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An Exploration of Ghanaian Basic School Marching Band Pupils' Instrument Choices

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate reported influences on Ghanaian Basic School band pupil's instrument choices, to gain an understanding of reasons expressed by students for preferring certain instruments and not others, in addition, to explore whether Ghanaian children are gender-stereotyped in their musical instrument choices. A questionnaire was developed to gather information concerning students' instrumental music experience, family participation in band, reported reasons for instrument choice, non-choice, and several other questions to give readers insight into how Ghanaian basic school bands operate. The sample consisted of 142 pupils from five basic school bands in the Accra metropolis. Results revealed strong gender/instrument associations. Pupils indicated that their choices were most influenced by their school band teacher. Other reported influences included instrument sound and programmes the school band attends.

The results also revealed that girls in the Accra metropolis who are members of the school bands tend to prefer playing the "percussions" which are mostly regarded to be for boys. Gender association with certain instruments seemed to override professed reasons for instrument selection.

Keywords: Fugu School band, instrumental music education, gender stereotypes, instrument preference, brass band

Introduction

Instrumental music programmes are positive elements in school life and an integral part of assemblies, and other corporate events. There is undoubtedly much enthusiasm for music and the other performing arts in Ghanaian basic schools. However, due to the poor economic state of schools and the country at large, school bands exist mostly in private and mission schools and they perform during end-of-term celebrations, anniversaries, sports festivals, and regular occurrences and events highly valued for educational reasons. These bands, apart from their educational roles, also contribute immensely to community cultural life by providing music for all occasions: funerals, marriage ceremonies, political rallies, street processions and so on. School bands in Ghana are generally like those in the United States, Australia, Asia, and the United Kingdom in terms of instrumentation, although the Ghanaian versions of the band are smaller in size and consists, predominantly, of instruments of the brass family.

Modern-day Ghanaian school marching bands consist of various combinations of the following instruments: trumpet, cornet, second trumpet or French horn, tenor trombone, bass trombone, euphonium, tuba, alto saxophone, clarinet, and percussions such as snare drum, bass drum, cymbal and tenor drum. It is difficult to find instruments like the oboe, flute, and bassoons among the instrumental set-up of Ghanaian school bands, mostly due to economic factors and sometimes the lack of technical expertise in playing such instruments. Usually, large percussion instruments, sousaphones, and contrabass clarinets and other expensive woodwinds are not common in Ghanaian school bands due to lack of funds. For detailed information on school bands in Ghana (Dordzro, 2017).

Music is not only a field of enjoyment but also an area that "lend itself to discipline and training of the mind and body and a field of cultural knowledge and artistic behaviour" (Nketia, 1999, p. 11). Playing a musical instrument (an aspect of music) is essential to human beings. According to research by Hallam (2004), music serves to assist in the process of increasing communication and enabling people to function together more effectively. Robinson (1996, p. 17) also confirms that "musical intelligence is a human

capacity". She further talks about music as a major civilizing force. Even though it does not necessarily make people more moral, music does help them learn to be empathetic towards others. It teaches them to feel and care. It puts them in touch with some of the highest achievements of humankind. There are countless examples of how learning music affects intelligence in students. Music is an academic discipline available in schools in which students' simultaneously develop cognitive abilities, physical abilities, and social skills. This is particularly evident in the instrumental music classroom.

Despite the numerous benefits associated with school instrumental music participation, marching band programmes in Ghanaian basic schools are organised informally with students earning no credits for participation. Up to now, no curriculum for school bands has been implemented in Ghana. Consequently, school band directors are left largely on their own when determining the content of their lessons and rehearsals. Typically, instructional materials consist of fingering and positional charts of the valve and slide instruments but not band method or instruction books. Consequently, band instruction is generally done using the rote method (Dordzro, 2017).

My seventeen years of experience playing, and teaching bands confirmed that apart from the scarcity of equipment and materials such as musical instruments and library books (Otchere, 2019), and inadequately trained teachers to handle the teaching of music in schools (Otchere, 2014), selection of musical instrument is another fundamental problem facing school marching bands in Ghana. Unfortunately, this issue is often overlooked. When a child selects a musical instrument to play, the decision affects his or her musical experience in many ways: factors such as size, physical characteristics, and enjoyment level all contribute significantly to a student's initial success on his or her instrument. Therefore, having a clear understanding of the factors that influence students in their choice of a musical instrument can provide a better perception as to the reasons why students select certain instruments, and may also reveal how educators can better recruit students in instrumental music. Students' satisfaction in school music programme is paramount since it contributes to continued participation, which preserves the instrumental music programme and, for that matter, music education in general.

A brief literature review

The choice of a musical instrument is among the most important factors in determining the course of a student's instrumental music education. Music and gender research suggests that many of the same stereotypes that determined musical instrument choice over 40 years ago are still predominant in school instrumental music programmes today (Si Millican, 2017; Dordzro, 2017/2015; Wych, 2012; Green, 2010/1997; Sinsabaugh, 2005

and Eros, 2008; Harrison & O'Neill, 2000, 2003; Pickering & Repacholi, 2002; Harrison, 2003; Kelly, 1997; Trollinger, 1994; Zervoudakes & Tanur, 1994; Tarnowski, 1993; Delzell & Leppla, 1992).

Exposing students to a wide range of musical experiences is a major goal of music education (Hui, 2009; Wiggins, 2001). However, guiding students to participate in a variety of musical styles and genres remain a challenge due to gender-based instruments selections- whereby certain musical instruments are believed to be more appropriate for males and others for females (Mckeage, 2004). As a result of the latter, students may be resistant to different and unfamiliar music, preferring to participate in music that is popular to their gender (May, 1985; Greer, Dorow, & Randall, 1974). The potential of this phenomenon in limiting students' range of musical participation is high and needs to be investigated and if possible, eradicated. It is our responsibility as music educators to ensure that every individual is granted the opportunity and be encouraged to learn music or play any musical instrument, and to share in musical experiences since this allows us to celebrate, preserve our cultural heritage, explore the realms of expression, imagination, and creation resulting in new knowledge.

Studies have been done to determine the components that contribute to instrument choice since the seminal work in this area by Abeles and Porter in 1978. Si Millican (2017) and Wych (2012) presented a detailed literature review on the current state of research on the subject matter. Also, one of the doyens who first established the view that the choice of musical instrument is stereotyped by gender; Abeles (2009) also revisited some issues that are pertinent to the current discussion. All the above mentioned researchers, and many others, found gender to be an influence as well as instrument timbre, parental and peer influences, personality, and the amount of exposure to music as well as several other factors of significant relevance (Sinsabaugh, 2005; Harrison & O'Neill, 2000, 2003; Tarnowski, 1993; Fortney, Boyle, & DeCarbo, 1993; Bruce & Kemp, 1993; Delzell & Leppla, 1992; Griswold & Chroback, 1981; Abeles & Porter, 1978).

It is clear from the literature that gender-stereotyping of musical instruments may depend on a range of other factors, including the shape or size of the instrument, its pitch, and quality of sound or the need for particular characteristics in order to play it, for instance, physical endurance. While examples of these differences can be found in many cultures, most large-scale explorations of the factors that influence students' choice of musical instruments have been carried out in the developed world, and these factors inevitably have an impact on the preferences of boys and girls for playing particular instruments.

Although there are also great overlaps in the musical instrument choices of males and females, research has demonstrated that many "sociological, psychological, and physiological factors are influential in the preferences towards and selection of instruments by the two sexes" (O'Neill, 1997, p. 48). There is, therefore, the evidence to suggest that external or self-imposed restrictions are limiting the range of musical instruments available for boys and girls to select from, thereby also limiting their musical experience, participation in instrumental groups, and opportunities for careers in instrumental music. Numerous studies have demonstrated these phenomena (Bruce & Kemp, 1993; Fortney, Boyle, & DeCarbo, 1993; Tarnowski, 1993; Delzell & Leppla, 1992; Griswold & Crookback, 1981; Abeles & Porter, 1978). However, the fact that this issue persists can be illustrated by subsequent research based on the same subject matter (Si Millican, 2017; Dordzro, 2017/2015; Elpus, 2015; Fitzpatrick, 2013; Wych 2012; Green, 2010; Eros, 2008; Sinsabaugh, 2005; Harrison, 2003).

Historically, all cultures have differentiated the roles of males and females. The nature and extent of this differentiation have varied between cultures and within them, depending on other factors, for instance, social class, religious beliefs (Unger & Crawford, 1992; Maccoby, 1988) and so on. One aspect of this differentiation has been the gender-stereotyping of musical activities that are perceived as appropriate for males and females and, in parallel with this, the gender stereotyping of musical instruments. There is no doubt that gender stereotyping of musical instruments exists among Ghanaian cultures with respect to participation in traditional musical groups and playing of instruments especially the "traditional drums". The latter is corroborated by Nketia (1999) that, "there are instruments that are played only by men and not by women and sometimes instruments that are played mostly by women" (p. 5). Ghanaian children are very much aware of the instrument stereotypes regarding Ghanaian traditional instruments and the "myths" that supports these beliefs. But the question is, are Ghanaian basic school children aware of these stereotypes as regards Western instruments and think about them when selecting an instrument for study in the school band? Thus the crux of this paper.

Though these gender concerns appear in the literature, to the best of my knowledge, there is little or no empirical evidence within music education to determine whether gender stereotyping of instruments exists among school bands in Ghana. The present study, therefore, sort to address this need for empirical research, by bringing an African perspective to the whole discussion, and to provide researchers and music educators an empirical understanding of the current issues and trend with regard to school instrumental music education in Ghana.

The questions that guided the research were: What factors influence pupils in their choice of a band instrument? To what extent does gender stereotyping of musical instruments affect Ghanaian children's choice of musical instrument? To what extent are boys' choices of instrument different from that of girls? To what extent does the child's home environment affect his/her choice of musical instrument? At what level are pupils eligible to play in the school band?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research strategy including a variety of complementary research designs, through survey (questionnaire) and observations to form a case study (Creswell, 2003). The relevance of this method in education research cannot be overemphasized (Neuman, 2003). Indeed visiting five school bands was a time-consuming process, but one which I felt worth pursuing in order to obtain a better illustration of the varied nature of the school bands and to reflect the individual perceptions and experiences of the individual students. According to Creswell (2003), a study using a survey simply for descriptive purpose is classified as a survey research design the same way a study using an observation simply for descriptive purpose is classified as an observation research design. Survey research design involves asking the same set of questions, often a written questionnaire of a large number of individual participants and (participant) observation was used in this study so that the researcher could engage in the same activities as the participants in order to observe their behavior.

The main study involved five randomly selected bands out of the 14 school bands in the Accra Metropolis of the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. Sample size selection relates to the questions and the type of approach (Creswell, 2007); one or two people in a narrative study, 20-30 in grounded theory project and 4-10 when cases are being studied. In line with Creswell's recommendation, five school bands were randomly selected for this study.

The 142 pupils from the five school bands that made up the sample for this research were selected because they belonged to one of the five basic school bands that made up the sample. All students belonging to the five bands were included in the study. The five basic school bands that made up the sample for this study were Rev. John Teye memorial school band (28 pupils), Mary Mother of Good Counsel School band (37 pupils), Providence School band (23 pupils), De-youngsters School band (24 pupils) and St. Theresa's School band (30 pupils). The survey instrument used in this study was a three-page, 33-item survey modified from a questionnaire previously used by Fortney, Boyle and DeCarbo (1993) in a large study in the U.S. Items in the questionnaire were arranged under the following topics: demographic questions and factors influencing

instrument choice.

The survey included both closed-response and open-response items. Besides soliciting background information regarding the respondents' instrumental music experiences, gender, age, denomination (religious affiliation), level/class, parents occupation and family members' instrumental music experience. The survey asked respondents to rate ("none," "some extent" or "large extent") the influence of 14 factors on their choice of a band instrument. In addition, the survey asked respondents to select, given free choice, which instrument they would like to play and why they would like to play it, and which instrument they would least like to play and why they would not like to play it. For issues concerning gender stereotyping of musical instruments, questions were asked soliciting the students' views on which instruments should boys and girls play and whether they are playing instruments that match their gender. Questions on rehearsal schedule, method of band teaching and the programmes the school band attends were also asked to get a fair idea on the activities of school bands in the Accra metropolis. A Likert scale with three categories ("None", "some extent" and "large extent") was used to determine the intensity of their response to specific questions.

With the cooperation of head teachers and Band-instructors; I was able to gather relevant data. The data was edited, coded, and analyzed using the SPSS package (Version 17.0). Data gathered were analyzed both descriptively and inferentially. Descriptively, I used the frequencies, simple percentages, means, standard deviations, cross tabulations and graphs. The Chi-square test, t-test, and ANOVA were used for inferential purposes at 5% significance level.

Results

All the 142 randomly selected pupils for the study participated in the study recording a 100.0% coverage rate. Responses gathered were summarised in statistical tables and graphs for easy understanding and also to answer the research questions above.

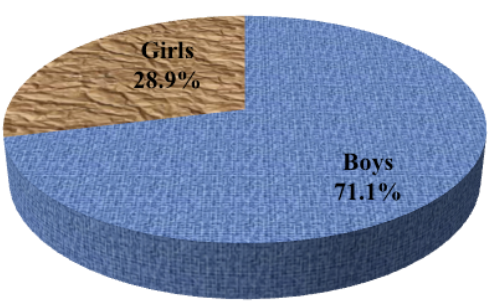

Figure 1. Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Out of the 142 respondents, majority 101 (71.1%) of them selected from the participating school bands were males, while the remaining 41 (28.9%) were females. The selection of the pupils was strictly random. This result is not consistent with the general notion in the available literature that girls mainly dominated school bands. There was a conscious attempt by the researcher to be gender sensitive, but the actual gender distribution of students who play in the school bands is in itself, positively skewed towards the males and thus, the frequencies shown in figure 1(above). This gender imbalance finds justification as far as professional and academic musical practice is concerned. To Elpus (2015), women have historically been underrepresented in professional music. However, there is extensive evidence that more girls than boys in the United states are involved in musical activities at school (Robinson & Lubienski, 2011) and most importantly, outperform their male counterparts in many traditional academic indicators measured during schooling: "reading achievement, secondary school graduation, postsecondary attendance" (Elpus, 2015, p. 89) and so on. However, men continue to have roles that are more prominent in the music profession, achieving higher levels of success in their music careers (Hanley, 1998; Green, 1993, 1997; Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 1994; Koza, 1994; Mizener, 1993). As a response to this, Weaver-Hightower (2003) and Eccles, Wigfield, Harold and Blumenfeld (1993) point out that instrumental music is the only instance we know about in which the gender-role, differentiated beliefs and self-perception in childhood are opposite to the gender differences in participation one observes in the adult world. More so, there is evidence that suggests that boys decline musical opportunities, preferring more 'masculine' activities such as sport. Green (1993) suggests that boys are more likely to create and succumb to peer pressure against school music because it may offer a threat to their masculinity. It is a major surprise that, apart from Elpus (2015), the former and the latter are not the case with Ghanaian children. It is rather the girls who decline musical opportunities and succumb to peer pressure against instrumental music participation.

Age of Respondents

Table 1 presents the summary of the information on the ages of the respondents.

Table 1

Age of Respondents

	Sex				Total	
	Boys		Girls			
Age (in years)	No.	%	No.	%	N=142	%
9 – 11	17	12.0	2	1.4	19	13.4
12 – 14	71	50.0	30	21.1	101	71.1
15 – 17	13	9.1	9	6.4	22	15.5
Total	**101**	**71.1**	**41**	**28.9**	**142**	**100.0**

Table 1 revealed that a majority (71.1%) of the respondents aged between 12 and 14 years, while 22 representing 15.5% fell within the age bracket of 15 – 17 years. Also, 19 (13.4%) of them fell between the ages 9 and 11 years. Computationally, their average age was 13.1 years. This meant that the band members were generally young.

Instruments Respondents Currently Played

Gender representation on instruments that the respondents currently played in their bands is summarised in table 2.

Table 2

Distribution of Instrument Currently Played by Gender

Instruments	Gender		Total	Percentage
	Boys	Girls		
Trumpet	25	8	33	23.2
Side Drum	24	4	28	19.7
Trombone	12	3	15	10.6
Tenor Drum	4	11	15	10.6
Cornet	7	3	10	7.0
French Horn	5	5	10	7.0
Bass Drum	7	3	10	7.0
Euphonium	9	0	9	6.4
Tuba	5	0	5	3.6
Cymbal	2	1	3	2.1
Sousaphone	2	0	2	1.4
Saxophone	1	1	2	1.4
Total	**101**	**41**	**142**	**100.0**

The sample included mostly players of brass instruments and seems to reflect a more or less typical balance of basic instrumentation for brass bands. Most (33 made up of 25 boys and 8 girls representing 23.2%) of the respondents played Trumpets, 28 (19.7%) currently played Side Drum, while 15 (10.6%) each played the Trombone. Ten representing 7.0% each played the Cornet and French horn. Also, 9 (6.3%) and 5 (3.5%) of them played Euphonium and Tuba respectively and 2(1.4%) person played saxophone. Some instruments seemed to be dominated by either boys or girls. Males dominated the playing of trumpet, trombone, side drum, sousaphone, Tuba, bass drum and euphonium, while girls dominated the playing of Tenor Drums. There was no girl that played the euphonium, tuba and sousaphone.

The sample reflected strong gender associations; which is slightly different from the assertions by many scholars (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Bruce & Kemp, 1993; Delzell & Leppla, 1992; Fortney, Boyle, & DeCarbo, 1993; Griswold & Chroback, 1981; Tarnowski, 1993; Harrison, 2003; Sinsabaugh, 2005) that brass and percussion are male-stereotyped instruments whereas high woodwinds (flute, oboe, and clarinet) and high strings (violin) are female stereotyped.

Factors Influencing Pupils' Choice of Band Instruments

The study examined the factors that influenced the choice of musical instruments among the pupils. They were asked to rate thirteen factors they considered influential in their choices. Their responses are summarised in Table 3 (below).

Reported influences on instrument choices were many and varied. Table 3 summarized respondents' ratings of the degree of influence that selected factors had on their choice of an instrument to play in band. As shown, the highest mean value was 2.60 out a total of 3.00, while 1.73 was the least. The most influential factor in the pupils' choice of musical instruments was music teacher. This factor recorded the highest average value of 2.60 with a standard deviation of 0.740. On percent basis, 90.1% of the 142 pupils responded positively, while the remaining 9.9% responded "none." The second factor influencing the instrument choice among the pupils was the like for the sound. On the average, they rated it 2.56 out of 3.00. Specifically, 89 (62.7%) and 44 (31.0%) of them responded "large extent" and "some extent" respectively. This factor had an associated deviation of 0.712.

Additionally, the method of band teaching featured strongly as the third determinant of the choice of musical instruments among the pupils. Eighty-four representing 59.2% of the pupils said that, to a large extent, this factor influenced their choices, while 44 (31.0%) of them said "some extent." This obtained a mean value of 2.49 with a variation of 0.399. Another major factor was the programmes the band attends (since they are given food, drink and money) with an average value of 2.47, vast majority (90.8%) of the pupil respondents somewhat agreed that this factor influenced their choices. However, the two least influential factors in their choices included "other teachers' advice" and the "cost of the instruments." "Other" influences, many of which were not stated, but a few stated "so I can play in the brigade band at church".

Table 3

Influences on Instrument Choices

Sources of Influence	Responses LE No.	LE %	SE No.	SE %	N No.	N %	Mean	S.D.	Total
Father	62	43.7	50	35.2	30	21.1	2.33	0.449	142
Mother	61	43.0	55	38.7	26	18.3	2.25	0.818	142
Friends	63	44.4	49	34.5	30	21.1	2.23	0.900	142
Music teacher	99	69.7	29	20.4	14	9.9	2.60	0.740	142
Other teachers' advice	51	35.9	53	37.3	38	26.8	1.73	0.609	142
I like the sound	89	62.7	44	31.0	9	6.2	2.56	0.712	142
I saw it on TV	57	40.1	54	38.0	31	21.8	2.18	0.506	142
Cost of the instruments	48	33.8	52	36.6	42	29.6	2.04	0.518	142
Size of the instruments	53	37.3	53	37.3	36	25.4	2.12	0.908	142
Availability of the instruments	57	40.1	55	38.7	30	21.1	2.19	0.717	142
Repertoire	46	32.4	72	50.7	24	16.9	2.15	0.841	142
Method of band teaching	84	59.2	44	31.0	14	9.9	2.49	0.399	142
Progammes the band attends	80	56.3	49	34.5	13	9.2	2.47	0.911	142

Mean – Large extent (LE) – 3; Some extent (SE) – 2; None (N) – 1.

Impact of Gender Stereotyping on Musical Instrument Choices

The crux of the study was to find out whether there was a gender stereotyping with respect to the choice of instruments among the pupils. On whether instruments that the respondents currently played matched their respective gender, Figure 2 presents their responses.

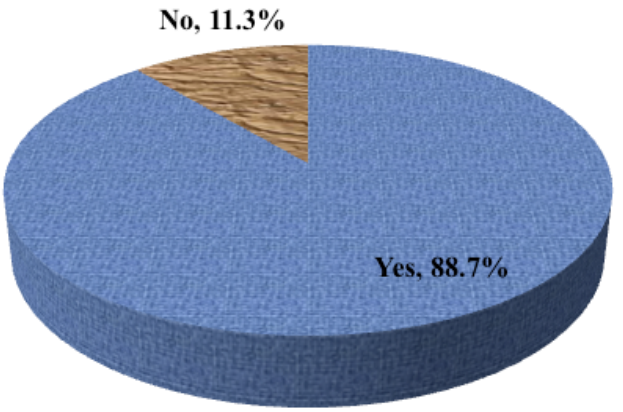

Figure 2. The Match between Instrument Played and Gender

As indicated in Figure 2, a greater majority (126 representing 88.7%) of the respondents agreed that the instruments that they currently play perfectly matched their gender, while the remaining 16 (11.3%) said "No". Those who said "Yes" cited the following reasons: "I have the strength and energy to play it," "it fits my body," "it fits my height," "it fits my gender," "I need more energy to play it," "it's where my interest is" and so on. However, the remaining 16 of them who claimed that their instruments did not match their gender gave reasons such as "I get tired quickly since I don't have enough energy like boys," "boys play it better," "it's difficult to play," "we don't have girls in the band," and so on. It can thus, be concluded that majority of the respondents played instruments that they think matched their gender.

The pupils were also asked to identify what instruments boys and girls should play and Tables 4 and 5 summarised their responses.

Table 4

Instruments Boys Should Play

Instruments	Sex		Total	Percentage
	Boys	Girls		
Drums	17	5	22	15.5
Side Drum	13	4	17	12.0
Trumpet	10	4	14	9.9
Sousaphone	10	0	10	7.1
Trombone	6	2	8	5.6
Bass Drum and Side Drum	8	0	8	5.6
Bass Drum	2	6	8	5.6
Bass Guitar	3	3	6	4.3
All instruments	3	1	4	2.8
Drums, Guitar and Trumpet	0	4	4	2.8
Euphonium	2	2	4	2.8
Trumpet and Side Drum	3	1	4	2.8
Trumpet and Bass Drum	3	1	4	2.8
Tuba	3	1	4	2.8
Euphonium and Tuba	0	3	3	2.1
Bass Drum and Tuba	3	0	3	2.1
Trumpet and Trombone	0	3	3	2.1
Saxophone	3	0	3	2.1
Others	12	1	13	9.2
Total	**101**	**41**	**142**	**100.0**

The main musical instrument suggested for boys to play was the Drum (actually referring to the drum set or drum kit which is commonly used in guitar bands) as indicated by most (22 representing 15.5%) of the respondents. Seventeen representing 12.0% of them also indicated that boys should play Side Drums, while 9.9% said "Trumpet." Again, 10 (boys only) said that boys should play Sousaphone, while 8 (5.6%) each reported that boys should play the Bass Drum only, and Bass Drum and Side Drum.

Six pupils made up of three boys and three girls indicated that boys should play the Bass Guitar, while 4 made up of 3 boys and a girl said that boys could play all instruments. In

addition, 4 (2.8%), girls reported that boys must play Drums, Guitars and Trumpets, and 4 (2.8%) claimed that boys should play the Euphonium. Four made up of 3 boys and a girl suggested that boys should play the Trumpet and Side Drum, and 4 of them also said "Trumpet and Side Drum." Three each (all girls) of the respondents indicated that boys should play the Euphonium and Tuba, and the Trumpet and Trombone.

In sum, the instruments that were considered as boys-dominated were the Drums, Side Drum, Trumpet, Sousaphone, Trombone, and Bass Drum. They cited reasons such as "boys have energy to play such instruments," "they play it better than girls," and "those instruments look manly." Similarly, the respondents were asked to indicate instruments that girls should play, and Table 5 contained their responses.

Table 5:

Instruments Girls Should Play

Instruments	Sex		Total	Percentage
	Boys	Girls		
Tenor Drum	26	10	36	25.4
Cornet	10	6	16	11.3
Flute	13	3	16	11.3
Tenor Drum and Triangle	8	2	10	7.0
Trumpet	7	3	10	7.0
Tenor Drum and Cymbal	5	4	9	6.3
Cymbal	7	0	7	4.9
Any instrument	5	2	7	4.9
French Horn	2	2	4	2.8
Recorder	0	4	4	2.8
Flute and Recorder	3	1	4	2.8
Piano and Recorder	3	0	3	2.1
Trumpet and Tenor Drum	2	1	3	2.1
Others	8	2	10	7.2
Total	**101**	**41**	**142**	**100.0**

Table 5 revealed that 36 (25.4%) respondents (made up of 26 boys and 10 girls) indicated that the Tenor Drum was the musical instrument meant for girls, while 16 (11.3%) of them recommended the Cornet, and the Flute. Again, 10 (7.0%) made up of 8 boys and 2 girls

said that girls should play the Tenor Drum and Triangle, while 10 (7.0%) also suggested that girls should play the Trumpet only. Four representing 2.8% (all girls) reported that they (girls) should use the Recorder. Seven representing (4.9%), all boys, recommended that girls should play the Cymbal, while 5 boys and 2 girls said that girls could play any instruments of their choice and ability.

in summary, the respondents said that girls should play the Tenor Drum, Cornet, Flute, triangle, violin and recorder with the reasons like "they are easy to play by girls," "girls like playing them," "they like it," and "it's for girls." Indeed, this finding corroborated their responses when they were asked to indicate the instruments they currently play. The boys dominated the playing of instruments such as the Trumpet, Side Drum, Bass Drum, Trombone, and the Euphonium, while their counterparts mainly played the Tenor Drum, and the French horn. This finding is slightly different from that of Abeles and Porter (1978) who found that the most masculine instruments were the drums, trombone, and trumpet, while the most feminine instrument were the flute, violin and clarinet.

Relationship between Gender and Instrument Choices

The study investigated whether there existed any statistical relationship between musical instruments and the gender of the pupils. The study therefore, used the Chi-square test at 5% significance level, and the results are contained in Table 6.

Table 6

Chi-Square Test

	Value
Chi-square	24.160
df	11
p (2-tailed)	0.012

Figures from Table 6 showed that there was a statistically significant association between gender and the choice of musical instruments since $p < 0.05$. This means one's sex determined his/her choice of instruments. That is, there were some musical instruments reserved solely for boys and others for girls.

Effect of Home Environment on Pupils' Choice of Musical Instruments

The study also investigated the influence of home environment (e.g. fathers' occupation, mothers' occupation, church, family involvement in school band, and watching of TV at home) on the pupils' choices of instruments yielded some statistically significant results. On whether any family member had participated in school band before, 76 (53.5%) said

"Yes," while the remaining 66 (46.5%) indicated "No" as depicted in Figure 3.

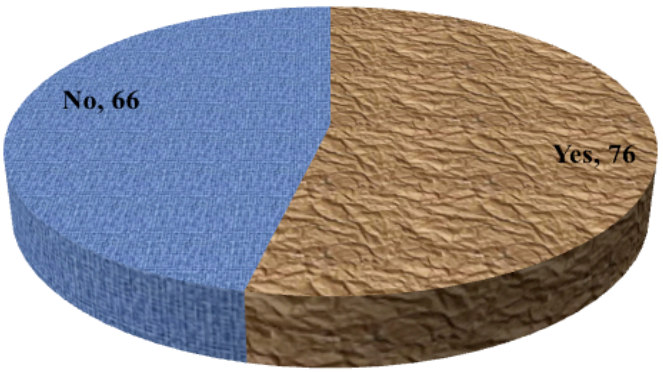

Figure 3. Family who played Members in a School Bands

Again, a Chi-square test however, revealed that there was no significant association between the choice of instruments and any family member's participation in a school band since $p = 0.180 > \alpha = 0.05$.

On the churches that they attended, their responses showed that more than half (64.1%) of the pupils were Orthodox Christians, while the remaining (35.9%) were Charismatic Christians. A sensual observation revealed that the use of brass instruments in orthodox churches was much more than in the Charismatic churches therefore resulting in orthodox Christians forming the majority in school band programmes.

The respondents were requested to indicate who encouraged them to play in the school band, and their responses are tabulated in Table 7.

Table 7

Advisors of Respondents to Join School Bands

Advisors	Frequency	Percentage
Music teachers	39	27.5
Father	36	25.4
Mother	24	16.9
Friends	15	10.6
Parents	10	7.0
Nobody but songs play	8	5.6
Aunties	4	2.8
Others	6	4.2
Total	142	100.0

Table 7 shows that 70 (49.3%) of the pupils were encouraged by their fathers or mothers or both parents. Also, 39 representing 27.5 were advised by their music teachers, while 15 (10.6%) were also motivated to join the school band by friends. A few (8) of them reported that they were encouraged only by the songs the bands played. The study further used the Chi-square test to see whether any relationship existed among 'Advisors' and 'Choice of instruments.' The test showed a significant result suggesting that the person who encouraged a pupil to join a school band contributed to his/her choice of musical instrument(s). This supports McPherson's (2009) finding that parent involvement in music can help students feel more competent and can foster a strong bond between parent and child. Conclusively, the variables that influenced the choice of musical instruments by the pupils were the advisors (persons who encouraged them to join the school bands), and father.

Pupils' Eligibility to Play in School Bands

The level (class) at which one qualified to join a school band differed from school to school. Table 8 summarized their responses.

Table 8

Eligibility to Join School Bands

Class/Form	Frequency	Percentage
Class 2	5	3.5
Class 3	16	11.3
Class 4	40	28.2
Class 5	39	27.5
Class 6	37	26.1
JHS 1	5	3.5
Total	**142**	**100.0**

The data revealed that most (28.2%) of the pupils joined school bands at primary 4, while 39 (27.5%) and 37 (26.1%) joined at primary 5 and 6 respectively. Sixteen representing 11.3% of them started at primary 3, while 5 (3.5%) joined the school bands in first year of Junior High School. Interestingly, 5 (3.5%) started very early as primary 2. It can be deduced that there existed no age and level (class) restrictions for joining the school bands.

Discussion

Data yielded some clear-cut instrument preferences and instrument-gender associations slightly different from the findings in the available literature. For example, if given a choice of instrument with no restraints to the selection process, the instruments reported as most preferred would be the trumpet and the tenor drum; however, more males than females in the sample actually play the trumpet, the same way more females than males play the Tenor drum. With the exception of the saxophone and French horn, the sample clearly reflects gender bias toward certain instruments. Females tend to play and indicate preference for tenor and snare drums, whereas males tend to play and indicate preference for trumpet, trombone, bass drum, euphonium, tuba, and sousaphone. These data support previous research that has found strong gender associations with certain instruments (Delzell & Leppla, 1992; Ableles & Porter, 1978), although there are differences between the data of the present study and that of the earlier studies. For example, the popularity of the percussion (snare drum and tenor drum) with the females that is prevalent in the present study was not apparent in the earlier studies. Reasons for the current popularity of the tenor drum, in particular, among females are difficult to discern from the data, but it is speculated that the "myth" that

females cannot give birth if they involve themselves in the playing of wind instruments especially the brass (wind) instruments could be an important factor to be investigated.

Responses regarding influences on the choice of instrument give credence to assertions by Gordon (1984/1991), Elliot and Yoder-White (1997) that timbre of the musical instrument is a strong consideration in instrument selection. The present data also suggests that the sound of the musical instrument is an important consideration in instrument selection for many students, but this finding is contrary to that of Rideout and Clinton (1987) whose finding is the direct opposite of this statement.

Factors other than timbre also influence instrument choices. Instrumental music teacher and parents were reported to be important influences in instrument selection resulting in some instruments being preferred over others. Although data presented in this study do not allow for examination of any interactive effects of the timbre and "people" influences, it seems that certain social influences are operating among Accra Metropolis basic school pupils' instrument choices. These social influences seem to be an integral factor in the strong gender-instrument association and preferences revealed by the data. For example, it is highly unlikely that most females just happen to prefer the timbre of percussion instruments and that most males just happen to prefer the timbre of brass (wind) instruments. Regardless of what students say in response to questions about the influence of the various factors, males tend to choose to play instruments that are considered difficult and masculine, and females tend to choose to play instruments that are considered "easy" to play. Practical considerations such as instrument size, availability, cost, and perceived difficulty also have strong influences on instrument selection.

The performances attended by the school band, the types of songs they play and the method of band teaching are great motivators for other students to join. This means the band teacher must do well to perform variety of repertoire and songs selected must be interesting. It cannot be overemphasized that one of the major catalysts for the growth and success of many surviving bands is the repertoire that the group performs and the regular invitation of the band to public performances. Helping the school band embrace diversity and respect differences in repertoire, the band teacher needs to select variety of good repertoire. This will determine the personal satisfaction each individual will receive because of his or her school band music experiences.

School bands in the Accra metropolis are involved in off-campus music activities. Apart from school worship services, morning assembly, speech and price giving ceremony, sports festivals and carol services, the school bands are also invited for off-campus

events such as; Independence day celebration parades, weddings, funerals, processions and other state functions.

Conclusions

The study concluded on the following based on the above findings: The influence of people (teacher, parents, etc.) in the choice of pupils' musical instruments is so immense that this can even outwit their own interest. This could be more disastrous when no preliminary tests or investigations are made before the prescription.

The method of band teaching also affects the interest of pupils in their choice of instrument. If the method is interactive and congenial, many of them will be attracted to instruments they had never been attracted to. The issue of gender stereotyping continues to influence the choice of musical instruments as the relationship between them is significant. Hence, its elimination is paramount. Home environment particularly fathers, mother, and the person who encourages a pupil to join a school band must be of interest in determining what instrument one plays in the band. This is because Ghanaian pupils tend to comply with the directives or suggestions of the elderly; especially their guardians and mentors.

Recommendations

In line with the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made for possible consideration and implementations: It is sometimes very necessary for Music teachers to assign students to certain musical instruments against their wish for balancing of parts of their school bands. But teachers must also allow their student to play more than one instrument in the school band so that they can satisfy their interests too. Bandmasters should use simple and friendly methods/techniques to teach their students since this will inspire them. Element of gender stereotyping concerning musical instrument choices must be eliminated by stakeholders. The choice of band instrument should be based purely on competence and interest. Parents can be involved in the procedure of instrument choosing but their suggestions must not override the choice of their wards. Bandmasters must maintain the status quo of no age or class/form restrictions.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The study presented must be viewed as an exploratory study of students' stated reasons for instrument selection and preference. The data regarding the degree of influence of certain factors do not necessarily reflect whether the influence was positive or negative, and there is a need for subsequent research to clarify the positive and negative

dimensions of the various influences. For example, the influence of instrument size could work two ways; some students might select a cornet because of its small size, while others might not select a tuba because of their large size. Perhaps an approach using something like double-digit analysis procedure, which allows respondents to express both their "enthusiasm for" and "reservations about" choices or preferences, would enable researchers to sort out both positive and negative dimensions of the various influences.

There is also a need for research to examine the relative influence of selected factors on instrument choices. Perhaps a multiple regression analysis of factors underlying instrument choices could provide such data. Such an analysis will enable researchers to account for the proportion of the final choices that are due to each of the respective predictor variables.

What the research showed was the picture of the factors that influence Ghanaian basic school band pupils in their choice of band instruments for study, thus, the question becomes, what is happening with this same phenomenon in the Senior High Schools and the tertiary institutions? Research on gender perceptions and preferences of children who have not yet begun instrumental music instruction, including those as young as the age of three (Abeles & Porter, 1978), have shown that gender stereotypes have little or no presence in the preschool and elementary school years. Insight might also be gained by examining the stereotype-free perception of elementary school students for possible application to older students.

Finally, the majority of studies of gender stereotypes assess students without considering the views of parents and ethnicity as a factor. However, the clear-cut gender/instrument associations tend to suggest strong sociocultural influences on instrument choices. The strength and pervasiveness of such influences, however, are difficult to ascertain, and there remain many interesting questions for those researchers concerned with societal influences on children's musical interests and preferences.

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