



Exploring the Motivations of Cooperating Music Teachers: A Mixed Methods Study

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Cooperating music teachers (CMTs) are an essential piece of the preservice music educator experience, yet limited research exists on their demographics, experiences, and motivations. The purpose of this research is to **examine the experiences and motivations of cooperating music teachers** in the state of Maryland in order to better understand and support this pillar of music teacher education.

Theoretical Framework

Situated Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020)

How individuals make **achievement-related choices** based on both their **expectations of success** and the **subjective value** they place on a task. We explored six facets of SEVT in this study.

Research Questions

- 1) **To what extent** is each facet of Situated Expectancy-Value Theory **evident** in cooperating music teachers' survey responses?
- 2) **How** do cooperating music teachers **describe** their experiences with respect to each of the Situated Expectancy-Value Theory facets?
- 3) **To what extent** do qualitative data **confirm** quantitative results?

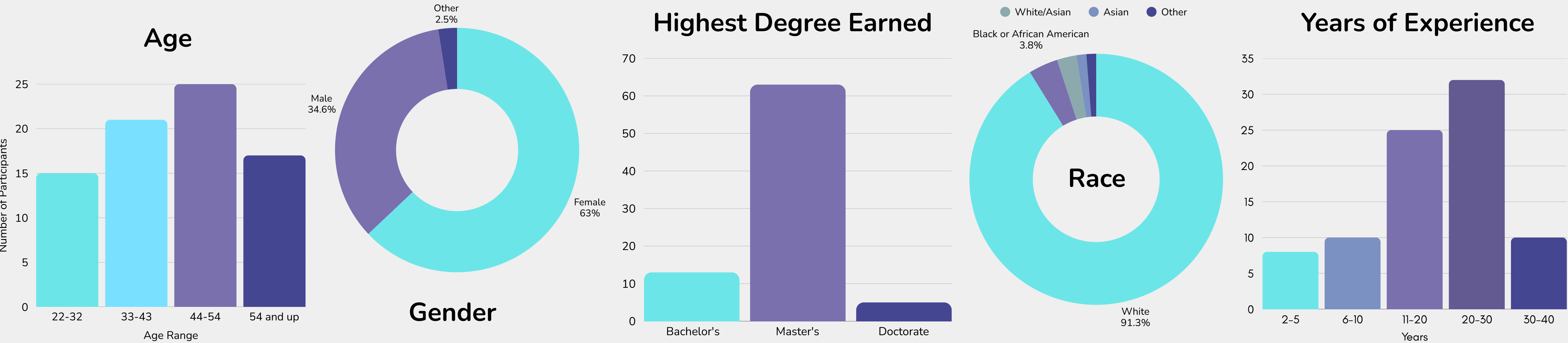
Method & Data Sources

- Convergent Mixed Methods Design (Creswell, 2014)
- Quantitative Survey sent to over 1,700 Maryland music educators, yielding 82 usable responses. Survey included three sections: teaching experience, FIT-choice items (Watt et al., 2012) that used a 1-7 Likert scale, and demographics.
- Qualitative Interviews conducted with 15 participants who volunteered via the survey.

Metainferences

- The CMT role is a vital piece of the student teaching experience, but the **generational impact** of an effective CMT is even more meaningful than we often realize.
- Different **personal approaches** to mentorship are effective, regardless of formal training, based on **unique CMT abilities and strengths**.
- **Personal utility values**, including stipends, PD credits, and increased personal time, were by far the **least motivating factors** for serving as a CMT.

Survey Participant Demographics & Teaching Experience



SEVT Facets	Quantitative	Qualitative	Inferences
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		<i>Inference labels borrowed from Fitzpatrick, 2011</i>
Socialization Influences	<i>I have had good cooperating teachers as role models.</i> 5.2	Many participants described a positive student teaching experience as a motivating factor to be a CMT. "I had a really, really good student teaching experience and I wanted to make sure that other people had that." (Interview, Andrew, 6/19/25)	Confirm. Most participants described their own experiences with cooperating teachers as professional, and often personal, role models. Several are still in contact with their CMTs, which speaks to the significance and longevity of these partnerships.
Expectancy Beliefs	<i>I have the qualities of a good cooperating teacher.</i> 5.7	Participants were able to identify their own strengths and articulated a range of abilities needed to be successful. "I'm really good at what I do...at planning lessons...I really love curriculum...and I'm super patient." (Interview, Kim, 6/13/25)	Enhance. CMTs described specific abilities including organization, content knowledge, classroom management, teacher language and feedback skills. This wide range of abilities speaks to the dual role of both effective music teacher and mentor.
Task Demand/Return	<i>Do you think cooperating teachers have a heavy workload?</i> 4.9	Being a CMT rarely reduced their workload. Participants reported either a change or an increase in overall task demands. "It's kind of like, not any more work during the school day for me. It's just a switch of what I'm, what work I'm doing." (Interview, Jenny, 6/20/25)	Mixed. No CMTs described a reduction in workload. Some CMTs cited a change in the type of work, while their overall workload stayed about the same. Others cited a significant increase in workload from having a student teacher.
Social Utility Value	<i>Being a cooperating teacher will allow me to influence the next generation.</i> 5.9	All CMTs desired to share knowledge and experience to impact student teachers, their future students, and the broader community. "I want to pass on what I've learned so far, and I want to be able to like, be a part of this." (Interview, Hailey, 6/11/25)	Confirm. The desire to influence and impact the next generation of music teachers and students, as well as the overarching music education community, was cited by all as a main motivating factor for becoming a CMT.
Personal Utility Value	<i>Being a cooperating teacher allows for more family time.</i> 1.5	Being a CMT rarely affected work-life balance, although the reasons for this outcome varied depending on life stage and work habits. "I keep pretty long days...I don't think it had any effect on my balance." (Interview, Bruce, 6/19/25)	Enhance. Several teachers view becoming a CMT as allowing for less family time. Others reported no effect because they either admitted to not having a work-life balance at all, or described themselves as being aware/protective of their work-life balance.
Intrinsic Value	<i>I like working with student teachers.</i> 5.8	CMTs enjoyed working with student teachers who were open to feedback and motivated to be in the classroom. "...they see the kids respond to them there, and you see the look on their face that, wow! I actually am doing something here." (Interview, Charlie, 6/11/25)	Mixed. No CMTs expressed that they did not like working with student teachers. However, interviews revealed the challenges of working with students who were unmotivated, lacked content knowledge, or with whom their personalities did not mesh.