

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF MUSIC ENSEMBLE DIRECTORS IN STRENGTHENING
RACIAL IDENTITY AMONG ASIAN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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DEDICATION

For my parents, thank you for instilling in me my love for music and the determination to pursue my dreams. I will never forget the sacrifices you have made to fully support me in my passion.

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ABSTRACT

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The twofold purpose of this study was: 1.) to bring awareness, and therefore an increased understanding of the complex experience of Asian Americans in music and 2). to explore the role of high school music educators in developing a positive racial identity for their Asian music ensemble members. Results of the survey indicated that almost one-half of participants played in orchestra ($n = 30$), followed closely by choir ($n = 28$). Most participants indicated that music was an important part of their childhood and that they had relatives and close family friends who were musicians. The majority of participants also indicated that performing Asian music or music by Asian composers may have helped them feel more respected and appreciated in their high school music classrooms, and therefore helped them develop positive racial identities as Asian Americans.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Orientation of Study

The positionality for this research is based on my background as a Filipino American and Asian American choral musician who grew up in Katy, Texas. I have participated in the Texas public school system since kindergarten, and I have been continually involved in music classes and choral ensembles ever since. Outside of the music classroom, my relatives on both sides of my family served as musical influences for me. My father's side of the family specifically had a strong musical culture, where every child took piano lessons at a young age, was strongly encouraged to participate and excel in school music ensembles, and was asked to perform at family gatherings. Throughout my life I have been surrounded by and involved in music; however, I have always felt a peculiar disconnect between my identity as a musician and as an Asian American.

Most of my cousins played string instruments in their school ensembles. I was one of very few Asian students in my middle school and high school choir programs; the rest of my Asian peers participated in orchestras. I noticed I began to feel out of place around my cousins and my Asian peers. I felt that I was not "Asian enough" because I did not play a string instrument and I was only involved in choir. This identity conflict would intensify when I attended music events or gatherings and people would be surprised when I told them I was a singer and not a pianist or violin player.

The Influence of Representation

I lived in closer proximity to the cousins on my father's side of the family compared to the cousins on my mother's side, but the encouragement for my school choir experiences came

from the eldest cousin on my mother's side, and it was very powerful to me as a child. This cousin graduated with a degree in choral music education, and he is a passionate and successful high school choir director in Texas. I was not able to interact with him often because he lived in a different city, but some of the most impactful moments in my musicianship journey involved him. I was very young when I attended his senior voice recital, but I remember being in awe of his talent, especially since I had never seen a Filipino person sing the way he did. Furthermore, no one was as excited as he was when I made it into the TMEA All-Region choir in middle school. Because he was a choir director, his excitement for me strongly influenced my growing love for choral music. His presence in my life would sometimes ease my feelings of identity conflict because he proved to me that Filipinos could be talented and successful choral musicians.

Among my peers and the cousins on my father's side of the family, I would feel the identity conflict of not feeling "Asian enough." However, my high school choir director, who was half Korean American, had a positive influence on my racial identity. She was a wonderful soprano and choral conductor and because she was an Asian woman and had a voice similar to mine, I was finally able to see someone who looked like me doing what I loved: choral music. Something as seemingly simple as having an Asian, female choir director in high school had such a substantial impact on me and is what made me decide I wanted to be a choral music educator.

Collegiate Music Education Observations

During my undergraduate studies at Texas State University, I noticed that I was the only Asian undergraduate voice-primary student in my class. I was also the only Asian undergraduate student in the Texas State University Chorale. During my master's studies at Texas Woman's

University (TWU), I noticed only two Asian undergraduate choral music education students, one a junior and one a senior. These two students were the only Asian undergraduate students who sang in the TWU Concert Choir when I began my graduate studies 2 years ago. My university experiences have further solidified my perception of the underrepresentation of Asians in choral and vocal music. If it were not for my cousin and my high school choir director providing racial role models for me, I am not sure that I would have pursued a career in choral music.

During my time at Texas State University, I learned about multicultural music education and culturally relevant pedagogy, and I realized that performing more musical pieces from Asian cultures and by Asian composers would have made a positive impact on how I viewed myself as an Asian choral musician. This was further validated when I came to TWU and sang in the choirs under Dr. Joni Jensen's direction. Out of the many wonderful choral directors I have studied under, she has made the most effort to program music of different genres, styles, and cultures. In the past 2 years, I have sung more songs from Asian cultures and by Asian composers than I have in my whole life. It was profoundly impactful on how I viewed myself, and I wondered if a multicultural and culturally relevant approach to music education would affect young Asian musicians as much as it did me.

Need for Study

Several researchers (Cayari, 2021; Herring, 2015; Nam, 2007; Young, 1996) have noted the multiple benefits of a multicultural music education. By learning and performing music from different cultures, students can learn how to be more accepting of cultures other than their own, expand their appreciation of music as a whole, and gain an understanding of themselves (Herring, 2015). Despite the growing interest and inclusion of multicultural music education in public American schools, there is little discussion about what students of racial minority groups

experience before entering their music classroom in terms of how they perceive themselves and how others perceive them. In order to completely understand the importance of cultural diversity and racial representation that comes with multicultural music education, one must also pay attention to the experiences of minority students and how they perceive their role in the society in which they live. Once this understanding is gained, music educators will be better equipped to make informed decisions that are beneficial to their students' music class or ensemble experiences.

Purpose of Study

Current research suggests the benefits of multicultural music education and the importance of Asian representation in all areas of music and media, but there is a lack of connection between these factors and Asian American racial identity. The twofold purpose of this study was: 1.) to bring awareness, and therefore an increased understanding, of the complex experience of Asian Americans in music and 2.) to explore the role of high school music educators in developing a positive racial identity for their Asian music ensemble members.

Research Questions

The findings of this study are based on the survey questions that correspond with the following research questions:

1. Do Asian American music ensemble members have musical influences outside of the music classroom?
2. Do Asian American music ensemble members experience racial identity conflict?
3. Do music-related racial stereotypes influence the racial identity of Asian American students?

4. Are Asian American ensemble members able to develop their racial identity through the following factors: programming Asian music and introducing professional Asian musicians?

5. What role can music educators play in promoting the self-worth and acceptance of Asian American students?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Racial and Ethnic Identity

Understanding Racial and Ethnic Identity

According to the American Psychological Association (2020), *race* refers to the physical characteristics that are determined by societies and cultures as socially significant, while *ethnicity* refers to shared cultural characteristics. The United States decennial census provides categories for race and ethnicity, and the expansion of these categories in recent years shows the growth of diverse populations in America and allows for a better understanding of racial and ethnic identity (Deaux, 2018). Racial and ethnic identities are social constructs, rather than exact realities. Therefore, individuals have a degree of choice over their identities, which can be influenced by parents, peers, and society (Deaux, 2018).

Kim (2012) described racial identity as a means of dealing with the “effects of racism, eventually disowning the dominant group’s views of their own race and developing a positive self-definition and positive attitude toward their own group” (p. 148). In their article on the theoretical framework of racial and ethnic identity and its effects on the mental health of adolescents, Wakefield and Hudley (2007) defined racial and ethnic identity as “the sense of belonging that an adolescent feels towards a racial or ethnic group as well as the significance and qualitative meaning that the adolescent assigns to that group membership” (p. 148).

Racial and Ethnic Identity Formation

The process of forming an identity begins in early childhood and is influenced by students’ experiences in school (Klock, 2021). Reyes (2002) explained that identity is acquired “through struggles to position the self and others in socially meaningful ways” (p. 183).

Wakefield and Hudley (2007) explored a popular model of racial and ethnic development that is based on the theory that during adolescence developing a multi-faceted identity becomes a primary task. This model focuses on the development of ethnic identity and suggests that adolescents may experience three stages of identity formation as they grow into adulthood: unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search, and achieved ethnic identity (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007). However, the influencing factors of this developmental progression have been debated by researchers. Some suggest that encounters with racism and discrimination would trigger the shift from the unexamined stage to the identity search stage because this negative experience makes the individual aware of their differences from the racial majority (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007). Wakefield and Hudley also argued that people who grow up in multicultural communities are aware of their ethnic differences and their desire to determine what is unique about their ethnicity initiates their ethnic identity developmental process.

The establishment of identity among American immigrants has been the topic of a few studies. Foner et al. (2018) examined the history of immigrants in America and how the increase in racial and ethnic diversity across the nation has created a shift in the way both immigrants and Native Americans perceive themselves and others. Casey and Dustmann (2010) found that the transmission of identity from immigrant parents to their American-born child plays an important role in the child's ethnic identity formation. Many American-born people of color find that they identify with both their ethnic background and their nationality (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2018). However, Feliciano and Rumbaut's (2018) study of children of immigrants in their middle adulthood found that their levels of identity ranged from strong to completely American-oriented and that their ethnic identity was either not central to their personal identity or irrelevant because they perceived themselves as just American.

Benefits of Positive Racial and Ethnic Identity

A well-developed ethnic and racial identity is important because it facilitates positive development for youth, specifically those who are in high-risk environments (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007). Adolescents, including ethnic minorities, in higher stages of ethnic identity development, such as the achieved ethnic identity stage, have fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety and experience a better overall self-concept (Yasui et al., 2004). Topps's (2021) study of high school students in the mid-South region of America revealed that clear ethnic identity may protect both African American and European adolescents from peer stress and, therefore, increase life satisfaction.

Asian American Experience

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2019), people of Asian descent make up approximately 5.8% of the U.S. population and are categorized as Asian Americans. The United States Census Bureau (2019) uses the word "Asian" to refer to any person from East Asia, Southeast Asia, or South Asia, for example, China, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Hoeffel et al. (2012) added that the Asian population in America "includes people who indicated their race(s) as 'Asian' or reported entries such as 'Asian Indian,' 'Chinese,' 'Filipino,' 'Korean,' 'Japanese,' and 'Vietnamese,' or provided other detailed Asian responses" (p. 2).

The History and Perception of Asian Americans

According to Foner et al. (2018), the social and racial status of Asian Americans has greatly shifted over the past seven decades, moving from "yellow peril" to "the model minority." Chinese and Japanese Americans went from being seen as "almost blacks but not black" to being seen as "almost Whites but not White" (Espiritu, 1997, p. 109). Racial discrimination against

Asians was also evident in the legislation that restricted immigration, naturalization, and prohibition of Asian-White intermarriage (Foner et al., 2018). Asian countries that were once perceived as backward regions, such as China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan, are now viewed as “modern advanced nations and world economic powers” (Foner et al., 2018, p. 9). Post-1965 Asian immigrants (including those from India) now have a higher racial status because a large proportion of these immigrants excel academically higher than the general American population (Lee & Zhou, 2015). However, despite these advancements in racial status, negative stereotypes and discrimination have not disappeared (Foner et al., 2018). Even with American citizenship, Asian Americans are often viewed as “perpetually foreign,” and the recent spread of the COVID-19 virus harmfully fed into the stereotype that Asian Americans are not “real Americans” and put them at a higher risk of violent anti-Asian hate crimes (Hwang, 2021).

The Model Minority Myth

Although the model minority stereotype of Asians has raised their racial status, this image encourages resentment against Asian Americans’ success, pits other people of color against them, and places greater pressure on them to perform at a high level (Lee, 2015). Kao’s (1995) evaluation of the data from the National Longitudinal Study of 1988 indicated that eighth-grade Asian Americans scored higher in math and reading than their White peers. She also discovered that Asian Americans valued education and self-improvement more and had higher rates of parental involvement than their White American counterparts. When Asian Americans do not fit the model minority stereotype or reach the academic expectations placed on them by their family’s cultural values, they can potentially experience distress and identity conflict (Kao, 1995). Lee (1994) interviewed a young boy from Cambodia who was academically low achieving. The young student shared that he did not want to receive tutoring because it was

“embarrassing to reveal his academic difficulties and that Asians did not talk about their problems” (Lee, 1994, p. 421). Lee (2015) explained that the model minority stereotype put pressure on students to excel academically, which resulted in the inner conflict of not wanting to be disliked by their peers and not being a disappointment to their parents.

When exploring the efforts of collegiate student affairs to promote a positive racial identity for Asian American students, Alvarez (2002) discussed *dissonance* as the developmental stage of racial identity that Asian Americans undergo as they encounter experiences “that suggest that race may be related to the differential treatment of both themselves and others” (p. 37). Alvarez explained that during the dissonance stage, the individual may experience confusion, anxiety, and ambivalence towards their race as they question and experience conflicts in the facets of their identity. Vaghela and Ueno (2017) suggested that lower to moderate levels of identity conflict are connected to better mental health. Porter and Washington (1993) found that Asian American high school students had the lowest ethnic self-esteem compared to their African American and Hispanic peers.

Music and Film and Asian American Culture

Asian Americans and the Western European Classical Music Tradition

Western imperialism introduced European classical music to many Asian countries and the classical music tradition became highly influential in these countries (Yang, 2007). Many Asian people have found that “the practice of Western music provides a stable cultural link between their native and host countries as new immigrants” (Yang, 2007, p. 12). The adult musical professionals in Cayari’s (2021) study all had parents who valued musical ensembles, especially orchestral string ensembles, and they encouraged their children to participate in music in school because of their conviction that classical music study would put their children at an

academic advantage over their White and other Asian peers. Cayari went on to explain that the parents' belief stems from the "desire for assimilation toward a U.S. musical culture, and these desires may have perpetuated stereotypes that Asians should play violin, cello, and piano" (2021, p. 21).

Asian musicians are frequently viewed through the lens of classical music performance. Asian composers and performers such as Yo-Yo Ma (cellist) and Vanessa-Mae (violinist) have inspired Asian listeners to embrace their cultural background by including traditional Asian musical elements in the classical genres they perform (Yang, 2007). The "music mom" image commonly placed on Asian mothers who push their children to excel in classical music is a result of the belief that classical music is an "'Asian' cultural practice" and "a means of preserving an 'Asian' identity in the face of mass American culture" (Wang, 2009, p. 899)

Representation of Asian Americans in Music

Asian Americans in music professions are underrepresented in some areas and overrepresented in others (Cayari, 2021). Professional orchestras show a significant number of Asian American musicians (Doeser, 2015), while Asian Americans in New York City stage productions show a disproportionate representation (Bandhu & Kim, 2016). Asian presence in stage musicals and media is often influenced by Orientalist views that portray caricatures and stereotypes of Asians such as the effeminate Asian man and the hyper-sexualized and exoticized Asian woman (Mangaoang, 2018). These negative stereotypes of Asians in theater and media may be a reason why Asian American musicians and performers do not pursue careers in music outside of Western orchestral settings (Cayari, 2021). Cayari (2021) pointed out that Asian American, non-string instrumentalists also lack representation. One of the participants in Cayari's study, an Asian American female bassoonist, shared that she experienced both racist

and sexist prejudice because she played the bassoon instead of a string or high-pitched instrument.

Representation of Asian Americans in Film and Pop Culture

Recent releases in the film industry have provided a more positive representation of Asian Americans. Nahnatchka Khan's 2019 film *Always Be My Maybe* and Alice Wu's 2020 film *The Half of It* both challenge typical Asian film tropes and "strive to represent a broader cross-section of Asian Americans' experiences in the diaspora" (Jessop, 2021, p. 42). The award-winning 2022 film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, also made strides in showing the sides of the Asian American experience that have been overshadowed by past media depictions, specifically by fighting against the model minority stereotype and representing the struggles of Asian immigrants (Cheng, 2022). Ju and Lee's (2015) study illustrated how Korean pop culture elements such as Korean dramas and K-pop (Korean popular music) have helped young Asian American women manage their feelings and emotions. Although the participants were not ethnically Korean, "Korean pop culture presents concrete manifestation of not only the nation, but also the coeval territory of East Asia, which has been limited in their imagined community" (p. 12).

Multicultural Music Education

Educators' Perceptions of Multicultural Music Education

The National Association for Music Education's (2023) position on the inclusion of diverse music in the curriculum is as follows:

The study of music includes the study of the people, places, and cultures involved in its creation and performance. As our country becomes increasingly diverse, it is important

for students in every school setting to study a wide variety of musical styles, cultures, and genres. (para. 1)

Young (1996) pointed out that while music educators support the incorporation of multicultural music, they have different ideas about its definition, scope, and implementation in the music classroom. The elementary and middle school teachers in Young's study believed that including multicultural content would mean sacrificing the quality of their music lessons. Factors such as the lack of preparedness to teach multicultural music, the notion that music from other cultures does not meet music education's standard of quality, and the lack of access to resources for educators are all challenges to the growth and inclusion of multicultural music education in the school curriculum, especially at the secondary and higher education levels (Albertson, 2015).

Music educators who incorporate multicultural music in their curriculum use a variety of approaches. The public high school choir directors in Cash's (2012) study who included world music in their programs did not make decisions based on their students' ethnicity. The choir directors further expressed the desire for further education and opportunities to learn more about teaching world music. In contrast, Herring's (2015) study of middle school choir directors indicated that they taught multicultural music in their classrooms and programmed their concerts based on the ethnic backgrounds of their students. The educators in Herring's study also shared that the "purpose of multicultural music education was to develop students' appreciation for diverse cultures through the exposure of diverse music" (2015, p. 100).

Students' Perceptions of Multicultural Music Education

Students' perceptions of multicultural music education are wide ranging. Nam's (2007) study found that elementary school students had a largely positive attitude toward learning songs from other cultures. The children indicated that "the music sounded different and interesting to

them” (Nam, 2007, p. iii). Nam warned against teaching songs in a different language too quickly, however, because the negative attitudes associated with music from other cultures were based on language difficulty.

Asian American Students and Multicultural Music Education

Cayari (2021) found that the performance and study of Asian music are lacking in the multicultural music curriculum of many schools. They went on to say that this was unfortunate in that teaching students about Asian music and Asian musical performers in a variety of styles and professions may assist Asian students in developing their racial and ethnic identities. Cayari posited that music educators are able to strengthen the ethnic and racial identities of Asian students by selecting music activities that support their cultural and ethnic background. An excellent demonstration of the inclusion of Asian culture in music was the 2005 production of *The Walleye Kid: The Musical*. This musical, staged by the Minneapolis-based Asian American theater company, Theater Mu, incorporated traditional Korean musical elements, an American musical setting, and the story of a young Korean American adoptee’s journey of self-discovery as an Asian woman, resulting in “multicultural education and awareness within the larger community” (Bryant, 2009, p. 4).

Asian Americans and Music Education

Asian Representation in Music Education

While media and pop culture have shown an increased representation of Asian Americans, the number of Asian American music teachers remains far behind the teacher populations of other racial groups (Elpus, 2015; Rickels et al., 2013). When looking at the demographics of those taking the Praxis II music teacher licensure exams exam between the years 2007 and 2012, Elpus (2015) found that only 1.79% of the examinees identified as Asian.

In a similar study conducted by Rickels et al. (2013), 2.8% of auditionees for university music education programs were Asian. Minority teachers often serve as role models for their minority students to pursue high levels of education, and the lack of Asian music teacher role models may explain the low number of Asian-identifying music educators in the teacher workforce (Auerbach, 2007; Guarino et al., 2006; Quioco & Rios, 2000; Shipp, 1999).

Just as Asian music teachers are underrepresented, the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 showed that Asian and Pacific Islander students made up 4% of the school populations and 4% of the music ensemble populations of 940 American high schools (Elpus & Abril, 2019). However, when looking at high school orchestra programs, Asian students made up 14% of the population, an overrepresentation that corresponds with the overrepresentation of professional orchestral ensembles (Doeser, 2015). Participants in Cayari's (2021) study who were in non-string school ensembles or sections shared that the lack of Asian representation "made it difficult to feel accepted while navigating musical experiences situated in White culture" (p. 18). Cayari went on to suggest that experiences in a music ensemble may have an influence on the way the participants identified ethnically.

Asian Spaces in Music Ensembles

Community orchestras and school orchestra programs are sources of what Cayari (2021) refers to as "Asian spaces" because the high population of Asian students creates an Asian community for those involved in these ensembles (p. 21). Positive elements of these orchestras include pride, a sense of belonging, and an opportunity to interact with other Asians, but these spaces may also feed into the model minority stereotype as it puts Asian students in a competitive environment that pressures students to achieve higher than their peers (Cayari, 2021). Racial minority students may benefit from having designated spaces and musical

communities that provide a safe environment with like-minded people (McBride, 2017) and to develop their identity (Pascoe, 2011); however, it is important for music educators to develop spaces where students are not pressured to fit into Asian stereotypes of what instruments to play and how high they must achieve over their peers (Cayari, 2021).

How Music Educators Can Support Asian Students

Over the past two decades, there has been a push for ethnomusicologists to understand and teach musical concepts from different Asian countries. Travel and careful examination of performance practices have contributed to notated works and textbooks that allow ethnomusicologists and advocates of multicultural education to make Asian music more accessible to Western musicians (Wade, 2014). Wang (2015) shared her strategies for teaching polyphonic vocal music from Asian cultures such as “using an oral/aural approach,” using a “nasal tone quality,” singing without the aid of instruments or accompaniment, using “the original language,” and including an “interdisciplinary research project” in the curriculum (pp. 89-90). When learning and performing music from other cultures, it is important to keep an open mind and not use “Western critical values” because “structure and expression are essentially different” (Kasilag, 1967, p. 1). When listening to music from Asian cultures, one can be exposed to many new musical elements not found in Western music, such as microtonal intervals, the Indian raga, and throat singing, and one can become a more well-rounded musician (Kasilag, 1967). Shuler (2011) maintained that one of the most important jobs of a music educator is to create a space for students of all backgrounds to feel welcome. Shuler added that “serving minority students” by creating opportunities for them to excel and by including music from the students’ cultural heritages are some examples of inclusion in the music classroom (2011, p. 9).

While research has shown us that the inclusion and programming of music from different cultures may properly serve minority students in the music classroom (Shuler, 2011), it is also important to note that tokenism, insufficient research, and lack of sensitivity may be harmful to a student's racial and ethnic identity (Cayari, 2021). Sarah, a participant in Cayari's (2021) study, shared that her band director programmed a wind band piece, *Korean Folk Song (Variations)* arranged by John Barnes Chance, that was inspired by "Korean ladies of the evening" (Kelly, 1999, p. 28). This song was referred to as "Sarah's song" by her ensemble-mates, and this experience made her feel "sick, just really uncomfortable" (Cayari, 2021, p. 16). The effect of her director's insensitivity and her peers' teasing impacted her to the point where Sarah, as a professional college professor of music education, "refused to teach anything modal or pentatonic that sounded Asian, regardless of whether she felt the piece was of sufficient quality" (Cayari, 2021, p. 17).

In order to avoid inauthenticity and tokenism, music educators are encouraged to support their students' cultural and ethnic backgrounds with a teaching method known as *culturally responsive pedagogy* (Shaw, 2016). This pedagogical approach utilizes "the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (Gay, 2002, p. 106). In his study of second-generation Chinese American students, Jiaxue (2021) found that including Chinese cultural music in the curriculum and musical activities in a respectful and educational way may assist with positive ethnic and racial identity formation.

Summary

This literature review discussed racial and ethnic identity, the Asian American experience, music and film and Asian American culture, multicultural music education, and

Asian Americans in music education. There is an insufficient amount of research concerning racial identity formation of Asian American students in music ensembles, and this study was established to connect the suggestions for multicultural music education to the existing research of the benefits of positive Asian racial identity

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Pilot Study

The first pilot study involved 10 graduate music education students from TWU. After providing them with an overview of my study, they went through the survey instrument and provided me with feedback. Based on their recommendations, I modified questions to make their meaning clearer and to be more specific, thus enabling me to collect the information I needed for my research. Although these graduate students were not Asian American, they provided feedback from the point of view of current and future music educators.

Because my study focused on the racial identity of Asian American students, I conducted a second pilot study that involved two Asian American musicians who were involved in Texas music ensembles during their high school years; one was involved in choir and the other was involved in orchestra. These two musicians took the study survey and gave me feedback on the wording of my questions, suggested additional questions I should include, and provided me with greater insight into my research by sharing their personal experiences in their high school music ensembles as Asian American music students.

Recruitment of Participants

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Appendix A), I began recruiting participants for the study. The participants ($N = 62$) were all Asian-identifying adults with experience in a high school music ensemble. I extended an invitation to participate in the study via a recruitment email to all faculty and students through TWU's ListServ system (see Appendix B) and by posting an invitation and link to the survey on the Asian Friends of Dallas Facebook page (Appendix C). Recipients of the invitation to participate in the study were

encouraged to share the invitation with any Asian-identifying adult who had participated in a high school music ensemble. The survey remained open for three weeks with a reminder for participants to complete the survey sent six days before closing.

Inclusion Criteria

All participants were required to identify as Asian, be at least 18 years of age, and have participated in a music ensemble during their high school years. The participants ($N = 62$) indicated that they meet the criteria for inclusion by selecting “yes” to the following three questions: 1.) “Are you 18 years of age or older?” 2.) “Do you identify as an Asian-American?” and 3.) “Were you a member of a music ensemble when you were a high school student?”

Data Collection

All data were collected through a Google Forms survey (see Appendix D). Upon opening the survey, the informed consent form and a description of the study were presented to the participants. In order to proceed with the survey, the participants had to consent to participate by clicking “yes” for the question, “I consent to participate in this study.” The next section included questions to ensure that the participants were eligible to take the survey. Once they answered “yes” to the eligibility questions, they were able to move on to the survey questions.

The first and second questions asked the participants to indicate their high school music ensemble experience and if their high school music director identified as Asian American. Survey Questions 3-5 asked the participants about their ensemble director’s curriculum choices, including if songs from different cultures were included in the performance repertoire, if the director showed musical performances that included someone who was Asian-identifying, and if the participant performed songs from an Asian culture or by an Asian composer. Because these questions involved information about the ensemble director’s decisions rather than the

experiences of the participant, the participants were to select “yes,” “no,” “I was never told,” or “I don’t remember.”

The next 16 questions included statements about the participant’s experience as an Asian American high school student in a music ensemble inside and outside of the music room. These statements were rated by the participants’ level of agreement on a Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Data Analysis

Survey Question 1 utilized a checklist response and results were reported through descriptive statistics using frequency and percentage of responses. Survey Questions 2-5 were reported through descriptive statistics using frequency and percentage of responses. Survey Questions 6-21 utilized a 5-point Likert scale and were analyzed by calculating the mean and standard deviation (see Appendix E), and to accurately portray these results, these questions were also reported using descriptive statistics through frequency and percentage of responses.

The results of Survey Questions 3-21 are reported as they correspond with the research questions of this study (See Table 1)

Table 1*Survey Questions and Corresponding Research Questions*

Survey question	Research question
3. My ensemble director/teacher included songs from different cultures in our performance repertoire.	5
4. My ensemble director/teacher showed me musical performances that included someone who was Asian-identifying.	4
5. I performed songs from Asian cultures or by an Asian composer during my time in a high school music ensemble.	4
6. I am able to name Asian-identifying professional musicians who specialize in the voice part or instrument(s) I learned in high school.	4
7. My ensemble director/teacher was welcoming and accepting of students of all ethnic backgrounds.	5
8. I am able to name Asian-identifying composers who write music for the type of ensemble I was a part of in high school.	4
9. Music was an important part of my childhood.	1
10. I had relatives/close family friends who were musicians.	1
11. I was a racial minority in my high school music ensemble.	2
12. I was a racial minority in my high school.	2
13. I felt disconnected from my race and culture when I was a high school student.	2
14. I felt that I needed to "hide" the Asian part of myself to fit in with my peers.	2
15. My cultural experiences as an Asian American were not understood or appreciated by my non-Asian peers.	2
16. I have heard my ensemble director/teacher make a remark that was discriminatory against Asian people.	3
17. I felt connected to my Asian identity due to my choice of instrument.	3
18. I received discriminatory remarks based on the instrument I played.	3

Survey question	Research question
19. I believe that the music I performed in high school helped me shape my racial identity.	4
20. I feel that if we had performed more music from Asian cultures or by Asian composers that I would have been more respected as an Asian American.	5
21. I feel that if my ensemble director/teacher explained the history and context of a musical piece from an Asian culture or by an Asian composer that I would have been more appreciated as an Asian American.	5

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Data reported in the results section are based on the 21 Survey Questions used in the study. The frequency and percentage of responses were calculated for Survey Questions 1-5 and reported in tables. The mean and standard deviation were calculated for Survey Questions 6-21 (see Appendix E), and the frequency and percentage of responses were reported through tables. Results of Survey Questions 3-21 appear under the related research questions (see Table 1) and include a table displaying the frequency and percentage of responses.

Background Information

Participants were asked to select all the music ensembles of which they were a member during high school from a checklist. Participants ($N = 62$) selected a total of 86 ensembles, implying that some of them were members of multiple ensembles (see Table 2). The ensembles included orchestra ($n = 30$), choir ($n = 28$), band ($n = 13$), show choir ($n = 6$), other ($n = 6$), jazz band ($n = 3$), and mariachi ($n = 0$). The most frequently selected ensemble was orchestra (48%), followed closely by choir (45%), and 21% were in band. Mariachi was not selected by any participants.

The next question on the survey asked participants to indicate whether they had an ensemble director who identified as Asian American. Eighty-four percent ($n = 52$) of the participants responded “no” and 16% ($n = 10$) responded “yes” and no participants reported they were not told or don’t remember (see Table 3).

Table 2*Survey Question 1: Which Music Ensemble(s) Were You Involved in as a High School Student?**You may select more than one option.*

Ensemble	No. of participants	Percentage
Orchestra	30	48%
Choir	28	45%
Band	13	21%
Show Choir	6	10%
Other	6	10%
Jazz Band	3	5%
Mariachi	0	0%

Table 3*Survey Question 2: I Had an Ensemble Director/Teacher Who Identified as Asian American*

Answer	Sample	Percentage
Yes	10	16%
No	52	84%
I was never told	0	0%
I don't remember	0	0%

Research Question 1: Do Asian American Music Ensemble Members Have Musical Influences Outside of the Music Classroom?

Two survey items were related to the research question investigating respondents’ musical influences outside of the music classroom. Responses to the statement, “Music was an important part of my childhood,” showed a strong agreement, with a mean of 4.53 and a standard deviation of 0.90 (see Table 4). Eighty-eight percent of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* while only 5% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*.

Table 4

Survey Question 9: Music Was an Important Part of My Childhood

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	45	73%
Agree	4	9	15%
Neither disagree or agree	3	5	8%
Disagree	2	2	3%
Strongly disagree	1	1	2%

The second survey question related to participants’ outside musical influences, “I had relatives/close family friends who were musicians,” and had a mean of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 1.55, indicating a range of responses (see Table 5). Forty-two percent of respondents

either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* and 40% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, showing an even distribution of participants with and without musical relatives.

Research Question 2: Do Asian American Music Ensemble Members Experience Racial Identity Conflict?

Five survey items were related to the research question that investigated if the participants experienced racial identity conflict. The first statement, “I was a racial minority in my high school music ensemble,” resulted in a mean of 3.44 and a standard deviation of 1.42 (see Table 6). Forty-nine percent of respondents either *agreed* or *strongly agreed*, and 29% either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, revealing that the majority of participants were racial minorities in their high school music ensembles.

Table 5

Survey Question 10: I Had Relatives/Close Family Friends Who Were Musicians

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	17	27%
Agree	4	9	15%
Neither disagree or agree	3	11	18%
Disagree	2	10	16%
Strongly disagree	1	15	24%

Table 6*Survey Question 11: I Was a Racial Minority in My High School Music Ensemble*

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	22	36%
Agree	4	8	13%
Neither disagree or agree	3	14	23%
Disagree	2	11	18%
Strongly disagree	1	7	11%

The next statement, “I was a racial minority in my high school,” resulted in a mean of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 1.32 (see Table 7). Sixty-five percent of respondents selected either *agree* or *strongly agree* with this statement, and 20% of respondents selected either *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. This suggests that most of the participants were also racial minorities in their high schools.

Table 7*Survey Question 12: I Was a Racial Minority in My High School*

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	18	29%
Agree	4	22	36%
Neither disagree or agree	3	10	16%
Disagree	2	4	7%
Strongly disagree	1	8	13%

The survey statement, “I felt disconnected from my race and culture when I was a high school student,” related to the participants’ experiences with the identity conflict of not feeling connected to their race and culture. This question resulted in a mean of 3 and a standard deviation of 1.38, which indicates a range of responses (see Table 8). Thirty-seven percent of respondents either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* and 39% either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, showing a relatively even distribution of participants who did and did not feel disconnected from their race and culture when they were high school students.

The next statement, “I felt that I needed to ‘hide’ the Asian part of myself to fit in with my peers,” relates to the racial identity conflict of concealing one’s culture to feel accepted by the dominant group. This survey question resulted in a mean of 2.45 and a standard deviation of 1.38 (see Table 9). Thirty percent of the respondents either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with this statement and 52% either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, which indicates that a little over half of the participants did not feel the need to hide their cultural identity to fit in with their peers.

Table 8

Survey Question 13: I Felt Disconnected From My Race and Culture When I Was a High School Student

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	12	19%
Agree	4	11	18%
Neither disagree or agree	3	15	24%
Disagree	2	13	21%
Strongly disagree	1	11	18%

Table 9

Survey Question 14: I Felt That I Needed to 'Hide' the Asian Part of Myself to Fit in With My Peers

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	4	7%
Agree	4	14	23%
Neither disagree or agree	3	12	19%
Disagree	2	8	13%
Strongly disagree	1	24	39%

The last survey item to investigate if Asian American high school music ensemble members experience racial identity conflict is the statement, “My cultural experiences as an Asian American were not understood or appreciated by my non-Asian peers.” The responses resulted in a mean of 3.18 and a standard deviation of 1.40 (see Table 10). Forty-six percent of respondents either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* and 33% either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, which shows that most participants felt as if their Asian American cultural experiences were not understood or appreciated by their non-Asian peers.

Table 10

Survey Question 15: My Cultural Experiences as an Asian American Were Not Understood or Appreciated by My Non-Asian Peers

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	14	23%
Agree	4	14	23%
Neither disagree or agree	3	14	23%
Disagree	2	9	15%
Strongly disagree	1	11	18%

Research Question 3: Do Music-Related Racial Stereotypes Influence the Racial Identity of Asian American Students?

Three survey items investigated if music-related racial stereotypes had an effect on the racial identity of high school Asian American music ensemble members. The first statement to explore this research question was “I have heard my ensemble director/teacher make a remark that was discriminatory against Asian people.” The responses showed a strong disagreement with this statement with a mean of 1.68 and a standard deviation of 1.08. Eight percent of the participants either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with this statement while 80% either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*.

The mean of 2.40 and standard deviation of 1.03 of the responses for the statement, “I felt connected to my Asian identity due to my choice of instrument,” suggest that most participants did not connect their instrument choice with their Asian identity (see Table 12). Twelve percent of respondents either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with this statement and 47% either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*.

Table 11

Survey Question 16: I Have Heard My Ensemble Director/Teacher Make a Remark That Was Discriminatory Against Asian People

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	2	3%
Agree	4	3	5%
Neither disagree or agree	3	8	13%
Disagree	2	9	15%
Strongly disagree	1	40	65%

Table 12

Survey Question 17: I Felt Connected to My Asian Identity Due to My Choice of Instrument

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	1	2%
Agree	4	6	10%
Neither disagree or agree	3	26	42%
Disagree	2	13	21%
Strongly disagree	1	16	26%

The last survey item to investigate if music-related racial stereotypes impact Asian American racial identity is the statement, “I received discriminatory remarks based on the instrument I played.” This survey question resulted in a mean of 2.30 and a standard deviation of 1.36 (see Table 13). Nineteen percent of participants answered either *agree* or *strongly agree*, and 67% answered either *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. A little over half (52%) of respondents

strongly disagreed. This suggests that most participants did not receive discriminatory remarks based on the instrument they played.

Table 13

Survey Question 18: I Received Discriminatory Remarks Based on the Instrument I Played

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	5	8%
Agree	4	7	11%
Neither disagree or agree	3	9	15%
Disagree	2	9	15%
Strongly disagree	1	32	52%

Research Question 4: Are Asian American Ensemble Members Able to Develop Their Racial Identity Through the Following Factors: Programming Asian Music and Introducing Professional Asian Musicians?

Five survey items investigated if programming Asian music and introducing professional Asian musicians had any effect on the racial identity development of Asian American music ensemble members. The first survey item, “My ensemble director/teacher showed me musical performances that included someone who was Asian-identifying,” was analyzed by observing the frequency and percentage of responses, which resulted in 27% of the participants selecting “yes,” 53% selecting “no,” 3% selecting “I was never told,” and 16% selecting “I don’t remember” (see Table 14). A little more than half of the participants in this study were not shown musical performances with someone who was Asian-identifying.

The next statement, “I performed songs from Asian cultures or by an Asian composer during my time in a high school music ensemble,” was analyzed by observing the frequency and percentage of responses, which was 29% of participants answering “yes,” 57% answering “no,” 3% answering “I was never told,” and 15% answering “I don’t remember” (see Table 15). Over half of the participants did not perform music from an Asian culture or by an Asian composer.

Table 14

Survey Question 4: My Ensemble Director/Teacher Showed Me Musical Performances That Included Someone Who Was Asian-Identifying

Answer	Sample	Percentage
Yes	17	27%
No	33	53%
I was never told	2	3%
I don’t remember	10	16%

Table 15

Survey Question 5: I Performed Songs From Asian Cultures or by an Asian Composer During My Time in a High School Music Ensemble

Answer	Sample	Percentage
Yes	16	26%
No	35	57%
I was never told	2	3%
I don’t remember	9	15%

The statement, “I am able to name Asian-identifying professional musicians who specialize in the voice part or instrument(s) I learned in high school,” resulted with a mean of 2.04 and a standard deviation of 1.36 (see Table 16). Twenty-five percent of the participants either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* and 66% either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, which shows that the majority of the participants were unable to name Asian-identifying professional musicians who specialize in their voice part or instrument.

Table 16

Survey Question 6: I Am Able to Name Asian-Identifying Professional Musicians Who Specialize in the Voice Part or Instrument(s) I Learned in High School

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	6	10%
Agree	4	9	15%
Neither disagree or agree	3	6	10%
Disagree	2	18	29%
Strongly disagree	1	23	37%

The mean of 1.55 and standard deviation of 0.92 for the survey question, “I am able to name Asian-identifying composers who write music for the type of ensemble I was a part of in high school,” show a strong disagreement with the statement (see Table 17). Five percent of the respondents selected either *agree* or *strongly agree* and 85% selected either *disagree* or *strongly disagree*, indicating that a large majority of students were unable to name Asian-identifying composers who write the type of music for the ensemble they were a part of in high school. Sixty-six percent of the respondents *strongly disagreed*.

The last survey item investigated if the music the participants performed in high school had any impact on their racial identity development was the statement, “I believe that the music I performed in high school helped me shape my racial identity.” This survey question resulted in a mean of 2.06 and a standard deviation of 1.13 (see Table 18). Thirteen percent of the respondents either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* and 69% either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*, which shows that the music performed by most of the participants did not shape their racial identity.

Table 17

Survey Question 8: I Am Able to Name Asian-Identifying Composers Who Write Music for the Type of Ensemble I Was a Part of in High School

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	1	2%
Agree	4	2	3%
Neither disagree or agree	3	6	10%
Disagree	2	12	19%
Strongly disagree	1	41	66%

Table 18

Survey Question 19: I Believe That the Music I Performed in High School Helped Me Shape My

Racial Identity

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	2	3%
Agree	4	6	10%
Neither disagree or agree	3	11	18%
Disagree	2	18	29%
Strongly disagree	1	25	40%

Research Question 5: What Role Can Music Educators Play in Promoting the Self-Worth and Acceptance of Asian American Students?

Four survey items investigated what music educators can do to promote the self-worth and acceptance of their Asian American students. The first survey item, “My ensemble director/teacher included songs from different cultures in our performance repertoire,” was analyzed by observing the frequency and percentage of responses, which resulted in 63% of participants selecting “yes,” 24% selecting “no,” 2% selecting “I was never told,” and 11% selecting “I don’t remember” (see Table 19). This shows that a majority of the participants performed music from different cultures while they were in their high school ensembles.

Table 19

Survey Question 3: My Ensemble Director/Teacher Included Songs From Different Cultures in Our Performance Repertoire

Answer	Sample	Percentage
Yes	39	63%
No	15	24%
I was never told	1	2%
I don't remember	7	11%

The next statement, “My ensemble director/teacher was welcoming and accepting of students of all ethnic backgrounds,” resulted in a mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 0.74, and these results suggest that most participants agreed with the statement (see Table 20). Eighty-eight percent of the respondents either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement and 2% *disagreed*. No participants indicated that they *strongly disagreed* with the statement. This reveals that most participants had ensemble directors who were accepting of all their students’ ethnic backgrounds.

The statement, “I feel that if we had performed more music from Asian cultures or by Asian composers that I would have been more respected as an Asian American,” resulted in a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 1.23, which shows a variety in responses (see Table 21). Forty-nine percent of the respondents either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement while the rest of the responses were divided. While responses were divided on this survey question, a larger portion of respondents agreed that performing more music from Asian cultures or by Asian composers would have made them feel more respected as Asian Americans.

Table 20

Survey Question 7: My Ensemble Director/Teacher Was Welcoming and Accepting of Students of All Ethnic Backgrounds

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	43	69%
Agree	4	12	19%
Neither disagree or agree	3	6	10%
Disagree	2	1	2%
Strongly disagree	1	0	0%

Table 21

Survey Question 20: I Feel That if We Had Performed More Music From Asian Cultures or by Asian Composers That I Would Have Been More Respected as an Asian American

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	9	15%
Agree	4	21	34%
Neither disagree or agree	3	14	23%
Disagree	2	9	15%
Strongly disagree	1	9	15%

The last statement to investigate what music educators can do to promote self-worth and appreciation for their Asian American students was, “I feel that if my ensemble director/teacher explained the history and context of a musical piece from an Asian culture or by an Asian composer that I would have been more appreciated as an Asian American.” This question resulted in a mean of 3.55 and a standard deviation of 1.20 (see Table 22). Sixty percent of the

participants either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* and 19% either *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*. This shows that most of the participants believe that teaching background information about a musical piece would have made them more appreciated as an Asian American in their music ensemble.

Table 22

Survey Question 21: I Feel That if My Ensemble Director/Teacher Explained the History and Context of a Musical Piece From an Asian Culture or by an Asian Composer That I Would Have Been More Appreciated as an Asian American

Descriptor	Rating	No. of response	% of response
Strongly agree	5	14	23%
Agree	4	23	37%
Neither disagree or agree	3	13	21%
Disagree	2	7	11%
Strongly disagree	1	5	8%

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the implications of the results of this study and relates them to previous research in this area of investigation. The chapter is organized topically, using research questions as a framework.

Asian Representation in Ensemble Population and Director Positions

Orchestra was the most selected ensemble by the Asian American participants in this study, which aligns with previous research that shows an overrepresentation of Asian Americans in professional and school orchestras (Cayari, 2021; Doeser, 2015). Although there is an insignificant amount of research that may suggest why choir was the second-most selected ensemble in this study, I speculate that the participants in this study who were in choir participated in this ensemble because of the strong choral culture in Texas public schools. Because the invitation was sent through the TWU ListServ system and the Asian Friends of Dallas Facebook page, a majority of the participants may have gone to Texas high schools. No participants were involved in mariachi ensembles during their high school years. I speculate that because mariachi is a traditional Mexican music group, the desire to join mariachi as an Asian person may be low because it does not have a cultural significance. The low number of Asian ensemble directors represented in this study corresponds with previous research indicating that Asian music educators rank low in the minority teacher population (Elpus, 2015; Rickels et al., 2013).

Research Question 1: Do Asian American Music Ensemble Members Have Musical Influences Outside of the Music Classroom?

This study revealed that music was an important part of the participants' childhood with a mean of 4.53. This result is in keeping with the study by Cayari (2021) that revealed that the participants, who were professional musicians, all had parents who valued music. The even distribution of participants (mean of 3.04) who did and did not have musical relatives suggests that, although it has been proven by previous literature that Western music acts as a cultural link between native and host countries for many Asian people (Yang, 2007), not all Asians have a strong musical culture in their family or relatives and close family friends who are musicians.

Research Question 2: Do Asian American Music Ensemble Members Experience Racial Identity Conflict?

The results of this study show that most of the participants were a racial minority in both their high school music ensemble and in their high school. Previous research indicates that both immigrant and American-born Asians develop their identity as a minority group (Foner et al., 2018) and that school experiences are formative to identity development (Klock, 2021). Therefore, it follows that the participants of this study largely developed their identity as racial minorities in their music and school communities.

This study revealed that some participants felt disconnected from their Asian race and culture, while others did not. However, there is existing research that supports the phenomenon of Asian Americans feeling as if they cannot relate to or associate with their racial and ethnic culture which may lead to an under-developed Asian racial identity (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007). Although this cultural disconnection was not experienced by all participants, close to one-half of

participants felt disconnected from their race and culture, a fact that would be helpful for music educators to be aware of when planning their curriculum.

Thirty percent of the participants either agreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “I felt that I needed to ‘hide’ the Asian part of myself to fit in with my peers.” Some of the Asian music professionals in Cayari’s (2021) study shared that they either rejected or felt the need to adjust aspects of their Asian identity to fit in within their community and among their peers. Further, 46% of the participants in this study felt that their cultural experiences as Asian Americans were not understood or appreciated by their non-Asian peers. Music educators are able to mitigate the desire of Asian students to hide their racial identity to fit in by making sure that their music classrooms are spaces that welcome and celebrate the racial backgrounds and cultures of all students. Additionally, by providing information about Asian culture in conjunction with the performance of music by Asian composers, students can gain a better understanding of and respect for Asian people.

Research Question 3: Do Music-Related Racial Stereotypes Influence the Racial Identity of Asian American Students?

Only 8% of participants agreed with the statement, “I have heard my ensemble director/teacher make a remark that was discriminatory against Asian people.” While the results imply that few participants heard their ensemble director make a discriminatory remark about Asian people, it is important to note the potential negative impact on the students. According to the research of Cayari (2021), Klock (2021), and Wakefield and Hadley (2007), the negative comments that these participants overheard may have had a negative impact on their racial identities.

The most-selected ensemble in this study was orchestra, which made up 48% of all ensembles represented in this study. As discussed in the literature review, young Asian musicians often faced stereotypes and racially-based assumptions, especially about their instrument choice and the type of ensemble they were involved in (Cayari, 2021).

Because of the overrepresentation of Asian string musicians, it is a common assumption that if an Asian person is a musician, they are most likely to play a string instrument, and these stereotypes impact racial and ethnic identity (Cayari, 2021; Doeser, 2015). In this study, the mean of 2.40 indicates that the participants did not feel a connection between instrument choice and racial identity. In other words, their instrument either did not have an effect on their racial identity development or they felt that their racial identity did not align with their musical identity.

Survey Question 18, “I received discriminatory remarks based on the instrument I played,” resulted in a mean of 2.10, which suggests that most participants did not receive discriminatory remarks based on their instrument choice. However, 19% of participants indicated that they did receive discriminatory remarks about the instrument they played. Although most of the participants did not receive discriminatory remarks based on their instrument choice, it is important to observe the outliers in this study who experienced discriminatory remarks that most likely led to identity conflict. Assumptions and remarks based on stereotypes create identity conflict when an Asian American student does not play a stereotypical instrument such as the violin or piano (Cayari, 2021).

A child’s school experiences affect their identity development (Klock, 2021; Wakefield & Hadley, 2007), and a music educator’s support of a child’s ethnic and cultural background may further assist a positive identity formation (Cayari, 2021). Although few participants

reported experiencing the harmful effects of music-related stereotypes, music educators should be aware of these stereotypes and know that the racial identity development of their Asian students can be negatively impacted by them.

Research Question 4: Are Asian American Ensemble Members Able to Develop Their Racial Identity Through the Following Factors: Programming Asian Music and Introducing Professional Asian Musicians?

Most of the participants in this study were not shown musical performances with someone who was Asian-identifying nor did they perform music from an Asian culture or by an Asian composer. Further, only 25% of participants were able to name an Asian-identifying professional musician who specializes in their voice part or instrument, and a smaller percentage (5%) were able to name an Asian composer. The frequency and percentage of responses suggest that most of the participants of this survey had ensemble directors who did not expose them to positive Asian representation or give them the opportunity to connect with music from Asian cultures. This is consistent with Cayari's (2021) study that found that music from Asian cultures and by Asian composers is underrepresented and underperformed in traditional Western music ensembles and that positive representation for Asian Americans in musical ensembles and performances outside the genres of string orchestras and piano is lacking. Because of this, it would be more challenging to name Asian composers and Asian-identifying professional musicians for instruments other than strings or piano.

Cayari (2021) went on to say that being able to see Asian professional musicians specializing in one's instrument and performing music written by an Asian composer or from Asian cultures may have a positive effect on identity development. However, the mean of 2.06 for the statement, "I believe that the music I performed in high school helped me shape my racial

identity” suggests that the music the participants performed in high school did not help develop their racial identity. Based on the results of this study, it can be implied that the participants were not given the opportunity to shape their racial identity through the programming of Asian music and the introduction of Asian professional musicians and composers.

Research Question 5: What Role Can Music Educators Play in Promoting the Self-Worth and Acceptance of Asian American Students?

By observing the frequency and percentage of responses, it is apparent that most of the participants (63%) performed music from different cultures. Although only 26% of participants indicated that they performed music from Asian cultures or by an Asian composer, the majority of participants were able to experience a multicultural music education during their time in a high school ensemble. Based on previous research, it can be concluded that those who had a multicultural music education may have a better appreciation and respect for other cultures than those who did not receive a multicultural music experience (Cayari, 2021; Herring, 2015; Jiaxue, 2021; Shaw, 2016). Further, Shuler (2011) contended that to promote the self-worth and acceptance of Asian American students in the music classroom, music educators must create a learning environment where all students of different backgrounds feel welcome.

A mean of 4.56 and a low standard deviation of 0.74 strongly suggest that the participants had an ensemble director who was welcoming and accepting of students of all ethnic backgrounds. However, it is important to note that one participant indicated that they disagreed with the statement, “My ensemble director/teacher was welcoming and accepting of students of all ethnic backgrounds.” This outlier implies that there are still a few music educators who have created experiences for their Asian students that were not welcoming.

Previous research suggests that music educators help develop positive racial identities by including music from Asian cultures or by Asian composers and teaching the history and context of those music selections (Cayari, 2021; Jiaxue, 2021; Schuler, 2011; Shaw, 2016). The last two survey questions asked the participants if these suggestions would have had an impact on how they were respected and appreciated as Asian Americans.

The mean of 3.19 for the statement, “I feel that if we had performed more music from Asian cultures or by Asian composers that I would have been more respected as an Asian American,” implies that on average, more participants were on the “agree” side of the scale, but there were a variety of answers. Although there is a variety in the responses, the frequency and percentage of responses show that most of the participants feel that performing Asian music or music by Asian composers would have helped them be more respected as Asian Americans.

Similar to the results of the statement above, the mean of 3.55 suggests that most participants agreed with the statement, “I feel that if my ensemble director/teacher explained the history and context of a musical piece from an Asian culture or by an Asian composer that I would have been more appreciated as an Asian American.” There is also variety in the answers for this statement, but the frequency and percentage of the responses suggest that most of the participants were of the opinion that teaching the history and context of a musical piece would have led to higher levels of appreciation as Asian Americans in their music ensembles.

The opinions of the participants suggest that music educators should consider including music from Asian cultures or by Asian composers and teaching the history and context of these music selections in order to help their Asian American students feel more respected and appreciated in the classroom.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Racial identity formation begins at a young age, and most participants indicated that music was an important part of their childhoods and that they had musician relatives and close family friends. Music has affected the participants' lives both in and outside of the music classroom. Music educators are able to strengthen the racial identity of their Asian American students through music, by utilizing multicultural and culturally relevant approaches.

Each participant had a unique experience when developing a racial identity and experiencing racial conflict. Although not all Asian American students may be affected by racial conflict in the music classroom, it is important for music educators to understand that some of their Asian students may feel a conflict between their Asian identity and their musician identity, feel that they need to hide the Asian side of themselves in order to fit in, or feel as if their cultural experiences are not understood or appreciated by their peers.

Music educators who fail to provide a learning environment that supports students of all cultural backgrounds may have a negative impact on the racial identity of Asian musicians (Cayari, 2021; Shuler, 2011). Fortunately, most participants in this study did not hear discriminatory remarks against Asian people from their music educator or hear discriminatory remarks about their instrument choices. However, some participants in this survey said they had overheard discriminatory remarks about their instrument choice and, more alarming, one participant heard their music ensemble director make a prejudiced comment about Asian people. Although these negative experiences were not common among the participants of this survey, some bias against high school Asian musicians is still apparent. Current and future music

educators should be aware of the stereotypes that may be harmful to their Asian students in order to properly support them in their musical journeys.

Studying and performing Asian music and being introduced to professional Asian musicians in a variety of genres and styles are some ways that music educators may help Asian students to develop a positive racial identity (Cayari, 2021). These two factors, along with the presence of Asian choral directors in my developmental years, have helped shape my own racial identity. More than half of the participants in this survey were not shown musical performances with someone who was Asian-identifying nor did they perform music from an Asian culture or by an Asian composer, thus losing the opportunity to strengthen their racial identity. Creating opportunities for students to connect to their cultural heritage by programming Asian music or pieces by Asian composers and exposing students to Asian musical performers are some ways music educators can assist with positive racial identity formation (Cayari, 2021), which in turn increases acceptance and life satisfaction (Topps, 2021). The results of this study further suggest that a multicultural and culturally relevant approach to music education may develop positive racial identities among Asian American students and help them feel more respected and appreciated in their high school music classrooms.

Limitations of Study

Because this study was shared via the TWU ListServ system and posted on a Facebook group based in Dallas, Texas, most of the participants may have come from Texas, specifically the Dallas-Fort Worth area. No demographic information was obtained about the participants' state of residence, where they attended high school, what their primary instrument was, and whether or not they are a professional or amateur musician.

Recommendations for Further Research

The racial category of “Asian” is very broad as it includes the many ethnicities found on the Asian continent. Although this study was designed to explore how music educators could strengthen the racial identity of Asian American students, and it did not specifically explore the experiences that may be unique to different ethnicities. For example, my experiences with identity formation as a Filipino American may not be the same as someone who is Korean American. Additionally, since no racial or ethnic group is a monolith, people’s experiences will vary even if they identify as having the same ancestral country. Similar to how experiences among different Asian ethnicities will vary, the experiences of biracial or multi-racial individuals will vary, and this study does not take into account the participants who may identify with more than one race.

The field of music education would benefit from studies that include the experiences of different ethnic identities and other racial groups. As the population in music classrooms diversifies, research to strengthen the racial and ethnic identities of all students is essential to providing a well-rounded and inclusive education.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL



Texas Woman's University

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

irb@twu.edu

<https://www.twu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb/>

November 1, 2022

Cryselle Cruz

Music and Theatre

Re: Exempt - IRB-FY2023-57 Exploring the Role of Music Ensemble Directors in
Strengthening Racial Identity Among Asian American High School Students

Dear Cryselle Cruz,

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU IRB - Denton operating under
FWA00000178 and was determined to be exempt on October 31, 2022.

Note that any modifications to this study must be submitted for IRB review prior to their
implementation, including the submission of any agency approval letters, changes in research
personnel, and any changes in study procedures or instruments. Additionally, the IRB must be
notified immediately of any adverse events or unanticipated problems. All modification requests,
incident reports, and requests to close the file must be submitted through Cayuse.

On October 30, 2023, this approval will expire and the study must be renewed or closed. A
reminder will be sent 45 days prior to this date.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please email your IRB analyst at
irb@twu.edu or refer to the [IRB website](#).

Sincerely,

TWU IRB - Denton

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Exploring the Role of Music Ensemble Directors in Strengthening Racial Identity Among Asian American High School Students

Are you of Asian descent?

Were you in a music ensemble during your high school years?

If you answered “yes” to the questions above, you are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Crysty Cruz, a master’s student at Texas Woman's University, as a part of her thesis. The purpose of this study is to understand how multicultural music education can contribute to the racial identity of Asian American students.

Take the survey below to help music educators better support their Asian-identifying students.

In order to participate in this ONLINE SURVEY, you must be at least **18 years of age, identify as Asian, and have to have been enrolled in a high school music ensemble.**

Purpose

- To investigate the role of multicultural music education practices on the racial identity of Asian American students.

Procedure

- The survey is administered online
- Take this survey using the *link provided below*
- There are 20 questions, including eligibility questions.
- Total time estimated for the survey is around 10 minutes

- The study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the survey at any time or skip any questions

Survey link: <https://forms.gle/JkwFdqqSZkmwQH3g8>

Contact information

Principal Investigator: Crysty Cruz - ccruz27@twu.edu

Faculty Advisor: Vicki Baker, PhD - vbaker@twu.edu

Thank you for your time and interest in this study!

**There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email downloading, electronic meetings, and internet transactions.*

APPENDIX C

RECRUITMENT FACEBOOK POST

Hello, everyone!

Are you of Asian descent? Were you in a music ensemble during your high school years?

If you answered “yes” to the questions above, you are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Crysty Cruz, a master’s student at Texas Woman's University, as a part of her thesis. The purpose of this study is to understand how multicultural music education can contribute to the racial identity of Asian American students. Results of this study will be used to educate music teachers on how to better support their Asian-identifying students.

Below is a link to the survey that will be conducted on Google forms. It is 100% anonymous, participation is voluntary, and you will not be asked for your name or any identifying information. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading and internet transactions. If you answer “no” to any of the eligibility screening questions, you will be prompted to leave the survey. I will post a link to the results of this study when it is completed.

If you are unable to complete this survey but know someone who may be interested in it, you may forward it to them.

Research survey link: <https://forms.gle/WjoVLHEmhVjHjJcY8>

This post has been approved by the admins/moderators of this group.

APPENDIX D

ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

Survey Eligibility Questions

Are you 18 years of age or older?

_Yes

_No

Do you identify as Asian-American?

_Yes

_No

Were you a member of a music ensemble when you were a high school student?

_Yes

_No

Survey Questions

Fill out the following information to the best of your knowledge

1. Which music ensemble(s) were you involved in as a high school student? You may select more than one option.

_Choir

_Band

_Orchestra

_Mariachi

_Show Choir

_Jazz Band

_Other

Listed below are statements that you will answer based on your experiences as a high school student. To clarify, the use of the word "instrument" also includes the singing voice.

2. I had an ensemble director/teacher who identified as Asian American.

_Yes

_No

_I was never told

_I don't remember

3. My ensemble director/teacher included songs from different cultures in our performance repertoire.

_Yes

_No

_I was never told

_I don't remember

4. My ensemble director/teacher showed me musical performances that included someone who was Asian-identifying.

_Yes

_No

_I was never told

_I don't remember

5. I performed songs from Asian cultures or by an Asian composer during my time in a high school music ensemble.

_Yes

_No

_I was never told

_I don't remember

(Questions 6-21 will be answered based on the participant's level of agreement by indicating on a five-point scale)

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

5

4

3

2

1

6. I am able to name Asian-identifying professional

musicians who specialize in the voice part or instrument(s) I learned in high school.

7. My ensemble director/teacher was welcoming and accepting of students of all ethnic backgrounds.

8. I am able to name Asian-identifying composers who write music for the type of ensemble I was a part of in high school.

9. Music was an important part of my childhood.

10. I had relatives/close family friends who were musicians.

11. I was a racial minority in my high school music ensemble.

12. I was a racial minority in my high school.

13. I felt disconnected from my race and culture when I was a high school student.

14. I felt that I needed to "hide" the Asian part of myself to fit in with my peers.

15. My cultural experiences as an Asian American were not understood or appreciated by my non-Asian peers.

16. I have heard my ensemble director/teacher make a remark that was discriminatory against Asian people.

17. I felt connected to my Asian identity due to my choice of instrument.

18. I received discriminatory remarks based on the instrument I played.

19. I believe that the music I performed in high school helped me shape my racial identity.

20. I feel that if we had performed more music from Asian cultures or by Asian composers that I would have been more respected as an Asian American.

21. I feel that if my ensemble director/teacher explained the history and context of a musical piece from an Asian culture or by an Asian composer that I would have been more appreciated as an Asian American.

APPENDIX E

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF SURVEY QUESTIONS #6-#21

Survey Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
6. I am able to name Asian-identifying professional musicians who specialize in the voice part or instrument(s) I learned in high school.	2.31	1.36
7. My ensemble director/teacher was welcoming and accepting of students of all ethnic backgrounds.	4.56	0.74
8. I am able to name Asian-identifying composers who write music for the type of ensemble I was a part of in high school.	1.55	0.92
9. Music was an important part of my childhood.	4.53	0.90
10. I had relatives/close family friends who were musicians.	3.05	1.55
11. I was a racial minority in my high school music ensemble.	3.44	1.42
12. I was a racial minority in my high school.	3.61	1.32
13. I felt disconnected from my race and culture when I was a high school student.	3.00	1.38
14. I felt that I needed to "hide" the Asian part of myself to fit in with my peers.	2.45	1.38
15. My cultural experiences as an Asian American were not understood or appreciated by my non-Asian peers.	3.18	1.41
16. I have heard my ensemble director/teacher make a remark that was discriminatory against Asian people.	1.68	1.08

Survey Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
17. I felt connected to my Asian identity due to my choice of instrument.	2.40	1.03
18. I received discriminatory remarks based on the instrument I played.	2.10	1.36
19. I believe that the music I performed in high school helped me shape my racial identity.	2.06	1.13
20. I feel that if we had performed more music from Asian cultures or by Asian composers that I would have been more respected as an Asian American.	3.19	1.28
21. I feel that if my ensemble director/teacher explained the history and context of a musical piece from an Asian culture or by an Asian composer that I would have been more appreciated as an Asian American.	3.55	1.20