



Living Female in a Traditionally Male Paradigm: How Female Band Teachers Navigate Gender Issues in the Profession

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Research Design

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine in-service female band directors' (FBD) perspectives regarding their experiences working in a traditionally male paradigm.

Framework

Three Domains (Fisher-Croneis, 2013)
1. Gaining entry into the profession of band teaching
2. Navigating the profession
3. Gender issues

Included mentoring, role models, etc. (Taylor, 2011)

Data Collection

Individual Interviews
* Music teacher preparation & life/career goals
* Professional experiences
* Mentoring & role models
Focus Group Discussion
* Prompts derived from individual interview responses
Follow-up Interviews (TBD)

Sue

- 4th year
- Grades 6–8
- Large, public middle school
- 2nd position
- Clarinet
- Engaged
- No children

Josie

- 6th year
- Grades 5–12
- Private, college-prep school
- 1st position
- Tuba
- Married
- 1 step-child, expecting twins

Joan

- 16th year
- Grades 5–12
- Rural, public school
- 2nd position
- Saxophone
- Married
- No children

Patti

- 35th year (semi-retired)
- Grades 5–12 public (30 yrs.)
- Grades 5–8 private (5 yrs.)
- Bassoon
- Married
- One child

Working with the “Good Ol’ Boys”

- “If you get a judge that is part of the good old boys club, to me that is much scarier than a newer judge.” (Sue)
- Learn to second-guess yourself; be silent (Josie)
- “They all treated me like their little sister or even their granddaughter...it took a significant amount of time for them to see me as an equal.” (Joan)
- “a bunch of suits” (Patti)
- First interview: “As a woman...” (Patti)

Forceful
Straightforward
Direct
Honest
Relationships
Delegated
Efficient
Goal-oriented
Goodears
Exciting
Loud

Adopting a masculine persona is “more of a personality trait than a gender trait...those strong personalities [are] what it takes to be a good band director.” (Patti)

- All FBDs shared perspective
- Balance with “motherly” traits
- “accepting, blending, or rejecting behaviors that signify traditional masculinity or femininity” (Sears, 2014, p. 9)

“She’s just a real bitch.”

- “Because when I lay down something black and white, that can be perceived as being a bitch. But when a guy does that, a lot of people embrace that as like, ‘Wow, he’s so confident.’” (Sue)
- “I will say something, I will not be heard, then I have to get ‘bitchy’ or whatever in order for them to listen to me. I used to feel bad about that, but I don’t anymore.” (Josie)
- “That can be the tricky part, where to [students]...you’re being a bitch. But in reality, you’re just trying to set it up so that everybody’s on the same page.” (Joan)
- “Guys can say stuff, demand stuff, raise their voice, yell at people, or whatever, and it is way more accepted...when you take on those traditionally male, coach characteristics, then the word bitch just gets kind of thrown out there—‘Oh yeah, she’s just a real bitch.’” (Patti)

Coping/Navigating

- “Where I’m one of the only girls in the room...I have to really push out of my comfort zone, to be an Alpha.” (Sue)
- “Now that I’ve seen it, and I’ve experienced situations where there’s no doubt in my mind what was going on, I don’t question myself anymore. And I’m not afraid to say something, either.” (Josie)
- “I mean there’s, there’s, there’s no winning on this end. There’s no winning. So it’s a smile and a nod and change the topic, walk away, whatever. But yeah. It’s happened a number of times.” (Joan)
- “I don’t know if I’ve purposely done it, or if I just have a masculine...I’m, I’m pretty forceful. I’m loud. I’m hot headed.” (Patti)

Implications for IMTE

- “Good ol’ boys club” OR “Good ol’ network”?
- All agreed “it’s going away” or “getting better,” but still exists
 - Recruitment/retention of FBDs (SMTE ASPA?)
- “Masculine” Personality
- All four FBDs described adopting a masculine persona, similar to previous research (e.g., Bovin, 2019; Green, 1997; Gould, 2005; Sears, 2014)
 - “I wish we would stop using the word bitch.” (Sue)
 - Agreed that “it’s just good teaching”
 - How do we “rewire” professionals to perceive personality traits and teacher dispositions as non-binary?

Mentoring FBDs

- Importance of mentoring the next generation of FBDs (Bovin, 2019; Grant, 2000; Jones, 2010)
- “I would like to see more women mentoring young men.” (Josie)
- How do IMTEs prepare both male and female preservice teachers to navigate gender issues in the profession?
- How do IMTEs “rewire” professionals to perceive personality traits and teacher dispositions as non-binary?
- In what ways can men make a positive impact?