

Music Education Majors vs. Elementary Education Majors: The Relationship Between World Music Preferences and International-Mindedness

Alena V. Holmes, Sharri VanAlstine

Abstract— Many educators agree that learning world music is beneficial for the development of international-mindedness. The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) to examine whether there is a significant difference in preference and familiarity for world music between music education and elementary education majors, and 2) to find out how international-mindedness is related to preference and/or familiarity to world music. In this cross-sectional survey study pre-service teachers (N=85) provided insights into their familiarity and preference for world music samples with which they may or may not have been familiar. They were also asked to respond to survey items designed to measure international-mindedness. Findings indicate there is a significant difference between music education and elementary education majors' preference for world music. Music education majors preferred the world music examples to a significantly greater degree than did their elementary education counterparts. Interestingly, there was not a significant difference between groups for familiarity with world music – only with preference for world music. Furthermore, there were significant correlations between preferences and international-mindedness.

Index Terms—*International-Mindedness, Music Education, Music Preferences, World Music.*

I. INTRODUCTION

World music traditions are valuable, and they are important to the growth of the nation's musical life, including its education [1]. Recordings and transcriptions of music from around the world are becoming more accessible - to music teachers in general music classrooms, performance organizations, as well as

regular elementary school classrooms. Scholars have proposed several rationales to justify teaching world music. One of the most common is the social rationale developing as a result of changing classroom demographics. As societal demographics change, education must evolve to include, embrace, and welcome the wealth of diverse cultures present in today's classrooms. Students "who know the world only from their own cultural and ethnic perspectives are denied important parts of the human experience and are culturally and ethnically encapsulated" [2]. Another rationale stems from the benefits to music education that result from the inclusion of musical ideas originating in other parts of the world [1]. The study of musical elements from other cultures reinforces the understanding of concepts of music. By learning about other musical systems, students acquire more perceptive, critical, and sensitive attitudes toward a diversity of musical expression. A third rationale is global in nature. Experiences with world music help to open students' minds to other cultures, developing acceptance and understanding of people from different parts of the world. Through music, people of all backgrounds are united in appreciation, participation, and education [1]. As educators and students access, learn, and perform world music, many musicians and educators raise questions about how to authentically and accurately learn and perform unfamiliar music. The music may come from a culture in which the instructor may or may not be familiar. How does one teach and learn unfamiliar world musics in a way that is educationally sound as well as honoring to the music and culture from which it comes? Furthermore, how does musical familiarity and preference affect a pre-service teacher's interest in teaching world music?

A number of researchers have examined students' preferences and familiarities with regard to music of other cultures. Research findings indicate that musical preference is affected by several factors. Familiarity, musical characteristics, and students' characteristics have a significant effect on students' preference and attitudes for music [3]-[8]. From these considerations, music educators can create lessons that expand students' musical preferences and attitudes. World musics include many musical characteristics different from Western music such as scales, rhythmic construction, micro-tonality, notation, and performance practices. Fung investigated the relationship between musical characteristics and college students' preferences for world music. The characteristics examined were rhythm regularity, similarity to Western music, tonal-centeredness, consonance, tempo, number of different pitches, melodic clarity, pitch range, and loudness level. Fung found that music with similar characteristics to Western music and music from cultures geographically closer to the United States had higher familiarity and preference ratings [9]. In another study, Fung explored the relationship between world music preferences and attitudes of undergraduate, non-music majors. After listening to randomized excerpts from Africa, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Middle East, and Thailand, participants responded on a 7-point Likert-type scale for music preference. Fung discovered that social and cultural attitudes affect world music preference, and that students preferred instrumental musical styles above vocal musical styles [10]. In a subsequent study, Fung investigated the relationship between musical characteristics and musicians' and non-musicians' preferences for world music. Results indicated that musical characteristics played a significant role in world music preference ratings. Fung specified that "the entire sample (N = 449) preferred excerpts that were characterized as relatively fast, having many different pitches, tonal-centered, consonant, bright timbre, smooth, loud, complex or moderately complex in texture, and moderate in the richness of embellishment" (p. 71) [11]. Similarly, Montgomery found a significant relationship between tempo and preferences in his study that examined undergraduate, non-music majors' familiarity with and preference for Arabic music as compared to other world music [8].

Another factor affecting preference for music is musical experience. Darrow, Haack, and Kuriyabashi found that American and Japanese listeners' preference scores embraced a wider range for musically experienced students than for those with limited

experience. Results of the study indicate that musical experience in general may generate a wider range of "liking" and "disliking" [12]. Results of a Shehan study indicates that students, exposed to African, Asian, Indian, Japanese and Hispanic songs demonstrated greater preference for selections they had learned [13]. Cutietta and Foustalieraki studied preferences for select band and non-band instrumental timbres among students in the United States and Greece. They found that experience with particular timbres positively affects preference with those timbres [14].

The notion of international-mindedness (though it is often referred to as global- or world- mindedness) figures prominently in education discourse of international schools and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Ian Hill, IB deputy director general, stated that an integral part of the outcomes of internationally-minded education includes an understanding that people of different backgrounds hold different views and education should provide opportunities to examine the origins of those beliefs. The opportunities lead to understanding and respecting various viewpoints [15]. According to Haywood international-mindedness has five characteristics that all children need: (a) a curiosity and interest in the human and physical geography of earth, (b) an openness to different cultural approaches (tolerance), (c) a scientific understanding that the earth is valuable and common to everyone, (d) awareness that people are interrelated, and (e) respect for differing cultural backgrounds [16].

Rodway's research on international-mindedness suggests that the most influential factors affecting the development of international-mindedness are travel, family, and education. Travel experiences are most significant when the traveler is immersed into the local culture within a foreign environment. Families are also very influential, especially those who have lived abroad and/or are representative of recent immigration to the USA. According to Rodway's findings, students who grow up in rural communities have limited experience with people of different cultures. Conversely, children who grow up in urban neighborhoods identified—from an early age—the diversity of the families in their communities as a key influence. This factor leads to open-mindedness, a characteristic included in the definition of international-mindedness. Being first-generation Americans to immigrant parents appeared to be a key influence on the development of international-mindedness for many students. Education serves as an influential factor, and may be the only factor, especially for students raised in a mono-cultural environment.

Cultural exposure during school years, as well as multicultural content, is a powerful tool in the development of international-mindedness, preferences, and attitudes toward music from world cultures [17]. The purpose of this study was to examine undergraduate music education and elementary education majors' preferences and familiarity for world music and its relationship with selected characteristics of international-mindedness. The specific research questions for the study were: (1) Is there a significant difference in preferences for world music between undergraduate music education and elementary education majors? (2) Is there a significant difference in familiarity for world music between undergraduate music education and elementary education majors? (3) Is there significant difference in international-mindedness between music education and elementary education majors? (4) Is there is a correlation between preferences for world music music and international-mindedness?

II. DESIGN

In this cross-sectional survey study pre-service teachers (N=85; F=69 and M=16; Freshmen = 18, Sophomores=22, Juniors=25, Seniors=16, and Post-Bac=3) provided insights into their familiarity and preference for world music samples with which they may or may not have been familiar. They were also asked to respond to survey items designed to measure international-mindedness. All participants were pre-service teachers in music education (N=25) and non-music education majors (N=60) at a mid-sized university in the upper Midwest region of the United States. The survey instrument was administered to all participants on their first day of class in the 2013 spring semester.

Using the international-mindedness instrument from a study by Baker and Kanan as the model, survey items were created with alterations more accurately reflecting the content of the music courses in which the participants were enrolled. [18]. The *World Music Familiarity and Preference Test* was also used as a model to create the survey items to measure participants' familiarity and preferences regarding non-Western music examples[19]. The survey included three sections. The first section was largely demographic in nature, including fifteen questions regarding gender, musical background, birthplace, their parents' birthplace, where they have lived, and questions about the cultural background of friends and teachers. Part two included fourteen questions related

to characteristics of international-mindedness. Participants responded to each of these items by marking their responses on a continuum. The third section included questions regarding familiarity and preferences related to twelve musical excerpts from Russia, China, India, Mexico, Indonesia, Ghana, Bulgaria, and the Egypt. All musical excerpts were instrumental to control for any bias in students' responses due to their familiarity or lack of familiarity with the language in a musical excerpt, language barrier constraints, and influence of the gender of singers. Native performers of each culture performed on these recordings, using traditional instruments and authentic musical style. All of the musical examples represented traditional folk music. Each excerpt was played for approximately 50 to 60 seconds in random order. All of the experts were selected from *Excursions to World Music* textbook and from the *Global Music Series* books with input and suggestions from a musicology/ethnomusicology professor [20].

The questions in part two of the survey was created in alignment with the definition of international-mindedness from Haywood. Haywood's definition of international-mindedness indicates there are five characteristics of international-mindedness that can be included in the curriculum and assessed, including: a) curiosity and interest in the world around us related to the human and physical geography of the earth, b) open attitudes to other cultural approaches/tolerance, c) understanding scientifically that the earth is a valuable entity common to everyone, d) recognition that people are interconnected, and e) respect for other cultural backgrounds – situated in concern for the welfare of all people. The fourteen questions were aligned with three of Haywood's characteristics (a, b, and e) of international-mindedness [15].

Internal reliability of the items related to international-mindedness was addressed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Survey items related to the international-mindedness measures (fourteen items in section two) were tested. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is in the acceptable range ($\alpha = .85$) for the international-mindedness measures [21]- [22]. Internal reliability of the items related to familiarity and preference for the world music examples was also addressed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Survey items related to the world music examples (twelve items in section three) were tested. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is in the acceptable range ($\alpha = .85$) for familiarity and preference on the non-Western music examples [21]- [22]. Because there was a disparity in

the size of the groups non-parametric tests were used for the analysis. Statistical tests used include: descriptive statistics, frequencies, Spearman rho Correlation, Kruskal Wallace, and Mann Whitney U tests.

III. ANALYSIS

A Kruskal Wallace Test revealed a statistically significant difference in preference for world music between music and non-music majors (music majors, $n = 25$; non-music majors, $n = 65$, $\chi^2(1, n = 85) = 7.60$, $p = .014$. Participants rated their preference on a scale of 1-5 where 1 = “strongly dislike”; 2 = “dislike”; 3 = “neutral”; 4 = “like”; and 5 = “strongly like”. The music majors recorded a median score ($Md = 4$) for music example one from Mexico than the non-music majors ($Md = 3$). See Table 1 for the seven examples for which music majors preferred the music significantly more than their non-music major counterparts. Of further note, a Mann-Whitney U test revealed that music majors’ preference ratings were significantly higher than non-music majors’ preference ratings on all except two of the twelve music examples. For instance, for music example 1, preference for world music for music majors ($Md = 4$, $n = 25$) and non-music majors ($Md = 3$, $n = 59$), $U = 481.50$, $z = -2.76$, $p = .006$, $r = .30$. See Table 2 for the Mann-Whitney U test results for the musical examples that music majors indicated a significantly greater preference than their non-music major counterparts.

A Kruskal Wallace Test revealed a statistically significant difference in familiarity for world music between music and non-music majors (music majors, $n = 25$; non-music majors, $n = 65$, $\chi^2(1, n = 85) = 8.73$, $p = .003$. Participants rated their familiarity on a scale of 1-3 with 1 = “not familiar”; 2 = “somewhat familiar”; and 3 = “very familiar”. The music majors recorded a median score ($Md = 2$) for music example one from Mexico than the non-music majors ($Md = 2$). There was not a significant difference between music majors and non-music majors for familiarity for any of the eleven other world music examples. Finally, a Kruskal Wallace Test revealed there is not statistically significant difference in international-mindedness between music and non-music majors (music majors, $n = 25$; non-music majors, $n = 65$ for any of the fourteen survey-items related to international-mindedness.

A Spearman rho Correlation test was used to determine whether there is a relationship between world music preferences and international-mindedness. There is a small to moderate correlation between world music

preferences and nine of the survey items related to international-mindedness. Survey items 29 and 30 have the greatest relationship with international-mindedness, relating to two of Haywood’s characteristics of international-mindedness - a) curiosity and interest in the world around us related to the human and physical geography of the earth, and b) open attitudes to other cultural approaches/tolerance. See Table 3 for correlations between preferences for world music examples and international-mindedness survey items.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings music majors and non-music majors did not indicate a significant difference in their familiarity to world musics. Not surprisingly, however, there is a significant difference between the groups regarding their preferences for world music. In 83% of the musical examples, music majors preferred the music more than the non-music majors. The difference was significant for 58% of the musical examples. This appears to mean that although both groups were equally familiar with the musical examples, the music majors preferred the world musics to a significantly greater degree than their non-music counterparts.

There was not a significant difference between the groups relative to international-mindedness. This is striking because there *is* a relationship between musical preferences and international-mindedness. Therefore, if teacher educators seek to impact international-minded through the use of world musics, it seems listeners need to develop a greater liking for the music in order for it to have an impact upon the development of their international-mindedness.

This is likely not novel news for music educators. It is, however, good news. International-mindedness can be impacted by the inclusion of world music to the degree that students learn to enjoy the music. Bearing in mind that familiarity does not necessitate preference, the authors would suggest in-depth study of world music as opposed to broad surveys of a vast array of musical cultures. In-depth study across time is more likely to encourage appreciation and preference for music. As students’ preferences develop, so too will their international-mindedness develop. In an increasingly global society, helping students develop international-mindedness is imperative, and a musical adventure for both students and educators alike.

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TABLE 1

SIGNIFICANT MAIN EFFECT FOR GROUP RELATING TO PREFERENCE FOR WORLD MUSIC

Example #	Country	<i>n</i> Music Majors	<i>n</i> Non- Music Majors	Df	χ^2	<i>p</i>	Music majors <i>Md</i>	Non- Music majors <i>Md</i>	Music Majors μ	Non- Music Majors μ
1	India	25	59	1	7.60	.014	4	3	3.88	3.37
3	China	24	57	1	13.05	$\leq .001$	4	3	3.92	3.18
4	Indonesia	23	57	1	6.01	.014	4	4	3.00	2.47
5	Russia	24	58	1	16.41	$\leq .001$	4	4	4.33	3.53
10	Egypt	24	57	1	6.55	.01	5	5	4.04	3.58
11	China	24	55	1	6.08	.014	3.5	3	3.50	3.05
12	India	23	56	1	9.37	.002	3	3	3.48	2.75

TABLE 2

SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER PREFERENCE RATINGS BY MUSIC MAJORS THAN NON-MUSIC MAJORS

Ex. #	Country	<i>n</i> Music Major	<i>n</i> Non- Music Major	df	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	Music major <i>Md</i>	Non- Music major <i>Md</i>	Musi c Major μ	Non- Music Major μ
1	India	25	59	1	481.50	-2.76	.006	-.30	4	3	3.88	3.37
3	China	24	57	1	357.50	-3.61	$\leq .001$	-.41	4	3	3.92	3.18
4	Indonesia	23	57	1	436.50	-2.45	.014	-.27	4	4	3.00	2.47
5	Russia	24	58	1	326.00	-4.05	$\leq .001$	-.45	4	4	4.33	3.53
10	Egypt	24	57	1	460.5	-2.56	.01	-.28	5	5	4.04	3.58
11	China	24	55	1	451.0	-2.47	.014	-.28	3.5	3	3.50	3.05
12	India	23	56	1	377.5	-3.06	.002	-.34	3	3	3.48	2.75

TABLE 3

SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER PREFERENCE RATINGS BY MUSIC MAJORS THAN NON-MUSIC MAJORS

Ex. #	Country	<i>n</i> Music Major	<i>n</i> Non-Music Major	df	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	Music major <i>Md</i>	Non-Music major <i>Md</i>	Music Major μ	Non-Music Major μ
1	India	25	59	1	481.50	-2.76	.006	-.30	4	3	3.88	3.37
3	China	24	57	1	357.50	-3.61	$\leq .001$	-.41	4	3	3.92	3.18
4	Indonesia	23	57	1	436.50	-2.45	.014	-.27	4	4	3.00	2.47
5	Russia	24	58	1	326.00	-4.05	$\leq .001$	-.45	4	4	4.33	3.53
10	Egypt	24	57	1	460.5	-2.56	.01	-.28	5	5	4.04	3.58
11	China	24	55	1	451.0	-2.47	.014	-.28	3.5	3	3.50	3.05
12	India	23	56	1	377.5	-3.06	.002	-.34	3	3	3.48	2.75

Alena Holmes receive her Bachelor of Music Education from Minsk State Pedagogical University in Minsk, Belarus in 1993, her Master of Education from University of Oklahoma in 2002 and her Doctor of Philosophy in music education from University of Florida in 2009. She has taught in elementary, middle, and collegiate music programs and private studios in the Belarus, Bahrain, Italy and USA. She is currently Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Music Education at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, USA. Research interests include Early childhood music education, world music, the development of international-mindedness through music and teacher training.

Dr. Holmes is a member of NafME, AOSA, CMS, AERA, OAKE and ISME.

Sharri VanAlstine received her Bachelor of Music Education from Bethel University (St. Paul, Minnesota, USA) in 1991, her Master of Arts in choral conducting (St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota) in 1998, and her Doctor of Philosophy in music education (University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA) in 2011. She has taught in elementary, middle, high school, and collegiate music programs in the USA and Germany. She is currently teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, USA. Research interests include the development of international-mindedness through music and teacher training.

Dr. VanAlstine is a member of NafME, ACDA, and ISME.