

How Important is Parental Involvement in A Child's Musical Education for the Achievement of Musical Success?

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between parental involvement in music education and the achievement of childhood musical success. The aims of the paper were to recognise that the multi-faceted nature of parental involvement relies not only on parental interest in music lessons and practice but also on external factors such as socioeconomic standing and familial situation. It acknowledges that musical achievement develops in response to more than parental and teacher impetus and that the triangular parent-teacher-pupil relationship needs to be flexible to allow for students' extra-curricular circumstances. The paper suggests how the dwindling state of music education might be reversed and/or improved by taking such factors into consideration. A literature review-based approach was undertaken to trace the beginnings of research in this area and evaluate more recent papers. From this, we are able to appreciate developments the field has undergone over the last 30 years. Evidence suggested that, although parental involvement dramatically increases childhood musical success, the results remain inconclusive. The lack of clarity in these findings indicates the broader problems the research area faces: methodological inconsistencies and the absence of more recent literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

The preoccupation of researchers over the last 30 years has been the question of how families can best support their children's interests (Creech, 2010). Considerable research literature shows the importance of parental involvement in student academic success (Zdzinski, 1992). It has been equally well documented that actions and approaches taken by parents contribute to higher levels of musical aptitude. Biographical and autobiographical evidence suggests that the families of many successful young musicians have taken pains to give their child opportunities and encouragement to gain musical skills (Sloboda & Howe, 1991). While some are unaware of the value of their potential input, and others assist their children without the teacher's knowledge, children who receive help welcome it (MacMillan, 2004). Of course, any information directly given to the parent by the teacher will have little effect unless the parent becomes involved with the child's practice at home (Davidson, Howe, Moore, & Sloboda, 1996). As studies most often investigate instrumental tuition, the role parental involvement plays in education schemes has been explored to a lesser extent. For the sake of music education nationally, the conclusions drawn by studies based on individual tuition must be applied to the curriculum as a matter of urgency.

In earlier research, the role of the parent was largely neglected and undervalued as student-teacher relationships received

more attention. Instead of studying approaches to parenting, teaching practices and student attentiveness were measured (Sang, 1987; Madsen, 1990). More recently, methods of parenting and teaching have been studied simultaneously, (Creech & Hallam, 2003; Creech & Hallam, 2010; Gouzouasis, Bakan, Ryu, Ballam, Murphy, Ihnatovych, Viran, & Yanko, 2014; Uptis, Abrmi, Brook, & King, 2017) a development which indicates the necessity for all studies to link pupil achievement with parental involvement and the teacher-parent relationship. In doing so, the field will begin to recognise the importance of the triangular parent-teacher-pupil relationship for musical success. Musical achievement, however, develops in response to much more than the impetus from either parents or teachers and relies on a child's intrinsic motivation and extra-curricular situation. To provide a more nuanced view of the impact of the familial situation on childhood musical success, parental involvement might be considered a variable measured on a spectrum, as the degree and means by which parents are involved in their child's development varies on an individual basis. Where involvement is of a high level, parents offer practical and psychological support. Subsequently, parental participation recurrently bears a strong correlation with increased student motivation and levels of attainment.

Before delving into the significance of this paper, we must define its terminology. 'Parental involvement' refers to the interest and support parents provide during their child's education in the form of practical encouragement, financial provision or psychological support. 'Childhood' is a term used to describe a young person up to the age of 18 (Walker, 2011). 'Musical success' refers to the musical improvement an individual undergoes to the stage where they can perform, rehearse and practice effectively to allow progression to a level of proficiency. At the highest level, children are able to compete in international competitions; however, success is equally marked by the overcoming of practical and psychological boundaries for children of all skill levels.

This paper will discuss the evolution of the research field from the early studies of Zdzinski (1992) and Davidson et al., (1996) to the more recent work undertaken by McPherson (2009) and Creech (2010). The former two studies appear methodologically rudimentary while the latter, more progressive papers cite the importance of parental involvement with particular reference to external factors, namely, socioeconomic boundaries and relationships with teachers. In recognition of the increased self-awareness of the field in the present day, studies by Uptis, Abrmi, Brook, and King (2017), Creech and Hallam (2003) and Gouzouasis et al.

(2014) move the discussion into the realm of music education. The present study aims to bring the debate surrounding parental involvement into the periphery of research concerning teacher involvement. In doing so, we might suggest how individual and classroom tuition can influence one another to allow a re-conceptualisation of music and meet the needs of children and families in the present day. Consequently, this study recognises the importance of parental involvement in musical success and enjoyment while suggesting developments the research field must undergo. It will urge scholars to look more broadly at the state of music education in schools and assess how previous findings can inform the working practices of teachers.

2. PRELIMINARY STUDIES

2.1. Overview. One of the earliest studies assessing the connection between parental involvement and musical success was carried out by Zdzinski (1992). It examines the relationship between parental involvement and musical success through dependent variables including; attendance at rehearsals, talking about music and attending non-school concerts. Its findings had to accept the null hypothesis – that is there is no significant relationship between parental involvement and student’s musical success. The possible reasons for this include; the inconclusive operationalisation of the terms ‘parental involvement’, ‘musical achievement,’ and ‘musical aptitude,’ differences in reporting parental involvement (i.e. student versus parent reporting) and different geographical locations. Most significantly, this study recognises that for the achievement of musical success parental involvement varies as students age (Zdzinski, 1992). Similar results were seen for the relationship between parental involvement and musical aptitude. While the distinction made between ‘success’ and ‘aptitude’ is not the primary focus of this paper, it is necessary to acknowledge the similarly positive correlation between musical ‘aptitude’ and home involvement in children’s musical education. Despite disproving the hypothesis, the paper provides the foundation for more recent research as Zdzinski (1992) suggests the research field needs to uncover the relationship between performance and cognitive achievement. Furthermore, this study encourages teachers and parents to work together and so forms a basis for the present research to examine music education schemes more broadly.

The later study by Davidson et al. (1996) aims to address the shortcomings of earlier inquiries surrounding parental participation in music lessons, involvement with practice, parenting methods and profiles of non-musician parents. They hypothesise parental behaviours are responsible for differential rates of progress in musical learning. The authors admit the ideal study would trace individuals from birth to achieving musical competence, which, while not impossible, would be difficult and require an extensive commitment from those involved. As context for the present paper, the work of Davidson et al. (1996) determines that for a student to achieve musical success flexibility toward their individual needs is required within teachers’ working practices. At the time of the study, it had been established that some instrumental teachers

welcomed and encouraged parents to attend lessons along with their children (Jorgensen, 1986), while others preferred the parent not to be present (Davidson et al., 1996). Musical success was also seen in the cases where parents received regular feedback from the teacher, rather than those who only provided transportation to and from lessons. There was clear evidence to connect student motivation not only with practical parental involvement but the implementation of self-belief. Their findings conclude that children who achieve musical success experience high levels of support, with one of the strongest parental attributes being a presence in music lessons or gaining regular feedback from the teacher. Most parents seemed to have an interest in music and performing rather than expertise per se.

2.2. Discussion. These studies are useful as a catalyst for later research but remain problematic. Zdzinski’s study (1992) demonstrates a limited sample size and profile, with 77 females outnumbering 36 males, and only students aged between 10-14 of Grades 6-8 ability being assessed. Using a sample comprised of teenagers raises additional concerns about the validity of the experiment’s results. The age bracket 12-18 has been described as the mid-life crisis point of young musicians, when the need to acquire or disown the interest in music becomes paramount (Bamberger, 1987). Consequently, the findings of the study face difficulty in being applied to a broader spectrum of children. To offset the age-related bias, testing a sample of younger (age 5-10) and older students (age 14-19) would have been advisable to fully assess the variable of age. Similarly, equal numbers of males and females and a more extensive range of abilities should have been tested. There is further potential for bias as tests were carried out by the band director. Although the methods and results were checked by researchers, such procedure displays inadequate practice. Additionally, the methodology used Colwell’s Music Achievement Tests dating from 1969. Using tests created in the 1960s in research in 1992 reduces the ecological validity of the study as the methods risk being obsolete. Any findings, therefore, struggle to be as pertinent as they might have been had more contemporary testing methods been used. Nonetheless, the paper, strengthened by the supplementary inclusion of a pilot study, is as thorough as could be hoped for at the time of writing when examination in this research area was more primitive.

The study by Davidson et al. (1996) has its own limitations. An interpretation of the findings is particularly difficult as qualitative methods are used and the results are presented on a continuum. Despite these self-assessed shortcomings, it is accepted there are influencing factors not covered, in the hope that the study may act as a stimulus for further scholarship. Davidson et al. (1996), summarise by recognising that there is compelling evidence to suggest a positive and regular parental presence in a child’s musical education, practically and psychologically, may increase musical success and ability.

3. CONTEMPORARY STUDIES

Following the studies by Davidson et al. (1996), and Zdzinski (1992), extensive research has been undertaken to examine the

relationship between parental involvement and musical achievement. In creating models capable of influencing future studies and linking extra-curricular influences (socioeconomic standing and family situation) to student motivation, studies by McPherson (2009) and Creech (2010) represent the significant developments the field has undergone since Zdzinski's 1992 paper. There has been greater emphasis placed on parental involvement with increased attempts to analyse parenting methods and approach. The most noteworthy improvement has been the recognition of variability in extra-curricular circumstances created by the very nature of surveying human participants. McPherson (2009) and Creech (2010) reiterate the seminal importance of parental involvement in relation to children's musical successes. Despite the advances presented in these studies, they present issues in the field, which are yet to be overcome. While there is an increased self-consciousness in recognising greater rigour is needed in the methodological approach, they also acknowledge there is no one correct answer to the question of factors influencing childhood musical success. As a result of its qualitative nature, the topic itself is difficult to measure objectively. To begin overcoming these issues, psychologists must creatively advance the methods of McPherson (2009) and Creech (2010) with the aim of combining case study and statistical testing methods in the future.

3.1. Research by McPherson (2009). Based on evidence suggesting that parents play a pivotal role in their child's musical development, McPherson proposes a framework for studying parent-child interactions (Figure 1). The model includes a feedback loop in which child and socio-contextual characteristics interact with parenting goals, styles and practices to shape children's musical competence and achievement, in addition to a continuing desire to participate, exert effort and overcome obstacles. The McPherson Longitudinal Study (McPherson, 2005; McPherson & Davidson, 2006) considers the impact of separated parents. 7 out of 9 learners whose parents separated stopped learning very soon or immediately after one of their parents left home. For 2 out of the 9, extraordinary amounts of support were required. A second hypothesis raised is the possibility of variance in levels of support from mothers and fathers to sons and daughters. As a result of its nature as a literature review, McPherson (2009) admits the study is selective rather than exhaustive and, instead, is only capable of describing relationships between students and parents, which hold the most potential for future research. The concluding sentiment encourages others to look for new methods from different areas of psychology to support family dynamics.

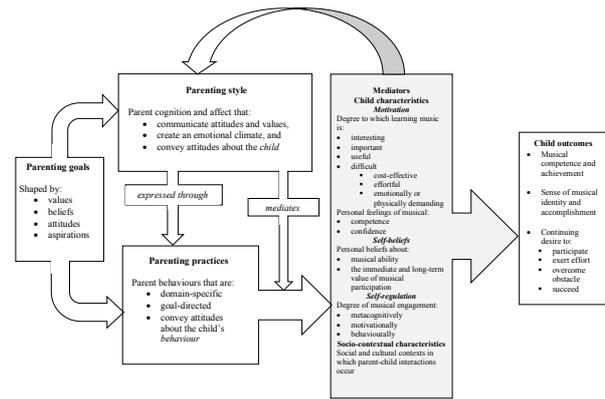


Figure 1. McPherson's 2009 model of parent-child interactions in children's musical learning

As context for the current research, there are critical elements in McPherson's (2009) paper, which could be improved upon. The study is only capable of acting as a basis for an exploration of the importance of socio-cultural context and gender, as no statistics and only one model are presented. If the study were to form a basis for future empirical work, the broad conclusions, lack of supporting evidence and sweeping generalisations detailed would be extremely limiting and offer little insight. Of course, this is dependent on the exact nature of the research. Nonetheless, it does provide a solid theoretical and conceptual basis for current and future studies but, as a result of introducing provocative ideas, is challenging in isolation. Regardless of these difficulties, it is a particularly innovative study and raises enough new questions to allow its inclusion in discussions surrounding musical success and education.

3.2. Research by Creech (2010). In response to Pruett (2003), Creech (2010) recognises that effective parental involvement in instrumental learning requires versatility. With reference to an interpersonal relating style based on 'responsiveness' and 'demandingness' (Baumrind, 2005; Birtchnell, 2001), Creech (2010) suggests parents need to be adept at moving between close and distant positions on the responsiveness axis and directive and acquiescent positions on the control axis on the model for interpersonal dimensions. This process involves practical assistance and personal support during the early years of learning. Positive outcomes then occur when parents seek teacher's advice and allow an autonomous teacher-pupil relationship. The study found parents provided high levels of behavioural support, which peaked during the 9-11 age range. In terms of practical guidance, resources for learning in the home were prioritised and children were supported by attending concerts. Despite the increased awareness of the study, the suggestion that a 'model' parent exists, presents a challenging concept from the outset, and the scope of the study is compromised as only broad conclusions are possible. By its very nature, applying a model to human individuals rather than processes, as McPherson (2009) does, has the potential to create indistinct conclusions. Likewise, qualitative surveys are useful in demonstrating correlational relationships but should be treated with caution as the subjective nature of the method does not provide conclusive evidence. Another

issue concerns the sample itself. While the size is quite large, there is a lack of diversity as only parents of violinists were approached. To broaden the study, it would be useful to not only include findings from parents of viola, cello and double bass students but those who have children studying instruments of other disciplines. It would increase the ecological validity of the research to compare the results of string tuition with that of wind, brass and vocal studies. A follow-up study would be worthwhile to compare these results, i.e. those from fixed-pitch instruments, with parents of children who study non-pitched instruments. Of particular interest, is the case of parents of percussionists who take lessons in fixed-pitch and non-fixed pitch instruments. In the case of the present study, the discussion should consider why only parents of children learning fixed-pitch instruments were tested. Perhaps Creech (2010) believed them to be more straightforward for parents to engage with and understand. It may be easier for parents to support children whose instruments are based on a fixed-pitch system, as it can be more obvious where to offer suggestions of praise or criticism when dealing with the accuracy of distinct pitches. Again, acknowledging the differences between parent-teacher and teacher-pupil relationships becomes vital when suggesting where a child gains the most support and if there is variability between fixed and non-fixed pitch instruments. Despite these drawbacks, the study does recognise the importance of child, parent and teacher interactions. It introduces 6 parent-teacher-pupil types (Figure 2), through which parents can support their children. Creech (2010) further presents the dependent variable of age and proposes evidence for the benefit of cognitive support, particularly for the oldest group of students. The sample used by Creech (2010) raises broader questions of how music education and musical success can be measured objectively. As this study indicates, 'musical success' is a term most often taken to describe the progress of instrumental and vocal studies. The decision to apply the hypothesis to string players further alludes to a broader cultural issue which encroaches on scientific practice. Young children who are musically successful, most often violinists and pianists, are readily associated with the term 'child prodigy.' The first instinct of those studying childhood musical success, therefore, appears to apply this thinking as string players are most frequently examined in studies. Consequently, psychologists are part of and test in a culture that needs reconditioning. The current field needs to widen its scope to give equal attention to all instruments. That such inequalities arise during data collection is unsurprising as the most appropriate means to test this subject area continues to elude many researchers.

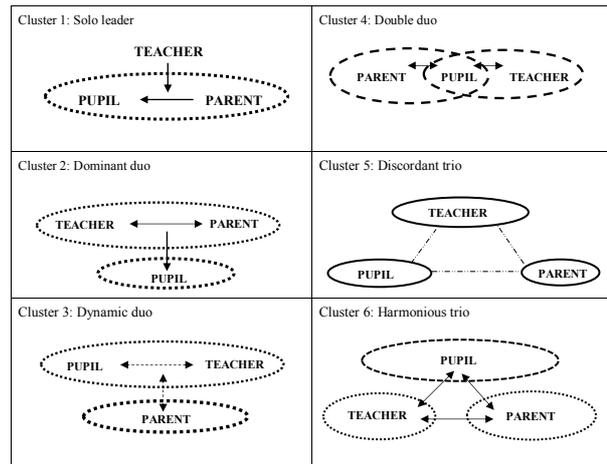


Figure 2. Creech's (2010) model indicating the six parent-pupil-teacher interaction types

3.3. *Discussion.* These studies demonstrate that at the time of writing the research field had not yet reached maturity. As psychologist's struggle to quantify, qualify and evidence musical success and parental involvement there are shortcomings present in the scholarship. The principal issues involve the subjective nature of the discipline; therefore, more creative approaches must be found when designing investigations to explore parent-teacher-pupil relationships. To better represent the population, a combination of qualitative and quantitative data testing extra-curricular factors should be collected, so that this triangular relationship might be presented on a continuum. Moreover, the pace of research must quicken to apply these findings to the broader contexts of classroom music tuition as soon as possible. If psychologists remain unable to do so, they will have to admit their studies have little impact in the realms of music research or in application to real-life settings of music education.

4. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND STUDENT MUSICAL SUCCESS

Other research has found supporting evidence for parental involvement in childhood musical success and instigated more detailed investigations into the triangular parent-teacher-pupil relationship (Creech & Hallam, 2003; Uptis et al., 2017). The following papers begin to test McPherson's hypothesis surrounding the importance of external factors and bring to light the critical caveat of socioeconomic context and family situation which impacts upon the 'harmonious trio' (Creech, 2010) and, thus, children's musical success. Often these external factors influence the capacity of a parent to be involved in education, regardless of whether it is musical or academic. For example, those of a lower socioeconomic standing may be less involved in their child's music learning due to disruptive personal circumstances. Most notably, in the case of parental separation, children either adapt and work harder individually to reach success or give up.

4.1. *Research by Uptis et al. (2017).* To explore the impact of parental support on musical success, Uptis et al. (2017)

examined types of parental involvement associated with independent music lessons via a self-report survey distributed through Canada's Royal Conservatory. The study aimed to investigate teacher-student relationships, parenting behaviour and goals within a pupil's practice sessions in-between lessons. The authors questioned what it means to support practice sessions and hypothesised enjoyment came as a result of positive relationships between constituent parties and parental involvement. As an extension of McPherson's (2009) theoretical model of parenting goals and practices this study considers the socioeconomic influences – culture, parent expectation and student purpose – driving the positive correlation. The investigation found evidence to support the hypothesis but recognised that the scaffolding and amount of support required from parents is complex as some parent interactions drop off over time in response to increasing student independence (Upitis et al., 2017). Furthermore, teachers were found to play a vital role in musical outcomes, with their qualities and characteristics noted as a significant factor in pupil's success and aptitude. Despite the seemingly rigorous approach of this study, which demonstrates a self-conscious awareness of its shortcomings, a sample based on the process of self-report confines general conclusions. This research area will always be challenging to investigate causally, and so methods of experimentation and meta-analysis combined with case studies examples would be more appropriate. Here, issues created by the causal method are compounded by the disproportionate gender representation within the sample. The participants, derived from 86 schools, were mostly female. This gender imbalance evidences McPherson's (2009) hypothesis of the greater involvement of mothers/females as opposed to fathers/males. Moreover, not all surveys were completed, as the requisite was only 90% completion. The lack of more systematic sample profiles means it is still not possible to entirely define what stimulates musical success.

4.2. Research by Creech & Hallam (2003). Creech and Hallam (2003) present a literature review of parent-teacher-pupil interactions (Figure 3) in instrumental teaching. They aim to uncover the qualities of the communication between the three constituent parts of the relationship rather than merely how musical skills are acquired. In the context of instrumental tuition, the concept of effective learning and teaching, effective parenting and interpersonal relationships are key (Creech & Hallam, 2003) to allow the formation of a 'harmonious trio' (Creech, 2010). The study is grounded in the work of Bandura (1997) and recognises that self-efficacious parents regard education as a shared responsibility (Creech & Hallam, 2003) while those who doubt their efficacy to help their children learn

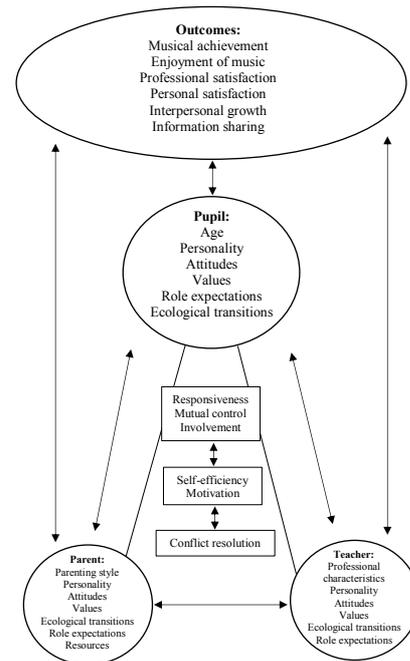


Figure 3. Creech's (2003) model demonstrating the interaction of human variables in a music education context

turn their children's education over to their teachers (Bandura, 1997), who become additionally efficacious in their place. It is vital to question why parents doubt their effectiveness towards their children's education. A lack of self-belief on the parent's behalf, in many instances, may indicate broader familial issues that impact negatively on a child's educational support. Crozier (1999) explored perceptions of parental involvement held by all three constituents of the triangular relationship and found disparities between the attitudes of working-class parents and teachers. In the case of the former, the expectations for their children's happiness and welfare, and the importance of qualifications and educational aspirations differed from teachers' expectations of parental involvement (Creech & Hallam, 2003). When these socioeconomic limitations are placed on the education system teacher efficacy must come to the fore. One particular characteristic of high-involvement teacher efficacy is its circular, cyclical nature, which leads to increase childhood persistence and better performance, which in turn leads to greater efficacy. The reverse is also true (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Consequently, high-involvement teachers typically acknowledge and respect children's out-of-school life whether parental involvement is high or low (Creech & Hallam, 2003). As a result, the participation and behaviour of one constituent impacts on the efficiency of the entire system. The study concludes that music education ought to employ the same system-based approach to increase understanding of the influence and consequences of human interaction in learning scenarios. To aid children in their path to musical success, teachers must evaluate their part in the parent-teacher-pupil triangle and recognise the importance of a flexible, efficient

and sensitive approach for all students as each will have unique familial circumstances. While this literature review indicates the ability of socioeconomic standing to impact on children's musical education and the role of teachers, the research and its quoted studies are outdated. The lack of more recent references indicates a broader demand for an injection of new literature. If the research field is to progress at the same rate as the rapidly shifting education sector, the lacking wealth in new papers is unacceptable. The lack of financial backing in government policies and the reduced priority of music education schemes indicates a failure to rectify this issue.

4.3. Discussion. These studies demonstrate the increased self-awareness of the discipline, which has developed over the last ten years. In recognising the changing habits and needs of children, the paper by Uptis et al. (2017), indicates there are growing nuances within the research area. The recognition that students are individuals with unique familial situations marks a distinct development in the field and indicates the need for the creation of a universal parental involvement spectrum, which takes extra-curricular circumstances into account. Regardless of such developments, the parent-pupil and pupil-teacher relationship are often assessed separately rather than in combination as the triangular parent-teacher-pupil relationship. In doing so, parental involvement remains limited as the parent-teacher connection fails to be examined and the triangle remains incomplete. The study by Creech and Hallam (2003) begins to connect the three constituents into one body and recognise the impact of socioeconomic standing. This approach should act as an exemplar for music education policies to inspire high involvement teaching and parenting capable of infusing students with the necessary motivation and support to achieve high levels of musical attainment. Despite progress towards this end, there is still much work to be done in the search for conclusive and indisputable evidence, which covers the necessary ground for a complete study. In the current climate, where music education continually faces cuts to funding, scholars must confront these errors to recognise the broader implications and lasting influences of their research.

5. THE PARENT-TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONSHIP AND MUSIC EDUCATION

Despite the failure of many earlier studies to explore the triangular parent-teacher-pupil relationship, it is essential to consider the impact it has on music education. The study by Gouzouasis et al. (2014) searches to connect these two, seemingly distinct, areas to suggest how we might re-invigorate the learning processes for children with the hope of influencing the education sector and achieving increased levels of musical success as a by-product of supportive child-led means.

5.1. Research by Gouzouasis et al. (2014). This study reconceptualises music education and recognises the significance of sociological processes Gouzouasis et al. (2014) informed by teachers and learners. There is a great

importance placed on the feedback between each side of the triangle as a result. The study remains insistent that music education sits behind other trends in education as it is currently more teacher directed. This conclusion causes problems for the attainment and achievement of students who require flexibility rather than structure, informality on occasion and emotion and individual study rather than formal classes and lessons (Gouzouasis, 2013). The perspective of music teachers is discussed and their role in classroom music education rather than only in instrumental teaching is emphasised. Gouzouasis et al. (2014) further recognise the importance of external factors beyond the home and infer the impact politics and contemporary music cultures have on learning. They suggest that the British education system must be considered in the broader context of other traditions if the profession is to avoid entering stasis. The politics surrounding music education research and the orthodoxy it encourages has restricted the ability of the profession to grow and communicate the relevance of its findings to music teachers and learners (Gouzouasis et al., 2014). For that reason, parents must be given the power to supplement the teaching taking place in schools. The need for outside culture to influence musical study is also essential as currently there is a disconnect between music education, music pedagogies and twenty-first-century youth culture (Gouzouasis et al., 2014). As the profession seems to lack an ethos encapsulating these influences, we risk acting unethically in the promotion and proliferation of the outdated, outmoded music curricular that predominantly use teacher-centred and teacher-directed pedagogies (Gouzouasis et al., 2014). The education sector, therefore, must reinvent itself to retain its relevance in the twenty-first century, a process, which parents can reinforce to significant effect. On account of this, McPherson (2009) was entirely valid in recognising the critical importance of the socioeconomic position for students' musical attainment. Studies can no longer refuse to consider the influence of extra-curricular factors and apply it to the present question. To conclude, Gouzouasis et al. (2014) implore researchers in the education field to be encouraged in using their own words and experiences to take risks and allow the voices of music teachers and learners of all ages to matter (Gouzouasis, 2013).

5.2. Discussion. As it only examines North American schools, the study has a reduced ecological validity on account of its limited sample profile. Psychologists must also remain wary of research based on an entirely narrative-based subjective view, as quantitative evidence should be used to evidence such bold claims. Moreover, its ethnographic approach risks a reduced relevance for British culture and practices. In a study area where there is already difficulty in methodology and conclusion, the ethnographic lens method adds unnecessary historical and emotional connotations to scientific study. Equally, the inclusion of jargon and overly complicated language offers an indication as to why investigations into parental involvement and music education are not considered a priority. The 'reflective practitioners' (Gouzouasis, 2013) the research *should* concern fail to become engaged and instead suffer the consequences of research, which fails to define its terms through appropriate means. Despite these

problematic areas, the study serves as a poignant reminder that, regardless of the indecisiveness of the field, psychologists must remember the purpose of the research and whom it concerns. In appreciating its place in the realms of psychology as a living enquiry (Meyer, 2010), the issues faced in measuring, studying and concluding are only intensified.

6. CONCLUSION

Although there is substantial evidence to suggest parental involvement dramatically increases childhood musical success, the evidence is not conclusive. As the null findings of the early study by Zdzinski (1992) indicate, the field has been aware of its need for greater operationalisation and methodological improvement for over two decades. While it is easy to understate the minor improvements made in tackling these issues, it is imperative to keep in mind that childhood musical success is a subjective measure in itself. Researchers would be hard-pressed to find a definition for 'parental involvement,' and 'musical success' to suit all. To avoid confusion, the focus of studies should be to follow widely adopted terms rather than attempting to offer new definitions and thereby reinforce any existing inconsistencies. A failure to do so recognises an apparent lack of rigour on behalf of the researching body.

Another significant development requiring implementation concerns the issue of methodology and recency of literature. As the area of childhood success and parental involvement is entirely subjective, psychologists must find a way to balance qualitative and quantitative approaches. While surveys, interviews and observational studies are useful in isolation, creative experimentation is required to combine these methods with the collection of empirical data where possible. Case studies, randomised controlled trials and meta-analyses must be used to measure parental involvement, with reference to familial settings, and musical success if the question of their relationship is to be answered or its results to bear weight in the real or academic world. In the case of academic achievement, meta-analyses have revealed a small to moderate yet practically meaningful relationship between parental involvement and achievement with family structure being the single greatest predictor of academic achievement (Jeynes, 2008). Through statistical analysis, it has been revealed that parental expectation for children's educational achievement has the strongest relationship and parental home supervision the weakest (Fan & Chen, 2001). This methodology and its findings ought to be applied to music education. The lack of large quantities of more recent literature raises an even greater concern for the field. Many of the studies available to academics and policy-makers date between 1990 and 2010 with a noticeable dwindling of research in the past decade. Subsequently, the issue of parental involvement in relation to musical success and its implications for music education is relegated to a subservient position. Such an oversight offers little help to the already deteriorating state of music education provisions in the UK. To allow a definite shift to take place, we should be proactive and remain optimistic. It is vital to involve parents heavily in

the creation of a more stable music education system and entice them to become involved. Students must also be granted the support to improve their self-perceived ability and attitudes toward music (Kokotsaki, 2017). Increased parent and pupil autonomy will mark a desirable change across the country as music education becomes an area to be considered more earnestly by local authorities. Consequently, the hypothesis and methods used to investigate parental involvement must now be applied to music education in the classroom to recognise the real-world implications of this paper and the research field of which it is a part. Teachers must be given the self-sufficiency to become cyclical and versatile in their methods as parents have been. The approach of parents and teachers within the parent-teacher-pupil triangle, therefore, should mirror one another and imbue students with motivation to heighten their levels of attainment. Furthermore, these findings ought to encourage a better quality of communication between parents and teachers and, likewise, parents and students. A parental involvement spectrum needs to be created to recognise that the learning process has to be tailored to each child *and* each family. Future investigations might further question if parental influence extends to grandparents and influences siblings similarly, to assess exactly how broadly and deeply the home environment impacts the musical success of children, and, thus, the evolution of music education nationwide.

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