



BRIDGING MUSICAL IDENTITY AND CURRICULUM: A SEQUENTIAL EXPLANATORY STUDY OF ASPIRING PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the musical identity of aspiring Physical Education (PE) teachers and its implications for strengthening music education within the PE curriculum. Guided by Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, the research employed a sequential-exploratory mixed-methods design integrating quantitative survey data and qualitative interview findings. A total of 200 bachelor of Physical Education students participated in the quantitative phase, while five (5) participants were selected for in-depth interviews to elaborate on emerging patterns. Quantitative results revealed a generally high level of musical identity among participants, with Emotional Attachment obtaining a Very High descriptive level, followed by high levels of Growth Mindset, Musical Calling, and Musical Self-Efficacy. These findings indicate that music plays a vital role in shaping both personal identity and professional readiness among future PE teachers. The qualitative phase further revealed that music functions as an emotional anchor, a medium for social connection, and a foundation for pedagogical confidence. Participants described music as integral to motivation, emotional regulation, creativity, and classroom engagement, although challenges such as limited formal training and insufficient curricular integration were identified. The integration of quantitative and qualitative results suggests that musical identity contributes to holistic teacher development by bridging expressive arts and movement-based instruction. The study concludes that embedding structure music components within Physical Education programs can foster interdisciplinary teaching practices, strengthen teacher identity formation, and enhance learner engagement. Recommendations include curriculum enhancement, institutional support for music integration, and continued research on interdisciplinary pedagogies in teacher education.

KEYWORDS: *Musical Identity, Physical Education Teachers, Curriculum Integration, Interdisciplinary Education, Music Education, Teacher Identity Development*

INTRODUCTION

Musical education has increasingly been marginalized worldwide due to budget constraints and policy priorities that privilege core academic subjects over the arts (Hallam, 2015; O'Connor & Marsh, 2018). Despite substantial evidence demonstrating that music education enhances cognitive development, emotional regulation, social interaction, and identity formation such as the key components of holistic education (McPherson, 2016; Welch & McPherson, 2019) its pedagogical value remains underutilized in interdisciplinary teacher preparation. Studies from Australia and the United Kingdom suggest that musical competence supports broader teaching effectiveness, including movement-based disciplines such as physical education (Barrett, 2017; Creech et al., 2019). However, existing research largely examines music education within specialist music contexts, leaving the musical identity formation of future physical education teachers conceptually and empirically underexplored.

In the Philippine context, music and arts education are formally embedded within the K-12 curriculum yet often receive limited instructional time and institutional support compared to mathematics, science, and language subjects (DepEd, 2016). While national studies acknowledge music's contribution to

students' socio-emotional and cultural development, persistent issues of underfunding, insufficient teacher preparation, and shifting educational priorities constrain meaningful implementation (Palomares & Villaverde, 2018). Current scholarship emphasizes music's cultural significance but seldom investigates how non-music specialists, particularly aspiring physical education teachers develop musical orientations that may influence pedagogical practice and curriculum integration.

Locally, teacher education programs in Davao City operate within a culturally rich environment shaped by diverse musical and dance traditions. Yet these cultural resources remain minimally integrated into physical education preparation due to curricular competition, limited training, and scarce instructional resources (DepEd Davao, 2020; Santos & Cabigon, 2019). Although preliminary findings suggest that integrating music could enhance movement instruction and cultural responsiveness in PE classrooms (Lariosa, 2021), empirical studies examining how aspiring PE teachers construct musical identity and translate it into teaching practice are scarce.



Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the musical identity of aspiring physical education teachers and its implications for curriculum development. By situating musical identity within interdisciplinary teacher preparation, the study seeks to extend current discourse beyond music specialization toward a more integrated, culturally responsive approach to physical education and teacher education.

Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the musical identity of aspiring Physical Education (PE) teachers and its implications for strengthening the music education curriculum. Specifically, to answer the following objectives:

- To explore the musical identities of aspiring physical education teachers and how these identities shape their perspectives on teaching.
- To examine the role that music plays in the personal and professional development of physical education students.
- To identify challenges and opportunities in integrating music education into the physical education curriculum.
- To provide insights and recommendations for enhancing the music education curriculum based on the lived experiences of aspiring physical education teachers.
- To contribute to the development of a more interdisciplinary approach that combines music and physical education for a holistic educational experience.

Research Question

This study aims to explore the musical identity of aspiring Physical Education (PE) teachers and its implications for strengthening the music education curriculum. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is the level of agreement of aspiring Physical Education teachers regarding the role and impact of music education in physical education, as measured by their responses to the survey questionnaire?
- How do aspiring Physical Education teachers perceive the integration of music in their discipline, given the findings of the survey?
- What factors contribute to the challenges or hesitancy in incorporating music into Physical Education teaching?
- How do aspiring PE teachers describe their musical identity and its influence on their teaching practices?
- What recommendations do aspiring PE teachers have for strengthening music education in the Physical Education curriculum?

METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the procedures employed in the collection and analysis of data for this study. It includes the research design, participants and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection process, data analysis methods, ethical considerations, the role of the researchers and measures of trustworthiness.

Sampling Design

This study utilized a Sequential Explanatory Mixed-Method design. In the initial phase, data was collected from aspiring Physical Education teachers. Participants were selected to

provide measurable data on musical identity, including musical calling, self-efficacy, emotional attachment, and growth mindset, in accordance with the Musical Identity Model (MacDonald, et.al., 2002). Following this, a subset of participants was selected for the qualitative phase to undergo in-depth interviews, allowing for a deeper exploration of the experiences and perceptions identified in the survey.

Statistical Design

The statistical design followed a two-phase integration process. The initial quantitative phase, primary data were summarized using descriptive statistics, including mean, median and standard deviation, to establish the baseline profiles of aspiring PE teachers. Inferential statistics, specifically correlation and regression analysis, were subsequently applied to examine the relationships between variables such as musical calling, self-efficacy, and growth mindset. All quantitative computations were processed using statistical software, such as SPSS or R, to ensure high levels of accuracy and reliability. For the qualitative phase, primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved coding responses and identifying recurring themes to explain and expand upon the quantitative findings. The integration of both datasets was guided by a pragmatic approach, ensuring that the resulting interpretations were both theoretically sound and practically applicable for curriculum development.

Geographical Area

The study was conducted within the urban setting of Davao city, Philippines, specifically focusing on the academic environment of Holy cross of Davao College (HCDC). As a prominent private sectarian institution located in the heart of the city, HCDC provides a diverse demographic of students enrolled in its teacher education programs. This setting was strategically chosen to examine the musical identity of aspiring Physical Education teachers within a private institutional framework, ensuring that the findings reflect the specific curricular standards and cultural context of one of the region's established educational providers.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the Musical Identity Model proposed by Graham F. Welch (2005), which conceptualizes musical identity as a dynamic interaction among personal experiences, social contexts, cultural influences, and musical engagement across lifespan. The model explains how individuals construct self-perceptions as music participants through learning, participation, and reflection. Applied to aspiring physical education teachers, the framework examines how musical experiences shape professional identity formation and inform pedagogical practices integrating movement, culture, and music within interdisciplinary teaching contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the findings from both quantitative and qualitative phases, organized by key musical identity variables: emotional attachment, musical caring, self-efficacy, and growth mindset. Data are displayed in a logical sequence, using



descriptive and inferential statistics followed by qualitative insights to provide depth and context.

Discussions

The Emotional Attachment domain reached a very high descriptive level (0.72), indicating a strong, shared affective involvement among respondents. These results align with research by Hargreaves et al. (2022) and Jones et al. (2020), which identifies emotional attachment as a primary driver of motivation and well-being. This deep personal bond confirms that music is a significant element in the participants' professional development and pedagogical identity.

The Emotional and Motivational Foundation

This theme centers on the belief that musical ability is a developable skill rather than a fixed trait. The Emotional Anchor: Music serves as a vocational mission and psychological stabilizer. For these educators, music is a core component of self-identity that fosters social connection and emotional expression (Hallam, 2010). A Vital Refuge: Participants 3, 4, and 5 described music as a sanctuary for recovery and self-reflection. Acting as informal therapy, musical engagement provides the internal stability necessary for professional longevity (Jakubowski & Ghosh, 2022). Purpose-Driven Expression: Music acts as a bridge to pedagogical roles. Participants noted that mastering instruments and public performance clarified their calling to foster inclusive, rhythmic environments in Physical Education (Abril & Gault, 2008). The Social Bond: Music functions as "social glue," transforming personal talent into communal leadership. Synchronized musical activities build interpersonal trust and "we-agency," reinforcing music's role as a social beacon (Pearce et al., 2015; Cross, 2014).

The Mastery and Competence Cycle

This theme reflects a dynamic performance-validation cycle in which a growth enables pre-service teachers to reinterpret technical struggles not as limitations, but as formative experiences that strengthen pedagogical authority. Mastery emerged as a non-linear journey shaped by persistence, reflection, and intentional practice. Rather than viewing setbacks such as; scholarship loss, performance anxiety, or technological challenges as failures, the participants recognized them as productive disruptions that deepened learning and reinforced intrinsic motivation (Kapur, 2021; Duckworth, 2023). These experiences reveal how adversity functions as an instructional space where resilience is cultivated and professional identity begins to solidify.

The Challenge-Response Mechanism theme highlights that expertise develops through repeated negotiation between vulnerability and competence. Participants demonstrated that growth occurs when individuals remain engaged despite uncertainty, allowing challenges to refine both technical skill and teaching philosophy. In this process, obstacles became catalysts for self-awareness, redefine success, and reconstruct confidence through sustained effort.

Pedagogical confidence marked as a significant transition from perceiving music as a personal interest to intentionally

employing it as an educational instrument. Collectively, the findings position musical identity as a multidimensional construct integrating emotional attachment, cognitive engagement, and social interaction. Emotional connection to music does not remain confined to personal expression; instead, it evolves into professional motivation that informs instructional decision-making. Thus, becoming transformative inquiry. The perseverance required to master musical techniques parallels the confidence necessary to integrate rhythm, movement, and creativity into the Physical Education curriculum (Welch & McPherson, 2019).

Suggestions

This study's exploration of musical identity among future Physical Education (PE) teachers provides a strategic recommendation for enhancing the educational landscape. To translate these insights into practice, the following formal recommendations are proposed for key stakeholders:

Curriculum Specialists or Instructional Coordinators. It is recommended that specialists adopt interdisciplinary frameworks by embedding specific music modules within PE curriculum to promote a more holistic teaching methodology. Furthermore, administrative bodies should prioritize the allocation of budgets to ensure schools are outfitted with the essential musical instruments and facilities required to support this integration.

School Administrators. Those responsible for training future educators should design specialized programs that equip PE interns with the specific musical strategies and rhythmic skills needed for the classroom instruction. This can be furthered by fostering collaborative partnerships between music and other schools with Bachelor of Physical Education Programs, to encourage the exchange of innovative pedagogical methods.

Aspiring and Current PE Teachers. Educators are encouraged to take initiative in their own professional growth by engaging in self-directed musical learning that can be directly applied to a physical education context. By implementing music-infused pedagogies, teachers can create a more dynamic, engaging lessons that cater to a wide variety of student learning styles and boost overall participation.

Future Research Directions. Subsequent academic inquiries should investigate the long-term professional impact of music integration on teaching efficacy. Additionally conducting comparative studies across various regions of the Philippines would offer a more comprehensive understanding of how regional musical identities shape the development of Physical Education teachers nationwide.

CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the musical identity of pre-service Physical Education (PE) teachers to determine how such an identity might inform and strengthen music education curricula. Adopting a sequential explanatory mixed-method approach, the researcher synthesized quantitative survey data with qualitative interview insights to gain a holistic view of music's role in the professional growth of future educators.



The quantitative results, as detailed in Table 1, highlighted a Very High level of Emotional Attachment to music ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.72$), which served as the most prominent dimension. Other key areas including Growth Mindset ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.68$), Musical Calling ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.67$), and Musical Self-Efficacy ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.69$), all received High ratings. These figures suggest that while participants strongly identify with music and believe in their capacity for improvement, they also view it as a foundational element of their personal and professional selves.

The qualitative findings mirrored these statistics, as participants shared narratives of formative musical experiences, such as instrumental performance and the strategic use of rhythm in teaching that solidified their personal bonds with the art form. However, the interviews also brought to light significant systematic hurdles, including lack of formal training, limited access to resources, and the marginalization of music by other academic requirements. Ultimately, the study advocates for a more integrated curriculum, suggesting that embedding music within PE major programs can significantly boost teaching efficiency rather than making it as an elective course and Forster a more comprehensive, holistic educational experience.

Conceptual Framework

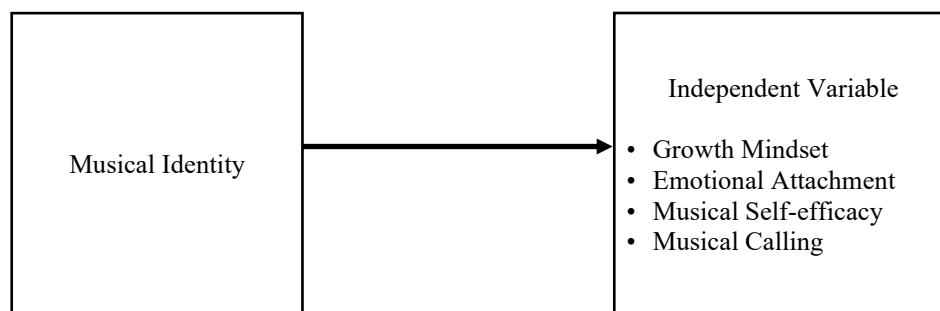


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Table 1:

<i>Musical Identity Dimensions</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standar Deviation</i>	<i>Descriptive Level</i>
Musical Calling	3.25	0.67	High
Musical Self-efficacy	3.13	0.69	High
Emotional Attachment	3.30	0.72	Very High
Growth Mindset	3.31	0.68	High
Overall	3.25	0.64	High

Means and Standard Deviations on the Measure of the Musical Identity Among Bachelor of Physical Education Students of the Holy Cross of Davao College ($N = 200$).

Note: 4.00-3.26 is Very High, 3.25-2.52 is High, 2.50-1.76 is Low, and 1.75-1.00 is Very Low

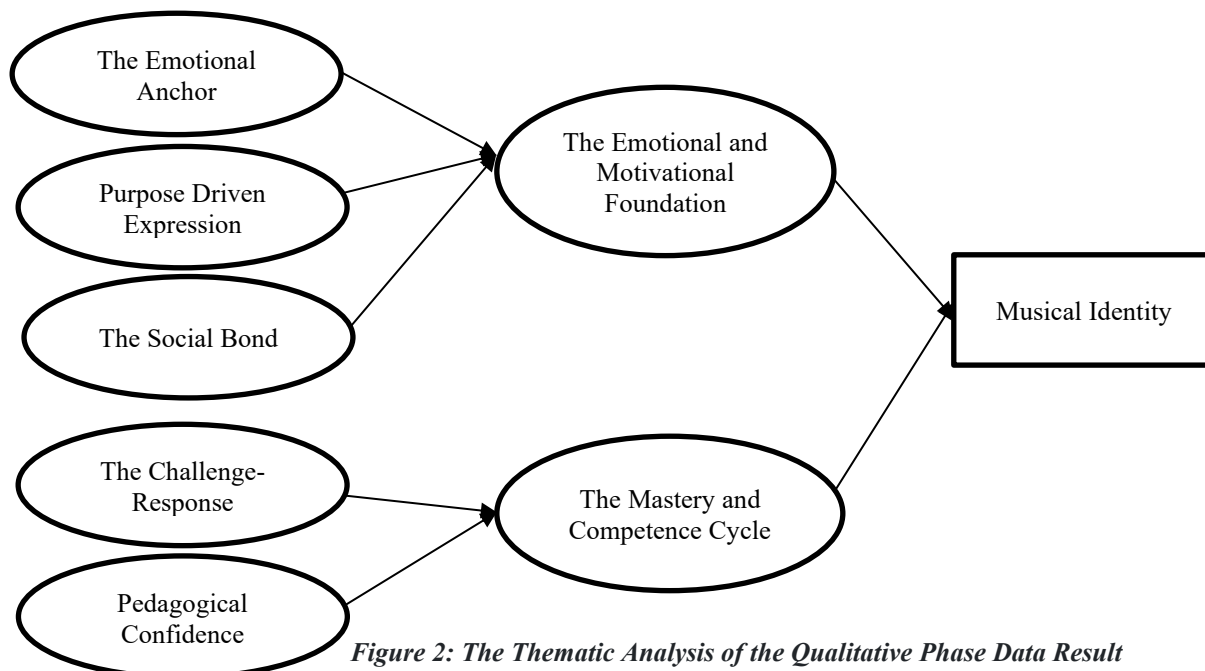


Figure 2: The Thematic Analysis of the Qualitative Phase Data Result



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