

# FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MALE PARTICIPATION IN CHOIR

by

JARED KEITH REGISTER

(Under the Direction of Rebecca Atkins)

## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the factors related to a sixth-grade male's decision to enroll or not enroll in choir. Research questions included: what are the contributing factors related to a sixth-grade male's decision to join choir and what are the contributing factors related to a sixth-grade male's decision not to join choir? Also, of concern was how attitudes toward singing, confidence in singing, gender expectations and school/family factors influenced a sixth-grade male's choice to participate.

Based on the review of literature, a paper-based survey was formulated to address the research questions and purpose of this study. The questionnaire consisted of three sections including demographic information, free-constructed response and Likert prompts. The survey items addressed the leading factors for male choral participation. sixth-grade male students ( $N = 64$ ) attending a middle school grades 6-8 or a PK-8 school in a southeastern state's school district participated in the study from diverse educational

environments. Participants completed the survey at the beginning of their sixth-grade school year, a crucial time surrounding when decisions about music classes and activities traditionally occur. Results of the study found that males who did not choose choir had low self-efficacy in their singing voice, a dislike for singing and stage fright. Males who chose choir commented on their enjoyment of choir as an activity and a desire to have fun.

INDEX WORDS: choral music participation, male singing, retention, recruitment, self-efficacy, choir

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MALE PARTICPATION IN CHOIR

by

JARED KEITH REGISTER

B.M., Brewton-Parker College, 2010

M.M., Georgia Southern University, 2012

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2019

© 2019

Jared Keith Register

All Rights Reserved

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MALE PARTICPATION IN CHOIR

by

JARED KEITH REGISTER

Major Professor:	Rebecca Atkins
Committee:	Clinton Taylor
	Daniel Bara

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour  
Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
May 2019

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am genuinely grateful to my doctoral committee for their guidance and encouragement throughout the completion of my coursework. I am also especially appreciative of their wisdom, knowledge, patience and direction during the composition of this document.

A sincere thank you to Rebecca Atkins who was an invaluable mentor and model professor during my studies at UGA. It was a joy to teach alongside you and serve as a TA. I am thankful for your willingness to provide endless support during my time at The Hugh and beyond.

Many thanks to Skip Taylor who helped fully fund and support my doctoral studies. Thank you for believing in me and guiding me along the way; you ultimately provided the means to fulfill this dream.

A heartfelt thank you to Daniel Bara with whom I spent much time in choir and the conducting studio. Thank you for allowing me to make such wonderfully beautiful music during my time at UGA. I will never forget all of the mountaintop experiences I had thanks to my ability to sing and conduct under your leadership.

I am also especially grateful for all of my music professors at UGA. I grew because I surrounded myself with people who made me want to be a better musician and teacher, something I will never forget.

It is a true and rare gift to find someone who loves you most and knows you best.  
To my husband, Kody: Thank you for your tremendous love, support and motivation to  
pursue and finish this educational endeavor.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xi
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
Purpose of Study .....	4
Limitations of the Study.....	5
2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .....	6
History of Male Choral Singing.....	6
Introduction.....	6
The British Choral Tradition.....	7
Male Singing in Colonial America .....	8
Male Singing During the World Wars .....	11
Practitioner Suggestions on Recruiting and Retaining Male Singers .....	12
Voice-Change .....	15
Gender Expectations .....	18
Systematic Research Studies on Male Participation in Choir.....	19
Self-Efficacy and Self-Perceptions .....	20

3	METHODOLOGY .....	24
	The Research Instrument .....	24
	Schools and Participants .....	31
	Procedures.....	33
	Data Analysis .....	35
4	RESULTS .....	36
	Introduction to the Data .....	36
	Music Participation at School .....	37
	Classes That Interest Students .....	37
	Music Participation Outside of the School Day.....	38
	Free Constructed Responses .....	39
	Likert Rating Responses .....	41
	Statistical Results .....	42
	Attitudes Toward Singing.....	42
	Confidence in Singing.....	45
	Threats to Gender Expectations .....	48
	Family and School Factors.....	52
	Final Section .....	55
5	DISCUSSION.....	56
	Introduction.....	56
	Schools and Students .....	57

Classes That Interested Students.....	59
Music Participation During the School Day .....	59
Music Participation Outside of School .....	59
Why Students Did Not Choose Choir.....	60
Why Students Chose Choir.....	61
Limitations and Further Research.....	62
Conclusion .....	63
REFERENCES .....	65
APPENDICES	
A UGA IRB Forms.....	72
B School System Research Application .....	74
C School System Research Approval.....	78
D Surveys.....	80
E Parental/Legal Guardian Consent Form.....	92
F Minor Assent Form.....	95
G Recruitment Letter .....	97
H Curriculum Vita .....	99

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: <i>Likert Categories and Prompts</i> .....	30
Table 2: <i>School System Demographic Data for Middle Schools</i> .....	32
Table 3: <i>Male Participant Information</i> .....	34
Table 4: <i>Music Participation at School</i> .....	37
Table 5: <i>Selection of Classes that Interest Students</i> .....	38
Table 6: <i>Music Participation Outside of the School Day</i> .....	39
Table 7: <i>Contributing Factors for Those Not Enrolled in Choir</i> .....	40
Table 8: <i>Contributing Factors for Those Enrolled in Choir</i> .....	41
Table 9: <i>Means and Standard Deviation for Attitudes Toward Singing</i> .....	43
Table 10: <i>ANOVA F Values and p-values for Attitudes Toward Singing</i> .....	44
Table 11: <i>Post-hoc p-values for Attitudes Toward Singing</i> .....	45
Table 12: <i>Means and Standard Deviations for Confidence in Singing</i> .....	46
Table 13: <i>ANOVA F Values and p-values for Confidence in Singing</i> .....	47
Table 14: <i>Post-hoc p-values for Confidence in Singing</i> .....	48
Table 15: <i>Means and Standard Deviations for Gender Expectations</i> .....	49
Table 16: <i>ANOVA F Values and p-values for Gender Expectations</i> .....	52
Table 17: <i>Post-hoc p-values for Gender Expectations</i> .....	52
Table 18: <i>Means and Standard Deviations for Family and School Factors</i> .....	53

Table 19: <i>ANOVA F Values and p-values for Family and School Factors</i> .....	54
Table 20: <i>Post-hoc p-values for Family and School Factors</i> .....	55

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
<i>Figure 1: Cooksey voice stages among adolescent males</i> .....	16
<i>Figure 2: Original version of survey section one</i> .....	25
<i>Figure 3: Final version of survey section one</i> .....	27
<i>Figure 4: Question regarding music outside of school</i> .....	28
<i>Figure 5: Original prompt for factors related to participation</i> .....	29
<i>Figure 6: Revised prompt for factors related to participation</i> .....	29

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Many choral ensembles whether public-school, community, collegiate, or sacred ensembles have experienced the effects from low enrollment of male singers at one time or another. From unbalanced sections to the inability to perform certain literature, the effects of gender disparity hinder many choirs to perform at their desired potential. Issues related to gender disparity have intensified over the past four decades and continue to influence the potential of many choirs across the globe (Freer, 2012). Overall, scholars have provided evidence that male students participate in public-school choral ensembles for many reasons. Some students chose choir because it is an activity they love to do and allows them opportunities to bond with their classmates and build lifelong friendships among peers (Freer, 2009). Students also report enjoying the freedom to move and be more physically active in the choral classroom, a refreshing change compared to classrooms with rows of desks (Callahan, 2016). On the other hand, research has shown that attitudes or perceptions about voice-change, threats to masculinity, gender expectations and low self-efficacy in singing may be leading contributors for declining rates of participation among male choral students (Freer, 2009; Lucas 2012; Palkki, 2015; Zemek, 2010).

Between 1982-2009, 30% males and 70% females comprised choral ensembles across the United States (Elpus, 2015). Researchers and directors sought to find solutions to the “missing males” through the study of recruitment techniques, retention techniques

and factors contributing to a student's decision to enroll or not enroll in choir (Demorest, 2000; Freer, 2012; Koza, 1993). Many teachers and authors alike speculated that the issue of the "missing males" began in middle school when students chose their arts classes. Even with all the freedom to choose music courses, the research indicated a consistent decline in the number of male singers who participated in chorus (Elpus, 2015). Factors have emerged within the systematic research about male participation in choir including voice-change, confidence in singing, gender expectations and vocal self-efficacy. School factors like scheduling and family influence including support of music-making by parents also emerged (Freer, 2009; Lucas 2012; Palkki, 2015; Zemek, 2010).

Suggestions for recruitment continue with Lucas (2012) who found that some males chose not to sing in the choir because students also considered participation to be an effeminate activity. As a professor and former public-school teacher, he suggested making warmups more masculine by incorporating weightlifting gestures and accessing the low vocal register while completing vocal warmups. These suggestions come after teaching for many years and creating a vocal workshop for male singers aimed at better recruitment and retainment. Freer (2011) encouraged increasing the number of opportunities for different male choirs to sing for one another. He suggested having the college choral ensembles visit the middle school choirs for choir exchange. This opportunity for building community provided males a means to increase their social ties within the choral classroom. Additionally, authors commented on a lack of appropriate repertoire for males to sing during the voice-change and how there was a lack of male role models who participated in choral singing (Callahan, 2016; Demorest, 2000).

Personally, I also experienced issues related to low rates of male participation in chorus during my professional career. I accepted my first public-school teaching position just before the start of the school year, I was excited to begin my journey as a middle school chorus teacher. I was surprised when my rosters showed only nine male students and fifty-eight female students. After receiving this news, I began thinking about the factors contributing to this gender disparity. Was this disparity caused by the lack of recruitment techniques employed by the former director? Was this a school culture issue where male students did not feel like they belonged in the choral classroom?

At this point, I implemented some last-minute recruitment strategies just before the start of school. My first strategy was to inform all parents/guardians about my new position and inform them of my philosophy that all were welcome to the choral classroom. I also created a social media presence on Facebook to showcase the future activities of the choral department including photos and department news. Before the start of school, I recorded a video advertising open enrollment for the choral department played on the first day of school homeroom announcements.

As the new year began, I was pleasantly surprised to hear from so many students. These students were either new to the county or were not present for the recruitment tour that took place at the elementary school the previous year. While I was inspired to hear from so many students, very few of these students were male. My gender disparity issue was getting worse and I feared the results this would have on the sound and balance of the choral ensembles.

Over the course of that first year, I made a conscious effort to create an inclusive environment, especially in the presence of my nine male singers. I highly advertised the

participation in All-State Chorus, Solo & Ensemble and Literary; I made it an extra point to promote and publicize these extra-curricular events with enthusiasm to create a culture that would hopefully encourage participation.

After the first year of teaching, I taught 11 male and 60 female singers. While the number of male singers increased from nine to eleven, the gender disparity continued to challenge the choral sound, while also making it awkward for the limited number of boys. Since that first year of teaching, gender disparity has been an ever-present topic on my mind and is one of the leading contributing factors fueling the decision to use this paper as a vehicle for further study.

While articles dedicated to either retaining or recruiting male singers to the choral classroom saturated the literature, there were very few studies which surveyed non-choral students in public-school. To create a multi-dimensional view of the factors which lead males to participation, I surveyed non-choral students in addition to choral students on the attitudes and opinions of singing. The results of this study may give teachers a better understanding of reasons males do not continue singing, especially between elementary and middle school. This gained knowledge may help directors create more effective strategies aimed at gender disparity issues in the choral classroom and may contribute to balanced sections, informed pedagogy, better recruitment strategies and overall retention of all choral singers.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors contributing to a sixth-grade male student's decision to enroll or not enroll in a choral ensemble. For this study,

choral students, students in a music class other than chorus and non-music students completed a paper-based survey which included demographic information, attitudes toward singing, confidence in singing, gender expectations, and school factors/family influences.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study included 64 students from a public-school system in a southeastern state in the United States. I chose this population so that I could relay the results of this study to my performing arts administrator and principals of schools without choirs. The schools were also chosen for the diverse population they served, the school type and the choral program at each school site. Schools included in this study were not formally assessed for program quality. Additionally, students were not questioned about the quality of their school program or the impact of quality on their enrollment decision. Thus, results from this study may not generalize to other regions with varying demographics, school structures and fine art course offerings.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Although the study of choral music in public school is considered a core subject in the United States, the topic of the “missing male singers” continues to be a familiar refrain among American choral ensemble members and their directors (Gates, 1989; Koza 1993). According to Chorus America (2009), there were nearly 270,000 choruses in America, with over 41,000 of those meeting during the school day, yet participation rates between males and females have widened over the last forty years. In summary, male choral singing in the United States continues to decline and affect the balance and sound of many choral ensembles.

#### **History of Male Choral Singing**

##### **Introduction**

The history of male choral singing provides context and perspective integral to any discussion about male choral participation. According to Collins (1999), Greek all male choruses are thought to have included between 50 and 600 singers, where most choirs devoted their time to the singing of hymns to the gods of wine and fertility. Other choruses were comprised of 50 boys and men where members would assemble themselves in a circle and sing with string or wind accompaniment. The purpose of these choirs was to offer praise and thanksgiving as a religious exercise.

Around the fourth century, male church members of the early Christian church, which at the time was based on Jewish practices, met at a fixed day and time to sing hymns praising God. These traditions evolved to include a Schola Cantorum which served as the vocal training ground for boys and monks who worshiped in cathedral settings. The Schola Cantorum was the trained papal choir during the Middle Ages. During this time, the singing of chant melodies permeated the music that was sung in the church. Chants also continued to increase in complexity to the point where special training was required to learn and sing for Mass. By the end of the Middle Ages, most choirs consisted of men only or of men and boys. The main purpose of these choirs was to provide service music for the Mass or Divine Office. Women were not fully excluded from singing but could not perform with males or outside the convent (Collins, 1999).

### **The British Choral Tradition**

The all-male choral tradition of Britain stems from its practice of cathedral music, where the earliest record of male singing dates to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. During this time, one choral part provided chant, while a second part was improvised to supply harmony. Steadily, polyphonic music developed where multiple parts coincided. By the early 1500s, sacred choral music composers like Tallis, Weelkes, Gibbons, Morley and Byrd began writing their music down to preserve their music (Brown, 1978). Sacred choral music during this time was performed by a male choir with young boys singing the soprano and alto parts.

The English Civil War, 1642-1649, led to several years of Puritan rule and strict limitations on music for worship, including the exclusion of women choristers. Many

music books were destroyed, organs demolished and thriving choirs disseminated. In 1660, Charles II restored cathedral music and slowly returned it to its former grandeur.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century brought about many struggles for cathedral choirs including underfunding and low numbers of participants. Composers like Samuel Wesley started a revitalization by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, where the use of choral music was firmly re-established. This expansion included the creation of singing schools and dedicated choirs to sing for choral evensong and other church services. Wesley was also a major contributor of hymns for the church and is considered to be one of the most significant composers of English church music. England is also one of the sole remaining countries in Europe where male cathedral choirs regularly sing as part of daily worship. Many of these choirs continued to house only men and boys in the boy-choir tradition (Horton, 1986).

The history of American choral singing has its roots from the British choral tradition, which still includes all-male choirs to this day. American choral music was founded on the shoulders of Britain's use of sacred male choirs in worship. Today, many British choirs, including Westminster Abbey, continue to use male only choirs. The Anglican church, Church of England, is well known for its contributions to choral works and arrangements for male voices. (Norden, 1917).

### **Male Singing in Colonial America**

Britain's settlement in America brought a predominately religious choral tradition. Since there were no cathedral music programs yet in place, male singing began in Boston's local churches and taverns. Here, men took leadership roles in public singing

and advocated for women to sing. Because no one was teaching proper vocal technique, male singing during this time was often reprimanded for being too boisterous (Gates, 1989). During the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, clergy members united to discuss the unfortunate state of their congregation's singing ability. Rather than promoting silent worship, clergy members helped increase music literacy by providing vocal instruction for their congregations. Although the entire congregation received advanced musical instruction during worship, the men of the church received most of the instruction due to their voices being categorized as too harsh, too high, or too low. While some parishes introduced vocal training within the parish, some created ensembles of accomplished singers and used musical instruments to enhance their music-making. The use of trained singers in church provided a model example for non-trained musicians, which led to better singing and more sound vocal technique (Gates, 1989).

One of the most significant events in the revitalization of church music and introduction of vocal music education in American public schools occurred during this time in Boston. Lowell Mason, who is regarded by many as the father of music education, was born in 1792. Before moving to Savannah, Georgia at the age of 20, Mason directed his church choir and the Medfield town band outside of Boston. After moving to Savannah, Mason worked in a dry-goods store before becoming a successful banker. Mason continued his music career by establishing himself as a prominent member of the Savannah community. In 1815, Lowell directed the church choir at the Independent Presbyterian Church of Savannah and later became their organist and choir director. During his tenure as music director in Savannah, Mason studied composition, where he developed a keen fascination with hymns and sacred melodies.

While Lowell Mason continued his career teaching vocal music in local churches, Sunday School classes and private schools. He returned to Boston in 1826 to plead his case for the inclusion of vocal music in public schools in home state. However, the courts deemed vocal music instruction as an inappropriate activity during the school day and rejected the application.

Due to the need for better singing in church during the 18th and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Mason later lead a campaign in 1833 to establish the Boston Academy of Music. This academy sought to promote the art of singing, raise the standards of church music and promote the inclusion of music education in the public schools. By the end of its first year, the academy enrolled 3,000 students, offering instrumental and vocal music courses, choral and instrumental ensembles, and public concerts. A year after its opening, Mason published, *The Manual of the Boston Academy of Music*, where he outlined principles for teaching music students. In 1837, a select committee recommended the inclusion of vocal music in the curriculum of Boston's public schools. This time, the courts agreed. Following the decision to integrate the curriculum with music, Lowell Mason was the first official music teacher in a public-school in America, which included vocal music for males and females. Here, he taught at the Hawes School of South Boston on a trial basis prior to the later full inclusion of vocal music in schools (Pratt, 2010). After several years of teaching, Mason was promoted to a supervisory position where he oversaw the music instruction in Boston's public schools. Following this position, he continued to serve as a music director in several churches before retirement.

Though females were now fully integrated, male choral singing took a new direction with the development of glee clubs. According to Jones (2010), glee clubs were

originally male vocal ensembles that sang short traditional college songs and fight songs in clubs. The oldest glee club originated in the Harrow School in London in 1767. The tradition was so popular that other American schools began their own glee clubs by 1858. The first three American organizations to include male glee clubs were Harvard University, University of Michigan, and Yale University. These institutions procured a high level of artistry and continue to have a vibrant singing history to this day. Other male glee clubs include the University of Virginia, Ohio State University, Michigan State University, Pennsylvania (Penn) State University, Miami University and Morehouse College. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, non-collegiate glee clubs included the Orpheus Club, Apollo Club of Boston, Apollo Club of Brooklyn and the Mendelssohn Glee Club, which are still in existence today (Jones, 2010).

### **Male Singing During the World Wars**

During and after World War I, ensemble music making increased due to the success of military bands and high school instrumental ensembles. According to Freer (2012), choral ensembles did not attain the same degree of academic attention during the World War I years, yet there was no report of decline in choral singing throughout the country. Several groups became formalized as the premier ensemble of local colleges. For example, the St. Olaf College choir and the Westminster College choir of Rider University arrived on the national stage as leaders of the “a cappella choir movement.”

Following the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Music Supervisors’ Journal from 1914-1924 reported a decline of males in music. According to a study of the journal by Koza (1993), male choral membership declined due to musical activities being thought of as

effeminate. Early publications from this time period advocated for, “Music for every child, every child for music.” The journal also concentrated on males and music, promoting career opportunities in music for males, explaining the relationship between a boy’s development and music and a boy’s musical likes and dislikes (Koza, 1993). This article is the first time anyone wrote about the way males viewed music and singing in a negative light. Lastly, Koza found that public school aged boys resisted the pursuit of music as career, citing voice-change, gender expectations and a decreased self-efficacy in their singing voice as deterrents (Koza, 1993).

Research in America on male participation from World War II to the present spans a six-decade base from 1940-2000, where studies sought to provide better answers to questions related to vocal pedagogy during the voice-change and recruitment/retention of adolescent males in the choral ensemble (Freer, 2012).

### **Practitioner Suggestions on Recruiting and Retaining Male Singers**

For more than four decades, male choral participation has steadily declined (Freer, 2012). Classroom teachers, church music directors and professional conductors have spent a great deal of discussion and professional development on the recruitment and retention of male singers. This topic continues to be one of the most popular subjects in practitioner-based journals due to the consistent need for more male singers in choral ensembles (Freer, 2010). It is also common to see sessions devoted to recruiting and retaining male singers at many state, regional and national music conferences, including American Choral Directors Association and the National Association for Music Education. These conference sessions also cited middle school as a crucial time for

recruiting and retaining male singers (Clements, 2002; Freer, 2009, 2012; Ruybalid, 2016).

During middle school, boys seek opportunities to transition themselves from elementary students to high school students and boys to men. New interests, social norms and goals all influence a young man's decision to choose certain school activities. Because of these ever-changing elements during the transition into middle school, authors suggested increasing the amount of social time and opportunities for bonding within the choir (Callahan, 2016; Freer, 2011; Lucas, 2012). From the choral teacher's vantage point, Callahan (2016) and Lucas (2012) suggested including positive reinforcement through reward systems and choosing appropriate choral literature that showcases the strengths of male choirs.

Demorest (2000) provided specific considerations for teachers to recruit male singers in public-school. He also suggested carefully choosing repertoire which allowed boys to actively participate even with restrictions during voice-change. A second set of strategies recommended making choir more appealing by focusing on a boy's masculinity. He encouraged teachers to allow student athletes to sing in choir and bring in adult male vocal ensembles to serve as role models. Additionally, he recommended workshops for male singers to provide an encouraging atmosphere for singers to sing together. Post-event feedback found teachers reported an increase in their male choral participation throughout the remainder of the year. In retrospect, teachers felt this workshop was essential when boys were deciding whether to continue singing in public-school.

Mark Lucas outlined several factors pertaining to why male students may not choose to sing in choir, including: singing as an effeminate activity, lack of repertoire appropriate for changing voices, lack of understanding when it comes to voice-change, lack of positive male singer role models and lack of self-efficacy in their singing voice (Lucas, 2012). Lucas presented strategies for setting up positive experiences for male singers. He introduced the idea of a one-day “male singer retreat,” like that of an all-state chorus event. Lucas designed this type of retreat in early December, so it did not conflict with school events like sports games and theater productions. With regards to choral literature, Lucas suggested finding music that gave singers confidence from the beginning of rehearsal; too tricky of literature with this type of event could discourage male singers who are experiencing voice-change. Additionally, music teachers within driving distance to this event attended each year for inspiration and created their own similar events to promote recruitment and retention of male singers (Lucas, 2012).

Like the workshop described by Lucas, professional community choirs also promoted positive experiences to recruit younger male singers. In 2016, the California ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) conference hosted a presentation by The Cincinnati Boy Choir. Their conference session focused on the community choral organization with topics including motivation, values, recruitment and adolescent choices. In their experience, adolescent males chose to participate in choir after considering several factors: “What are my outside friends doing?” “Do I have friends in the boy choir?” “Do I have time?” “Is it exciting?” “Is it cool?” Comparatively, the decision to participate was made by the parent who considered the following, “Is my child having fun?” “Is my child learning?” “Am I getting a good value for the money?”

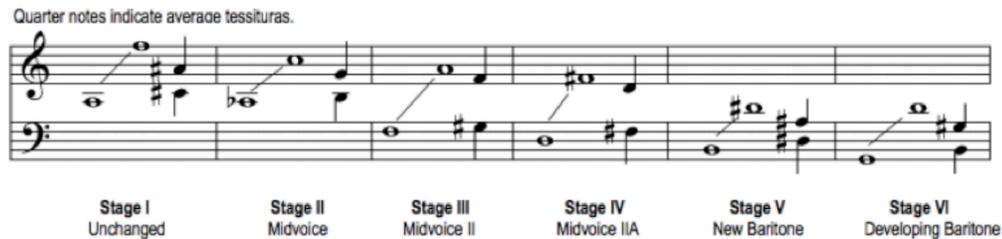
“Is it convenient?” “Is there a sense of community?” In the organization’s experience, an answer of ‘no’ to any of the above questions by either student or parent almost always ended with non-participation. Students in the Cincinnati Boy Choir were constantly juggling a variety of activities. As the boys aged, their choices included college applications, dating, church, high school, scouts, video-games, sports, homework, friends and doing other things. The boy choir was affiliated with The University of Cincinnati’s College Conservatory of Music and utilized a mentoring program to benefit both younger and older boys. The younger choir boys also had social and vocal role models by observing the older boys’ participation and performance. For the older boys, the heightened sense of responsibility and sense of continuity throughout the program had the power to benefit the entire organization (Eanes, 2016).

### **Voice-Change**

The voice change is a tumultuous period for young men, especially in middle school. It is also a well-known fact that the voice-change can negatively impact a student’s belief in their singing ability, resulting in low self-efficacy (Kennedy, 2002). While many articles exist on the stages of the voice-change process (Cooksey, 1992; Cooper, 1953; Kennedy, 2004; Killian, 1997; McKenzie, 1956), more recent literature seeks a connection between how the stages of the voice-change affects the number of male singers in secondary choral ensembles (Adler, 1999; Fisher, 2014; Kennedy, 2002; Koza, 1993).

One of the leading authors on the topic of the male changing voice was John Cooksey. His work spanned nearly four decades with topics including vocal maturation

and adolescent male voices. Cooksey observed the vocal maturation process for ( $N = 86$ ) 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys and determined that the male voice matures through a series of six stages (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* adapted from Cooksey voice stages among adolescent males by Cooksey, 1977b, pg. 12.

Cooksey found that the male vocal range was the most important element for classifying an adolescent male voice. Having a working knowledge of the vocal maturation process has the potential to help teachers navigate and then encourage students when voices begin to change. Cooksey's research paved the way for others to answer similar questions about the stages of vocal maturation.

In a study conducted by the American Boy Choir, Kennedy interviewed male singers during the middle school years about perceptions of the voice-change. Informants included twenty-seven students, two music directors, ten staff members and members of the American Boy Choir School. One student reported that his voice part changed from tenor to bass in two months, while another student reported that his voice part changed from tenor 1 to tenor 2 over the course of one academic year. Additionally, students commented about losing accessibility to pitches in the middle of the voice-change. Some

students used terms like, “gap” or “space” to describe the sensation of failing pitches during the process. Boys also commented on the recognition of differing registers – head, chest and falsetto, as being fundamental components of the training and technique developed at the school. Lastly, boys commented about a renewed understanding of the breathing mechanism in theory and practice following the voice-change. Changed male voices also experienced a strengthening of the chest register, thus forcing them to learn how to navigate their breath in a new way (Kennedy, 2004).

Using the foundations set by Cooksey, Patrick Freer outlined several strategies when working with changing male voices. First, teachers and students should be aware of the vocal maturation process and how the vocal range is affected at each phase. Secondly, voice changes do not occur overnight, and boys should have opportunities to create visual aids to help them understand what is occurring physically. Helping the boys visualize the voice-change with progress reports may also assure boys that their voices are getting stronger and not weaker. Lastly, vocal training cannot alter the vocal maturation process, but singing can assist boys throughout the change. When working with adolescent male singers, the language used by teachers to describe the voice-change can highly influence a student’s self-efficacy. It could also be beneficial to ask male students what they know about the voice-change and where they learned it. When speaking with boys about the voice-change it is important to stress that singing is a skill for anyone (Freer, 2012).

Fisher (2014) examined the elements of voice-change and self-efficacy of emerging adolescent males. Participants, ( $N = 80$ ), consisted of sixth through eighth grade males enrolled in a public-school choir. After completing a survey about their vocal self-efficacy during adolescence, he discovered that 45% of sixth-grade participants,

48.15% of seventh-grade participants, and 87.88% of eighth-grade participants were classified as changing voices. His study also found an increase in the percentage of eighth-grade participants classified in the later stages of the voice change than sixth and seventh-grade participants. Results from this study also revealed that male students had a more positive singer's self-efficacy the longer they sang in choir.

### **Gender Expectations**

Research on male singing and choir continues to include a preconceived notion that singing is an effeminate activity (Ashley, 2006; Bennetts, 2013; Lucas, 2012; Palkki, 2015). Palkki (2015) described the gender troubles plaguing choral ensembles, citing evidence of gender stereotypes built into singing and male chorus repertoire. Through the study of masculinity in the choral context, the author provided three thought-provoking statements when working with adolescent males. First, choral music educators must provide a spectrum of masculinities through the selection of repertoire. According to Palkki, gender stereotypes saturate the male choral literature. Second, public-school choral music programs often showcase a mixed choir as their "elite" ensemble. By doing so, Palkki suggested that sopranos and altos may feel a heightened sense of competition, compared to that of tenors and basses. In many programs, single-gender choirs provide "feeder" ensembles for the "elite" choral ensemble. By only having a mixed choir as the "elite" ensemble, many programs create unfair disadvantages for singers that influence recruitment and retention in the choral ensemble.

Lastly, the Palkki suggested a multidimensional approach when modeling masculinity through words and actions used in the choral classroom. Words and actions

can have close relations with gender stereotypes, thereby making some male singers uncomfortable. The author suggested using neutral pronouns when discussing romantic texts and for directors to be an ambassador for social change during a time when the redefinition of masculinity is constantly changing

### **Systematic Research Studies on Male Participation in Choir**

The overall enjoyment of being in choir ranked as one of the highest factors by males (Freer, 2009; Kennedy, 2002; Lucas, 2011; Mizener, 1993). Systematic studies on male participation present two themes within the literature which are general male attitudes toward choral singing and factors contributing to participation. These factors include attitudes toward singing, confidence in singing, gender expectations, and school/family factors saturated the systematic research studies on male participation.

Clements (2002) explored the variables in predicting future participation in music by surveying 504 middle school students about their motivations and reservations to participate in music at school. The study also explored whether teacher characteristics and school demographics as influences in a male student's decision to enroll in a music class. Student, teacher, and school characteristics provided three sets of variables for the study. Results found that music self-concept, attitude and peer influence ranked high as predictive variables of participation. Results for research question two, "Do predictive variables vary by gender," found that females reported participation in music was due to a high level of musical self-efficacy and musical ability. Interestingly, male band students made their decision to participate in music based on their family's musical background, while male choral students decided based on their musical self-efficacy. Results for research question three, "Do predictor variables of choral or music participants in middle

school vary by school?” found that only 25% of students participated in a music class, leaving 75% of students not participating in a middle school music course.

In a similar study, Ruybalid, (2016) found predictors of future enrollment in middle school music courses focused on parental involvement and peer influence. This study involved 284 students, all of which were in their final year of elementary general music class. Results from a survey found that peers could be highly influential in school-related activities, be that academics or music. The study also found a statistically significant interaction between parental involvement, grade level and music aptitude,  $p < .05$ . While this study did not specify whether the students were future musicians in band, chorus, or orchestra, it is interesting to note the data coming from upper elementary aged students before choosing a middle school music course.

### **Self-Efficacy and Self-Perceptions**

One of the leading researchers in the field of male self-efficacy and self-perceptions in public-school choral music is Patrick Freer. His decades of research help support many directors with appropriate tools and strategies for working with male singers, especially middle school boys.

Freer (2009) interviewed several male students on their past, current, and future participation in choral singing. The interviews took place during three separate events, totaling 90 minutes of interview time. While compiling the interview data, several themes came to light. Family played a significant role in the boy’s discovery of their potential as a musician. The boys were able to name specific people who influenced their decision to be involved in music and the boys recognized a need for older male role models.

Additionally, comradery was of high value to males who participated in music (Freer, 2009).

Because vocal maturation and social/emotional changes can wreak havoc on some middle school students, Freer created the “possible selves” program in music, which identified six stages of development as males mature and develop as musicians. The purpose of the “possible selves” construct was to create benchmark-like experiences where male singers would chart their progress through the voice-change. Three questions were included in the first section of the study, “what are my musical strengths?” “what am I already good at?” and “where did my musical interest come from?” These questions allowed students to reflect on their interests and what they could become. The second section of the study included three questions, “what should my musical priorities be?” “how do I reach my musical goals?” and “how am I doing on my musical journey?” These questions allowed students to reflect on impediments they may find on the way to their artistic goals. The goal of the possible selves’ program in choral music was to offer structure as boys evolved through the public-school music program. As students transitioned through each grade, this structure could help nurture them by giving them opportunities to reflect, hopefully leading to a lifetime of involvement in choir (Freer, 2009).

Kennedy (2002) also surveyed middle school boys about their experiences in choir. The purpose of the study was to investigate the motivational factors related to enrollment in a choral ensemble. Topics on the questionnaire included motivation to join the choir, remain a member, musical skills and knowledge, repertoire considerations and self-perceptions. Overall, male singers placed a minimal degree of importance on the

range-appropriateness of repertoire. The absence of interest in range could stem from a lack of knowledge about choral pedagogy and what an “appropriate range” for choral music. Both Freer and Kennedy found that “enjoyment of the activity” was one of the highest motivators for participation. Students interviewed for the Kennedy study also spoke highly of vocal benefits obtained through choral singing (Kennedy, 2002).

Mark Lucas’ study on self-perceptions of musical ability involved 101 adolescent male singers in the Kansas and Oklahoma public-school system. Five research questions fueled the investigation: What factors contribute to participation? What are male’s perceptions of how their peers feel about males singing in choir? What are perceptions of the males’ teachers, coaches and administrators on males singing in choir? What are perceptions of the male’s family on males singing in choir? How do boys view their singing ability? How do they view singing in choir? Lucas found that the number one reason why males participated in a chorus was that they enjoyed being in a choir. This result echoed Kennedy (2002) who found that male singers joined because they loved to sing. Lucas’ study also suggested that males felt like the most popular students in the school participated in choir. Males also perceived negative support from non-music teachers and administrators. When discussing parental support of male singing in a choral context, the highest ranked response indicated that, “My family thinks it is good that I am in choir.” Lastly, students who felt confident in their singing showed higher rates of retention in choir than those who had a negative self-concept (Lucas, 2011).

Middle school students not only face anatomical changes through vocal maturation, but their social and educational environments also shift, creating a free opportunity to choose school activities. Much of the systematic research literature points

its readers to three main factors that may contribute to the low numbers of male singers: gender expectations, low self-efficacy in singing, and issues related to voice-change. Low male participation is often mentioned by practicing teachers who struggle with gender disparity issues in their choirs, and more research is warranted to help encourage the boys to sing.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors related to a sixth-grade male's decision to enroll or not enroll in choir and general attitudes toward singing. Based on the review of related literature, attitudes toward singing, confidence in singing, gender expectations and school/family factors were highly influential in a male student's decision to participate in choir. The study was designed as a mixed-methods survey containing both qualitative and quantitative aspects. A paper-based survey was used to collect data on the factors related to participation and attitudes toward singing.

#### **The Research Instrument**

After a review of related literature, I created a paper-based survey to investigate the factors related to a sixth-grade male's attitudes toward singing and factors contributing to choral participation. A paper-based survey was more effective and reliable for this type of mixed-methods research because one of the sections required participants to reflect and write. According to Quitadamo & Kurtz (2007), critical thinking skills increased when students were asked to write their responses versus typing them using technology. Due to the qualitative nature of section two, critical thinking and written reflection were essential to the research questions and overall purpose of the study. The use of online surveys could potentially lead to issues with confidentiality, multiple

responses and high rates of click-through when compared to paper-based surveys. The aforementioned potential issues with online surveys fueled the decision to choose a paper-based survey for this study.

The first section of the survey requested demographic information similar to other surveys about participation in music. In the original version of the survey, section one asked students to answer questions regarding their age, classes that were offered at school, classes they were interested in school, what music classes they were enrolled in at school and if they participated in music outside of school (see Figure 2).

**Question 1. How old are you? (Select one.)**

- 10
- 11
- 12

**Question 2. What music classes are offered at your school? (Check all that apply)**

- Band
- Chorus
- General Music
- Orchestra
- Piano
- Not sure

**Question 3. What other classes are offered at your school? (Check all that apply)**

- Art
- Business
- Computer
- Dance
- Drama
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Foreign Language (Spanish, Chinese, etc.)
- P.E. (Physical Education)
- Technology
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 4. Select the sentence which best describes you. (Select one.)**

- I am currently enrolled only in chorus.
- I am in another ensemble like band and/or orchestra, but not in chorus.
- I am in chorus and/or another ensemble like band or orchestra.
- I am not in band, chorus, or orchestra.

*Figure 2.* Original version of survey section one

Upon completing the survey, I submitted it to colleagues for revisions. Several suggestions were made to improve the survey including the need for clarity on certain prompts, deletions and to make sure the questions were worded two different ways for reliability purposes. After the committee and IRB approved the survey, the school system asked to make it fewer questions due to time constraints. Therefore, I chose to omit the duplicated questions and kept only a minimum of two questions per category for reliability checks. Upon their advice, I omitted the question about which music classes were offered at each school. This question was deemed unnecessary because it could be answered by a simple internet search. I also revised the question about non-music classes at each school. Instead of asking students, “What other classes are offered at your school?” I replaced the question with, “What classes do you like at school?” This way I could make potential connections between participation in choir, academic courses and other courses that interested students. The final version of section one is shown below (see Figure 3).

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What classes do you like at school? (Check all that apply)

- Art
- Band
- Business
- Chorus
- Computer
- Dance
- Drama
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Foreign Language (Spanish, Chinese, etc.)
- General Music
- Orchestra
- P.E. (Physical Education)
- Piano
- Technology
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

3. I am currently enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_ at school. (check all that apply)

- Band
- Chorus
- General Music
- Orchestra
- Piano
- None of these

*Figure 3.* Final version of survey section one

The original version of the survey did not ask students about their music-making outside of the school day. Because there were several opportunities for students to make music outside of school, including church, community music and children's choirs, the decision was made to include this as a demographic question. The final version of this question is shown below (see Figure 4).

**4. Do you participate in a musical activity outside of the school day?**

- Yes                       No

**If yes, please check all that apply:**

- Church
- Community music ensemble, like Savannah Children's Chorus or Savannah Children's Theater, etc.
- I have my own band. (rock/pop/country/r&b/hiphop/etc. and/or I jam with my friends)
- Private music lessons, *list instrument* \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, *please list* \_\_\_\_\_

*Figure 4.* Question regarding music outside of school

Based on similar surveys within the literature, it became apparent that very few surveys allowed participants to freely write about their attitudes toward singing, confidence in singing and factors that lead to participation in music. Most surveys only provided participants a “comments” section at the end of the survey instead of requiring participants to answer as a primary section of the survey. The first draft of the free-constructed response section included the prompt below (see Figure 5).

**Question 5. In your own words, answer ONE of the following questions.**

- Why did you join chorus at your school?
- Why did you not join chorus at your school?

*Figure 5.* Original prompt for factors related to participation

After a consultation with colleagues, the first draft was deemed a bit too busy and unclear, which could distract the sixth-grade participants. The final version is shown below (see Figure 6).

**5. List the reasons you chose to JOIN or NOT JOIN choir/chorus this year?**

*Figure 6.* Revised prompt for factors related to participation

The final section of the survey involved four-point Likert prompts where students answered: 4- strongly agree, 3- agree, 2- disagree and 1- strongly disagree. The original survey allowed students to answer, “neutral.” The later removal of “neutral” created a forced-choice, where students definitively answered prompts with a measurable response. In order to determine intra-item reliability, at least one prompt was included twice but written in a different way for each theme, attitudes toward singing, confidence in singing, gender expectations and school/family factors. The table below outlines the Likert categories and the accompanying prompts for each (see Table 1).

Table 1  
*Likert Categories and Prompts*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Accompanying Prompt</b>
Attitudes Toward Singing	<p>It's cool to sing</p> <p>Singing is a skill anyone can be good at</p> <p>I sing alone or to the radio/YouTube</p> <p>Everyone can be included in choir</p>
Confidence in Singing	<p>I am not able to sing songs well</p> <p>I sometimes have difficulty singing all the notes in a song</p> <p>When I sing, I can only hit certain notes</p> <p>A friend has told me that I am a good singer</p>
Gender Expectations	<p>I know other males my age that enjoy singing</p> <p>Males and females can be equally good at singing</p> <p>Males would be more interested in choir if another male encouraged them to sing</p> <p>A male can be equally good at both sports and music</p> <p>I know adult men who sing in choir</p> <p>Males sometimes get made fun of for being in choir</p> <p>A good chorus needs plenty of guys to participate</p> <p>Males can be good athletes and good singers</p> <p>Males and females should sing together</p>
Family and School Factors	<p>I have male family members who enjoy singing</p> <p>Someone in my family encourages me to sing</p> <p>Males would consider joining choir if there was more room available in their schedule</p>

## **Schools and Participants**

The study took place in a county with a population of 290,000 and an area of 632 square miles. The school district was one of the largest systems in the state with a student enrollment of 38,100. The system operated 23 elementary schools, eight middle schools, eight K-8 schools and 11 high schools.

I only contacted schools that served 6<sup>th</sup> graders and offered a choir program. Additionally, I wanted to survey students who represented the diverse populations of this school district including rural, urban, suburban and magnet schools. I contacted all eight middle and K-8 schools that offered a choir program and only three agreed to participate. Following a second request, two additional schools agreed, bringing the total number of schools from three to five and participants from 29 to 64. All schools in the study offered music including some combination of general music, chorus and/or band, while only one school offered piano and orchestra. The schools who agreed to participate are underlined in Table 2. Three schools were classified as K-8 schools serving grades kindergarten through eight, and two schools were traditional middle schools serving grades six through eight (see Table 2).

Table 2  
*School System Demographic Data for Middle Schools*

	School Enrollment	% of Boys	Choir?	Grades	Low SES %	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	MR	NA
<u>A*</u>	758	36	Y	K-8	38	3	44	5	44	9	0
<u>B</u>	812	52	Y	K-8	48	3	50	6	32	8	0
C	1,829	51	Y	K-8	27	7	36	9	39	9	1
<u>D</u>	1,337	51	Y	K-8	39	4	20	18	54	4	1
<u>E</u>	781	51	Y	6-8	30	5	25	4	60	5	0
F	923	55	Y	6-8	63	1	64	14	14	8	0
G**	716	61	Y	6-8	28	4	28	10	51	7	0
<u>H</u>	974	51	Y	6-8	62	2	49	15	27	7	0
I	594	50	N	K-8	88	0	92	0	3	4	0
J	481	47	N	K-8	29	1	34	4	54	6	0
K	841	50	N	K-8	73	2	69	3	21	5	0
L	1,038	54	N	K-8	59	1	60	12	21	6	0
M	776	49	N	6-8	81	0	91	2	2	4	0
N	591	57	N	6-8	80	0	91	3	2	4	0
O	440	52	N	6-8	76	1	65	23	7	4	0
P	656	53	N	6-8	75	1	81	4	6	8	0
<b>Total 13,151</b>											

*\*performing arts school \*\*STEM school for science/math MR- Multi Racial NA- Native American*

School A in Table 2 was a performing arts magnet school which served students in grades pre-kindergarten through eight. The school had a specialized performing arts curriculum where middle schoolers declared an intended major in chorus, band, piano, orchestra, dance, theater, or visual arts. The school had five sixth-grade homeroom classes, a total of 35 males in sixth-grade and five sixth-grade males in chorus.

School B in Table 2 was a non-performing arts K-8 school which served students in grades pre-kindergarten through eight. Students could take elementary general music, middle school general music, chorus, or band. The school had six sixth-grade homeroom classes, a total of 60 male students in sixth-grade and eight sixth-grade males in chorus. Music participation was not required at this school.

School D in Table 2 was a middle school which served students in grades six through eight. Here, students could take general music, chorus, or band. The school had ten sixth-grade homeroom classes, a total of 261 students in sixth-grade, a total of 119 male students in sixth-grade and only one sixth-grade male in chorus. Music participation was not required at this school.

School E in Table 2 was a middle school which served students in grades six through eight. Here, students had the option to take general music, chorus, or band. The school had a total of 151 male students in sixth-grade and five males in chorus. Music participation was not required at this school.

School H in Table 2 was a non-performing arts K-8 school which served students in grades pre-kindergarten through eight. Students could choose between general music, band, or chorus. The school had a total of 60 male students in sixth-grade and four boys in chorus. Music participation was not required at this school.

## **Procedures**

With authorization from The University of Georgia Institutional Review Board (Appendix A), the school system IRB (Appendices B and C) and the principals at each school site, I distributed parental consent forms (Appendices E and F) and recruitment letters (Appendix G) during the first week of school to advertise the study (Appendix D).

Parental consent forms were distributed to each sixth-grade student in homeroom which met every day. Students had a full week to return the parental consent forms. One week after the distribution of parental consent forms, the homeroom teacher distributed stapled copies of the minor assent form and survey to students who returned the completed parental consent form. If a student did not return the parental consent form or sign the minor assent form, they were ineligible to take the survey. Students were given 10–15 minutes to complete the survey during one class period. I then retrieved all completed surveys. Individual student names were not recorded with results. I safely housed the IRB documents away from the printed survey. The table below includes the total number of male 6<sup>th</sup> grade students who were invited to the survey by school, the number of students who completed the IRB and survey and the percentage of population for the study (see Table 3).

Table 3  
*Male Participant Information*

	<b># Invited to Complete</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>% of Population</b>
School 3	119	25	21
School 4	151	13	8
School 1	35	11	31
School 2	60	11	18
School 5	60	4	6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>15</b>

In all, I delivered 425 recruitment letters to five school sites and received 64 completed surveys/IRB documents from 6<sup>th</sup> grade males.

### **Data Analysis**

Student responses to the open-ended prompt were analyzed, coded, and counted. Descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations were used to analyze the Likert data based on three student categories: choral students only (Choral), students in a music class other than chorus (Other Music) and students not enrolled in any music classes (Non-Music). A series of ANOVAs (Analysis of Variance) and post-hoc *t*-tests were performed to find differences between means from the Likert prompt data. Cronbach's alpha was also calculated to find intra-item reliability of survey prompts.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### **Introduction to the Data**

Participants in this study were 64 sixth-grade male students who attended middle school in a southeastern public-school system. Homeroom teachers assisted by administering the paper survey to students who had returned a signed parental/legal guardian permission form. Qualitative data was coded by each student response and the number of occurrences for each prompt throughout the survey. Statistical analysis on the Likert data was calculated using SPSS.

The first section of the survey gathered demographic data from students including age, classes that interested students, enrollment in a music class: chorus, band, orchestra, general music, or piano and participation in music outside of the school day. The second section of the survey reported qualitative data regarding the reasons why a student would or would not choose to participate in a public-school choir.

Data from these prompts was then organized by choral participation and included Choral students ( $N = 12$ ), students in a music class other than chorus labeled “Other Music” ( $N = 16$ ) and students not involved in music at school labeled “Non-Music” ( $N = 36$ ).

## Music Participation at School

Participating students indicated their current enrollment in choir, band, orchestra, piano and/or general music. Students were also given the option to respond, “none of these,” which indicated no music participation during the school day (see Table 4).

Table 4  
*Music Participation at School*

Course Name	(N = X)	%
None of these	36	56
Chorus	12	19
Band	9	14
General Music	4	6
Orchestra	2	3
Piano	1	1

## Classes That Interest Students

Participants indicated which classes interested them at school. Students chose from the following list of courses: art, band, business, chorus, computer, dance, drama, family and consumer sciences, foreign language, general music, orchestra, physical education, piano and technology. Students had the opportunity to write-in four additional classes if their responses were not part of the given list. Answers were organized by Choral, Other Music and Non-Music students. For this study, Other Music classes included band, orchestra, piano, and general music. (see Table 5).

Table 5  
*Selection of Classes that Interest Students*

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Choral</b>	<b>Other Music</b>	<b>Non-Music</b>
Physical Education (P.E.)	9	14	23
Art	9	12	14
Technology	4	5	7
Dance	5	5	4
Family/Consumer Science	4	6	4
Chorus	9	2	0
Foreign Language	4	2	2
Band	0	7	0
General Music	2	13	0
Orchestra	0	2	0
Piano	0	1	0
Business	0	1	0
Computer	0	0	1
Other: Math	0	0	1
Other: Robotics	0	1	0
Other: Programming	0	0	1
Other: Social Studies	1	0	0

### **Music Participation Outside of the School Day**

Students indicated whether they participated in a musical activity outside of the school day. Students chose from the following responses: church, community music ensemble, I have my own band, private music lessons, or other. Both, “private music lessons” and “other” required students to list an instrument or activity they participated in outside the school day (see Table 6).

Table 6  
*Music Participation Outside of the School Day*

<b>Category</b>	<b>(N = X)</b>	<b>%</b>
No Involvement	40	63
Did Not Answer	14	22
Private Music Lessons	6	9
Church Music	2	3
Community Music	2	3
I Have My Own Band	0	0
Other	0	0

### **Free Constructed Responses**

Following the demographic information in section one, section two asked students to answer a free-constructed response prompt, “List the reasons you chose to join or not join choir/chorus this year.” Here, students openly listed their attitudes toward singing and motivations to participate in choir. The data for this prompt showed each student’s response related to choral participation and the number of occurrences throughout the survey (see Table 7).

Table 7  
*Contributing Factors for Those Not Enrolled in Choir*

<b>Student Responses</b>	<b>Other Music</b>	<b>Non-Music</b>
I don't like singing	20	24
I am not a very good singer	9	14
I have stage fright	7	4
Chorus does not interest me	3	5
I feel like I would be judged	0	2

Single-digit responses for non-participating choir members included: "I don't like the idea of singing in a choir," "I don't like the teacher," "The teacher gives more opportunities to girls," "It was tiring cause we traveled so much," "I have a hard time singing due to allergies," "I would rather do band and art," "The type of music the choir sings does not interest me," "I would like to, but I'm in band and I can't do both," "I only sing in my church, not school," "Singing without dancing seems boring," "I think it's a girly thing to do, unlike P.E.," "Chorus ain't nothing new," "It will take-up my free-time" and "Singing in chorus hurts my throat." Table 8 shows responses for students who chose choir.

Table 8  
*Contributing Factors for Those Enrolled in Choir*

<b>Student Responses</b>	<b>Occurrences</b>
I wanted to have fun	6
I love to sing	2
I wanted to get better at singing	2

Single digit responses for students who enrolled in choir included, “I have to choose an arts area, so I chose choir,” “My family encouraged me to do so,” “To make friends,” “It helps me get through life,” “I like the songs” and “I enjoy performing.”

### **Likert Rating Responses**

The third section of the survey consisted of twenty Likert prompts rated on a four-point scale: 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- agree and 4- strongly agree. Four categories: attitudes toward singing, confidence in singing, gender expectations and school/family factors comprised data for the Likert responses.

Cronbach’s alpha was calculated to find internal consistency of certain related response prompts. Two prompts from the “Confidence in Singing” section, “I sometimes have difficulty singing all the notes in a song” and “When I sing, I can only hit certain notes” generated a ( $\alpha = .90$ ). Two prompts from the “Gender Expectations” section, “A male can be equally good at sports and music” and “Males can be good athletes and good singers” produced a ( $\alpha = .92$ ). Two prompts in the “Attitudes Toward Singing” section, “Males and females can be equally good at singing” and “Singing is a skill that anyone

can be good at” yielded a ( $\alpha = .70$ ). These prompts may have produced a lower rating because the questions were worded a bit differently and weren’t asking exactly the same question. With the high reliability of the questions in the other two sections, the medium reliability of this section shows that students took the survey seriously and did not just mark answers at random.

### **Statistical Results**

Likert scale responses were categorized into three different groups: all choral students (Choral), students in a music class other than choir (Other Music) and students not enrolled in a music class at school (Non-Music).

#### **Attitudes Toward Singing**

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine differences between the means of the responses from Choral students ( $N = 12$ ), Other Music students ( $N = 16$ ) and Non-Music students ( $N = 36$ ) on attitudes toward singing. See Table 9 for the means and standard deviations.

Table 9  
*Means and Standard Deviations for Attitudes Toward Singing*

	<u>Choral Student</u>		<u>Other Music</u>		<u>Non-Music</u>	
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
1. It's cool to sing.	3.92	.29	2.25	.58	2.78	.58
9. Singing is a skill anyone can be good at	3.17	.94	1.81	.75	2.14	.75
11. I sing alone or to the radio/YouTube	3.50	.90	3.06	.57	3.08	.57
14. Everyone can be included in choir	3.42	.51	2.88	.81	3.22	.81

There were statistically significant three-way interactions between all groups for responses to the prompts “It’s cool to sing”  $F(2, 61) = 18.6, p = < .001$  and “Singing is a skill that anyone can be good at”  $F(2, 61) = 8.22, p = .006$ . No significant difference was found between the means for the prompts, “I sing alone or to the radio/YouTube”  $F(2, 61) = 1.63, p = .204$  or “Everyone can be included in choir”  $F(2,61) = 1.94, p = .152$  (see Table 10).

Table 10  
ANOVA *F* Values and *p*-values for Attitudes Toward Singing

Prompt	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1. It's cool to sing	18.60	< .001*
9. Singing is a skill that anyone can be good at	8.22	.006*
11. I sing alone or to the radio/YouTube, etc.	1.63	.204
14. Everyone can be included in choir	1.94	.152

\**significant*

Post-hoc paired comparisons revealed differences for the prompt “It’s cool to sing” between Choral vs. Other Music  $F(2, 61) = 18.6, p = < .001$ , and Choral vs. Non-Music  $F(2, 61) = 18.6, p = < .001$ . No significant difference was found for this prompt between Other music vs. Non-Music  $F(2, 61) = 18.6, p = .210$ .

For the prompt, “Singing is a skill anyone can be good at” differences were found between Choral vs. Other Music  $F(2, 61) = 8.22, p = < .001$  and Choral vs. Non-Music  $F(2, 61) = 8.22, p = < .001$ . No significant differences were found between Other Music vs. Non-Music  $F(2, 61) = 8.22, p = .130$ .

Though no significance was found in a three-way interaction between groups, post-hoc paired comparisons revealed a significant difference in the means for the prompts “I sing alone or to the radio/YouTube, etc.” between Choral vs. Other Music  $F(2, 61) = 1.63, p = < .001$  and Choral vs. Non-Music  $F(2, 61) = 1.63, p = < .001$ . No differences were found between the means for Other Music and Non-Music  $F(2, 61) = 1.63, p = .140$ .

Similarly, post-hoc tests revealed a significant difference in the means for the prompts “Everyone can be included in choir” between Choral vs. Other Music  $F(2, 61) = 1.94, p = < .001$  and Choral vs. Non-Music  $F(2, 61) = 1.94, p = < .001$ . No differences were found between the means of Other Music vs. Non-Music  $F(2, 61) = 1.94, p = .320$ . For “attitudes toward singing” prompts, the means of choral responses were significantly different than the students not enrolled in choir. Post-hoc p-value results for all prompts are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11  
*Post-hoc p-values for Attitudes Toward Singing*

Prompt	Choral vs. Other Music	Choral vs. Non-Music	Other Music vs. Non-Music
1. It’s cool to sing	< .001	< .001	.210
9. Singing is a skill that anyone can be good at	< .001	< .001	.130
11. I sing alone or to the radio/YouTube, etc.	< .001	< .001	.140
14. Everyone can be included in choir	< .001	< .001	.320

### **Confidence in Singing**

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine differences between the means of the responses from Choral students ( $N = 12$ ), Other Music students ( $N = 16$ ) and Non-Music students ( $N = 36$ ) on confidence in singing. Four prompts comprised this category “I am not able to sing songs well,” “I sometimes have difficulty singing all the notes in a

song,” “When I sing, I can only hit certain notes” and “A friend has told me that I am a good singer.” See Table 12 for the means and standard deviations.

Table 12  
*Means and Standard Deviations for Confidence in Singing*

	<u>Choral Student</u>		<u>Other Music</u>		<u>Non-Music</u>	
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
2. I am not able to sing songs well	1.60	.49	3.00	.89	2.92	1.0
4. I sometimes have difficulty singing all the notes in the song	2.75	.75	3.31	.60	3.19	.82
6. When I sing, I can only hit certain notes	2.50	1.0	2.13	.72	2.11	.85
7. A friend has told me that I am a good singer	2.50	.67	2.50	.73	2.39	.84

There were statistically significant three-way interactions between all groups for responses to the prompt “I am not able to sing songs well”  $F(2, 61) = 9.46, p = .002$ .

Paired comparison post-hoc differences occurred between Choral vs. Other Music and Choral vs. Non-Music for “I am not able to sing songs well”  $F(2, 61) = 9.46, p < .001$  and “I sometimes have difficulty singing all the notes in a song”  $F(2, 61) = 2.08, p < .001$ .

Though no significance was found in a three-way interaction between groups, post-hoc tests revealed a significant difference in the means for the prompts “When I sing I can only hit certain notes”  $F(2, 61) = .16, p < .001$  and “A friend has told me that I am

a good singer”  $F(2, 61) = .99, p = < .001$  between Other Music vs. Non-Music. ANOVA data (see Table 13) and post-hoc p-value results (see Table 14) for this category are shown below.

Table 13  
ANOVA  $F$  Values and  $p$ -values for Confidence in Singing

Prompt	$F$	$p$
2. I am not able to sing songs well	9.46	.002*
4. I sometimes have difficulty singing all the notes in a song	2.08	.133
6. When I sing, I can only hit certain notes	0.16	.852
7. A friend has told me that I am a good singer	0.99	.377

\**significant*

Table 14  
*Post-hoc p-values for Confidence in Singing*

Prompt	Choral vs. Other Music	Choral vs. Non-Music	Other Music vs. Non-Music
2. I am not able to sing songs well	< .001	< .001	.140
4. I sometimes have difficulty singing all the notes in a song	< .001	< .001	.330
6. When I sing I can only hit certain notes	.230	.340	< .001
7. A friend has told me that I am a good singer	.130	.210	< .001

### **Gender Expectations**

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine differences between the means for the responses from Choral ( $N = 12$ ), Other Music ( $N = 16$ ) and Non-Music ( $N = 36$ ) students on gender expectations. Nine prompts comprised this category: “I know other males my age that enjoy singing,” “Males and females can be equally good at singing,” “Males would be more interested in choir if another male encouraged them to sing,” “A male can be equally good at both sports and music,” “I know adult men who sing,” “Males sometimes get made fun of for being in choir,” “A good chorus needs plenty of guys to participate,” “Males can be good athletes and good singers” and “Males and females should sing together.” See Table 15 for the means and standard deviations.

Table 15  
*Means and Standard Deviations for Gender Expectations*

	<u>Choral Student</u>		<u>Other Music</u>		<u>Non-Music</u>	
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
3. I know other males my age that enjoy singing	2.75	.97	2.55	.89	2.52	.94
5. Males and females can be equally good at singing	3.17	1.00	3.10	1.00	3.22	.90
8. Males would be more interested in choir if another male encouraged them to sing	2.75	.75	2.55	.82	2.61	1.00
10. A male can be equally good at both sports and music	3.25	.87	3.40	.82	3.39	.77
12. I know adult men who sing in choir	2.42	1.00	2.55	.94	2.78	.96
15. Males sometimes get made fun of for being in choir	2.75	.97	2.60	.99	2.81	.92
17. A good chorus needs plenty of guys to participate	2.83	.39	2.31	.70	2.06	.70
18. Males can be good athletes and good singers.	3.33	.65	3.40	.58	3.42	.64
20. Males and females should sing together	2.41	.74	2.54	.81	2.77	.75

There were two statistically significant interactions between all groups for, “A good chorus needs plenty of guys to participate”  $F(2, 61) = 5.4, p = .006$  and “Males and females should sing in choir together”  $F(2, 61) = 4.28, p = .018$ .

There were also statistically significant post-hoc differences between Choral vs. Other Music and Choral vs. Non-Music for “I know other males my age that enjoy singing”  $F(2, 61) = .27, p = < .001$ , “Males and females can be equally good at singing”  $F(2, 61) = .03, p = < .001$ , “A male can be equally good at both sports and music”  $F(2, 61) = .23, p = < .001$ , “I know adult men who sing in choir”  $F(2, 61) = 1.10, p = < .001$ , “Males sometimes get made fun of for being in choir”  $F(2, 61) = .37, p = < .001$  and “Males and females should sing in choir together”  $F(2, 61) = 4.27, p = < .001$ .

ANOVA data (see Table 16) and post-hoc p-value results (see Table 17) for this section of prompts are shown below.

Table 16  
ANOVA *F* Values and *p*-values for Gender Expectations

Prompt	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
3. I know other males my age that enjoy singing	0.27	.764
5. Males and females can be equally good at singing	0.03	.970
8. Males would be more interested in choir if another male encouraged them to sing	0.22	.801
10. A male can be equally good at both sports and music	0.23	.793
12. I know adult men who sing in choir	1.10	.337
15. Males sometimes get made fun of for being in choir	0.37	.690
17. A good chorus needs plenty of guys to participate	5.40	.006*
18. Males and females should sing in choir together	4.27	.018*
20. Males can be good athletes and good singers	0.36	.694

\* *significant*

Paired comparisons showed significance differences between the means for Other Music vs. Non-Music for, “Males would be more interested in choir if another male encouraged them to sing”  $F(2, 61) = .22, p = < .001$ .

Table 17  
*Post-hoc p-values for Gender Expectations*

Prompt	Choral vs. Other Music	Choral vs. Non-Music	Other Music vs. Non-Music
3. I know other males my age that enjoy singing	< .001	< .001	.380
5. Males and females can be equally good at singing	< .001	< .001	.640
8. Males would be more interested in choir if another male encouraged them to sing	.680	.340	< .001
10. A male can be equally good at both sports and music	< .001	< .001	.130
12. I know adult men who sing in choir	< .001	< .001	.400
15. Males sometimes get made fun of for being in choir	< .001	< .001	.760
17. A good chorus needs plenty of guys to participate	.160	< .001	.740
18. Males and females should sing in choir together	< .001	< .001	.270
20. Males can be good athletes and good singers	.130	< .001	.170

### **Family and School Factors**

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine differences between choral students ( $N = 12$ ), other music students ( $N = 16$ ) and non-music students ( $N = 36$ ) on family and school factors. Three prompts comprised this section of the Likert prompt

section of the survey: “I have male family members who enjoy singing,” “Someone in my family encourages me to sing” and “Males would consider joining choir if there was more room available in their schedule.” See Table 18 for the means and standard deviations.

Table 18  
*Means and Standard Deviations for Family and School Factors*

	<u>Choral Student</u>		<u>Other Music</u>		<u>Non-Music</u>	
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
13. I have male family members who enjoy singing	2.92	1.00	2.50	1.00	2.44	1.00
16. Someone in my family encourages me to sing	2.92	.79	2.25	.94	2.22	.99
19. Males would consider joining choir if there was more room available in their schedule	2.50	.67	2.40	.58	2.36	.64

There were no statistically significant three-way differences for this group. There were, however, statistically significant post-hoc differences between Choral vs. Other Music and Choral vs. Non-Music for “I have family member(s) who enjoy singing”  $F(2, 61) = .71, p = < .001$  and “Someone in my family encourages me to sing”  $F(2, 61) = 2.57, p = < .001$ .

Additionally, a significant difference in the means was found between Choral vs. Non-Music for “Males would consider joining choir if there was more room in their

schedule”  $F(2, 61) = .28, p = < .001$ . ANOVA data (see Table 19) and post-hoc p-value results (see Table 20) for this section of prompts are shown below.

Table 19  
ANOVA  $F$  Values and  $p$ -values for Family and School Factors

Prompt	$F$	$p$
13. I have family member(s) who enjoy singing	0.71	.492
16. Someone in my family encourages me to sing	2.57	.084
19. Males would consider joining choir if there was more room in their schedule	0.28	.752

There were statistically significant post-hoc differences between Choral vs. Other Music and Choral vs. Non-Music for “I have family member(s) who enjoy singing”  $F(2, 61) = .71, p = < .001$  and “Someone in my family encourages me to sing”  $F(2, 61) = 2.57, p = < .001$ . There was also a significant difference found between Choral vs. Non-Music for “Males would consider joining choir if there was more room in their schedule”  $F(2, 61) = .28, p = < .001$ .

Table 20  
*Post-hoc p-values for Family and School Factors*

Prompt	Choral vs. Other Music	Choral vs. Non-Music	Other Music vs. Non-Music
13. I have family member(s) who enjoy singing	< .001	< .001	.420
16. Someone in my family encourages me to sing	< .001	< .001	.720
19. Males would consider joining choir if there was more room in their schedule	.380	< .001	.270

### **Final Section**

The final section of the survey asked students if they wished to report any additional comments about choir, singing, or participation. Students either answered, “No” or failed to comment anything at all. The purpose of this prompt was to give students a final opportunity to reflect and respond about their attitudes and motivations related to participation in a public-school choir.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

#### **Introduction**

The steady decline of male participation in choral music has been a popular topic among researchers and teachers for the past four decades. This study sought to discover the true motivations or reservations students in a large south-eastern school system had about singing in choir at school. The study allowed students to freely respond to an open-ended prompt, “List the reasons why you *chose* or *did not choose* choir this year.”

Through this prompt, I explored sixth-grade male answers to the two main research questions, “What are the contributing factors related to a sixth-grade male’s decision not to join choir?” and “What are the contributing factors related to a sixth-grade male’s decision to join choir?” Additionally, students filled out Likert-scale responses on prompts related to the factors about attitudes toward singing, confidence in singing, gender expectations and school/family factors on participation in choir at school. The paper survey gave the researcher multiple ways to investigate true motivations to participate. The survey also yielded highly reliable answers as there were no random responses unrelated to the prompts.

## **Schools and Students**

There are several reasons I chose to survey sixth-grade students. First, the beginning of middle school tends to be a time for transitions and when decisions have been made about classes and activities. Second, male voice-change occurs during middle school and leads to a significant time of low vocal self-efficacy (Kennedy, 2002). It is also important to note that there was not one single study in the literature that exclusively surveyed sixth grade boys about their motivations to sing or not sing in choir and attitudes towards singing. Additionally, the majority of studies surveyed choir members and only one surveyed non-choral students (Freer, 2009).

The participants in the study attended middle schools housing either grades PK-8 or 6-8. The accessibility to music classes varied across schools. Four of the five schools offered a combination of chorus, band and general music, while only one school offered piano and orchestra in addition to chorus, band, and general music (performing arts magnet). Several attempts were made to include all schools offering choir from the varying regions of the county, but only five of the eight middle schools agreed to participate in the study.

For most schools, the student's home address determined which middle school they were zoned to attend. However, no one was zoned to attend the performing arts magnet middle school. This meant any student in the county could attend the school if their grade point average and subsequent audition were satisfactory. I was curious to analyze data from the performing arts middle school. I thought the performing arts magnet students would answer a certain way based on their geographic location in the county or due to the school being "audition-only." I was surprised to find that because

the student body was comprised of students from all over the county, the free-constructed responses and Likert data were similar across all schools. The only response that was exclusively unique to the performing arts school was, “I had to choose an arts area, so I chose choir.” This response was made in reference to the performing arts school’s requirement for students to choose an arts “major” in their sixth-grade year. It is also important to note that no school in the county required a fine arts credit in middle school. The reason for this stems from the fact that music is not offered in the same way across all schools.

I was then curious to see if answers from the free-constructed response section varied based on percentages of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. My hypothesis was that schools which had a higher percentage of students on free or reduced lunch would also show a higher distain for arts activities. I was surprised to see that responses were similar among all students from all schools, whether the school had a high number of students on free or reduced lunch, or not. While I did not individually ask students if they were on the free lunch program, even the school with the lowest percentage, 38% (performing arts magnet), showed similar responses compared to schools with 72%. As stated previously, only eight of the 16 middle schools in the county offered a choir program. I was eager to analyze the low socio-economic status information in Table 2 and found that schools with high “low S.E.S.” percentages tended to not offer choir during the school day. The only outlier was a school that had 400 students, 28% low S.E.S., and only offered general music.

### **Classes That Interested Students**

Students were asked to check boxes of their favorite non-academic classes at school. Physical education, arts courses, and other electives comprised the list of interested courses. Math, science, language arts and social studies were not represented on this list. 57% of students indicated physical education as their favorite course at school. I began looking deeper into this result and found that the fewer non-academic course offerings at school the higher the attraction to physical education. More students responded that physical education was their favorite class in School D (arts options were general music, band, or choir) compared to School A (performing arts magnet). I was surprised that music participation only accounted for 44% of the population across all schools.

### **Music Participation During the School Day**

Overall, 56% of students who participated in the survey were not enrolled in any music classes at their school, leaving 44% of students participating in music at school. Chorus was the most popular music class at school with 19% of the population, yet schools ranged from having only one sixth-grade boy to a maximum of five. Band was the second most popular music class and accounted for 14% of the population.

### **Music Participation Outside of School**

63% of students who participated in the survey reported they did not participate in music outside of the school day. Two main opportunities for choir outside of school included a children's theater and the local children's chorus. These organizations both require an audition and subsequent membership dues to participate. Church music

participation was a musical activity for only three survey participants. According to Rohwer (2010), students who participated in public-school music programs were also motivated to participate in church choir programs because of the bond built between members, diverse musical skills exhibited by church music participants, church choir had a looser rehearsal structure when compared to public-school and the repertoire varied between church choir and school choir. 22% of students, ( $N = 14$ ), did not respond to this question, leaving me curious about their music involvement outside of the school day. Zero students responded to the prompt, "I have my own band." With the increasing amount of technology available to students, it's no surprise that so few students have their own bands.

### **Why Students Did Not Choose Choir**

The first research question, "What are the contributing factors related to a sixth-grade male's decision not to join choir?" was answered through the free constructed-response section of the survey. Survey data concluded that male students are not participating in choir because they do not like singing, have low confidence in their singing voice and have stage fright. Detailed data included the following reasons for non-choral participation, they don't like to sing ( $N = 24$ ), they don't feel like they are a good singer ( $N = 11$ ), they have stage fright ( $N = 11$ ), chorus does not interest them ( $N = 8$ ) and they feel like they would be judged for participating ( $N = 2$ ). It is interesting to note that 81% of students who participated in this study were students in a music class other than chorus, ( $N = 52$ ) and that at least 37% of these students indicated a dislike for singing as a reason for not participating in choir. According to Lucas (2012), low self-efficacy in one's singing was found to be a strong contributing factor to low participation

rates among males in secondary school. Previous research on the male voice-change, Cooksey (2000), reported that males experience a great deal of low self-efficacy during the adolescent years. Kennedy (2002) also found that the voice-change process could have a negative impact on a male student's vocal self-efficacy. The results of the current study were also consistent with Lucas (2007) which found that the top contributing factors for non-participation in choir among adolescent males included, "I do not like singing" and "I am not a good singer."

Research on the participation of male singers in choir often cites singing as a perceived effeminate activity for adolescent males. I found it interesting that only one student felt singing was effeminate and only two students felt that they would be judged for singing. My results did not mimic previous research, (Legg, 2013; Lucas, 2012; Palkki, 2015), which cited choir as a perceived effeminate activity.

### **Why Students Chose Choir**

The second research question: "What are the contributing factors related to a sixth-grade male's decision to join choir?" was answered using the free response section of the survey. Data revealed that being good at choir was the number one reason why students chose to participate. These results echo Fisher (2014) who found that students had a higher-level of vocal self-efficacy the longer they sang in choir. This section of the survey also found that students enjoyed singing, wanted to have fun and wanted to get better at singing. Detailed results from the free response section found that students chose to participate in choir because they were good at singing ( $N = 8$ ), wanted to have fun ( $N = 6$ ), enjoyed singing ( $N = 2$ ) and wanted to get better at singing ( $N = 2$ ). For males who chose to participate in choir, their attitudes toward singing showed a high self-efficacy in

their singing ability and a desire to enjoy the activity. These findings are largely in harmony with those of Killian (2009) and Freer (2012) who found that males participate in choir because they enjoy singing and want to have fun.

### **Limitations and Further Research**

When considering the power of any study, it is also important to consider its limitations. This study limited itself to one public-school system in a southeastern region of the United States. The schools were chosen for the diverse populations of each school and the school type. The school system was unique in that sixth-grade students attended some schools which served grades pre-kindergarten through eight and some which served grades six through eight. The size of each grade level was also drastically different between the K-8 schools and the traditional middle schools. The average K-8 school in this district had approximately 50–60 sixth-grade males, while the traditional middle schools had between 100–150.

Within the K-8 school sites, one school was a designated visual and performing arts school where students were required to declare a “performing or visual arts major” beginning in sixth grade. When a student chose to be a “choir major,” they were required to participate in choir. However, the traditional middle school choral enrollment was based on pure and genuine interest of choir as a standalone activity. This factor could skew the data due to students at the fine arts magnet being required to take choir compared to traditional middle school choral students sincerely choosing to participate

One of this study’s strengths was that it limited itself exclusively to surveying sixth-grade males. Sixth-grade was a crucial year for these students as they transitioned between elementary and middle school. As a result, many middle school students began

choosing their music activities as sixth-graders (Freer, 2012). Because this study limited itself to one school system, this study may not generalize to other regions with varying demographics, school structures and fine art course offerings.

The results from this study show that the “missing males” in chorus is directly linked to attitudes and confidence in singing. While all peoples sing, a study that strictly investigates just attitudes toward singing or just confidence in singing may help gain a deeper look into factors related to participation. A national or international comprehensive study could also shine light on why males are motivated to sing due to cultural factors.

## **Conclusion**

For the past four decades, researchers and practitioners found that there is an intensifying issue with gender disparity in American public-school choral ensembles. Research on the topic of male participation in choir fell into two main categories, practitioner-based articles by teachers and systematic research studies. The bulk of this research examined choral students in secondary school, grades six through twelve, but there is very little research from the non-music student’s vantage point. Future research on this topic should include more participants from varying geographic locations and from more non-music students. Future studies should also survey all male students at various ages to get a comprehensive view of why some male students do not choose choir.

I want to stress the importance for elementary music teacher and middle school choir director familiarizing male students with their changing voice. Males need to know what is going on with their voice change, even before it occurs, and be guided through

the process as it develops. Boys will then hopefully feel more comfortable with the voice change and could possibly plan for it in advance, knowing that it is only a temporary time in their development. Additionally, elementary teachers could include more singing in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum, allowing students opportunities to explore the beginning stages of their voice change.

People go into teaching to share their content area(s) with others. Music teachers give of their time and talents to inspire students in their development as musicians and young people. When damaging outside influences, such as negative perceptions of singing, cloud their efforts, teachers should investigate the origins, whether they be related to school, community, church, family and/or peers. Only then can they develop inventive methods to respond. Both Kennedy (2002) and Hall (2005) studied male student perceptions about singing throughout elementary school and into middle school. According to their studies, male students need the influence of an encouraging, imaginative teacher and a healthy positive learning environment to continue singing between elementary and middle school. Hopefully, this study will empower directors in combating issues related to recruiting and retaining male singers in choir, especially during the adolescent years. Only then will male singers have the opportunity and courage to reap the countless benefits singing in a choir can bring.

## REFERENCES

- Arrant, P. (1983). Report of the ACDA committee on the male chorus: Objective: to increase the participation of boys and men in singing. *Choral Journal*, 23(9), 23–25. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23546213>
- Ashley, M. (2002). Singing, gender and health: Perspectives from boys singing in a church choir. *Health Education*, 102, 180–187. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09654280210434255>
- Ashley, M. (2006). You sing like a girl? An exploration of “boyness” through the treble voice. *Sex Education*, 6, 193–205. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681810600578792>
- Ashley, M. (2010). “Real boys” don’t sing, but real boys do: The challenge of constructing and communicating acceptable boyhood. *Thymos: Journal of Boyhood Studies*, 4, 54–70. <https://doi.org/10.3149/thy.0401.54>
- Ashley, M. (2011). The angel enigma: Experienced boy singers’ perceptual judgements of changing voices. *Music Education Research*, 13, 343–354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2011.603046>
- Ashley, M. R. (2013). Broken voices or a broken curriculum? The impact of research on UK school choral practice with boys. *British Journal of Music Education*, 30, 311–327. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051713000090>
- Bennetts, K. S. (2013). Boys’ music? School context and middle-school boys’ musical choices. *Music Education Research*, 15, 214–230. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2012.759550>

- Brown, H. M. (1978). Choral music in the renaissance. *Early Music*, 6, 164–169. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3125600>
- Callahan, S. (2016). Mission impossible? (How to recruit and retain junior high male chorus members). *Choral Journal*, 56(10), 97–99. Retrieved from <http://www.aracda.org/PDFs/accent-spring%2015.pdf>
- Clements, A. C. (2002). *The importance of selected variables in predicting student participation in junior high choir* (Thesis). Retrieved from <https://digital.lib.washington.edu:443/researchworks/handle/1773/11244>
- Collins, D. L. (1999). *Teaching Choral Music* (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Cooksey, J. (2000). Voice transformation in male adolescence. In *Bodymind & Voice: Foundations of Voice Education* (pp. 718-738). Collegeville, MN: The VoiceCare Network. Retrieved from <https://urlzs.com/7HYj>
- Darrow, A.-A., Johnson, C. M., & Ollenberger, T. (1994). The effect of participation in an intergenerational choir on teens' and older persons' cross-age attitudes. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 31, 119–134. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jmt/31.2.119>
- Demorest, S. M. (2000). Encouraging male participation in chorus: A carefully planned workshop for adolescent boys can motivate them with stimulating rehearsals, a chance to hear male choruses, and a final performance opportunity. *Music Educators Journal*, 86(4), 38–41. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3399604>
- Denison, C. (2015). A structural model of physiological and psychological effects on adolescent male singing. *Open Access Dissertations*. Retrieved from [http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/oa\\_dissertations/1432](http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/oa_dissertations/1432)

- Eanes, C. (2016). Recruiting, retaining, and inspiring boys who sing. Paper presented at the meeting of the California American Choral Directors Association, Los Angeles, California. Retrieved from <https://urlzs.com/trBz>
- E., F. G. (1902). Samuel Wesley (1766-1837). *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 43, 523–528. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3369763>
- Elpus, K., & Abril, C. R. (2011). High school music ensemble students in the United States: A demographic profile. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 59, 128–145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429411405207>
- Elpus, K. (2015). National estimates of male and female enrolment in American high school choirs, bands and orchestras. *Music Education Research*, 17, 88–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2014.972923>
- Fisher, R. (2014). The impacts of the voice change, grade level, and experience on the singing self-Efficacy of emerging adolescent males. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 62, 277–290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429414544748>
- Freer, P. K. (2007). Between research and practice: How choral music loses boys in the “middle.” *Music Educators Journal*, 94, 28–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002743210709400207>
- Freer, P. K. (2009). ‘I’ll sing with my buddies’ — Fostering the possible selves of male choral singers. *International Journal of Music Education*, 27, 341–355. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761409345918>
- Freer, P. K. (2010). Two decades of research on possible selves and the “missing males” problem in choral music. *International Journal of Music Education*, 28, 17–30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761409351341>

- Freer, P. K. (2011). The Performance-pedagogy paradox in choral music teaching. *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 19, 164-178. Retrieved from Project MUSE database. (n.d.).
- Freer, P. K. (2012). The successful transition and retention of boys from middle school to high school choral music. *Choral Journal*, 52(10), 8–17. Retrieved from <http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/>
- Freer, P. K., & Tan, L. (2014). The self-perceptions of young men as singers in Singaporean pre-university schools. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 36, 165–178. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X14556575>
- Freer, P. K. (2015). Perspectives of European boys about their voice change and school choral singing: developing the possible selves of adolescent male singers. *British Journal of Music Education*, 32, 87–106. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026505171400031X>
- Freer, P. K. (2016). The changing voices of male choristers: an enigma ... to them. *Music Education Research*, 18, 74–90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2015.1014330>
- Gates, J. T. (1989). A historical comparison of public singing by American men and women. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 37, 32–47. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3344951>
- Hall, C. (2005). Gender and boys' singing in early childhood. *Cambridge University Press*, 22, 5–20. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051704005960>
- Horne, C. J. (2008). Recruitment, participation and retention of African Americans in high school choral ensembles (Ph.D., Univ. of Minnesota, 2007). *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Sciences*, 68, 3207.
- Jones, J. D. (2010). The development of collegiate male glee clubs in America: An historical overview. University of Cincinnati. Retrieved from <https://urlzs.com/wHWa>

- Killian, J. (1999). A description of vocal maturation among fifth and sixth grade boys. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 47(4), 357–369. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3345490>
- Kennedy, M. A. (2002). “It’s cool because we like to sing:’ Junior high school boys’ experience of choral music as an elective. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 18, 26–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X020180010401>
- Kennedy, M. (2004). It’s a metamorphosis: Guiding the voice change at the American boychoir school. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 52, 264–280. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3345859>
- Koza, J. E. (1993). The “missing males” and other gender issues in music education: Evidence from the “music supervisors’ journal,” 1914-1924. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 41, 212–232. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3345326>
- Legg, R. (2013). Reviewing the situation: a narrative exploration of singing and gender in secondary schools. *Music Education Research*, 15, 168–179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2012.737774>
- Liu, M. Y.-W. (2016). Psychological needs and music engagement intentions: a self-determination theoretical perspective on the motivation to continue in music. *Open Access Dissertations*. Retrieved from <https://open.bu.edu/handle/2144/19550>
- Lucas, M. (2011). Adolescent male attitudes about singing in choir. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 30, 46–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123311418623>
- Lucas, M. (2012). Real men sing ... choral repertoire. *Choral Journal* 52(9), 42–48. Retrieved from [https://acda.org/files/choral\\_journals/Lucas.pdf](https://acda.org/files/choral_journals/Lucas.pdf)
- Martin, A. (2002). Singing, gender and health: Perspectives from boys singing in a church choir. *Health Education*, 102, 180. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09654280210434255>

- Mizener, C. P. (1993). Attitudes of children toward singing and choir participation and assessed singing skill. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 41, 233–245.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3345327>
- Norden, N. L. (1917). The boy choir fad. *The Musical Quarterly*, 3, 189–197. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/738084>
- Palkki, J. (2015). Gender trouble: Males, adolescence, and masculinity in the choral context. *Choral Journal*, 56(4), 24–35. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2UeWqGF>
- Phillips, K. H. (1995). Recruiting and retaining males. *Teaching Music*, 2(6), 28-129.  
Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2Yttlky>
- Pyles, M. (2015). *Secondary choral educator traits and characteristics that support adolescent male enrollment* (Thesis). University Honors College, Middle Tennessee State University. Retrieved from <http://jewlscholar.mtsu.edu/handle/mtsu/4682>
- Quitadamo, I. J., & Kurtz, M. J. (2007). Learning to improve: Using writing to increase critical thinking performance in general education biology. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 6, 140-154. <https://www.lifescied.org/doi/full/10.1187/cbe.06-11-0203>
- Ruybalid, M. (2016). Predictors of elementary students’ intentions to continue in music when entering middle or junior high school. *Open Access Dissertations*. Retrieved from <https://shareok.org/handle/11244/44922>
- Schneider, J. (2012). *Intrinsic motivation vs. extrinsic motivation: A survey of middle school students to determine their motivation for taking choir as an elective class*[Scholarly project]. Retrieved from <http://www.nwmissouri.edu/library/researchpapers/2012/Schneider,Jeremy.pdf>

- Sibley, T. (2006). The boychoir model: A perspective on retaining changed voices. *Choral Journal*, 46(10), 55–57. Retrieved from <https://www-jstor-org.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/stable/23556098>
- Siebenaler, D. (2008). Children's attitudes toward singing and song recordings related to gender, ethnicity, and age. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 27(1), 49–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123308322275>
- Sigler, P. (2015). Can you hear my voice? Students' reflections regarding access to music participation during secondary school. *Open Access Dissertations*. Retrieved from [http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/mse\\_diss/14](http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/mse_diss/14)
- Stubbs, G. E. (1897). Practical hints on the training of choir boys. *Novello*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3364933>
- Swanson, F. (1984). Changing voices: Don't leave out the boys. *Music Educators Journal*, 70(5), 47–50. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3400768>
- Sweet, B. (2010). A case study: Middle school boys' perceptions of singing and participation in Choir. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 28(2), 5–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123310361770>
- Van Camp, L. (1988). Current status of U.S. secondary and college/university groups and male participation: Part II: Analysis and suggestions. *The Choral Journal*, 29(5), 5–13. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23547416>
- Zemek, M. D. (2010). Where's the evidence? Finding support for separating middle and junior high school choirs by gender. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 29(1), 15–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123310378451>

APPENDIX A:

UGA IRB Forms



Tucker Hall, Room 212  
 310 E. Campus Rd.  
 Athens, Georgia 30602  
 TEL 706-542-3199 | FAX 706-542-5638  
 IRB@uga.edu  
<http://research.uga.edu/hso/irb/>

Office of Research  
 Institutional Review Board

**EXEMPT DETERMINATION**

July 27, 2018

Dear [Rebecca Atkins](#):

On 7/27/2018, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Factors Contributing to Male Participation in Chorus
Investigator:	<a href="#">Rebecca Atkins</a>
Co-Investigator:	<a href="#">Jared Register</a>
IRB ID:	STUDY00006171
Funding:	None
Review Category:	Exempt, HHS (2)

The IRB approved the protocol from 7/27/2018 to 7/23/2023.

This is an exempt study, so it's not necessary to submit a modification for minor changes to study procedure. You can keep us informed of changes that don't affect the study scope by using the Add Comment feature.

Please close this study when it is complete.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

William Westbrook, IRB Analyst  
 University of Georgia

APPENDIX B:

School System Research Application

## Request for Permission to Conduct Research

This form must be completed and submitted with your Research Proposal. Proposals should be in FINAL final form and must include all supporting documentation. Only final and complete proposals will be reviewed.

Part 1 of 3

### Prospective Researcher Information

Legal Last Name: REGISTER	Legal First Name: JARED	Legal Middle Name: KEITH	Suffix:
------------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------	---------

Purpose of Research (select one):

Undergraduate Course Requirement       Other (please specify):

Master's Level Thesis

### Institutional Affiliation or Funding Agency

Organization Name:  
THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA – HUGH HODGSON SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Address 250 RIVER ROAD	City ATHENS	State: GEORGIA	Zip Code: 30602
---------------------------	----------------	-------------------	--------------------

Instructor/Advisor/Committee Chair	Email Address	Contact Telephone:
------------------------------------	---------------	--------------------

Primary Research Question(s):

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that contribute to a sixth-grade male student's decision to enroll or not enroll in a public school choral ensemble.

Desired Start Date: AUGUST 2, 2018	Duration: 1.5 WEEKS: RECRUITMENT, DISTRIBUTION AND RECEIPT OF PERMISSION FORMS, AND ADMINISTRATION OF SURVEY
---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

### Participants (Indicate all that apply)

Participants	Grade Level(s) Requested	Sample Size	Site(s) Requested	Time Required
Students	6 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	ALL MALE STUDENT		SURVEY TAKEN DURING HOMEROOM
Teachers				
Administrators				
Other Staff				
Parents				
Other (specify below):				

## Request for Permission to Conduct Research

This form must be completed and submitted with your Research Proposal. Proposals should be in FINAL final form and must include all supporting documentation. Only final and complete proposals will be reviewed.

Part 2 of 3

### Data Sources

List sources of data:

Primary data collected by way of written survey.

Brief description of research activities, administrative procedures:

Before the study begins, the researcher coordinates the distribution of recruitment materials with the counselors and/or principal at each school site during pre-planning. The recruitment letter and parental informed consent will be sent home the first day of school through homeroom with the first day paperwork. Teachers will inform students that the forms are expected back no later than Friday, August 10<sup>th</sup> to ensure the study begins the week of August 13<sup>th</sup>. On the day of the survey, students whose parents returned signed informed consent, will receive the minor assent form and the survey. Students will return both the completed minor assent form and survey to their homeroom teacher. The survey should only take about 10 minutes to complete.

Potential Benefits:

Researchers and practitioners agree that there is an intensifying issue with gender disparity in American public school choral ensembles. Many authors and researchers concur that gender disparity in choir is a multidimensional issue involving a myriad of factors. Three of the most featured systematic research topics for male participation in public school choral music include voice-change, threats to masculinity, and self-efficacy of a student's singing voice. Results of this study will hopefully provide more clear answers to questions about participation, recruitment, and retention of male singers.

Potential Risks:

The risks involved in the study are minimal because students will only be asked to do tasks that they do on a regular basis – reflect and write.

Results of this study may be presented at professional conferences and included in publications of peer-reviewed journals. A student's name will not be asked on the survey, so that a student's name or responses cannot be identified.

Instrument(s) to be used:

One written survey to be completed during homeroom.

## Request for Permission to Conduct Research

PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF YOUR COMPLETE RESEARCH PROPOSAL, INCLUDING ALL APPLICABLE INFORMED CONSENT FORMS AND A COPY OF ANY SURVEYS, QUESTIONNAIRES, OR OTHER RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS TO BE USED.

Your request will not be processed until these items are received.

Part 3 of 3

Research Agreement	
As a prospective researcher within the [REDACTED] (Initial next to each item below)	I hereby assert that I understand and agree to abide by the following statement:
<i>JK</i>	I have completed the research permission form and submitted my research proposal, consent forms, and all related research instruments for review.
<i>JK</i>	Once permission to conduct research is granted, any deviations from the methodology or instruments submitted in the research proposal must be re-submitted for review and approval.
<i>JK</i>	Parental consent is required for research involving student participation.
<i>JK</i>	[REDACTED] reserves the right to use the final research for its purposes.
<i>JK</i>	The final research product should disclose neither the participating schools' nor the school district's name, nor any student or staff names or other identifying or confidential information without prior approval.
<i>JK</i>	Take all due precautions to ensure the security of personally identifiable data (PII) to include the following: a. data will not be shared with individuals or entities b. data will be transported and transmitted in encrypted form and will be password protected; c. data will be secured at all times to prevent disclosure of PII to unauthorized personnel. d. data will be destroyed upon completion of the project.
<i>JK</i>	Additional limitations may apply by the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (34 CFR § 99.31).
<i>JK</i>	Immediately (within 24 hours of discovery) report any security breach of personally identifiable data to the Chief Data and Accountability Officer for [REDACTED]
<i>JK</i>	All research conducted at a school site must be approved by the school principal. [REDACTED] approval does not imply principal approval; it is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain principal approval.
<i>JK</i>	Failure to abide by these terms may result in denial or revocation of permission to conduct research within [REDACTED] reporting to the Institutional Review Board, and/or reporting to the Professional Standards Commission as appropriate.

*Jared Register*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

July 20, 2018

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

As instructor or faculty advisor to this student, I have reviewed the research proposal and endorse the proposed research project.

*Rebecca Atkins*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Instructor/advisor Signature

July 20, 2018

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX C:

School System Research Approval



July 26, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

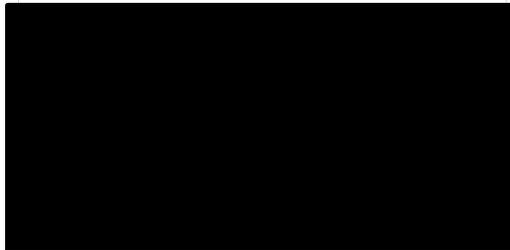
Jared Register has requested and been granted permission to conduct research within the [REDACTED] County Public School System on the following topic:  
*Factors Contributing to Male Participation in Chorus.*

This permission has been granted by the office appointed by the Superintendent of schools to review all requests for research to be conducted within the [REDACTED] County Public School System. The individual named above has fulfilled the application requirements and provided the documentation necessary to ensure that we understand the scope of research and the methods used to collect and present findings.

All prospective researchers must note that district approval does not guarantee participation of any site, program area, or individual. The school principal or program supervisor will make the final determination on whether research activity may proceed at the site or program level. Individual participants may decline to participate or discontinue participation at any time.

Should you have any questions regarding this research approval status, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED]

Thank you,



## APPENDIX D:

### Surveys

**MALE CHORAL PARTICIPATION IN SIXTH GRADE**

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_ Participant's School \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Classroom Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

**1. How old are you?** \_\_\_\_\_**2. What classes interest you at school? (Check all that apply)**

- Art
- Band
- Business
- Chorus
- Computer
- Dance
- Drama
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Foreign Language (Spanish, Chinese, etc.)
- General Music
- Orchestra
- P.E. (Physical Education)
- Piano
- Technology
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

**3. I am currently enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_ at school. (check all that apply)**

- Band
- Chorus
- General Music
- Orchestra
- Piano
- None of these

**4. Do you participate in a musical activity outside of the school day?**

- Yes                       No

If yes, please check all that apply:

- Church
- Community music ensemble, like Savannah Children’s Chorus or Savannah Children’s Theater, etc.
- I have my own band (rock/pop/country/r&b/hiphop/etc. and/or I jam with my friends).
- Private music lessons, *list instrument* \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, *please list* \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Check the appropriate answer that completes the sentence; then, answer the prompt in your own words.**

List the reasons you chose to  join or  not join choir this year? (check one)

**DIRECTIONS:** For the following statements, please circle the numbered response that best represents your opinion. Circle ONE response per statement.

**It's cool to sing.**

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

**A sports coach has encouraged me to sing.**

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

**I am not able to sing songs well.**

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

**Other guys my age enjoy singing.**

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

**I sometimes have difficulty singing all the notes in a song.**

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

**Singing is an enjoyable activity.**

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

**When I sing, I can only hit certain notes.**

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

**Guys and girls can be equally good at singing.**

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

**My peers have praised my singing.**

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

**All children can sing.**

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

**A teacher has told me I am a good singer.**

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

**Guys would be more interested in choir if a guy encouraged them to sing.**

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

**Someone at my school has complimented my singing voice.**

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

**Singing is a skill that anyone can be good at.**

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

**I can be equally good at both sports and music.**

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

**I like that there are both girls and boys in choir.**

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

**I sing alone or to the radio/YouTube, etc.**

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

**I know adult men who sing in choir.**

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

**Everyone can take choir at my school.**

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

**My male family member(s) enjoy singing.**

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

**It's easy to sign-up for choir at my school.**

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

**I enjoy singing with my family.**

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

**I decided whether to be in choir based on my class schedule.**

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

**Family have told me that I am a good singer.**

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

**Everyone should be in choir.**

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

**Someone in my family encourages me to sing.**

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

**There should be more guys in chorus.**

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

**Boys and girls should sing in choir together.**

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

**It would make me feel good if the principal encouraged me to sing in choir.**

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

**More guys would join choir if there was more room available in their schedule.**

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

**More guys would be interested in singing if there were less girls in choir.**

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

**More guys would join choir if their friends encouraged it.**

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

**Adult males in my family sing in choir.**

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

**I can be an athlete and sing in choir.**

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

Any other thoughts about singing you would like to share?

Revised Version of the Survey

**MALE CHORAL PARTICIPATION IN SIXTH GRADE**

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_ Participant's School \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Homeroom Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

**1. How old are you?** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. What classes do you like at school? (Check all that apply)**

- Art
- Band
- Business
- Chorus
- Computer
- Dance
- Drama
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Foreign Language (Spanish, Chinese, etc.)
- General Music
- Orchestra
- P.E. (Physical Education)
- Piano
- Technology
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

**3. I am currently enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_ at school. (check all that apply)**

- Band
- Chorus
- General Music
- Orchestra
- Piano
- None of these

**4. Do you participate in a musical activity outside of the school day?**

- Yes                       No

**If yes, please check all that apply:**

- Church
- Community music ensemble, like Savannah Children's Chorus or Savannah Children's Theater, etc.
- I have my own band. (rock/pop/country/r&b/hiphop/etc. and/or I jam with my friends)
- Private music lessons, *list instrument* \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, *please list* \_\_\_\_\_

**5. List the reasons you chose to JOIN or NOT JOIN choir/chorus this year?**

DIRECTIONS: For the following statements, please circle the numbered response that best represents your opinion. Circle ONE response per statement.

**1. It's cool to sing.**

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

**2. I am not able to sing songs well.**

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

**3. I know other males my age that enjoy singing.**

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

**4. I sometimes have difficulty singing all the notes in a song.**

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

**5. Males and females can be equally good at singing.**

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

**6. When I sing, I can only hit certain notes.**

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

**7. A friend has told me that I am a good singer.**

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

**8. Males would be more interested in choir if another male encouraged them to sing.**

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

**9. Singing is a skill that anyone can be good at.**

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

**10. A male can be equally good at both sports and music.**

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

**11. I sing alone or to the radio/YouTube, etc.**

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

**12. I know adult men who sing in choir.**

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

**13. I have male family member(s) who enjoy singing.**

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

**14. Everyone can be included in choir.**

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

**15. Males sometimes get made fun of for being in choir.**

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

**16. Someone in my family encourages me to sing.**

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

**17. A good chorus needs plenty of males to participate.**

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

**18. Males and females should sing in choir together.**

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

**19. Males would consider joining choir if there was more room available in their schedule.**

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

**20. Males can be an good athletes and good singers.**

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

**Any other thoughts about singing or choir participation you would like to share?**

APPENDIX E:

Parental/Legal Guardian Consent Form

Participant ID# \_\_\_\_\_

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
CONSENT FORM  
Factors Contributing to Male Participation in Chorus**

**Researcher's Statement**

We are asking your child to take part in a research study. Before you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study, so you can decide whether to allow your child to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want your child to participate in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

**Principal Investigator:** *Jared Register (under the direction of Dr. Rebecca Atkins)  
The University of Georgia – Athens, Georgia  
Hugh Hodgson School of Music*



**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine the factors contributing to a male student's decision to enroll or not enroll in a public school choral ensemble.

**Study Procedures**

If you agree to allow your child to participate, your child will be asked to complete a short, written survey where they will discuss their reasoning for participating or not participating in choir.

**Risks and discomforts**

We believe the risks involved in the study are minimal because your child will only be asked to do tasks that he does on a regular basis – reflect and write.

Results of this study may be presented at professional conferences and included in publications of peer-reviewed journals. A student's name will not be asked on the survey, so that a student's responses cannot be identified.

**Benefits**

One benefit of your child's participation may be that he becomes more aware of the musical opportunities available at school. Participation may create discussions with peers and staff about the factors that allow participation in musical ensembles and may give insight to administration about attitudes and scheduling.

**Privacy/Confidentiality**

Only researchers in this project will have access to the data. Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without the participant's written consent unless required by law. Results of this study may be presented at professional conferences and included in publications of peer-reviewed journals. All data will be de-identified so that

Participant ID# \_\_\_\_\_

each survey is confidential. De-identified data will be kept for five years after data collection so that others may use the data for educational purposes.

**Taking part is voluntary**

Your child's involvement in this study is voluntary and will have no bearing on a grade or class standing. Your child may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

If your child decides to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as your child's will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

**Timeline**

Students will take the survey at the beginning of the school year. The survey questionnaire should only take between 10-15 minutes to complete.

**If you have questions**

The main researcher conducting this study is Jared Register, a doctoral music student at The University of Georgia. The study is performed under the direction of his professor, Dr. Rebecca Atkins, a professor at the UGA School of Music. Please don't hesitate to email or call and ask questions. If you have questions



participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

**Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:**

To voluntarily allow your child to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire Parental Permission Form and have had all your questions answered.

Your Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

APPENDIX F:

Minor Assent Form



**Minor Assent Form for Participation in Research  
Factors Contributing to Male Participation in Chorus**

We are doing a research study to see what attitudes you have towards singing and singing in choir. We are asking you to be in the study because you are a sixth grader in the [redacted] public school system and there is a choir program at your school. If you agree to be in the study, you will complete a short online survey. The survey will ask you questions about your attitudes towards singing and take about ten minutes to complete.

You do not have to say "yes" if you don't want to. No one, including your parents, will be mad at you if you say "no" now or if you change your mind later. We have also asked your parent's permission to do this. Even if your parent said "yes," you can still say "no." Remember, you can stop at any time. Your grades in school will not be affected whether you say "yes" or "no."

We will use this information to help directors better recruit and retain male singers in choir. We will not use your name on any papers that we write about this project. We will only use a number so other people cannot tell who you are.

You can ask any questions that you have about this study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can contact Jared Register [jkr28315@uga.edu](mailto:jkr28315@uga.edu) or Rebecca Atkins [rlatkins@uga.edu](mailto:rlatkins@uga.edu).

---

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Parental Permission on File:  Yes  No\*\*  
Yes \*\*(If "No," do not proceed with assent or research procedures.)

**(For Written Assent)** Signing here means that you have read this paper or had it read to you and that you are willing to be in this study. If you don't want to be in the study, don't sign.

Signature of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(For Verbal Assent)** Indicate Child's Voluntary Response to Participation:  Yes  No

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX G:

Recruitment Letter



# UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Dear Student,

My name is Jared Register and I teach chorus at [REDACTED]. I am also finishing my doctorate degree in music at The University of Georgia.

I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study about attitudes about singing and participating in choir. You're eligible to be in this study because you are a sixth-grade male student in the [REDACTED] Public School System.

If you decide to participate in this study, please have your parent read and fill out the attached parental informed consent. The week of August 13<sup>th</sup>, you will fill out a minor assent form and then take a short, written survey during homeroom. It should take no longer than ten minutes.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you have any questions about the study, please email or contact me at [jkr28315@uga.edu](mailto:jkr28315@uga.edu).

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Jared Register



APPENDIX H:

Curriculum Vita

# Jared Register

---

## EDUCATION

2019	<b>Doctor of Musical Arts</b> The University of Georgia
2012	<b>Master of Music</b> Georgia Southern University
2010	<b>Bachelor of Music</b> Brewton-Parker College

## QUALIFICATIONS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

2018 – Present	<b>Trinity United Methodist Church – Savannah, Georgia</b> Director of Chancel Music
2017 – Present	<b>Savannah Arts Academy of Visual &amp; Performing Arts</b> Conduct three choral ensembles Co-teach group voice class Teach musical theater appreciation Teach freshman aural skills
2017 – 2018	<b>The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist – Savannah, Georgia</b> Interim Director of Music Conduct Cathedral Choir Organist for three Mass services each week Organist for weddings and funerals as needed
2015 – 2017	<b>Georgia Children’s Chorus – Athens, Georgia</b> Staff Accompanist
2014 – 2017	<b>The University of Georgia – Athens, Georgia</b> Professor of Record, Voice Class I & II Professor of Record, Non-Major Voice Class, MUSI 4000 Graduate Conductor, Repertory Singers Seminar Instructor, Elementary Music Education Methods Seminar Instructor, Secondary Choral Methods & Materials Seminar Instructor, Introduction to Music Education Student Teacher Observer for Music Education Candidates Practicum Supervisor, Music Education Field Experiences

- 2013 – 2017      **Madison Community Theater – Madison, Georgia**  
 Chorus Master and Musical Director  
 Voice Lessons and Coaching for K-12 Student
- 2013 – 2017      **First United Methodist Church – Madison, Georgia**  
 Director of Music  
 Conduct Chancel choir  
 Conduct Handbell ensemble  
 Conduct Children’s Music ministry  
 Organist
- 2012 – 2014      **Morgan County Middle School – Madison, Georgia**  
 Conduct three graded choirs  
 Middle Grades Reading Teacher  
 Teach three sections of General Music
- 2011 – 2013      **Pittman Park United Methodist Church – Statesboro, Georgia**  
 Conduct Chancel Choir
- 2010 – 2012      **Georgia Southern University – Statesboro, Georgia**  
 Teaching Assistant, Accompanying – Vocal Studios and Recitals  
 Teaching Assistant, Graduate Conductor of University Singers  
 Teaching Assistant, Opera Chorusmaster
- 2008 – 2009      **Brewton Parker College – Mount Vernon, Georgia**  
 Summer Music Camp Instructor (K – 8 Orff Lessons)

## **HONORS AND AWARDS**

- 2014 - 2017      **The University of Georgia – Hodgson School of Music**  
 2017 Director’s Excellence Award
- Graduate Teaching Assistantship in Choral Music Education
- 2015 Simmons Choral Teaching Award in Music Education
- UGA-ACDA Chapter: Chair of Public Relations and Advertising

- 2016 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award
- 2010 - 2012      **Georgia Southern University**  
 Graduate Assistantship in Conducting & Collaborative  
 Piano
- 2010              **Brewton – Parker College**  
 Outstanding Senior Music Major Award

## **SCHOLARSHIP & RESEARCH**

Register, J., Asmus, E., & Bermel, D. (2015). Aligning the Georgia performance standards with the national music core standards. *Georgia Music News*, 75(3), 63-66.

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

American Choral Directors Association  
 National Association for Music Education

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Collaborations with notable conductors:**

- 2015 - Kent Hatteburg – ACDA Conducting Masterclass
- 2014 - Daniel Bara & Deanna Joseph – GMEA Conducting Masterclass
- 2013 - Sonja Sepulveda – National ACDA Performance, Dallas, TX
- 2011 - Sonja Sepulveda – Southern ACDA Performance, Winston Salem, NC
- 2012 - Jo-Michael Scheibe – GMEA All College Chorus
- 2011 - Eric Whitacre - Accompanist for Southern Pines, NC Residency
- 2010 - Sonja Sepulveda – Carnegie Hall, New York City
- 2010 - John Rutter – Carnegie Hall, New York City
- 2009 - Lynne Gackle – GMEA All College Chorus
- 2008 - Keith Hampton – GMEA All College Chorus
- 2007 - Weston Noble – GMEA All College Chorus
- 2003 - Anton Armstrong – Spivey Hall Honor Choir