations play a role in the occupational choices and education of young adults—especially young women who see their mothers in positions contrary to traditional gender norms.

To look at the relationship between the occupational choices of children entering adulthood and the impacts of their parental/familial socialization, Lawson et al. (2015) conducted a longitudinal study. The researchers reported that there was no relationship between parents' work life (i.e., "work hours per week and the gender typicality of parents' occupations") and their "children's occupational attainment" (Lawson et al., 2015, p. 33). The researchers also found that "both men and women who spent more time with their fathers attained more male-typed occupations in young adulthood" (Lawson et al., 2015, p. 33). This finding is in alignment with Bandura's social learning theory, which presents observation and role models as agents of socialization. I will explain and discuss more about social learning theory in the next section as it also pertains to music teacher socialization.

Lawson et al. (2015) also discussed how occupational attainment was potentially impacted by other non-familial factors. They posited that "aspirations may be more strongly associated with socialization experiences than is occupational attainment" (Lawson et al., 2015, p. 34). This finding allowed the researchers to consider economic and job market factors as potentially impactful and related to occupational attainment (Duffy & Dik, 2009 as cited in Lawson et al., 2015). These results also led me to wonder about occupational attainment and potential gendering impacts of socialization during higher education, occupational training, as well as socialization by friends, peers, and romantic partners during young adulthood.

This research on socialization is critical for understanding how women high school band directors are socialized through their upbringing. Agents of socialization include gender as exemplified by parents, family, peers, and culture. Realizing what women are socialized to believe about themselves as well as their home and professional roles contextualizes the ways women are socialized prior to professional entry, and provides a foundation on which women

will continue to experience music teacher socialization. This literature establishes a foundation on which to further explore how women band directors' gender socialization is based on their upbringing in addition to the socialization that occurs when they become high school band directors. In the next section, I will discuss the literature specific to music teacher socialization.

Music Teacher Socialization

Social Learning Theory

In music education, teacher educators, ensemble directors, and performance studio teachers all use models as a means of instruction. Social learning theory, which is the work of Bandura (1977) is based on the idea that a significant part of our learning occurs through the observation of models (Cherry, 2022). This learning can be based on a live model through which individuals see actions or behaviors that can be imitated. A model can also be symbolic (i.e., a role model with which an individual may not interact directly) such as a fictional figure from popular culture or a famous conductor. Modeling can be verbal, visual, or a combination of the two (e.g., classroom instruction, verbal tutorials, how-to videos, guided hands-on activities). It is important to note that just because an individual learns how to do something does not necessarily mean that they will change their behavior or implement that learning in an actionable way (Cherry, 2022).

Social learning theory also has an active role in the socialization of music teachers. In preservice music teacher training, music teacher educators utilize models to aid in instruction. Observation of such models can take many forms (e.g., preservice field observations, observations of cooperating teachers during student teaching practicum, video observations of conductors). For practitioners in the field, observations of models are less common, but can still be an active part of socialization. In school districts where mentoring and collaborative

interactions are encouraged or a part of induction for new teachers, more experienced teachers may serve as observed models. When music teachers attend music conferences, they also have opportunities to observe rehearsals of ensemble conductors and teachers as lecturers or leaders of clinics. It is important to note, however, that the prevalence of these models does not mean that preservice teachers or practitioners will adopt the methods that they see utilized in the observation or that the models always socialize in ways that should be emulated.

While Bandura's social learning theory is useful for analyzing many aspects of being and becoming a music teacher, it falls short when being used to analyze the patriarchy at play in the lived experiences of women band directors. Much of how band directors are socialized can be accounted for based on learning from models. However, social learning theory does not take account of socialization through other routes such as family expectations (especially those that may not be modeled or may be unspoken), media representation of gender, traditions based in patriarchy, pressures from students' parents and administrators, teacher personality, and personal perceptions of how others see the teacher. With the learned behaviors associated with patriarchal practices comes subtle, but impactful socialization pressures to adhere to, police, and reinforce those practices.

Other Agents of Music Teacher Socialization

Research on music teacher socialization focuses on a combination of primary and secondary socialization processes, each with its own set of agents. Isbell (2008) discussed music teacher socialization within two crucial times: primary occupational socialization and secondary occupational socialization. Each of these times involves different agents of socialization that influence the career decisions of students and preservice teachers.

For the purposes of this discussion, primary socialization refers to occupational primary socialization which includes an individual's time in school and private lessons prior to collegiate study (Woodford, 2002). During primary socialization, students' school music teachers comprise the majority (63%) of an individual's agents of encouragement toward the pursuit of music education as a career (Isbell, 2008). Other agents of socialization during this time include parents, private lesson teachers, community music teachers, friends, and siblings (Isbell, 2008; Draves, 2012). Draves (2012) found that students were in the beginning stages of teacher identity as high school students with ambitions to pursue a music education career, reinforcing the importance of this time in the socialization process.

Researchers also found primary occupational socialization as a formative time because of the amount of time students spend observing and interacting with their own music teachers (Draves, 2012). This aspect of socialization aligns with Lortie's (1975) apprenticeship-of-observation theory. The theory is based on the fact that most students spend around 13,000 hours observing their school teachers by the time they finish 12th grade. Most of what students learn about teaching or assuming the role of a teacher comes from intuition and imitation. The student approach to learning about the profession is, at least initially, not based in pedagogy, but rather on personality and how the students perceive or imagine their teachers' experiences in a variety of settings (Lortie, 1975). Because apprenticeship-of-observation is inherent as a part of most preservice teachers' experiences, preservice teachers may not be fully aware of the challenges of the profession, as those experiences are often dealt with behind closed doors.

Further discussing music teachers as agents of socialization, Porter et al. (2017) found that the primary socialization of music teachers is not always positive. Results indicated that only about half of their music teacher participants (52%) encouraged students to explore music

teaching as a potential career option. The other half of the music teachers felt either unsure (27%) of whether to encourage their students toward music teaching, or discouraged (21%) their students from considering music education. This finding was intriguing because "93% of the respondents reported teaching music to be a fulfilling career" (Porter et al., 2017, p. 18). The reasons music teachers gave for discouraging students from pursuing music education as a career dealt with aspects of the job such as time commitment, heavy workload, work-life balance issues, and low pay (Porter et al., 2017).

Occupational secondary socialization refers to the time that one begins training as a preservice teacher in collegiate music education (Berger & Luckman, 1966). During this time, Isbell (2008) found that parents and music education professors were among the most positive influences on participants' decisions to continue pursuing a music education degree. Randles (2012) used a metaphorical story to provide insight into the agents of socialization for student teachers. Supervising teachers, professors, and newly-found colleagues all played roles in the socialization of music student teachers as their identities changed from student to teacher (Randles, 2012). Even though preservice teachers perceived their mentor teachers and cooperating teachers as very positive influences, they were also perceived as the least positive influences on their career decisions. The preservice teachers ranked their college performing experiences as the most positive influences (Isbell, 2008).

Researchers have identified primary and secondary socialization as important in the process of occupational development. During these crucial times, formative agents of socialization can provide experiences and opportunities that may encourage music students to remain on a career trajectory toward music education—a process that operates as recruitment for the profession, therefore helping to counterbalance attrition. Agents of socialization may also

establish relationships with students and preservice teachers that may lead to mentorship as preservice teachers progress through teacher preparation programs and enter the field. Further, the research findings about primary and secondary socialization left me with questions about whether agents of socialization are doing enough to encourage and equip women preservice band directors for the challenges they will likely face in the profession, hence looking at other mechanisms for socialization.

Music Teacher Socialization in Music Education Resources

Gender as it relates to conductor and music teacher socialization is also evident in reference books and resources for band directors. In 2015, Kruse et al., studied photographic representation of men and women between 1961-2011 in *Music Educators Journal* publications. These researchers found that in 2011, women were significantly underrepresented in photographs. Women accounted for only "32% of conductors, 24% of teachers/presenters, and 35% of named persons featured" in this practitioner journal (Kruse et al., 2015, p. 495). The researchers also found that of the 50 years studied, the last two, 2010 and 2011, featured the lowest percentages of representation for women as music teachers (Kruse et al., 2015).

Music Educators Journal, a journal publication of NAfME (National Association for Music Education) is aimed at a readership of music education practitioners. As of 2015, the journal distribution was around 80,000. Because of the prominence of this journal, the researchers shared their concerns about how women might perceive their lack of representation. They wrote:

> This starkly disproportionate representation of females compared to males is not encouraging to young women aspiring to conduct or hold leadership positions in music

> education and could send an inadvertent message that women are less capable in these roles than are men. (Kruse et al., 2015, p. 495)

When women preservice teachers read music education journals and find that men are featured much more prominently as powerful leaders in the field, women may take it as a message that those positions are not for her (Kruse et al., 2015). In other words, experiences like this may be negatively influential on preservice women band directors' identity development (Kruse et al., 2015).

Besides just statistics, in documenting women's underrepresentation in the band directing profession, important evidence exists in band directing resource literature. One example is the lack of inclusion of women contributors to materials such as the *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* book series. I intended to count the number of women contributors in these books, but there were none. The 12 volumes include background and teaching materials on a wide range (grades 2-6) of band music. These books also contain chapters by "a team of nationally recognized band directors and teachers…" (GIA Publications, n.d.)—all of whom are men. While I do not know the details of how or why this set of books came to be, and I appreciate the work of the men who contributed to these chapters, it is still difficult to acknowledge that there were no contributions from women included in a band resource series of this magnitude. Conversely, the two *Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band* volumes and the single *Teaching Music Through Performance in Middle School Band* volume, each contain contributions from at least one woman band director author. The representation of women band directors as authors in the books on beginning band and middle school band further reiterates the gender disparity of women between the middle and high school levels. This

example sends the message that it is acceptable for women to be experts of their craft at the beginning and middle school levels of band, but not at the high school or collegiate levels.

The *Rehearsing the Band* book set is another resource for directors. As far as representation, this book set looks very similar to the *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* series. Out of the 33 author contributions in these three books, only two are written by women—that is, 6% representation. The representation of women in these books further perpetuates the status quo.

Socialization takes many different forms both inside and outside of the music education profession. Through the representation and instruction in professional journals, authors continue to bring the issues associated with conductor gender to light. They inform readers of the difficulties and status quo within the expectations of the music profession. Further, the lack of representation of women music teachers, and in particular high school band directors, in resource books aimed at music educators raises a significant question in terms of the profession's role in socializing women to believe that only men are valued as high school directors.

As I embarked on this study of women band director experiences, I planned to further investigate socialization from within and outside of the profession. I sought to better understand the web of socialization related to traditions of feminine behaviors, spoken and unspoken expectations, as well as attitudes and beliefs from within the profession. I was further interested to fully understand what creates the paradoxical gender expectations for women and the band directing job—how women can be criticized for femininity, but also criticized when they assume characteristics that are not associated with being a woman—a double bind[1] situation. Double

[1] For more on double binds, see Chapter 4 under Obstacles for Women High School Band Directors.

binds create a seemingly impossible situation for women who hope to enter an occupation traditionally dominated by men.

Conductor Socialization

In addition to teacher socialization and the emphasis on modeling, there is an additional layer of career-related socialization that impacts women band directors—the socialization process specifically for conductors. Women in conducting leadership positions have been a topic of interest in both popular media and research work for more than 30 years.

In professional magazines and newspapers, authors have analyzed and presented perceptions about the leadership abilities of women in conducting positions. In their 1991 article published in *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective*, Lawson discussed the careers of women as conductors and what conditions they felt would be necessary for complete equity for women in such a men-dominated profession. They acknowledged the progress that has been made to this point, but also discussed the challenges they believed would be present for women conductors for years to come.

The primary challenge was the critique of women for being emotional. “There are some who would point to this and claim that it weakens the ability of women to be firm, aggressive, and demanding…” (Lawson, 1991, p. 216). The author also acknowledged that women are socialized to be “nurturing, supportive, and intuitive, while men traditionally have been expected to act out their thoughts and take risks, all while displaying total control and unemotional responses” (Lawson, 1991, p. 216). This work gets to the heart of how women are traditionally socialized and how this socialization creates issues as women attempt to make progress toward equal representation as ensemble conductors. Despite the age of this article from 1991, the socialization for women as described in this article still stands as a barrier for success in careers

as conductors, and I argue that some of the same characteristics are troublesome for women high school band directors. In this study, I sought to better understand the socialization of women band directors. I aimed to understand how socialization might both create the conditions that influence women's negative experiences of psychological constructs, but also how their socialization may be further influenced by constructs like impostor phenomenon, vulnerability (or the inability to be vulnerable due to socialization), perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem.

In a more recent article from *The Guardian* newspaper, Tilden (2017) discussed the lack of women in jobs as conductors and how there is growth in this area, but that the growth is quite slow. When asked about qualities related to conducting that women need to work on, Marin Alsop[2] and several other conductors talked about women needing to work on their ability to clearly communicate power and confident intention. Alsop said, "Society interprets women's gestures very differently, so that if women are exuding an aura of extreme confidence, that can be deemed off-putting, whereas it's desirous for men" (Tilden, 2017, para. 17). In other words, there is a certain expectation of how women will present themselves, and anything outside of that expectation can be detrimental to their success in an occupation traditionally dominated by men. Also, it is important to note that *The Guardian* is a newspaper published in the U.K. and that this knowledge brings up further questions about how the opinions expressed in this paper might differ from those individuals in the United States. The presence of gender discrepancies for

[2] Marin Alsop is a woman orchestral conductor—"the first woman to serve as the head of a major orchestra in the United States, South America, Austria and Britain" (Marin Alsop, n.d.). She has working relationships with orchestras such as the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the National Orchestra Institute and Festival, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and the London Philharmonic (Marin Alsop, n.d.).

conductors in this publication also suggested that the socialization expectations of women may be problematic in countries beyond the U.S. and the U.K.

Acknowledging how conductors make meaning of their experiences as individuals within specific contexts is important. In her analysis, Byczkowska-Owczarek (2022) discussed the socialization of orchestra conductors with agents including interactions with people and groups as well as the musical score. She explained that, "the image of a resolute and determined conductor is sustained due to the expectations of other social actors engaged in the process of performing music" (Byczkowska-Owczarek, 2022, p. 149). She further described this role-making socialization as a "balancing between the individual (the artistic) and the social (the persuasive, the organizational)" (p.149). In the context of women's conducting experiences, this author may be pointing researchers to further investigate how women attempt to balance their individual qualities (i.e., what they find valuable about themselves as women) with societal expectations and the pressures placed on women by agents of socialization in a variety of contexts.

A Note About Gender Socialization

All of the processes mentioned in the section above influence and contribute to the socialization of band directors. Among research about music teachers, and specifically band directors, gender is undertheorized. In the above sections, I discussed literature related to gender socialization among women and as a part of women band directors' experiences. It is important to note, however, that some men deal with similar gender toxicity. For example, men who do not subscribe to masculine characteristics associated with patriarchal power are also subject to oppression. Socialization plays a significant role in who individuals become and why. Toxic masculinity, for example, is the result of patriarchal power under which men are socialized to

believe they must be strong, tough, and assertive (Foss, 2022). Rather than be accepted the way they are, men are expected to reject any stereotypically feminine characteristics and are not free to share emotions (Foss, 2022). I will discuss more about how patriarchal power is harmful for individuals of all identities in Chapter 7.

Summary

In this section, I discussed multiple layers of socialization that may impact music teachers. I began by defining socialization. Discussing gender socialization, I examined how parents, peers, and family socialize children as they develop into young adults. I also discussed gender socialization related to occupational interests and models within non-traditional family units as impactful. Next, I delved into music teacher socialization, beginning with exploration of social learning theory and its ties to music teacher socialization through observational practices. After problematizing the shortfalls of social learning theory, I explored other agents of music teacher socialization, specifically focusing on the roles of teachers, parents, peers, and experiences in primary and secondary socialization. This exploration also included music teacher identity development. I finished the discussion of music teacher socialization by discussing how it relates to women's lack of representation in music education resources for high school band. Concluding the section, I explored popular culture assessment and research literature associated with conductor socialization. Each of these facets of socialization combine as inextricable parts of women band directors' experiences.

Feminism

In this section, I discuss my use of feminism as an analytical tool for my research on women band director experiences. Providing a working definition for feminism, I specified some basic tenets of feminist theory. I concluded the section by identifying and defining discrimination

and stereotyping as two elements of gender oppression that served as analytical lenses as I explored participant experiences.

Defining Feminism

Considering the changes that have occurred in feminism between the late nineteenth century and now, there are many different messages and emphases associated with feminist theory. In her work on feminism, hooks (2015b) discussed the complexity of feminism and how feminist work requires intentionality and a consideration of many intersections of identity, individual experiences, societal expectations, as well as relationships. hooks defined feminism as such:

> Feminism is the struggle to end sexist oppression. Its aim is not to benefit solely any specific group of women, any particular race or class of women. It does not privilege women over men. It has the power to transform in a meaningful way all our lives. Most importantly, feminism is neither a lifestyle nor a ready-made identity or role one can step into. (hooks, 2015b, p. 28)

I chose hooks' definition because she challenges taboo attitudes and perceptions of feminism. Her definition does not demonize men or create a culture completely absent of men and their ideas; nor does it emphasize women as victims of oppression. Instead, her definition is about empowerment of women and women forming bonds based on "shared strengths and resources" (hooks, 2015b, p. 46). Her definition is about activism that will seek to change systemic oppression rather than simply individual situations, and she calls both women and men to action to make these changes. Analyzing the experiences of women band directors through this lens provided insight into the challenges associated with what it means to be a woman and what women bring to their experiences based on the identities they hold. Feminism as a lens

provided insight as I sought implications for change in instrumental music education—a portion of the profession where white men are the majority.

hooks' definition and writings also make the assertion that feminism is for everyone (2015a). Feminist theory necessitates that women self-critique and look inwardly to understand their own roles in oppression based on their identities and privilege pertaining to issues of race and class (hooks, 2015b). hooks also addressed men's roles in feminism based on patriarchal oppression:

> Patriarchal masculinity teaches men that their sense of self and identity, their reason for being, resides in their capacity to dominate others. To change this males must critique and challenge male domination of the planet, of less powerful men, of women and children. (2015a, p. 70)

This statement placed the responsibility for the advocation of women's rights not just on women, but also on men. hooks envisioned how masculinity might be reconceptualized saying, "What is and was needed is a vision of masculinity where self-esteem and self-love of one's unique being forms the basis of identity" (hooks, 2015a, p. 70). In other words, the problem is not masculinity itself, but the way that masculinity has been consumed by patriarchal power to dominate femininity and lessen its value.

Facets of Feminist Oppression

I used feminist theory as a lens through which to view participant data and to guide my analysis, discussion, and implications. To aid in my study, I identified two facets of oppression that feminist theory makes intelligible as they relate to women's experiences. These facets are: discrimination and stereotyping.

Discrimination

Gender discrimination is about restriction of opportunities and unequal practices based on one's gender (Salvini, 2014). Several examples of gender discrimination may include biased expectations based on gender, job responsibilities, pay disparities based on gender, and inability to access certain opportunities due to gender. Motherhood is also another common factor related to gender discrimination and can create issues in job hiring processes for women (Ishizuka, 2021). In this research study, I investigated what gender discrimination looks like for women in high school band directing. I was eager to analyze potential psychological connections to these experiences and how women interpret, process, and make meaning of discriminatory encounters (Roebig, 2020).

Stereotyping

Stereotyping is a continuous challenge for women. Stereotyping is defined as "an often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic" (Britannica, n.d.). In the case of this study, that characteristic was one's identity as a woman. Having a hunch that stereotyping impacted women band directors' experiences, I was interested in examining stereotypes related to occupational choice, occupational sorting, and people's beliefs about what jobs are most suited to men and women. I also explored how gender stereotypes can conflict and manipulate individuals' beliefs about their abilities to be successful in specific roles and jobs (Gerdeman, 2019). I was interested to look at the potential psychological connections to stereotypes and how gender stereotypes impact hiring practices for women in the band directing profession.

Based on these two facets of gendered oppression, I provided several examples of relevant topics for investigation in this study. This was not an exhaustive list, but aided in my

investigation and analysis. I intentionally kept the definitions of each facet of oppression brief in an attempt to limit preconceptions and potential bias surrounding topics that I would potentially encounter as a part of my analysis.

In this section, I discussed feminist theory as an analytical tool for this study. I began by providing a definition of feminism and some information about its main components. Concluding the section, I provided definitions and working examples for two facets of oppression: discrimination and stereotyping. These two facets of oppression served as analytical considerations for exploring participants' experiences.

Research Questions

I used the following question and sub-questions to guide my research:

How do participants who have left high school band directing to move into collegiate music education describe and make meaning of their experiences?

a) What factors or elements of women band director experiences influenced women's decisions to move from high school band directing to collegiate music education?
b) What were the women band directors' experiences of psychological constructs such as, but not limited to impostor phenomenon, vulnerability, perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem?
c) How do women former band directors make meaning of their experiences?

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I introduced my project based on the experiences of women high school band directors who chose to leave their work in K-12 teaching and move into collegiate music education. I began by sharing two vignettes to help the reader understand my positionality and how I came to this work. I also shared experiences that led me to ask questions specifically about

other women band directors' experiences with impostor phenomenon, vulnerability, perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem. Delving into the research literature, I introduced topics that were relevant to the need for this study. These topics included music teacher attrition, work-life balance and burnout, gender socialization, music teacher socialization, and conductor socialization. I then discussed feminism as an analytical tool through which I examined participant experiences. Concluding the chapter, I shared the research questions that guided this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I start by discussing the existing literature about women band directors' experiences. I explore many of the challenges encountered by women band directors as a result of patriarchal power. Next, I examine the psychological constructs of impostor phenomenon, vulnerability, perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem as well as how these constructs have been studied both outside and inside of music education. Impostor phenomenon, vulnerability, perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem are topics that have not been researched extensively in music education. Delving into these constructs may be a helpful place for teacher educators to begin understanding women band director attrition, and as a starting place for understanding how these constructs and others may have influenced the experiences of women former high school band directors. Women's experiences based on these constructs often result in movement within the profession or attrition, which are understandable responses to patriarchal oppression. To help the reader better understand these constructs and how they have been researched as a whole, I also include examples of work from outside of music education. Finally, I conclude the chapter by acknowledging gaps in the literature and explaining the need for this study.

Women Band Director Experiences

The body of literature on women band directors is still quite modest, but covers a wide range of topics—including experiences of gender inequities. In the following sections, I will address challenges and expectations as identified by researchers in the literature on women band directors' experiences. I will begin with challenges of time commitment and support, which have been identified by both men and women directors. While highlighting how these challenges may be perceived differently by some women band directors, I will also address topics which researchers discussed as being specific to women's experiences. These topics include

expectations of masculinity as well as motherhood, harassment, stereotyping and discriminatory experiences, the old boys' club, professional identity, and gender microaggressions.

Time Commitment and Support Challenges

Researchers have identified challenges that exist not only in women's band directing jobs, but also at least anecdotally, in the lives of most directors regardless of their gender identity. For example, several participants in Sears' (2010) study talked about how the jobs of band directors often took priority over marriage relationships and how both men and women struggled with work-life balance. Other challenges, which are well-documented among band directors, include time commitment, workload, and support (Bovin, 2019; Coen-Mishlan, 2015; Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Mullan, 2014; Neel, 2019; Shaw, 2014; 2016; Wilson, 2014).

Although time commitment and support were issues faced by both men and women band directors, several researchers addressed these issues specifically from the vantage point of women directors and highlighted ways in which these issues may be specifically challenging for women. Many women band directors expressed that their personal relationships were hampered by the demands of their job. One director specifically referenced working as many as 75 hours per week and suggested the need for a supportive partner who could understand the demands of this type of work (Coen-Mishlan, 2015). Wilson (2014) also found that women struggled to balance time spent between family and work-related tasks. Fischer-Croneis (2016) found that their participants perceived band directing to be quite time consuming and that having a prominent high school or collegiate position contributed to the expectations of time commitment from the directors. One woman participant said, "I constantly felt that I had to prove myself, I felt judged all the time" (Bovin, 2019, p. 39). Statements like this suggest that women's perceptions of time commitment may be elevated due to their feelings of needing to work harder

than their men counterparts in order to achieve success (Bovin, 2019; Coen-Mishlan, 2015; Mullan, 2014).

Several researchers further discussed the importance of support from family and friends while in the profession (Bovin, 2019; Coen-Mishlan, 2015; Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Wilson, 2014). Women band directors attributed support from family, friends, and co-workers as a necessary contributing factor in their success—success relating to both their roles in the occupation and their identities as directors (Bovin, 2019).

Expectations of Masculinity for Women

Many researchers have identified expectations of masculinity as a major theme in the literature on women band directors' experiences (Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Foley, 2019; Furman, 2012; Mullan, 2014; Sears, 2014). Participants (Foley, 2019; Sears, 2014) talked about gender as being performative in a way that echoed the work of Butler (1990). Butler (1990) discussed how an individual's words and actions are what make up one's gender. They suggested that there was not a predetermined, natural status for gender apart from how one performs it. Butler said in this sense, "reality is fabricated as an interior essence…" (Butler, 1990, p. 185). What one performs as their gender is based on the individual's identity and is impacted and policed by external, social expectations (Butler, 1990). In the studies of women band directors, the social expectation of masculinity and traditional patriarchal standards often require women to perform masculinity (Foley, 2019; Sears, 2018). Foley (2019), for example, talked about how their participants "did gender" daily. This need to perform gender is at least partially due to historical precedents and society's views of prominent, high school and collegiate band directing positions as being exclusively for men (Gould, 2001; Sears, 2014). Sears (2014) also talked about the need for women directors to mask their feminine personas, by performing masculine characteristics,

regulating their identity through clothing choices, and adjusting their teaching practices to embrace masculinity.

Women band directors also talked about expectations of masculinity that could be seen in the hiring processes that they experienced (Bovin, 2019; Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Furman, 2012; Mullan, 2014). Many women experienced being hired to fill jobs where administrators just needed a warm body—positions where there was little to no competition for the job, unestablished band programs, and programs that were in building or recovery stages (Mullan, 2014). Based on their gender, other participants discussed being questioned by administrators about their capabilities to handle specific teaching situations (Furman, 2012). During interviews, women felt that they had been asked questions that would never have been asked of their men counterparts or were given advice based on their gender. In one interview, a woman was asked how she was "going to control lippy six-foot-four trombone players…" and continued stating, "They would NEVER ask a man if he would be scared in front of 100 kids in marching band" (Fischer-Croneis, 2016, p. 187). Moore (2022) shared the experience of another participant who had been told by a school board member that they did not think she was capable of classroom management. He said, "Well, we really just didn't want to hire you because you're a woman, and we didn't feel like you could control the students" (p. 32). These quotes are three specific examples of administrators and school board members asserting their expectations of masculinity into the hiring process.

Biases in interviews can also come in subtle ways including questioning women's commitment, alluding to potential career diversions such as marriage or childbearing. One participant was given advice not to wear her large engagement ring as it might lead the interviewers to assume that the woman would not need to work and therefore, may not be

committed to the position (Fischer-Croneis, 2016). The lack of confidence in women shown by administrators responsible for hiring women for high-performing, prestigious band directing jobs and their perception of the need to question the abilities of women to handle certain teaching situations reflects the expectations of masculinity displayed by many school administrators and reinforces the perception that feminine characteristics are not valuable for these positions.

As I have highlighted in this section, expectations of masculinity for women band directors are present in many aspects of their work. These expectations are present in women band directors feeling the necessity to assume and perform masculine characteristics as a part of their everyday work, in the interactions involved with hiring processes, and administrators' assumptions about women regarding commitment based on marriage and childrearing. In the next section, I discuss more about challenges related to motherhood.

Motherhood Challenges

Challenges related to motherhood were a popular topic among women directors (Bovin, 2019; Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Fitzpatrick, 2013; Mullan, 2014; Webb, 2021; Wilson, 2014). Some women felt that they had to balance being/feeling like a parent to both their biological children as well as the children in their ensembles (Wilson, 2014). Many women directors who were also mothers experienced "mommy guilt" as they struggled with feeling guilty about spending time with their children at home instead of being at work, and vice versa (Bovin, 2019; Fitzpatrick, 2013; Wilson, 2014). Women directors who were also mothers placed extra value on support from their partners and families—especially in the form of childcare (Wilson, 2014). Fitzpatrick (2013) shared that women band directors, who were also mothers experienced a difficult time balancing home and work life due to lack of time. Bovin (2019) and Webb (2021) corroborated

those findings. The necessity to balance home and work life created issues when women needed to determine what tasks to prioritize (Fitzpatrick, 2013).

Challenges Involving Harassment

Women also talked about challenges with harassment from men (Bovin, 2019; Jones, 2010; Mullan, 2014; Sears, 2018). In Sears' (2018) study, the participant described their inability to confront an administrator who acted inappropriately. The participant said, "…he would do things in the office in front of the office staff and the other teachers like, give me a hug and kiss me on the cheek. Call me babe and put his arm around me…" (Sears, 2018, p. 106). Bovin (2019) reported that the women in their study had also experienced harassment through name calling (e.g., "babe," "hun," "sweetheart" (p. 39)), as well as instances of "rude, offensive, and vulgar sexual comments" (Bovin, 2019, p. 39). One of Jones' (2010) participants described how her predecessor talked to her in patronizing, but "seemingly innocent words" (p. 48). The participant described an incident where she heard him say, "Hey, sweetheart. You here, darling" (Jones, 2010, p. 49)? This is an example of disrespect based in the patriarchal assumptions that men have the right to talk to women in a condescending, belittling manner. In other words, women are often treated as though they are not due the same respect as their men counterparts.

Challenges With Stereotyping and Discriminatory Experiences

Researchers also discovered that stereotyping and discrimination were common challenges for women band directors (Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Mullan, 2014; Sears, 2010). One example of this discrimination and stereotyping is a study by Shouldice and Eastridge (2020) in which they compared the ratings of ensembles based on the gender of the conductors at the Virginia Band Performance Assessment. The researchers found a "statistically significant association between performance rating and director gender" (p. 131). This finding was

especially noticeable among the high school ensembles, of which many conductors were men. The researchers suggested this trend may have been due in part to the fact that many women were hired into smaller, less established programs, where the expectations for performance may have been lower than prominent programs often run by men (Shouldice & Eastridge, 2020).

Women also experienced stereotyping through negative perceptions and mistaken identities (Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Foley, 2019; Mullan, 2014; Sears, 2010). In one study, some people assumed that women directors held other, more feminine roles such as the color guard instructor, the assistant director, or the band director's spouse (Sears, 2010). In another study (Moore, 2022), a participant shared, "When we go to a band competition or even a football game, the referee will try to find the male band director and they're like so surprised that it's a female band director" (p. 33). The assumptions that women will not hold jobs that have been historically reserved for men is an example of persisting patriarchy that assumes women do not possess the characteristics necessary to hold leadership positions.

Mullan (2014) shared that women band directors struggled with disrespect due to their gender. Participants expressed that students and parents often perceived the women directors as being "too mean or aggressive" as opposed to a man using the same tone and their behaviors being perceived as "assertive" (Mullan, 2014, p. 148). One of Sears' (2010) participants described a similar situation as being a "delicate balance" for women when determining how to reveal their persona (p. 194). Some women worked to assume characteristics of the traditionally masculine persona and leadership styles (e.g., assertiveness, confidence, aggressiveness, extraversion, toughness), feeling the need to conceal their femininity as a part of the job (Sears, 2010). Foley (2019) shared that this delicate balance was also necessary at the collegiate level. In order to be accepted within the collegiate band directing profession, women needed to be very

deliberate in their maintenance of identity based on professional expectations and fluid personas. These examples of discrimination and stereotyping further suggest that women band directors are not allowed to simply be themselves.

Challenges With the Old Boys' Club

Researchers found challenges with the old boys' club to be a significant obstacle for many women band directors (Bovin, 2019; Boykins, 2022; Coen-Michlan, 2015; Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Mullan, 2014). Many women felt disrespected and unwelcomed by their men colleagues who seemed to be part of an exclusive group that met to network at professional development conferences and other events (Mullan, 2014). Based on the findings of Coen-Mishlan (2015), the presence of these men-dominated gender clubs made women feel they needed to demonstrate their competence as women band directors and often led to these women questioning the critiques they received when taking their bands to festival events. While some participants felt the presence of the old boys' club was declining in the profession, most did not indicate feeling that these gender clubs would disappear completely (Fischer-Croneis, 2016). These perceptions would lead one to believe that gender clubs are well-rooted in the traditions of the band directing profession.

Challenges With Mentor Relationships and Role Models

Mentor relationships were a theme in many studies of women band director experiences. In their study on the impacts of gender among women high school band directors, Jones (2010) discussed how "the lack of female influence" created role and identity challenges for some of their participants who lacked strong women as role models and mentors (p. 57). Cox (2020) indicated that many participants were "quick to suggest that women needed female mentors and role models in order to succeed as band directors but had previously paid no attention to mentor

gender in the selection of their own mentor relationships" (p. 127). Contrastingly, Moore's (2022) participants did pay attention. They discussed how being African American women made it more difficult to find women mentors in music education. One participant referred to the underrepresentation of black women as a "double minority"—meaning that black women were underrepresented based on both gender and race. The mentor relationships discussed by Cox (2020), Jones (2010), and Moore (2022) were opposite to what hooks (2015b) described as the feminist ideal where women are empowered. Rather than femininity being embraced and used as a "shared strength" (hooks, 2015b) in mentor relationships, mentees subscribed to the patriarchal status quo, not advocating for the "female influence" (Jones, 2010) that the women understood to be empowering.

Mullan (2014) discussed how many women reported that they did not go out of their way to build friendships with other women directors. Mullan cited Grant (2020) as they discussed that some of this hesitation may have to do with Queen Bee syndrome—being unwilling to support other women (especially those junior to them) based on perceived competition relating to their occupational positions. Queen Bee syndrome could easily be construed as women taking on attitudes and simply refusing to help one another, but the root of this problem is in the power structures of patriarchal tradition. "We are taught that women are 'natural' enemies, that solidarity will never exist between us because we cannot, should not, and do not bond with one another" (hooks, 2015b, p. 43). This negative, unsupportive behavior among women seems to be the result of the competitive and toxic environment that occurs as gender bias, and the pressure for women to comply with dominant behaviors (i.e., aggression, toughness) associated with the patriarchy (Harvey, 2018; Salles & Choo, 2020). Queen Bee behaviors are more likely to occur among women in work environments where there are gender biases, and the scrutiny of

influential women prevails (Salles & Choo, 2020). Salles & Choo (2020) emphasized that Queen Bee syndrome "is more a product of gender-biased environments than any individual woman's traits or approach" (p. 940). In other words, patriarchal oppression maintains toxicity and impedes women's attempts to band together for support.

Role models, like mentors, are another important topic to discuss in relation to women band directors' experiences. This discussion encompasses issues of socialization by other women directors as well as the influences of men as role models. Kincade (2021) found that "36% [of participants] reported not having a female role model who was also a band director. For comparison, only 14.6% of participants reported not having male role models. A small portion of participants (7.8%) reported having no role models" (p. 166). The researcher suggested that the lack of same-gender role models may be due to women seeking women outside the profession to serve as role models, or that women have chosen other women who hold prestigious positions (i.e., Mallory Thompson[3]) as role models. As a result, they cannot make the connections of these relationships to their own teaching in high school bands. Many women talked about Mallory Thompson as a role model, but I, like Kincade, wonder about the practicality of this modeling when there is likely no personal connection or correspondence between the model and teacher. This situation brings into question how band directors and music education researchers define role models in terms of purpose and benefits.

Professional Identity and Gender

Professional identity and gender can be in harmony or in conflict depending on one's professional life. This relationship between gender and identity can be dependent on many facets

[3] Mallory Thompson is the director of bands and head of the conducting program at Northwestern University. Dr. Thompson is a highly esteemed guest conductor, lecturer, and teacher who works with conducting students and musicians across the United States and Canada (Northwestern Bienen School of Music, n.d.).

of one's job including length of time in the job and assuming professional tasks that one may be socialized to associate with a specific gender identity. In their study of 206 women high school band directors, Kincade (2021) explored the relationship between gender and professional identities. Results indicated that those women who were older and had more occupational experience felt less conflict between their gender and professional identity compared to those who were younger and less experienced. Kincade posited that this surprising finding may have been due to attrition of those women who felt serious conflict between their gender and identity as a band director, or that longevity in the profession may have been beneficial to some women in resolving such conflicts. The researcher also found that women who taught classes in other subject or content areas besides instrumental music experienced more conflict between their gender and professional identities (Kincade, 2021). For those women who felt they must prove their competence in a men-dominated profession, it may have been difficult to achieve that competence if part of their teaching assignment included teaching courses that may be already associated with femininity (Kincade, 2021) such as elementary music or middle school band.

Gender Microaggressions

Shouldice (2023) discussed how some challenges described in the literature on women band directing experiences can be labeled as microaggressions. Microaggressions are "the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative…slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). Shouldice used Sue and Capodilupo's (2008) framework of eight types of microaggressions in her analysis of literature about female and female-identifying band directors. Those types were assumptions of inferiority, restrictive gender roles, second-class citizenship, use of sexist language, denial of the reality of sexism,

environmental microaggressions, leaving gender at the door, and sexual objectification (Sue & Capodilupo, 2008, as cited in Shouldice, 2023, p. 286).

In her article, Shouldice (2023) suggested steps to stem the pervasiveness of microaggressions, identifying awareness as the best place to start. She also acknowledged the need for "action to be taken in response to gender microaggressions, particularly by those who observe them being perpetrated toward others" (Shouldice, 2023, p. 8). Shouldice's (2023) implications and suggestions highlight the need for feminist activism.

Moving Forward

While the common experiences shared above are important, there are still many aspects of women's band directing experiences that have yet to be explored. These research topics include, but are not limited to how women are influenced by psychological constructs, understanding why women move within the profession, spoken and unspoken societal and school socialization as related to gender, and preservice teacher training.

Summary

Over the past 30 years, researchers have been studying women in their occupational roles as band directors. While the body of research about the experiences of women band directors is still modest, several authors have identified common challenges and experiences among women in the band directing profession. In this section, I summarized the literature on women's challenges associated with time commitment, expectations for women to assume masculine characteristics, motherhood, harassment, stereotypes, discrimination, the old boys' club, mentor and role model relationships, professional identity challenges, as well as gender microaggressions. These shared experiences across multiple studies give power and trustworthiness to the common claims that women band directors endure challenges specifically

related to their gender. In the next section, I will discuss systemic exclusion of women in band directing and band-related roles.

Systemic Exclusion

In this section, I will address the literature related to systemic exclusion of women within music education. I start with some basic statistics about the number of women high school music teachers in the United States. Then, I delve into the literature that specifically addresses the systemic exclusion of women as conductors (Gould, 2013) and band directors (Leimer, 2012; Sheldon & Hartley, 2012). Some of this literature also addresses the lack of racial diversity (Sheldon & Hartley, 2012) in music education.

The Statistics

Elpus (2016) conducted a study to describe the demographic characteristics of arts teachers in the U.S. based on the 2011-12 NCES *Schools and Staffing Survey*. Based on high school music teacher demographics and statistics from the survey, 40.99% were female and 59.01% were male. The survey did not provide a detailed breakdown of gender demographics based on music content areas taught at the high school level. Therefore, the percentages would include band, choir, and orchestra directors in addition to those music teachers who instruct courses outside of ensemble music (e.g., music technology, music appreciation, music history, general music). Elpus (2016) also found that there was a "significant difference of male/female distribution of non-arts teachers and arts teachers across all four arts disciplines" measured in the survey. His analysis indicated that the overrepresentation of men was based solely on the differences among high school music teachers as well as an almost equal binary gender divide among middle school music educators. Compared to the 2001 Music Educators National Conference (MENC) statistics, the number of women teaching high school music is increasing.

According to MENC, in 2001 women high school band directors accounted for approximately 25% of the high school directors in the U.S. While it is impossible to compare these two numbers accurately, the increasing percentage of women high school music teachers is a positive move. However, until further research is completed, there is no way to know for sure how much this increase applies to women high school band directors.

Literature About Systemic Exclusion

Some of the researchers who explored systemic exclusion of women band directors specifically addressed these trends at the collegiate level. In their 2003 critical inquiry, Gould analyzed the cultural contexts that propelled the exclusion of women in the collegiate band directing profession. The researcher sought to "create a narrative that described how the cultural structures of music, performance, and college bands function in terms of the situation of women college band directors" (Gould, 2003, para. 9). Gould later said that "as college band directors, women are clearly the 'wrong gender'" (Gould, 2003, para. 23). In 2003, Gould stated that "women constitute little more than five percent of all U.S. college band directors" (para. 1). According to the College Music Society Directory of Music Faculties, as of the 2017-2018 school year, the representation of women collegiate band directors in the U.S. had risen to 11.3 percent (Shaker, 2020).

The trends in systemic exclusion of women directors at the collegiate level are also relevant and present at the high school level. While Gould (2003) only addressed exclusion of women as collegiate directors, their critical inquiry helped to contextualize what socialization looks like for band directing. High school band directing shares some similarities in terms of the desire to maintain prestigious, high-performing ensembles. Athletic band, including marching band and pep band responsibilities are also often experiences of both high school and collegiate

directors. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that high school band directing experience is often a prerequisite for collegiate band directing, and if women are not staying in high school jobs, this could significantly limit opportunities for women in collegiate band directing jobs.

Other researchers addressed systemic exclusion of women band directors by analyzing representation of women as directors and wind conducting graduate students who participated in prestigious band performance opportunities. Sheldon and Hartley (2012) analyzed the representation by exploring trends among individuals who held music education leadership roles between 1996-2008. The researchers also analyzed gender representation among the band conductors present at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic starting in 1947 as well as the representation data for wind-conducting graduate students between 1999-2008. Sheldon and Hartley (2012) reported that only 7.56% of conductors in the history of the Midwest Clinic were women. Of the total 602 conductors between 1947 and 2008, women directed 52 ensembles. Women made their debut as band conductors at the clinic in 1955. The researchers also found that the majority of wind-conducting graduate students were white men (Sheldon & Hartley, 2012).

Several researchers explored systemic exclusion by looking at women's representation as middle school band directors in comparison to their representation as high school or collegiate band directors. Leimer (2012) found that the representation disparity among middle school directors in Florida was less extreme, but nevertheless persistent. Looking at representation at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, Sheldon and Hartley (2012) found that 15 of the performances conducted by women were those of high school ensembles, while 35 were middle school or junior high groups.

Leimer (2012) also found that in marching band, women were in the minority for all adjudication captions[4] with the exception of auxiliary. This result corroborates Sears' (2010) finding about stereotypical assumptions of women assuming feminine roles. The reason for such a result may possibly be that women are stereotyped as more competent to assume roles based on gender. For example, individuals may assume women are more likely to be auxiliary adjudicators because auxiliary is often associated with femininity due to its basis in dance and visual representation.

Previous research regarding women as band directors, conductors, and adjudicators elucidates the systemic exclusion of women in these professional roles. By examining representation of women teaching middle school, high school, and college, the results suggest that perhaps women are considered most capable and valued as middle school directors and serving in roles that society socializes individuals to believe are meant to be filled by women. These examples of systemic exclusion highlight patriarchal issues regarding why specific roles are associated with femininity, and what socialization looks like for the women who strive to assume traditionally men-occupied roles.

Summary

In this section, I discussed systemic exclusion of women as band directors. I began by sharing recent statistics highlighting the number of women band directors in comparison to men band directors in the U.S. I then summarized the literature on the systemic exclusion of women in band directing and conducting roles at the collegiate and high school levels versus at the middle school level. I also shared literature summarizing the gender disparity in adjudicator roles

[4] In marching arts events such as marching band, adjudication captions are the categories in which ensembles are judged (e.g., music, general effect, marching execution, percussion, auxiliary or color guard). Adjudicators are often band directors who have retired or taken on adjudication as a side job in addition to their school day band directing work.

for the marching arts and how that may be connected to gender stereotyping based on traditionally masculine and feminine characteristics. In the next section, I will discuss literature about psychological constructs which may influence women band directors' experiences.

Psychological Constructs

In this section, I will discuss four psychological constructs that researchers have explored both inside and outside of music education. Based on my personal experiences in music education, I have chosen four constructs—impostor phenomenon, vulnerability, perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem—as a starting point for examining women band director experiences. I had a hunch that as a part of my study I might discover more about how these psychological constructs influence women band director experiences, interacting with other factors. Patriarchal oppression creates an ideal environment for the negative manifestations of these constructs to emerge. I designed this section to help the reader gain an understanding of what each construct is, and how these constructs have been explored both inside and outside of music education.

Impostor Phenomenon

Impostor phenomenon (IP) is a psychological construct which was first identified by Clance in the 1970s. Clance (1985) described IP as when individuals "feel their success has been due to some mysterious fluke or luck or great effort; they believe their achievements are due only to 'breaks and courage' and never the result of their own ability" (p. 9). Despite coming from a variety of backgrounds, individuals who suffer from IP often have similar relationships with success. Most question their personal experiences of success and intelligence, despite having "received objective, external evidence that they're bright, successful, talented people" (p. 17). It is common for successful individuals with intense IP to believe that they have deceived others

into thinking that they possess more knowledge and capability than they really do. This causes further fear of failure as those with IP worry that they will not be able to maintain their past level of success. This fear manifests as hard work in an attempt to discount such irrational notions (Clance, 1985).

Researchers studying IP have made conflicting conclusions regarding IP experiences among men and women. Some researchers have discovered that while both men and women can experience IP, women tend to experience it more frequently and intensely (Clance & Imes, 1978; Sims & Cassidy, 2019, 2020; Vaughn et al., 2020). Vaughn et al. (2020) specifically looked at IP among women in academia as professors and students at all levels. Corroborating Clance and Imes' (1978) findings that women are influenced by IP, the investigators found that 95% of the 1,326 women participants identified as having moderate to intense IP feelings. On the contrary, other researchers and authors on the topic (Cokley et al., 2015; Husk & Lewis, 2024; Ramey, 2022; Sorenson, 2022; Young, 2011/2023) talked about IP as an experience that influences both men and women equally. Husk and Lewis (2024) found no difference in IP experiences of university faculty physicians based on gender. Among their sample of both men and women, participants on average identified as having moderate levels of IP (Husk & Lewis, 2024). Some researchers have concluded that while IP seemed to influence the experiences of both men and women, sometimes their experiences were different based on outside factors. Cokley et al. (2015) reported that there were no significant IP differences between men and women. However, the researchers also reported that IP was more impactful on the experiences of women's academic achievement based on women's engagement in academic work and feeling they needed to work harder. Therefore, the women also often obtained a higher GPA, creating a positive relationship between IP and women's GPA.

Clance and Imes (1978) discussed the IP experiences of women and how those experiences seemed to differ from men. While women often credited success to luck or effort, both of which are temporaneous factors, men often valued success as their innate personal ability. Clance and Imes (1978) also believed that the origins of women as impostors developed through family dynamics where a sibling might be seen as more intelligent or in a situation where a woman's family leads her to believe "that she is superior in every way—intellect, personality, appearances, talents. There is nothing that she cannot do if she wants to, and she can do it with ease" (p. 243). These family-based dynamics lead to distrust, doubt, and can cause the woman to feel that she needs to prove herself (Clance & Imes, 1978). Clance & Imes' definition of this construct provided a starting place for exploration as I sought to determine how IP may influence the experiences of women high school band directors. Their definition also left room for further questions about how women may be socialized to experience IP in historically men-dominated professions.

Exploration of IP Outside of Music Education

Imposter phenomenon has been explored extensively outside of music and music education. Researchers have studied IP experiences within a wide variety of occupations including health care, engineering, business, as well as among students who are studying to enter such occupations. Some researchers believe that the findings among student populations may not be applicable to research among adult employees in workplace settings (Vergauwe et al., 2014), implicating the need to study both. The experiences of both students and adults are valuable in this literature review as the experiences that individuals have as students are often carried into or reflected in their professional experiences later in life.

Similarities in IP experiences can be found among women at a variety of levels within and beyond collegiate experience. Impostor phenomenon researchers, Clance and Imes (1978), described working with women who had earned doctoral degrees. In their work, Clance and Imes also explored a sample of women that included those in academia as well as professional women who worked in a variety of fields. These women were all involved in either therapy for non-IP issues, groups aimed at growth, or classes instructed by the researchers. The researchers discussed how these individuals received honors and accolades for their work, but despite markers of success, the women believed they lacked intelligence and qualification to be truly successful in their chosen fields. The similarities identified among women at a variety of experience levels suggested a need to explore the IP experiences of undergraduate, preservice women band directors to determine potential relationships between the presence of IP prior to entering the field and women band director attrition. It is important to acknowledge that the Clance and Imes' studies are 46 years old and much has changed in the psychological research during this time. I included these studies as Clance and Imes are the originators of research on IP. However, I believe there is still relevance to their findings as they have not been disproved. Their research is still used in current studies and as a starting place for additional research on the topic. In the following paragraphs, I highlight the work of researchers from the last 10-15 years, providing examples of the work that has branched out from the foundations of Clance and Imes' IP work.

In more recent years, IP has become a topic of interest among researchers exploring various workplace environments. Impostor phenomenon plays a role in work attitudes and performance (Hudson & González-Gómez, 2021; Vergauwe et al., 2014). Hudson & González-Gómez (2021) explored IP in relation to temporary emotions, work performance, and career

outcomes. IP in combination with the shame that often results from it, can exhaust individuals' resources in a way that causes short-term issues with lessened work performance and decreased career success. Workers with IP may have decreased creative abilities (Hudson & González-Gómez, 2021). Those individuals with IP feelings also tend to experience less satisfaction with their jobs, decreased job performance based on their own efficacy perceptions, and convey intentions to remain in their current jobs (Vergauwe et al., 2014). Despite these potentially negative work outcomes associated with IP, Vergauwe et al. (2014) found that strong social support neutralized the negative impact of IP on satisfaction and efficacy levels.

Recent IP researchers in academia have also explored how IP influences individuals' perceptions of their abilities, emotions, relatedness with others, as well as whether IP impacts men and women differently. Specifically, academic researchers have found that participants with IP tend to have doubts about their abilities. Husk and Lewis (2024) investigated IP by looking at the perceived teaching abilities of obstetrics/gynecology faculty physicians. The researchers found that those individuals with higher levels of IP often evaluated their teaching abilities lower than those individuals with lower IP feelings. Women representing every level of academia from undergraduates to university faculty experienced IP as "feelings of self-doubt, lack of belonging, and low confidence" (Vaughn et al., 2020, p. 790). In a study of undergraduates, Cokley et al. (2015) identified IP as having a negative relationship with academic self-concept for both men and women as those with higher levels of IP feelings were often not as confident in their personal academic abilities. Among six doctoral students, Craddock (2011) also found that participants discussed their IP experiences in relationship to feeling unsure in their abilities to maintain the work level necessary to keep up with the high demands of work to earn a doctorate.

From the standpoint of individuals' relationships with others, IP also seemed to play an influential role. Husk and Lewis (2024) found that IP had a negative correlation relationship with emotional intelligence, or the way that one controls their own emotions as well as how their emotional control relates to other people. Vaughn et al. (2020) also investigated how IP influenced relationships with others. The investigators found that individuals with lower levels of IP feelings had higher scores for connection with others in higher education (Vaughn et al., 2020).

Exploration of IP in Music Education

Impostor phenomenon is a relatively recent addition to music education research. Despite the small number of publications about IP in music education, the findings of these studies highlight the influence that IP holds for college students and music faculty, alike. In each of these studies, music education researchers used the original CIPS (Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale) survey as developed by Dr. Clance. With permission from Clance, several of the researchers created modified versions of the CIPS that would measure IP feelings related to specific music education skills or behaviors.

Several music education researchers have explored undergraduate music education majors' experiences of IP (Nápoles et al., 2024; Rinn, 2024; Sorenson, 2022). Nápoles et al. (2024) studied IP as a predictor of burnout among music education students. Their results indicated that of 143 student participants, the majority scored in the frequent range for IP feelings. Other students scored in the moderate and intense ranges, but only three students' scores fell into the lowest IP category. Rinn (2024) explored 131 undergraduate music education students' experiences of IP as they related to students' use of Facebook to participate in social comparison behaviors. His results indicated that 77.8% of the students scored in the frequent to

intense range for IP feelings on the CIPS. Sorenson (2022) examined IP among music education student teachers. The author also found that on average, student teachers scored in the frequent range for IP scores on the CIPS.

Among the researchers studying music education students, demographic variables were a popular area of inquiry. Results showed that first generation college students experience more IP than those students who are not the first in their family to attend college or graduate school (Rinn, 2024; Sims & Cassidy, 2020). Nápoles et al. (2024) and Sims and Cassidy (2020) studied whether students' year in school would impact their levels of IP feelings. Among undergraduates, students' years in school did not impact their experiences of IP (Nápoles et al., 2024). In contrast, according to the results for graduate students, the number of years those participants had been in school did impact their IP feelings. The longer graduate students were in their program, the higher their IP scores (Sims & Cassidy, 2020).

IP feelings among music faculty have also been explored by researchers in music education. In their study of early career music education faculty, Sims and Cassidy (2019) administered not only the original CIPS, but also modified versions designed to provide information about participants' IP feelings with regard to teaching at the undergraduate level, teaching at the graduate level, and research work. The results indicated that all the participants self-identified as having IP in at least one of those three areas. Many of the participants scored in the moderate and frequent ranges (Sims & Cassidy, 2019). Participants' scores indicated that research work created the most IP feelings among the faculty with over 70% of the participants scoring in the frequent or intense ranges. Ramey (2022) explored the IP experiences of choral faculty in different areas of their work (i.e., conducting, teaching, research). Their results corroborated the findings of Sims and Cassidy (2019), indicating that most of the faculty scored

in the moderate and frequent ranges on the CIPS. Additionally, among mid-career and late career faculty, research was the job responsibility that prompted the highest IP scores (Ramey, 2022).

In some of the first research on IP, Clance and Imes (1978) made claims that women experience IP more intensely than men. Similar to results in research outside of music education, among IP music education researchers, there are also contradicting findings. In both of Sims and Cassidy's (2019) and (2020) studies, the researchers found that among music education graduate student participants and early career music education faculty, more females self-identified as having experienced frequent or intense IP in comparison to males. Sorenson (2022) found contradicting results in their mixed method study. In the quantitative data, the researcher found men and non-binary student teachers' IP scores to be lower than women's scores. Based on the results of a focus group discussion, however, both male and female participants discussed strong IP experiences, leading the researcher to believe that male and female participants experience IP more similarly than most research reveals. Rinn (2024) and Ramey (2022) also found no significant differences in IP experiences based on gender.

While these studies were beneficial to helping music education researchers understand IP among music education students at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as early career faculty and music faculty, their work did not address IP among practicing teachers. The prevalence of IP among both undergraduate students and music education faculty leads me to believe that K-12 practitioners may also experience IP. Further research is needed to understand IP among practicing music teacher experiences. It would also be beneficial to study whether IP experiences among these teachers have an impact on music teacher attrition.

Summary

In this section, I discussed IP as a psychological construct which has a powerful impact on women at a variety of career and education levels. I began by summarizing some of the significant works of Clance and Imes as the foundation for IP research. Then, I delved into literature from outside of music education as it pertained to IP in the workplace and in academic settings. Concluding the section, I summarized what research work has been done within music education and talked about how this work brings forth further questions and a need for continued IP research among K-12 music teachers.

Vulnerability

In this section, I will introduce vulnerability as a psychological construct. I begin by providing a definition and some contextual information about vulnerability as it relates to human psychology. Then, I will share how researchers have explored vulnerability within music education. Finally, I conclude by sharing a critique of vulnerability challenging the ways that some researchers present it as a universal experience.

Definition and Context

Vulnerability has been defined as "a state of emotional exposure that comes with a certain degree of uncertainty" (Fritscher, 2021, para. 1). Vulnerability, shame, and fear researcher, Brown (2019), further clarified vulnerability by saying "…vulnerability is not weakness; it's our most accurate measure of courage…When the barrier to vulnerability is about safety, the question becomes: 'Are we willing to create courageous spaces so we can be fully seen'" (p. 154)? These definitions which encompass courage and exposure also suggest the importance of creating space for authenticity and trust in relationships.

Brown (2013) talked about how many individuals perceived vulnerability to be a dark emotion associated with grief, shame, and fear. While she admitted vulnerability is closely tied to difficult emotion, it is also "the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity" (Brown, 2012, pp. 33-34).

Brown also talked about the tendency to avoid vulnerability. She said:

> Vulnerability is not knowing victory or defeat, it's understanding the necessity of both; it's engaging. It's being all in…Our willingness to own and engage without vulnerability determines the depth of our courage and the clarity of our purpose; the level to which we protect ourselves from being vulnerable is a measure of our fear and disconnection. (Brown, 2012, p. 2)

Exploration of Vulnerability Outside of Music Education

Researchers have explored vulnerability, acknowledging its helpful potential in learning. Brantmeier (2013) coined the *pedagogy of vulnerability*, which is a teaching method that "invites vulnerability and deepened learning through a process of self and mutual disclosure on the part of the co-learners in the classroom. The premise is simple—share, co-learn, and admit you don't know" (p. 97). The author further discussed how an educator's openness with their identity and life experiences can serve as a model for self-examination that students may emulate to find new values and meanings beyond what is typically learned in a class (Brantmeier, 2013). When an individual shows vulnerability, they often open the door for others to feel comfortable to also be vulnerable (Mangione & Norton, 2023).

Vulnerability is beneficial for creating possibilities for students to find their voice. Batchelor (2006) explained that vulnerability creates an openness for students that allows them

not to feel defensive or like they need to protect themselves. This kind of openness can give energy to students' development. The researcher further explained that as students continue through their process of development, teachers must be cognizant of vulnerability in "the voice yet to be uncovered" (p. 789) as students become who they will be. Teachers may also give voice to their students by turning over some of their control to allow students to collaborate with teachers and share their knowledge, background, and stories (Mangione & Norton, 2023). I wonder if vulnerability may be just as valuable for college students, preservice teachers, and practitioners as they continue the process of self-development.

Brantmeier (2013) claims that through the *pedagogy of vulnerability*, both the teacher and the students serve as co-learners where teachers must undo society's expectations of teachers as being the ultimate source of knowledge. In this process, the teacher works to equally empower the students. Mangione and Norton (2023) also discussed vulnerability in terms of co-learning. The researchers talked about how teachers should be allowed to admit that they are not all-knowing.

It is important for individuals considering vulnerability to acknowledge the risks associated with embarking on that kind of sharing and learning process for both students and teachers. Mancilla (2020) shared how she had encountered learning as a student through the *pedagogy of vulnerability* in her mentor-mentee relationship with her advisors in higher education. The author discussed how vulnerability can be very uncomfortable as it often brings difficult emotions to the fore (Mancilla, 2020). Mangione and Norton (2023) talked about the need for discretion in terms of being selective about what one discloses about themselves. How much an individual shares and how quickly they share it should be determined based on their

comfort (Brantmeier, 2013). Brantmeier (2013) also discussed the need for relationships based in trust and care to be established prior to self-disclosure on the part of the students and teacher.

Additional risks often exist for individuals of minoritized identities as individuals of privileged identities may question their authority employing biases and discriminatory behaviors (Brantmeier, 2013). Batchelor (2006) gave an important reminder regarding the vulnerability of certain groups of individuals, saying that: "The danger of concentrating only on publicized and visibly vulnerable groups is that a whole dimension of hidden vulnerability is missed" (p. 789). It is important to be aware of creating unhealthy experiences for students who are part of vulnerable situations and minoritized groups. Batchelor makes a valid point that all students may be impacted by situations and factors to which teachers are unaware. Teachers' perceptions and what they know about their students are not always representative of the entire situation as it pertains to student identities and experiences. In some cases, through vulnerable experiences, students and teachers alike may grow in ways previously unexplored or unacknowledged.

Exploration of Vulnerability in Music Education

Vulnerability holds many benefits for music teaching. Two authors discussed how vulnerability encourages learning and promotes further vulnerability. Hendricks (2018) discussed how vulnerability helps individuals secure trust and enhance their abilities to learn. The author continued to explain how trust is dependent on one's willingness to demonstrate confidence in other people. When there is confidence, it can open the door creating a kind of permission and freedom for others to participate in vulnerability (Hendricks, 2018). Richerme (2016) also talked about one's vulnerability creating freedom for others' vulnerability. Students may benefit from teachers' vulnerability, learning by example (Dale & Frye, 2009). Through music, the feelings of uncertainty and fear that can accompany music making may divulge one's emotions. Through

camaraderie of shared experience, students may bond with others who take similar risks of exposure (Richerme, 2016). Vulnerability also creates potential for growth among both students and teachers (Richerme, 2016).

Richerme (2016) discussed the act of being vulnerable as creating the potential for both student and teacher growth. For teachers, they shared how individuals may experience feeling vulnerability as a way to get comfortable with personal development. The researcher said, "Extending such engagement with ambiguity to other aspects of one's life has the potential to challenge solidified ways of being, thinking, and acting" (Richerme, 2016, p. 32). Teachers can benefit from identifying themselves as learners (Dale & Frye, 2009).

> When teachers view themselves as learners, there is a sense of vulnerability that their students are able to sense; they are open and more perceptive to the subject(s) they are teaching and to students' needs. We hope to teach our students that vulnerable and humble teachers are aware of how they personally confront difficult situations and how they make decisions, and we believe teachers are able to model this capacity for their students. (Dale & Frye, 2009, p. 129)

This is another instance in which students may be able to learn from their teachers' examples of vulnerability.

Acknowledging vulnerability experiences among preservice teachers is another important consideration as researchers seek deeper understanding of this construct. Dale and Frye (2009) discussed how preservice teachers perceived vulnerability as liability. Preservice educators associated the susceptibility of vulnerability with lack of control in the classroom in terms of classroom management, as well as the content that they taught. Lack of control is not the only way that preservice teachers may influence vulnerability that feels contradictory to their teacher

training. In their article on the grief and trauma of loss, Sears (2021) discussed how vulnerability would be considered contrary to the traditional training of most preservice music educators. Sears further talked about how the comprehensive education that college music education majors receive does not usually account for how to deal with personal vulnerability. For example, when young band directors enter the profession, they are expected to maintain the tradition-based image of fearlessness, invulnerability, and determination (Allsup & Benedict, 2008). Allsup and Benedict (2008) pointed to the harmful effects of teaching without vulnerability and accused those in the band directing profession of knowing this problem exists, but choosing to ignore it.

While not explicitly named as vulnerability, full engagement and the act of being one's true self certainly fit into this conversation. Researchers have talked significantly about the identity sites of gender personas and performativity in music education. In her dissertation, Sears (2010) discussed gender expectations for both men and women in music education. She approached these topics from gender performativity and shared examples of how societal expectations can prohibit music educators from being vulnerable to engage all aspects of their gender identity in the music classroom. This research suggests that the traditional characteristics associated with fear, invulnerability, and determination may be rooted in patriarchal expectations and values.

A Critique of Vulnerability

While analyzing patterns of behaviors and reactions is useful for helping researchers understand how individuals enact vulnerability, it is also important that researchers do not assume the experience of being vulnerable is one-size-fits all. Cole (2016) critiqued the work of vulnerability scholars such as Brown, arguing that they assumed vulnerability as a universal experience. They acknowledged the value of Brown's efforts to change the primarily negative

narrative that often surrounds vulnerability because the positive aspects can allow vulnerability to be "a resource for ethical response and political resistance to oppression" (Cole, 2016, p. 265). However, for many people, being vulnerable means foregoing safety. Cole argued that in attempts to protect themselves, individuals have a tendency to push away those who they perceive to be unsafe. This often includes individuals of racial or ethnic identities that differ from their own. Additionally, the author believed that if vulnerability is only acknowledged as a positive construct and universal experience, this perception would prohibit individuals from seeing the differences in others' vulnerable experiences. Through this perception, individuals often fail to acknowledge the difference between vulnerability that creates temporary susceptibility and the perpetual state of oppression within certain identities and communities of people (Cole, 2016). Exploring vulnerability through an intersectional lens may be helpful for understanding teachers' perceptions and susceptibilities associated with their ability to be vulnerable.

Summary

In this section, I discussed vulnerability as a psychological construct. After defining vulnerability and providing some context about how vulnerability is perceived and experienced, I highlighted a variety of research based on how vulnerability has been experienced and used to facilitate growth and learning in music education. Researchers discussed the perceived pros and cons of vulnerability for both students and teachers, as well as how the construct impacts trust, agency, and self-development. I also shared a study that suggested how music teacher education may not always prepare preservice teachers to handle vulnerability in the classroom—both their own and that of their students. Concluding the section, I discussed literature that critiqued vulnerability based on the uniqueness of individual experience.

Perfectionism[5]

In this section, I discuss perfectionism as a psychological construct. Providing a definition of perfectionism, I explain why it is difficult to differentiate whether this construct is a healthy behavior. Sharing research on how perfectionism impacts workplace behaviors as well as student academic and stress outcomes, I shared literature from outside of music education. Concluding the section, I focused on music education, sharing studies about the impacts of perfectionism on music performance anxiety (MPA) as well as stress and burnout impacts for music teachers.

Definition and Context

Despite its inclusion in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)-3[6] in 1980, perfectionism was not precisely defined (Frost et al., 1990). Prior to that time period, little research had been completed on perfectionism. Frost et al. (1990) believed that part of the reason a formal definition had not been accepted had to do with the difficulties associated with differentiating between "normal" and "neurotic" perfectionism. There seemed to be disagreement amongst scholars about whether or not there was a distinction between healthy and

[5] Perfectionism is multi-faceted, and researchers have divided the topic into different dimensions. One set of dimensions includes perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns. Sirois and Molnar (2016) defined perfectionistic strivings as, "the propensity to set excessively high personal standards that are often unrealistic in nature and to demand nothing less than perfection from the self" (p.8). Perfectionistic concerns are "extraordinarily critical appraisals of one's own behavior, chronic harsh self-scrutiny, excessive preoccupations with others' evaluations, expectations, and criticism, and an inability to gain satisfaction even when one is successful" (Sirois and Molnar, 2016, p.8). Hewitt and Flett (1991) also divided perfectionism into three categories: self-oriented perfectionism, other-oriented perfectionism, and socially prescribed perfectionism. Self-oriented perfection involves "setting exacting standards for oneself and stringently evaluating and censuring one's own behavior" (Hewitt & Flett, 1991, p. 457). Other-oriented perfectionism means that individuals are "believed to have unrealistic standards for significant others, places importance on other people being perfect, and stringently evaluates others' performance" (Hewitt & Flett, 1991, p. 457). Socially prescribed perfectionism "involves the perceived need to attain standards and expectations prescribed by significant others" and "entails people's belief or perception that significant others have unrealistic standards for them" (p. 457). See Chapter 5 for discussions of these dimensions of perfectionism.

[6] The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) is the current manual. Perfectionism is no longer an included diagnosis in the DSM-5.

unhealthy perfectionism, or if all perfectionism should be viewed as negative (Rimm, 2007). While perfectionism can be tied to excellence and achievement, it is also closely related to underachievement, because some individuals who decide they cannot achieve perfection may actually underachieve or withdraw from a task completely (Rimm, 2007).

Frost et al. (1990) embraced the following definition: "Perfectionism involves high standards of performance which are accompanied by tendencies for overly critical evaluations of one's own behavior" (p. 450). Common characteristics of perfectionism often include: "high personal standards, the perception of high parental expectations, the perception of high parental criticism, the doubting of the quality of one's actions, and a preference for order and organization" (p. 449). While parental expectations may not seem relevant to adult experiences of perfectionism, I argue that many experiences which individuals have during childhood can be impactful on experiences later in life. Understanding that perfectionism may have ties to childhood experiences could be beneficial for understanding causes and how to employ coping strategies.

Twenty years later, other researchers suggested definitions that were less diagnostic and offered individuals relatable examples of how perfectionism manifests in daily life situations. Brown (2010) explained perfectionism based on how individuals see themselves and react to their imperfections—including how perfectionism impacts individuals' lives. She said:

> Perfectionism is not self-improvement. Perfectionism is, at its core, about trying to earn approval and acceptance. Most perfectionists were raised being praised for achievement and performance (grades, manners, rule-following, people-pleasing, appearance, sports). Somewhere along the way, we adopt this dangerous and debilitating belief system: I am what I accomplish and how well I accomplish it. (p. 56)

Explaining the difference between healthy and unhealthy perfectionism, Rimm (2007) discussed ways that perfectionism could impact children in a variety of ways. Perfectionism can contribute to "high achievement motivation," but it is different from what the author considered "motivation for excellence" (Rimm, 2007, p. 247). Individuals who feel that they need to be the best may develop the inability to take risks, the need to procrastinate as avoidance due to fear, or experience physical symptoms such as gastrointestinal disturbances, headaches, and depression.

Exploration of Perfectionism Outside of Music Education

Researchers have explored job performance, stress and burnout, as well as job commitment as related to perfectionism in careers outside of music education. Vreeker-Williamson et al. (2024) explored work performance among 22 adults who identified as perfectionists. The results of this qualitative study described positive and negative outcomes for individuals who identify as perfectionists in the workplace. Among their positive experiences of perfectionism, participants saw work outcomes in a positive light. Some viewed attention to detail as an asset as it encouraged high quality output and often contributed toward a positive reputation among coworkers (Vreeker-Williamson et al., 2024). Despite a few positive outcomes, the participants identified perfectionism as a "double edged sword", simultaneously acknowledging the negative aspects. Participants further identified the diminishing returns associated with spending too much time on a task. Individuals may be forced to ask for extensions as they procrastinate, worrying about meeting their personal expectations as well as the expectations of others (Vreeker-Williamson et al., 2024).

Several researchers studied perfectionism and coping behaviors of students as they navigated academic and life challenges (Cowie et al., 2018; Stoeber, 2016; Stoeber & Janssen, 2011). Among graduate students, Cowie et al. (2018) explored predictors of academic

challenges. The researchers found that perfectionists' self-presentation, or their attempts to present themselves to others as perfect, is an important aspect of comprehending challenges in academia. These challenges may be based on personal issues such as stress and relations to others with additional difficulties related to experiences like IP (Cowie et al., 2018). Graduate students may actively try to hide their imperfections. Researchers found that those hiding behaviors were the strongest predictor of school challenges. Additionally, as the researchers explored how their results may differ based on gender, they found that women were more susceptible to academic stress and IP. However, they determined that gender had very little effect on perfectionism and school challenges (Cowie et al., 2018).

Continuing to look at how students dealt with daily challenges, researchers also explored coping strategies and flourishing (i.e., "an optimal state of mental health characterized by emotional, psychological, and social well-being" (Stoeber & Corr, 2016, p. 50)). Stoeber & Janssen (2011) examined perfectionism based on perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns. They studied students' coping strategies based on reports of their perceived most significant failure each day for up to two weeks (Stoeber & Janssen, 2011). The researchers found that perfectionist strivings predicted that participants would utilize self-blame as a coping mechanism on a lessened basis, and have a greater sense of satisfaction each day (Stoeber & Janssen, 2011). Flourishing among undergraduate students was positively related to self-oriented perfectionism (Stoeber & Corr, 2016). The researchers also identified perfectionistic concerns as the element of perfectionism that compromises flourishing among college students (Stoeber & Corr, 2016).

Researchers have also worked to identify the effects of perfectionism on teachers. Jones (2016) explored teachers' commitment to their work along with their commitment to remain in

the profession as related to perfectionism. The researcher explored perfectionism from three different dimensions: high standards, order (i.e., "importance on organization, tidiness, being disciplined, and [people] who aim, in general, to have everything go according to plan" (p. 439)), and discrepancy (i.e. "teachers who set high standards for themselves but feel as though such standards are difficult for them to achieve" (p. 439)). Results indicated that among these three measures of perfectionist tendencies, none are related to teacher commitments. Also exploring teachers' tendencies to stay in the profession, Stoeber and Rennert (2008) studied perfectionism among teachers to see if relationships existed between stress appraisals and ways teachers cope with stress and burnout. The findings indicated that negative elements of perfectionism can be impactful on tendencies for teacher burnout. The results also revealed that the source of pressure on teachers to achieve perfection was important. For example, when students' parents were the source of pressure, this predicted higher degrees of burnout while pressure from colleagues predicted smaller degrees of threat appraisal and burnout (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). The authors noted that perfectionistic striving is healthy and often leads to coping behaviors and viewing stressors as challenges (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). These studies demonstrate some ways that perfectionism can have negative manifestation on the work of teachers, potentially contributing to their burnout and attrition.

While these studies addressed many measures of perfectionism as they related to student and teacher behaviors, as well as emotional exhaustion and burnout outcomes, most of the researchers did not address experience differentiation based on gender. I wonder how perfectionistic strivings and concerns impact the coping mechanisms that women use when they encounter challenges at school and in the workplace. These findings leave me with questions

about how these manifestations of perfectionism are related to women band directors' experiences of commitment and outcomes like burnout.

Exploration of Perfectionism in Music Education

Music education researchers have also looked at perfectionism as it impacts individuals' stress in a variety of ways. Many of these researchers have made connections between perfectionism and music performance anxiety (MPA). Dobos et al. (2019) looked at the potential for relationship between social phobia, MPA, and perfectionism. Results indicated that there were no significant differences among perfectionism scores of men and women participants. However, women experienced higher levels of MPA and social phobia (Dobos et al., 2019). They also found that participants' MPA scores had a moderately strong relationship with their perfectionism scores. Results also indicated that perfectionism was not always a negative influence in regard to MPA, admitting that perfectionism manifests as both positive and negative in relationship to MPA (Dobos et al., 2019).

Exploring perfectionism in relationship to MPA and coping, McNeil et al. (2022) found that when individuals' coping levels are high, there will likely be a strong positive correlation with personal standards perfection and MPA. When participants used avoidant coping, there was also a significant relationship with higher levels of MPA. Mindfulness and meditation are sometime used as stress management. Looking at other forms of coping, Diaz (2018) studied the meditation habits of college music students to see if they impacted MPA. The researcher found when they accounted for perfectionism and mindfulness, MPA levels were lower for those participants who utilized meditation at least once per week. Diaz (2018) found that while mindfulness predicted less MPA experiences, self-orientated perfectionism and socially prescribed perfectionism both predicted increased MPA among participants.

Taking a different angle on perfectionism, stress, and burnout, Paetz (2024) described the experiences of music educators. The researcher found demographic characteristics like age and longevity of experience as helpful for predicting perfectionism in music teachers. Participants discussed feeling that they needed to be perfect in their first few years of teaching, but feeling those pressures dissipate over time. Paetz (2024) considered this lessening of standards to be based in maturity over time. The researcher also examined the influence of gender on perfectionism experiences of music educators. She found that women participants identified feminine socialization as partially responsible for their perfectionism tendencies. Findings further indicated that music teachers experienced pressure from self and others to be successful in their jobs. This pressure was related to stress and emotional exhaustion (Paetz, 2024). Despite the fact that some participants were able to view job stress as a challenge and opportunity to be successful, these symptoms are still related to burnout (Paetz, 2024).

The studies about perfectionism in music education largely emphasize the negative manifestations of perfectionism in terms of teaching and performing. Pressures from others bear a major burden on individuals with perfectionism—increasing the risk for stress, anxiety, and burnout. Contrary to these results, through these studies, researchers have also exemplified how perfectionism can have both positive and negative impacts on MPA and stress. Additionally, perfectionism may impact how some individuals are able to counterbalance perfectionism through coping strategies that include practices like meditation and mindfulness. Further research is needed about how individuals can tap into the positive powers of perfectionism, or at least counter its negative outcomes with strategic management. These results and findings create additional wonderings as to how women deal with perfectionism tendencies, pressures from self and others to be perfect, and if and how they attempt to cope.

Summary

In this section, I began by defining perfectionism as a psychological construct. I then synthesized the research from both outside and inside of music education, looking at specific dimensions of perfectionism, pressures from self and others, and ways of coping. Topics focused on perfectionism and its combination of positive and negative outcomes. I concluded the chapter by sharing ideas about the need for further research related to perfectionism.

Self-Efficacy/Self-Esteem

In this section, I explore the literature related to self-efficacy/self-esteem. I begin by defining and providing context for a new definition of self-esteem that encompasses self-efficacy. Sharing literature from outside of music education, I discuss research about gender relationships with self-efficacy, teaching abilities as predicted by preservice teacher efficacy, and job satisfaction among non-music teachers. Concluding the section with music education research, I shared literature about topics such as perceived concerns about abilities among student teachers and music teachers' confidence in their job roles.

Definition and Context

For many years, self-efficacy and self-esteem have been considered two separate and unique psychological topics. As it was originally coined, self-efficacy is one's belief in their ability to carry out actions, therefore successfully achieving a specific result or outcome. Self-efficacy influences one's beliefs in their abilities, impacting effort and persistence. As such, strong self-efficacy allows for more significant efforts (Bandura, 1977). Self-esteem was originally defined as a construct related to how one viewed their self-concept (Campbell & Lavallee, 1993). However, in recent years, psychologists have questioned how these two

constructs relate and how to accurately define them. Eromo & Levy (2017) shared a new definition for self-esteem that encompasses self-efficacy. They explained:

> Self-esteem is the approach of one's own personal value, including both emotional components (self-worth) and cognitive components (self-efficacy). More comprehensively, self-esteem is a multifaceted and heterogeneous construct, the multiple forms of which are a function of how accurately or closely it matches an individual's measurable reality, composed of the objective outcome of one's behavior (actual achievements, measurable capabilities) as well as how one thinks he or she is perceived and how he or she is actually perceived. (pp. 280-281)

In other words, the prior definition of self-esteem fell short of creating a full picture of each individual aspect of the construct. For the purposes of this review of literature and study, I have chosen to include self-efficacy and self-esteem together as one, single, but multifaceted construct.

Exploration of Self-Efficacy/Self-Esteem Outside of Music Education

Soysa and Wilcomb (2015) explored self-efficacy and self-esteem. The researchers specifically analyzed dimensions of mindfulness, self-compassion, self-efficacy, and gender demographics to see if they predicted depression, anxiety, stress, and wellbeing while making some further discoveries based on gender. Their results indicated that self-efficacy and gender demographic data served as predictors of wellbeing. The researchers also learned self-efficacy experiences differed by gender. Men participants had greater levels of self-efficacy than women. Levels of stress were also higher for women than men (Soysa & Wilcomb, 2015). Therefore, the results further showed that men participants experienced better wellbeing than women participants (Soysa & Wilcomb, 2015).

Walter (2015) and Reilly et al. (2014) looked at experiences of self-efficacy and self-esteem among teacher candidates and practicing teachers. Walter (2015) found self-efficacy as a strong predictor for desirable teaching skills among future teachers. The researcher's findings also suggested that self-efficacy in one's teaching abilities also strongly predicted good teaching skills as well as high achievement in academics—two important components for acceptance into a program to earn a teaching degree (Walter, 2015). Reilly et al. (2014) on the other hand, looked further into how self-efficacy and self-esteem experiences influenced teachers in the profession. Looking at job satisfaction as it related to self-efficacy, the results indicated no significant relationship. In other words, just because a teacher is satisfied with their job, does not mean the teacher feels confident about that work (Reilly et al., 2014). The researchers also found that self-efficacy and self-esteem shared a weak negative relationship. Therefore, a teacher that feels confident in their abilities, may not have favorable feelings about themselves and their worth (Reilly et al., 2014). Unfortunately, these studies about teacher candidates and inservice teachers did not differentiate results based on gender leaving questions regarding how women preservice and inservice teachers experience self-efficacy and self-esteem. Further, I wonder if women band directors' experiences would align with the findings of these studies, potentially explaining negative issues with wellbeing, self-perceptions, and confidence levels.

Exploration of Self-Efficacy/Self-Esteem in Music Education

Killian et al. (2013) and Regier (2021) investigated self-efficacy/self-esteem beliefs among student teachers. Working with 159 music student teachers before and after their student teaching experience, Killian et al. (2013) was able to analyze students' concerns based on their perceptions of their abilities over a five-year period. Pre-student teachers identified more concerns about themselves (56%) than about their students (4%) when they first began student

teaching. After the student teaching experience, their comments about themselves decreased to 33% and comments about their students increased to 20% (Killian et al., 2013). In a similar study of concerns and self-efficacy surrounding the student teaching experience, Regier (2021) found the opposite. The number and frequency of student teachers' concerns about themselves grew between pre-student teaching and student teaching. Their concerns about tasks diminished during that same period (Regier, 2021). Among pre- and post-student teachers, the researchers identified concerns regarding knowledge application, classroom management, and personal confidence. On the whole, pre-student teaching comments tended to be worded negatively, while post-student teacher comments usually had a positive tone. This difference may be partially due to how data collection prompts were worded, but may have also been due to the rise in confidence that post-student teachers may have felt based on their positive comments about professional growth (Killian et al, 2013). Regier (2021) also found that student teachers talked about opportunities not associated with their coursework as being a positive influence on confidence in their teaching abilities. These results show the importance of student teaching as a time of growth and increased confidence. At the same time, this data reveals that students may benefit from involvement in outside teaching experiences in addition to fieldwork placements. These opportunities may help students feel like they can use their skills to positively impact the lives of others (Regier, 2021).

Some music education researchers (Ballantyne & Canham, 2023; Regier, 2024) focused their self-efficacy work on the experiences of music teachers. Ballantyne and Canham (2023) reported that participants' self-identified perceptions of what teachers felt was important and the areas in which they felt confident, enabled the researchers to realize how teachers viewed themselves in relationship to their job roles. Regier (2024) gathered concert band directors'

perceptions of their skills related to classroom management. Results indicated that those directors who scored low for self-efficacy in this area also indicated experiencing greater amounts of stress based on student behavior. Regier (2024) further discussed how band directors may depend on the practicum and mock teaching experiences during which they learn classroom management to buttress their self-efficacy while they await further mastery experiences in the field. Confidence in areas or skills that teachers deem as crucial is important for music education as "teacher positivity and higher self-efficacy are associated with longevity in teaching and resilience to challenges" (Ballantyne & Canham, 2023, p. 465). There is a need for further research about the experiences of teacher self-efficacy based on gender as researchers and teacher educators need to understand how to prepare women band directors in a way that will boost their positivity and self-efficacy to promote career longevity.

Summary

In this section, I discussed self-efficacy/self-esteem. Before sharing an updated definition of self-esteem, I defined the constructs based on their original uses and then explained why I chose to combine them for the purposes of this discussion. I then shared relevant literature from outside music education that explored self-efficacy/self-esteem which included the experiences of teachers and teaching candidates in subjects other than music. Concluding the section, I synthesized music education literature based on the self-efficacy/self-esteem experiences of music student teachers and band directors.

Gaps in the Literature

In this literature review, I discussed relevant research about women band director experiences and the psychological constructs of impostor phenomenon, vulnerability, perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem. Band directors are primarily white men. As such,

there are gaps in the literature related to the gender disparity that persists in high school band directing. Research is needed to further explore the disparity in order to understand the reasons why women are choosing to leave high school band directing.

When scholars explore IP, vulnerability, perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem, it often feels as though the view of these constructs is narrow. Such a short-sighted view does not fully allow for the exploration of the potential implications for each of the constructs—both positive and negative. Impostor phenomenon, vulnerability, perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem all seem to fit into a category of taboo, personal issues that many people do not wish to acknowledge or own as a part of their experiences and as explanations for their behaviors. Music practitioners and collegiate music teacher educators would benefit from further study of these four constructs both individually and together within music education. Having only a surface-level understanding can prohibit teacher educators and researchers from seeing how they relate, intersect, and combine—further prohibiting music teacher educators from comprehending what some students and teachers deal with on a daily basis. Research is needed to explicitly explore gender in relationship to these constructs and how they may influence women's band director experiences. Additionally, there is scant research addressing how the different facets of socialization and systems of power may influence women's experiences and their interactions with psychological constructs along with the many negative outcomes shared in the literature above.

The Need for This Study

This study ultimately serves to aid in meaningful preservice teacher preparation that is aimed at preventing music teacher attrition—specifically for women high school band directors. Research is needed to address gaps in the literature in order to incorporate new knowledge into

preservice teacher preparation. The goal is to help women understand what they may face in the field while helping women to be successful in a men-dominated profession—with tools to navigate the inherent challenges so often rooted in oppression. While this study will not answer all the questions or address all of the gaps necessary to complete this process in its entirety, I see this study as a beneficial step toward that end.

As I consider the preparation of preservice teachers and professional development for practitioners, I believe that it is crucial to understand that psychological constructs can influence experiences in ways that are both positive and negative. It is also important that music teacher educators and researchers do not assume anyone's experience of each construct to be the same, but should instead help these individuals to understand the constructs in such a way that they can see multiple vantage points. It is equally valuable to understand that helping individuals to work through, overcome, or even embrace their experiences will never be a one-size-fits-all process.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I began by reviewing the literature about women band director experiences. Common challenges among women band directors included time commitment, support, expectations of masculinity, motherhood, harassment and stereotyping, discrimination, the old boys' club, mentor and role model relationships, professional identity challenges, as well as gender microaggressions. Sharing the most recent statistics for women high school music teachers, I discussed systemic exclusion of women as both high school and collegiate band directors. Then, I explored the literature on the psychological constructs of impostor phenomenon, vulnerability, perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem. Sharing definitions for each, I provided contextual information to aid reader understanding. I also highlighted relevant

literature from outside and inside of music education. Concluding the chapter, I discussed gaps in the literature and the need for this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I explain my methodological choices. I explicate my decision to use phenomenology and discuss the philosophical background that distinguishes it as a framework and method. In this chapter, I also address my role as the researcher and how I treat my preconceptions as I come to this study. I end the chapter by discussing the specifics of data collection through interviews and data analysis, as well as some study limitations.

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation was to understand how women previously employed as high school band directors made sense of their experiences. Using feminism as an analytical tool and phenomenology as a theoretical framework, I examined participants' lived experiences as a part of conductor socialization, which interconnects with music teacher educational training and societal expectations. I worked to make sense of participants' experiences and understand their reasons for leaving high school band directing and moving into collegiate music education. Additionally, I explored participants' experiences of being a woman band director and how those may have been influenced by psychological constructs such as impostor phenomenon, perfectionism, vulnerability, and self-efficacy/self-esteem.

Phenomenology

Researchers have used phenomenology to explore many topics in music education. Phenomenology is a theoretical framework and an empirical research method based on the work of philosophers such as Husserl, Gadamer, and Heidegger. Using this framework and methodology, researchers explore participants' lived experiences. The researchers seek common interpretations or meanings associated with a particular phenomenon of interest. The phenomena that researchers explore are usually life experiences—e.g., music teacher educators' experiences

of learning in a professional development community (Pellegrino et al., 2014), older Australians' and children's experiences of intergenerational music making (De Vries, 2012), beginning music teachers' understandings and self-perceptions of micropolitical literacy (Conway & Rawlings, 2015). In this study, I examined the experiences of women who left high school band directing and moved into collegiate music education. "The word *phenomenon* comes from the Greek *phaenesthai*, to flare up, to show itself, to appear" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). Through data collection and analysis work, I hoped to shine a light on the phenomenon of having been a woman high school band director, allowing the essence of that experience to appear naturally through the research process.

In this section, I discuss phenomenology as a theoretical framework. I begin by explaining the epistemic and ontological underpinnings of phenomenology. Based on those perspectives, I also talk about the ramifications of using phenomenology as a research method. I conclude the section by explaining my personal role as a researcher and acknowledging my preconceptions of the phenomenon based on my insider perspective.

Epistemology of Phenomenology

Epistemically, phenomenology relies on description as a primary way of knowing. Cerbone (2012) discussed the role of description, saying, "Phenomenology is primarily a descriptive enterprise. What it seeks to describe are the phenomena associated with, or making up, consciousness or experience" (p. 7). Researchers gather participants' descriptions of their lived experiences with a specific phenomenon and work to find the essence of those experiences with the intent to understand, interpret (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), and further describe the phenomenon as a whole.

Phenomenology is an interpretive, and therefore constructivist approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Individuals' interpretations are part of their experiences and "there is no 'objective' experience that stands outside its interpretation" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, pp. 9-10). In other words, one's descriptions of their experiences are inseparable from their interpretations. Because of the constructivist nature of phenomenology, an experience can be interpreted through "multiple realities" each of which are based on context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 12). Individuals can look at experiences from multiple perspectives and angles to construct their unique interpretations. Heidegger argued that "in interpretation, understanding does not become something different. It becomes itself…Nor is interpretation the acquiring of information about what is understood; it is rather the working-out of possibilities projected in understanding" (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 188-189). While individuals sometimes see interpretation as the act of coming up with one's own ideas about an experience, I believe that Heidegger meant that interpretation is not an evolution that reveals new knowledge. Heidegger's belief emphasized participants' experiences as truth.

Along with interpretation and reality construction comes the issue of presupposition. Van Manen (2014) shared their understanding of how presuppositions may hinder one's comprehension of experiences. The author shared:

> Phenomenology constantly questions the assumptions and presuppositions that prevent us from adequately understanding and expressing in words the living moments of immediate experience…The problem is that the living moment of immediate experience is by no means easily accessible or even conceivable. It must always be retrospectively retrieved as past. (van Manen, 2014, p. 59)

Van Manen highlighted that lived experiences are fleeting. Other experiences, previous knowledge, and biases all influence how individuals see their lived experiences in the moment. However, until they process in retrospect, individuals cannot fully understand and make connections to their preconceptions. Detmer (2013) further discussed phenomenology and researcher presuppositions, saying:

> Its [phenomenology's] aim is to help us to see more clearly what we have already seen, not by adding to what we have seen some grand theory that would explain it all, but rather by persuading us to remove the confused, or speculative, or prejudicial assumptions or thought constructions that can serve to block our access to what is given in experience. It can aid us in our effort to discard from our thinking (or at least, to set aside temporarily) all that is merely traditional, habitual, familiar, taken on faith, taken on authority, or in some other way believed without having been seen. Phenomenology strives to return us to what stares us plainly in the face, and then to help us to see that from an up-close, unobstructed vantage point. (p. 18)

Detmer explained how researchers can more clearly see an experience by setting aside what they already "know." Their explanation is the basis for bracketing—a concept I will define in the coming section about phenomenology as methodology.

Ontology of Phenomenology

Phenomenology also addresses consciousness based on a first-person perspective as a work of intuition (Smith, 2018). This framework expounds upon "forms of consciousness" (Smith, 2018, para. 23). Therefore, phenomenology has connections to ontology—explorations on the nature of being in terms of consciousness. Husserl (1982) talked about how researchers must approach consciousness:

> We therefore effect, as examples, any single mental processes whatever of consciousness and take them as they themselves are given to us in the natural attitude, as real human facts; or else we presentiate such mental processes to ourselves in memory or in freely inventive phantasy. (p. 67)

What individuals share about their conscious experience should be acceptable in the form that it is presented. If researchers allow their own preconception to cloud their ability to see participants' experiences for what they are, the researchers present consciousness as nothing more than manufactured, inaccurate accounts of a participants' lived experience. More recently, Detmer (2013) discussed consciousness, saying, "consciousness is understood to be the unique and universal medium of access to whatever exists" (p. 21). Zahavi (2019) also talked about how the human mind naturally relates to its surroundings. The intuition accompanying consciousness does not necessarily result from a specific event or experience. Detmer (2013) and Zahavi (2019) reiterate that the nature of consciousness reveals how it occurs naturally and exists as insightful without modification from outside influences.

Phenomenology as a Method

Based on its ontological and epistemological underpinnings, researchers use phenomenology as a method to explore lived experiences. As van Manen (2014) explained, "virtually any and every moment or event of our lives can be approached as a lived experience" (p. 58). Researchers explore lived experiences that include ordinary taken-for-granted moments as well as exceptional moments that happen under specific circumstances. In the case of the present study, the phenomenon was participants' lived experiences of having been a woman high school band director.

Researchers using phenomenology often conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews to collect data about the descriptive encounters of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Gadamer's thinking supported interview-based qualitative research as an effective way to emphasize the importance of genuinely listening to facilitate understanding (Gadamer et al., 2001). Gadamer believed that language was a vehicle for comprehension. I would also argue that this viewpoint suggests the importance of interpretation beyond the surface level of what the interviewer hears.

Because of the interpretive nature of phenomenology, researchers must confront their preconceptions and biases, which if left unchecked, may influence the interpretations they make about their participants' experiences. Therefore, many researchers use bracketing to temporarily set aside their own experiences, judgments, and preconceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) so they can have fresh eyes and a theoretically unobstructed view of the participants' experiences (Detmer, 2013). Moustakas (1994) also talked about the uniqueness of phenomenology as this quest for knowledge does not encompass the perceptions of onlookers or even the educated hunches of the researcher but simply the lived experiences of the participants. They said:

> Phenomenology, step by step, attempts to eliminate everything that represents a prejudgment, setting aside presuppositions, and reaching a transcendental state of freshness and openness, a readiness to see in an unfettered way, not threatened by the customs, beliefs, and prejudices of normal science, by the habits of the natural world or by knowledge based on unreflected everyday experience. (Moustakas, 1994, p. 41)

Despite the entirety of a phenomenon's character being hidden based on the infinite number of perspectives from which it can be viewed and experienced, I do not believe that one can ever

dismiss previous experiences and biases in a way that would not impact one's perspective. I wonder if the freshness and openness to which Moustakas referred is really about making sure that previous experiences do not consume one's perspective causing the researcher to miss the essence of the phenomenon in the participants' lived experience. Bracketing, therefore, does not allow taken-for-granted experiences to prevent researchers from being able to "see" the phenomenon from various perspectives (van Manen, 2014).

As they collect data which constitutes accounts of their participants' experiences with the phenomenon, the researchers seek to gather textual and structural descriptions that detail the experience itself, as well as the situational and contextual details that surround the experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When phenomenological researchers analyze data, it is common to start narrow with individual experiences and then expand the analysis into broad findings based on the "what" and "how" of the generalized experiences of multiple people (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 77). Because each person's individual experiences are contextual, phenomenological researchers do not seek generalizable results in the statistical sense. Rather, they seek to define the essence of the phenomenon. This determination can be beneficial for helping researchers interpret the findings logically for not only the participants but potentially for others who share similar lived experiences (Randles, 2012).

In the data chapters that follow, I have chosen to include discussion alongside the findings. My rationale for this decision was based on my desire to not simply state participants' experiences, but also to interpret them based on their situatedness in the cultural and social context of music education. I also incorporated my insight as an insider to the phenomenon in order to help me understand and interpret participants' experiences. This rationale was my effort to integrate the philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger. Husserl focused on describing

consciousness and seeing things exactly as they are (Sharma, 2024). Contrastingly, Heidegger was more interested in interpretations based on contexts, relationships, and situatedness in the world (Sharma, 2024). I attempted to capture the experience of being a woman high school band director, while also including informed interpretation through a feminist analytical lens.

Researcher Role & Insider Preconceptions

Because of my experience as a woman band director who has since moved within the profession to pursue higher education—specifically a doctorate—I am an insider to the phenomenon I explored in this work (Smith & Nizza, 2022). Heidegger believed it would be impossible for researchers to create an interpretation free of preconceptions based on their experiences (Heidegger, 1962 [1927]). In phenomenology, the researcher seeks to prioritize the participant experience over the researcher's preconceptions (Smith et al., 2022).

Gadamer had a conflicting philosophical view of researchers' preconceptions or prejudgments. Gadamer believed that as a part of interpretation, "understanding oneself is part of this process" (Gadamer, 2001, p. 37). The philosopher also believed in the potentially positive power of preconceptions in understanding. They believed preconceptions would always be a part of research in the social sciences because preconceptions are a part of the "practice of knowing," but that researchers also had "the duty to disempower, where possible, prejudices that do not prove to be positive" (Gadamer, 2001, p. 43). I interpret the preconceptions that are not positive to be anything in the researcher's experience that might keep them from openness to listening and interpreting the experiences of others, and not allowing the researchers' experiences and beliefs to cloud the interpretation of what happened in the experience.

Gadamer (2001) also suggested that researchers may not be aware of all their assumptions. The philosopher believed that because of socialization, it would be possible for an

individual not to be fully aware of their situatedness (e.g., what they believe and why they believe it). However, just because one does not possess this awareness does not change "the way traditions are working on us and in our understanding" (Gadamer, 2001, p. 45). Gadamer further explained, "Full enlightenment about one's interests in questioning is not attainable. There is always something remaining that one does not realize" (Gadamer, 2001, p. 46). Gadamer's look at situatedness highlights the importance of understanding the powers of socialization that often hide in the background of researchers' experiences. Again, I argue this creates a need for openness and honesty on the part of the researcher to reflect on what they bring to a project regarding assumptions, judgments, and situatedness in their own experiences. It is also necessary, however, to understand that with this openness, one should learn more about oneself as a part of the process of listening and interpreting the experiences of others.

Furthermore, Smith and Nizza (2022) also discussed the importance of researcher reflexivity, suggesting that being cognizant of preconceptions can help hold the researcher accountable for the influence they bring to the process. Further, they suggested that "it can be helpful to put in writing your ideas and experience before you start the interviews; otherwise, your preconceptions could sneak in on you when you least expect them…" (p. 17). In order to take account of my own experiences and known preconceptions in a meaningful way, I share my insider experience in the following paragraphs.

I worked as a middle school and high school band director in a small Ohio school district for eight years. During those years, I loved working with my students, making music together, and helping students foster a love of music. I inherited a program that was grieving the loss of the former band director due to a legal incident involving another staff member. Unfortunately, the previous director was also my high school band director—a fact that disintegrated my

previously healthy, professional relationship with my band director. The students and parents were angry and hurt. The booster organization quickly went into shambles. I found myself amid a giant mess of emotions and financial concerns that would take years to resolve.

From the beginning, as a 22-year-old woman with no previous classroom teaching experience, I felt very much like the new kid on the block. I felt all eyes were on me as students and parents compared me to the previous director and questioned my capabilities. Many times over, in the course of those eight years, I struggled with impostor phenomenon. While my university education had more than adequately prepared me for the job, I questioned my abilities and wondered how and why I got the job. Was it luck? Was I in the right place at the right time? At the time, I did not know what to call it, but when I encountered impostor phenomenon in my research as a graduate student, I felt like I had just found the key to understanding my experience—something with which I identified so deeply.

Over the eight years, I sought to prove myself and worked hard to make everything right in the program. I thought putting in more hours would help me to be a better teacher. I devoted my life to it for the first six years. It was not uncommon for me to work 12- to 14-hour days. I planned, bought music, fixed instruments, practiced secondary instruments, made phone calls, answered emails, completed paperwork, and worked on a million other tasks that I hoped would eventually make things better and help me to prove myself, my work ethic, and the amount of care I brought to the program. These were my perfectionist tendencies kicking in. I wanted to make it perfect, but I wasn't sure how, so I ended up grasping at what I thought would get results.

Sometime around the middle of year six, I met the man who would later become my husband. For the first time, I found myself wanting to have a life outside of the band room. I wanted to go home at the end of the day and spend time with him on weeknights and weekends. I

pulled away from the long hours and relinquished some of the control that I held onto for so long. It was like finding freedom. While no one explicitly said anything about my cut back on hours and my desire to have a personal life, I felt the pressures, and I experienced guilt for not being there for my program in the same way I had been for the past six years. The truth was, however, that I was tired, and I desired the same work-life balance that the other classroom teachers seemed to enjoy.

It wasn't until about three years after I left that job that I started to unpack and sort through the plethora of experiences and what led to my burnout after eight years. While reflecting on my experiences, I realized that many of the struggles and frustrating incidents I encountered were linked to my identity as a woman and the expectations that came with the tradition of having a male band director. What I valued as strong rapport with my students and being my true, vulnerable self seemed to be of little value to two of my administrators, and I was left feeling frustrated and felt that what I brought to the job as a compassionate, empathetic young woman was not adequate or valued.

My preconceptions included several beliefs and wonderings. I had a preconception that other women band directors who had left high school teaching and moved into higher education may also have experienced impostor phenomenon, perfectionism, self-efficacy/self-esteem, and being vulnerable in ways similar to my own experiences. These potential influences only represented a partial list, as I believed that women band director experiences were influenced by many individual and shared factors. Further, my other major preconception was that by looking at women's band directing experiences through a feminist lens, I would find significant evidence of lived experiences that reflected inequities and oppressive behaviors toward women in this historically white, masculine profession.

I acknowledge that my lived experience was the driving force behind this project. The process of beginning to understand my own story brought forth a myriad of questions regarding the experiences of other women in the band directing profession, what causes women to leave high school band teaching, and how to better prepare preservice women band directors with the intent to prevent attrition. I did my best to prioritize the experiences of the participants in this study employing traditional bracketing and reflexivity. According to Gadamer, "this kind of sensitivity involves neither 'neutrality' in the matter of the object nor the extinction of one's self, but the conscious assimilation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices. The important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text may present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings" (Gadamer, 1975 [1960], p. 238). My experience impacted how I perceived and interpreted the experiences of others, allowing me to ask questions that got to the deeper sense of what it means to be a woman band director without leading the participants to give perfunctory responses. To avoid asking leading questions, I was cognizant of my tone, choice of words, and sentence syntax, which could provide meaningful information to participants about the responses I suspected may have been part of their experiences. At the same time, however, I assumed that participants knew some of my biases based on the questions I asked in our interview conversations and some of my interjections, verbal responses, facial expressions, and body language.

Participants

In this section, I discuss my recruitment strategies and talk about the participants in this research study. I begin by talking about my use of purposive sampling and definitional sample selection criteria. Talking about the specifics of recruitment, I share the criteria I identified for

study participation. I conclude the section by sharing participant profiles, which provide a snapshot of participants and their experiences in high school band directing.

Recruitment Strategy

To identify participants, I used definitional sample selection criteria (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010), which means that I utilized preset requirements to recruit individuals who were eligible for participation in the study. Using definitional criteria allowed me to select participants based on experiences of interest (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). This type of purposive sampling was beneficial for selecting participants as I sought to explore the specific lived experiences of women former high school band directors who have entered collegiate music education. Because there is no database for tracking women who have left K-12 music education and moved within the profession, I recruited participants through social connections with friends and colleagues, as well as sending recruitment materials to organizations such as Women Band Directors International, Black Women Band Directors, and the Band Directors Facebook groups.

I selected ten women former high school band directors as participants. After recruitment, one participant chose to leave the study. Nine women participated to completion. Criteria for participation in this study were as follows: 1) Participant must have identified as a woman at the time during which they were a high school band director; 2) Participant must have left K-12 music education and moved into collegiate music education; 3) Participant needed to have taught as a high school band director for at least five years. I selected five years of experience as the threshold criterion for this study as researchers have determined that five years is an important milestone for many novice teachers who will leave or move within that period (Hammerness, 2008; Madsen & Hancock, 2002).

In my recruitment efforts, I aimed to recruit participants across a range of identities. The nine participants in this study, however, shared many identities which is consistent with the demographics of the band directing profession. All participants identified as women and used she/her pronouns. At the time of the interviews, the women were between the ages of 31 and 65. Each participant was a music education Ph.D. student or a college professor with five to 27 years of high school band teaching experience. Most participants identified as white, heterosexual, and neurotypical. None of the participants identified as non-binary or transgender women. It is also important to note that there was very little dissent among the participants as they discussed their experiences. In the next section, I will share profiles that provide background information for each participant and context for their band directing experiences.

Participant Profiles

Grace

Grace (she/her) is a white, former high school band director in her 30s who took over her father's band position when he retired as the band director in their town. After taking the position, she remained in that district for six years before pursuing higher education. After leaving K-12 music education, she received her master's degree. At the time of the interviews, Grace was a third-year Ph.D. student.

Grace's experience was unique; she returned to her hometown after graduating with her bachelor's degree. Grace grew up wanting to be like her father, but as she began to experience the realities of the job, she found herself trying to create her own identity separate from his. One thing that felt comfortable and different from her father was being the choir director alongside of band. However, as she served as a teacher for both subjects and began making things her own, she described feeling like a glass dish that experienced temperature change too quickly and

cracked (Interview 3, 25:27) as she code-switched between the band and choir world (Interview 3, 1:57). She felt conflicted in how to speak, act, and dress in order to be successful in the band world—a conflict that ultimately led to her pursuit of higher education degrees in music education. After graduation, Grace plans to continue teaching music, but not band.

Diane

Diane (she/her) is a white, former high school band director in her 60s who taught high school band for 27 years. Her desire to be a lifelong learner led Diane out of high school band teaching and fueled her pursuit of higher education. She completed a summer master's degree and a summer fellowship program before returning to school for her Ph.D. Diane is now a music education professor and a university department chair. At the time of interviews, Diane had been in higher education for 15 years. She teaches primarily higher-level courses, such as pedagogical courses designed to help students learn to teach in the ensemble setting, but also basic pedagogical classes, such as methods courses.

Diane's experience as a band director was fraught with challenges related to her identity as a woman. As a preservice teacher, career counselors told her that because she was a woman, she should teach general music. As a teacher, despite growing up with feminist women who were ahead of their time, Diane described how she bought into the patriarchy unintentionally, feeling like she had to work harder than her male colleagues. Diane also felt like she needed to seek approval and affirmation from men, and she tried to attach herself to men whom she thought held power. Even having been through troubling experiences as a part of her K-12 career, Diane chose a path to continue in music education within higher education—learning, trusting in her abilities, training preservice teachers, and investing in students.

Ellen

Ellen (she/her) is a former high school band director in her 40s. She identifies as biracial— "mostly white, but also native" (Interview 1, 6:45). She taught high school band for 14 years across several different schools. Throughout college and during her first year of teaching, Ellen lost some of her most influential mentors. In search of a new mentor, she pursued her master's degree. The year following her master's degree, Ellen met a university conducting professor with whom she decided she wanted to study. She found summer opportunities to work with him and several years later, started her Ph.D. in music education at the university where he taught. At the time of interviews, Ellen was a first-year Ph.D. student. She was also part of the conducting studio at the university. She hopes to eventually work in a higher education job that includes conducting, acknowledging the influence that conductors and college band directors had in her life, and looking forward to the impact she hopes to have on the students she will teach.

In her journey as a high school band director, Ellen identified several challenges. She struggled with feeling like she did not have a mentor—especially a woman mentor who was also a music teacher. Ellen dealt with sexist issues surrounding her abilities and how she felt that others perceived her as a woman in a leadership role. Ellen also felt like she assumed a conductor role as a high school director but that her femininity was not always welcome on the podium. In Ellen's work as a band director, she tried to change herself to meet the expectations of those around her, but now, she is working to be comfortable as herself.

Jill

Jill (she/her) is a white, former high school band director in her 40s. She taught high school band for eight years. While Jill was in the high school classroom, she was also a part-time master's student. During that time, she completed two master's degrees—one in music theory

and the other in secondary education. Jill then decided to pursue her Ph.D. in music education. Since completing her Ph.D., Jill has experience teaching at two different universities. At the time of the interviews, she was in her tenure year at her current university and was responsible for teaching methods and practicum courses, a yoga and mindfulness course for musicians, as well as a music integration course for classroom teachers.

Jill shared challenges related to her identity as a woman that she experienced during her time as a high school band director. She talked about how she never felt totally free to be herself because of gendered perceptions of women. Jill described feeling like she was being forced to fit into the male model of how society felt that band directors should look (Interview 3, 18:55). She also discussed some challenges with age and looking young, especially when she first began teaching. While some of these challenges have followed Jill into higher education teaching, she is using her experiences in positive ways. She shared how she has become more vocal about addressing microaggressions, helping women preservice teachers to identify positive role models, and using her experiences to drive her teaching and research.

Ashley

Ashley (she/her) is a white, former high school band director in her 30s. Ashley taught high school band for seven years. After completing her undergraduate work, Ashley taught for one year at the school where she student taught. She then took a job working with the marching band at an all-boys high school. That job eventually led to Ashley being hired as the assistant band director. She remained in that school for seven years, and while she was teaching full-time, Ashley earned her master's degree. Within a month and a half of her master's degree completion, she abruptly left her high school job to pursue her doctorate. After finishing her Ph.D., Ashley worked as a Director of Bands at a university and has since become the Director of Athletic

Bands at another university. Along with her athletic band responsibilities, she also teaches applied percussion as well as music education courses such as marching band techniques, instrument methods courses, and secondary methods.

Instances of sexism greatly influenced Ashley's high school teaching experience. At the all-boys school, despite her modest dress and professionalism, Ashley felt sexualized by the students. She encountered gendered expectations in terms of how she was expected to dress. Ashley also experienced feeling unappreciated and undermined by the head director at her school—an influence that heavily impacted her decision to leave K-12 teaching and pursue her Ph.D. Ashley admitted to feeling like she needed to constantly prove her competence, and she did that by being involved in myriad activities and experiences including but not limited to participation in drum corps and indoor percussion[7]. Despite these experiences, Ashley prioritized the needs of her students and found fulfillment in seeing her students' success.

Nancy

Nancy (she/her) is a white, former high school band director in her 40s who taught high school band for 20 years. Nancy earned a master's degree while she was a full-time teacher. As a high school teacher, she hosted many preservice teachers from her alma mater for practicum experiences or as student teachers. Eventually, folks from the university asked her to teach an introduction to music education class—an experience that led Nancy to fall in love with teaching in higher education. She began her Ph.D. while still teaching but soon retired from her K-12 job and finished her dissertation the following year. Nancy now works as Director of Music Education and Department Chair of the Music Department at a university.

[7] Indoor percussion is a marching arts activity that takes place during the winter and early spring months. High school and professional percussion groups perform regular shows in a competition setting similar to marching band adjudicated events.

Nancy has many experiences that have impacted her journey in music education. Her story began with childhood experiences, including poverty, homelessness, and abuse. With the care and support of her music teachers, Nancy found her way out of the trauma that she experienced as a child. Nancy now uses those experiences to help and advocate for students from similar situations. She sees her purpose as being a teacher who encourages students, giving them a chance through support and care.

Nancy's high school teaching experiences also had an impact on her journey. Nancy dealt with gendered expectations and troublesome perceptions associated with her short stature, her qualifications to be a band director as a woman, and her joyful, bubbly personality. She expressed feeling that women are often in a no-win situation in terms of personas and expectations. Nancy has clearly spent some time processing her experiences and getting to know her true self. Encouragingly, Nancy expressed how, being in higher education, she does not "have to be one of the guys anymore" (Interview 3, 51:40).

Susan

Susan (she/her) is a white, former high school band director in her 30s. Susan taught high school band for six years. Her first job was at the school where she student taught. After a couple of years in that district, Susan decided that she needed a location change and decided to move back to her home area. There, she took a job as an assistant band director, hoping to focus on her teaching abilities and becoming a more effective teacher (Interview 1, 29:47). However, in her second semester at that school, Susan became the head director as a result of a traumatic incident involving the head director. Susan remained in her position as head director for the next three years.

During her time as a high school band director, Susan experienced challenges associated with being a woman in a high school band position. She struggled with not feeling like she had an in with the old boys' club environment that existed as a part of the local bandmasters' chapter. She felt insecure based on the need to adopt a masculine persona as a way to navigate her relationships with other directors. Susan also lacked mentorship, which shaped her experiences as a high school band director. She talked about feeling like an "untouchable person" in terms of professional mentorship.

Susan shared that it was always her intention to teach for a number of years and then return to school (Interview 1, 34:40). After a difficult four years in her second district, Susan made the decision to pursue her master's degree. In higher education, she described feeling like she found her fit and a place to use her skills to contribute to the profession (Interview 1, 1:03:44). After completing her master's degree, Susan continued on to pursue her Ph.D. At the time of interviews, Susan was a second-year music education Ph.D. student.

Kristen

Kristen (she/her) is a white, former high school band director in her 30s who taught high school band for five years. She taught for four year in a school for fifth and sixth grade students before pursuing a master's degree. Upon graduation, Kristen began her second job where she taught high school band along with some elementary and middle school.

During her time as a band director, Kristen experienced challenges related to time commitment and values conflicts. She expressed feeling like she lacked work-life balance while in her high school job. When the pandemic caused shut-downs, Kristen realized just how sick and unwell her job had been making her. She talked about the impact of a reduced workload—more sleep, increased exercise, and having time to cook healthy meals. Within the social aspects

of the job, Kristen discussed how she never really felt like she fit in with band director culture because of her disagreement with the emphasis placed on band assessment, trophies, scores, and placements in many high school band programs. She admitted to seeing herself as "a weird band director" despite the fact that she felt good about what she was doing (Interview 2, 33:02).

When asked why she left her high school band directing job, Kristen explained how after completing her master's degree, she had questioned whether higher education would be a better fit. She had a desire to research and work with pre-service music education students. To this point, Kristen seems to be finding higher education as a better fit than high school band directing. Her values remain the same as when she was a band director. She still values student growth, but her emphasis is now on preparing student teachers based on the unique traits of both the teaching candidates and the different jobs that those candidates will eventually fill.

Amanda

Amanda (she/her) is a white, former high school band director in her 30s. She taught high school band for nine years. After student teaching in what she considered an ideal band program, she took her first job in an urban school district with ineffective administrators. Frustrated by the severe lack of support, Amanda left the job mid-year during her second year of teaching to take a secretarial job. The following summer, she took a job in a small country school where she remained as the high school band director for nine years.

Despite the fact that she loved her new job, Amanda felt challenges related to her identity as a woman. She discussed obstacles related to policing her gender identity. She talked about issues related to attire and the perceptions of others. Amanda felt that she needed to dress a certain way in order to be perceived as professional. She also aimed to be accepted by her colleagues, therefore, policing her emotions and feeling like she needed to prove herself.

As a high school band director, Amanda loved watching her students grow and develop into young adults. She always aimed to show her students that she cared about them as people, and not just students. Amanda found fulfillment in the process of setting goals and helping her students to accomplish things they thought were impossible. She now works as a professor of music education at a university. In her role as a teacher educator, Amanda's focus is still student-centered—dedicated to the needs of her students.

Ethical Considerations

In this section, I discuss ethical considerations for my research. I begin by acknowledging the risks involved for participants. Then, I discuss the need to balance the researcher-participant power differential. Concluding this section, I discuss how I used practices such as member checking and ensuring confidentiality to represent my participants in safe and trustworthy ways.

Because occupations are such an important part of many people's lives, talking about occupational change can be difficult and emotionally charged for some individuals. In these interviews, I asked participants about their journey in music education. From seeking to understand and share my own experiences, I realized that women who have moved in the profession were potentially still dealing with sensitive issues and emotions as they processed and made sense of their experiences. In the interviews, confidentiality of the participants and the schools where they taught was a top priority.

It was important to be considerate of the participants and acknowledge the risks involved in research. I allowed participants to express difficult emotions, but did not force them to disclose personal, sensitive information in a way that would cause them to dwell on uncomfortable content (Seidman, 2019). Participants had the right to pass on any particular

question (for any or no reason), to withdraw data after reviewing interview transcripts, and to withdraw from the study at any point.

Researcher & Participant Power Relationship

Balancing the power differential between researcher and participant was also a critical consideration. I needed to ensure that I did not assume my interpretation contained more truth or insight than the participants' voices. I made it my priority to focus on the participants' experiences. As a researcher with lived experiences similar to my participants, I understood that my interpretation could lend further insight. However, I also recognized that my experiences and interpretations could differ from my participants.

To help me keep an open mind as I sought to understand participant experiences, I kept a journal. I aimed to answer reflexive questions about myself and how I came to specific knowledge and beliefs. I journaled about topics from my band directing experiences such as gender stereotypes, experiences steeped in patriarchy, and participant experiences that on first glance appeared to be similar to my own. I also tackled some topics about my assumptions, my definitions of certain elements of experience (like toxicity), and my own processes for meaning-making.

Confidentiality

To protect the identity of participants and their stories, I used pseudonyms in place of any identifiers (e.g., places, school names, event names) within the data, as well as the written findings and discussion. It was important to protect participants from situations that might cause them harm based on the disclosure of their identity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It was also important to consider what kinds of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018) could be easily identifiable by specific insiders. This consideration was essential as I recognized the close-knit web of music

educators in the U.S. and how small and interconnected the social network of band directors can be. Therefore, it was also necessary to change and obscure details of some stories to ensure that participants' identities remained confidential.

Data Collection

In what follows, I discuss my data collection process. Regarding interviews, I share details of my interview protocol, timeline, and recording procedures. I then explain how I organized the topics discussed in each of the three semi-structured interviews. Concluding this section, I explain my processes for interview transcription via the Otter.ai service, transcript editing, and my process for member checking at the completion of edits.

Interviews

I conducted three semi-structured interviews for each participant. Each interview length was between 60-120 minutes. The basic questions for each interview were very similar for each participant, but interview lengths varied greatly based on how much participants shared about the topics. (For interview protocol, see Appendix B.) This flexibility allowed participants to share as much as possible without feeling pressure to get done at a specific time, but also allowed both myself and the participants the freedom to be finished with the session when the interview topics were exhausted. I conducted 27 interviews over the course of a six-month period between February and August of 2023. To allow me to include participants from across the United States, I opted to conduct virtual interviews using Zoom. Additionally, I used Zoom's in-app recording capabilities to record each interview and created a backup recording using the Voice Memos app on my password-protected iPhone 14.

Each interview served a specific purpose as a portion of the entire interview process. During the first interviews, I focused on the participants' lives and encouraged them to share as

much as possible about their music life history (Seidman, 2019) as it related to being a woman band director and their trajectory in music education. Their music life history often included information about how the participants became high school band directors—context from their high school and college music experiences, student teaching, family contexts, career influences, and challenges experienced in their musical and life journeys. In addition to questions about each of these topics, I asked each participant to complete an activity during which they created a visual representation of their music life history using drawings, colors, and words. (For an example of this activity, please see Figure 1.) At the end of the first interviews, each participant shared their creation—explaining their music life history. In the second interview, I asked participants to focus on the details of their experiences related to their support systems, role models and mentors, as well as their experiences in high school band directing (e.g., the programs they inherited, predecessors, why they left band teaching, what it would have taken for them to have opted to remain a high school director, administrators, parents, community). In the final interview, we focused on participant experiences revolving around psychological topics (e.g., IP, vulnerability, perfectionism, self-efficacy/self-esteem), perceptions, personality, and values. Interviews two and three also contained questions specific to each participant as follow-up inquiries based on topics discussed in the previous interview.

Transcription

At the completion of each interview, I transferred the recorded audio interview files onto my laptop computer for transcription. I used Otter.ai, which provided a computer-generated transcript. The computer-generated transcription service helped lessen the time required to transcribe the interviews (Seidman, 2019). After receiving the computer-generated transcription, I edited the transcripts by hand—returning to the audio recordings to edit and verify word

accuracy, punctuation, and any other notable aspects of the interviews that would potentially help me to understand participants' sense-making (e.g., laughs, long pauses, vocalizations) (Smith et al., 2022). Returning to the interview recordings and actively editing the transcripts was helpful in increasing my familiarity with the data (Seidman, 2019) in addition to verifying the accuracy of the transcription. I edited each transcript twice before sending the transcript to the participant for member checking.

Member Checking

I was cautious in my interpretation, realizing the potential for inaccurate insights. The potential to "get it wrong" reinforced my need to incorporate thorough member checking procedures. Member checking was the process of providing the interview transcripts, data analysis, and summary of findings/discussion to the participants to ensure that I represented them in the intended manner. Member checking was also a process for verifying the accuracy of my interpretations of the participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and ensuring that, in retrospect, participants were comfortable with the information that I shared about them.

After editing each transcript, I emailed individual transcripts to the corresponding participants for member checking. Utilizing password protection in the documents, I provided an extra layer of confidentiality for the participants. I requested that participants read each interview transcript to ensure accuracy. Participants returned the transcripts with edits or a note indicating their approval of the transcript. I time-bound each member checking process to two weeks so as not to delay the following interviews and analysis. If participants supplied corrections or additions to the transcript, I made those changes so they were reflected in the final transcript document that would be used for analysis.

After completing the analysis and writing the data chapters, I provided participants with another opportunity for member checking. Each participant received the data chapters by email. I requested that each participant read the chapters or sections written about them to ensure I represented them accurately. I requested feedback and edits by a deadline at the end of two weeks. Eight of the nine participants responded. Three participants shared clarifications regarding quotes and interpretations in the findings and discussion chapters. Overall, participant feedback was positive and affirmed that I had represented and interpreted their experiences accurately.

Data Analysis

In this section, I discuss my process for data analysis. I describe my use of eclectic coding (Saldaña, 2016). Delving into specifics, I also describe my process for data management and cross-participant analysis. I conclude this section by discussing some of the limitations of the study.

Coding

Using eclectic coding (Saldaña, 2016), I analyzed each participant's interview transcripts as I reread each one a third time. Eclectic coding is a version of open coding in which the researcher uses multiple other coding methods (Saldaña, 2016). I recorded my initial reactions to the data being interested and open to any data that might come to the fore as relevant or useful (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). My eclectic coding included *in vivo* codes and value codes (Saldaña, 2016). Researchers use *in vivo* codes to categorize data using the participants' words verbatim (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I used *in vivo* codes when I felt that a participant's words thoroughly described the significance of the data or delivered a meaningful impact. Researchers consider value coding as an affective coding method because it allows them to explore human experiences

and motives associated with subjective, individual experiences (Saldaña, 2016). Value coding is an approach to coding in which the researcher selects codes to "reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 131). Eclectic coding was helpful as this procedure provided a means for me to analyze participant experiences from a variety of angles.

Utilizing colored flags allowed me to create categories of codes across each transcript, where specific colors represented specific codes. As I marked each code, I also created a short sub-code description that would later help me to identify similarities and differences between participant experiences within the same parent code. Color coding also assisted me in more accurately identifying themes and subthemes within each transcript. As I analyzed each individual participant's transcript, I created a codebook for each participant with major themes highlighted for future cross-participant reference. Further, I utilized horizontalization (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994), or making a list of each participant's quotes that seemed relevant to the experience of being a woman band director. The lists were organized according to themes across each individual's data.

Cross-Participant Analysis

After I completed the analysis for each participant, I conducted a cross-participant analysis to determine if there were patterns between participants and to analyze whether any participant's experiences diverged from common patterns. Analyzing these patterns allowed me to create groups of common themes, or "clusters of meaning" (Creswell & Poth, 2018) in which several participants' experiences engaged with a given topic. I sought to understand the most important parts of each participant's experience and how/why participants' experiences were similar or different (Smith & Nizza, 2022). The purpose of the analysis was to uncover a full

picture of the phenomenon—what the experiences look like and an explanation of how and why the experience of the phenomenon exists as it does (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Finally, I compiled the themes and sub-theme descriptions based on how I might use each to answer my research questions and made notes of what quotes might be most beneficial to aid in my presentation of data and discussion.

Study Limitations

While this study reveals meaningful information about women former high school band directors, the study has some limitations associated with my role as the sole researcher and the lack of diversity among participants. In the paragraphs below, I explain these limitations and their significance.

As the sole researcher, one limitation of this study was the singular interpretation of data. With the interpretive nature of the data analysis, this study was limited to my interpretation and sense-making. I analyzed participants' sense-making through my lens of perception and experiences as a woman former high school band director. This process would have been more diverse with a team of researchers, each with their own band directing experiences impacting their interpretations. However, I brought strengths in my shared experiences with participants, because they allowed me to better understand certain situations, feelings, and circumstances in a way that an outsider might not grasp.

Another limitation of the study is the similar identities of the nine women former band director participants. I did not delimit the participant criteria to include specific identities and characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, or location. I intended for cross-participant analysis to highlight experiences among participants from a variety of identities. The majority of participants, however, shared similar identities. Participants all identified as white or "white

passing" and no participants identified as non-binary individuals, or transgender women. While the data about these nine participants will reveal how some women of predominantly white, heterosexual, and neurotypical identities have experienced high school band directing, this research will not shed light on the experiences of those women of other minoritized identities.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed my methodological choices. I began by reviewing the purpose statement and discussing phenomenology as a method and theoretical framework. I highlighted relevant works of some of the original philosophers on whose output this theoretical framework and methodology are based (e.g., Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer). I then explained how I identified and selected the participants. Reviewing ethical considerations for my research, I talked about my role as the researcher and protecting the participants through confidentiality measures. Delving into data collection, I discussed my use of interviews as the data collection instrument, interview modality, as well as transcription methods. As a part of my data analysis, I explained my use of coding and cross-participant analysis. To conclude the chapter, I reviewed the limitations of my research.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What factors or elements of women band director experiences influenced women's decisions to move from high school band directing to collegiate music education?

In this chapter, I explain the elements of women band director experiences that may have influenced their decisions to move out of high school band directing and into collegiate music education. I begin by discussing participants' experiences with obstacles associated with their identity as women. These include their experiences with the old boys' club, the need to assume a masculine persona in order to navigate their jobs, and stereotyping associated with participants' jobs as high school band directors. I utilize the feminist lens as described in Chapter 1 to analyze these experiences. I then share participants' motivations for moving into higher education based on their need for something new and different. That motivation includes the need for personal challenge and growth, the need to refresh, as well as the desire to meet professional goals. For some, the desire for new and different also included the pursuit of higher education as an escape from toxicity in high school band directing. In the following section, I discuss women's desires to move into higher education based on their love for mentoring student teachers and a desire to help the profession. I conclude the chapter by discussing time commitment as a specific element of women band director experiences that served as a deterrent to remaining in the profession as high school band directors.

Obstacles for Women High School Band Directors

Women high school band directors deal with obstacles related to their identity as women. In this section, I discuss obstacles participants identified as part of their band directing experiences. While participants did not directly identify these obstacles as their particular reasons for moving into higher education, these experiences influenced their music education journeys

and likely influenced their decisions to leave high school teaching. First, I discuss the old boys' club and participants' experiences with exclusion, as well as how the old boys' club influenced relationships with colleagues. I then talk about the need for participants to adopt a masculine persona to navigate the profession. The section on adopting a persona includes participant experiences with taking on stereotypically masculine characteristics, decisions about attire, as well as their policing of actions and speech. I also discuss how some participants navigated the fine line between masculinity and femininity. I conclude this section by discussing stereotyping experiences (e.g., others' assumptions that women are someone besides the high school band director and therefore assumed into roles that are stereotypically feminine) as discriminatory and devaluing for women high school band directors.

The Old Boys' Club

As in the previous literature in which researchers discussed the influence of the old boys' club on the experiences of women band directors (Bovin, 2019; Boykins, 2022; Coen-Mishlan, 2015; Cox, 2020; Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Mullan, 2014; Sears, 2010), participants in the current study also had much to say about this exclusive group. The old boys' club is an exclusionary situation created when "male band directors form a tightly-knit group from which it is difficult for women to find support" (Mullan, 2014, p. 45). Amanda, Susan, Kristen, and Grace shared influential experiences involving the old boys' club during their time as high school band directors. It is important to note that for some participants, the old boys' club experiences persisted into their higher education careers. Jill assumed that as she got older and made her way into higher levels of academia that challenges related to gender would become less of an issue. However, Jill shared how she noticed that the problems she experienced related to her identity as a woman did not stop regardless of her age or position in higher education.

Amanda, Susan, Jill, and Grace shared their high school band directing experiences with the old boys' club at events such as bandmasters' meetings. Collectively, their comments revolved around feelings of discrimination resulting in exclusion because of their identities as women. Amanda said, "I would see young male band directors, my age, walk in and be welcomed at the specific table of macho band directors at a district meeting, whereas I couldn't go sit there" (Interview 2, 44:50). Grace shared examples of being excluded by the old boys' club:

> Just talking over you at a bandmasters' meeting or never asking your opinion. It's like, we're sitting there in the freaking Longhorn Steakhouse, and everyone is asking people's opinions on these things, but they're directing it to certain people. It's not really an anyone-can-talk situation. So, there's a lot of times where you're sitting there, just really quiet, and nobody cares to ask, and you try to speak, and everyone's like, "Who are you?" (Interview 2, 52:49)

Susan shared how she felt excluded in the old boys' club. She explained, "Then going into professional communities like our local—like our bandmasters' chapter and that kind of thing. And again, just not having an in with the club. And so that was definitely a big thing" (Interview 2, 1:28:18). Later in our third interview, Susan continued to talk about fitting in. She shared:

> Going back to the fitting in conversation, you want to fit in because you feel like you need to, and if you don't fit in, then you're not successful and you're not going to be accepted. You're going to miss out on opportunities. But then there is this part of me that is really repelled by that, as well. And so, that was hard for me as a high school band director, where so much of it is just doing what others do, and fitting in, and the networking, and everything. (Interview 3, 1:07:28)

Similarly, when I asked Jill if she had any experiences in which she perceived that expectations were different than those required of a director who was a man she discussed how the issues were more about exclusion than differing expectations. She explained, “Like, not being included in conversations, or we’re going to invite certain high schools and not getting an invitation because they’re all going to invite each other because they’re friends” (Interview 2, 56:19). In circumstances such as the one explained by Jill, where others overlook women, exclusion can create limitations and a lack of opportunities. This type of exclusion further reinforces patriarchal power.

Amanda also discussed how she didn’t feel like an equal with her colleagues in terms of being valued for her band directing work. She explained:

> But when they needed somebody to be a secretary, or host an event, I did all kinds of that stuff. I think I was secretary for a time, and then hosted our music performance assessment events for several years. And I hosted solo and ensemble for several years. And it was always like, “Thanks, Amanda. You’ve done a really great job of this or that, or this or that.” But I just didn’t—I still kind of felt like my value was administrative, not an equal contributing member of the group. Or maybe not as—I was well respected for my organizational skills and administrative skills, but maybe not as a complete band director. (Interview 2, 45:49-46:35)

All four women’s experiences of exclusion from the old boys’ club served as examples of microaggressions that were based in assumptions of inferiority and invisibility as categorized by Sue and Capodilupo (2008). Old boys’ clubs that exclude women and make them feel that their opinions are not valued, deliver the messages that women are not as competent or as important as the individuals who subscribe to the patriarchal traditions held in those groups (Capodilupo et al.,

2010). Those microaggressions that operate as assumptions of inferiority are incidents during which "a woman is assumed to be less competent than men (either physically or intellectually)" (Capodilupo et al., 2010, p. 198). Additionally, these instances of microaggressions corroborated the previous literature about old boys' club experiences. Sears (2010) and Cox (2020) shared similar findings. Both researchers had participants who reported that they did not feel that their voices were valued and respected among a particular group of men in the profession. Like Grace, the men did not ask for their opinion, and like Susan, they struggled to feel like they fit in with the club (Sears, 2010).

The exclusion that participants felt as a result of their experiences with the old boys' clubs may also fit Shafaei et al.'s (2024) description of workplace bullying. They defined workplace bullying saying, "WB [workplace bullying] occurs where a person is repeatedly, and over a period of time, exposed to abuse, harassment, offenses, or *social exclusion* placing the individual in an unequal position, unable to defend themselves from unethical behavior" (Shafaei et al., 2024, p. 41, emphasis added). Participants' exclusion, being devalued and disrespected, was a form of social exclusion that placed women in an unequal position to the men who were leading and reinforcing male dominance in music education spaces. The devaluation and disrespect alone were unethical behaviors among colleagues, but also left the women frustrated and held at bay in terms of what they could do to uplift themselves and others out of those situations. Because some women felt this type of behavior would occur less often in higher education, it may have influenced participants' decisions to move out of high school band directing.

Susan discussed how her difficulties with the old boys' club had to do with "interpersonal relationships with other band directors" (Interview 3, 33:39). She explained the situation as being

toxic because of the need to navigate glad-handing[8] or ingenuine acceptance in terms of networking. The group sometimes included both men and women. Susan went on to explain how some women were able to successfully navigate the situation much better than her—something that she accepted gracefully, but qualified with her expectation of civility from those women.

Women who have been able to successfully navigate the old boys' club may become instruments in the oppression of women. For example, a woman who has submitted to patriarchal tradition may have attached themselves to powerful men in the old boys' club in a way that would gain them inclusion in the club. Those same women, however, may exclude other women in an attempt to have an advantage over them. This finding suggests that unhealthy attitudes toward other women, or "queen bee syndrome," may cloud opportunities for mentorship and networking from women who have successfully navigated the old boys' club (Harvey, 2018; Salles & Choo, 2020). As a further example, exclusion might involve refusing to mentor younger women entering the profession. This impact on mentorship may be detrimental to women who require these networking and mentee opportunities to help them learn to navigate the challenges of the profession (McKeen & Bujaki, 2007).

Self-Policing Gender

Adopting a Masculine Persona

In order to navigate the job of a high school band director many of the participants felt the need to regulate their more feminine actions and visible traits through self-policing. Nancy, Grace, Diane, Susan, Amanda, and Ellen discussed how in some environments they felt they needed to adopt a persona that was different than who they were in their own classrooms or

[8] Glad-handing is to "greet or welcome warmly or with the appearance of warmth" (Oxford Languages, n.d.). Glad-handing may involve fake networking interactions, which may lead members of minoritized groups to feel a false sense of security and inhibit one's ability to see degrading and negative situations accurately.

outside of school. When asked if she felt the need to adopt a masculine persona, Nancy said, "Not in the classroom, but definitely in some professional environments" (Interview 3, 49:33). Ellen talked about assertiveness. She shared:

> I think, just assertiveness is something—I don't consider myself to be naturally assertive. And I would say that, again, gender stereotypes—maybe that's a more masculine stereotype. And with administrators, with other band directors, with certain booster parents over the years, I felt like I had to kind of step into that role a little bit. (Interview 3, 17:32)

By taking up assertiveness as a part of her persona, she stepped into a role that was not in alignment with her natural self, but in orientation with more stereotypically masculine characteristics.

Diane also admitted to assuming a persona on the podium that made her feel more assertive than she did in her personal life. She said:

> In my head, when I stood in front of my 160 high school band members, that I was 6' 5", 250 lbs.…. But I always felt like I was bigger, physically than I really am…In my head, I didn't realize that I was as small as I am…so some of it was a physical sensation of being in charge. (Interview 3, 20:22)

Diane's experience involved more than just policing feminine characteristics to assume a more masculine persona. Her experience of gender was also one of embodiment. In their book, Butler (2004) explained how social norms dictate human experiences. They said:

> Indeed, if we consider that human bodies are not experienced without recourse to some ideality, some frame for experience itself…and if we accept that that ideality and frame

> are socially articulated, we can see how it is that embodiment is not thinkable without a relation to a norm, or a set of norms. (p. 28)

Later in their work, Butler continued:

> The distance between gender and its naturalized instantiations is precisely the distance between a norm and its incorporations. I suggested above that the norm is analytically independent of its incorporations, but I want to emphasize that this is only an intellectual heuristic, one that helps guarantee the perpetuation of the norm itself as a timeless and inalterable ideal. In fact, the norm only persists as a norm to the extent that it is acted out in social practice and reidealized and reinstituted in and through the daily social rituals of bodily life. The norm has no independent ontological status, yet it cannot be easily reduced to its instantiations; it is itself (re)produced through its embodiment, through the acts that strive to approximate it, through the idealizations reproduced in and by those acts. (p. 48)

Butler's explanation of society's influence on how gender is perceived, viewed, valued, and performed may be a useful frame for understanding how masculinity prevails as the dominant standard for personas in traditionally men-dominated settings. It would then, make sense that women who adopt masculine-coded characteristics and traits may experience reward. At the same time, however, it is important to acknowledge that gendered embodiment takes place in the mind and not just in the ways that women display visible traits. For some women, this involves thinking of themselves as having physical traits often associated with masculinity. While these traits do not exist physiologically, this kind of embodiment may be one way that women attempt to make themselves feel more accepted, more powerful, and worthy of acceptance in men-dominated spaces.

Amanda shared her experiences with the need to adopt a masculine persona. She explained:

> And at my school, I had to interact with the coaches a lot just because there were some shared spaces. And they were all male. And all pretty well older than me, too. And so I did feel like I had to talk to them differently than I maybe would have somebody else…I wanted to make sure they perceived me a certain way. Same thing in band director meetings, again, kind of making sure I removed the emotion from things…I would want to make sure that my attire fit in the professional setting—feminine, but not too feminine because you want—it's weird, because you want to be accepted by those peers, but you don't want to lose yourself in that. But if you're too feminine—look or act too feminine, are they going to take you seriously? So it was like finding that line in professional settings. (Interview 3, 15:29)

To achieve acceptance, Amanda policed her emotions as she admitted to feeling that anything she said or did that was related to emotion would be grounds for the men to discredit her. She adjusted her talk and emotions toward more stereotypical masculine standards in an attempt to be accepted professionally. However, Amanda also policed her attire in an attempt to be her feminine self, but not be perceived as too feminine. This is an example of what Butler (1990) considered gender performativity. They stated:

> Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. (Butler, 1990, p. 185)

In other words, women can perform various aspects of gender such that others perceive them as masculine or feminine in an attempt to place themselves advantageously within certain situations.

These examples of women assuming personas in an attempt to navigate their roles as high school directors are steeped in patriarchal gender assumptions. In Diane's case, assertiveness and being "in charge" were qualities that she perceived as necessary for her success on the podium. I assert that these were socialized traits based on Diane's upbringing in a music education landscape dominated by men. At the time of her entry into the profession, career advisors told Diane that high school band was not a place for women—an example of exclusionary discrimination based on gender.

The experiences of Diane, Ellen, and Amanda are further examples of the need to "do gender" (Foley, 2019) by performing masculinity in order to meet the traditional and societal expectations that men are high school band directors (Gould, 2001; Sears, 2014). All three participants were, even if inadvertently, suppressing their feminine traits in order to perform the masculine personas necessary to navigate their jobs (Sears, 2014).

Brown's (2010) discourse on the difference between fitting in and belonging may provide some insight into participants' performance of masculine personas. Brown (2010) says, "Fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be to be accepted. Belonging, on the other hand, doesn't require us to *change* who we are; it requires us to *be* who we are" (p. 25). Therefore, the need to adopt a masculine persona may be rooted in the desire to fit in within the profession—a mechanism that potentially facilitates beneficial acceptance and mentorship opportunities. According to Brown (2010), however, true belonging is not attained through changing oneself but rather being one's true self. When women band directors strive for

belonging, they often face the reality that vulnerability and being their true selves will not provide them acceptance in the masculine-dominated profession.

Attire as an Aspect of Persona

It was also common for women high school band directors to feel the need to adjust their clothing choices in an attempt to be successful in the profession (Boykins, 2022; Mullan, 2014; Sears, 2010; Sears, 2018). Attire often includes style choices such as pants, pant suits, dresses, blouses, flat shoes, as well as heels. The color and prints of women's clothing are also part of the decisions when it comes to gendered attire (e.g., black, gray, navy, pink, floral print). Grace felt the need to wear black pant suits even though they never fit her body. She admitted to wearing pants suits because she felt they fit better with the expected band director attire. This finding suggests that attire choices were largely directed based on the perceptions of others and a possible attempt to imitate culture's mold for what a band director should look like. Amanda also struggled with knowing what to wear in professional settings. She said:

> I always wondered what to wear because all the male band directors would wear khaki pants and a polo shirt. And I don't find either of those flattering on my female body. So I did struggle with like, "I want to be perceived as a band director and respected by my colleagues and kind of go with the status quo in what to wear," but when I did that, I felt uncomfortable in myself because outside of that, I would never normally wear that. (Interview 3, 14:01)

How women choose to dress is based on how their peers and colleagues will perceive them. Danesi (1999/2008) said, "When people put clothes on their bodies, they are not only engaged in making images of themselves to suit their own eyes, but also to conform to cultural models, such as gender models" (p. 159). Therefore, some individuals make attire choices as a

form of imitation, conveying how they want to be perceived. The desire for others to perceive them as confident and assertive may create the need for some women to wear masculine or neutral attire (Sears, 2010). Other women, like Ashley, were expected to wear dresses and skirts because they did not want others to see them as too masculine (Mullan, 2014)—a trait perceived to be just as negative as being too feminine.

The Fine Line Between Too Masculine and Too Feminine

The fine line between too masculine and too feminine was one that participants had to navigate carefully, and not just in regard to their clothing choices. Nancy called it a "lose-lose…double standard" (Interview 3, 1:13:25). She talked about how there were different perceptions and treatment for men and women who exhibited the same behaviors. Ellen also talked about the differences in how men and women were often perceived. She said:

> Frankly, I think they hear things differently coming from a man. If I make a strong point or strong decision, I think it comes as—it's like the trope of, "I'm being a bitch' versus if the same words come out of a man's mouth, they're just saying what they think." (Interview 2, 1:16:56)

The lose-lose situation that Nancy referred to is what Frye (1983) identified as a double bind. The double bind often puts women in a lose-lose situation where whatever decision they make in terms of words or actions creates potentially harmful consequences such as negative perceptions from others, being excluded, or not being able to take up space in certain environments (Frye, 1983). Engaging with double binds in later literature, Hirji (2021) said, "Double binds are situations where one's options are limited and all options involve punishment or censure" (p. 647). Hirji (2021) continued to describe these situations as having a "'damned if you do, damned if you don't' character" (Frye, 1983, p. 3, as cited in Hirji, 2021, p. 649). Double binds can create

scenarios where women have the "choice between cooperating in and resisting some oppressive norm" (Hirji, 2021, p. 650). In the case of the participants in the present study, the double bind choices having to do with gender norms, created a need for them to police and make changes to the ways in which they spoke and acted.

Ellen shared how she felt the need to police and adjust her way of speaking because of the way women are often perceived. She continued:

> With my students, I did find myself over the years, softening my tone of voice in rehearsals, and when I would call home for parents. And that was a conscious choice because I started realizing that I was being perceived in this negative way…I realized if I just softened my tone, that sometimes, I, at least, I felt that it would be more welcome. The nice way to say it is: you catch more bees with honey. But I think that women have to be more careful about that because more of what we say is automatically taken as being negative, when it's not negative. (Interview 2, 1:16:56)

Ashley also shared feeling like she needed to portray herself:

> …a little bit more masculine versus feminine. Like I think I'm a little bit—I'm not as…delicate. I don't want to seem dainty, or anything but my approach is more upfront, I think than most females. And not that I'm asserting my dominance, but it's like I'm making it show them that I'm not weak—that they can't take advantage of me. (Interview 3, 21:53)

Women did not want to present themselves as feminine, a portrayal often synonymous with weakness or incapability, but at the same time, did not want to be too masculine—an upset to society's stereotypical, patriarchy-enforced gender norms (e.g., caring, nurturing, kind, quiet, subservient) (Ellemers, 2018; Sultana, 2010). While none of the participants discussed the need

to adopt a persona as their reason for moving into higher education, the pressure to change oneself to be able to navigate the profession is an issue that may get at the very core of some women's gender identities and may explain why women do not always feel welcome in high school band directing.

Stereotyping Women Band Directors Into Other Roles

Grace shared multiple experiences of expectations through incidents of being stereotyped into various roles—none of which were a high school band director. She talked about how visiting band directors at football games would consistently assume that her husband was the band director despite Grace's attempts to make her identity clear by wearing a shirt that said, 'Director.' In another incident, she discussed taking a male high school student to check in at All-State weekend. The folks running the event handed the paperwork to the student, assuming he was the director. Grace answered his questions about the school's address as he filled out the paperwork, but when he asked her to sign the form, much to Grace's dismay, the folks running the event said, "What? It says director signature…don't have your student sign." Grace explained her astonishment, saying:

> He's carrying a trumpet. I am dressed up and he is in blue jeans. We followed all the traditional things…I'm in a blouse. Like, "You still handed him the paperwork." And I think his height had something to do with that, but still, that's still a presentation of masculinity that they responded to. So I looked at them. I was like, "I'm the teacher. You didn't ask." (Interview 2, 43:07)

Grace continued to share a situation where a man with whom she was judging for All-State assumed her to be a middle school teacher and questioned whether she was indeed the main director at her high school. She shared:

> So, then another time, I was judging at All-State, and the guy I was judging with looked at me and said, "So what middle school are you at?" And I just froze because that was weird—because I was like, "Well, maybe he thinks I'm someone else." Like, why? —I'm just confused. I don't care that you're asking what middle school I'm at, but that's a weird thing to say. So, I just said, "What do you mean?" And he's like, "What middle school do you teach at?" And I was like, "Do you know me?" And he was like, "No." And I was like, "Why are you asking if it's a middle school?" And he's like, "I just assumed." I was like, "Why did you assume?" And I just kept asking questions, and it just kept getting more awkward. And I was like, "I teach at a high school." And he goes, "As the main band director?" And I said, "As the only band director." And I'm just like—this is getting weird. So, I felt like he looked at a young female and assumed, "There's no way you have a high school gig." (Interview 2, 41:27)

Kristen, Diane, and Amanda also shared experiences of being stereotyped based on their identities as women. Kristen shared how others assumed she was the color guard instructor when she dressed up to go to a marching band competition (Interview 2, 39:14). Diane shared a similar experience saying:

> In marching band, it was the worst. I used to get so upset, because here I am standing with my drum majors at the front, at the start line. And the starter would walk right by me and I would just turn around and look at my assistant band director or my drum instructor—whoever was standing behind me...And the guy would walk up to them and say, "Is your band ready?" And they would go, "I don't know. Why don't you ask the band director? She's right there." (Interview 2, 17:02)

She continued to talk about how she would go to critique after a marching band show, and most of the time, the judges would not talk to her—only talking to the others who were men. Amanda discussed an experience of being stereotyped into a middle school teaching role. She said, "The director that was at my feeder middle school was a male. And if we went anywhere together, people assumed he was the high school director, and I was the middle school director" (Interview 3, 38:38). These findings based on gendered expectations that women will not be high school band directors show how some individuals still uphold the patriarchal expectation that secondary band directing is a profession for men. The assumptions that women will only fill stereotypical roles that are subordinate to the head high school band director (e.g., middle school director, color guard instructor, assistant director, student) show how women continue to encounter patriarchal traditions in the profession—being devalued simply because they are women. These assumptions send the message that women are less capable and less valuable. These results corroborate previous literature about patriarchy and its impact on women in the workplace. In their chapter on women's experiences with leadership barriers, Diehl and Dzubinski (2017) stated, "Traditionally, leadership has been associated with masculinity. Such perceptions disadvantage women's promotion into leadership roles and their agency when they do become leaders" (p. 275). This association between masculinity and leadership may create a disadvantage for women in hiring practices for head band director positions as well as perceptions of how well women may be able to handle leadership tasks associated with high school band directing. These findings leave questions regarding how stereotyping potentially impacts preservice teachers if they witness this devaluation of women into subordinate roles.

Role stereotyping experiences were not the only source of devaluation and discrimination among the participants. Ellen and Kristen talked about experiences where they felt they were

treated differently than their colleagues who were men. Ellen described an experience at festival. She shared:

> I know the literature that's best for my students…we played the *Holst First Suite*. Well, the older judge is the one who called me— "You're a brave young woman for playing this—brave young lady for choosing this for festival." And then the other judge, the younger judge, wrote his phone number on there and said, "Please call me, and we can talk about how to choose good literature for your band." (Interview 2, 1:06:17)

Both remarks were demeaning to Ellen, an adult woman with professional training in music education, similar to the two men who judged her ensemble. She further explained how she felt perceived based on being a woman in a leadership role and how she felt society was uncomfortable with that reality. Ellen further elaborated, "I have felt that feminine aspects are not always welcome on the podium—like traditional feminine affects" (Interview 2, 1:19:12). In a later follow-up question, Ellen talked about the unwelcome affects. She said, "I would say that I am not very domineering or aggressive and am naturally a bit nurturing, which isn't always a traditional conductor attribute (Personal Correspondence, 7/1/24). Ellen felt that the feminine-coded traits she held were not welcome in her role as a conductor. This conflict brings back the need for some women to adopt masculine personas, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Kristen shared a similar experience. She said:

> I had a weird situation where a retired band director came in [to observe a colleague's ensemble]. He wasn't supposed to observe me, and he didn't ask before sitting in with my ensemble and making comments to the students. The whole thing was weird…, but he came up to me at the end of my class and said, "You're very competent." As if that should be a surprise to me, or be a compliment.

Kristen continued to discuss how when she shared that story, almost everyone interpreted the man's statement as, "You're very competent for a woman" (Interview 2, 39:14). Both Ellen and Kristen's experiences are other examples of gender microaggressions that communicate assumptions of inferiority (Shouldice, 2023). Assumptions of inferiority are a part of women's experiences but are not typically experienced by men. This is not to say that men cannot be assumed to be inferior. However, because men have historically dominated the band directing profession, women are, in this case, the recipients of most gender microaggressions as a minoritized group. These findings suggest that there is gender discrimination surrounding how men in the profession perceive women band directors' work. Shouldice (2023) discussed how women's band directing work is often perceived by others, saying, "Many women have observed the assumption that they are less equipped than men to be band directors, particularly at the high school level" (p. 42). Some men still assume that women band directors are not as competent to do the same work as them (e.g., selecting repertoire for ensembles, running rehearsals) (Lawrence & Lawrence, 2020; Shouldice, 2023).[9]

In this section, I discussed obstacles encountered by women high school band directors. I began by discussing the influence of exclusionary experiences with the prevalence of the old boys' club. Next, I explained some women's need to assume a masculine persona as a means of navigating the profession. I concluded by talking about experiences of stereotyping, including how others often assume that women hold stereotypically feminine roles, as well as stereotypical judgments of women as inferior to men. In the next section, I discuss participants' need for something new and different as a motivation to move from high school teaching into collegiate music education.

[9] For a formal definition of gender microaggressions, see Chapter 2.

The Need for Something New and Different

In this section, I discuss participants' needs for what they identified as "something new and different" as a source of motivation for moving out of high school teaching and into collegiate music education. I begin by talking about participants' desires for fresh opportunities as a professional challenge as well as the potential connection to goal theory (Bandura, 1997). I then explain some participants' needs for personal and professional growth. I conclude the section by discussing how several participants had consistently recognized higher education as part of their plans and how their music education trajectories may reflect resilience.

Seeking New Challenges

Six participants (Amanda, Kristen, Ellen, Jill, Susan, and Diane) talked about their need for something new as the reason they left high school band teaching to enter collegiate music education. Amanda described being ready for something different based on the work she had done at the high school where she taught. She said:

> I really just was kind of looking for a change at that point. Like I said, I'd been at that school nine years. And I felt that, in a way—I felt like I did everything I could there. I felt like perhaps the school was, and those students, were capable of a little bit more, but I had done what I could do. (Amanda, Interview 1, 26:31)

When asked what would have made her feel inclined to stay in that high school job, Amanda did not feel that anything about that job could have caused her to stay because of her need for something different.

Ellen discussed her desire for a new challenge. That desire stemmed from a wish to carry on the legacy of a mentor who was formative in Ellen's undergraduate music education experiences. She said, "I was ready for a new challenge…I would like to work with future music

educators now, and future band directors" (Interview 2, 44:20-45:24). She continued to express that she wanted to be a mentor to her students in the way that she had been mentored. Ellen also talked about how she had a bucket list of pieces that she wanted to do with her high school students. She described:

> I realized my bucket was becoming empty. I was like, "Okay. Well, I did all the Holst Suites with my high school kids." I built up a band that could do like—"Okay. Well, here's all this music. We can do it all. So now what? So, what's the next step?" So, the timing being right, and the opportunities then presenting themselves and being ready for a new challenge, I think were the most motivating things. (Interview 3, 36:39)

Ellen's motivations for a new challenge were positive. While she felt like she was ready to move from her high school job to a new teaching situation, it is also important to acknowledge Ellen's hard work in building her program up to the level where she could fulfill the goals that she had in place for herself and the student musicians.

Similarly to Ellen, Kristen also took inventory of the things she had done with her students. She acknowledged "student independence and the student engagement, participation, [and] joy" as evidence of having done what she came to do. She also expressed how such evidence mirrored her goals and values (Interview 2, 52:45). Bandura (1997) discussed goals and motivation. In his goal theory, he talked about motivation based on satisfaction, and how it can be related to the way one compares their performance to what they view as their personal standard. One may find satisfaction in meeting their personal goals and may increase the goal and therefore their motivations toward finding satisfaction (Bandura, 1997). In this way, those participants who felt they had reached their goals in the high school classroom may have been increasing their goals and motivations to find satisfaction through the challenges associated with

higher education. Amanda, Ellen and Kristen's desires for new opportunities all seemed to be based in their need for new challenges after feeling that they had done all that they could do with their high school band programs—a positive outcome of hard work and persistence. All three women's experiences align with Deskins' (2019) study of music education doctoral students in which she found that women were primarily motivated to begin doctoral study based on the need for professional challenge. Therefore, participants' desires for a new challenge may reflect both Bandura's (1997) goal theory while utilizing the motivations described by Deskins (2019) as the vehicle to undergo those new challenges in pursuit of satisfaction.

Personal and Professional Growth as Resilience

Diane talked about her realization concerning her need for personal growth. She shared, "When I hit year 17, that's when I realized that I also needed to grow. And I didn't think that was going to be in that job, in that place, in that time" (Diane, Int. 2, Part 2, 47:08). She continued to discuss how she felt that staying in her high school band job would stifle her ability to learn. She said, "It was just this feeling that there was so much more for me to learn, and that there was something else I needed to do" (Diane, Int. 2, Part 2, 20:34).

Several participants expressed how higher education had always been part of their long-term goals, indicating their desire for professional growth. Jill discussed feeling the need for something fresh, but her motivation was completely different from the participants discussed in the previous sections. She said:

> I think, as with a lot of high school directors, I don't think I'm unusual in feeling the burnout phase. And thinking like, 'I don't want to do this for the rest of my life.' I had always thought about wanting to end up in higher ed., eventually. (Interview 3, 42:07)

Ellen also talked about collegiate music education as a goal. She said:

> I think it's always been a long-term goal. But I never had a date on that goal…If you asked me at 20 years old, I think I probably would have said, "I think eventually I'll probably teach college." I think I would have said that. (Interview 3, 35:27-36:39)

Susan expressed similar feelings about her intent to move into higher education. She shared:

> It was always my intention the entire time to teach for five or six years and then go back to grad school. I didn't necessarily know what exactly I would go to school for. But I kind of always knew that it was what I wanted to do. So, part of it was just—that's what my goal was, but then also, it was a hard four years there—the first three, especially. (Susan, Int. 1, 34:40-35:07)

Susan also talked about how she knew early in her undergraduate education that she loved and cared about band, but that she did not see herself being a high school band director forever. She said:

> I knew that I wanted to work with college students in some capacity at some point. And then I taught high school, and it wasn't a good fit, at all, but for a lot of reasons…And so then I came to grad school. And I just started doing the higher ed thing, and it fit so well. (Interview 3, 55:06)

For Jill, Ellen, and Susan, moving into higher education was always a professional goal, but it seemed that participants felt pressure to move based on difficulties that they experienced as a part of high school band directing (i.e., high school not being a good fit, difficulties during their years teaching high school band, burnout)—experiences that made women not want to be high school band directors forever.

These findings corroborated the results of Dust (2006) who studied motivational influences of music education graduate students and differentiated results for men and women. In

their study, Dust (2006) identified the "need to refresh" as an influential source of motivation specifically for women to enter graduate school music education (p. 163). Their participants talked about feeling stuck professionally, feeling burned out, and feeling like they were unable to grow as a music teacher—experiences that parallel those of the participants in the present study.

Further, participants' desires to continue their own music education through graduate school, despite the challenges they faced in their high school band directing work, seemed to parallel previous literature about resilience. In their work on resilience among nurses, Jackson et al. (2007) discussed how "resilience is positioned interdependently from adversity—to demonstrate resilience, one must first encounter adversity" (p. 3). For some women former band directors, moving into higher education may be a form of resilience in response to the adversity that many felt based on the discriminatory and degrading experiences they encountered in their high school teaching careers. These findings pose further questions about women's motivations to move in the profession in terms of how long women would stay in the profession if those difficulties had not been present, even though the women identified higher education as an eventual goal.

At first glance, resilience may seem like a positive outcome to adversity. It is essential, however, to understand that resilience is not about "aiming to transform or resist oppression" (Hess, 2019, p. 491). Hess (2019) continued to explain that where resilience is valued, the focus often becomes pressure to "accept oppression and succeed despite it" (p. 491) The source of oppression, in this case patriarchal traditions, can become disguised within the positive mask that women assume when they persist in the face of those challenges. Therefore, while some good can come of the persistence of those who experience oppression, resilience is not necessarily the answer for dealing with the oppression that those individuals face.

In this section, I discussed participants' needs for fresh challenges, opportunities, and growth as influential in their desire to move out of high school band directing and into higher education. I began by discussing women's needs for new challenges based on their goals and having accomplished the goals they had for their high school teaching situations. I then talked about their desire for growth and how many women considered higher education as a long-term goal. With these goals, however, women often experienced challenges as a part of high school teaching that seemed to encourage moves into higher education further to promote their resilience. I concluded the section by discussing how resilience, while a positive amongst individuals, may simply be used to cover up the systemic problems that create the need for resiliency.

Higher Education: Toxicity Continued

In this section, I discuss some participants' moves into higher education as a potential way out of toxic situations encountered in high school band directing. Their journeys into higher education, however, required the participants to continue navigating toxicity in different ways. I begin by explaining Ellen's specific experience. While positive in some ways, her escape into higher education required that she manage expectations associated with unconscious gender bias. I also discuss Ellen's experience in order to explain double standards for women and the patriarchal traditions of masculine dominance in conducting. I conclude the section by talking about Grace's experience of values conflict and feeling psychologically unsafe as a band director.

Ellen talked about how she had always viewed getting a Ph.D. as an option. She described being in a toxic high school environment, where she had been director number 12 in a 13-year stretch. She admitted to figuring out why that amount of director turnover had occurred.

Although she did not share all the details about the turnover, she admitted that the situation helped provide an extra push toward higher education.

While several participants were motivated to pursue higher education as a way out of toxic high school teaching situations, many participants found higher education to be less toxic in some ways, but nevertheless, continued to experience toxicity in different ways. In higher education, Ellen found escape from the specific toxicity that she experienced in her job as a high school director. She described the environment as similar to what she experienced in her undergraduate program—a program in which she had a positive mentor. She described regaining someone to fill that mentorship role, saying, "It's like almost getting something back that I lost a little bit" (Ellen, Int. 1, 49:18). This finding suggests the importance of mentorship for women in high school band directing and further conveys the absence of mentorship as a catalyst for toxic experience among some women, specifically when mentorship is vital in preparing women to navigate challenges in the profession. Despite this positive mid-career change, however, Ellen continued to struggle with toxicity in higher education. During that time, the toxicity was based on the feminine traits that Ellen assumed as a conductor in her Ph.D. program. She shared a specific instance in which she struggled with the masculine stereotype of assertiveness. She described:

> Also, as I continue to learn as a conductor, one piece of music that I continue to struggle with is the "Lord Melbourne" movement from *Lincolnshire Posey,* and I've had male conductor after male conductor after male conductor—like pedagogue—tell me that I need to embody Lord Melbourne to conduct that piece. And I just—I struggle with that… I'm like, "Well, I don't know what that is…I feel like I can get this piece of music across without embodying a man." And there's other pieces of music—like when there's using a

> lot of force and using a lot of aggression. I think I've been struggling with ways to get that out where it is authentic to me and not embody a more male stereotype. (Interview 3, 17:32)

This suggestion was clearly a double standard. Male conducting teachers told Ellen to embody a man and assume stereotypically masculine characteristics. If found in a similar scenario, men would not typically be asked to embody a woman or assume feminine characteristics. The pedagogues' efforts were not achieved by providing relatable scenarios or tapping into emotional connections that might help Ellen to feel assertiveness based on her own experiences as a woman. Instead, they attempted to get her to feel like Lord Melbourne through embodiment, a task that further discouraged and angered Ellen as she did not know how to, nor did she want to, try to become a man. She described, "I felt like, 'So what I have to bring to the table isn't going to work because that's the message that I'm hearing. That's the message that I'm feeling" (Ellen, Int. 3, 19:58). This expectation reinforced patriarchal values and the dominance of men in the conducting profession, valuing stereotypically masculine attributes. This dominance is discriminatory—a toxic degradation of what some women bring to the table as a part of feminine identity. As a part of her April 2024 Women in Leadership blog, Dana Theus talked about double standards for women and how unconscious bias was at the root of nearly every form of double standard encountered by women (Theus, 2024). In the case of the present study, the type of bias would be considered unconscious gender bias. Filut et al. (2017) explained how socialization plays a role in unconscious gender bias and, therefore, double standards:

> Exposure to gender stereotypes occurs from birth and the information contained in these stereotypes is reinforced throughout life. These messages lay the foundation for

> unconscious gender bias that could shape the decisions of those in the workforce who determine who to admit, mentor, hire, promote, or fund. (p. 5)

Because messages are taught and reinforced over one's life, even those who are made aware of this discrimination may still inadvertently employ harmful forms of bias.

Even though Ellen's experience of being told to embody Lord Melbourne was not linked to a workforce or educational admission decision, it reflected unconscious gender bias because it seemed that the men assumed Ellen would be able to place aside the traits that she already embodied (many of which were feminine-coded based on Ellen's description) to assume masculine-coded traits which were in some cases opposite to what Ellen brought to the table. My guess is that the men who were coaching Ellen did so with genuine intent to create a positive learning experience, but their actions reflected unconscious gender bias at the root of their double standard expectation.

Not Feeling Safe as a Teacher

Grace also discussed how she pursued graduate school as an escape from what she experienced as a high school band director. Grace talked about how her decision to move into higher education was one of practicality in terms of her own needs and desires regarding her time commitment, the desire to have a family, and the discomfort that she had experienced in the profession as a result of her identity as a woman. She admitted that band was no longer a safe space for her as a teacher. She said:

> I could almost cry thinking about it. I was like a lot of kids, you know, sometimes bullied and sometimes teased—total nerd. And band was always the safe place and it just wasn't that as a teacher. So, you know, why continue? I respect myself and I'm sure I could fight

through it. I told my husband all the time—we need female band directors. It's just not going to be me…it's not something I can do right now. (Interview 2, 49:53)

In our third interview, Grace admitted to struggling with self-efficacy in terms of comparing herself to other directors who were willing to play "political games" in the profession. She shared:

> I feel like there's kind of an elitist like—I'm speaking in metaphors now, but like a strut, that you're trying to show how competent and strong you are. You speak loud. You grill people on stuff. You're trying to walk in the room and seem like you've really got it together, whether your program's big, whether everyone knows you, whether you got superiors, like whatever it is, you're trying to kind of fluff your feathers, so to say…it just seemed like there was so much talking yourself up, that it just was a game that—it felt political. It felt just icky. And so, I just didn't play that, well. And it didn't sit right with me. (Interview 2, 51:30)

Those puffing up experiences were teacher-centric—not focused on the students and their individual growth. This finding suggests that Grace experienced toxicity because she felt unsafe in her role, which may have been based on a values conflict that Grace was experiencing—a potential cause of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). According to Maslach and Leiter (1997), values are influential because they "provide both direction and meaning" for one's work (p. 130). When groups of people work with values that are in opposition to one another, conflict may arise (Maslach & Letier, 1997). In this case, Grace felt that there was capital in learning to play the political game in the band directing profession. However, her values reflected a student-centric focus and desire to help her students grow. Therefore, the struggle had to do with which set of values was more important—a struggle between her professional values and the values of some

of her band directing colleagues who had ascribed to patriarchal traditions associated with the need to prove strength and competence. In seeking escape from high school band directing, Grace also shared:

> I know that sounds really sad for higher ed., that I went there as like an escape, but I didn't know where to go and I knew that…everything was drained out of me from band. There was nothing left. I was just—I felt like a shell—like it was gone. I had no more energy, no more time. And I still wish I had that time. The love was there, but I was empty. And so, I just had to leave. And so, I think that's kind of a sad reason to go back. (Interview 3, 1:04:08)

Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, one must often feel safe before self-worth, accomplishment, and self-actualization needs can be met (Maslow, 1943). Safety is complicated and it can look different for each individual person based on their identities. According to Maslow's theory, as Grace did not feel safe as a band director, in relation to her work, she may have struggled with self-esteem and self-worth, as higher-level needs. More recent researchers have questioned Maslow's hierarchy because it did not account for variation based on cultural and socioeconomic situations. Tay and Diener (2011) found that individuals often met their needs for subjective well-being in a specific order, but that order did not impact fulfillment. Contrary to Maslow's theory, Tay and Diener (2011) found that many people can "derive 'happiness' from simultaneously working on a number of needs regardless of the fulfillment of other needs" (p. 364). Additionally, the researchers found that basic needs, which would include safety, were necessary for life evaluations, but needs related to respect were key to positive feelings. According to Tay and Diener's (2011) theory, Grace may have been working on safety, self-efficacy, and self-worth as goals, simultaneously. In other words, safety in the workplace was a

need that did not have to be met before Grace could be working toward self-esteem and self-efficacy. Despite this slightly different take on Grace's needs, Grace's experience still corroborated the findings of Tay and Diener (2011) based on her negative feelings linked to her challenges with self-efficacy and self-esteem.

In her previous quote, Grace also expressed feeling completely drained by being a band director. In their study on the topic, Edmondson et al. (2016) defined psychological safety as "the degree to which people view the environment as conducive to interpersonally risky behaviors like speaking up or asking for help" (p. 66). Grace's situation may have been rectifiable had Grace felt safe to ask for help or speak up about what she was experiencing. This finding suggests that Grace's move into higher education may not have been an escape from toxicity in high school band directing if she had felt psychologically safe in her teaching situation. This leads me to wonder how many other women high school band directors feel psychologically unsafe as a result of challenges related to being a woman.

In this section, I began by explaining how Ellen and Grace pursued higher education as an escape from the toxicity they experienced as high school band directors. Despite their efforts to escape toxicity, they further experienced it—just in different ways. I talked about Ellen's experience being told to embody a man and the unconscious gender bias associated with double standards for women. I concluded the section by discussing Grace's feeling of being unsafe as a teacher in relationship to hierarchical needs and psychological safety. In the next section, I will discuss participants' moves into higher education based on their desire to work with preservice teachers in mentorship roles.

Mentors for Preservice Teachers

Another common element of women band director's experiences that led to their move into collegiate music education was their work with student teachers. In this section, I begin by discussing how several participants who served as cooperating teachers during their time as high school band directors learned to love working with student teachers and desired to help the profession by doing so. I then address participants' lack of women mentors who were also high school band directors. I conclude the section by explaining the importance of mentors to those in the field.

The Love of Working With Student Teachers

Nancy shared how she fell in love with working with student teachers. She said:

> But I realized that after I had probably 17 student teachers in my career there, and one year I had three back-to-back…and I was like, "You know what? I really love getting that fire started and letting student teachers know what the amazing reality of being a music educator is and what you can do." (Nancy, Int. 1, 32:28)

Similarly, Jill discussed her motivations for entering higher education based on a desire to work with preservice teachers. She shared:

> There are so many terrible teachers out there, that I really wanted a hand in helping create more positive teachers and being a part of that circle of life, so to speak. So those were the things that really motivated me to the next step (Jill, Int. 3, 42:07).

Nancy and Jill's motivations corroborate Palmer's (2018) findings about motivations to work with student teachers. In their research, Palmer studied the experiences of four cooperating teachers to determine their motives for working with student teachers. The researcher found that one of the sources of motivation for cooperating teachers' willingness to work with student

teachers was “the desire to help the profession” (Palmer, 2018, p. 29). Mentorship among women can be a way of helping the profession. When women serve as effective mentors, in a way that uplifts mentees and helps them navigate the challenges of the profession, that type of mentorship can be beneficial in helping to not only prevent teacher attrition, but also the toxicity that many women band directors experience.

In their 2011 study, Russell and Russell worked with nine cooperating teachers to examine their perceptions about serving as mentors for student teachers. The researchers found that participants felt the desire to share their passion for teaching, experiences, and expertise (Russell and Russell, 2011). Kristen talked about how higher education became more enticing because of her work with student teachers. Similar to the participants in Russell and Russell’s (2011) study, Kristen also expressed how much she “liked that mentoring role and helping people learn how to be teachers” (Kristen, Int. 1, 30:04).

The Importance of Mentors

Grant (2000) interviewed 12 women instrumental conductors at different stages in their careers to learn about their mentor experiences. The researcher shared a potential reason that women high school band directors have struggled to find mentors until recently. Their research suggested that “The first generation of women going through in any profession often don’t mentor other women because they were not mentored, so they don’t know how” (Grant, 2000, p. 84). For participants like Nancy and Diane, who taught high school band for most of their careers, Grant’s finding may accurately describe their situation in terms of having a lack of mentors, as there were not many women teaching band, let alone high school band, when Nancy and Diane began their careers. Even though they lacked mentors who were women high school band directors, they learned how to mentor through the guidance of other individuals throughout

their careers (e.g., advisors, higher education colleagues). One of Grant's (2000) participants also shared how she felt a desire to work with preservice teachers because she saw the necessity for more women role models. In the case of the present study, some participants' lack of women band directing mentors may have influenced their desire to serve as mentors to fulfill this need.

Cross-participant analysis in the current study revealed that the majority (six of the nine) of participants did not identify a woman mentor who was also a high school director during their time teaching high school band. Cox (2020) discussed how the participants in her study expressed the need for female mentors and role models to help women in the profession successfully navigate the job, but that most of them had not considered gender when finding their own mentors and role models. Cox's findings parallel those of the current study. Most of the women in the current study identified at least one mentor while teaching high school band. Those mentors, however, were often women middle school band directors, other teachers or school personnel with whom participants were assigned as a part of their schools' mentorship programs, family members, or men who were influential in participants' music education trajectories. While there is nothing wrong with having mentors besides other women high school band directors, the absence of women in high school band directing mentorship roles may have impacted participants and shaped what they learned through mentorship. McKeen and Bujaki (2007) described the purpose of mentorship for women saying, "Mentors help women to succeed by assisting them in identifying and addressing key success factors and in overcoming barriers to success" (p. 200). The mentors who would be most equipped to provide guidance about the key success factors and barriers that women high school band directors experience would be those individuals who share the identity and the journey of being women high school band directors, themselves. Therefore, while mentorship from other individuals may be helpful in some ways,

those mentoring relationships may not be as beneficial to women trying to navigate challenges specifically associated with being a woman band director at the high school level. While none of the participants directly addressed lack of mentorship as a motivation to work with preservice teachers, I wonder if many of the participants in the present study felt the need to figure things out (i.e., navigating experiences to promote success and tackling barriers) for themselves and conviction to serve as a mentor based on the lack of mentors and role models.

In this section, I discussed how some participants learned to love working with student teachers through their experiences serving as cooperating teachers in their high school band programs. Participants felt driven to work with preservice teachers based on their inclinations to help the profession and share their expertise. I then explained that the majority of participants did not have a woman band director as a mentor, the importance of such mentors, and how the lack of women band director mentors may have influenced women's desires to serve as mentors for future teachers. In the next section, I will discuss time commitments as a deterrent for women high school band directors to remain in high school teaching.

Time Commitments

High school band directing involves significant time commitment (Coen-Mishlan, 2015; Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Wilson, 2014), which impacts many areas of life beyond the job itself. In this section, I discuss time commitment as a challenge many participants encountered. I begin by looking at time commitment as a barrier to relationships, including marriage and those with significant others. I then talk about work-life balance among women high school band directors and how some participants weighed their options for continuing in the profession or going to graduate school based on their time commitments and schedules. Many of the participants found time commitment to be a deterrent to remaining in music education as high school band

directors. Participants discussed long hours, weekend commitments, as well as expectations for working outside of contract hours and how those topics impacted their lives through work-life balance and personal wellness. These findings corroborated previous music education research on the experiences of women band directors (Bovin, 2019; Coen-Mishlan, 2015; Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Mullan, 2015; Sears, 2010; Wilson, 2014). I conclude the section by analyzing participants' moves into higher education as a means of gaining agency and schedule flexibility rather than the expectation of fewer time commitments.

Time Commitment as a Barrier to Work-Life Balance

Nancy talked about the challenge of being the only high school band director in her district. She said:

> Because when you're the only high school director and you're doing everything, that means every ensemble, every class, and a lot of nights and weekends with parades and games…chaperoning, and all of those things, meetings—it takes its toll—it definitely takes its toll. (Nancy, Int. 2, 9:14)

Nancy continued, indicating that part of this toll included the failure of her first marriage as she sought to be the perfect band director. Likewise, Diane shared about the toll that high school band directing took in her life. She explained, "I kept thinking about marching band and all the athletic bands—that was starting to wear on me—the time that you put into that" (Diane, Int. 1, 44:46). She expressed how the time commitments were not only wearing down on her, but also impacting her marriage. These findings align with previous literature. Cox (2020) found time commitments associated with band directing to be a barrier that impacted relationships, including marriage. Cox shared how men in supporting roles often did not want to be a secondary commitment compared to the primary commitment required by women in many high school

band directing jobs. Fischer-Croneis (2016) also discussed the conflict associated with band directing and relationships. She found that women band directors had to sacrifice when it came to personal life, relationships, and even professional growth opportunities such as graduate school.

Kristen also discussed struggles with work-life balance. She talked about extra rehearsals, marching band, and having commitments every weekend. She said, "So I just felt like I was always either at the school, or answering emails, or planning lessons. Like, there was very little time for me to get my life together" (Kristen, Int. 2, 20:05). She provided examples of those commitments: morning marching band rehearsals several days per week; Saturday morning rehearsals and competitions; after-school sectionals and rehearsals; regional and state honor bands; solo and ensemble festivals. Kristen also communicated how she experienced expectations from the school and community to provide certain opportunities for students and how that often involved work outside of her contract hours (Interview 2, 1:01:42).

The Desire for Flexibility and Agency

Kristen and Ashley talked specifically about how their time commitments and schedules played a part in their consideration of staying in their jobs or attending graduate school. Kristen discussed her required time commitments in terms of weighing her choices and whether to go to grad school. She questioned her options for staying in the high school job, asking herself, "'Do I want to keep getting up at 5:30 in the morning every day to do 7 am marching band rehearsal? Do I want to have lots of 16 to 18 hour workdays? Do I want a life outside of work?'" (Kristen, Interview 3, 57:48). Ashley explained:

> I wanted to have a flexible schedule because, yeah, it was a little bit of a fact of, I don't want to have to wake up at dark all the time to go teach kids that necessarily didn't want to be there.

She continued talking about how that experience of teaching high school students differed from what she would experience in collegiate music education:

> If my class is at ten, I only have to roll in to teach the class at ten, and then you can leave. You don't have to be there from 7 am to 7 pm, which is what I would do so much with high school. When you're doing competitive band, you have all of these morning and after school—like weekends and on and on and on. And I didn't want to do that forever. (Ashley, Interview 3, Part 2, 48:01)

Ashley admitted that the high school time commitment was "relentless" (Interview, 19:25), but also recognized that in higher education, she had more flexibility in her schedule in terms of how she structured her worktime and based on the classes and lessons she would teach in a given day, as well as the evening and weekend commitments associated with the athletic bands. Her summation of her work-life balance comparison between high school and higher education teaching was that "it's almost the same, just in a different light" (Interview, 13:01).

At first glance, it may seem that participants believed higher education would require less time commitment than high school band directing. While there is no comparison of these two levels of music education in terms of time commitment in the literature, previous research findings have revealed that time commitment challenges persist for some women in academia (Carter et al., 2013; Paksi, 2022). Carter et al. (2013) talked about how some women doctoral students worked 60-70 hours per week with the "expectation that there will be no life outside of study before submission" (p. 346). However, the appeal of graduate school came from a desire

for agency in terms of time management. Grace and Kristen provided additional insight into their desires for agency in regard to time commitments. Grace talked about observing the schedule of her grandfather, a college professor, and seeing how his days were "hard and long sometimes, but they had holes in them in places" (Interview 3, 1:02:08). She started thinking about having more agency in terms of her own schedule. In her third interview, Grace also talked about how this flexibility would potentially be helpful in terms of her desire to start a family.

Kristen also discussed this desire for agency over her time and schedule. She expressed, "going into higher ed. won't necessarily decrease my workload, but I'll have a little more control over how I prioritize my time" (Interview 1, 31:40). This need for agency seemed to be based on her experiences of realizing that her all-consuming high school job was making her unwell. When her school commitments slowed down because of the pandemic, Kristen realized that agency would potentially give her the power to prioritize personal wellness—something she had not experienced in a long time (Interview 1, 30:04). Contrary to many women's experiences of stress and intensity associated with doctoral work (Mountz, 2016), Kristen seemed to find better balance in graduate school.

It is essential to acknowledge that the agency of doctoral work looks different in some ways than the agency associated with being a music education professor. As a student, boundaries confine agency based on academic tasks and research productivity, which are primarily built into the students' assignments. For faculty, however, there is also agency that allows for some flexibility in one's work, but at a certain point, expectations may still lead to detrimental consequences when it comes to annual reviews and the tenure process. In their study of work-life balance among higher education faculty, Diego-Medrano and Salazar (2021) found

that faculty struggled to maintain work-life balance despite the flexibility of higher education roles. The authors explained:

> Although many choose a career in higher education and were 'aware of both the demands and the flexibility' of higher education, many were not prepared for the rigor of the work culture in academia. Many faculty members were overwhelmed with their teaching responsibilities, time for research and writing, and the service demands required for all faculty in higher education who were on the tenure track. (Diego-Medrano & Salazar, 2021, pp. 31-32)

Additionally, participants in Diego-Medrano and Salazar's (2021) study found research and writing to be sources of stress as they stretched themselves thin to accommodate teaching and service requirements. Some participants prioritized their service work, leading to lessened priority for teaching and research—a potential detriment to those in "publish or perish" (Diego-Medrano & Salazar, 2021, p. 30) environments. These findings question how women doctoral students manage time commitments in higher education versus public school teaching. Additionally, these findings pose further questions about how agency for time commitments in Ph.D. programs and higher education careers may differ based on one's progress in the program, faculty position, and other simultaneous life experiences (e.g., relationships, marriage, pregnancy, parenting, caregiving, working, applying for jobs).

In this section, I discussed time commitment as a deterrent for women high school band directors to remain in high school jobs. The deterrence was based on how excessive time commitment negatively influenced work-life balance, including relationships. Participants shared how they weighed their challenges with time commitment as a part of their decisions to remain in high school band directing or move into collegiate music education. I concluded the section by

sharing how participants looked to higher education for flexibility and agency of their work schedules as opposed to less time commitment.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I sought to answer my first research question to determine which elements of women band director experiences influenced participants' decisions to move from high school band directing into collegiate music education. I began by talking about common obstacles that were influential to participants' experiences as high school band directors. These included gendered considerations such as experiences with old boys' clubs, the need to adopt a masculine persona, and the experience of being stereotyped into roles that were perceived to be more traditionally feminine. Next, I discussed the need for something new and different as a motivation for participants to move into higher education. Fresh opportunities included participants' pursuit of higher education goals, as well as needs for personal challenge and growth. In the following section, I explained how some participants sought escape from high school band directing toxicity through resilient moves into higher education. For two participants in particular, however, toxicity continued in higher education—toxicity with different causes that still created conflicts surrounding personal values and difficulties with patriarchal tradition. Mentorship through service as cooperating teachers for student teaching experiences was another motivating influence for participants to move into higher education. Participants desired to help the profession and found joy in working with preservice teachers. In this section, I also discussed how the majority of participants did not have women mentors who were also high school band directors, highlighting the importance of mentors sharing gender and occupational identities. I concluded the chapter by explaining how the excessive time commitment served as a deterrent for participants to remain in high school band directing by creating challenges related to

relationships and work-life balance. Some participants looked to higher education for scheduling flexibility and agency rather than reduced workload.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What were the women band directors' experiences of psychological constructs such as, but not limited to impostor phenomenon, vulnerability, perfectionism, and self-efficacy/self-esteem?

The longer I worked with participants and spent time analyzing their experiences, the more I found that psychological topics were an important part of women band directors' experiences. Each participant discussed these topics differently—expressing experiences in different settings, in varying amounts, in how they chose to deal with them. Psychological experiences influenced how participants felt about themselves and their teaching, and their relationships with colleagues. Participants shared their experiences with impostor phenomenon, perfectionism, vulnerability, as well as self-efficacy/self-esteem. In this chapter, I will share examples and testimonials from the participants about their experiences with these psychological constructs.

Impostor Phenomenon

In this section, I discuss participants' experiences with impostor phenomenon (IP). I begin by discussing how Nancy and Susan believed that everyone experiences IP. I then look at how IP was influential for women former band directors as they embarked on new experiences. Next, I discuss mixed perceptions of IP among the participants. Even though they recognized IP in their experiences, it seemed that IP still had a stronghold over some of their actions and thinking. Then, I discuss how IP and self-efficacy/self-esteem played a role in Amanda's insecurities about her abilities as a high school band director. I conclude the section by talking about participants' experiences with IP in higher education.

Everyone Experiences Imposter Phenomenon

Some of the participants talked about how they believed that everyone deals with IP. Nancy said, "I think we all suffer from impostor syndrome a lot. I still do. I think we all do" (Interview 3, 1:36:03). Susan also felt that everyone experienced IP. She shared, "…impostor phenomenon is always going to be there. And I'm suspicious of people who don't experience it" (Interview 3, 1:12:54).

Hawley (2019) alluded to some of the reasons that one might assume everyone experiences IP. Even though it is normal for everyone to occasionally experience impostor feelings, those feelings do not mean that a person struggles with IP. For someone to specifically have IP, they must experience continuing, recurrent impostor feelings (Hawley, 2019). The author also discussed how someone may experience IP in one area of life, but be completely sure of oneself in another (Hawley, 2019). Therefore, unless someone knows an individual intimately, it would be difficult to ascertain whether that person experienced the recurrent impostor feelings that create impostor phenomenon.

Impostor Phenomenon as a Part of New Experiences

Only a few of the participants discussed IP specifically from their high school band directing experiences, but several discussed how their impostor feelings related to new aspects of their music education trajectories. Nancy talked about the insecurities she felt as a new teacher, and as a first time high school band director. She shared:

> I did when I got my first teaching job. "Oh, my God. Oh my God. I'm a teacher. I'm an adult? They gave me a degree? Are they sure?" And then you get a little better. And then, when I started teaching high school, "Oh my gosh. I shouldn't be teaching high school.

I'm shorter than all of the students. How are they going to respect me?" (Interview 3, 1:36:03)

Ellen discussed her IP experiences with research and writing as she began her Ph.D. work as a music education graduate student. She described:

> Whenever I submit something to her [Ellen's advisor], I'm thinking, "This is when they're going to find out that I'm an idiot." And they're like, "You can go back to the public schools." Every single time I submit, I'm like, "Okay. They're gonna find me out." (Interview 3, 57:29)

These findings align with literature regarding how life transitions can influence one's experiences of impostor phenomenon. Clance, the psychologist who first theorized IP, and her colleagues discussed life transitions' impacts on IP experiences in their article on the topic. Clance et al. (1995) discussed how IP was expected among women who had gained social mobility through education or jobs based outside of the traditional social expectations associated with marriage and family roles. They said, "Such a woman…in breaking new ground is unsure of herself and unsure of what the future holds" (p. 87). More recently, Dr. Lutovsky of the SALT Center[10] at the University of Arizona identified a similar expectation for transitions and IP saying, "Life transitions may be another trigger of imposter syndrome, as individuals may feel undeserving of their new opportunity and compare themselves to others with more experience. Impostor syndrome may be heightened when starting college or starting a career post-graduation" (Lutovsky, n.d., para. 6).

Imposter feelings as a part of new experiences, especially the experience of entering music education for the first time, should not be surprising based on the presence of gendered

[10] "The SALT (Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques) Center is an academic support program that provides services to University of Arizona students with learning and attention challenges" (University of Arizona, n.d.).

traditions in the profession. Nancy admitted that the state music education organizations can be toxic, especially for young teachers. She said, "In some cases, though, the state MEA [music education association] really is still an old boys' network. And it makes some of our young teachers feel like they don't belong, or they just don't understand enough and they're afraid to ask questions. And that's just sad" (Interview 2, 5:38). Grace shared how the profession was rooted in gendered tradition. She noted:

> Band is sometimes one of those good old boys' clubs—do things the way they've been. We honor tradition…I think that's from military kind of stuff. But that is not conducive when you're a person who hasn't been welcome in those same times—that you're trying to remember the good old days. (Interview 3, 1:08:34)

Grace's quote brings to light how women have traditionally been a minority within the band directing occupation. Therefore, those individuals who still subscribe to the idea that band directing is a men-dominated profession uphold biases and discrimination that create additional challenges for women, especially young women who are new to the profession. With gendered challenges on top of the inherent struggles of learning to become a new teacher, it is no wonder that women band directors experience IP as a part of their job transitions.

Mixed Perceptions of Impostor Phenomenon

For some participants, at first glance, their experiences with impostor phenomenon seemed to lessen over time. Eventually, some participants seemed to learn to attribute their successes and positive experiences to their hard work. Upon further analysis, however, some of the same participants talked about not underestimating the roles of luck, being in the right place at the right time, and networking as responsible for their success.

Diane shared mixed perceptions of IP. She said:

> Yeah, I think there have been times when I felt like it was—I think there is a certain amount of luck. I don't know if it's luck, or just being in the right place at the right time—which I guess is the same thing…Though, there have been times—never so much when my students were performing because I always felt like I worked hard for that. That wasn't luck; they earned that. They earned whatever. So maybe not musically as much as maybe just being in the right place at the right time with other things. (Interview 2, Pt.2, 1:00:20-1:03:19)

Kristen also shared about how she saw luck, abilities, and networking as an influential combination. She shared:

> I don't underestimate the role that luck has played in my entire career. So, the luck of being in a student teaching placement and having someone leave. I kind of train wrecked during my undergrad and that meant that I student taught in the fall rather than in the spring. So, my career would have turned out completely differently without all of that lining up. You know, the luck of getting a job in X school district with someone I had never met before just based off of some recommendations of friends living in that area. I think it's both. Certain situations just didn't work if you wouldn't have the skills that are needed. And I think networking also plays a big role in our careers, for better or for worse… (Interview 2, 1:22:36)

Amanda discussed her experience with IP in relation to her time as a high school band director. She shared:

> I had impostor syndrome something terrible. It got slightly better as I progressed through those years of public school teaching, but I definitely had impostor syndrome thinking, "I don't know what I'm doing." And every little failure or setback would make me think,

> "Oh gosh. I just need to go be in an office desk job somewhere. I'm messing this up,"…even though, looking back now, obviously in the grand scheme of things, that would be like one little setback. But I would always take it to mean that I was a failure. But over time, as we would set a goal and meet it, and then set a new goal and meet it, and we kept getting better and better, I started to think, "Well, maybe. Maybe I'm okay at this. We're getting better." But then, there was just always something in the back of my mind. I'm like, "No, it's just luck. You're just in the right place at the right time and it's just luck." (Interview 3, 58:58)

In their discussions, Diane, Kirsten, and Amanda seemed conflicted about their IP experiences. Diane and Amanda could see their success based on their hard work and abilities. It seemed, however, that IP feelings based on luck and being in the right place at the right time prevailed as ever-present. Rakestraw (2017) talked about various impostor phenomenon manifestations. The author shared that "Lucky Duck Imposter victims believe that all their successes and accomplishments are due not to skill but to luck or to being at the right place at the right time" (Rakestraw, 2017, p. 471). Similarly, Young (2011/2023) talked about how many individuals with IP feel the need to "explain away" success by crediting their accomplishments to being lucky or having fortuitous timing and location (p. 16). Diane, Kristen, and Amanda's experiences seem to parallel these descriptions and may confirm the continual presence of IP despite their ability to see some of their successes as a result of their hard work.

There are numerous books on overcoming IP in which authors provide self-help plans (Danilo, 2022; Hibberd, 2019; Mann, 2019; Mount & Tardanico, 2014; Orbé-Austin, 2020; Young, 2011/2023). Young (2011/2023) talked about how learning about IP might create

negative feelings, but the author shared the importance of knowing about these experiences. She said:

> However, knowing what's going on will help you to contextualize your impostor feelings more and personalize them less. As you step away from your experience you'll see that there's a lot more to your impostor story than meets the eye. From there, you can explore how external realities might have affected what's going on inside you. (Young, 2011/2023, p. 49)

Despite the author's intended encouragement, I would argue that knowing about IP and being able to contextualize it may not be simple steppingstones to an easy fix for everyone—especially individuals of minoritized groups who may experience additional situations that complicate and add to impostor feelings. I will discuss this topic further in Chapter 7. Therefore, individuals that have knowledge of, and can identify impostor feelings, may not be immune to the influence of IP on their actions and thinking.

IP, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Esteem

Amanda's quote, above, also revealed how she connected impostor phenomenon to insecurities about her abilities as a high school director. This finding corroborates the results of previous research which indicated that IP is related to women's experiences of self-efficacy and self-esteem. Previous researchers have found a significant negative correlation between IP and self-efficacy (McDowell et al., 2015; Pákozdy et al., 2023). This means that those individuals with high levels of IP also often experience low levels of self-efficacy, potentially creating ability insecurities in those same individuals. Researchers have also determined that those with IP tend to have low levels of self-esteem. Schubert and Bowker (2019) found that "several defining characteristics of impostors, such as chronic self-doubt, fear of failure, and performance anxiety,

are classic symptoms of low self-esteem" (p. 752). This finding may explain how individuals with IP and low self-efficacy might also experience feelings of low self-esteem—not feeling good about themselves and their efforts.

Impostor Phenomenon in Higher Education

Many of the participants discussed IP from the perspective of higher education. The prevalence of this topic may simply be a result of participants' present work in higher education. Because they were immersed in that part of their musical life journey at the time of interviews, their experiences with IP in collegiate music education were potentially more relevant, and accessible to their recollections. The prevalence of IP among the participants may also suggest that some women former band directors continue to experience IP throughout their career trajectories.

Diane shared a reason that IP in higher education may have been a prevalent topic among participants. She said, "We learn about IP in higher education and can learn to recognize it and acknowledge it" (Interview 2, 34:45). Her explanation may suggest that with higher education comes more familiarity with IP, making it easier to discuss and identify within participant experiences.

Susan discussed her feelings of IP in higher education as it related to having left high school teaching and how she might be perceived by her colleagues who were still in K-12 teaching. She explained:

> But in some ways, too, I honestly—it's with my band friends…who are still in kind of the teaching vein that I was in, those are actually some of the people that I feel my strongest impostor phenomenon with—if I'm being honest. It's this, feeling like they see, 'Oh, well, she couldn't hang, or like, I was not an effective teacher because I'm not still there.

> And as you see them, they're growing and becoming important and involved people. And I'm doing that too, just in a different capacity…Most of them don't even know really what I'm doing with a Ph.D. in music ed. (Interview 2, 14:29)

Some of the participants experienced impostor phenomenon as a very personal part of their work. Ellen shared her experience of feeling like she embodied IP saying, "And then, my special addition to the impostor thing is when people are like, 'Oh, everybody has impostor syndrome,' and I'm like, 'Yeah, but I'm actually an impostor. You have impostor syndrome, but I'm actually an imposter'" (Ellen, Interview 3, 58:27). From the interview, it seemed that Ellen had assumed, or was in the process of assuming, the role of impostor as part of her identity. Hawley (2019) talked about how for some women and individuals from minoritized groups, IP feelings can be nonfactual, but still be justified. When many individuals hear about IP, it is common for them to feel that despite everyone else's claims of having IP, that they are the real impostors. In other words, the claims that others make about IP do not seem to be true, but personal IP feelings are deeply embedded. In their study of imposter syndrome among Ph.D. students, Handforth (2022) found that their IP feelings were "not something that was perceived as a shared, collective experience, but rather an individual deficit" (p. 304). IP feelings are influenced by comparison with others, feedback from ourselves and others, as well as evidence supplied through experiences (Hawley, 2019).

Hawley (2019) continued on to say, however, that despite the presence of all of these indicators, "None of us is justified in forming firm beliefs about our own capabilities on the basis of formal markers alone; these need to be bolstered by ongoing and wider evidence" (p. 212). The author reminded readers, however, that in some cases, the same work may receive a variety of reactions in different settings and among various observers. Minoritized individuals may

receive unwarranted feedback about the insufficiency of their work, or their work/success may be credited to some "unfair boost" (p. 213). The literature leaves me to wonder if women who have a deeply internalized sense of their IP have endured critical, degrading experiences based on their identities that continue to plague their feelings about themselves, despite formal evidence of success in their lives and careers.

When individuals assume the role of impostor, over time, they may risk creating a self-fulfilling prophecy in terms of their feelings about themselves and their work performance based on their self-efficacy beliefs. For those individuals who struggle with severe IP, a self-fulfilling prophecy can become reality over time. Hawley (2019) said, "Severe impostor syndrome may in fact reduce someone's competence and success, by undermining her confidence and her ability to maintain the skills and knowledge she needs" (p. 211). The author stated that through such a process, an individual's IP feelings may "start off as factually mistaken, but render themselves correct…" (Hawley, 2019, p. 211). If an individual thinks poorly of themselves and their abilities for long enough, they may adopt it as truth.

Diane offered her perception about IP and its impact saying, "As far as imposter syndrome goes, I think the less you know when you get started, the better off you are" (Interview 2, Part 2, 36:35). She continued to explain that going into a new situation, if she did not know too much going into it, she would not know how to be afraid (Interview 2, Part 2, 36:48). On one hand, ignorance may seem like bliss, but ignorance can also stand in the way of progress. Rescher (2009) talked about ignorance saying, "Often we do not simply respond to ignorance by leaving a mere blank. We have a natural and perfectly reasonable inclination to fill in those gaps in the easiest, most natural, and sometimes even most attractive way" (p. 2). They continued on to say, "as knowledge is power, so ignorance is impotence" (p. 2). In other words, rather than not

knowing something, one may be tempted to create their own interpretation or their own understandings of a situation. For an individual experiencing IP without the knowledge of what it is or how it might impact them, they may choose to create their own knowledge based on what they believe they are experiencing. That "knowledge", based in their own naivete may result in misunderstandings of their experiences, and may ultimately prevent that individual from taking action to reverse or lessen the potentially harmful influences of IP feelings—thus creating a situation where that individual may be stuck in their IP feelings rather than being able to work to overcome them. Therefore, while it may seem advantageous not to know about IP as a way of preventing individuals from being afraid, not knowing can be detrimental and limiting, especially when individuals experience frequent IP feelings and do not know how to recognize or respond to what they are feeling.

In this section, I discussed impostor phenomenon experiences among participants. I began by discussing how individuals might perceive that everyone has IP. I then talked about IP as a part of new experiences and how those feelings might impact young teachers in their first job, but also individuals who are going through transitions, including those moving into new positions in higher education. Next, I explained how participants seemed to have mixed perceptions of IP. For some, this included lessened feelings of IP, but several participants still talked about not underestimating luck and being in the right place at the right time—elements that seem to indicate the continuing presence of IP feelings. I further noted the presence of a link between IP, self-efficacy, and self-esteem based on the connection between IP feelings and the work insecurities of one of the participants. Concluding the section, I explored how IP has impacted participants' experiences in higher education.

Perfectionism

Participants discussed perfectionism as part of their experiences in everyday life, their time as high school band directors, and during their time in collegiate music education. In this section, I begin by talking about self-oriented perfectionism and how Grace, Ashley, Ellen, and Susan experienced the manifestations of this type of perfectionism during their time as high school band directors. I explain how Susan's experiences as a high school band director also seemed to be influenced by socially prescribed perfectionism. I then talk about the graduate school experiences of Kristen and Susan as a place to unlearn perfectionism. To conclude the section, I explain the potential links between IP and perfectionism in the classroom and in graduate school. In the classroom, IP and perfectionism create the need for validation from others. In graduate school, this experience is marked with difficulty due to transitions and a variety of expectations from professors and mentors.

Self-Oriented Perfectionism

Grace, Ashley, Ellen, and Susan all shared their personal experiences with perfectionism and holding themselves to standards of perfection. Grace shared, "I'm pretty perfectionistic of myself—hard on myself" (Interview 2, 1:03:22). Grace continued to share about experiencing personal competitiveness and how that seemed to intertwine with perfectionist tendencies. She said:

> So, it's funny—if you ask people that know me—as far as competition arenas, do I thrive? No. If there's a solo, but who wants it—I don't care. I don't care. Even if I would play it out the best, I don't care if I get it. I just don't. However, if someone asks me to play it, oh my gosh, I'm going to be so hard on myself. So, it is a personal competition, more than with-others-competition. And I definitely struggle with that. That will play into

> a lot of anxiety. You can speak to yourself very meanly; I have to watch. So, there is a high level of personal competitiveness and low level of like, social. I don't usually put myself in a situation that's high pressure, because it is actually a lot for me...It's just too much for me to deal with those kinds of situations. I would really want to do perfect, so I guess I kind of avoid them. (Interview 2, 1:03:34)

Ashley described how perfectionism was private and internalized. She said:

> Sometimes I feel like I'm a perfectionist, but it bites me in the butt sometimes. Because if it's not in the way that I wanted it to be…—and I'm like super stressed and literally nobody would be thinking that needs to happen, except me—and then if it doesn't happen…But that's not always the case. Like, I'm not super, super, everything has to be perfectionist. I just want it to be in my mind, right. I guess that's kind of a good summarization for the most part. (Interview 3, Part 2, 1:03:23)

Grace and Ashley both talked about their perfectionism as being very personal and private. Their perfectionism was not driven by the expectations of other people. Instead, their experience was about making things right in their own minds, for themselves. These self-driven demands parallel what researchers describe as perfectionistic strivings (PS). Perfectionistic strivings are defined as, "the propensity to set excessively high personal standards that are often unrealistic in nature and to demand nothing less than perfection from the self" (Sirois & Molnar, 2016, p. 8). Because of the self-focused nature of perfectionistic strivings, these tendencies reflect the private and personal nature of perfectionism as described by Grace and Ashley.

Susan also talked about her personal and private experiences with perfectionism. She explained:

> [Explaining her music life experiences and her identity as a perfectionist] I mentioned earlier that I have Bipolar II, and so my senior year of high school was when my first depressive episode happened. And then looking back now in college—especially just the lifestyle that I led—I wasn't a partier in college. I was very serious all the time. And I didn't sleep and you know, just really didn't take care of myself. And I know now, that [Bipolar II] really even inflamed that [perfectionism] more. (Interview 1, 54:56)

Susan described how her perfectionism was exacerbated by undiagnosed bipolar. Susan was also diagnosed with ADHD, but did not comment about any potential connections to her perfectionism experiences.

ADHD has become a health and lifestyle buzzword topic among adult women (Attention Deficit Disorder Association, 2024). Adult ADHD can manifest in procrastination behaviors, which as I explained in Chapter 2 can also be associated with perfectionism. On their website, the Attention Deficit Disorder Association (2024) discussed how individuals with either ADHD or perfectionism may be predisposed to set extremely high standards that are not warranted for a given task or situation. Further, those with ADHD may be prone to perfectionist standards based on personal recognition of their "lack of focus, poor memory, disorganization, and time blindness" which are typical symptoms of ADHD that may cause anxiety as individuals compare themselves and their abilities with those of other people (Attention Deficit Disorder Association, para. 2). As Susan was the only individual in this study who identified as having ADHD, it was impossible to determine if a common connection existed between ADHD, perfectionism, and the experiences of women band directors. In light of recent ADHD research and Susan's experiences as a woman band director with disabilities, more research is needed to determine if, and how,

perfectionism in combination with adult ADHD and other disabilities may be playing an influential role in the experiences of women band directors.

Ellen shared another example of personal and private perfectionism. She talked about beating herself up through the process of trying to improve her conducting skills. She shared:

> I always felt like it was coming in all different directions. As soon as I started going to conducting workshops, I was aware of all these other problems that I didn't know I had. And taped on my stand, I had the baker's dozen conducting techniques…I'd have that taped on the stand and I'd have my recording going almost every day, trying to get better as a conductor and beating myself up about those things that I wasn't doing. (Interview 3, 53:38)

Ellen was receiving feedback from the conducting workshops she attended and using her personal resources to work toward improving her techniques, but instead of using those sources of input constructively, Ellen's perfectionism tendencies seemed to fuel her self-criticism. In their study about the effects of perfectionism and self-criticism on goal pursuit, Powers et al. (2012) found their results to be "consistent with theoretical notions that the self-critic will find it difficult to effortlessly engage in goal pursuit" (p. 768). The researchers continued to discuss how rather than focusing on progress, an individual may instead use their energy "guarding against potential failure and focusing on potential criticism" (p. 768). Therefore, some women former high school band directors who have moved into higher education may find perfectionism as an inhibiting influence as they continue to refine their skills and focus on their own growth.

Susan also shared her sensemaking about perfectionism and how it influenced her high school band directing experiences. When I asked her how chronic perfectionism had impacted her high school teaching and music education trajectory, Susan said:

> It's part of the profile for just the constant overachiever. And it's one of those things, though, that holding myself to such a high standard, to the point of constantly having to use self-shaming as motivation—I think that while it was definitely maladaptive, it was a technique that kept me functioning to an extent—until it wasn't. Like, having that really rigid, or like, "This has to be like this. It has to be perfect."—All or nothing thinking. Yeah, I think it was a coping mechanism, at times. (Interview 3, 1:14:25)

The perfectionism experiences of Grace, Ashley, Ellen, and Susan were each uniquely individual, but also similar in terms of each participant creating their own personal expectation of perfection. Each of the four participants shared the ways their internalized perfectionism manifested in their professional lives (e.g., experiences of being hard on themselves, expecting themselves to complete tasks perfectly, beating themselves up, and being the only one who would require certain things to be perfect). These experiences are examples of self-oriented perfectionism (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Flett & Hewitt, 2002). It is also important to note that the perfectionism experienced by these participants was self-created rather than being based on perceived expectations of perfection from other people (i.e., socially prescribed perfectionism) (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Flett & Hewitt, 2002) —a facet of perfectionism that I will discuss in the next section.

In their interviews, Grace, Ashley, Ellen, and Susan also identified some of the ways that perfectionism manifested in psychological symptoms. Because of her need to be perfect, Grace talked about feeling "a lot of anxiety." Ashley mentioned how she would often feel "super stressed" in her pursuit of perfection. Susan talked about her need to use "self-shaming as motivation" because she held herself to such high standards. These results corroborate previous research about perfectionism and how it may influence stress and psychological states. La

Rocque et al. (2016) found that individuals with high levels of self-oriented perfectionism "may become caught up in being perfect in terms of achievement, which may paradoxically sabotage performance in this domain due to elevated expectations and anxiety" (p. 81). Therefore, despite the high standards to which individuals hold themselves, stress and anxiety as a result of perfectionism can be self-sabotaging and may in fact be the cause of some unintentional negative outcomes or may further compound stress and anxiety.

In her book on perfectionism, Brown (2010) talked about the interconnectedness of perfectionism and shame. She wrote,

> Where perfectionism exists, shame is always lurking. In fact, shame is the birthplace of perfectionism…Perfectionism is addictive because when we invariably do experience shame, judgment, and blame, we often believe it's because we weren't perfect enough. So rather than questioning the faulty logic of perfectionism, we become even more entrenched in our quest to live, look, and do everything just right. (Brown, 2010, pp. 55-57)

Brown's explanation may explain why some individuals use self-shame as motivation. If an individual feels shame based on not being able to meet aspects of their own rigid expectations, they may have experienced the addictiveness of perfectionism that Brown discussed. This logic means that an individual may feel compelled further by perfectionism that is produced as a result of the shame and feelings associated with not being perfect enough.

Other researchers, however, found that those individuals with "higher levels of self-oriented perfectionism had lower levels of burnout (cynicism, reduced efficacy) and higher levels of engagement (vigor, dedication)" (Childs & Stoeber, 2010, p. 276). These findings left me wondering whether Grace, Ashley, Ellen, and Susan's perfectionism could also lead to positive

outcomes through enhanced engagement or perhaps less likelihood for burnout (Childs & Stoeber, 2010).

Socially Prescribed Perfectionism

One of the participants, Susan, shared how she felt the requirement of perfection was imposed on her by other people. She said:

> And the perfectionism, too, I mean especially when I was teaching high school and being in a situation where I didn't feel supported, and people were questioning me all the time and that kind of thing—I mean, obviously, you do have to be perfect because you're just going to be criticized more. But I'm realizing that, yeah, it's not sustainable, obviously. And it's not fun. It's not fun to just hate yourself into succeeding. (Interview 3, 1:15:49)

The pressure for perfectionism that Susan felt seemed to be based on perceived pressure from other people—specifically those who questioned her and those who Susan felt were unsupportive. In her earlier interviews, Susan discussed how her first few years of high school teaching were a challenge in terms of relationships. She talked about value conflicts within the band community, struggles with gaining the respect of band parents and those in the booster organization, and not feeling like she was accepted by the men in the local bandmasters' association. The criticism that Susan faced as a part of those relationship challenges seemed to be influential in terms of the standards of perfection that Susan perceived were necessary in order to escape further criticism.

In their research on perfectionism, Childs and Stoeber (2010) found that those individuals with high levels of socially prescribed perfectionism often experienced more burnout, which involves a lower sense of efficacy. Therefore, in Susan's experience, socially prescribed perfectionism may have influenced her sense of self-efficacy as a high school band director.

Interrupting Perfectionism in Graduate School

Kristen discussed her experiences of perfectionism as a graduate student, after moving from her first position teaching fifth and sixth grade band into her master's degree. She talked about graduate school as a place to unlearn perfectionism. Kristen talked about her process of unlearning her perfectionist tendencies with the help of her advisor. She said:

> There's a point of diminishing return when you're working on anything, where it's like, "Well, you can continue to work, but you're gonna have to put in a lot more to get a very small amount of progress." So, kind of getting better at seeing failure as useful opportunities for learning, but then also trying to figure out when the optimal time to stop something and take breaks is…One of the things we talk about in this program is figuring out what the barometer for good enough is on any given thing… I've been talking to one of my advisors about that with writing…I'm pretty good at procrastinating on writing assignments, but he's like, "You're giving yourself this number of hours to do it, but it could really be this and it would be fine." (Interview 2, 47:33-49:50)

Research has revealed that procrastination is known to be associated with perfectionism as some individuals avoid tasks because they fear failure (Sudirman et al., 2023). In other words, Kristen learned that she could spend hours working on something trying to make it perfect, when it was probably good enough with much less time.

Kristen's conversation with her advisor about using her time effectively, in an attempt to help Kristen move past her perfectionism behaviors, is an example of reflective practice. As Mann and Walsh (2013) suggest, "Developing experiential knowledge, we suggest, is supported by collaborative discussion where thoughts and ideas about classroom practice are first articulated and then reformulated in a progression towards enhanced understanding" (p. 303). I

argue that the "classroom practice" mentioned by Mann and Walsh (2013) may also include professional student practices that would impact not only future classroom work, but research, as well. I also argue that the potential benefits of reflective practice reinforce the need for effective women music education mentors who can help women band directors, and those who have moved into higher education, collaboratively process and reconstruct their experiences.

Impostor Phenomenon and Perfectionism

The Need for Validation

Susan and Ellen experienced both IP and perfectionism as a part of high school band directing. Both women also discussed their desire for validation from others. Susan shared, "We're trained to look externally for that validation and because I wasn't getting the external validation that I thought mattered, I internalized that and assumed like, "Okay, but maybe I…didn't actually pull this off" (Interview 2, 1:48:44). Because Susan was not receiving the external validation that she felt was important, she perceived that she was not being successful in her job. Ellen also discussed the importance of external validation as benchmarks of her career success. She said:

> Having people like X [a prominent college band director] come out. I remember he came out—which is a terrifying day, and also like, my favorite day in the career. And at the end of the class period, he came over to me and said, "Things are just fine, here." And I think that was a moment that I was like, "Okay."—like success…I was setting goals, and we were meeting and reaching those goals. And respected people in the profession were recognizing that things were going well. (Interview 2, 1:02:41)

Ellen's moment where she recognized her success revealed that she, too, may also have internalized feeling unsuccessful, because she had not received validation from others.

Those individuals with IP often feel a need to be the best. They may also doubt their own competencies at certain tasks, a tendency that shares similarities to low self-efficacy. In the case of individuals who have IP and perfectionist tendencies, the combination may cause them to doubt their abilities to be successful in certain tasks and may also fuel their need to continue to strive for perfection or seek to prove themselves. Kets de Vries (2005) found that perfectionism may be influential in terms of increasing or maintaining impostor tendencies. The experiences of Susan and Ellen corroborate the work of Dudau (2014) who found that, "self-evaluative perfectionism dimensions reflect the fact that the persons with frequent impostor symptoms may also have a tendency to seek the validation from others" (p. 132). For women who have perfectionism and IP feelings, concurrently, the presence of a mentor may serve as an important aspect of external validation, but may also be a helpful guide for managing perfectionism and IP in healthy ways. On the other hand, the need for external validation could prove detrimental to some women, especially when seeking validation from someone who may discriminate against women. In that case, if a woman is left feeling like her best is not good enough, her attempt at validation could potentially lead to increased feelings of IP and perfectionism (Brown, 2010).

IP's Influence on Unlearning Perfectionism in Graduate School

Similar to Kristen's graduate school experiences as described earlier, Susan also talked about how she used graduate school as a place to unlearn perfectionism. She said, "Part of my graduate studies, and I think especially now that I am in a place where the fit is better, has definitely been sort of unlearning that [perfectionism] and recovering from that [perfectionism]" (Interview 3, 1:14:25). Because Kristen self-identified as someone who experienced both IP and perfectionism, this was an interesting finding based on the previous literature about these two psychological topics. Previously, Tigranyan et al. (2021) found a statistically significant positive

relationship between participants' perfectionism and IP experiences. Those findings may mean that Susan could experience less IP as she unlearns perfectionism in graduate school. However, despite these potential results, Susan admitted to experiencing IP in her research, conducting, and working with collegiate ensembles (Interview 1:12:54).

While some individuals may attempt to unlearn perfectionism as a part of graduate school studies, I wonder if some individuals would struggle with such an endeavor. Graduate school is a time of transitions, changes, and new experiences. As described earlier in the section on IP, change itself often initiates impostor feelings. In addition to transitions, students experience the instruction of many different professors and teachers, each with their own set of expectations which may further feelings of perfectionism as students work to achieve based on different sets of standards.

In this section, I discussed how participants experienced perfectionism. I began the section by exploring self-oriented perfectionism and socially prescribed perfectionism experiences among the participants. I then talked about how some of the participants attempted to use graduate school as a place to unlearn perfectionism tendencies. Next, I discussed how IP and perfectionism related to participants' needs for validation. Concluding the section, I discussed another participant's experience with unlearning perfectionism in graduate school, but this time including the influence of IP. In the next section, I will talk about participants' experiences of vulnerability.

Vulnerability

Many of the participants addressed vulnerability by focusing on topics like authenticity, being themselves, and establishing healthy boundaries. While these topics are not synonymous with vulnerability, each one emerged within participants' discussions of the topic. I have chosen

to include them in this section based on their importance in the context of how they influenced women former high school band directors' experiences of vulnerability. In this section, I begin by providing examples of participants' perceptions of their ability to be vulnerable during their time as high school band directors. Next, I talk about how participants approached vulnerability as a way to show their humanity while also maintaining appropriate boundaries. I then explain how participants found the perceptions of others to be a challenge to their willingness to be vulnerable. Concluding the section, I explore how and why the participants had difficulties sharing both successes and failures.

Vulnerability and Trust

Susan and Jill talked about vulnerability and how it required trust. Susan specifically talked about feeling that not everyone was a safe person with whom to be vulnerable. She shared:

> I feel like I'm still learning this today—…recognizing that not everyone is a safe person for you to share those vulnerabilities with. Even if, maybe on paper, you think that they would be—just learning to be a little more discriminant about when and where I show my cards…" (Interview 3, 2:02)

Susan felt uncertain about who she could trust with her vulnerability. Brown (2012) spoke to this uncertainty. She said, "We need to feel trust to be vulnerable and we need to be vulnerable in order to trust" (p. 47). She continued by describing the results of her research on the topic. Brown explained, "The research participants described trust as a slow-building, layered process that happens over time" (p. 47). Women high school band directors may feel hesitations about being vulnerable based on trust granted within previous relationships—some of which may have

been challenging parts of their work experiences (e.g., administrators, colleagues, band parents) ending in betrayal of trust.

Jill shed a little bit of light on the topic as she alluded to double standards when it comes to perceptions of women and how that impacted vulnerability. She explained:

> I feel like, as a woman, if you get upset, it's an automatic, like, "Oh, she must be on her period,' or 'It's that time of the month,' or something. As opposed to like, "No, we're just human beings. Everyone gets upset. That's a normal part of life." So, I don't want to say I felt necessarily very free… (Interview 3, 1:16)

In their coaching article about double standards for women, Theus (2024) explained how double standards are a problem for all women in the workplace. The author discussed how double standards are a result of unconscious bias in combination with stereotypes. Theus (2024) specifically addressed the type of double standard encountered by Jill in this quote. The author labelled Jill's double standard experience as a "communications double standard" in which "women's communication is evaluated very differently than men's, and most often with negative consequences" (Theus, 2024, para. 10). Because of the way that women's communications are often construed as negative, women high school band directors may choose to limit their vulnerability. Participants in this study may have chosen to withhold their vulnerability because they feared how they might be perceived based on double standards. The examples provided by Jill illustrated the ways that women are subject to negative judgments as opposed to some men in the profession. Jill was not granted the same grace to be a human being as the men to whom she was being compared.

Showing Humanity With Healthy Boundaries

Several of the participants discussed their approach to vulnerability by embracing the need to show students their humanity, while establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries. In other words, the participants created limitations on what topics were appropriate for sharing with students. Amanda explained:

> Using my judgment, I did share some personal things with students. I just tried to discern—I tried to share enough so that they could see my humanity, but not so much that it made anyone uncomfortable, if that makes sense.

She continued, providing an example of what she might have said to students in a given situation:

> Like, there were days that maybe I didn't feel well, and I shared with them, "Sorry. I have a migraine. Give me just a minute, and then we'll move on." Or if I was out of school for any length of time, I would share with them…Stuff like that, just so that they can understand, again, the humanity of it, and that you're not just sloughing things off. (Interview 3, 3:55)

Nancy also talked about the need to show one's humanity and how that could be helpful. She said:

> I don't need to pull out my family tree and my timeline and share my whole life story, but little bits because you are human. And they also need to realize you're human. And if I'm like…, "Guys, I'm really having a rough time. I had a late night. I picked my daughter up from the airport. So just bear with me. I might be a little off today, but we will get there together." They have a tendency to really understand that more. (Interview 3, 11:33)

Later in the same interview, Nancy further discussed the benefit of vulnerability in her work. She talked about sharing her own story in order to help specific students who she knew would identify with her childhood and teenage experiences. She shared:

> And one in a very, very few students got to know a little bit more about my story, because I wanted them to know… "I know what you're going through. It does get better. It's not easy. It's going to suck the life out of you. But this is the one place where—nobody can take your education from you. Nobody can do that. That's yours. You own that. So, whatever you put in here, you own it. Nobody's gonna go into your brain and go, 'Oh, you lost all of that knowledge. You don't have it anymore.' People can't control that. You control that. So, if you don't use it in high school, and then you just follow along the same pattern—unless you break the chain, you're not going to get anywhere. You need to break the chain." (Interview 3, 21:13)

Nancy and Amanda's choices to show students their humanity within the confines of healthy boundaries aligned with Sears' (2021) exploration of vulnerability. In her article on grief, Sears (2021) talked about how teachers have the ability to remove the "mask…in the performance of teaching" to show students their humanity— "whole human beings that love and lose just as they do" (p. 89). Sears continued to discuss how when teachers show their mutual humanity with students, they create opportunities for "healing and connection" (p. 89). Connections extend beyond those based in grief to assist teachers in developing rapport with students. Teachers build rapport with their students when the students can see that their teachers are imperfect and always learning, themselves (Huddy, 2015). Therefore, Amanda's choice to show her humanity was most likely beneficial for building rapport with her students. Nancy's vulnerability to share her story may have opened doors for students from similar backgrounds by

normalizing and empowering them to "break the chain" and be persistent to create new opportunities for themselves through hard work in their education. While encouraging and potentially helpful to many students, it is important to acknowledge that this "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" meritocratic discourse does not work for all students—especially those students of minoritized identities. Pacansky-Brock et al. (2020) acknowledged that when teachers are willing to share their own stories that include their challenges and shortcomings, they were likely to earn the trust of their students. Additionally, the author talked about how this type of sharing can serve to model determination.

As Romney and Holland (2023) said, "when teachers make themselves vulnerable, they invite their students to also be vulnerable, creating an environment that is more conducive to deeper learning" (p. 86). Elaborating on how vulnerability influences the student-teacher relationship, they continued, "Seeing a teacher's vulnerability gives the students confidence that the teacher will be understanding of their own vulnerabilities in the course" (p. 86). At the same time, I would assert that students gain confidence that teachers will understand their own vulnerabilities both inside and outside of the course content—this might include empathy when it comes to certain learning needs, life situations, and stressors.

Jill talked about the importance of boundaries and how she never wanted to make students feel uncomfortable because of personal information that she would share or topics that might come up as a result of sharing such information. She explained:

> I don't talk about family. I mean, the kids know I have a family, obviously…But I don't really talk about family stuff. I've never spoken about—I have a sister—so, I have three sisters. I have one older, two younger, and the one right under me is actually a nun…and that's something I don't speak about in front of my students, ever. I mean, I would. I'm

> not shy about it, but at the same time, I just don't feel like we need to get into religious topics or anything…so it's just like a conversation I don't want to have with students. I don't think it's any of their business and I don't want any other student to feel uncomfortable either direction…So those kinds of topics, I try to just leave out of the classroom, so all students feel comfortable. (Interview 3, 2:04)

Continuing on the topic of student comfort, other participants discussed the importance of not divulging so much that the sharing became a burden for their students. Nancy said:

> We've become so self-centric, we think that everything is about us. Now, my focus is—I share a little bit. No oversharing. You're throwing all this stuff on their lap and they're gonna go home and go, "Wow! My teacher is dealing with a lot of stuff right now." And that's not their burden to bear. (Interview 3, 11:33)

Similarly, Amanda talked about sharing as a source of burden for the students. She shared: "I also wouldn't go in and vent to the extent that they're uncomfortable and like, 'I don't know what to do with this information'" (Interview 3, 3:55).

Hammond (2015) advocated for what she termed as "selective vulnerability" in establishing trusting relationships and vulnerability with students (pp. 79-80). As its name implies, this type of vulnerability does not involve divulging every detail of one's life or experiences (Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020). Hammond (2015) specifically explained that "the information shared is selective and appropriate" (p. 79) and that such sharing is most effective in the form of storytelling. Venting and oversharing would indicate a lack of selectivity and would probably have less effective results in terms of establishing trust. Oversharing may even inhibit establishment of trust as students might focus on less relevant details, creating distraction from what it was that the teacher specifically intended to convey.

Others' Perceptions: A Challenge to Being Vulnerable

Participants identified experiences that revealed the ways in which the perceptions of others created challenges relating to participants' abilities to be vulnerable. When I asked Amanda about her level of freedom to share things like emotions in the classroom as a high school band director, she said:

> I will say, outside of the classroom, in more of the administrative parts of the job, not only at my school, but on the whole, in district band director meetings and things like that—in those spaces, where I was often the only woman or one of only just a couple, in those spaces, I felt like I had to be reserved in a way, particularly with emotion. Or otherwise you fear being perceived as just an emotional person rather than someone whose opinion you're going to listen to and consider valid. So, I will say that I do feel like I had to sort of make sure that I was reserved and polished. And I have a way of, even in meetings and stuff like that, speaking almost sort of monotone...And I think it comes from that, where…I wanted to be direct, but I couldn't let it be perceived as emotional. (Interview 3, 1:10)

This finding highlights a connection between vulnerability and the experiences during which women feel the need to police their actions and assume a specific persona in order to navigate certain situations. Women's needs to assume different personas necessitate that they will be inauthentic and therefore unable to be vulnerable for fear of negative consequences related to their work.

Ashley and Susan also shared how they felt like they were scrutinized by others. Ashley talked about how she sometimes felt like she was under a microscope with her colleague directors. She experienced criticism, sometimes, even in front of her students. She said:

> When I was in the band room…I kind of felt like I was under the microscope all the time. So, when I was teaching just the normal classes—by normal, I just mean like music theory or fundamentals…it was a little bit more structured of what I had to do because trickling down from the different directors of what we wanted to stay on task with. When I had my different sectionals—mainly percussion or percussion ensemble, I felt like I could do and be a little bit more myself. But the main classes—the director would literally be in earshot and would make sure that I was staying on task and would even come out sometimes and be like, "You need to explain this further." So, I'm like, "Cool. We were getting there. Give me a minute." (Interview 3, 00:32)

Susan also shared about being scrutinized by other band directors and parents. She explained:

> I definitely felt like there was less room for me to make the mistakes that an early career teacher would make. And part of that had to do with being the head director of a big program. But even in my first job…I didn't understand budgets or that kind of thing very well. And so, there's just kind of this expectation, or almost maybe even that—it was like an assumption that I didn't know. And that I wasn't able to make good decisions…Actually, that was kind of the big thing was just people assuming that I wasn't able to do those things. And then, yeah, I think that just the expectations—showing any vulnerability, especially, like I said, with other band directors, and with parents, for sure. It felt like ammunition. I just give people ammunition. (Interview 3, 1:27:28)

Ashley and Susan were not alone in their feelings of being scrutinized as teachers. Previous music education research revealed that relationships with colleagues, parents, and students are influential sources of stress that impact music teachers. Mateos-Moreno (2022) found that globally, preservice music teachers cited the "social environment at work" to be an

area of concern as they prepared for their future careers. The author said, “The social environment at work refers to how one relates to one’s colleagues, school principals, and parents” (Mateos-Moreno, 2022, p. 495). For preservice teachers to worry about the social environment of band directing prior to entering the field, they must have seen evidence of that kind of stress in their experiences as high school students, in their university field work placements, or heard about it through the experiences of their music education mentors.

For women high school band directors working in jobs traditionally held by men, it is not uncommon for them to be scrutinized based on how others think that a man would do the job. Students, parents, and colleagues may be tempted to compare women to the men who preceded them in their band directing jobs. In cases where women are being compared to men, it is no wonder that women do not want to show vulnerability—a position that would potentially open them up to further scrutiny, comparison, and being perceived as weak.

Sharing Failures and Successes

Failures

For many participants, sharing failures with others was complicated. Their ability and desire to do so were largely wrapped up in the perceptions of others—what seemed to be intertwined in the participants’ anticipation of judgment based on their shortcomings. Grace, Jill, and Amanda talked about how they only shared their failures with certain people. Grace talked about how her closest confidant was another woman band director. She said, “I would tell her anything, but I don’t think I would have gone to the masses and just shared big mistakes, socially, but maybe even especially, musically” (Interview 3, 53:35). Jill confided in her boyfriend, at the time. She explained, “when I taught high school, I had a long-term boyfriend at that time, who also taught high school—not in music. He taught biology. And I felt very

comfortable sharing things with him. And of course, being another educator, he understood trials and tribulations of teaching" (Interview 3, 38:35). Amanda discussed how her comfort level to share failures depended on the relationships with those people with whom she would share. She said:

> I think a lot of that also depends on the relationship that I have with them. Like, definitely, I have a few colleagues I'm closer to, that I don't have a problem with being like, "Oh man, I messed it up. Let me go back and fix that," or whatever…

She continued:

> If I don't have a close relationship with somebody, I'm going to have a hard time going in and apologizing. It easily rolls off the tongue, I would say, with people that I'm comfortable with. With people I'm not so comfortable with, it takes me a little longer to get there. (Interview 3, 23:05)

Based on their work on vulnerability and trust, Mackenzie (2020) talked about how not all trust is equal when it comes to impact on vulnerability. She said, "not all trust is morally decent, especially in contexts of power inequality. Thus, trust is ambivalent: we need to be judicious in whom we trust and with what" (Mackenzie, 2020, p. 630). For women high school band directors to be vulnerable through sharing failures, they must entrust those with whom they share failures with knowledge that could impact relationships, other's perceptions of the sharer, and the work of the sharer. As Mackenzie (2020) suggested, individuals must be careful with whom they share especially if the individuals with whom they share have power over them, and could potentially use that power to do harm. Therefore, Grace, Jill, and Amanda's choices to be discriminant in determining with whom they would share failures aligned with Mackenzie's (2020) analysis of trust and vulnerability.

Grace discussed how it was okay to share "sexy" failures. She explained:

> It would definitely be hard to share a failure. If you shared a failure, it would have to be one of those sexy failures. And by that, I mean, like one that's going to come across like you were just dealt a really hard hand. So, it's not going to be too bad. Like, you can talk about the kid that's hard because everyone's got that, and they're gonna kind of just admire you for putting up with the kid that's hard. (Interview 3, 53:35)

By sharing "sexy" failures, a woman could gain credibility with her colleagues based on a difficult situation with which other band directors could empathize. "Sexy" was the language that Grace used to describe those types of failures that would generally be accepted, appealing, and sometimes even praised. Looking through a feminist lens, I am inclined to refer to these kinds of situations as "collectively endorsed" failures as they represent those failure situations that receive endorsement within the confines of music education cohorts. Many music educators likely have experience with these types of failures, therefore opening a door for vulnerable connection. A collectively endorsed failure would not necessitate for the woman to be discriminant with those whom she was willing to share. This type of sharing, however, would look very different than sharing a failure that might subject one to criticism or scrutiny.

Grace also shared how it felt to admit to her colleagues that she did not know something. She said:

> Yeah, you just want to seem really smart all the time. You want to seem like you have it together. You're not going to take a score and be like, "What's this symbol?" Those things where they're like, "You've not seen that?" You're like, "Ugh. Sorry. This is probably a dumb question, but what is that?" I remember those were some of the moments I felt the most stupid. (Interview 3, 53:35)

While admitting not to know something is not directly a failure, such an experience could lead to feelings of failure.

Women's difficulties sharing failures may be at least partially explained by self-silencing. Self-silencing is limiting one's self-expression for the sake of maintaining relationships. Silencing oneself is a way of veiling one's authenticity due to fear of how they may be perceived by others (Newport Institute[11], n.d.). Self-silencing is, therefore, a fear of being vulnerable. In her TEDxRockville talk, Rachel Druckenmiller discussed self-silencing as it relates to vulnerability. She said:

> Because for my whole life, I only let people see a certain version of me. The one that was accomplished, and impressive, and independent. I silenced myself when I was struggling because that's what good little girls do. I was afraid to be vulnerable with people and to let them in and to open up and to share what I was feeling… (TEDx Talks, 2023, 2:58)

She continued to discuss how self-silencing impacted her emotions. She talked about how one might conceal one's emotions in order to preserve relationships. Sometimes this could mean that "we become who we think people expect us to be even if it means betraying ourself" (TEDx Talks, 2023, 4:15). The need to conform to the expectations of others harkens back to Brown's (2010) discussion of the difference between belonging and fitting in that I discussed in Chapter 4. Druckenmiller continued to discuss how she talked to 800 working professionals and found that the most prevalent topic related to the ways that individuals self-silence at work was fear. Those fears were related to "conflict, failure, judgement, rejection, being wrong, looking selfish, [and] not being good enough" (TEDx Talks, 2023, 5:32).

[11] The Newport Institute is a network of U.S.-based healing centers for young adults and their families. Their focus is on evidence-based treatment of mental health issues (Newport Institute, n.d.).

The experience of finding it difficult to share failures as expressed by Grace, Jill, and Amanda in the present study seem to be motivated by the perceptions of others. This motivation is revealed in only wanting to share collectively endorsed failures and the desire to share failures only with those with whom the women had close, established relationships. The Newport Institute attributes self-silencing behaviors to socialization and what is valued by society, especially for women who grow up being "sensitive to the needs, desires, and expectations of others" (para. 5). It is important to note that this sensitivity is a quality that is stereotypically gendered as feminine (Ellemers, 2018; Glick et al., 2000). Women who experience failures in men-dominated professions may also be fearful that exposing their difficulties could potentially subject them to scrutiny, further need to prove themselves in the profession, or cause damage to any acceptance they may have already earned from men in the profession.

Further, participants' difficulties sharing failures with others reinforced the importance of mentorship among women both in the profession and for preservice teachers. For those women in music education, having close confidants who can relate to, and help navigate challenges are vitally important in terms of attrition prevention. Role models and mentors can also help to normalize vulnerable authenticity by sharing their own experiences and their failures. Amanda discussed how she had incorporated sharing failures into her work with her university students. She explained:

> I do that [share failures] a lot in a rehearsal, as well. Like, if I've rushed or dragged the tempo, or something myself, I am quick to tell the ensemble, "Oh, that was on me. Sorry. Let's keep going." And I try to get my future music educators to do that as well, because that's part of building the rapport with the ensemble. (Amanda, Interview 3, 22:12)

Amanda served as a mentor for her university students by normalizing vulnerability and showing humanity in ensemble rehearsals. By sharing her humanity, she was not only building rapport with her students, but was also serving as a role model of vulnerability for the preservice teachers in that ensemble.

Successes

For several of the participants, sharing successes was just as complicated as sharing failures. While the complications still involved the perceptions of others, socialization also seemed to played an influential role in women's decisions of whether to share. Kristen, Diane, and Amanda were uncomfortable with the idea of sharing their successes because they felt that to do so was bragging. While these participants felt it was not something that women should do, they were also uncertain about their socialization—unable to understand why they should not be allowed to celebrate and talk about their successes.

Susan said, "In terms of sharing, a lot of it was just a lot more internalized, I think for me. And successes—it is deeply uncomfortable for me to talk about successes. Even now. And yeah, so that was just almost like a non-thing" (Interview 3, 41:33). Kristen also described her discomfort with sharing success. She explained:

> I didn't talk about success often. I didn't want to be that person who was bragging about their students or their program, or their accomplishment…Some of my colleagues who are still good friends would come to a group professional learning community, and just want to talk up all the good stuff they were doing because they have a little more ego…In the larger band director community and culture, I didn't want to be the constant humble-bragger person. (Interview 3, 40:20)

Kristen further explained how she found humble-braggers to be distasteful and a likely sign that those individuals were insecure and seeking validation through their comments. As a result, she associated not feeling like she needed to participate in those behaviors as a "sign of healthy self-concept" (Personal Correspondence, 10/21/24). In other words, Kristen seemed to have internalized that type of success-sharing as egotistical and negative—an outcome that was likely rooted in her socialization as a woman. Diane also mentioned how women are socialized while comparing the expectations of women to those of men. She said:

> Do women do that?...The men do it all the time…And it's because I was taught that women don't do that. We don't brag. And that's not bragging…So I've had to struggle with that a little bit, myself, because I never did that. And I don't know why I didn't do it. I should have been more forward about it. (Interview 3, 35:26)

Amanda also talked about her discomfort with sharing success, and that she did not understand what made her feel that way. She shared:

> Okay, all of these announcements on Facebook— "I am so pleased to share that I bla, bla, bla…"—I could never, would never—I think I probably did at one time, because I felt like I had to. But it goes against every fiber of my being to do that, so I don't anymore. I do think I did at one time because, I'm like, "This is accepted practice. I guess this is what everybody does." But I don't do it anymore because I don't like it…

She continued on to say that she did not want to take people's celebrations away and that it was deserving for people to celebrate successes. However, she concluded that she did not have a clear answer to why it was so uncomfortable for her:

> So, I don't have a clear answer on that other than it makes me uncomfortable to just walk into a room and say, "Hey guys, guess what? I just did this or that or whatever,

whatever." So, when I am successful in some way, most people don't even know about it unless someone else shares it. And I don't know why I feel so funny about it. I don't know if it's…upbringing of like, "Don't talk about yourself," or if that's pervasive everywhere. (Interview 3, 19:41)

Participants' discomfort about sharing successes aligns with previous research on women's self-promotion behaviors. Smith and Huntoon (2014) found that norms associated with women's humility serve as a potential barrier to their desire to self-promote or share their successes (p. 455). In the experimental work of Smith and Huntoon (2014), when women completed a self-promotion task (i.e. writing a self-promotion essay for a scholarship) during which the participants were given something with which to misattribute their discomfort (e.g. a black box that was to send out subliminal noise), they were more successful in promoting themselves. They concluded that "under particular situational arousal-reducing circumstances, women are able to promote as well for themselves as they do for others" (Smith & Huntoon, 2014, p. 456). As they examined the circumstances under which women restrict their self-promotions, Lindeman et al. (2019) found that women worry how they will be perceived by others, and what reactions will occur, as a result of self-promotion. Their findings are in alignment with backlash theory which suggests, "women's self-promotion is limited by fear that others will derogate them for bragging about their accomplishments…" (p. 227). These findings suggest that women band directors are often socialized to see sharing successes as immodest and unladylike, therefore in some cases internalizing fears of how others will perceive them if they self-promote or publicly celebrate their successes.

Unlike the other participants, Jill discussed having no problem sharing successes under certain circumstances. She admitted:

> I don't think I shared a lot of my own personal stuff, but I would always share it on behalf of the students. Like if they competed and got a certain rating, we wanted to share. I don't think I felt any kind of shyness about that because it wasn't about me. It was about them…I'm trying to think when I was teaching high school if there's anything personal I would have even shared. Because at that point, everything you're doing is student-based, so it's not like publishing or that kind of stuff. So yeah, I think I felt pretty comfortable with it, because I felt the students should brag about the things they do… (Interview 3, 37:12)

Jill's comfort in sharing the successes of students, because they were not about her, aligns with the findings of Scharff (2015). In her study of self-promotion among women classical musicians, the researcher described how participants did not view themselves as lacking in skills, but rather as not being comfortable to self-promote. One of their participants expressed a similar sentiment as Jill. The participant talked about being successful in her part-time marketing job and that she felt comfortable talking about that because she did not feel that it was really about her (Scharff, 2015, p. 102). This research and other studies on the topic of women's self-promotion reveal that women have more success promoting others than themselves (Lindeman et al., 2019; Scharff, 2015; Smith & Huntoon, 2014). Based on these results, women band directors may be able to shift their view of self-promotion in order to focus more on the successes of their students. That change may be helpful and provide allowance for women to celebrate the successes of their students—especially the ones of which they are a part. Such a change may help women to become more comfortable with celebrating their accomplishments. Acknowledging the tremendous shift that this would entail for many women in music education,

the ultimate goal is for women to be able to celebrate their successes without feeling discomfort or shame.

In this section, I examined participants' experiences of vulnerability. I began by discussing the relationship between vulnerability and trust. I talked about how participants practiced vulnerability by showing their humanity while being cognizant to also incorporate healthy boundaries. Then, I explained how participants found the perceptions of others to be a challenge to being vulnerable. These experiences included being scrutinized by colleagues, parents, and students as well as being able to share failures and successes. I also looked at how self-silencing may have played a role in some of the participants' desires to share failures and how society discourages women's self-promotion. In the next section, I will discuss participant experiences as they relate to self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Self-Efficacy/Self-Esteem

In this section, I address participants' experiences with self-efficacy and self-esteem. I have included experiences from participants' time as high school band directors and some of their experiences after they transitioned into collegiate music education. Beginning the section, I discuss participants' admissions to a lack of self-trust and caring too much about what other people thought. I then talk about how vicarious experience was influential for one participant's self-efficacy and self-esteem as both a Ph.D. student and as a high school band director. I also look at comparison and how it related to other's opinions. Concluding the section, I explain several participants' feelings of unworthiness related to new opportunities, one participant's frustration with not being considered "a real doctor," and one participant's decreased self-worth as a result of her lessened teaching responsibilities as a graduate student.

Self-Trust and Caring Too Much About Others' Opinions

Five of the nine participants (Diane, Nancy, Jill, Ashley, and Amanda) expressed feeling that they struggled with self-trust. In some cases, this feeling was accompanied by the realization that the women had cared too much about the opinions of others during their time as high school band directors. Diane said:

> And the other thing that I wish I could tell myself, then, is that I was depending on other people's opinion of what I was doing, rather than judging it myself. And that I could have trusted myself a lot more. (Interview 3, 1:18:27)

Nancy shared, "I spent way too much of my life worrying about what other people thought of me" (Interview 3, 21:45). Amanda talked about self-doubt based on other's perceptions. She explained:

> The self-doubt always, again, crept in outside of my classroom because I was worried about, "Does so and so think that I'm a good band director? Does so and so, see and hear the progress that we're making? Or whatever, whatever." Or thinking, "I'll never measure up to so and so." When really, now, I know that was just silly, because no two schools are alike. No two situations are alike. And so, trying to measure them all in the same way, or trying to even define success for each of them in the same way, is not realistic. (Interview 3, 1:02:02)

Diane, Nancy, and Amanda all seemed to have processed their self-doubt so they could see the experiences of not trusting themselves and their abilities as negative in retrospect. These participants' self-doubt and lack of trust in themselves was based around the heightened value that they gave to the perceptions of others—a link to their sense of self-efficacy that makes me

wonder about further experiences which may have influenced their lack of self-trust and the presence of that self-doubt.

Ashley talked about overanalyzing herself based on how she thought others would perceive her. She admitted:

> I think this hurts me now a little bit. Typically, you don't see as many percussion [band] directors as you do see for woodwind and brass, strings—any of that. And so, I think, in my head, always, I would overanalyze some—just the woodwinds and brass when we would play through things because I feel like people are analyzing that because they know I'm a percussionist. They'd be like, "Well, they suck, but the percussion kids were good." So, thinking about that. (Interview 2, Part 2, 55:48)

Different from Diane, Nancy, and Amanda, Ashley continued to find her over-analysis to be a challenge in her work as a collegiate band director. It is important to note that Ashley recognized the absence of band directors who are also percussionists. This absence is similar to the lack of mentors and role models for women in band directing. The presence of percussionists who also serve as band directors may be another specific area in which representation is lacking. This finding suggests that the presence of specific role models and mentors that reflect the varying roles and identities of their mentees may be beneficial in helping women to overcome barriers to their self-esteem and self-efficacy by providing affirming examples through vicarious experience.

Value in Vicarious Experiences

Susan talked about how she experienced increased self-efficacy as a graduate student by watching one of her friends who was a year ahead of her in the Ph.D. program and now had a tenure track job. Susan described the vicarious experience saying, "And it's good to be like,

‘Okay, if she can do it, I can do it’” (Interview 2, 23:27). However, when I asked her about any times during her high school band directing career that she felt she struggled with self-esteem or self-efficacy, she said:

> And so, a big part of that, I think, was just that I felt so isolated. You said self-efficacy—so it’s kind of, “I’m the only one out here doing this.” And just really feeling alone and not having any type of external marker, almost—not saying like, comparing yourself to others, necessarily, but something to kind of feel like I could aim for or measure to. And that was really hard as a person who’s just naturally hard on myself—you know, chronic perfectionist. Yeah, it definitely affected my self-esteem and efficacy. (Interview 3, 1:10:03)

This finding suggests the importance of vicarious experience (Bandura, 1997) through successful role models and mentors. During her band directing years, the absence of vicarious experience, in combination with Susan’s perfectionism, may have contributed to her feelings of isolation. This combination may have led to a lower sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy. For women band directors, feeling isolated could cause those without mentors to have a lowered sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem as they look outward to determine how they are doing (Reid, 2004).

The Role of Comparison and Others’ Opinions

Grace talked about the influence of ability comparison and how that impacted her experience as a young, new teacher. When I asked her about age and how it influenced treatment from others and their perceptions of her, she shared:

> I probably did it to myself, too. In some ways, I felt like a first year teacher. Like, “What do I know compared to y’all?” So, I’m sure I also held myself back in that way…So, I felt really—just really behind. And I’m sure some of that was valid. And I probably

> psyched myself out over a lot of that. But I also don't think that—well, I know that none of the conversations I heard, were about the things that we could maybe bring.

Grace realized that with age comes experience and learning, but she did not see other people in the profession, especially those in bandmasters' meetings, "creating a space for the younger people to bring the different set of knowledge that they may have" (Interview 3, 49:24). Grace did not feel like her colleagues valued her as a contributor to those conversations. In other words, she did not feel that she was able to bring new knowledge to the profession. As a result, she compared her knowledge to older individuals. This comparison seemed to have impacted Grace's feelings of self-efficacy, causing her to question her abilities and knowledge as a young teacher.

Jill discussed her experience of being concerned about other's opinions based on a comparison with her colleagues and other programs. She said:

> I wanted to be a high school band director with everyone else, and have a good program, and have my students competing and performing, and this, and that. And it wasn't like that right away because I was building a program. So, I think I worried that people thought I wasn't a good teacher, or I didn't know what I was doing—especially if you compare it to other schools. Yeah, I think all band directors worry about it a little bit. You know—what the other guy thinks about it—whether we want to admit it or not. (Interview 3, 1:05:29)

The participants were not alone in their need to compare themselves to others and their care about others' opinions. Reid (2004) discussed how women receive mixed messages when it comes to sourcing their self-esteem and self-efficacy. The author said, "National norms direct them to look inward when they evaluate how well they are doing, but gender-specific norms direct them to look outward when they evaluate how well they are doing. Consequently, both

self-evaluation and interpersonal-evaluation are relevant to women's well-being" (Reid, 2004, p. 626). Because women are looking both to the opinions of others and looking inwardly, it is no wonder that comparison becomes part of their evaluations as they look at themselves, while also looking at others.

When I asked Diane if she experienced any struggles with self-esteem or self-efficacy in higher education, she alluded to the fact that she struggled early on, but that her outlook had changed with time. She admitted:

> No, that's funny that I don't have that same insecurity that I did—maybe sometimes, and perhaps early on, maybe, being around all these really brilliant people. And thinking, "What do I have to say?" So, there's still—sometimes with writing—with the research and writing, sometimes, I'll think that way. But somewhere in that process about halfway through, I started saying, "You know what? I have my own interests. I know what I want. I know where I'm going. I know what I want to look at. And I don't really care what other people think as long as my work is strong, and it's well-designed, and well-written. And, yeah, I have a point of view. And it's okay for me to have a point of view." I think we all have those moments before we get calmed down. But I think that partly comes with my career stage—and late career… (Interview 3, 1:20:38)

Self-esteem and self-efficacy among the participants seemed to change over time with age and experience. For Grace and Jill, at early stages of their careers as band directors, it seemed that comparison played an influential role in their sense of self-esteem in terms of how they felt about themselves and self-efficacy as they doubted their abilities in comparison to others.

Diane shared similar experiences to Grace and Jill as an early career band director, but as she gained experience, she has since found a strengthened sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem toward her work as a teacher and researcher. The work of Orth et al. (2018) revealed that an increase in self-esteem usually accompanies the natural progression of aging between adolescence and middle adulthood, peaking around the age when many people retire (i.e., ages 60-70). Researchers who have studied teachers' self-efficacy levels over time, however, have found mixed results. Putman (2012) found that in comparison to preservice and beginning teachers, those practitioners with years of experience had the highest levels of efficacy pertaining to their work. On the contrary, in their study of teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction, Klassen & Chiu (2010) found that "teachers gain confidence in their teaching skills through their early years and into the mid-career years but that these levels of confidence may decline as teachers enter the later stages of their careers" (p. 748). On one hand, it would be reasonable to assume that the growth in skills that comes with familiarity in one's occupation could potentially lead to an increase in self-efficacy across the span of adulthood, assuming the person maintained similar jobs throughout that time. On the other hand, it may be difficult for some teachers with many years of experience to adjust to transitions over time (e.g., changing expectations that accompany advancements in teaching, learning, and technology; changes in teaching positions; preparing for retirement). It is important to note that each individual's sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem are the result of myriad influences. It would be unreasonable to assume that everyone's experiences would be the same or even comparable.

Feeling Unworthy of Opportunities

Grace and Jill discussed experiences that were accompanied by undertones of unworthiness or feelings of being undeserving of opportunities. Grace talked about getting the job of band director following her father. She shared:

> I only got that job because of my dad. And I think that does make me feel insecure. Maybe that's the worst thing about taking that job is that I didn't—I never said this at the time—I have since leaving, but I think part of me internalized that, that [her father having been the band director] helped me get that job. It was a pretty sought after position. I happened to know a lot of people applied for it. And later people would tease me—bigger band guys that were kind of belittling me would say, "I applied for your job. I didn't get it because I'm not your dad's kid." And I'd be like, "That's probably true, though." Like, "I can't even argue with you. You can be mean to me about that because I actually feel like that's maybe true, too." (Interview 2, 1:33:15-1:34:40)

Jill shared a collegiate hiring experience where she questioned why she was given an interview. She explained:

> And the first thing that went into my mind was, "I bet they weren't diverse enough and needed to have a woman to campus." And that was—I don't know. That was my first assumption when I got the last minute call, not knowing the story that I know now. And so anyway, it's always been interesting to me that that was my first thought of why I got the last minute call. (Interview 2, 1:08:05)

It is important to note that Grace and Jill had similar experiences of feeling unworthiness based on new job opportunities at two different times in their career trajectories. Grace's experience happened upon entry into the profession for the first time as a high school band

director. Jill's experience occurred during the hiring process for her second collegiate music education job. These findings may indicate that women high school band directors may experience low self-esteem and self-efficacy related to new experiences. The feelings of unworthiness experienced by the participants also shared some resemblance of impostor feelings where individuals do not feel like their abilities are good enough to warrant success, and therefore, they must attribute any kind of success (e.g., a new job opportunity) with being in the right place at the right time or luck. These individuals also wonder if they will be as fortunate the next time, further revealing that they did not attribute their successes to their skills and abilities (Clance, 1985; Young, 2011/2023).

Not a Real Doctor

Nancy discussed feeling frustrated based on how other people viewed her doctoral degree. She shared:

> It is also really frustrating that many do not acknowledge doctoral degrees as "real" when it comes to education. Doctorates in the sciences or mathematics or medicine hold a lot more weight—and every time I introduce myself as "Dr." I immediately feel like I have to follow it up with, "not THAT kind of doctor…haha"—like five years of my life and some of the hardest work as a student I have ever done is only a punchline. (Interview 2, Emailed Response)

In her final interview, Nancy continued to explain her feelings saying:

> I felt like nobody really understood how hard it was, especially when people are like, "Well, it's not a real doctor." I'm like, "No, it's not. You're right. But guess what? All of the work I'm doing and all of the energy and emotion and mental capacity that is going into this, is equivalent of med school in a lot of ways. I don't have the stem tools in my

> brain. So, I'm not a rocket scientist, but that doesn't mean that the work I'm doing is not helping the field get better." And that's also it, too. It's hard to describe to people how that is still important. (Interview 3, 1:00:22)

Based on Nancy's experience of being told that her doctoral degree did not make her "a real doctor," I could sense that Nancy felt belittled by those words and that she was made to feel that her hard work was not worthy of the type of intellectual recognition and achievement that accompany a doctoral degree in many other fields. For women former band directors who have potentially already endured belittling and derogatory attitudes during their time in the men-dominated profession, to continue to encounter such behaviors after having put in the hard work for a doctorate degree could be devastating.

For some participants, the doctoral degree seemed to be an attempt at proving to themselves that they could obtain the degree through hard work and discipline, and for others, the attainment seemed to be an attempt to prove themselves to those who created challenges for them in their band directing experiences. Weill (2018) published an article about Ph.D. holders and people's perceptions of whether those individuals should be called "doctor." The author suggested that "for women and people of color, an academic title can be a tool to remind others of their expertise in a world that often undermines it" (para. 8). Weill (2018) continued to discuss how some women have been criticized for their attempt at self-promotion by using their honorary title. In a political piece on the same topic, Riddell (2018) talked about her own experience of earning her Ph.D. and the challenges associated with the title of "Dr." She explained, "Becoming an expert in something is not unusual…anyone who has to go through training and obtain knowledge that sets them apart from someone else has the right to be acknowledged as a qualified expert" (Riddell, 2018, para. 4). Riddell (2018) continued to discuss

how in recent years, it has become a societal norm for people to vilify expertise (para. 4). The realities that Weill and Riddell wrote about are examples of ways that women are socialized not to self-promote, and consequently they may feel that despite their accomplishments, they are never enough. These findings suggest that how others perceive women's hard work and accomplishments can potentially influence women's self-esteem by impacting not only the way they feel about themselves, but also their accomplishments.

Self-Worth Tied to Work

Ellen talked about her self-worth—a concept tied to self-esteem as it is influential on how individuals feel about themselves. Embarking on a new part of her career by pursuing her Ph.D. in music education, Ellen talked about how she now realized how much she had attached her self-worth to her work as a band director. She explained:

> I think about how I tied my sense of self-worth to helping those students. And so, when I'm here, and I'm assigned five student teaching students, or I'm co-teaching a class that's different from, "Here's my program. I'm seeing 300 humans every day that I know that I'm affecting." It's a different set of, "Okay. Well, what is my self-worth if I'm not doing that anymore? And especially going into next year, where the funding—I'm on this grant, so I don't have to have an assistantship, but I still get the funding… (Interview 3, 1:05:07)

Ellen continued talking about how she would not have students in the next year of her work as a Ph.D. student as a result of not having an assistantship. She said:

> This is the first time in 21 years, now, that I don't have any students. Period. I won't have any students at all. My only responsibility is myself. So, I just realized a lot of my self-worth was coming from teaching. So yeah, that's a transition. And I'm trying to reframe it

as: working on myself is just as helpful and is going to be helpful to my future students. If that's the best way to reframe it, I don't know. But yeah, that's been a rough transition. (Interview 3, 1:05:53)

Like many people, Ellen admitted to attaching her self-worth to her work. As a band director, she drew self-worth from the feeling that her work made a significant impact. This finding suggests that self-worth may be something that women former band directors derive from their occupational work. Crocker et al. (2006) discussed the connection between self-esteem and how it can be impacted by one's sense of self-worth and how some individuals create their own contingencies from which they draw self-esteem and self-worth. Crocker et al. (2006) explained, "In domains in which self-esteem is contingent, people often want to prove or demonstrate to themselves and others that they satisfy their contingencies of self-worth: in other words, they tend to have self-validation goals" (p. 1752). For Ellen, her contribution to music education through teaching students may have been in jeopardy as a contingency for both her sense of self-worth and consequently her self-esteem.

In this section, I explored participants' experiences of self-esteem and self-efficacy. I began by talking about self-trust and women's admissions to caring too much about the opinions of others. Next, I discussed the importance of vicarious experiences as they related to women's feelings about being band directors. Comparison was another topic that I discussed in relation to others' opinions. I then analyzed the experience of participants who felt unworthy when it came to new opportunities, as well as one participant who felt the influence of others not considering her to be "a real doctor." I concluded the chapter by discussing how one participant tied her self-worth to her work as a band director and the difficulties she experienced as she transitioned into her Ph.D. work with less teaching responsibilities.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I sought to describe the ways that women former high school band directors experienced impostor phenomenon, perfectionism, vulnerability, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. I began by talking about participants' experiences of impostor phenomenon. I looked at the potential reasons why individuals might believe that everyone experiences IP and how IP often plays a role in new experiences. Exploring participants' mixed perceptions of IP, I discussed how they began to acknowledge their hard work and abilities while IP seemed to prevail through acknowledgement of luck and being in the right place at the right time. I then addressed IP, self-efficacy, and self-esteem as they seemed to help explain some participants' insecurities about their abilities as band directors, as well as exploring how IP impacted participants' higher education experiences.

In the second section, I talked about various aspects of participants' experiences with perfectionism. I began by analyzing participant experiences into self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism. Explaining how some participants experienced perfectionism as a part of their graduate school experiences, I shared how some used graduate school as a place to try to unlearn perfectionist habits. I then, explained how IP and perfectionism related to some participants' need for validation, and then looked at how IP and perfectionism impacted graduate school for one participant.

In the next section, I discussed participants' experiences with vulnerability. I began by talking about vulnerability and trust, and how not everyone is a safe person with whom to be vulnerable. Further, I discussed how participants felt it was important to show their humanity with healthy boundaries. Other's perceptions were a challenge to participants being vulnerable. Those perceptions necessitated the need for some women to assume a persona and made some

women feel that they were being scrutinized by colleagues and parents. Concluding this section I talked about women's difficulties in sharing failures and successes as they may relate to self-silencing and self-promotion.

In the final section, I examined participants' self-esteem and self-efficacy experiences. I discussed the value in vicarious experiences, as well as self-trust and caring too much about other people's opinions. Then, I talked about comparison and how it related to other's opinions. Concluding the chapter, I looked at some of the participants' feelings of unworthiness when it came to new opportunities, how a participant felt about her doctorate not being honored as "a real doctor," and how self-worth can be tied to work.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

How do women former band directors make meaning of their experiences?

Women former band directors made meaning of their work and life experiences by recalling and processing them. As I examined participants' processing of experiences from their high school band directing work and their motivations for leaving their high school positions, I explored their purposes, values, emotions, identities, and goals. Paulsen (2020) discussed how individuals consider experiences, saying, "People often know an experience as a feeling and a way of perceiving or thinking related to an event, an issue, a lack of skill, an understanding, or the alternatives available for taking action" (p. 862). In the present study, participants defined their experiences as former high school band directors by sharing anecdotes, challenges, perceptions, emotions, purposes, and values. Through these narratives, participants processed their experiences to make meaning. This chapter is a departure from the previous two chapters as participants shared less narrative data and focused on meaning-making. Rather than narratives about specific band directing experiences, their responses were mainly descriptive accounts of reflections, sense-making, as well as their actions in response to the meanings they had made.

Each participant came to the interviews at a different place in terms of their processing, recollecting, and evaluation. The interviews served different purposes for the participants based on how much reflection they had done previously. For some participants, the interviews and participation in this study provided a helpful space to recollect, consider, evaluate, and make meaning of some of their experiences. Based on my own experiences with meaning-making, I had a hunch that this would be the case. For the participants who were still processing their experiences, the interviews served as a vehicle for telling their stories and reflecting on their

experiences in a way that allowed the participants to make meaning of them. Narrating their experiences as a method of meaning-making served as both a way to reflect upon difficult situations and an important role in "positive functioning" (McLean & Morrison-Cohen, 2013, p. 204). In other words, processing their experiences may have been influential on participants' abilities to handle and persevere through future challenges. I would argue, however, that perseverance in the face of adversity, while valuable at times, does not directly address oppression and discrimination. Positive functioning may also require making sense of one's experience in a way that allows them to spot oppressive systems and begin to work against them.

In this chapter, I begin by discussing participants' processes of meaning-making through reflection. Participants made meaning of their experiences by employing self-reflection, reflection through sharing with others, reflection over time, and by recognizing grief and acceptance as a part of the reflective process. I conclude the chapter by discussing how participants used their meanings made to work with undergraduate students and new teachers. Participants used their experiences and meanings made to share advice with developing teachers and to work toward educating everyone about the challenges and disparities associated with women's work as high school band directors.

Making Meaning Through Reflection

In this section, I talk about how participants made meaning through various types of reflection. For this discussion, I look at reflection using reflective practice as defined by Jasper (2003). Jasper (2003) discussed reflective practice and how it can be influential on learning and future experiences, saying:

> Essentially, reflective practice means taking our experiences as a starting point for learning. By thinking about them in a purposeful way—using the reflective processes—

> we can come to understand them differently and take action as a result. The learning that we achieve using reflective strategies is different from theory that provides the knowledge underpinning our practice. It is also different from acquiring skills by watching others and mimicking what they do, because it involves consciously thinking about things and actively making decisions. Hence, reflective practice bridges the gap between pure theory and directed practice by providing a strategy that helps to develop understanding and learning. (p. 1)

The value of reflective practice is that it serves as a catalyst for learning and subsequent action based on that learning. While theory and observation are important parts of helping individuals to broadly understand how things work in the world around them, it is the actions of personal experience and reflection that often bring about true and meaningful comprehension. More recently, Tovey and Skolits (2022) explained that "RP [reflective practice] is defined…as an iterative process of thinking and questioning, self and contextual awareness, focused on learning and improvement" (p. 19). Both of these explanations highlight learning as a focal point of reflection.

In this section, I begin by discussing how some participants made meaning of their experiences through self-reflection and internal processing. I then explain how Kristen and Grace processed their experiences by means of sharing with others. Also, I look at the role of time in participants' reflections and meaning-making. I conclude the section by discussing Ellen and Susan's reflections through grief and acceptance.

Self-Reflection

When I asked participants to describe how they made or were making meaning of their high school band directing experiences, Amanda and Grace discussed their process for self-

reflection. Amanda discussed the importance of self-reflection as she made meaning of her high school band directing experiences. She shared:

> I'm very much an internal processor…So, in terms of HOW I've processed this…Just through a lot of thinking. Maybe a few conversations with my husband or close friends, but mostly just a lot of internal grappling. I do spend a lot of time reflecting on my time as a high school band director...On the whole, I know my time as a high school band director was largely positive for my students and the community, but as any good reflective practitioner would, I have a few things I would have done differently. (Personal Correspondence, 6/18/24)

When I asked Amanda what she would have done differently based on her reflections, she said:

> I, like many, got mired in the day-to-day rehearsal grind and wish I'd stopped to do more "big picture" things and worried less about perfect performances and ratings…Anyone you talk to will tell you ratings don't matter and they can't possibly measure the value of music education on the whole…but as a young director getting to know my colleagues, I feel like introductions went like, "Hi. How are you? What's your name? Where do you teach? How big is your band? What did you get at festival last year?...those last two questions make a young director think that band size and ratings not only determine how good your band is but how you are to be seen/valued/treated as a PERSON. (Personal Correspondence, 9/16/24)

Additionally, Amanda shared some interpersonal situations where she felt that awkwardness could have been avoided. She explained:

> There were a few situations that were complicated that didn't need to be (think parents, boosters, admin…those types of non-musical things). I had to learn that because if

> something is a “no brainer” to me as the band director, I can’t assume everyone else knows that. Over time I learned to communicate more clearly and thoroughly, including my “why”, and most people would get on board once they understood my thought process/logic. I just got off on the wrong foot with a couple of people and it could have been avoided…it ended up fine, but it would have been nice to avoid those awkward things. (Personal Correspondence, 9/16/24)

Grace also talked about self-reflection. She shared:

> As I go through my days now and have new teaching experiences (some of those similar but many of those different from my high school band days), I can’t help but compare and contrast those to my past experiences. In doing so, it leads me to moments of clarity about why I felt a certain way in the past, why I did that thing, why I continue (or don’t want to continue) to do that thing, etc. (Personal Correspondence, 6/18/24)

Amanda and Grace discussed how they approached their personal self-reflection and meaning-making processes. Like Jasper (2003) and Tovey and Skolits (2022), Costa and Kallick (2008) also discussed reflection as a part of learning. They said, “Reflecting on experiences encourages insight and complex learning. We foster our own growth when we control our learning, so some reflection is best done alone” (p. 221). Both Amanda and Grace talked about their learning through reflection. Amanda was able to identify interpersonal communication and certain musical values she held as a young director as things she would do differently if given the opportunity, while Grace was able to determine aspects of her experiences that brought clarity. Amanda and Grace came to the learning they shared through personal reflection based on their experiences. Both reflected on their actions as band directors and the things they valued in order to learn from their experiences. The learning they shared in these instances was valuable based

on the personal insight on which they built their analysis—something that would have potentially looked very different if done collaboratively. Amanda and Grace's reflective practices also seem to align with the findings of Tovey and Skolits (2022). The researchers acknowledged reflective practice (RP) as "a practice of self-awareness" (p. 18), but proceeded to explain that self-awareness also necessitates that one comprehends the context of their reflection through social collaboration—a topic that I will explain further in the next subsection.

Reflection Through Sharing With Others

Kristen and Grace discussed how they made meaning through discussing their high school band directing experiences with others—specifically those with whom they had established relationships. Kristen talked about how she chose to reflect by sharing with others. She said:

> Based on what I understand about memory and meaning-making, I think it involves a bit of self-reflection but that the majority of the work takes place as I recall and consider my music teaching experiences with colleagues (including you), friends, family, faculty, my therapist, and even sometimes current students I'm working with. (Personal Correspondence, 6/21/24)

Kristen talked about sharing her experiences and reflections with her higher education students. Grace also shared how she discussed her experiences with others as a means of processing. She explained, "As thoughts and moments of clarity arise through my reflection, I do often discuss those moments with others around me. I've made meaning through self-reflection and discussion professionally (such as with you!), co-workers, friends, and family" (Personal Correspondence, 06/18/2024).

Tovey and Skolits (2022) discussed the importance of reflection through sharing with others. The researchers talked about "humility and the ability to be able to challenge what we think we know" and how that was an important part of reflective practice (p. 19). Without embracing humility and being able to see past one's own preconceptions, individuals may not glean the benefits of collaborative reflection or be able to fully grasp the context of their experiences by processing the perspectives of those with whom they reflect. The authors further shared how one of their participants described reflective practice without collaboration as "swimming in our own sweat" (Tovey & Skolits, 2022, p. 18)—a metaphor that describes how it would be easy to be consumed with one's own personal perspective and how just that one perspective alone may not be as beneficial as the collaborative learning that comes with sharing. Tovey and Skolits (2022) further elaborated, stating that individuals "often enter into a context and have a lot of learning to accomplish in order to have an integrated and holistic understanding" (p. 18). This statement implies that the perspectives shared in collaborative reflection lead to much greater learning and result in a more complete understanding of one's experiences. I will return to this topic in the next section on meanings made.

Reflection Over Time

Four of the participants (Diane, Ellen, Amanda, and Jill) discussed the significance that time had played on their meaning-making through reflection. Amanda and Ellen discussed the importance of having time and space to consider their experiences. Amanda said, "Now that I'm a few years in and had some time to process, I'm in a better place with it. But the first 1-2 years were…hard and strange, as this 'processing' was consuming as was the new job itself" (Personal Correspondence, 6/18/24).

Ellen also acknowledged time and space as a part of her reflection. She shared:

> The meaning-making of the sexism aspect of our profession is also quite different for me now; partially in thanks for the time and space to not only reflect, but read more deeply into feminist literature (what high school band director has time to do that??). I realize that challenges I faced might not have looked overtly sexist on the surface, but ultimately, likely were. (Personal Correspondence, 6/17/24)

In Chapter 4, I shared Ellen's experiences of being told by conducting pedagogues to embody Lord Melbourne as she conducted that movement from *Lincolnshire Posey.* Those experiences are examples of challenges that initially may not have looked sexist. At first glance, it probably seemed like a few good-willed pedagogues were trying to help Ellen refine her craft. In fact, the pedagogues probably intended to help Ellen expand her conducting toolbox to include more variety of gestures and styles, since Ellen admitted that she was not very assertive. Assertiveness is a characteristic necessary to effectively conduct a movement like *Lord Melbourne*. However, the pedagogues' desire for Ellen to embody Lord Melbourne as the method to help her feel assertive on the podium was problematic as an unconscious gender bias and a double standard. With reflection over time and the meaning-making that accompanied it, Ellen was able to recognize and identify the gender-based toxicity of that experience.

Diane, who was getting ready to enter retirement, acknowledged that reflection was an ongoing, whole-career undertaking. She explained:

> I have been quite reflective throughout my career in thinking about how the ways in which I was taught, I myself taught, and the response of my students to whom I was a musician, teacher, and human being, came to alter my teaching and identity as a band director today. However, I have spent SO much time thinking through my entire career, that I do believe that is what I have been doing. (Personal Correspondence, 06/19/24)

Jill also shared her experience with regard to time and how it impacted reflection. When I asked her whether she did anything in particular to process her experiences in a way that would prepare her to be able to use them to work with preservice and new teachers now, Jill shared:

> Honestly, nothing that really stands out in my mind. I left teaching in May and then immediately started my Ph.D. in August, so it was a quick move across the country to get ready to start grad school. So, I don't think I ever did anything specific, other than get ready for the next chapter of my life. So maybe I never really processed things at all. I am not really sure. (Personal Correspondence, 06/17/24)

Because Jill focused on moving across the country and beginning to transition back into graduate school, she was not sure that she took the time to reflect. With the short time frame between finishing her last school year as a high school director and beginning her Ph.D. work, Jill did not feel that she was able to glean from reflection over time, making her wonder if she had processed her experiences fully. However, based on further clarification, Jill felt that she reflected and made meaning of her experiences as she went through new experiences in graduate school. As a doctoral student, she described having the opportunity to research and read, which brought her to the realization that she was not alone in her experiences as a woman band director. This finding suggests that time may facilitate learning through new experiences and opportunities.

The progression of time seemed to be an important part of reflection for Amanda, Ellen, Diane, and Jill. Their appreciation and acknowledgement of the passage of time was very similar to the value placed on time by longitudinal researchers. Derrington (2019) talked about how change "occurs gradually over years and includes the learning process of individuals…as they adapt to change" (p. 8). Participants seemed to reflect and learn as time distanced them from their experiences as high school band directors—experiences that were both positive and

negative. Furthermore, time seemed to serve as a catalyst for processing and learning through further new experiences. This process may be part of the learning based on one's adaptation to change to which Derrington (2019) was referring.

Finding Pride and Self-Confidence: Using Grief and Acceptance in Reflection

Ellen and Susan talked about reflection through the lens of grief and acceptance. Ellen talked about feeling like her meaning-making process followed what many people experience as the stages of grief. She explained:

> The meaning-making process is ongoing, and in some ways, seemed to follow the grief cycle! Technically, my last day as a high school director was in June of 2021. However, we were still online; my last day that felt like a high school director in the traditional sense of the word was in March 2020, before the COVID quarantines. I miss my students and probably always will. However, four years emotionally and three years technically have given me time to come around to "acceptance." That was "my previous life," and I will likely never be "Ms. X" again. And I am fine with that! When people ask me if I would go back to teaching high school after my doctorate (which I often feel is a bit of a microaggression…my male studio-mates are never asked that!) I immediately respond, "No." I felt proud of what I did and left ready for a new challenge. Why would I go back now? (Personal Correspondence, 06/17/24)

Susan talked about going through the stages of acceptance. She said:

> I have changed so much since my time as a high school band director. However, over the last five years, I feel like I've gone through a lot of different stages of acceptance and making sense of my public school career as it relates to my career (and life) in the grander scheme of things. For the first few years, I felt like I really had to build my

> confidence in my abilities as an educator back up, and I had several moments of realizing that I was actually pretty good at my job, and instead, it was the external circumstances that made me feel like a failure much of the time. I held onto a lot of resentment and bitterness because of how much my self-confidence was shot when I left the classroom, but I've noticed recently that I'm starting to let go of that as well. I'm finally able to look back at my high school teaching career with a lot of pride… (Personal Correspondence, 6/17/24)

Both Ellen and Susan discussed feeling like they went through some of the stages of grief to eventually come to acceptance based on the loss of their high school jobs and their transitions out of identities as high school band directors. In their book about grief and grieving, Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2005) talked about acceptance from the perspective of losing a loved one. However, I would argue that their description of acceptance would also apply as individuals grieve the loss of something else they loved, such as a job or identity. Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2005) explained:

> Acceptance is often confused with the notion of being all right or okay with what has happened. This is not the case. Most people don't ever feel okay or all right about the loss of a loved one. This stage is about accepting the reality that our loved one is physically gone and recognizing that this new reality is the permanent reality. We will never like this reality or make it okay, but eventually we accept it. We learn to live with it. It is the new norm with which we must learn to live. This is where our final healing and adjustments can take a firm hold. (pp. 24-25)

It seemed as though both Ellen and Susan worked through their grief to a place of acceptance. Ellen seemed to find acceptance as a new starting point, acknowledging her previous

life as a high school band director and even the acceptance that she might never be addressed as "Ms. X." again. For Susan, acceptance seemed to follow a period of grieving and working through some anger and resentment. For both women, time seemed to be an important catalyst for working through their grief to a place of acceptance. Based on Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2005)'s definition of acceptance, I assert that, at the time of interviews, both Ellen and Susan were well-established into the healing that accompanies acceptance based on the pride that each woman felt about their work as high school band directors.

More recently, in Kessler's (2019) book, he introduced "Finding Meaning" as the sixth stage of grief. The author explained how "finding meaning in loss empowers us to find a path forward" (p. 2). Participants in this study who experienced grief associated with the loss of their jobs or identities as high school band directors may be able to use meaning to forge ahead, begin to heal, and implement positive change. Kessler (2019) continued to say that "everything you do has the potential for meaning" (p. 103). In other words, women former high school band directors may be able to find meaning in their former identities, the experiences they had as high school band directors, their new identities as Ph.D. students or university faculty, and even their new work experiences. Based on the ways that Ellen and Susan talked about their experiences, I believe that both women were already in the midst of making meaning through their loss.

Both Ellen and Susan also struggled with a lost sense of self-confidence. In the quote above, Susan described how she seemed to lose self-confidence when she left her high school teaching job. Ellen also described her loss of self-confidence, after 14 years of teaching, saying:

> One surprising aspect of the meaning-making is the loss of my confidence in being in a position I could do well. I would say by year 10, I was feeling like I was beginning to "get" it. I was taking more risks, bands were sounding better, I was confident. I had built

> relationships in my school and in the profession that were meaningful and deepening my career. The last seven to eight years before transitioning out were some of the best. I miss that version of myself. I know I will eventually get there again, but in this new adventure, every role is new and different (researcher, presenter, teacher-educator, conductor of more advanced musicians). I chose to put myself in this position of discomfort, but that doesn't make it more comfortable! I look forward to finding my confidence again. (Personal Correspondence, 06/17/24)

While Ellen and Susan seemed to have found acceptance in terms of the loss that accompanied leaving high school band directing and the things they missed as a part of that job, their self-confidence may have also been impacted by their change in identity from band directors to Ph.D. students. Ellen described the newness of the roles that accompanied being in higher education as a student and how she felt uncomfortable. Susan described the need to rebuild her confidence upon leaving her high school teaching job, which would have been synonymous with her beginning work as a Ph.D. student.

In their article on work-related identity (WRI) loss, Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly (2014) stated that "WRI loss triggers an interruption to existing identity, it creates the need for development of a new sense of self, and…it involves a liminal state between letting go of the old and moving on to a new identity" (p. 67). For Ellen, moving out of high school band directing and into higher education music education interrupted her identity as a high school band director. Based on her discussion of coming to acceptance that being "Ms. X" was part of her previous life, I assert that Ellen was embarking on the process of developing her new sense of self as a Ph.D. student and letting go of her previous identity as a high school band director. While Susan

did not specifically speak about her change of professional identity, I wonder if identity loss may have also been an influential aspect of her journey toward regaining her self-confidence.

In this section, I discussed participants' meaning-making through reflection. I began by talking about how some participants preferred to make sense of their experiences through self-reflection and internal processing. Others sought to understand their experiences by reflecting through sharing with others. I then explained the role of time in participants' reflection efforts. The passage of time seemed to be an essential part of meaning-making and learning for several participants, who appreciated the space to process that time afforded, as well as the change of perspective that often accompanies time. I then discussed how two participants talked about experiencing pride as a result of working through grief and acceptance in their reflective practices. Concluding the section, I talked about Ellen and Susan's loss of self-confidence when they left their band directing jobs. I explained how their self-confidence may have been influenced by work-related identity loss and the need to assume their new identities as Ph.D. students while letting go of their identities as high school band directors.

Using Meanings Made: Working With Undergraduates & New Teachers

In this section, I talk about how women who had previously made meaning of their experiences as high school band directors used the meanings made in their collegiate work. By using meanings made, participants utilized critical reflection. "Critical reflection is a 'meaning-making process' that helps us set goals, use what we've learned in the past to inform future action and consider the real-life implications of our thinking" (Centre for Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo, n.d., par.1). This reflective process involves deliberate action and investment in making meaning; it does not just happen. Beginning the section, I discussed how some participants used critical reflection and their meanings made to guide their work with

undergraduate students. I then share how meanings made sometimes led to advice for developing teachers. Closing the section, I talked about how participants felt inspired by their meanings made to educate everyone about the experiences of women in high school band directing in order to help facilitate meaningful change.

Using Experiences to Guide Work With Undergraduates

For participants who had previously processed their experiences, being able to use those experiences to guide their work with undergraduates was a clear example of "meanings made" (Park, 2017, p. 16). Park (2017) discussed how individuals might make use of the way that they create meaning from experience. They talked about "meanings made" as "the changes that one makes as a result of the meaning-making process—changes in how one appraises the situation as well as in one's global meaning system (e.g., reconfigured global beliefs or goals)" (p. 16). Participants discussed how they were incorporating their experiences into their work as a part of educating undergraduate preservice teachers with the intent to better prepare them for what they will likely encounter in the profession. Such an incorporation of experiences into teacher educators' work with undergraduates could potentially also change what future women high school band directors may encounter, especially over time as they work to educate everyone about the disparities and oppression experienced by women band directors—a topic I will revisit toward the end of this chapter. Bain (2004) talked about "teaching as anything they might do to help and encourage students to learn" (p. 49). Susan felt that honesty about what women face in the field was important. She shared, "We've got to be honest with people about what they're walking into, and what their colleagues are walking into" (Int.3, 1:02:33-1:04:23). Engaging students in honest conversation about professors' and graduate students' past experiences, as well

as allowing undergraduate students to share their experiences in fieldwork thus far, is one way participants encouraged learning.

Amanda shared about these types of educational conversations with her students. She said:

> I think talking about it with everybody is good. I mean, at least once a semester, with my seniors who are about to go student teach, I do have conversations with them about being a woman band director. And we talk about it. I share some of my experiences with them. I ask the female and female-identifying students in the room to share their experiences. (Interview 3, 42:52)

Participants also shared specific events that were impactful on them. Some events were personal parts of their life histories, while others were influential events that participants had encountered while teaching. Though Nancy did not share her background with everyone, she was willing to tell her story to encourage and empower students from similar backgrounds. She said, "I give a speech all over the place about the power of the starfish thrower[12] and the importance of making a difference to one kid" (Nancy, Interview 2, 15:52). Jill shared about helping high school students through the grieving process after a student was murdered in the fall of her first year of teaching (Interview 2, 36:34).

Other participants specifically viewed empowerment as part of their purpose as music teacher educators in higher education. Jill talked about strategically using role models to help women preservice teachers see all the possibilities they had for teaching opportunities. She

[12] The story of the starfish thrower is about a little girl on a beach full of starfish. She spends time throwing many of the starfish back into the surf. When asked about her motive for using her time to throw starfish back in the ocean, she throws another in and explains that she made a difference for that one. She inspired others to help in her efforts, allowing for all of the washed up starfish to be put back in the water.

talked about using role models in the Introduction to Music Education class that she taught. Jill said:

> [Referencing the high school band director that Jill sends students to observe] I always use a local female director because she's amazing and she has one of the best marching bands in this area. And she's very overlooked, sometimes, and people don't realize how amazing she is. But I do that specifically for the female students in the room. I want them to be aware that they can do this. This is okay. And then, when they get to Practicum IV…we see another female high school band director. She has a very different program…And so, she's the other one we go to, so that they can see that in action. And I think that's great for my female students. (Interview 3, 49:05)

This kind of empowerment is a potentially important counterbalance against the exclusion of women and individuals of minoritized identities seen in music education publications such as *Music Educators Journal* (Kruse et al., 2015) and the *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* book series. This type of underrepresentation and exclusion limits preservice individuals of minoritized identities from seeing individuals like themselves in positions that they may desire (Kruse et al., 2015). In the present study, this type of empowerment may be the result of meanings made and processing that women former band directors have already undertaken. In order to mentor or help others, women must already have reflected and made meaning of certain experiences—a process that may be beneficial as participants attempt to help others navigate the profession.

On the flip side of empowerment, however, Amanda shared how women must be careful not to use their identity as a woman as an excuse. She explained:

> When I'm having these conversations with them [preservice teachers], I'm also careful to tell them to make sure that we're not making being a woman band director a thing…Because I do think it can be a quick scapegoat or excuse. I think there might be some women in our profession that anytime they meet any adversity, it's, "Oh, it's because I'm a woman…They just don't like me because I'm a woman." And so, I want to be careful that we're not using that as an excuse or a crutch. Like, yes, it's a thing, and here's what we're gonna do to help each other make this less of a thing. But we're not gonna make it a problem if it's not one. (Amanda, Interview 3, 47:07)

Amanda pointed out that not every challenge that women band directors encounter is a result of discrimination or patriarchal oppression. While sharing experiences with undergraduate students, it is necessary to make that distinction clear so that preservice women band directors do not become socialized to believe that they can do no wrong, or that their efforts will always be the best for their students. Teacher educators must train their students to see the discrimination, patriarchal oppression, and gender disparity. I will share more about this topic in the section about educating everyone at the end of this chapter.

Sharing Advice for Developing Teachers

The desire to share advice and experiences based on the sense that women have made of their challenges was a form of meanings made among the women former high school band directors. Many participants talked about pieces of advice they had shared with preservice teachers. They shared some advice with the intent to help new teachers not make the same mistakes or have some of the same experiences that the participants had when they were new to the profession. Jill and Amanda talked with students about establishing relationships with other music education professionals as a resource when the new teachers needed someone to help them

figure things out (Amanda, Interview 2, 4:03; Jill, Interview 3, 47:21). Nancy talked about the ability to say "no" to promote longevity in teaching. She shared that "if we spend more time teaching our undergrads the importance of balance and saying no to some things, and knowing that it's okay to say no, I think that we would do a great service" (Nancy, Interview 2, 15:52). Further, she felt that empowering preservice teachers in this way would help to prevent burnout and music teacher attrition. University music education professors, and I would suggest graduate teaching assistants, are usually very positive sources of secondary socialization for preservice teachers (Isbell, 2008). Secondary socialization is defined as "the process by which an individual learns the basic values, norms, and behaviors that are expected of them outside the main agency of the family (Nickerson, 2024, para. 1). Secondary socialization occurs during adolescence and adulthood and is mainly achieved through peer groups, work colleagues, and clubs or societies" (Nickerson, 2024, para. 4). Therefore, this type of advice-sharing with the intent for better preparation and attrition prevention may be worthy of further exploration as an integral part of teacher education and how this engagement with professors and graduate students may be impactful over time or upon entry into the field.

As participants continue to share their advice and experiences with developing teachers, that information may also help direct the recipient's meaning-making. When participants share advice and experiences in their work as mentors for developing teachers, they are fulfilling the action aspect of Jasper's (2003) definition of reflective practice, as referenced at the beginning of this chapter. The participants' meaning-making provides comprehension of their experiences that they can impart as learning for mentees. The potential meaning-making power in these types of sharing relationships reiterates the need for mentorship of women high school band directors.

Educating Everyone

For women former high school band directors, the desire to use meanings made from previous experiences to fuel education for everyone was an important topic. Several participants talked about the need to educate not just women but everyone about the challenges and disparities women face in the field. Susan and Nancy both acknowledged that some important conversations were missing. Susan explained:

> We are talking with our undergraduate students about those barriers that…students face, but we don't actually talk to our undergraduate students about the barriers that teachers are facing. And we're starting to see that kind of thing pop up, too. (Susan, Interview 3, 1:02:33)

Susan went on to say that these conversations need to happen among everyone. She talked about the advantages of such conversations, stating, "They're able to see it, and they're able then to recognize like, 'Oh yeah. That happens. Wow, that sucks! I can be an agent for change in that, as well" (Susan, Interview 3, 1:02:33-1:04:23).

Susan acknowledged that not only should we be talking about challenges and experiences of music students, but also those of the music teachers. Music teacher experiences seem to be often overlooked as teacher educators work diligently to help their preservice teachers learn to address a wide range of student needs. Education that also addresses the challenges of music teachers in the profession, and more specifically women high school band directors, may serve as a critical first step toward change—first by helping students recognize and call out the issues, and then through the empowerment to help create change.

Nancy also shared her perspective on missing conversation topics. She said, “We have so much energy around gender and pronouns and really learning about those things to become more educated in how to approach our classrooms. But we don’t about basic cisgender stuff” (Nancy, Interview 3, 1:26:24). While this comment might initially be construed as exclusive, I did not believe that to be the intent of her statement. Based on our conversations, Nancy shared a passion to help preservice and practicing teachers of all identities. I interpreted her comment to emphasize the need for teacher educators not to miss meaningful opportunities to work with cisgender women students and teachers while still acknowledging the critical importance of addressing the obstacles faced by those of the most minoritized identities.

Nancy continued to discuss how teacher educators often neglect to talk about things that might be perceived as offensive to women in band directing. She shared that many stories of women as recipients of offensive behavior could be found on social media groups that are directed toward music educators. The abundant presence of these stories and pleas for help on social media, to which Nancy referred, suggest that women preservice teachers may not understand what they are entering into and how to handle such situations. Additionally, women may lack mentors with whom they feel comfortable sharing their struggles, potentially creating a need for these women to reach out to other music educators on social media as a means of processing and advice-seeking.

Other participants discussed why it was important to have these conversations with everyone. Amanda shared:

> I do it, number one, so that they know that if they’re [women] experiencing things like that, they shouldn’t just brush it off. Because it is pervasive. But also, so that the male

> students in the room are aware of some of the things that they might not think anything about, but is really a microaggression or something like that. (Interview, 42:52)

Ellen talked about having conversations regarding gender biases. She said:

> Let's talk about this as a thing. Here are the statistics as they stand right now in terms of gender and this profession. Let's talk about some of the biases. And maybe just starting that conversation so that you can start thinking about it and not try to victimize yourself, but just realize, "Okay, so this is a thing," …so that this is just a conversation that's being had, rather than a surprise to discover when you're out there. (Ellen, Interview 3, 47:44-48:40)

Ellen discussed educating everyone by making the issues real. She talked about looking at the statistics to bring some of the issues to light. Moreover, she was ready to be straight forward and honest about the biases at work in women band director experiences. Her emphasis was about bringing awareness so that no one would be surprised upon entry into the profession.

Diane admitted to incorporating articles into her curriculum to help her college students understand socialization through gender preferences and gendered roles. She commented:

> It's societal. I try to point out that there are forces at work around us that we may not be aware of that are influencing how we think about things and what we value. And that can include our roles as women or men. (Interview 3, 1:07:45)

Educating everyone to be aware of and recognize the disparities, biases, challenges, and microaggressions that women encounter in the field are a vital starting point for taking action to counter the prevalence of these experiences (Shouldice, 2023). Conversations with students are crucial, but the efforts to bring awareness to these topics must be tied into the music education curriculum, rather than being siloed into a single course or conversation—a topic that I

will expound upon in Chapter 7. By including articles into her course curriculum, Diane was attempting to bring conversations about the power of gender socialization into everyday classroom conversation rather than as a one-time topic.

In this section, I discussed how participants used meanings made in their experiences as a part of their work with undergraduate students and beginning teachers in higher education. I began the section by defining meanings made and explaining how participants who had previously made sense of their experiences could begin incorporating their meanings made into the education of students in their undergraduate music education programs. This incorporation of personal learning into participants' work in higher education aligns with the actions described as a part of Jasper (2003)'s definition of reflective practice. Participants shared some of their specific experiences with students, while others attempted to fulfill their purpose of empowering women by providing role models. I then discussed how many participants wanted to share advice with developing teachers. Their intent was to help the developing teachers not make the same mistakes that the participants had made as well as to help better prepare the preservice teachers for what they would likely encounter in the profession—a move that could potentially help prevent attrition based on praxis shock. Praxis shock is a response to encountering an unexpected reality about one's work or workplace that is different than an individual may presume (Ballantyne & Retell, 2020: See also Chapter 1). I concluded the section by talking about how participants felt that sharing their experiences was a great way to fuel education for everyone. The participants discussed the importance of educating everyone, not just women, about the challenges encountered by women band directors of various identities. They provided safe spaces to facilitate conversations in their classrooms and made diligent efforts to help their students

understand socialization related to gender norms that influence values and beliefs within music education.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I explored my third research question about how women former high school band directors made meaning of their experiences. In the beginning of the chapter, I talked about how individuals consider their experiences in order to make meaning of them and how I aimed to create a space for the participants in my study to process their experiences via narrative accounts. Acknowledging that each participant was in a different place in terms of the amount of reflection and meaning-making they had done, I hoped that the interviews would serve as a vehicle for helping participants consider their experiences, regardless of how much they had processed prior to interviews. In the first section, I explained several ways that participants made meaning of their experiences through multiple forms of reflection including self-reflection, reflection through sharing with others, reflection over time, as well as using grief and acceptance through reflection to find pride in their former work. I also explored how work-related identity loss may have influenced the self-confidence of two of the participants.

In the second section, I talked about participants' meaning-making through critical reflection. I began by discussing how participants who had already processed their experiences to some degree felt compelled to use their meanings made to work with undergraduate students and beginning teachers in higher education, thereby engaging in action following reflection. Participants felt that preparing women for what they would likely encounter once they entered the field as band directors was important. The participants shared impactful experiences but also sought to empower women preservice teachers by providing role models. I then talked about how participants aimed to share advice with beginning teachers. The participants wanted to help

new teachers avoid the same pitfalls they had experienced. I concluded the chapter by talking about participants' aims to educate everyone about the challenges and disparities often experienced by women high school band directors. Educating everyone is the first step for working against domineering systems such as patriarchal oppression.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

While the music education landscape has improved for women in some ways, the overall experiences influencing women's desires to move out of high school band directing have not. Many of the original studies about the experiences of women band directors are 10-20 years old. These studies have been crucial for establishing the baseline of women's experiences in the field. The current study, however, is unique to this literature—addressing topics that music education researchers have not previously explored. In this study, I have explored former women band directors' experiences with psychological constructs such as impostor phenomenon, perfectionism, vulnerability, and self-efficacy/self-esteem. Additionally, I explored how these women made meaning of their experiences through reflection and utilized their meanings made as a part of their work in collegiate music education. The results of this study were similar to the original literature, which also detailed the oppression and exclusion experienced by women band directors. It is distressing that all of the participants in this study reported many of the same types of oppression as the participants in earlier literature. Therefore, this dissertation is valuable as a study of the oppression women experience and how that oppression often manifests in women high school band directors' challenging life and work experiences. Additionally, this work affirms earlier research and demonstrates a lack of progress. In the next section, I will summarize the key findings of this study before moving to implications.

Key Findings

In Chapter 4, I explored elements of women band directors' experiences that influenced their decisions to move out of high school band directing and into collegiate music education. My analysis indicated that many women encounter obstacles to their band directing experiences that include interactions with the old boys' club, feeling like they need to adopt a masculine

persona to fit in and be successful as a band director, as well as experiencing gender stereotyping where others assume they hold more stereotypically feminine jobs. When asked about their motivations for leaving high school band directing, many participants expressed a desire for something new and different. In many cases, this meant seeking new challenges and opportunities for growth. Many participants also discussed their love of working with student teachers as their motivation for moving into higher education. Those women desired to make an impact on the profession by serving as teacher educators and mentors to preservice music teachers. The participants also discussed extreme time commitment, which was a deterrent to remaining in high school band directing. Participants sought flexibility and agency over their time as they moved into higher education.

In Chapter 5, I described how the participants experienced impostor phenomenon, perfectionism, vulnerability, and self-efficacy/self-esteem. For IP, results indicated that participants had mixed perceptions based on acknowledgment of their diligent work while simultaneously recognizing luck as well as fortuitous location and timing as parts of the experience. In combination with self-efficacy/self-esteem, IP seemed to explain some participants' insecurities about their band directing abilities. Perfectionism was involved in various aspects of many participants' experiences in graduate school, where some women attempted to unlearn their perfectionist tendencies. In combination with perfectionism, IP is also related to some women's needs for validation in their work as band directors. For vulnerability, participants talked about the importance of showing their humanity while also maintaining healthy boundaries. Some participants found perceptions of other people as an obstacle to their ability to be vulnerable, creating situations where women felt they needed to take on a particular persona. Results also indicated that women high school band directors struggled to share their

failures and successes. Self-efficacy/self-esteem also influenced participants' work as they found value in vicarious experiences and felt the need to trust themselves more. Participants also discussed experiences relating to others' opinions as well as comparison with others. Furthermore, some women shared how they felt like they did not deserve new opportunities, how feelings of self-worth related to their work, and how others did not honor their title of "doctor" despite the hard work required to get the degree.

In Chapter 6, I focused on how women former band directors made meaning of their experiences. Each participant was in a different place in their processing. They discussed their meaning-making through various methods, including individual reflection, collaborative reflection, reflection over time, and working through grief and acceptance on their way to finding pride in their band directing work. Some participants also discussed their loss of self-confidence, which may have been influenced by work-related identity loss. Results indicated that participants engaged in critical reflection as they worked to use meanings made to aid in educating and sharing advice with preservice and new teachers about the disparities often experienced by women band directors.

These results and insights born from the reflections of women former high school band directors are invaluable resources for the music education profession. By gleaning from women's experiences in high school band directing, music teacher educators can identify the challenges and obstacles many women face in the field. Only by understanding the stories and reflections of those who have experienced these challenges can others learn about women band director experiences while also learning to become activists against the oppression and discrimination that encourage attrition. Reading the results shared in a document like this, however, cannot be the final step in educating oneself. To help readers continue their journey of learning and

growing, in the following sections, I have included some suggestions for future practice as well as some topics that warrant further research.

Suggestions for Future Practice

Based on the findings of this study, I make suggestions that may help to inform and improve practices related to preservice music teacher training, working with women band directors, and the reflection processes for those women who previously worked as high school band directors and have since moved into collegiate music education. Understanding psychological constructs is important because of their potential influence on women band director experiences. Each psychological construct studied in this dissertation has negative manifestations—many of which are related to deficit self-understandings. In this section, I have identified some ways that music teacher educators and mentors may help women to navigate negative manifestations and identify toxic experiences based on the systemic oppression of women. I then present a call for educating everyone specifically about patriarchal oppression, discrimination, and the disparities experienced by women high school band directors and the impact of that oppression on their experiences. I talk about the need for everyone to serve as mentors and role models for women band directors. Furthermore, I discuss the extreme gender disparity among women collegiate band directors and issue an additional call for systemic change in response to this toxicity. Finally, I encourage women band directors, as well as those who have moved in the profession, to adopt meaningful reflective practice, which may include personal reflection, collaborative reflection, and purposeful use of time to facilitate meaning-making.

Understanding Psychological Constructs

In Chapter 2, I discussed the surface-level understanding of psychological constructs held by many in the profession based on research from both outside and inside of music education. In Chapter 5, I shared women former high school band directors' experiences as they related to psychological constructs, including impostor phenomenon, perfectionism, vulnerability, and self-efficacy/self-esteem. Based on the oppressive experiences shared by the participants in this study, it is essential for teacher educators and those serving as mentors to understand the influence of psychological constructs on women's work experiences. Without this knowledge, it is impossible for teacher educators and mentors to prepare their students and mentees to navigate the challenges that often accompany these, and other potentially influential psychological constructs. In this section, I discuss each of the psychological constructs identified in Chapter 5. I describe the negative manifestations that may accompany each one of the constructs. Then, I make suggestions for how music teacher educators may help preservice band directors and beginning teachers identify challenges based on systems of oppression. In some cases, teacher educators may help prepare women band directors for what they may encounter in the profession, equipping them to navigate gender-based challenges.

Music teacher educators should find the negative manifestations of the psychological constructs in this study to be a serious concern. Looking at the psychological constructs prevalent among women who are leaving high school band directing can help teacher educators make decisions about the most crucial constructs for inclusion in teacher education programs. In this section, I provide some information to help guide teacher educators' approaches to helping preservice teachers think about and navigate the psychological constructs presented in Chapter 5.

Impostor Phenomenon

As nearly 70% of individuals will experience impostor phenomenon at some point in their lifetime, IP should be discussed as a normal part of many life experiences (Sakulku, 2011). Some of these life experiences include being a student, individuals who hold creative jobs (Mann, 2019), first-generation college/graduate school students (Mann, 2019; Sims & Cassidy, 2020), individuals with highly successful parents (Mann, 2019), and individuals who hold minoritized identities (Mann, 2019). Based on the research showing that undergraduate students experience IP at frequent and intense levels, music teacher educators must prioritize addressing IP among students in their programs.

At the same time, teacher educators must not neglect to talk about IP from the perspective of oppression that makes individuals feel that they are not good enough. As an example, in 2020, Hallion posed a question on Twitter about IP and whether toxic situations caused individuals' experiences of it. They asked, "Do you really have imposter syndrome, or is it just that you've spent much of your life having your knowledge and skills subtly dismissed and devalued" (Hallion, 2020)? Hallion brings a critical inquiry to light. They brought into question the experience of IP and whether it is responsible for what women experience or whether those feelings are a response to oppression and adverse treatment that make individuals question their abilities and efforts.

As preservice music teachers, many individuals meet at least one of the identities in which IP is considered a norm. Conversations with undergraduate and graduate students are a crucial first step for helping preservice music teachers navigate the manifestations of IP. Rinn (2024) recommended incorporating IP-related conversations into early collegiate music education meetings, such as orientation sessions (Nápoles et al., 2024), as a first step toward

normalizing IP feelings. Early introduction may be especially beneficial to preservice women band directors as a way to better prepare women for IP experiences that may accompany their work as they enter the historically men-dominated field. Individuals of other minoritized identities (e.g., individuals of color, neurodivergent individuals, gender non-binary individuals) might also benefit from normalizing, preparatory conversations about IP experiences. Dealing with IP, however, is not straightforward. While conversations may benefit students, on the whole, I believe music teacher educators should first look critically at why IP has become a normal part of music teacher education. Teacher educators need to work to dismantle oppressive systems that make some individuals question their work and abilities, even before entering the profession.

Perfectionism

As with any other psychological construct, it is imperative that individuals take account of personal characteristics and traits that could potentially predispose them to perfectionism or at least perfectionist tendencies. Mann (2019) identified perfectionism as a potential byproduct of impostor phenomenon, as individuals with IP feel they have to work vigorously in order to prevent being found out as fraudulent. Among music students, it is important for those who struggle with music performance anxiety also to be aware of its close relationship with perfectionism (Dobos et al., 2019).

While perfectionism may be a helpful tool for some individuals based on motivation, teacher educators need to make preservice teachers aware of the negative manifestations of perfectionism and how this contrast can be derived from toxic situations and oppressive systems. Perfectionism may be driven by social pressures based on the expectations of others. Brown (2010) issued a reminder about perfectionism, saying, “Perfectionism is self-destructive simply because there is no such thing as perfect. Perfection is an unattainable goal. Additionally,

perfection is more about perception—we want to be perceived as perfect" (p. 57). As an example, for women band directors who are socialized and pressured to believe their value as a person lies in perfect performances and large participation numbers, perfectionism may be the destructive result. These women may feel they need to put in intense work to make everything perfect—to prove themselves. However, this impossible pursuit can ultimately lead to results that harm individuals' perceptions of themselves and their work. While assessment and participation outcomes are important, they are not the most important aspects of music education. This is just one example of negative outcomes related to perfectionism for band directors. It is important to acknowledge, however, that women may experience multiple layers of negative outcomes as they simultaneously work through additional discrimination and exclusion that comes with their identities as women.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability can be a difficult topic as individuals consider their personal traits and tendencies, as well as how this psychological construct potentially influences everyday actions and experiences. Vulnerability is only possible when individuals allow themselves to feel emotions, which can be difficult especially when women and individuals in other minoritized groups carry trauma from past experiences where they have felt "fear, shame, grief, sadness, and disappointment" (Brown, 2012, p. 33) based on gender discrimination, biases, or oppression. Brown (2012) provided examples of what vulnerability in action may look like. Vulnerability may look like an individual sharing an opinion that is different from the majority, feeling comfortable to ask for help when it is needed, defending oneself, taking risks in new experiences, making another attempt after failure, or being able to say "no" (Brown, 2012, pp. 35-36). Women high school band directors may struggle with vulnerability if they perceive that they are viewed

as unwelcome or even incapable because they are women who are attempting to work in a historically men-dominated profession.

Psychological safety is an integral part of vulnerable experiences. Therefore, if a woman band director feels unsafe in her work or past experiences, that individual may not be able to be vulnerable. For music teachers, fear of judgment based on the expectations of others, lack of support from parents and administrators, and feeling unaccepted based on personal characteristics or identities are examples of ways that feeling unsafe may lead to an inability or lack of desire to be vulnerable. Teacher educators can help preservice women band directors to understand vulnerability. They may encourage women to reflect upon their experiences to help them understand vulnerability insecurities based on negative emotions such as shame, fear, and disappointment (Brown, 2012). Through reflective practice, individuals may be able to understand the experiences that prevent vulnerability as a starting point for processing and working toward healing. Educating everyone about this construct may be a powerful tool for helping others to recognize and name oppression that creates barriers to vulnerability.

Vulnerability is complicated. In many cases, vulnerability can be a good thing. People tend to respond well when individuals can be open and honest about their experiences. However, it is crucial to understand the context of an individual's situation before asking them to be vulnerable. For individuals who hold more than one minoritized identity, vulnerability may be risky or even unsafe. So, as I consider vulnerability as a part of this work, I acknowledge that the context for vulnerability is not the same for everyone, and I understand that not everyone can be vulnerable. No one owes anyone their story or experience.

Self-Efficacy/Self-Esteem

Self-efficacy and self-esteem are based on an individual's thoughts about their abilities and goals. In music education, as pointed out by Amanda in Chapter 6, it is common for new band directors, especially, to feel that the size of their band and the rating they received at festival are what matters most in their work. Other band directors may make young directors feel that their worth and abilities are based on recruitment, retention, and achieving the perfect performance at festival. Unfortunately, many new directors must learn this through experience when they enter the profession. It is important to acknowledge that these experiences may impact new band directors of all gender identities.

Teacher educators may be able to help prepare preservice teachers for this reality by talking about the culture of competition in band and helping preservice teachers create effective recruitment plans as a part of their coursework. Music teacher educators may also help preservice teachers by sharing their experiences pertaining to recruitment, retention, and competition. That kind of purposeful sharing may open the door for fruitful conversations that may help prevent praxis shock and start preservice teachers thinking about their philosophies and values toward competition.

This kind of preparation may be especially helpful to preservice women band directors who intend to teach at the high school level. Research about festival ratings (Shouldice & Eastridge, 2020; Shouldice & Woolnough, 2022) has revealed that director gender combined with other factors may negatively impact the ratings received by school bands in competition settings. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 4, new as well as experienced women high school band directors may be more susceptible to the pressures and discrimination associated with the old boys' club and trying to belong within the profession as they simultaneously work to meet

their professional goals. As participants in this study shared, women band directors may also experience microaggressions and discriminatory attitudes based on others' perceptions that women are less competent, too emotional (Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018), and not masculine enough. These attitudes may create feelings of inadequacy as women learn to navigate work and life experiences.

Being Careful Not to Pathologize

It is important not to pathologize women high school band directors or to excuse oppressive systems in music education. It is imperative that educators realize that women band directors' experiences with psychological constructs are often a result of the toxicity they have experienced in the work environment. How others treat, talk to, and perceive women influences how and to what extent women experience certain constructs. As they become more educated about psychological constructs and their influence on experience, teacher educators and mentors will likely observe similarities in challenges from woman to woman. Despite seeing similarities in the experiences of many women, I want to reiterate the importance of mentors not pathologizing women who experience challenges related to psychological constructs and instead looking to oppressive systems to find potential root causes. Only then can mentors and teacher educators address oppressive systems and help women to unpack their experiences. While unpacking may include navigating challenges in strategic ways, it is important to recognize that reflection may simply lead to understanding gender oppression and discrimination in a way that allows women to see their experiences for what they are—in many cases, toxic experiences that require systemic change.

Educating Everyone

Many patriarchal practices become hidden or even overlooked because they have become a normal and accepted part of the social landscape. Therefore, educating everyone about the experiences of women in high school band directing is just as important as helping women band directors to unpack and navigate the systemic oppression that exists for them in some instrumental music education spaces. Educating everyone may help bring patriarchal practices to light, better preparing individuals to see them, identify them, and call them out—all while helping them to understand that patriarchy fails everyone.

It is also important to acknowledge how patriarchal power and oppression would influence those individuals of different minoritized populations. In the present study, eight of the participants self-identified as white—a position that provided them with power and privilege in comparison to those who hold additional minoritized identities. One participant was bi-racial but identified herself as "mostly white, but also native." (Interview 1, 6:45). She explained that race was complex. However, she felt she had benefitted from being "white-passing" since she did not "have the added barriers faced by people of color who are not white-passing" (Personal Correspondence, 9/29/24). It would, therefore, be reasonable to assume that the oppressive challenges and degradation experienced by the participants in this study would be far worse for individuals of compounded minoritized identities. These realities further reinforce the need for education, as individuals who do not possess those identities may not always be aware of the oppression and challenges faced by individuals of different identities.

Music educators and teacher educators have the responsibility to respond to systemic oppression. These professionals have the responsibility to educate students about the experiences of women high school band directors. They must also attend to the toxicity of music education

spaces and then find ways to encourage the most minoritized individuals who may be interested in music education as a profession. Those in positions to make decisions about music education participation and admittance into music programs must work to remove barriers that impede individuals of minoritized groups from participating in music at the primary and secondary school levels, and music education training at the collegiate level.

The need to "educate everyone" connects to Brown's (2010) discussion of fitting in versus belonging. This topic is crucial for music teacher educators to understand and communicate with preservice music teachers. Women band directors and band directors of other minoritized identities desire to feel belonging as valued, contributing professionals in their music education communities. When their identities and characteristics do not match the expectations of individuals who hold power and privilege in those communities, there becomes increasing pressure to fit in. The difference between belonging and fitting in is that belonging assumes an individual to be accepted among a group, just the way they are, while fitting in requires that the person trying to belong ends up changing themselves in an attempt to make themselves fit the expectations of others.

Educators must teach everyone the differences between belonging and fitting in. They must also equip everyone to identify and act when women are placed in situations where they need to change themselves to fit in rather than being accepted as a part of the community and valued for what they bring to the table. This training begins in undergraduate education as music teacher educators set the example of how to value every preservice teacher, appreciating each individual's identities, experiences, and backgrounds. As this expectation becomes the norm, music teacher educators can work against oppressive systems as they send allies, in the form of new teachers, out into the profession to continue this work.

Music teacher educators can also utilize various methods to educate everyone about these issues. The least effective method would include talking with students about gender socialization and gender oppression experienced by women high school band directors in a single, siloed conversation or attention to this topic in a single class such as a social justice class or a health and wellbeing class for music majors. Music teacher educators must make deliberate efforts to foster student connections with women high school band directors who may serve as role models and eventually mentors. Women teacher educators who previously worked as high school band directors may be able to share their own meanings made as a result of processing gendered experiences—both positive and negative. Teacher educators may also facilitate classroom discussions and encourage women preservice teachers to share the gendered experiences they may have encountered in their collegiate coursework or practicum experiences. In this study, Diane's efforts to educate everyone by incorporating articles into her coursework was an example of bridging this learning gap in classes with reading requirements and resource-sharing opportunities.

A Call to Action for Men

Men play a crucial role in educating others and working to dismantle patriarchy as an oppressive system in music education. It is important that men do not assume their experiences of band directing to be the same as those of women. I urge men to commit to learning about the challenges, discrimination, and oppression experienced by women and individuals of minoritized identities. Change requires that men become allies who are not only educated about the issues, but stand ready to call out oppression and discrimination when they see it. Meaningful subversion must involve men using their power and influence to disempower the old boys' club and to unite others in the effort to normalize actions that work against patriarchal power and

traditions which continue to reinforce the message that men are the dominant source of power and knowledge in music education. Furthermore, I urge men to uplift and empower women through support, positive mentorship, and valuing the characteristics and strengths that they also bring to music education.

Mentorship

In the present study, the participants talked a great deal about their mentorship experiences. The number of women who talked about not having a woman mentor during their time as high school band directors was alarming. Despite the systemic exclusion of women as high school band directors, the participants often sought mentorship with individuals whose identities were different from their own.

While it may seem that mentorship among those individuals who share the same or similar identities would be most ideal, because of the systemic exclusion of women, it is an undue burden for women to bear alone. This undue burden is especially true for those women of further minoritized identities who assume the task of mentoring all women band directors who share their identities—a situation that can become harmful as everyone looks to a few women for mentorship and guidance. The problem lies in the societal expectation that "women should put the needs of others ahead of their own" (Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018, p. 44) even if a situation will create harmful consequences. For the future, there is a need for everyone to fill these crucial roles for women high school band directors. However, the potential for having a man as a mentor can be a difficult situation because not every woman is receptive to male mentorship. In such a situation, schools and universities might consider compensation as a way to make mentorship more equitable.

The onus of mentorship does not sit only on the shoulders of those who are asked to be mentors or teacher educators who help young teachers establish professional networks. Just as much of the responsibility belongs to women preservice teachers who intend to become high school band directors. Preservice women band directors need to consider those teachers with whom they have made connections as a part of field practicum and with whom they have begun relationships. In this way, they may be able to identify individuals who will support and encourage them through their music education teaching trajectory. Preservice women band directors should also make it a point to get involved with one of the many organizations created to support them. Universities, as well as state and national music education groups (e.g., Women Band Directors International, Association of Black Women Band Directors, Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity), have realized the need for support among women band directors. These organizations are designing workshops, conferences, and presentations to offer support and mentorship to practitioners as well as undergraduate women and women-identifying students who are studying to become band directors.

Reflection

Music educators understand the power of reflection and how meaningful reflective practice can provide invaluable insight for learning how to be an effective teacher. Teachers and professors often use reflection to dissect teaching practices and lesson elements. However, these teachers have largely overlooked reflective practice as a tool for unpacking and understanding experiences outside of preservice and early practitioner teacher training. With clear expectations and appropriate precautions to avoid further potential trauma, reflective practice may be helpful for women high school band directors at various levels.

Reflection has the potential to be a helpful tool in teacher preparation beyond instruction and lesson planning practices. Teacher educators may utilize reflection as a tool to help students become aware of how they think about themselves and how they perceive their work. This type of reflection may serve as a gateway for integrating discussions into music education curriculum about experiences in the classroom, psychological constructs, and systems of oppression that may be otherwise siloed into singular discussions or neglected altogether. These practices may be most beneficial if incorporated into the early music teacher education curriculum.

Women who have served as high school band directors and have moved within the profession or have left the profession may also find reflection to be beneficial. Sharing experiences can be a healthy outlet for frustration and a valuable tool for meaning-making. In Chapter 4, I shared examples of common women band director experiences. For the participants, and other women who have moved out of high school band directing, reflection may be required to allow them to wholly understand their experiences along with their motivations for leaving. Women can usually perceive when they are in toxic situations, but sometimes do not know how to define the toxicity until they unpack the experience as a part of reflective practice. Additionally, reflection must take place from both inward and outward standpoints. In other words, it may be beneficial for individuals to reflect on their own practices and beliefs, but equally important to reflect outwardly to understand patriarchal power and other oppression systems that impact women's experiences.

Personal reflection is a powerful tool for analyzing experiences and individualized learning. However, it may also be helpful for women former band directors to participate in collaborative reflective practices. By seeking out opportunities to share in reflective practice with others, participants may gain beneficial insights to help them consider the full context of their

experiences. Individuals may also gain new perspectives and understandings as they listen to other's experiences and work to make meaning collaboratively. Efforts to be involved in collaborative reflective practice may include conversations with trusted family members and colleagues, as well as music education mentors.

Time is another vital aspect of successful reflection. The participants in this study found time to be a helpful aspect of their meaning-making journey. The time to reflect, however, is not guaranteed as a part of career transitions, whether moving out of music education completely or into higher education. For individuals making quick transitions out of high school band directing, making a deliberate effort to engage in reflective practice may be necessary to make the most meaning of their experiences. It is essential to acknowledge that there are no time bounds for meaning-making, and that every woman's experience of reflection will look different. Meaning-making does not end with one session of reflective practice, reflection over a month, or even at the completion of a dissertation about women band director experiences. Women can continue to reflect as they proceed in music education practice. When individuals are open to growth, there will continue to be opportunities for reflection and new meanings made.

Reflective practice may be particularly important for former women band directors who move into higher education. Participants in this study talked at length about using the meanings they made in their reflections to work with the preservice teachers in their music teacher preparation programs. For women former band directors, at least some reflection seems to be necessary before one can effectively share experiences and their meanings with preservice teachers or in mentorships with practicing teachers. However, as I discussed above, there is no limit or time bound for reflection. An individual may begin sharing experiences and meaning-making after just a small amount of reflection. The reflection process will continue as women

contemplate their experiences with their preservice students in classroom conversations, as they observe the experiences of others, and as they continue to have new experiences within higher education.

Patriarchy Fails Everyone

> One researcher defined patriarchy as:
>
> An organization, institution, or society in which power, social control, material wealth, and high social status accrue predominately to males rather than females. It appears in all eras, among all races, social institutions, and economic classes, and in virtually every known culture. (Hill, 2009, pp. 628-629)

Patriarchal power influences everyone, everywhere. In this study and the subsequent discussions that followed, most of my points were specifically about women and their experiences. However, it is important to acknowledge other individuals who feel the impact of patriarchy on their experiences—in many cases, encountering experiences even more harmful than those of the women in this study.

As shown through participant examples in the present study, one can see how patriarchy plays a role in the experiences of women. It is important, however, to acknowledge that this power structure harms everyone. In addition to women, patriarchy impacts individuals of varied minoritized identities, including, but not limited to, individuals of color, individuals with disabilities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as non-binary and trans individuals. Masculine power and pressure compound the challenges and obstacles that already perpetuate the experiences of individuals who hold minoritized identities. Any individual who does not subscribe and submit to the dominant systems maintaining favor, power, and control among men will suffer the consequences of patriarchal oppression. Although often hidden underneath the

assumptions that being a man is enough to maintain power, oppression also harms men who do not capitulate to patriarchy because they do not submit to the dominant attributes associated with patriarchal power.

A Further Call for Systemic Change

Looking at women's underrepresentation as college band directors, the profession needs a broader systemic change. In this study, I have highlighted the need for systemic change in advocation of women high school band directors. Because of gender disparity based in oppression, discrimination, stereotyping, and bias, some women high school band directors are moving out of high school band directing or leaving the profession altogether. However, when these directors move into collegiate music education, most are migrating into academia and teacher training. It is important to note that because of patriarchal power, for those who would desire to continue working with bands at the collegiate level, there are even fewer opportunities for women (Gould, 2003, para. 23; Shaker, 2020). Creating change will require research to understand the extreme disparity in collegiate band directing, education for everyone about the problem, as well as advocation driven by women and feminist allies. This is a call for systemic change.

In this section, I made implications for future practice based on the findings of this study. I began by discussing each of the psychological constructs explored in Chapter 5. With each construct, I included recommendations for teacher educators and mentors to consider as they seek to aid preservice and inservice teachers in navigating the manifestations that accompany these constructs. Additionally, I addressed the importance that women are not pathologized based on common experiences that are likely rooted in systemic oppression. In the next subsection, I explained how educating everyone is crucial as women struggle to belong in the profession but

end up changing themselves to fit in. Along with this discussion, I provided practical suggestions that may aid teacher educators in implementing gender-based education for everyone. I then discussed implications and recommendations for mentorship. The responsibility of successful mentorship falls onto the shoulders of teacher educators, willing individuals of all identities to serve as mentors, and the women band directors who require mentorship. Further, I shared my recommendations for incorporating reflective practice into the experiences of women throughout their career trajectories and by explaining how patriarchy is harmful to everyone. Closing the section, I discussed an additional call for systemic change based on the extreme gender disparity that accompanies collegiate band directing culture.

Further Research

In this section, I discuss several topics that warrant further research. I begin by talking about psychological constructs such as those in Chapter 5 and how they influence the experiences of women at various ages and in various education levels and occupational stages. I then discuss the need for further research on the lived experiences among women of a variety of intersections of identity. Concluding the section, I discuss the need for further study of meaning-making and reflection to determine the most beneficial reflective practices for women band directors.

As I explained in Chapter 5, psychological constructs such as impostor phenomenon, self-efficacy/self-esteem, vulnerability, and perfectionism can influence the experiences of individuals. Further research about these constructs and how they influence everyone at different ages, education levels, and occupational stages would be helpful. Continued study may aid teacher educators and music education students in better understanding why women band directors may struggle with negative manifestations of psychological constructs and how those

manifestations begin. The research results may influence teacher education as individuals in the profession seek to better equip women for what they may experience in high school band directing.

Identities bear a substantial influence on the lived experiences of every person. While I intended to highlight the lived experiences of women former high school band directors of a variety of identities in this study, the identities of the participants were not particularly diverse. There is a need for similar research work involving individuals of various intersections of identity to bring to light their experiences and how they may differ from the women in this study. Diversity would also show how those individuals experience psychological constructs and if their motivations for moving out of high school band directing differed from the participants in the present study.

Meaning-making processes are another topic for further research. Researchers have shared many processes for reflection, especially among those individuals in caring professions. However, I argue that there is a further need to explore the meaning-making processes for women who have experienced oppression in their lives and in the workplace. That type of research would highlight the role of reflection and how teacher educators might use reflective practice most effectively with women.

In this section, I suggested topics that warrant further research based on the findings of this study. Beginning the section, I discussed the need for more investigation into how psychological constructs influence the experiences of band directors of varying ages, career stages, and education levels—beyond the ages and career stages presented in this research. Based on the lack of diversity among participants in the current study, I shared how more research is needed to examine the experiences of women band directors of myriad other intersections of

identity. I concluded the section by discussing the need for music education researchers to study the meaning-making processes of women band directors to gain insight into the most beneficial means of reflective practice for those individuals.

Conclusion

As I close out this dissertation, I continue to look back at my entry into high school band directing and the experience of being told that I was "the man." That moment was the experience that caused me to pause and reflect during my first semester of doctoral work. Up until that point, I had not considered the influence of patriarchal oppression, discrimination, and bias that were a part of my own stories. My naivete was proof that society had taught me to believe those toxic situations were my fault or a result of something I did or did not do. As I used my own story as a launch pad to begin investigating the experiences of other women former high school band directors, I found it alarming that the gender-based toxicity experienced by those women was normalized. Like me, the participants in this study often felt forced to be "the man" as they navigated their own experiences as high school band directors.

Attrition is a major issue among women high school band directors. Many are moving out of high school band directing and into other levels of music education, or leaving the profession completely. Without a database to identify women who have left high school band directing, it was distressing that I was able to find so many women who met my participant qualifications so easily. There is no shortage of women who have had similar toxic high school band directing experiences and now need the space to process them.

In this study, there was very little dissent among the participants. The fact that there was so much similarity of experience and agreement among the participants was both significant and deeply troubling. When I presented preliminary findings at a conference, one of the participants

attended. At the end of the session, she told me that she did not remember her pseudonym, but expressed her astonishment that any one of the participants could have said any of the quotes that I shared from among the nine women. Her observation emphasized the lack of dissent that continued to be a prevalent part of the findings.

As I reflect on my own experiences and see the similarities with those of the participants in this study, I am issuing a call for change. This change requires the diligent efforts of many people to counter patriarchal oppression. Individuals who must act to work against gender-based toxicity include music teacher educators, mentors, and colleagues, women preservice teachers who intend to become high school band directors, and, in this case, specifically, women who previously worked as high school band directors.

Music teacher educators must educate everyone about the disparities, biases, and discrimination experienced by women and individuals of other minoritized identities. This education includes facilitating meaningful conversations, providing safe spaces for sharing, providing resources to support individuals who may be experiencing gender-based toxicity, and facilitating other preservice teachers to work against patriarchal norms. It is the hope that preservice teachers will learn to identify patriarchal oppression, call it out, and work to dismantle it in a way that will benefit not only current teachers but also teachers for generations to come. Music teacher colleagues of all identities must also step up to serve as mentors for women high school band directors. Their willingness to mentor women high school band directors helps prevent undue burden from being placed on those women who are often expected to mentor all individuals who share their identities. Women band directors may serve as important role models for preservice women looking to those already in the profession to see individuals with similar identities working in jobs to which they may aspire.

Women preservice teachers who intend to become high school band directors can also help themselves and their future colleagues in a variety of ways. Women preservice teachers must seek out networking connections with mentors and role models already in the profession. These relationships may serve as invaluable resources to new women band directors who must work through the typical challenges that accompany career entry while also navigating situations steeped in patriarchal oppression that have become a norm for many women in high school band directing. Additionally, it may be necessary for women preservice teachers to take the onus on themselves to seek support through state and national music education organizations as well as university-run programs that aim to support, unify, and strengthen women band directors. With continued knowledge of women's experiences and progress in working against patriarchal oppression, I hope to see programs taking on this work automatically—initiating opportunities and supportively coming alongside preservice and inservice women band directors.

As I conclude this work, I feel especially compelled to encourage women former band directors to pause and reflect. Reflection can be complicated work as individuals unpack experiences that are mixed with difficult emotions and intertwined with beliefs about personal abilities. However, reflection can also be cathartic—a potentially healthy outlet that may help begin the process of detoxification and the facilitation of healing. As I close this chapter, I want to share a brief letter to my women former high school band director colleagues who have moved into collegiate music education or left the profession completely:

Dear Woman Former Band Director,

As you close the final pages of this dissertation, you may be thinking, "Okay, I have all this information, but where do I start? What do I do?" I want to encourage you to start your journey by making time to pause and reflect on your experiences—the positive and the negative.

As you unpack them, do not be afraid to make meaning by sharing with trusted others. Those individuals may be helpful by providing perspectives to aid your ability to see the full context of what you have been through. Do not confine yourself to a timeline or a specific expectation for processing or healing. Remember that your journey will be uniquely yours.

As you make meaning, I hope you will consider passing on your wisdom to others, especially those in music education. By sharing the meanings you make of your experiences, you provide insight that helps music teacher educators to better understand how they must equip and empower women who want to work as high school band directors. As a teacher, you can also help educate everyone about the toxicity many of us have faced in our work and lives. You have the ability to empower allies that will uplift women in the profession now and for future generations. You have the power to help dismantle the very patriarchal oppression that wreaked havoc on work that you loved.

If you're anything like me, you may have asked yourself, "What do I have to say that would be helpful about this? What if my experiences weren't really a result of toxicity? What if it's all in my head?" Let me assure you that your experiences matter, and you are not alone. As a reflective practitioner, you will likely process experiences in which you would do something different if given the opportunity. We all have those. You will also likely uncover experiences that were impacted by patriarchal oppression or overt sexism that you may not have been able to identify at the time. Those things are not your fault. You will probably need to remind yourself that what you may be thinking about yourself, and your abilities has likely been influenced by patriarchal oppression—gender disparities, discrimination, and biases. Additionally, the ways you have experienced psychological constructs like impostor phenomenon, perfectionism, self-

efficacy, self-esteem, and vulnerability may be ravaged by toxic experiences that have caused distress and harm down to your very core.

It took me many years of reflection to understand my own experiences, and only then could I begin to heal and fall back in love with music education. If you are in a similar situation, I want to reassure you of your power to advocate for change. As I write this, I am reminded of a gift I received as a graduate student while working through my own reflection. It was a t-shirt from an organization called To Write Love on Her Arms. The t-shirt read, "The world needs your presence, not your perfection." You may not feel like you have processed enough or healed enough. You may think that your situation might not be relevant or important enough. However, rest assured that if you are a former woman high school band director, the world needs your presence and your voice! Music education needs you! Keep making a difference! And remember… YOU'RE THE WOMAN!!

With Great Care and Empathy,

Emily

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Study Title: *An Exploration of the Experiences of Former Women Band Directors*
Researcher and Title: Emily Moler, Ph.D. Candidate
Department and Institution: Music Education, College of Music, Michigan State University
Contact Information: [redacted]

BRIEF SUMMARY

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the research study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation including why you might or might not want to participate, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to discuss and ask the researcher any questions you may have.

You are being asked to participate in a research study about the experiences of former women high school band directors. You will be asked to participate in three interviews. Your participation in interviews will take place over 2-3 weeks.
Additionally, you may be asked to complete some written correspondence and/or participate in a focus group which may be held virtually or in-person. Interviews will be conducted in-person at an agreed upon location, or virtually over Zoom. This process will happen over the course of three months.

The most likely risk of participating in this study is being identified by a former employer or colleague. However, these risks will be minimized through strict confidentiality. All identifiers will be replaced with pseudonyms and separated from the original data. All identifiers and data will be stored on a password protected MacBook Pro. Additionally, remembering and recounting former employment experiences may cause emotional discomfort for some individuals. In the case of emotional discomfort, the participant may refuse to answer specific questions, or may withdraw from participation in the study without consequence.

You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation in this study may contribute to the understanding of women band director experiences. This understanding may assist music teacher educators in strengthening preservice teacher training to better prepare women for what they will experience in the profession, and to help facilitate change that will create a less toxic environment for women band directors in music education.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The purpose of this research study is to understand how former women high school band directors make sense of their experiences in high school band directing. The researcher will examine these experiences as a part of conductor socialization which interconnects with both music teacher educational training and societal expectations. As the researcher works to make sense of participants' experiences and their reasons for moving out of high school instrumental music teaching, the researcher

will also explore how participants' experiences of being a woman band director may have been impacted by a variety of factors.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO

After the completion of the three interviews described above, you will be given the opportunity to review your interview transcripts to make sure that the researcher has accurately presented your words and thoughts.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Data and identifying information will be kept by the researcher for potential subsequent use after the completion of the dissertation study. Data, including video and audio recordings of the interviews will be saved for future research use.

As soon as data is collected, any identifiers will be removed and separated from the data. Pseudonyms will be used in place of any identifying information. Both data will be stored electronically on the researcher's password protected MacBook Pro and interview data will be stored in password protected Word documents.

Each interview and focus group session will be recorded (audio, video, or both). Recordings will be stored electronically on the researcher's password protected MacBook Pro and on an encrypted external hard drive. These recordings will be kept after the completion of this research study and may be used in subsequent research work, while still maintaining participant confidentiality.

I agree to allow audio and video recording of the interviews and focus group session.

☐ Yes ☐ No Initials_____

YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW

You have the right to say no to participation in the research. You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY

There is no cost for you to participate in this study.
You will not receive money or any other form of compensation for participating in this study.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Information that identifies you will be removed from the research data (e.g., name, address, school district you taught in). After such removal, your pseudonym could be used for future research studies. You will be informed via email or phone if I will be engaging with the data for future research.

CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher, Emily Moler, [redacted]

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT.

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____ _____

Signature Date

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

A signature is a required element of consent – if not included, a waiver of documentation must be granted by the IRB.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Dissertation Interview Protocol

Interview #1:
Basic Demographic Information:
-Name
-Self-identification in terms of gender, race, class, disability
-Age
-Family Support System- Married/Partner/Relationship/SO, Kids
-Education Earned
-School(s) Where They Taught
-How Long They Taught
-What Subjects/Levels They Taught
-What Job They Hold Now

Activity: Musical Journey/Life History
-On a blank sheet of paper, draw your musical journey from when you first began playing an instrument or singing until now. Draw (or use words/colors) to represent your journey. Be sure to include major milestones along the way, successes, progress, failures, unexpected events, etc. Consider your time as a musician, music student, student teacher, and practicing teacher as a part of your journey.
I will then ask the participant to talk me through the musical life history that they created.

Interview #2:
Subsequent questions may be based on data from Interview #1.
As appropriate, I will ask questions about experiences from the following list:

Impostor Phenomenon
-How did you measure success in your job as a band director?
-How would you describe your teacher preparation in relationship to your success/lack thereof?
-Did you consider yourself successful in your job? Why or why not?
-How would you describe your beliefs about your ability and desire to be a band director before, during, and after you left your job?
-Have you experienced a time in your career when you felt like you were in the right place at the right time or that your success was based on luck? If so, what was that experience like?

Vulnerability
-How would you describe your level of freedom to share emotions/embrace/assume all parts of your identity in the classroom?
-What was the expectation in your school for sharing identity information? What about sharing emotional/personal experiences with students or colleagues?
-How would you describe your identity in the classroom vs. your true identity?
-How would you describe yourself authentically? How much of that identity did you feel you could assume/share in the classroom?

Perfectionism
-Describe your (previous) personal expectations for your work as a band director?
-How did you set your benchmarks for career and personal success as a band director?
-Were there spoken/unspoken expectations for things to be done a certain way (creating a standard of perfection)?
-Describe any experiences of expectations which were different than what you knew or believed to be expected of a director who was a man?

Interview #3:
Questions will be about emergent topics and follow up questions based on the data collected in Interview #1 and #2.

Written Correspondence
-Written correspondence will be emergent based on data collected in the interviews.

APPENDIX C: FIGURE

Figure 1: Interview 1- Sample Musical Life History