"MY CHORUS IS MY LIFELINE":

LGBTQ+ CHORAL PARTICIPATION IN OLDER ADULTHOOD

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this research to my brilliant feminist choristers, as well as the rest of the

resilient LGBTQ+OAs in the Pride Chorus world.

In these hard times, there will always be singing.

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"My Chorus is My Lifeline": LGBTQ+ Choral Participation in Older Adulthood

Abstract

by

JESSICA L. GALLAGHER-STEUVER

The purpose of this research was to add to the limited literature on LGBTQ+ older adults' (LGBTQ+OAs) motivations for joining LGBTQ+-serving choruses (henceforth called Pride Choruses), along with their self-perceived benefits of participation. Researchers have found that both older adults and LGBTQ+ individuals have reported heightened levels of loneliness and isolation (Inventor et al., 2022; Lyons et al., 2021; Perone, et al., 2020; Preston, 2024; Suragarn et al., 2021). Choral participation can improve such feelings. Older adults have found benefits of choir participation following identity-shifting events such as the loss of a loved one, retirement, or health concerns (Suragarn et al., 2021). Similarly, Bird (2017) and Latimer (2008) found that LGBTQ+ individuals may form meaningful relationships in settings that foster community support and identity affirmation, such as a Pride Chorus. Despite these benefits, limited research was found on the specific intersection of LGBTQ+OAs' choral experiences. I employed a survey-based descriptive research design to investigate possible relationships between LGBTQ+OAs' motivations, self-perceived benefits, and demographics. Participants ($N =$ 253) self-identified as LGBTQ+ choristers aged 50 or older. Results indicated that participants were primarily motivated to join their chorus due to social reasons rather than music-based reasons. Similarly, participants identified social aspects of choral participation as more beneficial than mental/emotional/spiritual or physical components. I interpreted data using Seligman's (2011) PERMA framework, and found that Pride

Chorus participation may contribute to LGBTQ+OAs well-being. Three primary implications for the music education profession include: (a) The importance of understanding ensemble members' motivations to join an ensemble and the benefits members perceive from participation, (b) recruitment and retention of community Pride Chorus participants, and (c) potential lifelong benefits of intentional encouragement and positive musical experiences.

Chapter One: Introduction

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or otherwise non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender older adults (LGBTQ+OAs) may benefit from participating in groups that promote a sense of healing, safety, community, and belonging, such as LGBTQ+-affinity choruses. I refer to these affinity choruses as Pride Choruses within the context of this study. These Pride Choruses are comprised of members of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies. Community group singing and other forms of music-making have appeared in cultures throughout history, often as a function of worship, self-expression, or lifelong learning (Leglar & Smith, 2010). Individuals can improve their quality of life through the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual benefits of singing in a community chorus (Clift & Hancox, 2001). Participants are often motivated to continue their involvement in choir due to the benefits of group singing (Clay, 2022).

People sing in choral ensembles as a way to engage in lifelong learning. Older adults have reported a renewed sense of identity, creativity, social connection, and motivation through choral participation (Boswell, 1992; Creech et al., 2013, 2023). Additionally, older adults have reported that singing with others helps them experience less loneliness and isolation (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019). Community choirs may form around specific cultures or identities, such as Pride Choruses for the LGBTQ+ community. Pride Choruses' mission, music, and goals often involve social justice activism, identity affirmation, healing, and empowerment (Bird, 2017; Latimer, 2008; Mensel, 2007). LGBTQ+OAs' quality of life may improve due to participation in a choir, particularly an identity-affirming Pride Chorus.

As the Artistic Director of a primarily LGBTQ+ feminist chorus, I have observed the joy that LGBTQ+OA members experience as they participate in musical and social group activities. I considered whether other LGBTQ+OAs knew about this opportunity for social engagement. Through speaking with members over time, I learned about their unique experiences as LGBTQ+OAs. Individuals revealed feelings of loneliness, health concerns, and traumatic experiences from growing up in a less accepting time. I wondered if the feminist chorus I direct could serve as a coping mechanism for their negative experiences, which prompted me to research LGBTQ+OAs' self-perceived benefits of choral involvement. Researchers have documented LGBTQ+OAs' life experiences, older adults' participation in community choruses, and the history of Pride Choruses. Scarce research exists, however, regarding LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses. I sought to understand more about this under-researched population and how they may be impacted by choral participation. More information on LGBTQ+OA chorus members' motivators and potential benefits may help chorus directors craft personalized experiences for their members, and retain and recruit new members by promoting the benefits of participation.

Researchers in the field of LGBTQ+ studies have written about LGBTQ+OAs' struggles with discrimination, stigma, health concerns, and social isolation. Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. (2019) reviewed the literature on LGBTQ+OAs' aging experiences. The authors examined how prior researchers addressed the interplay of historical events and the LGBTQ+ community. Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. found that researchers most frequently approached this interplay by examining LGBTQ+OAs' traumatic and adverse experiences that stemmed from homophobia, discrimination, and victimization. I cite this

literature; however, my aim is not to portray LGBTQ+OAs as a monolithic group of victims. Similarly, researchers I encountered in my literature review typically referred to a singular LGBTQ+ community when discussing landmark events. Adichie (2009) suggested that when those in positions of power focus on a single or monolithic perspective to represent a broader community, everyone involved may be harmed through othering and erasure. LGBTQ+OAs have unique lived experiences and community histories. While I will primarily use numerical data to describe my participants' choral experiences, their responses were shaped by their individual backgrounds, identities, and involvement in their Pride Choruses.

LGBTQ+ Older Adults

LGBTQ+OA Background

Researchers have studied a variety of generations in the area of LGBTQ+ older adulthood. Scholars have used the term "older adult" to classify age ranges within Generation X (1965–1980), Baby Boomers (1946–1964), the Silent Generation (1928–1945), and living members of the Greatest Generation (1927–1901) (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2019). Researchers do not seem to agree on a consistent definition of "older adult" regarding age, stages, or tasks (Hunter, 2005). Generation-specific trends have emerged in studies covering multiple older adult generations. For example, Southerland (2020) found that participants aged 56-65 were less likely to be motivated by audience praise, administrative tasks, artistic volunteerism, or artistic decision-making compared to their 66 and older peers, whereas participants aged 56-65 were more likely to be motivated by a sense of belonging. I identify LGBTQ+OAs as non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender adults who are at least 50 years old, for the purposes of this study. I will be

able to research a greater sample of LGBTQ+OAs using this age limit. Further,

considering persons aged 50 and older will enable me to discover any possible trends

among generations.

LGBTQ+OAs lived through landmark events in LGBTQ+ history. The Stonewall

Riots of 1969 marked the beginning of the modern American Gay Rights Movement

(Bates-Livesay, 2020; Carter, 2010; Hilder, 2023; Kaiser, 2019; Kuhn, 2011).

LGBTQ+OAs also lived through the beginning of the ongoing HIV/AIDS crisis, which

ravaged the LGBTQ+ community (Ayala & Spieldenner, 2021). The authors noted that

while HIV/AIDS was originally considered a white gay male disease, new cases have

disproportionately affected Black and Brown men who have sex with men. While

LGBTQ+OAs may have experienced social stigma and socially and legally sanctioned

discrimination, they have also lived through rapidly changing sociopolitical issues and

mainstream acceptance and celebration (Bates-Livesay, 2020). Although homophobia

and transphobia are not things of the past, LGBTQ+ visibility and acceptance have

continuously improved since the beginning of the Gay Rights Movement (Van Wagenen

et al., 2013). Meyer (2015) and Herrick and Duncan (2023) suggested that a sense of

community resilience could strengthen the LGBTQ+ community's resolve and coping

with past or current stressors. Herrick and Duncan described community resilience as

meaningful relationships with accepting, supportive people.

LGBTQ+OA Socialization

LGBTQ+OAs may experience a greater sense of well-being by participating in

group activities with supportive, identity-affirming individuals. LGBTQ+OAs have

reported higher levels of loneliness and isolation as they age due to stigma,

discrimination, and the greater likelihood of not having children, a partner, or supportive families of origin compared to their heterosexual peers (Inventor et al., 2022; Lyons et al., 2021; Perone, et al., 2020; Preston, 2024). Lyons et al. suggested that volunteering may combat the risks of loneliness and isolation, particularly among LGBTQ+ organizations. These researchers also found that social activities affiliated with LGBTQ+ rights were particularly beneficial to LGBTQ+OAs due to an increased sense of safety and support. This concept aligned with research on the benefits of community resilience (Herrick & Duncan, 2023; Meyer, 2015). LGBTQ+OAs may benefit from socializing with others who have experienced a shared history.

LGBTQ+OAs may join LGBTQ+-focused social organizations that promote social justice activism. Examples of these organizations include local LGBTQ+ community centers or an international chapter of Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (Cade, 2015; Old Lesbians Organizing for Change, 2024). Members of Old Lesbians Organizing for Change use education and public discourse to support LGBTQ+ rights, as well as anti-racism, anti-ageism, and economic justice. Montagno et al. (2020) expressed the importance of raising awareness of oppression, particularly aimed at those who have not experienced marginalization. Those researchers also found that participation in activism can be driven by empathy, internal drive, and personal experience with stigma and discrimination. Cummings et al. (2021) noted that LGBTQ+OAs can also be motivated to engage in activism through civic involvement. The researchers offered examples of advocating for voting and forming relationships with LGBTQ+-friendly politicians as a form of political activism for LGBTQ+ rights. Although individuals in the LGBTQ+OA community may benefit from participating in activities promoting social

connectedness and LGBTQ+ advocacy, it is important to remember that LGBTQ+OAs are unique individuals with a variety of experiences.

LGBTQ+OAs are not a homogenous group, regardless of their similar ages and sexual minority statuses. LGBTQ+OAs embody different generations, life course perspectives, and lived experiences, any of which might affect their motivation to participate in social activities (Lavender-Stott & Allen, 2022). In Cummings et al.'s (2021) study, participants acknowledged that the need for advocacy was not universal amongst the LGBTQ+ community. Participants expressed concerns about engaging in activism in isolated or rural areas. Other participants in Cummings et al.'s research experienced activism through the lens of their intersectional identities. For example, the authors noted that Jewish participants viewed LGBTQ+ discrimination through the lens of the Holocaust. African American participants questioned whether they were regularly treated poorly due to their race or sexuality. Living with multiple marginalized identities can increase stigma and discrimination, which may emphasize one's need for advocacy participation (Cummings et al., 2021; Cyrus, 2017). One pathway to social justice activism is through community music participation.

Community Music-Making

History and Background

Community music can encompass opportunities for lifelong learning, musical achievement, cultural transmission, and community-building (Leglar & Smith, 2010). Immigrants to the United States brought their musical traditions with them, which have continued in and beyond their original places of settlement. Leglar and Smith (2010) offered examples of Celtic music in the East, and African American music in the South

before the Great Migration into industrial cities. Early settlers' religious practices involved musical traditions such as psalm books and the German tradition of incorporating musical instruments into church services. Musical activities expanded in the 19th century as individuals created professional and amateur community singing societies, music schools, philharmonic orchestras, and culturally rooted music alliances.

One of these formal ensembles was the Handel and Haydn Society (HHS). A group of Boston merchants and musicians founded HHS in 1815 to promote better performance of sacred music and introduce eminent composers to the general public (Jones, 2017). Although similar societies briefly existed in New York and Philadelphia, HHS was the first orchestra and chorus with longevity. In 1821, the HHS collaborated with hymn composer Lowell Mason to publish a church music collection. Mason assumed the HHS presidency in 1827. He later co-founded the Boston Academy of Music and taught free music classes in Boston public schools. Researchers now consider Mason to be the father of music education in the United States (Jones, 1978). Mason represented an early connection between community and school music.

Community music ensembles can encompass a broad range of organizations, many of which are affiliated with school music. Veblen and Olsson (2002) classified community music groups into seven categories, three of which were directly associated with primary, secondary, and higher education. The authors offered examples of community music schools, professional ensembles that partner with schools to form youth ensembles, and collaborative ensembles between university students and community members. Community music became formally associated with school music in the United States when the Music Teacher National Association appointed a

Committee on Community Music in 1931 (Higgins, 2012). The committee recognized public schools' obligation to promote musical opportunities into adulthood. The National Music Study supported amateur music-making and described it as a "social harmonizer or a physiological let-off…there will always be an important place for the general spontaneous singing that we usually mean by community music" (p. 22). Lifelong musical learning became a component of public schools' music education goals. In addition to connections with formal music education, community music-making, and spontaneous singing have roots in activism.

Amateur, informal music-making can take shape as social justice advocacy. Political protest songs have an international history, from the 1795 anonymous composition Right of Women, considered to be the first feminist anthem (Zaggari, 1998), to the 1848 Revolution in Germany (Garratt, 2022), to the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s (Reed, 2019), to the Cold War-era Singing Revolution in Lithuania and Estonia (Šmidchens, 2014). The tradition of community music-making as protest has served as a method of support and solidarity, and can promote well-being amid turmoil (Neal, 2021). Individuals may be motivated to pursue lifelong music-making activities due to the like-minded solidarity and feelings of well-being found in musical activism.

Motivations for Community Music Participation

Community ensemble members may be motivated by enjoyable, social, lifelong learning opportunities. Researchers have utilized Stebbins' (1982) concept of "serious leisure" to investigate motivations for community music-making. Stebbins considered leisure to be an intrinsically driven activity that promotes joy, play, and fun, rather than

work, obligation, or a survival-based task. Serious leisure activities require an earnest commitment to learning a skill, achieving a goal, or developing professional standards (Southerland, 2020). One's identity is typically connected to a serious leisure activity (Coffman, 2006). For serious leisure to apply to community music-making, motivation to participate in community music-making should include three components: the benefits must exceed the costs of participation, participants must desire the benefits as rewards (including self-actualization, self-expression, and group accomplishment), and participants must perceive that their quality of life has increased (Stebbins, 1992; Veal, 2017). Individuals may experience a higher quality of life due to the social connectivity offered by music ensemble participation.

Social and musical factors have emerged as primary motivations for individuals to join a community ensemble. Higgins (2006) suggested that beginning musicians in a community ensemble were motivated by making music in a group, as well as the sense of belonging that may come from a collective group approach to an activity. Additionally, positive past musical experiences, the ensemble's repertoire, and the ensemble director's affect and skills may motivate individuals to join a community music group (Wilson, 2011). Similarly, King (2009) and Shansky (2010) found that community musicians were motivated to join their ensembles due to their love of music and their instrument, opportunities for self-expression, and desire for a musical challenge. These motivational factors, particularly musical enjoyment, self-expression, and accomplishing musical challenges, align with researchers' applications of Stebbins' (1976, 1977, 1982) serious leisure perspective (Coffman, 2006; Southerland, 2020; Veal, 2017). Once individuals

join a community ensemble, they may be motivated to stay due to the benefits of participation.

Benefits of Community Music Participation

Social motivations for participation in community music appear to be cyclical with the social benefits of participation. Higgins (2006) found that participants often join an ensemble looking for a community. Members have reported that they soon established strong friendships and meaningful relationships, which can improve social and emotional well-being (Higgins, 2012; Seligman, 2011). Social bonding has also contributed to ensemble members' sense of belonging, individual and group identity, and increased social capital (Goodrich, 2019). Additionally, members have reported an increased sense of personal fulfillment (Shansky, 2010). Regardless of the type of ensemble (e.g., instrumental, choral) or structure (e.g., informal, formal, cultural, sociopolitical), the benefits of participation in community music can result in increased well-being and quality of life (Lonsdale, 2021). Seligman (2011) hypothesized that positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) were the essential elements of well-being. The benefits of community music-making align with Seligman's model of happiness.

Community Choirs

Community choirs represent one popular setting for community music-making. The most up-to-date national demographics indicated that approximately 54 million Americans regularly sing in choruses (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019). Although millions participate in group singing, researchers have not come to a consensus on a universal definition of community chorus (Bell, 2008). The author

described community choruses as a democratic group of individuals who work together for a common purpose:

> When community choral directors allow all comers to participate in a cooperative group effort (a choir) that results in serving the larger community (in a broad sense) then we are practicing the most basic and fundamental democratic principles…. When choral conductors establish a democratic tone for their groups, they demonstrate how to mold assorted voices and abilities into a coherent body of singers, a cohesive assembly that embraces and extends the dynamic power of amateur singing into a community setting (p. 239–240).

Bell quoted Jorgensen's (1995) views on community in choir: "Community as place provides a sense of interconnectedness with others…one is interdependent with others for comfort, personal affirmation, intellectual stimulation…a host of things contributes to one's sense of personal identity and corporate cohesion" (p. 74). Choristers may view their ensemble as an equitable, supportive environment, as well as a place to create music with others.

Individuals may be motivated to participate in choir by musical and social factors. Musical motivating factors appear to fall into one of three themes: singing, the director, and repertoire. Southerland (2020) and Wilson (2011) found that choral singers were motivated to participate by their enjoyment of making music with others, improving musical skills, and undertaking musical challenges. Past and present directors have an impact on motivations for lifelong singing (Amundson, 2012; FitzStephens, 2022). The authors found that adults were more likely to continue singing from formal schooling into adulthood if they received praise and encouragement from their school music teachers.

Similarly, those who received discouragement from music teachers or parents were less likely to continue with music into adulthood (Richards & Durrant, 2003). Community choir conductors can motivate participation through their own musical mastery and coherence. Conductors have the ability to facilitate musical flow and convey musical meaning (Jansson, 2014). This skill may add to participants' enjoyment of performing and facilitating meaningful activities.

Choral participants' perceived benefits of group singing typically motivate them to continue participating in choir (Clay, 2022). Clift and Hancox (2001) categorized the benefits of group singing into four themes: physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. Participants experienced the physical benefits of improved lung capacity, respiratory health, alertness, posture, cardiovascular system, and diaphragm strength. Participants perceived emotional benefits such as raised mood, ability to express emotions, stress relief, increased enthusiasm, and improved self-confidence. The majority of participants in Clift and Hancox's study experienced social benefits of new friendships, a sense of being part of a group, and more opportunities for socialization outside of choir. Just under half of the participants experienced spiritual benefits such as a feeling of uplifting, harmony, and an indescribable positive feeling.

In addition to Clift and Hancox's (2001) foundational research, other researchers have discovered that participants have collectively experienced benefits of greater emotional self-awareness (Batt-Rawden & Anderson, 2020), sensations of affect, arousal, and affirmation (Bartleet et al., 2020), overall happiness (Clift et al., 2010), and an increased sense of optimism (Fernández-Herranz et al., 2022). Singing in a chorus offers participants a common goal of music-making, and additional commonalities may also

exist due to the ensemble's focus. Some affinity choruses have been formed to represent a specific age range, gender identity, voice part, or sexual identity. Other affinity choruses are dedicated to a particular cultural or sociopolitical identity. Individuals may find additional benefits from participating in community music with those who have similar life experiences.

Older Adults and Community Music-Making

Older Adult Participation

Participation in marginalized or underrepresented choral groups may amplify one's sense of meaning. As people age, they often face life changes including retirement, loss of loved ones, and deteriorating physical health. These changes can lead to feelings of loneliness and a dissolution of identity (Heylen, 2010). Goll et al. (2015) revealed perceived barriers to older adult participation, including illness and/or disability, a perceived lack of social opportunities, and fear of social rejection and/or exploitation. Older adults who avoid social activities may miss out on quality of life benefits.

Active engagement in community music-making can contribute to healthy aging. Creech (2014) and Creech et al. (2018) found that participation in community ensembles could encourage creativity, which could support older adults' cognitive, social, and emotional well-being. In addition to creative self-expression, group singing/music-making elders have experienced benefits including increased mental well-being, less physical pain, slowed cognitive decline, improved social connections, feelings of pride, purpose, and accomplishment, and a newfound sense of identity (Clay, 2022; Johnson et al., 2020; Kruse, 2022; Lehmberg & Fung, 2010; Noice et al., 2014). Kruse (2022) also discovered that the musical accomplishments created in affirming spaces can boost

musical confidence. The authors' findings echoed prior research on community music

benefits for participants of all ages, including achievement and increased self-confidence

(King, 2009; Shansky, 2010; Veal, 2017). Spaces that affirm older adults' identities and

self-esteem may be particularly beneficial for that population.

Instrumental Ensembles

New Horizons is an example of an affirming musical space for older adults. The

New Horizons International Music Association has established ensembles that cater to

adults 50 and older, that can serve as an entry point into music (Avery, 2017; Matherne,

2022; Tsugawa, 2009). Matherne (2022) explored the connections between participation

in a New Horizons ensemble and well-being through Seligman's (2011) PERMA

framework. New Horizons participants over age 64 perceived significantly higher levels

of positive emotions, relationships, meaning, and overall well-being compared to the

general population of older adults. Similarly, Tsugawa (2009) found that New Horizons

participants were motivated to participate due to humorous social interactions and a sense

of camaraderie, dealing with identity changes, and improved emotional and psychological

well-being. Although older adults may also have opportunities to participate in other

instrumental ensembles or music societies, the musical entry points in New Horizons

ensembles may boost older adults' confidence and feelings of belonging.

Choral Ensembles

Older adult choristers may experience an increased sense of wellness and

belonging. Clift and Hancox (2001) outlined physical, emotional, social, and spiritual

benefits of choral participation. Their research applied to singers of all ages, but benefits

may be magnified for older adults. As individuals age, they may experience physical

health concerns including breathing ailments such as chronic bronchitis or emphysema, heart disease, or nervous system diseases including tremors, Parkinson's, or Bell's palsy (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019). The researchers reported that older adult choristers perceived an improvement in health conditions since joining a choir, including mental health. Choral participation provides the opportunity for social connections, which can counteract loneliness and re-develop a sense of individual and social identity (Lamont et al., 2018). Participants have reported fewer negative emotions from late-life challenges and improved overall mental health, physical health, and quality of life (Creech et al., 2013; Lehmberg & Fung, 2010; Livesey et al., 2012; Noice et al., 2014). Older adults may experience additional choral benefits from singing in an affinity chorus—an ensemble centered around a cultural or sociopolitical identity.

Pride Choruses

History and Participation

The LGBTQ+ choral movement began in 1975 with the creation of Anna Crusis Women's Choir in Philadelphia (Balén, 2005; Vukovich, 1988). Dr. Catherine Roma formed Anna Crusis to create a space for lesbian-identified feminists fighting for social justice issues (Roma, 2018). Roma noted that the choir gave participants a place to share their vision for social change. The women's music movement grew throughout the 1970s in response to sex and gender oppression, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Gay Rights Movement. In the late 1970s, LGBTQ+ individuals formed choruses to support those impacted by anti-gay social conflict and the rising AIDS epidemic (Hilliard, 2008; Southerland, 2023). Ensemble leaders established The Sister Singers Network in 1981 to support the feminist and lesbian choral movement, and the Gay and Lesbian Association

of Choruses (GALA) in 1982 to support LGBTQ+ choruses of all sexual orientations. Today, there are roughly 200 choruses in the GALA Chorus system (GALA Choruses, 2023) and nearly 100 choruses that have been involved with the Sister Singers Network (Sister Singers Network, 2021). The LGBTQ+ choral movement has grown into an international web of Pride Choruses.

LGBTQ+ individuals may sing in Pride Choruses to get involved with social justice and create meaningful connections within the LGBTQ+ community. Pride Chorus participants have gained opportunities for socialization among like-minded individuals (Birch et al., 2024; Bird, 2017; Cates, 2020; Hudson & Egger, 2021; Latimer, 2008). The researchers found that LGBTQ+ choral participation strengthened members' sense of community support and LGBTQ+ identity. In addition to the social benefits of general community music-making, researchers have found that Pride Chorus members are highly motivated to participate in social justice activism, empathy for others, and a deeper connection to the LGBTQ+ community (Montagno et al., 2021). While a sense of belonging is a benefit of community music ensemble participation in general, belonging may be a more prominent motivator and perceived benefit of Pride Chorus participation, given the history of stigma and discrimination towards the LGBTQ+ community.

LGBTQ+ Older Adults in Pride Choruses

Researchers have studied LGBTQ+OAs, older adults in community choruses, and Pride Choruses in general, however, there is limited literature regarding LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses. In a study about LGBTQ+ choristers of all ages, Southerland (2020) noted that LGBTQ+OAs over the age of 56 scored highly on music-related motivational factors and that LGBTQ+OAs were highly motivated by "making a

difference for the LGBTQ community" (p. 152). A gap emerged in the literature regarding studies solely focused on LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses.

Theoretical Framework

PERMA

I utilized Seligman's (2011) PERMA model as a theoretical framework for this study. Researchers have found that choral members may experience heightened levels of well-being. Well-being, however, is a broad, subjective term. Seligman (2011) identified five characteristics essential to an individual's psychological well-being: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Positive Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishments/ Achievements (PERMA). Researchers have utilized the PERMA model to investigate well-being amongst a multitude of groups, including students of various ages (Kern et al., 2015; Kovich et al., 2023; Gray et al., 2020), individuals of different origins and cultures (D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2015; Ryan et al., 2019), and social groups (Ascenso et al., 2018; Joseph & Human, 2020). Researchers have also used the PERMA framework to understand well-being concerning amateur and professional music-making experiences (Forbes & Bartlett, 2020; Habron-James, 2024; Lamont et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2017; Matherne, 2022). Lamont et al. (2017) referenced PERMA in their study about choral participation later in life. The researchers found that individuals obtained positive emotions through engagement and challenges of singing. Members retained relationships amongst the choir beyond singing and achieved meaning through musical and educational accomplishments.

Researchers also discovered PERMA characteristics while studying choral participation, regardless of whether the authors utilized the framework. Positive emotion

has surfaced in studies through making social connections and enjoying the learning and performing aspects of choir (Batt-Rawden & Anderson, 2020; Cates, 2020; Clay, 2022; Ergen, 2019). Additionally, MacLachlan (2015) found that programming certain music in Pride Choruses could provoke positive emotions. These emotions may include humor, provoked by campy repertoire, and feelings of empowerment and hope, provoked by songs that call for action (MacLachlan, 2015). I was inspired by the aforementioned studies to select Seligman's (2011) PERMA framework for my research. Authors have utilized Seligman's framework to investigate how community music involvement may benefit participants. I will analyze my participants' choral motivations and benefits using the PERMA framework to assess whether Pride Chorus participation has contributed to their well-being.

Summation

LGBTQ+OAs are diverse individuals who may share compounding experiences of homophobia and ageism. This population may benefit from participation in social group activities. Community choirs can offer beneficial opportunities for creativity and socialization, which may improve LGBTQ+OAs' sense of well-being and perceived loneliness. LGBTQ+OAs may further benefit from participation in an ensemble with supportive, identity-affirming peers, such as a Pride Chorus. Through this research, I will examine LGBTQ+OAs' motivations for and benefits of participating in a Pride Chorus. I will utilize key research terms in the following ways:

- *Motivations:* individuals' reasons for initially joining a choir.
- *Benefits*: individuals' perceived positive outcomes of choral membership, which often contribute to members' continued participation.

- *Pride Chorus:* a choir in which members are united by sexual minority status and/or LGBTQ+ allyship.

- *LGBTQ+:* an umbrella term meant to represent the largely diverse array of gender and sexual identities outside of hetero- or cis-normativity. While this abbreviation does not cover all possible descriptors, it is regularly used in research.

Purpose

Participation in creative social organizations with like-minded people, such as a Pride Chorus, may improve LGBTQ+OAs' quality of life. There is, however, a gap in the literature regarding LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses. Understanding motivations for participation may help directors provide the best possible choral experience (Avery, 2017). Individuals at the intersection of both LGBTQ+ sexual orientation and older adulthood may have a shared history and an elevated need for social connectivity. The music education profession may benefit from a fundamental understanding of this group of singers to best serve and retain singers. I will research LGBTQ+OAs' personal demographics, the makeup of their Pride Chorus, and their musical backgrounds, along with their motivations and perceived benefits of choral participation in Pride Choruses. The purpose of this study is to explore LGBTQ+OAs' motivations for joining Pride Choruses, along with their self-perceived benefits of participation, to determine how choir may serve their unique needs. My research will be guided by the following questions:

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?

2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?

3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

4. What relationships exist among LGBTQ+OAs' musical experiences, their motivations to initially join Pride Choruses, and LGBTQ+OAs' self-perceived benefits from participating in Pride Choruses?

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

In this chapter, I document my synthesis of the related research on LGBTQ+ older adults (LGBTQ+OAs), community music making, older adults' participation in community music ensembles, and community choral singing within the context of Pride Choruses. I begin by outlining existing research on LGBTQ+OAs' lived experiences. Next, I summarize research regarding the history of community music-making, along with motivational factors, perceived benefits, and functions of community choirs. I then explore studies on older adults' participation in community music to review the unique motivations and benefits of this population. Finally, I review existing literature on the background of Pride Choruses, as well as the unique motivations and benefits of this population, and LGBTQ+ musical activism.

LGBTQ+ Older Adults

LGBTQ+ community members have expressed needs related specifically to aging and wellness. As of 2023, there were over 2.7 million LGBTQ+ older Americans, almost 7% of adults over 50 (Cummings et al., 2021; Flores & Conron, 2023; Miller, 2023). Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. (2017) and Fredriksen-Golden and Kim (2017) estimated that there will be 5 million LGBTQ+OAs in America by the year 2060, and Javier and Oswald (2019) suggested this level of growth could occur by 2030. Members of the rapidly growing LGBTQ+ community have a higher risk of physical and mental health disparities as they age compared to their heterosexual peers (Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2017). The author noted that an individual's mental health may impact their physical health due to increased stress and the likelihood of health-risk behaviors, such as smoking or substance use. LGBTQ+OAs of color, transgender LGBTQ+OAs, and LGBTQ+OAs of

low socioeconomic status were shown to have further magnified health risks (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2013; Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2017; Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2017). Similarly, McCabe et al. (2010) found that substance use disorders were nearly four times greater in lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults who experienced sexual, gender, and race-based discrimination. Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. (2013, 2017) found that transgender LGBTQ+OAs experienced poor health outcomes due to fear of accessing health services and a lack of social support. Fredriksen-Goldsen (2013) suggested that despite health disparities in the LGBTQ+OA community, resilient individuals may experience positive physical and mental health outcomes. LGBTQ+OAs may have had to develop resilience to combat systematic inequality in addition to health concerns.

LGBTQ+OAs have faced economic inequity in addition to physical and mental disparities. In two separate studies by Fredriksen-Goldsen (2017) and a team of researchers led by Fredriksen-Goldsen (2019) discovered that gay, lesbian, and bisexual older adults were more than twice as likely to have a college or advanced degree and nearly twice as likely to hold a job, yet made equal or lower incomes than heterosexual older adults. The researchers of both studies suggested that LGBTQ+OAs may have an elevated need for full-time employment due to experiencing salary and employment discrimination throughout their adult lives. The United States did not prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation until 2020 with *Bostock v. Clayton County* (Human Rights Campaign, 2023). Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. (2019) suggested that employment discrimination may have fostered economic inequities among LGBTQ+ individuals. Despite having higher levels of education, LGBTQ+OAs may

have been required to postpone their retirement due to elevated rates of economic

injustice.

Historic Events in the LGBTQ+ Community

LGBTQ+OAs have lived through historically significant events. These historical

milestones include the Stonewall Riots and the beginning of the human

immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) crisis.

Whether individuals experienced these types of events personally or through shared

histories, the impact on the broader LGBTQ+ community was profound. Carter (2010)

outlined harsh anti-homosexual laws in America from the mid-1900s with penalties

including professional license revoking, jail time, commitment to a mental institution,

and castration. Carter explained that in the 1960s, New York City had the largest

LGBTQ+ population in the US, as well as the highest level of systematic criminalization

of LGBTQ+ individuals. New York City police officers entrapped and arrested over 100

gay men each week for "homosexual solicitation" (p. 18). Despite increased police

presence, the LGBTQ+ community perceived gay bars as one of the few places they

could safely express their sexuality (Hildebrand, 2023; Hilder, 2022; Kuhn, 2011). In

1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn, a Greenwich Village gay bar in New York City.

Patrons fought back instead of complying with the police (Kuhn, 2011). A five-day riot

ensued, led by Marsha P. Johnson and Silvia Rivera, two transgender women of color

(Jenkins, 2019). Gay Rights activist Craig Rodwell wrote that Stonewall would "go down

in history as the first time that thousands of Homosexual men and women went into the

streets to protest the intolerable situation which has existed in New York City for many

years" (Kuhn, 2011, p. 76). Researchers have considered Stonewall the start of the Gay

Rights Movement (Bates-Livesay, 2020; Carter, 2010; Hilder, 2023; Kaiser, 2019; Kuhn, 2011). Halkitis (2019) framed the Stonewall Riots and gay liberation as catalysts for protesting the government's dismissal of the HIV/AIDS crisis. The Gay Rights Movement continued to grow as the LGBTQ+ community began to face a deadly epidemic.

The HIV/AIDS crisis has impacted the LGBTQ+ community since the early 1980s. Ken Horne, a San Francisco resident, was diagnosed with the first recognized case of AIDS in the US in 1981 (Ayala & Spieldenner, 2021). The authors found that transgender individuals, sex workers, people who used drugs, and gay and bisexual men faced the highest death rates early in the epidemic. While AIDS was initially thought of as "a white gay men's disease" (Patton, 1988, p. 109), researchers have noted that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals became disproportionately affected by the ongoing epidemic (Perez, 2022; U.S. Statistics, 2024; Wilson et al., 2016). These researchers stated that the BIPOC community and other historically marginalized groups were impacted by a lack of resources, drug-prevention education, and preventative care throughout the HIV/AIDS crisis. LGBTQ+OAs have been impacted by the high death toll of HIV/AIDS in their community, as well as long-term stigma and discrimination.

Stigma, Discrimination, Resilience, and Antifragility

Minoritized groups such as LGBTQ+ communities may experience poor health outcomes due to elevated stress. Meyer (2003) established the minority stress model, through which he posited that higher levels of social stigma, prejudice, and victimization could contribute to poor health among LGBTQ communities. Inventor et al. (2022) used the minority stress model to assess LGBTQ+OAs' unique mental health needs following

the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The researchers suggested that LGBTQ+OAs may have been marginalized from social interactions due to society's fears of HIV/AIDS. Similarly, Kahana and Kahana (2001) suggested that older adults living with HIV/AIDS have experienced diminished quality of life outcomes. These lowered outcomes may be due to losing friendships because of the stigma surrounding the disease, the authors wrote. Additionally, the authors noted that individuals may lose their ability to live independently, which could further contribute to a poor quality of life. LGBTQ+ communities have been affected by the dangers of the life-threatening disease, as well as mental health disparities due to HIV/AIDS stigma.

Older members of the LGBTQ+ community have faced lifelong systematic discrimination which may contribute further to mental health disparities. Laws against homosexuality existed in America until 2003, when the US Supreme Court made same-sex sexual activity legal in every state and US territory with *Lawrence v. Texas* (Gilkis, 2018). Anti-LGBTQ+ legislation resurged in the 2020s with transgender healthcare restrictions, school curriculum censorship, and religious exemptions that would allow for unequal treatment of LGBTQ+ individuals (ACLU, 2025). GLAAD (2023) detailed state bills that would ban gender-affirming treatment for transgender patients and inflict criminal penalties on doctors, parents, and/or guardians for supporting or providing gender-affirming care to transgender youth. The authors also noted state laws that prohibited conversations in schools about sexual orientation or gender identity, along with books by or about LGBTQ+ or BIPOC minorities. There were 456 bills targeting LGBTQ+ rights in the US as of February 2025 (ACLU, 2025). LGBTQ+OAs may have also faced lifelong social discrimination in the forms of anti-gay religious rhetoric, family

rejection, harassment, conversion therapy, and victimization with violence (Bratt et al., 2023; Preston, 2024). Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. (2017) noted that LGBTQ+OAs may have had to hide their LGBTQ+ identity in various contexts throughout their lives to avoid discrimination. LGBTQ+ individuals may have encountered systematic and social discrimination throughout their life course.

LGBTQ+OAs have experienced discrimination-related stressors regarding end-of-life care. Researchers have found that LGBTQ+OAs may experience fears of aging alone (Cummings et al., 2021). One of Cummings et al.'s participants expressed their anxiety after the loss of their partner: "I don't wanna be alone and that worries me because I am alone. I don't have any close friends; Bill was my best friend. Now I'm trying to establish friendships and at 75, I'm finding it very difficult" (p. 518). Miller (2023) and Wilson et al. (2018) echoed Cummings et al.'s (2021) research, noting that LGBTQ+OAs expressed high levels of stress and anxiety regarding homophobic care workers or peers in long-term care facilities. Wilson et al. (2018) reviewed participants' concerns about faith-based long-term care facilities, a lack of autonomy and sexual expression, returning to the closet, HIV/AIDS stigma, and anti-trans healthcare workers. One participant noted,

> [F]or transgender individuals…you're gonna have workers finding somebody coming in whose physical body doesn't match their gender identity, and I see that as...a source of horrendous problems...as it is right now for transgender individuals, life is most difficult (p. 27).

LGBTQ+OAS may have faced a compounded level of stress from past discriminatory experiences as well as future concerns for the remainder of their lives.

All individuals have a variety of intersecting identities including their age, race, class, sexual orientation, and gender that inform their worldview and experiences. Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality to describe how an individual's different social identities can impact their experiences with privilege and discrimination. Rivas-Koehl et al. (2023) described intersectionality as the idea that "one's social identities do not exist in isolation but instead interact and conflict with each other in a hegemonic society that oppresses some identities and gives power and privilege to dominant ones" (p. 712) LGBTQ+OAs represent an intersectionality, as they have potentially faced both homophobia and ageism (Wilson et al., 2018). Similar to intersectionality, multiple minority stress refers to the discriminatory experiences of an individual who experiences intersectionality with two or more marginalized groups (Balsam et al., 2011). Rivas-Koehl et al. (2023) noted a difference between the concepts of intersectionality and multiple minorities, in that multiple minority stress theory has considered different identity statuses as separate, rather than intersecting dimensions. Cyrus (2017) applied the minority stress theory to LGBTQ+ people of color and found that individuals within both marginalized groups may face magnified discrimination due to both homophobia and racism. In another example of multiple marginalization, Guest et al. (2023) documented rural LGBTQ+OAs' additional challenges involving healthcare access, service delivery, and social support. With the concepts of both intersectionality and multiple minority stress, factors such as age, race, and location may impact LGBTQ+ individuals' stress levels and perception of support.

Researchers have argued that LGBTQ+ communities have experienced collectively traumatic events throughout generations. Collective trauma refers to shared

events that have a lasting impact on communities (Kelly et al., 2020). The HIV/AIDS

crisis, systematic discrimination, and historical violence are examples of collective

trauma in the LGBTQ+ community (Bower et al., 2021; Kelly et al., 2020). The authors

of both studies gave examples of historical violence in LGBTQ+ communities including

the 1978 high-profile murder of Harvey Milk, the first openly elected gay official in

California. The authors also discussed the mass shooting at the Orlando gay nightclub

Pulse in 2016, in which 49 primarily LGBTQ+ Latinx individuals were killed.

LGBTQ+OAs may have developed a sense of resilience to cope with collective trauma

and intersectional struggles.

LGBTQ+ resilience, or the capacity to withstand and recover quickly from

challenges, may be a response to life-long stigma, discrimination, and collective trauma.

Bower et al. (2021) explored LGBTQ+OAs' lived experiences with resilience after

experiencing the HIV/AIDS epidemic and homophobic religious convictions. Andriote

(2017) narrated his experiences of resilience as a gay man diagnosed with HIV in 2005.

He eschewed the idea of victimization despite concerns about health and social

acceptance. Andriote interviewed Brian de Vries who expanded,

> [A]s gay men, as survivors, the victims' story is one of discontinuity, how we're
>
> not what we 'should' be because of all these things. The victory story is one that
>
> sees the ways we can grow from them. It provides hope, direction, and allows you
>
> to learn from the experiences. (p. 249).

Researchers have examined resilience in LGBTQ+ populations in connection with family

acceptance, social support, and community engagement (Erickson-Schroth & Glaeser,

2017). Preston (2024) and Weinhardt et al. (2021) connected high levels of resilience to

LGBTQ+ individuals' self-esteem and quality of life. Resilience has served as a recovery response for many in the LGBTQ+OA community.

Similar to resilience, antifragility has enabled individuals to thrive in the face of adversity. Taleb (2012) coined the term to describe how individuals and systems may be able to grow, rather than simply recover from hardships. Long (2021), a gay Christian, described his experience of developing an antifragile mindset. In his narrative, Long noted that LGBTQ+OAs initially inspired this mindset by encouraging him to prioritize his peace and accept discomfort. While some LGBTQ+OAs have developed a sense of resilience or antifragility in the face of hardships, others felt unable to cope with the long-term effects of stigma and discrimination (Van Wagenen et al., 2013). Substance abuse is one example of a negative coping mechanism. As previously explained, McCabe et al. (2010) found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults were four times as likely to be diagnosed with a substance abuse disorder if they had reported high levels of discrimination. LGBTQ+OAs may also experience loneliness and social isolation instead of or alongside resilience or antifragility, resulting in a heightened need for social connectivity.

LGBTQ+OAs' Need for Social Connectivity

LGBTQ+OAs have experienced heightened levels of loneliness and isolation due to a history of discrimination, lack of familial support, and decreased availability of identity-affirming social connections. Preston (2024) conducted a systematic review of quality of life among American LGBTQ+OAs and found that LGBTQ+OAs may lack family support. Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. (2011) reported that over half of LGBTQ+OAs in their study lacked companionship and felt isolated. Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. (2013)

and Wilkens (2015) found that gay and lesbian individuals were more likely to be single, live alone, and be childless than heterosexuals. Participants in Wilkens' study also believed that loneliness would increase with age as mobility and accessibility issues might arise. The AARP (2018) supported Wilkens' research, indicating that 76% of LGBTQ+OAs were concerned about future isolation. Similarly, Cummings et al. (2021) found that LGBTQ+OAs' social connections decreased with age, particularly connections with those who affirmed their LGBTQ+ identity. LGBTQ+OA may experience long-term isolation from communities, such as religious organizations. Rasmussen (2022) interviewed LGBTQ+ self-identified "Exvangelicals," who had left their unaffirming Evangelical or Pentecostal communities. Participants described feelings of internalized homophobia, fear, and inauthenticity. A former church leader was removed from his position noted, "I didn't know what depression felt like until I was removed from leadership in the church" (p. 17). LGBTQ+OAs may benefit from participation in identity-affirming programs that provide opportunities for social interaction with other LGBTQ+ adults.

LGBTQ+OAs can benefit from making meaningful social connections. Perone et al. (2020) explored a telephone-buddy program in which volunteers were matched with LGBTQ+OAs to create social connections. The researchers determined that LGBTQ+OAs could benefit from making meaningful connections within LGBTQ+ communities. Cummings et al. (2021) referred to this connection as the "desire to feel connected to other people as part of a network that allowed them opportunities to participate in a range of meaningful social activities and to experience a sense of comradery with others who have a shared history" (p. 515). Meaningful connections may

lead to increased agency and resilience among LGBTQ+OAs and may lessen the impact of traumatic events such as HIV/AIDS or lifelong discrimination (Perone et al., 2020). As individuals in the LGBTQ+ community age, participation in group activities can help counteract loneliness or isolation.

Social Group Participation for LGBTQ+OAs

LGBTQ+OAs may participate in affinity group activities to make meaningful connections with the LGBTQ+ community. Perone et al. (2020) suggested that older adults who exist in a community that has experienced unique historical trauma may benefit from focusing on connections within their community. Researchers have highlighted social ventures including volunteering, social justice activism, and engaging with the arts. In line with Perone et al.'s (2020) study on LGBTQ+OA telephone-buddy social connections, Lyons et al. (2021) found that volunteering for LGBTQ+ organizations may be linked to greater LGBTQ+ community connectedness for older gay men and lesbian women. Gates and Dentato (2020) also found that LGBTQ+OAs who participated in volunteering reported enhanced well-being, positive self-identity, socialization and engagement with others, and increased LGBTQ+ activism. Historically, members of the LGBTQ+ community have participated in activism for LGBTQ+ rights and social justice (Montagno et al., 2021). These researchers studied activism motivations for LGBTQ+ adults up to 73 years old. The authors' findings aligned with previously discussed LGBTQ+OA research, in that social engagement is a primary motivator and benefit of participating in social group activities (e.g. Gates & Dentato, 2020; Lyons et al., 2021; Perone et al., 2020). Participating in LGBTQ+-affirming social group activities

can be beneficial for LGBTQ+OAs' mental well-being, however, LGBTQ+OAs have reported barriers to participation.

LGBTQ+OAs may encounter challenges in participating in social activities including financial, health, and safety concerns. Perone et al. (2020) discussed structural barriers that LGBTQ+OAs experienced regarding volunteer programs. These researchers found that low socioeconomic status, unstable housing, and health concerns could limit LGBTQ+OAs from group participation, particularly those who were transgender or BIPOC. Similarly, Lyons et al. (2021) suggested that poor health and well-being could be a potential barrier to LGBTQ+OAs participating in volunteerism. The authors also expressed participants' concerns about sexual identity disclosure and a lack of diversity within organizations. Regarding activism participation, Montagno et al. (2021) echoed Perone et al.'s (2020) and Lyons et al.'s (2021) findings and discovered additional barriers. Almost 60% of participants reported that they did not participate in social justice activism due to concerns about their safety and others' disapproval, a perceived lack of opportunity, a lack of interest, and disagreement with their perceived attitudes toward activist groups. Montagno et al. (2021) reported that some participants condemned divisive practices and aimed to promote solidarity and unity. LGBTQ+OAs may feel more comfortable participating in social group activities that are financially flexible, offer health accommodations, and emphasize safety and support.

Participation in artistic activities can promote connectedness and unity between LGBTQ+ communities. Austin et al. (2022) investigated transgender and gender-diverse young people who were either a person of color, an immigrant, or living in a rural setting. The authors found that participants perceived their art as a form of authentic self-

expression, a coping mechanism, a social connector, and a pathway toward agency. Houseal et al. (2013) studied an LGBTQ+ intergenerational community theatre project. Participants reported that the actors and audience members confronted ageist stereotypes and felt affirmation in their LGBTQ+ identity regardless of age. In both artistic activities, LGBTQ+ individuals gained feelings of social bonding, identity affirmation, and agency, all of which can improve quality of life. Perone et al. (2020) noted the importance of intergenerational support in groups with a shared history, such as the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+OAs may benefit from participation in social, artistic, LGBTQ+-affirming groups.

LGBTQ+OAs have experienced shared history, collective trauma, and resilience among their communities. Throughout their life courses, LGBTQ+OAs have likely encountered direct or indirect effects of the Stonewall riots, the Gay Rights Movement, and the HIV/AIDS crisis. LGBTQ+OAs may have grown up dealing with systematic discrimination and social stigma, which can negatively impact LGBTQ+OAs' mental and physical well-being. LGBTQ+OAs can feel an increased sense of loneliness and isolation due to a history of discrimination, lack of familial support, and decreased availability of identity-affirming social connections. Social group activities such as volunteering, social justice activism, and artistic engagement. Among these artistic activities, LGBTQ+OAs may participate in community music-making. Community music has a rich history and unique creative benefits that merit further exploration.

Community Music-Making

International Overview

Researchers have considered community music to be a broad, diverse, and fluid area of study. Veblen et al. (2013) compiled research on international community music origins and current practices in countries in North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. Cottrell and Impey (2018) conducted case studies in South Africa to gain insight into community music and ethnomusicology. The researchers found that community music projects built upon and engaged with local public schools, enhanced community well-being through individual and collective musical development, and affected social transformation in disadvantaged communities. While the literature contains a wide variety of community music origins and practices, authors have chosen to focus on specific settings rather than attempt to complete a comprehensive history.

Community Music Background in the United States

Community music-makers in the US drew from multicultural religious practices and places of origin. Leglar and Smith (2010) provided the most in-depth history of American community music-making that I encountered during this review. To summarize, the researchers suggested that North American music-making likely began approximately 50,000 years ago with Indigenous people, however, there is limited research on Native American music prior to the 1600s. Early European settlers and enslaved Africans influenced musical norms, and trends in Native American music have continued outside of the mainstream. Settlers' religious practices informed much of the colonies' music. Instructors used religious texts as early music teaching material, and German immigrants incorporated orchestral instruments into worship services.

Community musicians began to develop secular music opportunities in the mid-1700s.

Settlers promoted European classical music through the creation of the Collegium

Musicum in Pennsylvania (1744), the Boston Phil-Harmonic Society (1809), The Handel

and Haydn Society in Boston (1815), and the German Singing Society in Philadelphia

(1835). Immigrants continued to settle and share their music in various parts of the

country. Leglar and Smith offered the example of African American[1] spirituals and

gospel music in the South. As African Americans spread to industrial cities following the

Great Migration, Black musicians expanded their sound into jazz and early rock genres.

Leglar and Smith found that Kentucky musicians popularized religious revival songs in

1800, which often contained popular folk melodies. Publishers printed these songs into

hymnals, and almost 50 years later, the Sacred Harp organization utilized these hymns for

community singing. Throughout the 1800s and 1900s, ethnic-based music organizations

were formed, including the Northeastern Sangebund of America (1850), the Polish

Singers Alliance of America (1889), the Norwegian Singers Association of America

(1891), and the Jewish Music Alliance (1925). Community musical, cultural, or religious

affinity organizations may represent early music education.

 Researchers have discovered overlap in the areas of community music and formal

school music education. In 1717, European immigrant John Tufts organized singing

schools to promote musical literacy in the church. He was considered by some to be the

first music educator. Lowell Mason was also a prominent musical figure, known widely

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[1]Although the authors contextualized African Americans as immigrants, others have argued that researchers should utilize the terms and implications of "involuntary" or "forced" migration when discussing Black peoples' origins in the US (Baily & Collyer, 2006; Monson, 1990). Goessling (2018) agreed with this concept. The author utilized critical race theory (CRT) to argue for transparency and counterstorying in higher education research.

today as the father of music education (Jones, 1978). Mason served as the president of the Handel and Haydn Society in 1827 and volunteered to teach singers who needed instruction (Perkins, 1941). He left the society six years later to co-found the Boston Academy of Music in 1833 and focus on teaching public school music lessons. Early music educators created other community music and singing schools in the late 1800s and early 1900s for the purposes of teaching shape note notation, preserving European folk and art music, and improving congressional singing (Humphreys, 2016; Leglar & Smith, 2010; Veblen & Olsson, 2002). Veblen and Olsson expanded upon the National Guild of Community Schools (NGCC). Many community music schools were affiliated with NGCC, which promoted arts accessibility and advocacy, and offered music education in the pedagogical styles of Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze, and Suzuki. The respective creators of these methods encouraged developmentally appropriate music-making, musical aptitude, learning through play, and student-led experiences (Mabini, 2024). Music educators utilized these models as the basis for public school music instruction.

Once public school officials recognized the physiological values of lifelong community music-making, they promoted musical activities that could continue throughout the life course. Community music became formally associated with compulsory school music education in 1931 (Higgins, 2012). The Music Teacher National Association appointed a Committee on Community Music which recognized public schools' obligation to promote musical opportunities that were likely to continue into adulthood. The National Music Study supported amateur music-making and described it as a "social harmonizer or a physiological let-off…there will always be an important place for the general spontaneous singing that we usually mean by community

music" (p. 22). Modern community music facilitators continue to champion the concept of social harmony through inclusion, community responsibility, excellence, creativity, diversity, and music-making across the lifespan (Bartleet & Higgins, 2018). Mullen and Deane (2018) agreed that inclusion and accessibility are major components of community music. Koopman (2007) described the focus of community music as authentic learning through intrinsic and social motivations. In addition to social, religious, cultural, and school music education, individuals have often engaged in group music-making to respond to socio-political events.

Community Music as Social Justice

Communities have historically employed music as a function of social justice activism. Internationally, individuals have used music as a form of protest, from the 1795 anonymous composition Right of Women, considered to be the first feminist anthem (Zaggari, 1998), to the 1848 Revolution in Germany (Garratt, 2022), and the Cold War-era Singing Revolution in Lithuania and Estonia (Šmidchens, 2014). Additionally, members of labor, peace, social, and civil rights movements, as well as grassroots organizations, have utilized music as a political tool intended to reinforce awareness of social injustices in the US (Berger, 2000). For example, the Freedom Singers of the Civil Rights Movement used their voices as a means of communication, symbolic representation, societal integration, and education about racial inequality (Rose, 2007). In addition to singing about civil rights across the country, members of the Freedom Singers registered people to vote and organized meetings to establish local leadership. Neal (2021) explained how organizations like the Freedom Singers used music to further political agendas in nonviolent protests and to provide fellow protesters with emotional

comfort and endurance. The author quoted Bernice Johnson Reagon, an original Freedom Singer: "The music doesn't change governments. Some bureaucrat or some politician isn't going to be changed by some music he hears. But we can change people—individual people. The people can change governments" (p. 14). Similarly, Shonekan (2018) claimed that student activists in the Black Lives Matter movement turned to their generation's music for inspiration, motivation, and spiritual upliftment as they fought for their community's rights. Communities have utilized music for nonviolent justice worldwide.

Community music, social justice, and community responsibility also have been connected with love (Silverman, 2009). The author argued that community music programs are sometimes guided by fellowship and community service ethics, particularly aimed at individuals who are socially or economically disenfranchised. Silverman was informed by hooks' (2000) theory that love is an action, and choosing to care for community and humanity is integral to social justice. Higgins (2016) explored this concept through what he referred to as hospitable music making: "a response from the call of the Other and is sparked into life through an encounter of a promise toward justice," (p. 452). The researcher offered hospitable music-making examples of a music program for disadvantaged youth in Taikang, China, and a participatory music-making course in a men's correctional institute in Boston, Massachusetts. Similarly, Boal-Palheiros (2018) studied a musical intervention for adults experiencing homelessness in Portugal. These program facilitators aimed to use music to encourage community connection and bolster participants' agency and self-esteem.

Benefits of Participating in Community Music

Participants in group music-making have expressed heightened levels of agency and self-esteem, as well as social factors that may contribute to their overall quality of life. Odendaal and Hodges (2021) considered social and personal benefits of musical engagement throughout the life course. The authors, along with Parker (2014, 2018) and Freer (2015) suggested that adolescents and young adults may develop intergroup solidarity while making music with others. Additionally, adolescents may experience identity formation and emotional regulation through group music participation (McFerran, 2019). Adult music-makers may also experience continued identity formation and intergroup solidarity (Boal-Palheiros, 2018; Goodrich, 2019; Odendaal & Hodges, 2021), along with higher levels of agency due to the ability to have more control over when, where, and how they participate in community music (Odenhaal & Hodges, 2021). The authors noted that when adults play music, they have higher levels of concentration and engagement, which may contribute to a state of flow. Heo et al. (2010) described flow as a psychological state in which people are intensely absorbed in an activity. Allison et al. (2020) suggested that people who experience musical flow are likely to develop new musical skills and increased self-esteem, along with higher levels of psychological well-being, lower levels of stress, and overall improved quality of life.

Communities as a whole may benefit from group music-making. Murray and Lamont (2012) found that community musicians reported feelings of community pride and identity, and believed that their participation in musical activities may develop a positive community narrative. Additionally, the authors noted that community residents may gain satisfaction from their neighbors' achievements. Community music-makers

may also enjoy the feeling of giving back to their community through positively engaging with school children and nursing home-bound elders during traveling concerts (Hallam et al., 2012). Given the benefits of community music-making, researchers have championed music participation throughout the lifespan.

Community Choir Background

Much of the research in community choral singing aligned with Leglar and Smith (2010), as previously discussed in greater detail. The authors gave examples of cultural and ethnic-affinity choral ensembles that American immigrants began to form in the 1800s, including the Handel and Haydn Society and the German Singing Society. Community singers received additional opportunities to perform with style-specific ensembles such as the Sweet Adelines and barbershop quartets. Sacred Harp singing was another popular activity for amateur singers. Cobb (2004) explained that the Sacred Harp tradition was not for the purpose of performance, but rather a member-led group singing ritual. Participants may gain a sense of autonomy, ownership, and pride in singer-centered rehearsals (Brown, 2024). These benefits may motivate individuals to continue choir participation.

Community choir participation is often a lifelong endeavor. Myers (2012) believed that there should be a seamless transition from school music to participation in an adult community choir. Additionally, Myers believed music educators should nurture musical learning and growth with musicians of all ages. FitzStephens (2022) found that school choir singers were likely to continue singing into adulthood if they received support and encouragement from their music teachers. Today, over 54 million Americans regularly sing in a chorus (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019).

Researchers have investigated what prompts this abundance of individuals to devote their time, talents, and/or financial dues to choral participation.

Motivations for Choral Participation

Individuals have been motivated to participate in serious leisure activities. Stebbins (2020) evolved his serious leisure perspective (SLP) for over 50 years. Stebbins (1976) began to develop the SLP in 1973 by studying amateur classical music musicians. Stebbins (1977) aimed to explain the relationships between leisure time, motivation, and the increasing professionalism of hobbies including sports, arts, and entertainment. The author argued that serious leisure activities have social components shaped by psychological, cultural, and historical conditions (1982, 2015). Southerland (2020) outlined three components an activity must have in order to be considered serious leisure: the benefits of participation must exceed perceived costs; the participant must be interested in the perceived benefits as rewards; and the participant perceives participation as improving their overall quality of life. These components may explain individuals' motivations to participate in community choir.

Individuals' motivations for joining a community choir may include intrinsic, aesthetic, musical, spiritual, social, and emotional factors. Coffman (2002) categorized factors of participation into three themes: personal, musical, and social motivations. These themes were represented in much of this research in this area. Redman (2016) found that singers who participated in auditioned community choirs were primarily motivated by the aesthetic qualities of music. Regardless of audition requirements, choristers who continued to sing from high school into adulthood were motivated by the intrinsic (personal) value of choral participation and their attitude toward music

(Amundson, 2012; Sichivitsa, 2007). Along with these factors, FitzStephens (2022) also discovered that participants were motivated by personal factors of self-expression, growth, feelings of confidence and achievement, healing, and teacher encouragement. Choral singers perceived personal enjoyment as a major motivational factor (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019; Wilson, 2011), as well as the musical factors of singing, the repertoire, or conductor affect (Wilson, 2011). Similarly, Rensink-Hoff (2009) identified the joy of singing and conductor leadership as two primary motivators. Singers have also reported social connectivity as a major motivating factor for choral participation (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019; Rensink-Hoff, 2009; Sichivitsa, 2007). Redman (2016), however, found that participants in auditioned community choirs ranked social motivations lower than aesthetic, educational, emotional, and spiritual factors. While participants initially join choir due to these broad personal, musical, and social motivations (Coffman, 2002), they may choose to stay due to self-perceived benefits.

Benefits of Choral Participation

Group singing participants have experienced physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social benefits. Grunwald Associates LLC and Chorus America (2019), Clift and Hancox (2001), Livesey et al. (2012), and Fernández-Herranz et al. (2022) have explored choristers' holistic experiences and outcomes across ages, genders, races, places of origin, socioeconomic statuses, and well-being statuses. In addition to physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social benefits, the majority of singers in the US believed that they were more open-minded and accepting of diversity since joining a choir and are more likely to be involved in their community (Grunwald Associates LLC

& Chorus America, 2019). Overall, Fernández-Herranz et al. (2022) found that choral participants have perceived a more positive sense of well-being and quality of life.

Physical Benefits. Long-term choral participation may improve individuals' pain levels, respiratory and cardiovascular health, and cognitive abilities. Irons et al. (2019) reviewed the literature on the impacts of group singing on those with chronic pain and health conditions. The authors indicated that post-singing intervention, individuals perceived lower levels of pain intensity (Clements-Cortes, 2015; Morrison et al., 2013; Pongan, 2017; Tamplin et al., 2013) and lower levels of pain interference with daily activities (Morrison et al., 2013; Pongan et al., 2017; Stegemoller, 2017). Moss et al. (2018), Clift and Hancox (2001), and Clift et al. (2010) found that choral participants frequently reported improved breath control and respiratory health. Clift and Hancox (2001) and Moss et al. (2018) also noted that participants perceived improvement in their cognitive alertness, posture, and cardiovascular health. Additionally, Grunwald Associates LLC and Chorus America (2019) reported that choral participants perceived improvement in ailments including voice disorders, COPD or chronic lung disease, asthma, and high blood pressure. Along with improved physical health, choral participants have reported higher levels of mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual Benefits. Improved mental health and well-being are prominent benefits of choral participation. Batt-Rawden and Anderson (2020), Clift and Hancox (2001), Clift et al. (2010), Dingle et al. (2013), Judd and Pooley (2014), and Linnemann et al. (2017) reported that the majority of participants felt an increased sense of positivity, joy, and overall well-being from choral singing. Additionally, the researchers found that participants experienced less stress and tension. Participants in

Clift and Hancox's (2001) study also noted that choral participation felt therapeutic. Researchers have echoed this concept in studies centered on singing as mental health recovery (Bartleet, et al. 2023; Shakespeare & Whieldon, 2018; Williams et al., 2018). Schladt et al. (2017) studied physiological relationships between mood, salivary oxytocin, and cortisol concentrations before, during, and after singing. They found that participants' happiness increased after singing, and worry, sadness, and stress decreased.

Researchers have referred to specific mental and emotional benefits as spiritual benefits of choral participation. Clift and Hancox (2001) organized some benefits as both emotional and spiritual, including positive feelings, therapeutic feelings, and lessened stress. Examples of strictly spiritual benefits included singing being spiritually uplifting, having an intangible effect, and enhancing one's religious or spiritual beliefs. The highest strictly spiritual benefit was the perception that singing was spiritually uplifting. Moss et al. (2018) did not define 'spiritual' in their study, however, participants reported that singing can be spiritually uplifting, life-affirming, and connect at a heart or energy level. The authors also categorized stress reduction and expressing creativity as spiritual benefits. Although Dingle et al. (2017) did not ask participants about spiritual benefits, a few participants reported feeling a spiritual impact while singing in choir. In addition to spiritually impactful benefits, choir participants have experienced improved social connectivity.

Social Benefits. Social benefits of choir membership are interconnected with mental well-being. Choral participants have expanded their social circle, made new friends, perceived more social support, and felt an increased sense of belonging and inclusion (Clift & Hancox, 2001; Clift et al., 2010; Livesey et al., 2012; Moss et al.,

2018). Grunwald and Associates LLC and Chorus America (2019) found that choral

participation can combat loneliness among singers of all ages, however, a significant

percentage of older choral singers felt less isolated, less likely to be left out, and were

more likely to feel contentment with their friendships and relationships. Similarly, Avery

(2017) and Moss et al. (2018) discovered that adult community choir participants felt as

though they gained an extended family among fellow choristers. Australian school choir

participants reported improved psychosocial well-being due to the positive relationships

formed within the choir and community collaborators (Lee et al., 2017). In addition to

forming positive relationships, Gul (2018) found that choir participation could develop

participants' worldviews and appreciation of different cultural values. In contrast with

much of the research on the social benefits of choir, Linnemann et al. (2017) reported that

amateur school choir participants did not associate positive mood benefits with social

contact within the ensemble. The authors suggested that social contacts may be more

relevant to participants who choose to join a choir for the purpose of social connection.

Social benefits of group singing may also contribute to a sense of social identity.

Social Identity and the Social Cure Approach. The aspects of an individual's

self-concept that are derived from group membership are referred to as one's social

identity. Parker (2014) examined social identity theory through studying high school

choristers' identity development. The author's findings reflected Tajfel's (1978) social

identity theory, in that singing with others over time can contribute to a strong in-group

identity and a sense of belonging. Group members can develop a positive sense of social

identity from meaning, social support, and agency, which may lead to positive health

benefits, or a 'social cure' (Jetten et al., 2012; 2017). Williams et al. (2020) studied

connections between arts-based group programs and mental health through the lens of

Jetten et al.'s (2012) social cure theory. They found that choral participants could

experience feelings of belonging, support, self-efficacy, purpose, and positive emotions.

Forbes (2021) also used Jetten et al.'s theory to study social identity within a singing

group for people with Parkinson's disease and their caregivers. In addition to previously

discussed choir benefits, caregivers experienced meaningful belonging due to their shared

caring identity. Social identity and a group's identity may often stem from a group's

shared values and goals.

   Identity Construction and Belongingness. A choir's shared identity, values, and

goals may contribute to a sense of belonging within the ensemble. Claridge (2020) noted

that identity and belonging are elements of social capital, or functional societal

relationships. Koo et al. (2024) explored culturally inclusive art pedagogy through the

framework of belonging and found that a sense of belonging could lead to openness and

trust building. Bartolome (2013) explored identity formation and belongingness within a

Seattle girls' choir and found that positive group identity could impact personal benefits

including a sense of belonging. Belongingness has been considered a necessary

component of an individual's well-being (Derrer-Merk et al., 2022). The researchers

discovered that during the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals, particularly older adults,

experienced loss of family and friends and social group dissipation. Older adults'

perceptions of belongingness decreased as a result, and they experienced increased levels

of isolation, anxiety, and depression. Individual and social identity redevelopment may be

crucial for those who have lost social connection amid identity-shifting life changes.

Community music-making is rooted in culture, lifelong learning, and community-building. Early US settlers' religious practices informed their musical practices (Leglar & Smith, 2010). Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, individuals created professional and amateur community singing societies, music schools, philharmonic orchestras, culturally rooted music alliances, and musical ensembles for social justice (Garratt, 2022; Leglar & Smith, 2010; Reed, 2019; Šmidchens, 2014; Zaggari, 1998). Individuals have been motivated to participate in community music-making due to social and musical factors, such as belonging (Higgins, 2006) and musical enjoyment (King, 2009; Shansky, 2010). Community musicians have benefited from participation through greater physical health, emotional well-being, social connections, and spirituality (Clift & Hancox, 2001). Participants have also experienced a positive sense of individual and group identity, as well as a deeper sense of belonging (Koo et al., 2023; Bartolome, 2013). These senses may greatly benefit older adults as they navigate life changes.

Older Adults and Community Music-Making

Social Group Participation and Serious Leisure for Older Adults

Social identity is an important component of social connection. Individuals can perceive social connection through structural components such as networks, social ties, and living arrangements (Suragarn et al., 2021). The authors found that older adults' social network sizes declined following the death of a spouse, retirement, illness, disability, and lowered income. This decline may heighten feelings of social isolation or loneliness. The researchers suggested that older adults undergoing these life changes could benefit from early intervention with social groups. Suragarn et al. also discovered that older adults have specifically expressed enjoyment of the arts and physical activity

programs. Participant enjoyment is one component of what makes an activity meaningful, along with developing skills and confidence, strengthening companionship, and improving health (Heo et al., 2013; Heo et al., 2018). Researchers have suggested that older adults' well-being increases when they participate in meaningful activities (Heo et al., 2018; Marrow-Howell et al., 2014; Simone & Haas, 2013). Meaningful activities such as participatory arts and physical activity programs fit into Stebbins' (1976) serious leisure perspective. For example, Joseph and Human (2020) found that older adult musicians participated in serious leisure activities to expand their lifelong musical learning and sense of belonging.

Serious leisure participants have expressed enhanced personal enrichment, identity regeneration, self-expression, and improved self-image (Stebbins, 2007). Noice et al. (2014) reviewed 31 studies on participatory arts for older adults and found participants experienced overwhelmingly positive cognitive and quality of life outcomes. Older adults felt self-motivated to participate in artistic activities and perceived that the activities were intrinsically pleasurable, productive, and stimulating (Goodrich, 2019; Noice et al., 2014). The researchers noted that participants felt a sense of unique ethos, belonging, and inherent social support in arts activities. Similarly, Allender et al. (2006) found that older adults who participated in physical activities including ballroom dancing, walking, and team sports, experienced feelings of support, health benefits (e.g., feeling fit and able to play with grandchildren), and enjoyment. Heo et al., (2018) and Buzzelli and Draper (2019) found that older adults viewed their participation in sports as fulfilling the components of serious leisure, including perseverance, significant effort, personal mastery, and identity. Researchers have consistently found that older adults' perceived

well-being and quality of life improve with participation in serious leisure activities such as sports and the arts.

How Older Adults Participate in Community Music

Older adults can engage with the arts by participating in community music ensembles. Researchers have often regarded older adult participation in community music-making as lifelong learning (Goodrich, 2019; Joseph & Human, 2020). Opportunities for lifelong musical learning can include solo voice or instrument lessons and, more frequently, group participation in ensembles (Coffman, 2006). Older adults may have the option to participate in one of many New Horizons ensembles. The organization New Horizons International Music Association has established bands, orchestras, and choruses that cater to adults 50 and older worldwide (New Horizons Music, n.d.). The purpose of New Horizons is to serve as entry or re-entry points into music learning and performing (Avery, 2017; Matherne, 2022; Tsugawa, 2009). Dr. Roy Ernst founded the first New Horizons band in 1991 at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. As of 2024, hundreds of New Horizons ensembles exist in the United States, Canada, Ireland, and Australia (Tsugawa, 2009). Through community music groups such as New Horizons, older adults have a variety of group music-making opportunities.

Older adults who wish to participate in community music-making may be confined to a nursing home or assisted living facility. Researchers have studied senior center-based music-making opportunities, such as the Community of Voices (CoV) program in San Francisco, CA (Allison et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2020). Facilitators developed the program to promote cognitive, physical, and

psychosocial engagement. Johnson et al. (2020) found that CoV participants experienced significantly greater improvements in loneliness, which aligned with research from Grunwald and Associates LLC and Chorus America (2019). Johnson et al. (2020) also found that group participants reported a significantly higher interest in life. While many ensembles and music programs cater exclusively to older adults, others provide opportunities for older adults to connect with community musicians of all ages.

  Intergenerational Music-Making. Older adults may choose to join an ensemble that caters to musicians of a variety of ages. Intergenerational ensemble directors typically plan curricula to engage different generations, primarily older adults and youth (Beynon, 2017). Conway and Hodgman (2008) examined the experiences of college and community members in an intergenerational chorus project. The project chorus was comprised of collegiate choir members and primarily older adult community choristers who rehearsed together in preparation for a Carnegie Hall performance. One participant perceived a sense of enrichment and appreciated how group members "fed off of each other's talents and knowledge" (p. 227). Another participant noted that although it could be hard to find common ground, participants connected over their shared love of music. Beynon (2017) offered guiding principles for directors based on a local intergenerational ensemble established for high schoolers, older adults with dementia, and their caregivers. The researcher emphasized the importance of experiential learning regardless of age, where all members are considered equal. She also recommended designated social time for participants to establish relationships and a sense of belonging. Both Beynon (2017) and Creech (2018) recommended that directors be mindful of physical and interpersonal accessibility to ensure an inclusive environment for all. Beyond the benefits of

intergenerational learning, older adults have additional reasons for participating in community music.

Motivations of Older Adult Participants in Community Music

Older adults may participate in community music for the purposes of social connection, rebuilding their identities, having a creative outlet, and lifelong musical learning. Coffman (2006) found that older adults may choose to participate in ensembles, rather than solo music, due to the opportunities for belongingness and interaction. Older adults were largely motivated to participate in musical activities by social connectivity benefits (Clay, 2022; Goodrich, 2016; Hallam et al., 2017), which aligned with prior research on social motivational factors for music participation (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019; Rensink-Hoff, 2011; Sichivitsa, 2007). Cavitt (2005) and Creech (2018) discovered that some older adults committed to music-making due to their enjoyment of the activity, as well as opportunities for social interactions. This motivation research was also consistent with previous findings on social aspects of music participation and the serious leisure perspective (Redman, 2016; Stebbins, 1982; Wilson, 2011). Additionally, Shansky (2010) found that adult orchestra members can achieve a sense of personal fulfillment through participation. Clay (2022) suggested that older adults in particular may be motivated to participate in music-making following retirement or widowhood. The author noted that widowed older adults may experience higher levels of depression and loneliness, and retirement may challenge older adults' sense of identity. Older adults who have experienced these life changes may benefit from choral participation for both social connectivity and identity reconstruction.

Older ensemble members may also be motivated by past and present music experiences and directors. Conductors have the ability to facilitate musical flow and convey musical meaning (Jansson, 2014). This skill may add to participants' enjoyment of performing and facilitating meaningful activities. Clay (2022) discovered older adults were influenced to participate in community music by positive musical experiences in their youth, and positive leadership examples. Kruse (2021) also suggested that older adults' past experiences with music may impact their lifelong participation. While reminiscing about life experiences, community music participants each recalled an instance that interfered with their intended musical path. For example, one of Kruse's participants described his complicated relationship with piano playing. The participant downplayed his skills and often used self-deprecating humor while discussing music due to a lingering comment from his former piano teacher:

> My problem with music is, I've always been more ambitious than talented, so I find it somewhat frustrating because I want to be better than I am, so there's an ambiguity about it...My piano teacher looked at me once and said, "You're not a natural pianist." Obviously, I've worked hard at it, so I've earned everything I've gotten out of it because I'm not a natural pianist (pp. 51–52).

Music educators' words of encouragement or discouragement may impact adults throughout their musical life course.

Researchers have considered how to prolong older adults' motivations and how to hinder any potential barriers to participation. Creech (2018) and Creech et al. (2013) noted that older adults' motivation may be impacted by the level of inclusive care they receive in ensemble settings, as well as physical accessibility. Creech et al. (2013)

addressed additional potential challenges including informational barriers, in which older

adults may not have access to or knowledge about choir opportunities, as well as a

perceived lack of confidence. The authors advised that facilitators communicate

respectfully, promote accessibility, and take account of older adults' prior experience

when programming. Additionally, Goll et al. (2015) suggested that older adults may be

wary of ageism and may avoid group activities due to the possibility of being identified

and stigmatized as "old" (p. 3). Beynon (2017) emphasized that while accessibility must

be kept in mind, facilitators should reinforce respect, equality, and value of all group

members. Motivations and benefits for older adult community music-makers aligned with

prior research about improved quality of life, regardless of age. Older adults, however,

may experience additional benefits specific to their generation.

Benefits of Older Adult Participation in Community Music

Older adults may be motivated to continue musical participation based on the

physical, mental, social and spiritual benefits they receive from their engagement. Older

adult music-makers have reported improved health, agency, purpose, creativity, and

identity reconstruction due to ensemble participation (Boswell, 1992; Grunwald

Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019; Clay, 2022; Creech et al., 2013, 2023;

Johnson et al., 2020; Kruse, 2022; Lehmberg & Fung, 2010; Noice et al., 2014). Older

adult choristers have rated their overall health significantly higher than their non-singing

peers (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019). Chorus America researchers

found that one in five older chorus participants perceived that singing improved at least

one chronic health condition including voice disorders, lung disease, asthma, and high

blood pressure. Livesey et al. (2012) suggested that choir participants may prioritize

physical health to maintain breath support and a strong singing voice. The physical health benefits of singing often connect to older adults' mental and emotional wellness.

Vocal health, agency, and opportunities for creativity may positively benefit older adults' mental health and well-being. Smith and Sataloff (2013) discovered that choral participation may positively impact older adults' vocal health, which could improve both singing and speaking strength. Older adults have indicated that maintaining a strong voice aided in their feelings of confidence and authority (Sataloff, 2014), which may positively impact mental health (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019). Creech et al. (2014) also found that community music participation can support older adults' mental well-being and sense of empowerment. Creech (2018) expanded on this research and found that older adults felt greater levels of agency and control over their learning. The author echoed prior research on social benefits, noting that musical social networks may positively impact older adults' mental health. Additionally, researchers have addressed the creative benefits of music-making for older adults' mental well-being and found that creativity may promote a sense of control, cognitive strength, self-esteem, and social engagement (Cohen, 2000; Creech et al. 2013; Creech, 2018; Creech et al, 2023; Hanna, 2013; Price & Tinker, 2014). Schmid (2005) argued that creativity is "a constructive, viable and contemporary force in daily activities and occupations, which can be consciously utilized to contribute to health and wellbeing" (p. 27). Older adults can uniquely benefit from vocal strength, agency, and creativity.

Older adults may particularly benefit from social and spiritual aspects of choral participation. Researchers have agreed that participating in group singing can lead to social benefits including a greater social network, meaningful connections, decreased

loneliness, and a sense of belonging (Avery, 2017; Clift & Hancox, 2001; Clift et al., 2010; Livesey et al., 2012; Moss et al., 2018). Some older adults, however, may experience greater social benefits due to the death of a spouse, retirement, illness, disability, or lowered income (Suragarn et al., 2021). Those life changes could heighten feelings of social isolation or loneliness. The social benefits of choir participation have been shown to decrease older adults' feelings of loneliness (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019). While researchers have tended to agree on the social benefits of choral participation, results are mixed regarding the spiritual benefits of music-making for older adults. Rohwer and Coffman (2006) found that older adult community band participants felt less spiritual than non-band participants. The authors suggested that music participants in a church setting may experience more spirituality than older adults who participate in non-musical activities outside of a religious setting. Iwasaki et al. (2010) contradicted this research, finding that older adults have found music participation in both religious and non-religious settings to be "spiritually refreshing" (p. 485). Hilliard (2004) also discovered that music-making significantly contributed to older adults' spiritual needs, particularly in the context of music therapy.

Older adults may find that participating in music may help the process of positive aging. Positive aging is a physical, mental, and social concept in which older adults feel a sense of well-being, inclusion, and empowerment (Creech et al., 2013). Researchers have investigated negative aspects of aging, including a loss of identity due to retirement, health, and disability struggles, and the death of loved ones. Along with the physical, mental, social, and spiritual benefits of choral participation, participants may re-develop their identities as older adults by exploring their musical selves (Creech, 2018; Creech et

al., 2023; Dabback, 2010; Kruse, 2017). Participants have reported that community music-making positively impacted their overall quality of life (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019; Creech et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2013). Older adults may experience additional benefits from participating in community music with peers who have similar life experiences.

Pride Choruses

Historical Background

Affinity choruses represent groups of individuals with similar, often marginalized, identities or experiences. Cummings et al. (2021) emphasized the value of making meaningful connections with those who have a shared history. The first Pride Chorus was the Anna Crusis Women's Choir, a Philadelphia-based ensemble created by Dr. Catherine Roma in 1975 (Roma, 2018). Roma explained that she created Anna Crusis as a feminist chorus open to straight, lesbian, and bisexual women, in order to create a safe space for women's self-expression. In addition to classical, folk, and popular music, the chorus sang songs from the women's liberation and gay rights movements (Southerland, 2023). Three years later, Jon Sims created the nation's first official Pride Chorus for gay men, the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus (SFGMC) (Hilliard, 2002, 2008). Sims formed the chorus during tense sociopolitical circumstances. Anita Bryant and her Save Our Children group were successfully campaigning for anti-homosexual legislature, and first lady Nancy Reagan opposed both women's liberation and gay liberation, claiming that they represented "a weakening of the moral standards of this nation" (Hilliard, 2002, p. 83). The HIV/AIDS epidemic was in its beginning stages. Harvey Milk, the first openly gay man elected to public office, was assassinated in November 1978, the night of

the chorus's fifth rehearsal. The SFGMC first performed publicly at Milk's funeral. Hilliard (2002, 2008) also noted that the country was also taking progressive steps with the appointment of the US' first openly gay judge, and the creation of the American Civil Liberties Union. The SFGMC acknowledged the dichotomous sociopolitical circumstances in their 1981 concert program:

> Music serves as a cultural and social bridge between our community and the community at large, fostering knowledge, understanding and sensitivity across social and sexual categorizations. Our national tour will be a significant contribution to the efforts of gay people to disseminate fears and prejudices that stand in their way of open participation in our culture (Hilliard, 2002, p. 89).

More Pride Choruses emerged during the late 1970s and early 1980s as a response to sociopolitical events and the increasing visibility of early Pride ensembles (Southerland, 2023). Southerland noted that LGBTQ+ choral participants could feel empowered in a safe environment. He quoted Jay Davidson, the founding president of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA): "The best political thing I could do is to sing in the chorus... This is what I can do to be out there, to be out and visible" (p. 77). LGBTQ+ individuals may have found a method of safely advocating for their rights while surrounded by a supportive, affirming community.

The LGBTQ+ choral community soon grew into larger choral networks. Several Pride Choruses gathered at the Olympic-style Gay Games in San Francisco in 1982 (Hilliard, 2002; Gordon, 1990; Southerland, 2023) to perform at the West Coast Choral Festival. This event, as well as SFGMC's first national tour, inspired choral leaders to create GALA (Gordon, 1990; GALA Choruses, 2023). GALA was comprised of 14 Pride

Choruses from major metropolitan areas across the country (Gordon, 1990). Gordon

characterized GALA as a supportive network that provided a member directory, planned

annual conferences, and provided "leadership and inspiration to the gay and lesbian

movement through excellence in the choral arts" (p. 25). One year prior to GALA's

creation, two feminist chorus directors founded the Sister Singers Network (SSN), a

women's chorus collective (Attinello, 2015; Sister Singers Network, 2021). Founders

Linda Ray and Linda Small's vision was to create an LGBTQ+-friendly feminist network

that could learn from each other and share music. Many Pride Choruses belong to both

GALA and the SSN, however, scholarly research on the SSN is minimal. As of 2023,

GALA is comprised of over 200 Pride Choruses worldwide (GALA Choruses, 2023).

The SSN has had 90 choruses in the international organization, though not all are

currently active (Sister Singers Network, 2021). Researchers have investigated the unique

motivations for Pride Chorus participation.

Motivations for Pride Chorus Participation

People are motivated to perform with Pride Choruses for reasons similar to those

persons engaging with other types of community choruses. Southerland (2020) concluded

that social, LGBTQ+ identity-related, and political factors motivated participants to join a

Pride Chorus, rather than musical factors. Southerland agreed with Coffman (2006), who

categorized major motivational factors as personal, musical, or social. In contrast, Cates

(2020) found that 48% of participants in his study cited musical reasons as their primary

motivational factor for joining a gay men's chorus. Community and social justice

emerged as the other two leading motivators. Although only 8% of participants indicated

social justice as their primary motivating factor, Cates found that singers who

participated in the ensemble for over 15 years were most highly motivated to participate due to social justice factors. A major unifying factor in both Southerland's (2020) and Cates' (2020) studies was the importance of social connectivity as a motivational factor for choral participation.

Researchers have discovered that social connection is a recurring motivational factor in choral participation studies. Group singing participants can benefit from making meaningful relationships, forming a social network, and feeling a sense of belonging (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019; Rensink-Hoff, 2011; Sichivitsa, 2007). The researchers found that social connectivity can decrease individuals' sense of loneliness and isolation. Beale (2017) discussed how Pride Choruses serve as a safe space and a place of deep belonging for the LGBTQ+ community. Beale's participants referred to their chorus as their community, their chosen family, and their tribe. One participant expressed their motivations for joining a Pride Chorus:

> Minority communities look for opportunities to be with one another, right?...because they feel welcome, they feel like they belong...I wanted...that uniqueness, that 'club'ness, that lack of external judgment that certain minorities...feel from the world around them...there's a different kind of goose-bump that you get singing with your tribe (p. 367).

Similar to Clay's (2022) research about older adults' motivations to join choir, LGBTQ+ individuals may feel an increased sense of loneliness and isolation due to factors unique to their community. Researchers discovered that LGBTQ+ individuals, specifically LGBTQ+OAs, may feel increased loneliness and isolation due to a history of stigma and discrimination, lack of familial support, and a perceived lack of opportunities

to create identity-affirming social connections (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2011; Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2013; Preston, 2024; Wilkens, 2015). LGBTQ+ individuals who wish for more social connectivity may be motivated to participate in a Pride Chorus. Once involved in Pride Choruses, singers may experience impactful benefits of participation.

Benefits of Pride Chorus Participation

Pride Chorus participants have reported benefits of social connection, healing, spirituality, and empowerment. Pride Chorus participants particularly enjoyed socializing with like-minded individuals (Bird, 2017; Latimer, 2008). The researchers found that meaningful relationships may form in settings that foster community support and LGBTQ+ identity affirmation. Balén (2017a) noted that the highest level of supportive identity practice and unmitigated support she witnessed was in the LGBTQ+ choral movement. Meaningful, supportive, affirming relationships may contribute to participants' mental health and well-being. Additionally, Pride Chorus members have discovered spiritual benefits of participation. Latimer (2008) found that choral participation may be used as a proxy for traditional religious experiences. LGBTQ+ individuals have expressed frustration at organized religions' failures to accept LGBTQ+ congregants. Latimer noted that many study participants were spiritual men with limited access to traditional religious practices. One participant noted that, "This [chorus] is where I worship" (p. 30). LGBTQ+ individuals may discover spiritual experiences within the healing community of a Pride Chorus.

Researchers have found that Pride Chorus members may benefit from singing music that provides a sense of healing and empowerment. Thorp (2016) represented a gay men's chorus through a rehearsal vignette. The author observed the chorus singing:

If you only knew, what would you do? Be still and surrender, let the sky turn blue? Leave it all behind you, do what little boys do? What would you do—if you only knew—that you are beautiful (p. 104)?

Thorp noticed an older participant crying, being comforted by a younger member. In response, the conductor announced:

In trauma, we want some sense of normality. We just want to get back to ordinary. That's what this song is about, and the people who show up at your side to help. Whether you are the one suffering from trauma or the one trying to help someone push through that pain, the one who says, "hey, it will be okay…let's sing some ABBA!" Connect with that. Connect with being the helper or the one being helped (p. 105).

Thorp found that the music committee chose much of this chorus's repertoire based on the music's message and resonance with the ensemble. Similarly, Mensel (2007) found that participants may perceive musical and emotional benefits from singing songs commissioned for Pride Choruses. MacLachlan (2015) offered the example of *Hidden Legacies*, a large-scale work commissioned for GALA. Composer Roger Bourland wrote the piece in honor of members of the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles who died of AIDS. Members of the chorus were able to openly express grief over their lost friends and community members. Mensel (2007) similarly noted that Pride Chorus repertoire may help members deal with loss, spread meaningful messages of love and peace, feel

humbled, and express LGBTQ+ joy. The author argued that music written for the gay

choral movement, or affinity music, shares an intention to affirm LGBTQ+ singers and

audience members, reinforce individual and group identity, and educate non-LGBTQ+

audience members. One of Mensel's participants expressed that singing affinity music

helped him to feel "normal" (p. 230). The participant continued:

> We're — the gay and lesbian community — perceived, in my opinion, by a lot of
>
> straight people as a culture that really is young and they're not serious, they don't
>
> have responsibility. I think this really alters that opinion. This shows that we feel
>
> just like you do, we have experiences just like you do. Even straight people or
>
> bisexual or transgendered, anyone could pull something out of their lives from
>
> [affinity music] (pp. 230–231).

Audience members of all sexual orientations may connect with themes of Pride music:

grief, joy, identity affirmation, acceptance, and love.

Pride Choruses may perform music that represents joy and humor, in addition to

presenting repertoire that addresses heavy subjects. MacLachlan (2015) categorized

GALA chorus repertoire as new works (more serious, commissioned pieces),

appropriated mainstream works (community songs), and re-worded mainstream works

(contrafacta). The author noted that Pride Choruses typically perform community songs

and contrafacta with a campy aesthetic. MacLachlan defined camp as performative,

ironic, and funny, and noted that it can be a vehicle for criticizing social norms. The

author added that campy pieces often include dance moves, or "choralography" (p. 93).

All three categories of affinity music may allow participants to express themselves, and

the many facets of their LGBTQ+ identities. Participation in LGBTQ+ social justice

advocacy is another way Pride singers may use their voices and demonstrate self-expression.

LGBTQ+ Social Justice Activism

Researchers have documented the historical connection between activism and advocacy and Pride Choruses. Balén (2017b) discussed singing as a way of counterstorying, or reframing unjust social norms and dominant social narratives. Singing was used as a form of protest in social movements including labor, civil rights, and LGBTQ+ liberation. The author suggested that LGBTQ+ singers can provide a counterstory to the heteronormative narrative by expressing pride and solidarity. Hilder (2023) offered an example of a counterstorying experience in London. The London Gay Men's Chorus sang the rock song "Glad to Be Gay" by Tom Robinson at a collaborative memorial to mark the 20th anniversary of a Neo-Nazi attack that targeted Black, Bengali, and gay communities. Representatives from all three groups gathered in solidarity to celebrate their communities. Balén (2017a) used examples of the labor movement and civil rights movement to further discuss solidarity. Laborers sang "Solidarity Forever" to reframe their identity as more powerful and valuable than the dominant social narrative suggested. Similarly, Balén told the story of a high school student who sang "We Shall Overcome" to calm and collect the group as police raided a social justice leadership training center. The author regarded that Pride Choruses typically maintain a formal choral tradition rather than utilize the labor and civil rights movements' informal strategies. Balén's suggestion, however, contrasted Pride Chorus's reported activities.

Individual Pride Choruses have sung or shown support at political rallies, protests, and marches. The Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles (GMCLA) recently participated in a

choral festival to support Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities, and LA's Women's Action Rally (Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, 2024). The GMCLA demonstrated solidarity with AAPI and feminist communities, similar to Hilder's (2023) example of Black, Bengali, and gay solidarity in London. The GMCLA is also a member of the Arts for Healing and Justice Network and provides music classes for incarcerated youth in the city's juvenile correctional system. Higgins (2016) and Boal-Palheiros (2017) considered similar musical interventions to be hospitable music-making. The researchers proposed that hospitable musicking could encourage community connection and bolster marginalized participants' agency and self-esteem.

Pride Chorus members may be considered leaders in activism. Davidson and Leske (2020) referred to singers who performed during the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s acted as agents of social justice. The authors stated that Pride Choruses gave gay men the opportunity to be visible and have their voices heard. Schattenkirk (2014) claimed that these choruses inspired tolerance and acceptance among audiences, and challenged prejudice by performing in politically, socially, and religiously conservative areas. Bao (2021) offered a different perspective on the concepts of visibility and activism. The author studied LGBTQ+ choral activism in China, where homosexuality remains a taboo topic due to traditional values and a lack of LGBTQ+ visibility. Bao referred to this "soft" activism as a type of protest that differs from mainstream LGBTQ+ activism across the world. Rather than emphasizing visibility, confrontation, and direct intervention, "soft" activism utilizes the performing arts, culture, and media. "Soft" activists have impacted identity construction and minority rights awareness, without putting activists' lives at risk. In another soft, arts-focused context, Cates (2020) broadly

referred to social justice in the LGBTQ+ choral community as anything concerning LGBTQ issues, community service, betterment, making changes, activism, and community. The author found that LGBTQ+ choristers and organizations in his study engaged with social justice through acts of healing, unity, developing community through the lens of music, and the ideal of changing the world through song. Pride Chorus participants have used their voices to express their LGBTQ+ identities, fight for social justice, and honor the struggles and triumphs of LGBTQ+ history.

Since the mid-1970s, Pride Choruses have served as a space for self-expression, empowerment, healing, and political activism. Choristers have been motivated to participate by social opportunities among like-minded individuals with shared histories (Southerland, 2023). Participants have also been motivated by their desire to get involved with social justice (Coffman, 2006; Southerland, 2020). Mensel (2007) and MacLachlan (2015) found that participants may perceive musical and emotional benefits from singing songs that could help members deal with loss, spread meaningful messages of love and peace, feel humbled, and express LGBTQ+ joy. Pride choristers can engage in social justice through musical acts of healing, unity, developing community through the lens of music, and the ideal of changing the world through song (Cates, 2020). In this environment of joy, affirmation, and acceptance, members of Pride Choruses may serve as each other's chosen families.

LGBTQ+ Older Adults in Pride Choruses

LGBTQ+ older adults may be motivated to join a Pride Chorus for musical, social, and sociopolitical reasons. Southerland (2020) investigated motivations for participation in LGBTQ-affinity choruses. The author categorized motivational factors

according to participants' demographics and highlighted four factors that applied

specifically to LGBTQ+OAs. Southerland stated that adults over the age of 56 were

particularly motivated by music-related factors. LGBTQ+OAs were most likely to join a

Pride choir if they received a personal invitation from a friend in the choir. LGBTQ+OAs

were highly motivated by political reasons, praise for performance, and "making a

difference for the LGBTQ community" (p. 152). Another study that emerged in the

literature was Taylor's (2014) narrative of himself as an LGBTQ+ older widow who

rejoined a Pride Chorus. Taylor found that after a year of participation, he experienced

optimism and agency, but also discovered new levels of grief and despair. Taylor felt

socially vulnerable and noted that social connections took time to establish. Making

music elevated his emotions, and Taylor felt as though the chorus shared "a common

thread to human emotions through music" (p. 80). Taylor experienced powerful emotions

and coped with feelings of loss through his participation in a Pride Chorus as a widowed

LGBTQ+OA. Southerland (2020) and Taylor (2014) made contributions to the literature

documenting LGBTQ+OAs' choral participation; however, this may have been the extent

of the research on the topic.

Summation

I reviewed relevant literature on LGBTQ+OAs, motivations, and benefits of

choral participation, and older adults' participation in choir. A gap remains, however,

with little to no research documenting LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses.

Avery (2017) emphasized the importance of understanding chorus participants'

motivations for involvement and the benefits they enjoy from group singing:

For directors of adult community choruses, knowledge of our participants'
purpose for joining and remaining in our ensembles will provide valuable
information and ensure the best experience possible in regards to the difficulty
and type of literature, seriousness of purpose, eagerness to improve, and other
considerations. Knowledge of the received benefits will make them more visible
to the directors and therefore provide opportunities for enhancement (pp. 348–
349).

I share Avery's belief that choir directors can enhance their ensembles by understanding
participants' motivations for involvement and their perceived benefits. Applications of
this research may help choral leaders best serve their unique populations. The music
education profession may benefit from this research in order to improve the retention and
recruitment of LGBTQ+OA choir members. Other implications for the profession may
include the importance of promoting a sense of belonging in ensembles of all ages and
affinities. The purpose of this present study was to gain insight into LGBTQ+ older
adults' motivations for participating in Pride Choruses, along with their self-perceived
benefits of participation. My research was guided by the following questions:

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?

2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride
   Choruses?

3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived
   benefits of Pride Chorus participation?

4. What relationships exist among LGBTQ+OAs' musical experiences, their motivations to initially join Pride Choruses, and LGBTQ+OAs' self-perceived benefits from participating in Pride Choruses?

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to add to the limited literature on why LGBTQ+ older adults (LGBTQ+OAs) may join a Pride Chorus, and how choir participation may benefit them. I utilized a survey-based descriptive research design to investigate LGBTQ+OAs' motivations for joining a Pride Chorus and their self-perceived benefits of participation. I analyzed the data to determine statistically significant relationships between participants' motivations, benefits, and demographics. I chose this descriptive research design to gather information about the characteristics of those at the intersection of LGBTQ+-identifying older adult choristers, and to explore trends and correlations amongst their motivational factors, perceived choral benefits, and demographics. I encountered a gap in the literature at the intersection of LGBTQ+OAs in choir, as well as research on both choral motivations and benefits within the same study. Researchers have employed similar quantitative study designs to investigate individuals' motivations for joining choir (Amundson, 2012; Redman, 2016; Southerland, 2020), and individuals' self-perceived benefits of choral participation (Clift & Hancox, 2001; Clift et al., 2010; Fernández-Herranz et al., 2021). The methodology of this research was informed by my research questions and supported by similar studies. Additionally, my choices were supported by peer review with panels of experts and three pilot studies that will be explained later in this document.

Positionality

I am an upper middle class, educated, white, cisgender woman in my mid-30s. Although I identify as bisexual, pansexual, and queer, I am married to a white, cisgender man. I experience straight-passing privileges along with privileges due to my

socioeconomic status, race, and gender identity. My positionality has enabled me to

conduct this research safely and securely as an empathetic observer. As a Pride Chorus

Artistic Director, I regularly observe LGBTQ+OAs' choral engagement firsthand. In my

three years leading a feminist chorus in a major city, I have had opportunities to learn

about my chorus members' unique lived experiences and the meaningful relationships

they built in the ensemble. My position has afforded me connections with similarly

positioned directors and choristers within the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses

(GALA) and the Sister Singer Network (SSN), two international LGBTQ+ choral

networks. I attended two international choir festivals in 2023 and 2024, hosted by the

SSN and GALA, respectively. I saw thousands of LGBTQ+OA choristers sing about

LGBTQ+ empowerment, joy, and activism. I learned about LGBTQ+OAs' struggles and

triumphs through conference sessions and personal conversations. My positionality has

allowed me to gain insight into how beneficial Pride Chorus participation can be for

LGBTQ+OAs, which inspired me to conduct this research.

Participants

Participants ($N = 253$) in this study were LGBTQ+-identifying adults of any

gender, aged 50 or older, who were active members of a Pride Chorus. I chose 50 years

as the lower age limit to research a larger sample of LGBTQ+OAs and to discover any

possible trends among individual generations. This age range aligns with prior research

on older adulthood (Cummings et al., 2021; Flores & Conron, 2023; Miller, 2023). I

attended multiple LGBTQ+ choral conferences and symposiums throughout Summer

2024 to connect with individuals within the LGBTQ+ choral community and generate

interest for this study. I obtained a convenience sample of participants by distributing my

recruitment script (see Appendix A), letter of consent (see Appendix B), and survey

instrument (see Appendix C) via email to all choir directors within GALA Choruses and

the Sister Singers Network (SSN). I contacted 295 SSN chorus leaders through a

previously established Google group, and 118 GALA directors of adult, US-based

choruses through GALA's public choral directory. I requested that directors read the

recruitment script at a rehearsal and distribute the recruitment script, informed consent

document, and questionnaire to their members via email. Additionally, I posted my

recruitment script and survey instrument to the GALA Choruses and Sister Singers

Network members-only Facebook groups. I specified in my recruitment script that

participants should be aged 50 or older, identify as non-heterosexual, and be an active

member of a Pride Chorus. The first section of the survey contained three screener

questions to reinforce these participant specifications. I received 253 completed surveys

from Pride Chorus members evenly distributed throughout the United States. I chose not

to ask participants for their chorus names to maintain confidentiality. As a result, the total

number of choruses represented in this research is unknown.

Study Design

I employed a survey-based descriptive research design for this study. Descriptive

research is the method of systematically recounting characteristics or facts about a given

population, interest area, event, or phenomenon, to accurately portray the participants or

subjects, and discover relationships among selected variables (Dulock, 1993). I employed

this design to learn about the motivations, perceived benefits, and relationships between

these factors and participants' demographics and backgrounds. I identified descriptive

research methodology as the best way to answer my research questions. Prior researchers

have utilized qualitative or mixed-methods designs to investigate choristers' motivations and perceived benefits (e.g., Bartleet et al., 2023; Batt-Rawden & Anderson, 2019; Cates, 2020; Clay, 2022). Due to the limited amount of literature on LGBTQ+OA choristers, however, I chose a quantitative survey-based design to collect data on participants' perceptions of their choral involvement. I wanted to collect this information on a national scale, with a large sample size (Farhati, 2024).

Questionnaire Design

I created a questionnaire after conducting a literature review on LGBTQ+OAs, community choir participation, older adult choristers, and LGBTQ+ ensembles. I did not find any quantitative survey-based studies on LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and perceived benefits of choir participation. I chose to modify survey instruments from Southerland (2020) and Clift and Hancox (2001), as those studies aligned more closely with the purpose of my research. Southerland (2020) researched LGBTQ+ chorus participants' motivations for joining a Pride Chorus. With the author's permission, I utilized his questions on personal demographics and choral demographics and background, as well as his motivational factor matrix (see Appendix C, Q25). Clift and Hancox (2001) conducted one of the first preliminary studies on the benefits of choral participation, which has been cited over 582 times throughout choral research (e.g., Baird, 2007; Clift et al., 2007; Clift et al., 2010; Moss et al., 2018). Clift and Hancox (2001) first developed an open-ended questionnaire for collegiate choir participants. Clift and Hancox asked participants if they perceived any benefits of singing in choir, and if they believed participation may be good for their health. Following data analysis, Clift and Hancox developed a 32-statement questionnaire using the results of the initial survey. The

statements reflected the main themes of participants' responses regarding physical, emotional, social, and spiritual benefits. Clift and Hancox asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a 5-point Likert-type scale. In addition to adapting Southerland's (2020) motivational factor matrix, I used Southerland's (2020) matrix model to measure participants' perceived physical, mental/emotional, spiritual, and social benefits, as derived from Clift & Hancox (2001). I modified the instrument to align the survey questions with my research questions and added researcher-created questions following feedback from pilot tests.

Survey Tool Development

After creating the first draft of my questionnaire, I assembled a content validity panel with Music Education graduate students and a Music Education faculty member at a private Midwestern university. The panel reviewed the first draft of the questionnaire to proofread for errors and validity. Panel members offered suggestions about questions I could remove that did not relate to my research questions. For example, Southerland (2020) asked his participants about their background with instrumental private lessons, as well as participants' political beliefs. Neither of these questions revealed pertinent findings in Southerland's. The panel members also suggested that I turn written response questions into multiple choice sliding scale questions for the purposes of analysis. After making changes to the questionnaire based on feedback from the panel of experts, I further examined the instrument's validity by pilot-testing the updated questionnaire with members of the Pride Chorus I conduct.

I conducted an initial pilot study to receive feedback from LGBTQ+OAs regarding the readability and relevance of the survey questions. Members of the Pride

Chorus over the age of 50 volunteered to take the pilot test ($n = 27$). One participant

remarked that the instrument did not provide opportunities to express motivations and

benefits relating to social justice, and noted that many choruses within the SSN appeared

to be focused on social justice. Researchers have found that Pride Choruses may

participate in and sing about social justice activism (Cates, 2020; Hilder, 2022, 2023;

MacLachlan, 2015). I added questions about social justice to the motivation and benefits

matrices (see Appendix C, Q33, Q39). Two other participants expressed confusion over

questions regarding spiritual benefits. As with my initial survey tool, Clift and Hancox

(2001) categorized spiritual benefits as a separate entity from physical, emotional, and

social benefits. Participants of the authors' original open-ended survey reported spiritual

benefits including feeling spiritually uplifted, positive about life, and more connected.

Researchers have regarded similar participant responses as personal impact or emotional

benefits (Dingle et al., 2012; Joseph & Human, 2020). I chose to group mental,

emotional, and spiritual benefit factors categories together, as prior research indicated

that these three descriptors were often overlapping and used interchangeably (Clift &

Hancox, 2001; Moss et al., 2018).

I examined each survey question in connection with my research questions. I

mapped this process to ensure that every survey question was directly connected to at

least one research question (see Appendix D). I also assessed whether each question fit

into established categories within the broader areas of demographics (personal

demographics, choral demographics, and musical background), motivations (social and

musical), and benefits (physical, MES, and social). Following the second revision, I

conducted a second pilot test with members of the previously-tested Pride Chorus, most

of whom did not participate in the original pilot test (*n* = 5). I asked participants to inform

me how long it took them to complete the questionnaire. The average time was 15

minutes and 34 seconds, ranging from 7 minutes and 13 seconds to 24 minutes and 45

seconds. Pride Chorus members who participated in the pilot tests did not participate in

the final research study.

The final questionnaire consisted of 38 questions throughout five sections:

participants' personal demographics, choral demographics, musical backgrounds,

motivations to join their chorus, and self-perceived benefits of participation. In the first

section, I asked participants questions regarding their personal demographics, including

their age, gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, location, religion,

retirement/job status, socioeconomic status, education level, relationship status, and

military service history. Next, I asked participants about their individual Pride Choruses,

including questions about the vocal makeup of chorus, audition requirements, their

preferred voice part, the length of their membership, chorus repertoire, the age range of

the chorus, chorus dues, and leaderships/volunteering opportunities. I investigated

participants' musical backgrounds through questions about their performance/music-

making history, exposure to music in childhood, parental encouragement, teacher

encouragement, and ensemble participation in secondary school and college. These three

sections were designed to gain demographic understanding of the sample and their Pride

Choruses.

I designed the fourth section of the survey to determine participants' motivations

for initially joining their Pride Chorus. Participants rated 14 total motivational factors I

categorized motivational factors on a 5-point Likert-type matrix, in which the rating of

"1" represented strong disagreement/non-importance and "5" represented strong agreement/importance. I categorized the motivational factors into social and musical groups *a priori*, with seven factors in each group. I added an open-ended response prompt following the Likert-type matrix, where participants were given the option to provide any additional motivational factors that were not addressed in the questionnaire. In the final section, participants rated self-perceived benefit factors on a 5-point Likert-type matrix. I categorized perceived choral benefit factors into three groups *a priori*: physical (with nine benefit factors), MES (12 benefit factors), and social (nine benefit factors). As with the motivation section, I prompted participants to provide any self-perceived benefits that were not addressed in the questionnaire. These open-ended responses were used to support quantitative data and gain a deeper understanding of quantitative results. I submitted this study to my university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and received confirmation of approval in October 2024 (see Appendix E).

Survey Distribution

Following IRB approval, I distributed the recruitment script, informed consent document, and questionnaire to Pride Chorus directors. I requested that directors read the recruitment script at a rehearsal, and distribute the recruitment script, informed consent document, and the questionnaire to members via email. I also posted these materials on the GALA Choruses and SSN members-only Facebook pages. I collected data over a three-week period between October and November 2024. This was an ideal time to collect data, as Pride Choruses typically rehearse weekly in the fall. Directors had plenty of opportunities to share this research with chorus members during this period. This was

more feasible than during summer or winter breaks when choruses typically pause for the holidays.

Data Analysis

Participants answered questions relating to their demographic information, choral history, and musical backgrounds. Additionally, participants rated prompts on a 5-point Likert-type scale regarding their level of agreement on motivations to join their chorus, self-perceived benefits of choral participation. I noted in the survey instrument that a rating of "1" represented strong disagreement/non-importance and "5" represented strong agreement/importance. I performed nonparametric data analyses by using JASP version 0.19.1 (JASP Team, 2024), VassarStats (Lowry, n.d.), and Statistics Kingdom (2017). I used three different programs because I discovered that JASP did not appear to have a nonparametric equivalent to ANOVA tests. I initially used VassarStats for the Kruskal Wallis *H* tests, but later found that they did not give the option of performing Dunn's post hoc tests, hence my choice to shift to Statistics Kingdom.

I used JASP software (JASP Team, 2024) to conduct descriptive analyses (distribution, central tendency, and variability) to determine participants' highest-rated motivational factors for joining a Pride Chorus and their highest-rated benefit factors of choral participation. I conducted two sets of analyses for motivations. The first was a descriptive analysis to determine participants' mean responses to each motivation factor. Secondly, I conducted a Mann Whitney *U* test on VassarStats (Lowry, n.d.) on the broader categories of social motivations and musical motivations to determine if there was a statistical significance between social and musical motivation categories. Similarly, I conducted a descriptive analysis to determine participants' mean responses to each the

three categories of physical, mental/emotional/spiritual, and social benefits. I conducted a

Kruskal-Wallis *H* test on Statistics Kingdom (2017) to determine if any benefit categories

are significantly more impactful. Additionally, I investigated correlations between

motivational categories (social/emotional and musical motivations) and benefit categories

(physical, MES, and social factors). I conduced a Spearman's *rho* test to determine any

relationships between motivations and benefits on JASP (JASP Team, 2024). I then

completed Kruskal-Wallis *H* tests on Statistics Kingdom (2017) to explore relationships

between participants' musical experiences, motivational factors (social/emotional and

musical), and benefits (physical, mental/emotional/spiritual, and social). Following the

Kruskal-Wallis tests, I completed Dunn's post hoc tests with a Bonferroni corrected alpha

of 0.02 in order to determine which relationships were significant (Russell, 2018). In line

with prior music education research, I established a *p*-value of less than or equal to .05

for statistical significance.

Ethical Considerations

I submitted the study proposal to my university's IRB to gain approval for this

research. This was particularly important, as the survey sample of older adults contained

vulnerable populations. I did not create survey questions regarding participants' names,

cities, or Pride Chorus names to ensure anonymity. I included a question about the

participants' location by state to determine any regional trends in the data. Before

beginning the survey, participants read and agreed to an informed consent document, in

which I explained that absolute confidentiality could not be guaranteed due to the limited

protection of internet access. I advised participants to choose a private location to

complete the survey, and to close their browser when they had finished.

Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this research study was to examine LGBTQ+ older adults'

(LGBTQ+OAs') motivations for joining a Pride Chorus, as well as their self-perceived

benefits of participation. In this chapter I report a profile of participants and data analysis

conducted to answer the following research questions:

1.   What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join a Pride Chorus?

2.   What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in a Pride

        Chorus?

3.   Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived

        benefits of Pride Chorus participation?

4.   What relationships exist among LGBTQ+OAs' musical experiences, their

        motivations to initially join a Pride Chorus, and their self-perceived benefits

        from participating in a Pride Chorus?

Participant Demographics

Participants ($N = 253$) ranged in age from 50–80 ($M = 62.97$, $SD = 7.54$), nearly

half of whom were partially or fully retired (48.22%, $n = 122$). Participants identified as

cisgender males (59.29%, $n = 150$), cisgender female (31.23%, $n = 79$), and as

transgender, non-binary, or otherwise gender-expansive (9.48%, $n = 24$). Over half of the

sample solely identified as gay (56.13%, $n = 142$), while 19.37% of participants ($n = 49$)

solely identified as lesbian and 24.51% ($n = 62$) identified as bisexual, pansexual, queer,

asexual, other, or selected multiple sexual orientations. I prompted participants to select

all gender identities and sexual orientations with which they identified, which revealed

many unique answer combinations. The majority of participants were white (90.51%, $n =$

229), married or partnered (65.22%, $n = 165$), had earned at least one college degree (90.11%, $n = 228$), and had a gross annual household income of \$80,000 or higher (61.26%, $n = 155$). See Appendix F for the full list of participants' gender identities, sexual orientations, and additional demographic information.

Participants' Pride Chorus Demographics

Next, I asked participants to describe aspects of their Pride Chorus participation, including how they learned of the chorus, whether they had to formally audition, and if they were required to pay dues to participate. Respondents (33.60%, $n = 85$) indicated that they initially learned about their chorus from a member of the chorus, among other options, while 32.41% ($n = 82$) heard about their chorus through the social, electronic, or print news media. Roughly half of participants (50.59%, $n = 128$) reported that their chorus required all potential members to audition, and all but four respondents reported that their chorus asked members to pay dues in order to participate. While participation in this study was limited to age criteria, most participants (69.57%, $n = 176$) reported that their Pride Chorus contained a relatively even mix of adults aged 18 and older. See Appendix F for full descriptive analyses of Pride Chorus demographics.

Research Question 1: What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join a Pride Chorus?

I addressed my first research question by asking participants to rate their agreement with 14 musical and social motivation factors. I asked participants to respond to the prompt "When you FIRST *[sic]* started singing with the choir, how important was..." on a 5-point Likert-type matrix. Response choices on the Likert-type scale ranged from 1, "Not at all important" to 5, "Extremely important." The top two musical

motivation factors were "The director's personality/affect" ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.02$) and "The quality of the choir's performance" ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.03$). The bottom two musical motivation factors were "My past musical experiences" ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.22$) and "Receiving recognition for musical talent" ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.03$). See Table 4.1 for the full list of musical motivation factors and mean participant scores.

Table 4.1

Musical Motivation Factors

Musical Motivation Factor	*M*	*SD*
The director's personality/affect	3.66	1.02
The quality of the choir's performance	3.53	1.03
The director's knowledge/skills	3.48	1.10
The type of music the choir sings (repertoire)	3.33	1.05
Improving musical skills and abilities	3.11	1.12
My past musical experiences	3.06	1.22
Receiving recognition for musical talent	2.20	1.03

The top two social motivation factors were "Making music with others" ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.81$) and "Being around like-minded people" ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.90$). The bottom two social motivation factors were "Involvement with social justice" ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.19$) and "Looking for a stress reliever" ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.21$). See Table 4.2 for the full list of social motivation factors and mean participant scores.

Table 4.2

Social Motivation Factors

Social Motivation Factor	*M*	*SD*
Making music with others	4.19	0.81
Being around like-minded people	4.08	0.90
Involvement with the LGBTQ+ community	3.93	1.07
Looking for a place to belong	3.89	1.06
Meeting new people/socialization	3.78	0.98
Involvement with social justice	3.32	1.19
Looking for a stress reliever	3.05	1.21

Relationships Between Motivation Categories

To gain a deeper understanding of my participants' motivations, I investigated whether participants felt significantly more motivated to join their Pride Chorus for social or musical reasons. I calculated the mean of each participant's ratings of all social and musical motivation factors to determine a computed variable. This mean of each computed variable per motivation category gave the overall Social Motivations Category mean ($M = 3.75, SD = 0.66$) and Musical Motivations Category mean ($M = 3.20, SD = 0.75$). I conducted a Mann-Whitney U test to compare participant responses between motivational categories. I used a nonparametric tool for analysis due to ordinal nature of the data. Results indicated that participants were significantly more motivated to join their chorus due to social motivations compared to musical motivations ($U = 18070.50, z = 8.47, p < .001$).

Research Question 2: What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in a Pride Chorus?

I addressed my second research question by examining LGBTQ+OAs' self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation. I asked participants to respond to the

prompt "I feel that singing with my choir..." on a 5-point Likert-type matrix for 30

physical, mental/emotional/ spiritual (MES), and social benefit factors. Response choices

on the Likert-type scale ranged from 1, "strongly disagree" to 5, "strongly agree." The

top two physical benefit factors were "Helps increase my breath control/support" ($M =$

3.80, $SD = .98$) and "Improves my ability to project my voice" ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.04$).

The bottom two physical benefit factors were "Strengthens my cardiovascular

system/exercises my heart" ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.16$) and "Helps with breathing

difficulties/asthma" ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.32$). See Table 4.3 for the full list of physical

benefits and participants' ratings.

Table 4.3

Participants' Ranked Mean Scores for Self-Perceived Physical Benefits

Physical Benefit Factor	*M*	*SD*
Helps increase my breath control/support	3.80	0.98
Improves my ability to project my voice	3.61	1.04
Wakes me up/helps me feel more alert/energized/active	3.54	1.12
Exercises/strengthens my diaphragm, abdominal, and/or chest muscles	3.42	1.10
Exercises/improves my lung capacity	3.41	1.08
Helps me feel fitter, stronger, better	3.40	1.10
Improves my posture	3.24	1.03
Strengthens my cardiovascular system/exercises my heart	2.80	1.16
Helps with breathing difficulties/asthma	2.31	1.32

The top two MES benefit factors were "Makes me feel positive/good/happier" ($M = 4.51$,

$SD = 0.68$) and "Induces powerful emotions when I sing" ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.85$). The

bottom two MES benefit factors were "Makes me feel safe" ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.17$) and

"Enhances my spiritual beliefs" ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.41$). See Table 4.4 for the full list of

MES benefits and participants' ratings.

Table 4.4

Participants' Ranked Mean Scores for Self-Perceived MES Benefits

Mental/Emotional/Spiritual Benefit Factor	*M*	*SD*
Makes me feel positive/good/happier	4.51	0.68
Induces powerful emotions when I sing	4.29	0.85
Makes me feel refreshed, enthusiastic, energized	4.08	0.91
Feels therapeutic	3.91	1.08
Helps to release or reduce stress; makes me feel calmer	3.89	1.04
Diverts my thoughts/helps me cope with stressors	3.77	1.17
Helps me express my emotions	3.74	1.10
Gives me a sense of self-identity	3.73	1.14
Improves my self-confidence	3.61	1.14
Is spiritually uplifting	3.54	1.29
Makes me feel safe	3.50	1.17
Enhances my spiritual beliefs	2.67	1.41

Finally, the top two social benefit factors were "Gives me the opportunity to be in a friendly space" (*M* = 4.43, *SD* = 0.76) and "Gives a unified experience, lets me feel like I'm part of a group/gives me a sense of group identity" (*M* = 4.37, *SD* = 0.85). The bottom two social benefit factors were "Helps me learn from others younger than me" (*M* = 3.70, *SD* = 1.07) and "Helps me learn from others my age" (*M* = 3.26, *SD* = 1.10). See Table 4.5 for the full list of social benefits and participants' ratings.

Table 4.5

Participants' Ranked Mean Scores for Self-Perceived Social Benefits

Social Benefit Factor	M	SD
Gives me the opportunity to be in a friendly space	4.43	0.76
Gives a unified experience, lets me feel like I'm part of a group/gives me a sense of group identity	4.37	0.85
Gives me opportunities to engage with my LGBTQ+ peers	4.36	0.81
Helps me feel more connected to the LGBTQ+ community	4.30	0.87
Allows me to socialize with people	4.21	0.89
Gives me positive opportunities to sing about/engage with social justice	4.04	1.10
Helps me meet/get to know new people/helps me make friends	4.03	1.00
Helps me learn from others younger than me	3.70	1.07
Helps me learn from others my age	3.26	1.10

Relationships Between Physical, MES, and Social Benefit Categories

I looked more closely at participants' perceived benefits to learn if any differences among benefit categories were statistically significant. I calculated a computed variable to determine the mean of all Likert-type responses for each benefit factor within each of the three benefit categories per participant. This mean of each computed variable per benefit category gave the overall Physical Benefits category mean ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.86$), MES Benefits Category mean ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.82$), and Social Benefits category mean ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.67$).

To further examine these relationships, I performed a Kruskal-Wallis H test between all three benefit categories. As with motivation ratings, I utilized a nonparametric test due to the ordinal nature of Likert-type responses. The Kruskal-Wallis test indicated significant difference in the participants' benefit ratings between physical, MES, and social categories, $H(2) = 111.52$, $p < .001$, with a mean rank score of 270.66

for physical benefit ratings, 394.46 for MES benefit ratings, and 474.88 for social benefit

ratings. I calculated a Dunn's post hoc test using a Bonferroni corrected alpha of 0.02 in

order to discover where the significance emerged between pairs. Results indicated that

participants perceived MES factors as significantly more beneficial than physical factors

($z = 6.35$, $p < .001$), and that participants perceived social factors as significantly more

beneficial than both MES ($z = 4.13$, $p < .001$) and physical factors ($z = 10.48$, $p < .001$).

Research Question 3: Are there any relationships between motivational factors and

self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation?

I addressed my third research question by examining relationships between

reported motivational factors and self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation. I

calculated Spearman's *rho* to determine any relationships between the overall means of

all motivation and benefit categories (see Table 4.6). In line with my previous analyses, I

employed this nonparametric tool to discover relationships between participants'

subjective motivation and benefit ratings. All motivation and benefit categories were

revealed be significantly correlated, with a positive low-to-moderate r_s. Results indicated

that the strongest correlation was between participants' self-perceived physical benefits

and MES benefits ($r_s = 0.67$), and the weakest correlation among all motivation and

benefit categories was between musical motivations and social benefits ($r_s = 0.20$).

Spearman's *rho* correlation coefficient measures the strength and the direction of the

relationship between variables. Values of r_s indicate the following correlation strength

levels: very high ($r_s = 0.9–1$), high ($r_s = 0.7–0.89$), moderate ($r_s = 0.5–0.69$), moderately

low ($r_s = 0.3–0.49$), and low ($r_s < 0.3$).

Table 4.6

Motivation and Benefit Category Correlations

Variable	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Musical Motivations	253	3.20	0.75	—				
2. Social Motivations	253	3.75	0.66	0.36**	—			
3. Physical Benefits	253	3.28	0.86	0.38**	0.36**	—		
4. MES Benefits	253	3.77	0.82	0.30**	0.46**	0.67**	—	
5. Social Benefits	253	4.08	0.67	0.20*	0.44**	0.48**	0.64**	—

$*p < .01, **p < .001$

Research Question 4: What relationships exist among LGBTQ+OAs' musical experiences, their motivations to initially join a Pride Chorus, and their self-perceived benefits from participating in a Pride Chorus?

I addressed my fourth research question by investigating relationships that emerged between participants' musical experiences, their motivations to initially join a Pride Chorus, and their self-perceived benefits of participating in a Pride Chorus. Participants' musical experiences included participants' early exposure to music, the amount of parental and teacher encouragement participants received to partake in musical activities, past participation in choral ensembles, and aspects of their current participation in their Pride Chorus including leadership roles and membership duration (see Appendix G for full descriptions of participants' musical experiences). In this section, I report significant relationships that emerged in the data.

Early Exposure to Music, Parent and Teacher Encouragement, and Motivations

While investigating my fourth research question, I discovered significant correlations between participants' reported levels of early musical exposure, encouragement, and participants' motivations for joining their Pride Chorus. I calculated

Spearman's *rho* to determine correlations within this ordinal data. I found that

participants' musical and social motivation ratings significantly correlated with

participants' mean early musical exposure ratings, and perceived parent/teacher

encouragement ratings. All significant correlations had a positive low-to-moderate r_s

value (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

Correlations Between Early Musical Exposure, Encouragement, and Motivations

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
1. Early Musical Exposure	253	2.97	0.85	—			
2. Encouragement	253	3.42	1.14	0.61*	—		
3. Social Motivations	253	3.75	0.66	0.23*	0.28*	—	
4. Musical Motivations	253	3.20	0.75	0.21*	0.28*	0.36*	—

*$p < .001$

I conducted four Kruskal-Wallis *H* tests to further explore relationships between

encouragement, early music exposure, and participants' motivation ratings. First, I

compared participants' mean musical motivation ratings among three groups: participants

who received little early music exposure ($n = 24$), participants who received some early

music exposure ($n = 130$), and participants who received frequent early music exposure

($n = 99$). The Kruskal-Wallis test indicated significant difference in participants' musical

motivation ratings between the three groups. I did not, however, find significant

differences after conducting a Dunn's post hoc test with a Bonferroni corrected alpha of

0.02.

Second, I conducted a Kruskal-Wallis test to compare participants' social

motivation ratings among the three early music exposure groups. I discovered significant

differences in participants' social motivation ratings between the three groups, $H(2) =$

7.54, $p = .02$, with a mean rank score of 91.69 for those who received little early exposure to music, 125.86 for those who received some early exposure to music, and 137.06 for those who received frequent early exposure to music. I conducted a Dunn's post hoc test using a Bonferroni corrected alpha of 0.02, which indicated that the mean rank of little early musical exposure and frequent early musical exposure was significantly different ($z = 2.73, p < .01$).

Next, I compared participants' musical motivation ratings between three groups: participants who received little encouragement from parents and teachers, participants who received some encouragement, and participants who received frequent encouragement. I found a significant difference in participants' musical motivation ratings based on the amount of encouragement participants received from parents and teachers $H(2) = 11.01, p < .01$, with a mean rank score of 90.06 for those who received little encouragement ($n = 26$), 117.61 for those who received some encouragement ($n = 71$), and 137.43 for those who received frequent encouragement ($n = 156$). I conducted post hoc Dunn tests with a Bonferroni corrected alpha of .02, which indicated that participants who received frequent encouragement had significantly higher musical motivation ratings compared with the "little" and "some" encouragement groups ($z = 3.06, p < .01$).

Finally, I discovered a significant difference in participants' social motivation ratings between the three encouragement groups, $H(2) = 11.06, p < .01$, with a mean rank score of 100.96 for those who received little encouragement, 110.51 for those who received some encouragement, and 138.84 for those who received frequent encouragement. I conducted post hoc Dunn tests with a Bonferroni corrected alpha of .02

for each motivation comparison between encouragement groups. Results indicated that participants who received frequent encouragement had higher social motivation ratings compared to those with little encouragement ($z = 2.45$, $p = .014$) and some encouragement ($z = 2.71$, $p < .01$).

Choral Leadership and Membership Duration

I discovered one other significant relationship while investigating my final research question. Significance emerged between participants' Pride Chorus membership duration and whether the participant had served in a leadership role. I utilized a parametric tool to analyze the data, as participants' years of membership represented an intervallic variable. I calculated an independent samples *t*-test to compare years of membership duration among participants who served in at least one leadership role and participants who did not take on any leadership roles in their Pride Chorus. There was a significant difference in the years of participants' membership between the two groups, $t(251) = 2.99$, $p < .01$. Results indicated that participants who held a leadership role ($M = 14.51$, $SD = 10.52$) had a significantly longer duration of membership compared to those who had never held a leadership role ($M = 10.58$, $SD = 10.29$).

Summary

In this chapter, I reported participants' personal and musical demographics, and the analyses I utilized to answer my four research questions. I addressed the first research question by investigating LGBTQ+OAs' motivations for joining their Pride Chorus. Results indicated that participants were significantly more motivated by social factors rather than musical factors when deciding to join their chorus. I examined the second research question by asking participants to rate their agreement with nine physical benefit

factors, 12 MES benefit factors, and nine social benefit factors. I found that participants perceived MES factors as significantly more beneficial than physical factors, and that participants perceived social factors as significantly more beneficial than both MES and physical factors.

I investigated my third research question by examining relationships between reported motivational factors and participants' self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation. Results of a Spearman's *rho* correlation test indicated that the strongest correlation was between participants' self-perceived physical benefits and MES benefits. I addressed my final research question by investigating relationships between participants' musical experiences, their motivations to initially join their Pride Chorus, and their self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation. I found statistically significant relationships in two areas. Firstly, participants' motivation ratings significantly correlated with two early exposure factors: having the opportunity to perform music as a child and to witness parents listening to music. Both musical and social motivation category means significantly correlated with participants' perceived amount of encouragement they received from parents and teachers. Secondly, I discovered that participants who had served in a leadership role in their Pride Chorus had significantly longer membership duration than those who had never taken on a leadership role. In the next chapter, I offer interpretations and implications of these results, as well as address limitations and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Researchers have investigated LGBTQ+ older adults' (LGBTQ+OAs) collective histories and behavioral trends, as well as community music-making, older adults' participation in community choruses, benefits of choral participation, and choruses that welcome members of the LGBTQ+ community (Pride Choruses). LGBTQ+OAs have reported higher levels of loneliness and isolation as they age compared to their heterosexual peers (Inventor et al., 2022; Lyons et al., 2021; Perone, et al., 2020; Preston, 2024). Researchers have also discovered that singing in a chorus can benefit participants physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually (Clift & Hancox, 2001). However, limited research has been conducted specifically regarding LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses.

The purpose of this research study was to add to the limited data on LGBTQ+OAs' experiences in Pride Choruses. I sought to investigate how those at the intersection of LGBTQ+ identity and older adulthood may benefit from singing in Pride Choruses and learn what factors motivated LGBTQ+OAs to join their chorus. I examined LGBTQ+OAs' motivations for joining a Pride Chorus, as well as their self-perceived benefits of participation, and explored relationships between those factors and participants' musical backgrounds. The results and implications of this study are a snapshot of 253 LGBTQ+OAs and their experiences in their Pride Choruses.

In this chapter, I interpret the data through the lens of Seligman's (2011) PERMA framework. Seligman suggested that five key elements (Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment/Achievements) contribute to an individual's well-being. Researchers have utilized this framework in prior studies to

examine how music-making may contribute to participants' quality of life (Ascenso et al., 2018; Forbes & Bartlett, 2020; Habron-James, 2024; Lee et al., 2017; Matherne, 2022). I refer to Seligman's PERMA model to suggest that participants were motivated to join their chorus to improve their well-being through socialization, and were successful in doing so according to their reported benefits.

Participants had the option of providing open-ended responses to address factors of their Pride Chorus participation that I did not include in the questionnaire. Participants ($n = 53$) addressed additional motivational factors and ($n = 75$) addressed additional self-perceived benefits. I utilize these responses in this chapter solely to support the quantitative data. Following my interpretation of the results, I suggest implications for the music education profession, offer recommendations for further research, and address study limitations. Finally, the research questions that guided this study were:

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join a Pride Chorus?

2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in a Pride Chorus?

3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation?

4. What relationships exist among LGBTQ+OAs' musical experiences, their motivations to initially join a Pride Chorus, and their self-perceived benefits from participating in a Pride Chorus?

Research Question 1: What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join a Pride Chorus?

I explored participants' motivations to initially join a Pride Chorus by analyzing their level of agreement with 14 social and musical motivation factors (see Appendix C for the full survey instrument). Participants were significantly more motivated to join their chorus due to social motivations compared to musical motivations. These results aligned with much of the research on choral participation motivations. Researchers have found social connectivity to be a major motivating factor for choral participation in older adulthood (Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019; Rensink-Hoff, 2009; Sichivitsa, 2007), as well as participation in Pride Choruses (Beale, 2017; Southerland, 2020). Choral singers of all ages and sexual orientations have reported a more evenly distributed range of motivation factors including intrinsic, aesthetic, musical, spiritual, and emotional motivations (Amundson, 2012; Coffman, 2002; FitzStephens, 2022; Redman, 2016). Low standard deviations emerged in all participants' mean ratings of motivational factors, which suggested that individuals in my sample reported similar levels of agreement to the 14 motivational factors (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). Participants of this present study appeared to be like-minded in their motivations for joining their Pride Chorus.

LGBTQ+OAs may seek out social connections in Pride Choruses in order to alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation. Inventor et al. (2022), Lyons et al. (2021), Perone et al (2020), and Preston (2024) reported high levels of loneliness and isolation among LGBTQ+OAs, which may support this conclusion. Out of 14 motivational factors, both social and motivational, the top three reasons participants joined their Pride

Chorus were making music with others, being around like-minded people, and involvement with the LGBTQ+ community. Participants' highest-rated motivations were directly connected to Seligman's (2011) PERMA model for well-being.

Making Music with Others

Participants indicated that they were the most motivated to join a Pride Chorus by the opportunity to make music with others. I categorized this as a social motivation *a priori*, although it could be argued that making music with others overlaps with musical motivations. Music may not be the primary aspect of this factor, however, as many participants did not indicate longtime engagement with music or group singing. Although 68% of participants ($n = 172$) sang in their secondary school chorus, 56% ($n = 142$) did not participate in a collegiate chorus. Additionally, 61% of participants ($n = 154$) indicated that they did not have frequent music exposure in childhood. It appeared that the majority of participants did not have a history of music engagement or participation beyond secondary school choir.

Rather than past musical engagement, Higgins (2006) suggested that beginning musicians were motivated to participate in community music by the opportunity to make music in a group and finding a place of belonging. While this was not one of the top three motivational factors, participants in my study rated looking for a place to belong an average of only 0.04 points lower than the third-highest factor. Participants provided open-ended responses that supported Higgins' connection of group music-making and belonging, such as one participant's motivation "to find community, which has become chosen family." Additionally, participant responses supported the quantitative data from the present study. Although participants did not rate finding a place of belonging as one

of the top three factors, Higgins aligned belonging with the concept of making music with others. I chose to include this factor in the discussion due to supportive prior research and participants' open-ended responses. For example, one participant remarked "Music gives my life meaning. It was essential." Based on the open-ended responses, it appeared that making music with others provided participants with opportunities for engagement, relationships, and accomplishments.

Being Around Like-Minded People

Participants rated being around like-minded people as their second-highest motivational factor. This motivation connected to the Relationships aspect of Seligman's (2011) PERMA framework. Prior research supported the idea that Pride Chorus participation allowed for relationships to form within friendly, identity-affirming communities with shared histories (Cummings et al., 2021; Southerland, 2023). Pride Choruses' mission, music, and goals often involve social justice activism, identity affirmation, healing, and empowerment (Bird, 2017; Latimer, 2008; Mensel, 2007). Results from my study, as well as prior research, indicated that LGBTQ+OAs may seek out places of community among like-minded individuals in groups that promote affirmation, healing, and empowerment to combat stigma and discrimination (Birch et al., 2024; Bird, 2017; Cates, 2020; Hudson & Egger, 2021; Latimer, 2008). One participant in this present study reflected the motivation to connect with like-minded people, noting that they joined a Pride Chorus to "have an experience with [people] who are like-minded and connect spiritually." It seemed that participants in my study indicated the need for relationships with like-minded people whom they may connect with on a deep level.

Involvement with the LGBTQ+ Community

Participants were also highly motivated to join a Pride Chorus by the opportunity for involvement with the LGBTQ+ community. Out of the 53 open-ended motivation responses, participants ($n = 7$) specified that they were motivated by the opportunity to connect and make music with the LGBTQ+ community. One participant indicated that they recently came out as gay. They noted that "the gay chorus became available and a way for me to express my new self." Other participants ($n = 8$) mentioned being motivated to find an LGBTQ+ community after moving to a new city. Participants rated involvement with the LGBTQ+ community their third-highest motivational factor. Participants' ($n = 15$) open-ended responses supported these quantitative results.

One traditional setting for LGBTQ+ socialization emerged as an unideal gathering space for my sample. Two participants noted that they were motivated to find an LGBTQ+ community outside of the bar environment. One participant specified that they "wanted to have an alternate means of meeting, becoming friends, and socializing with other gay men outside of the bar environment." Gay bars have historically served as a popular environment for LGBTQ+ socialization. Hildebrand (2023) argued that generations of LGBTQ+ individuals have sought out gay bars as a space for identity affirmation and comradery. However, this setting may not be beneficial for LGBTQ+OAs with a history of substance abuse. Fredriksen-Goldsen (2017) noted that high stress levels could increase the likelihood of health-risk behaviors, such as smoking or substance use. McCabe (2010) specified that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals who experienced discrimination based on sex, gender, and race were four times more likely to receive a substance abuse diagnosis compared with LGBs who did

not experience discrimination. Although Pride Choruses are not the only LGBTQ+ gathering space outside of bars, perhaps LGBTQ+OAs in recovery chose their Pride Chorus as an alternate method of connection with their LGBTQ+ peers.

Individuals have considered LGBTQ+ community involvement as an opportunity for activism. In my study, one participant specified that their "favorite form of political activism is singing in an LGBTQ+ friendly chorus." This motivational sentiment aligned with Perone et al.'s (2020) investigation of LGBTQ+OAs' social group participation in settings including volunteer organizations, arts organizations, and social justice activism. Pride Chorus leaders often aim to provoke social change through meaningful, identity-affirming repertoire (MacLachlan, 2015). Pride Choruses appear to be a setting in which LGBTQ+OAs can make powerful music about LGBTQ+ experiences with like-minded people. This musical, social, change-provoking LGBTQ+ involvement fits into Seligman's (2011) PERMA's model in the categories of Relationships and Meaning. Participants may be motivated to join a Pride Chorus to improve their well-being.

Research Question 2: What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in a Pride Chorus?

I addressed my second research question by analyzing participants' ratings of 30 benefit factors LGBTQ+OAs' self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation (see Appendix C for the full survey instrument). Choristers of all ages and sexual orientations have reported physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social benefits from choral participation (Clift & Hancox, 2001; Grunwald Associates LLC & Chorus America, 2019; Livesey et al., 2012). Participants in the present study reported mid-to-high ratings of physical, mental/emotional/spiritual (MES), and social benefits. The highest single

benefit factor was in the MES category: feeling good/positive/happier. Unlike prior findings, however, participants in my study rated self-perceived social benefits significantly higher than MES or physical benefit categories. Members of the LGBTQ+OA community have regularly reported increased levels of loneliness and isolation compared to their heterosexual peers (Inventor et al., 2022; Lyons et al., 2021; Perone et al, 2020); Preston, 2024). Perhaps participants rated social benefits significantly higher in this research due to experiencing high levels of loneliness and isolation prior to their involvement with their Pride Chorus. Participants' self-perceived benefit ratings reflected the small standard deviations of their motivation ratings, indicating once again that participants were largely in agreement with one another (see Tables 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 for a complete list of means and standard deviations).

Feeling Good/Positive/Happier

Participants rated the statement "I feel that singing with my chorus makes me feel good/positive/happier," as the highest factor out of all benefits and motivations. This statement was an example of the Positive Emotions component of Seligman's (2011) PERMA model for well-being. Although I categorized this statement as an MES factor, it is possible that social and physical benefits may have contributed to participants' positive feelings. I believe this makes sense, as many factors could have applied in multiple categories (e.g., making music with others could be considered both social and musical). One participant noted the connection and importance of social and mental/emotional benefits of Pride Chorus: "My chorus is my lifeline and primary source of joy." Another remarked, "there is a stronger connection than friendship when music comes together. It's a transcendent feeling." I believe that these responses suggested that engaging in music-

making with others may create meaningful experiences, which aligned with the Engagement and Meaning components of PERMA. It is valuable to note that this data may be skewed due to selection bias. Pride Chorus members who did not have positive experiences likely did not remain in their chorus. Pride Chorus members who did participate in this research, however, supported the overall sentiment that Pride Chorus participation can contribute to members' sense of happiness and well-being.

Being in a Friendly Space

Participants' second highest-rated benefit factor, being in a friendly space, may have contributed to their positive well-being. Researchers have found that older adults in kind environments, particularly in an aging-friendly community, have reported high levels of psychosocial well-being (Suragarn, et al., 2021). Similarly, Bird (2017) and Latimer (2008) found that Pride Chorus participants benefitted from socializing with like-minded individuals, supportive communities, and settings that promote LGBTQ+ identity affirmation. Avery (2017), Beale (2017), and Moss et al. (2018) discovered that participants felt as though they gained an extended family among fellow choristers. In my study, three participants referred to their chorus as their "chosen family" in their open-ended responses while discussing additional benefits of Pride Chorus participation. Having a friendly, supportive, chosen family aligns with the Relationship component of Seligman's (2011) PERMA framework. This connection furthers the idea that the relationships fostered through Pride Chorus participation may contribute to participants' quality of life.

Unified Experience, Group Identity

Choir participation, particularly among like-minded individuals, may serve as a catalyst for group identity and belonging. Participants rated the unified, group experience of Pride Chorus as their third-highest benefit. Researchers have found that choristers can experience a positive sense of individual and group identity, as well as a deeper sense of belonging (Koo et al., 2023; Bartolome, 2013). One participant in the present study echoed this concept as they remarked on the importance of a unified community: "community that embraces me, and that sense of belonging is very powerful." As with the motivational open-ended responses, two participants commented on the benefits of being able to form a group connection within the LGBTQ+ community outside of bars. One participant disclosed, "I am in recovery from alcoholism and substance abuse. Being in the chorus keeps me connected to my humanity and singing with others connects me to my higher power." Clift and Hancox (2001) explored the spiritual benefits of choral participation and found similar participant sentiments. Participants in this present study found their Pride Chorus involvement to be spiritually uplifting, for both themselves and their audiences. One participant remarked,

> We can uplift our audiences, we can show families outside our community that there are lives we build that are joyful (my mom didn't think of gay people as being able to have happy lives, and I know today parents worry). Seeing us out and proud and singing is important in so many ways.

This participant's response illuminated another way that Pride Chorus participation may contribute to the Positive Emotions component of PERMA (Seligman, 2011). Additionally, performing for family members while "out and proud," as my participant

noted, may be considered a meaningful accomplishment. Participants' top perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participations aligned with all five components of Seligman's model: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishments/Achievements.

Research Question 3: Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation?

For my third research question, I pondered whether participants' motivations to join chorus correlated with the self-perceived benefits of participation. I found all motivation and benefit categories to be significantly correlated with one another, with a low-to-moderate r_s. This is unsurprising, as many individual motivation and benefit factors had similarities and overlap. For example, the top social motivation factor, making music with others, had a musical component (making music) as well as social (with others). I categorized factors based on Clift & Hancox's (2001) foundational study on the benefits of choral participation, as well as through feedback from my pilot test participants. The highest-rated factors in my study, as well as Clift and Hancox's and Southerland's (2020) study, were nuanced enough to be understood through mental, emotional, and social lenses.

Participants' top three motivation and benefit factors all contributed to aspects of Seligman's (2011) PERMA model (see Table 5.1), which indicated that participants likely perceived that Pride Chorus participation contributed to their well-being and quality of life. This suggestion was supported by prior research and participants' open-ended responses, as quoted in Table 5.1. The top motivation and benefit factors interacted with each other throughout all five components of Seligman's model, which allowed me

to answer my third research question in a more nuanced manner. According to

Seligman's framework, Pride Chorus involvement has positively contributed to

participants' sense of well-being.

Table 5.1

Pride Chorus Motivations, Benefits, and PERMA

Motivation/Benefit Factor	Supporting Quote	PERMA Element(s)
Making music with others	"[I] wanted to help create a place for feminist women to sing together"	Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishments/ Achievements
Being around like-minded people	"Have an experience with [people] who are like-minded and connect spiritually."	Relationships, Meaning
Involvement with the LGBTQ+ community	"Activism - to be a visible presence of the gay community in my city."	Engagement, Relationships, Meaning
Makes me feel positive/good/happier	"HAPPY & CONNECTED :) *[sic]*"	Positive emotions
Gives me the opportunity to be in a friendly space	"Makes me feel part of a friend group"	Positive emotions, Relationships
Gives me a unified experience, lets me feel like I'm part of a group/gives me a sense of group identity	"Singing in the chorus gives me an opportunity to create something with a group that I cannot create by myself. I need to contribute to something that we all create together."	Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishments/ Achievements

Research Question 4: What relationships exist among LGBTQ+OAs' musical experiences, their motivations to initially join a Pride Chorus, and their self-perceived benefits from participating in a Pride Chorus?

Early Music Exposure, Parent and Teacher Encouragement, and Motivations

I investigated significant relationships among participants' musical experiences, their motivations to join their Pride Chorus, and their self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation to answer the fourth research question. The first statistical representation of significance I discovered was between participants' early exposure to

music, participants' perceived level of encouragement from parents and teachers to get involved with music, and their motivations for joining a Pride Chorus. Participants who reported frequent amounts of early music exposure and encouragement from parents and teachers rated their overall musical and social motivations significantly higher compared with those with lower levels of exposure and encouragement.

My findings aligned with prior research on individuals' musical experiences (early music exposure, encouragement from adults, and participation in school ensembles) and adult music participation. Wilson (2011) found that positive past musical experiences, as well as the ensemble's repertoire and the director's affect and skills, may motivate individuals to join a community music group. Similarly, FitzStephens (2022) suggested that positive school music experiences motivated individuals to continue singing into adulthood. King (2009) and Shansky (2010) also found that community musicians were motivated to join their ensembles due to their love of music and their instrument, opportunities for self-expression, and desire for a musical challenge. It may be that participants in my study were more motivated to join their Pride Chorus if they had a pre-developed love of singing and positive past engagement with musical experiences. Those factors may have been fostered through early exposure to music and encouragement from parents and teachers.

Choral Leadership and Membership Duration

I examined relationships between participants' years of membership and choral leadership as part of my fourth research question. Results of a *t*-test indicated that participants who held a leadership role in their chorus, such as president, membership chair, or section leader, had a significantly longer duration of membership compared to

those who had never held a leadership role $t(251) = 2.99$, $p < .01$. Participants may have

taken on a leadership role because they had been with their chorus for many years.

Perhaps those who participated long-term took on leadership positions due to their

institutional knowledge. Alternatively, participants could have stayed in their chorus for

many years because of the leadership commitment they made. It is possible that other

factors impacted both participants' membership duration and leadership. I believe this

finding fits into the Meaning and Relationship aspects of Seligman's (2011) PERMA

model. Taking on leadership opportunities may have made participants' choral

participation more meaningful. Additionally, participants may have fostered additional

relationships within their leadership team. Further research on musical leadership and

ensemble longevity may illuminate further information about this statistically significant

relationship.

Widows' Motivations and Self-Perceived Benefits

I was intrigued by widowed participants' motivation and benefit ratings. There

was no significant relationship between relationship status and any motivations or

benefits category, however, widowed participants ($n = 11$) scored higher on both musical

and social motivations for joining their LGBTQ+ affinity chorus compared to all other

participants. Additionally, widowed participations indicated lower agreement on benefit

factors in all three self-perceived benefit categories. One participant remarked in the

open-ended response section that he was motivated by "rebuilding life after death of

partner of 16 years."

There is limited research on widows' choral participation. Taylor (2014) found

that after a year of participation, he experienced optimism and agency but also discovered

new levels of grief and despair. Taylor stated that "establishing new connections on [his] own felt very vulnerable (p. 77). He continued,

> Without [my husband], I searched for new meaning. While one of my primary goals in joining the chorale was to forge new social bonds, the act of making music with others provided a deeper link to renewed introspection, thus allowing me the opportunity for healing...the healing process was not always easy or painless (p. 77).

Taylor supported my suggestion that widowed participants may have rated their perceived benefits lower due to feelings of vulnerability and grief, and may have felt it took too long to establish connections. Future research on widows' experiences in choir may aid directors in promoting connections among vulnerable singers.

Implications

I drew several key implications for the music education profession from this research, including the importance of understanding ensemble members' motivations and self-perceived benefits, expanded preservice teacher training, long-term impacts of teacher encouragement, Pride Chorus retention and recruitment, and the consideration of whether music is the most important aspect of a musical ensemble. Firstly, the importance of understanding ensemble members' motivations and self-perceived benefits of participation could serve the profession by improving students' experiences in ensembles, which could lead to heightened recruitment and retention.

Music educators could apply their understanding of students' motivations and self-perceived benefits to craft spaces for their specific ensemble members. Directors may consider surveying their ensemble members throughout the school year to determine

their motivations for joining chorus, and students' self-perceived benefits of participation. For example, if choristers are primarily motivated by singing challenging music, the director may consider regularly assessing members' perceived level of challenge, and program accordingly. If their members primarily benefit from social bonds within the group, the director could facilitate social opportunities outside of rehearsal or select repertoire with messages of belonging. I would imagine that making music in an environment that was intentionally crafted to serve members' reasons for being there would enhance their overall experience. Perhaps members would be encouraged to continue their participation in this personalized environment and invite others to join them. Students may be motivated to join and remain in choir due to the enhanced experiences. This concept echoes Avery (2017):

> For directors of adult community choruses, knowledge of our participants'
> purpose for joining and remaining in our ensembles will provide valuable
> information and ensure the best experience possible in regards to the difficulty
> and type of literature, seriousness of purpose, eagerness to improve, and other
> considerations. Knowledge of the received benefits will make them more visible
> to the directors and therefore provide opportunities for enhancement (pp. 348–
> 349).

Avery's statement resonated with my own teaching philosophy. I believe that directors have a responsibility to create an environment that serves their unique singers.

Secondly, Avery's research and implications of this present study could be incorporated into preservice teacher training. Music teacher educators have typically emphasized pedagogy and musical skill development. Preservice teachers and their future

students may benefit from a more holistic music education curriculum. Curricular additions could include methods of collecting student feedback, such as their reasons for joining an ensemble and what students feel they gain from participation, and how to incorporate that feedback into their teaching practices and classroom environment. Music teacher educators and preservice teachers could explore how these skills could be transferred to a variety of ensembles outside of K-12 teaching, such as a community Pride Chorus.

Other possible curricular additions include teacher personality and affect development. Although participants rated director knowledge/skills highly (see Table 4.1), their highest musical motivation factor was director personality/affect. Lamont et al. (2018) discovered similar results among older adult community choristers. The authors suggested that participants were motivated to continue choral participation due to their director's enthusiasm and inclusive agenda. Similarly, Jansson (2015) suggested that choral singers valued conductors who demonstrated musical competency as well as sincerity and devotion. A participant in this present study noted the value of having a director who demonstrated both musical skills and positive personality traits:

> [The] director's professionalism and the positivity they present are helping [me] to continue to grow in my new identity. The director's...responses to what is happening with the chorus is very emotional for me and part of the reason I feel so strongly about my belonging to the community they are creating."

Similarly, another participant stated in an open-ended response, "Our director is the best, and her skill and leadership is a huge part of the success of our community." Preservice

music teachers might feel more prepared to connect with choristers and create positive musical environments if teacher affect development were included in the curriculum.

The third implication of this research is the potential long-term impact of intentional encouragement and positive musical experiences. Participants in this study who experienced frequent parent and teacher encouragement reported increased levels of motivation to participate in their Pride Choruses. Similarly, researchers have found that positive musical leadership and encouragement may motivate students to continue music-making into older adulthood (Clay, 2022; FitzStephens, 2022; Kruse, 2021). Music educators might consider seeking out additional opportunities for students to expand their musical participation, such as advanced extracurricular or all-state ensembles. Intentionally encouraging students to embrace their talents and take on musical challenges could positively impact their self-esteem, create additional musical opportunities, and motivate lifelong ensemble participation.

Participants addressed past musical experiences and adult encouragement in open-ended motivation responses. One participant noted that they were motivated by positive memories of community music-making in adolescence: "[I] saw an article about the chorus in the local gay paper, and it reminded me of enjoying playing with a municipal concert band and symphony orchestra as a teen." Another participant was motivated to join a Pride Chorus by encouragement from their mother: "My mother always encouraged participation so after she passed I joined a municipal based men's chorus." Adult encouragement and positive musical experiences in adolescence can motivate individuals to participate in music throughout their life-course. Lifelong music-making can contribute to individuals' well-being.

LGBTQ+OAs may particularly benefit from the fourth implication of this research regarding recruitment. Goll et al. (2015) found that older adults' high levels of loneliness and isolation may be linked to social fears, which may deter them from participating in group activities. Participants in Goll et al.'s study experienced additional group participation barriers including disabilities and a perceived lack of social opportunities. LGBTQ+OAs have identified structural barriers that further prevent them from maintaining social connections, such as systematic financial discrimination (Perone et al., 2020). To combat these challenges, Pride Chorus directors could explore recruitment strategies for contacting LGBTQ+OAs who might be unaware of Pride Choruses, or how to get involved. For example, directors could advertise membership openings on local television stations or by word of mouth in LGBTQ+-friendly nursing homes or Pride Centers. If directors highlight the meaningful social aspects of Pride Chorus participants identified in this present research, LGBTQ+OAs may feel more motivated to join despite social fears. Directors could further remove barriers to participation by arranging free transportation and having flexible dues options. Participants in this present study indicated that Pride Chorus participation can improve LGBTQ+OAs well-being, yet some may be unaware of this opportunity.

Finally, choir directors and music teacher educators might consider that individuals perceive choral participation as more than a solely musical experience. LGBTQ+OAs in this study indicated that their motivations for joining their chorus were significantly more social-based than musical-based. Participants' open-ended responses supported the importance of social connectivity in chorus, and how that connectivity may promote better music-making. One participant stated,

> Singing with this particular chorus has given me a sense of acceptance, whereas in other spaces, I have felt confined or labeled... relating stories as a community and sharing joys and challenges as well as losses draw us closer as a cohesive group... I love the variety of music we have—even those pieces that challenge our chorus... I look forward to conquering more uncomfortable tasks/situations together.

As this participant indicated, choristers may perceive the ability to undertake musical challenges if they are in an environment that is accepting, vulnerable, and cohesive. Music educators might consider the value of prioritizing time for social engagement and sharing joys and hardships. Balén (2017b) and Hilder (2023) emphasized the power of sharing stories to combat oppression, honor one another, and create "musical magic" (Hilder, p. 8). Perhaps making time in rehearsal to share meaningful experiences could promote a greater sense of group belonging without detracting from musical quality.

Future Research

This study inspired multiple ideas for future research, including retention and recruitment strategies, narratives from those who had a diversity of Pride Chorus experiences, and follow-up studies. Firstly, further research in ensemble recruitment and retention based on members' motivations to join the ensemble, as well as the benefits their perceive, may impact a wide variety of choruses. Participants' responses did not directly reflect the general population's motivations for joining a chorus, nor the benefits received, however, the importance of directors understanding their members' motivation and benefit factors may highlight recruitment and retention practices, should those factors be emphasized.

Secondly, it could be beneficial to explore the experiences of Pride Chorus participants who are widowed, those who identify as further marginalized beyond LGBTQ+ older adulthood, and those who chose to leave their ensembles. Widowed participants ($n = 11$) in this present study scored higher on both musical and social motivations for joining a Pride Chorus compared to all other participants, yet rated benefit factors lower overall in all three categories. Although this was not a statistically significant finding, it was intriguing that all widowered participant had such similar responses. These results indicated that LGBTQ+OA widows may be especially motivated to join a Pride Chorus, but do not experience as many benefits as those who are not widowed. I have found very limited research in this area and believe that it is worth pursuing.

Additionally, the music education profession may benefit from future research on choristers who have experienced the effect of multiple marginalizations beyond LGBTQ+ older adulthood. The participants in this study were overwhelmingly white and cisgender. The limited research I discovered on LGBTQ+OA choristers (Southerland, 2020; Taylor, 2014) also centered around white, cisgender voices. Cyrus (2017) found that LGBTQ+ people of color may face magnified discrimination due to both homophobia and racism. Similarly, Perone et al. (2020) found that transgender older adults may experience barriers to social group participation. It may be valuable to learn more about non-white, non-cisgender LGBTQ+OAs' choral experiences in a supposedly affirming space that does not represent their complete intersectional identities. Community music educators could utilize results to create a more equitable environment for voices outside of the majority. I also did not encounter any prior research on LGBTQ+OA choristers who

reported negative experiences in Pride Chorus or chose to leave. Participants in this study likely remained in their chorus and chose to complete the questionnaire because of positive Pride Chorus experiences. This selection bias will be explored further in the Limitations section.

Researchers might consider conducting follow-up, or long-term studies to further explore nuances of Pride Chorus participants' experiences. It could be valuable to conduct a follow-up study in three-to-five years to examine any potential changes in participants' motivations and self-perceived benefits following the 2025 political implementations against the LGBTQ+ community. It is possible that LGBTQ+OA choristers may face additional systematic barriers to social group participation, or may feel a decreased sense of safety. Alternately, LGBTQ+OAs may view Pride Chorus participation as an act of resistance. They could feel more empowered to be involved with the LGBTQ+ community or be in a space with like-minded individuals.

Finally, researchers could conduct a long-term study with participants of youth Pride Choruses or young adult Pride Choruses. This research could continue as participants reach older adulthood. Researchers have investigated LGBTQ+ choral participation in youth and in young adulthood, as well as experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals through their life course. I did not, however, encounter any studies in which a researcher specifically followed LGBTQ+ choristers through life-long musical experiences. Future researchers may discover specific past musical experiences or life events that led to Pride Chorus participation in older adulthood.

Limitations

Inherent challenges emerged in this study. These challenges included collecting specific data from quantitative surveys and researcher bias that may have limited participant responses. As I structured the Results chapter based on my research questions, I felt as though my fourth research question (What relationships exist among LGBTQ+OAs' musical experiences, their motivations to initially join a Pride Chorus, and their self-perceived benefits from participating in a Pride Chorus?) was simply an extension of my third research question. Based on participants responses, these questions more closely related than I anticipated. One way to further delineate the two questions might be to explore other demographic and musical background factors as follow-ups to my third research question. For example, I could have kept the original third research question (are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation?) and added two sub-questions: (a) Are there any significant relationships between participants' motivations to join a Pride Chorus, self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation, and participants' past musical experiences?; (b) Are there any significant relationships between participants' motivations to join a Pride Chorus, self-perceived benefits of Pride Chorus participation, and participants' demographics?

Research on non-monolithic experiences may require authors to provide open-ended responses when screening participants and collecting gender and sexuality demographics. For example, I specified that participants in this study be non-heterosexual in both the recruitment script and one of the survey screener questions. A Pride Chorus participant contacted me during data collection to note that transgender and gender-

expansive persons may not identify as non-heterosexual. This oversight may have deterred heterosexual transgender or gender-expansive choristers from participating in this research.

I structured four survey questions in a way that may have produced invalid responses (see Appendix C for the full list of questions). I asked participants to indicate the dollar amount of membership dues they had to pay to participate in their chorus. I discovered overlap in the answer choices in which the same dues amounts were listed multiple times. Additionally, I discovered a potential limitation regarding participants' prior ensemble involvement. I initially asked participants to indicate whether they participated in chorus, general music, orchestra, band, or other ensembles during middle school, high school, and college. It proved to be challenging to determine whether participants were involved in just choir, or choir and other ensembles, in middle school, high school, and college settings. The addition of the open-ended response exacerbated the challenge. Finally, I did not analyze data regarding Pride Chorus repertoire or how participants learned about their Pride Chorus. The "select all that apply" options for these two questions yielded hundreds of different response combinations. The large variety of responses were impractical to analyze for the purposes of this study.

Finally, limitations emerged regarding selection bias, nonresponse bias, and response rate. Pride Chorus members may have been more likely to participate in this research if they had previously recognized their motivations for singing in choir as well as their perceived benefits (Andrade, 2020). Choristers who did not feel strongly about their participation may have chosen not to respond. Furthermore, LGBTQ+OA Pride Chorus participants who did not have positive experiences in their ensemble may have

chosen to end their membership. There was no way to predict or know the study participants' motives for taking the survey, so it was not possible to understand the extent of bias. Additionally, there was no available record of the number of LGBTQ+OAs who participate in Pride Choruses. It was not possible to determine to what extent this study sample reflects the overall population of LGBTQ+OA Pride Chorus participants. Therefore, these results are not generalizable. This study did, however, provide a snapshot of how 253 participants from an under-researched population engaged with their Pride Choruses, and added to the limited literature on a valuable topic in music education.

Conclusion

LGBTQ+OAs have been positively impacted by their participation in Pride Choruses. Participants were primarily motivated to join their chorus by social factors, such as their desire to make music with others, to be around like-minded people, and to get involved with the LGBTQ+ community. Similarly, participants benefitted from the positive feelings, friendly environment, and sense of group identity and belonging that they found in their Pride Chorus. All of these factors fit into at least one aspect of Seligman's (2011) PERMA framework for well-being: Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishments/Achievements. Therefore, it can be argued that Pride Chorus participation can contribute to participants' well-being and quality of life. This foundational research has added to the limited literature on LGBTQ+OAs' choral participation. The under-researched population of LGBTQ+OAs may continue to benefit from further in-depth studies on how involvement with Pride Choruses may impact their quality of life. LGBTQ+OAs have reported heightened levels of loneliness and isolation, which can contribute to reduced quality of life. The results of

this research may illuminate opportunities for LGBTQ+OAs to combat loneliness and isolation, and improve their well-being through Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishments/Achievements. As a music educator and Pride Chorus director, I am proud to be able to foster opportunities for social connectivity, belonging, and increased well-being for this intersectional community.

Appendix A

Recruitment Script

Hello, singers!

My name is Jessica Steuver, and I am proud to serve as the Artistic Director of Windsong, Cleveland's Feminist Chorus. I had the pleasure of meeting many of you at the GALA Choruses Festival this summer in Minneapolis and at the Sister Singers Network Festival last summer in Cleveland. I am conducting research for my PhD at Case Western Reserve University, and I would greatly appreciate your help.

The purpose of my research is to learn more about why LGBTQ+ older adults participate in Pride Choruses, and what benefits they receive from participation. Although researchers have studied older adult choral participation and Pride Choruses, there is very limited research on the unique intersection of LGBTQ+ identity and older adulthood in the context of choral participation. I aim to fill this gap in the research in order to help music educators learn more about how we can help you have the best experience in your chorus.

If you are 50 years or older and identify as non-heterosexual, please consider taking the time to fill out this survey. It will take about 15 minutes and will ask questions about your personal demographics, information about your chorus, your musical background, why you joined your chorus, and what you feel you have gained from your participation.

Use this link to fill out the informed consent form and complete the survey: _

If you have any questions, please contact me at ███@case.edu, or my faculty advisor,

Dr. Matthew Garrett, at ███@case.edu. This survey has been approved by CWRU's

IRB.

    With thanks,

    Jessica Steuver

Appendix B

Informed Consent Document

The purpose of this study is to understand LGBTQ+ older adults' motivations for joining a Pride Chorus, as well as their self-perceived benefits of participation. In this survey you will be asked about your musical background, information about your chorus, why you chose to join your chorus, and the benefits you receive from singing in your chorus.

This survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Absolute confidentiality of data provided cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protection of internet access. Please be sure to complete the survey in a private location and close your browser when finished in order to protect your privacy. You will not receive compensation for participating in this research.

Contact graduate researcher Jessica Steuver at ██████@case.edu if you have any questions or concerns. The faculty advisor for this research is Dr. Matthew Garrett, who may be contacted at ██████@case.edu. This questionnaire has been approved by the Case Western Reserve University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

By clicking yes, you are consenting to participate in this research. Do you wish to continue?

o Yes (1)

o No (2)

Appendix C

Survey Instrument

LGBTQ+ Older Adult Choral Participation

Q1. Informed Consent Document:

The purpose of this study is to understand LGBTQ+ older adults' motivations for joining a Pride Chorus, as well as their self-perceived benefits of participation. In this survey you will be asked about your musical background, information about your chorus, why you chose to join your chorus, and the benefits you receive from singing in your chorus. This survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Absolute confidentiality of data provided cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of internet access. Please be sure to complete the survey in a private location and close your browser when finished in order to protect your privacy

You will not receive compensation for participating in this research. Contact graduate researcher Jessica Steuver at ▮▮▮@case.edu if you have any questions or concerns. The faculty advisor for this research is Dr. Matthew Garrett, who may be contacted at ▮▮▮@case.edu. This questionnaire has been approved by the Case Western Reserve University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

By clicking yes, you are consenting to participate in this research. Do you wish to continue?

o Yes

o No

Q2. Are you an active member of a choir affiliated with GALA Choruses, the Sister

Singers Network, or any other Pride choral group?

o Yes

o No

Q3. Do you identify as non-heterosexual?

o Yes

o No

Q4. Are you 50 years of age or older?

o Yes

o No

Q5. What is your age in years? Please select from the dropdown list.

▼ 50 – 100

Q6. How would you describe your gender identity? Choose all that apply.

☐　　　　Cisgender Male

☐　　　　Cisgender Female

☐　　　　Non-binary / gender expansive

☐　　　　Transgender Male

☐　　　　Transgender Female

☐　　　　Other _____

☐　　　　Prefer not to say

Q7. How would you describe your sexual orientation? Choose all that apply.

☐　　　　Gay

☐　　　　Lesbian

☐　　　　Bisexual

☐　　　　Pansexual

☐　　　　Asexual

☐　　　　Queer

☐　　　　Other _____

☐　　　　Prefer not to say

Q8. What is your race/ethnicity? Choose all that apply.

☐　　　　American Indian or Alaska Native

☐　　　　Asian

☐　　　　Black or African American, non-Latinx

☐　　　　Latinx

☐　　　　Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐　　　　White, non-Latinx

☐　　　　Unknown or prefer not to answer

Q9. In what state do you currently live? Please select from the dropdown list.

▼ Alabama ... Outside of the US

Q10. What is your religious faith?

☐   Christian

☐   Jewish

☐   Muslim

☐   Buddhist

☐   Hindu

☐   Agnostic

☐   Atheist/no religious belief

☐   Other _____

☐   Prefer not to answer

Q11. Are you currently retired?

☐   Yes

☐   Yes, but I work a part-time job

☐   No

☐   Other (please explain)

_____

Q12. What is your gross annual household income? Include all sources of income (wages and salaries, social security, unemployment, etc.)

o Less than $20,000

o $20,000 - $39,999

o $40,000 - $59,999

o $60,000 - $79,999

o $80,000 - $99,999

o $100,000 - $149,999

o More than $150,000

o Prefer not to say

Q13. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you
have received?

☐　　　　Less than high school degree

☐　　　　High school graduate (diploma or GED equivalent)

☐　　　　Some college but no degree

☐　　　　Associate degree in college (2-year)

☐　　　　Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)

☐　　　　Master's degree

☐　　　　Doctoral degree

☐　　　　Professional degree (JD, MD)

☐　　　　Trade school or other specialty training (please specify field)

_____

☐　　　　Prefer not to answer

Q14. How would you describe your relationship status? Choose all that apply.

☐   Married

☐   Partnered

☐   Single

☐   Divorced

☐   Widowed

☐   Other (please explain)

_____

Q15. Have you ever served in the military?

o Yes

o No

o Prefer not to answer

Q16. Which of the following terms best describes this chorus?

o Soprano and Alto Chorus

o Tenor and Bass Chorus

o SATB Chorus

o Trans Chorus

o Other: _____

Q17. How are new members admitted to the chorus?

o Open Membership, No Requirements ("All Come")

o Voice Check Required, but no formal audition

o Audition Required

o Other _____

Q18. What is your primary voice part in chorus?

o Soprano

o Alto

o Tenor

o Bass

o Other _____

Q19. How did you hear about the chorus initially? (Choose all that apply.)

☐ A chorus member

☐ The chorus director

☐ Social media

☐ Search engine or website

☐ Newspaper or print media

☐ Attending a performance

☐ Friend

☐ Teacher

☐ Family member

☐ Other _____

Q20. How many years have you been a member of your current chorus? Please select from the dropdown menu.

▼ less than 1 ... 50

Q21. What styles of music does your chorus sing? (Choose all that apply)

- ☐ Christian sacred

- ☐ Non-Christian sacred

- ☐ Holiday

- ☐ Popular music (e.g. pop, rock, etc.)

- ☐ Spoken word (e.g. rap, slam)

- ☐ Classical

- ☐ Contemporary Acappella

- ☐ Barbershop

- ☐ Broadway

- ☐ Folk

- ☐ World music

- ☐ Gospel/spirituals

- ☐ Jazz

- ☐ Songs about social justice/protest

- ☐ Songs about the LGBTQ+ community

- ☐ Other _____

Q22. Which option best describes the age range of your chorus?

☐ Mostly 20s and 30s

☐ Mostly 40s and 50s

☐ Mostly 60s and 70s+

☐ The choir is made up of a relatively even mix of ages

☐ Other (please specify)

_____

Q23. What are the dues/fees to participate in your chorus?

☐ None

☐ $50 or less per year

☐ $51-$100 per year

☐ $100-$150 per year

☐ $150-$200 per year

☐ More than $200 per year

☐ Flexible dues/pay what you can

☐ Other/unknown/I'd rather not say

Q24. Do you have any artistic or administrative responsibilities in your chorus? Check all that apply.

☐ Artistic Director

☐ Assistant Director

☐   Section Leader

☐   Accompanist

☐   Musician (other than voice - e.g., percussion, guitar, etc.)

☐   Composer/arranger for your chorus

☐   Executive Director

☐   Core Group/Board Member

☐   Leadership (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.)

☐   Chair or head of a group/committee (Music Librarian, DEIA,

Membership, Volunteering, Concert/Event planning, etc.)

☐   Grant Writer

☐   Other (please explain)

_____

☐   No

Q25. How often did you perform music, either by yourself or with a group, when you were growing up?

o Never

o Occasionally

o Sometimes/Moderately

o Frequently

o Extremely Frequently

Q26. Did your parents listen to music when you were growing up?

o Never

o Occasionally

o Sometimes/Moderately

o Frequently

o Extremely Frequently

Q27. Did your parents perform any kind of music when you were growing up?

o Never

o Occasionally

o Sometime/Moderately

o Frequently

o Extremely Frequently

Q28. Do you feel like your parents encouraged you to participate in music-making

activities growing up?

o Never

o Occasionally

o Sometimes/Moderately

o Frequently

o Extremely Frequently

Q29. Do you feel like your teachers encouraged you to participate in music-making

activities growing up?

o Never

o Occasionally

o Sometimes/Moderately

o Frequently

o Extremely frequently

Q30. Did you participate in any music-related classes/ensembles in secondary school

(grades 6-12)? Check all that apply.

	Middle School/Jr. High	High School/Sr. High
General music (e.g., appreciation, history, theory)	☐	☐
Chorus	☐	☐
Band	☐	☐
Orchestra	☐	☐
Other music class or ensembles (please specify)	☐	☐

Q31. Did you participate in any music-related classes/ensembles in college? Check all

that apply.

General music (e.g., appreciation, history, theory)   ☐

Chorus   ☐

Band   ☐

Orchestra   ☐

Other music classes or ensembles (please specify)   ☐

Q32. How many years total have you participated in musical ensembles throughout your life? Please select from the dropdown list. An estimate is okay.

▼ 1 – 100

Q33. When you FIRST started singing with the choir, how important was:

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Making music with others	o	o	o	o	o
Meeting new people/socialization	o	o	o	o	o
Involvement with the LGBTQ+ community	o	o	o	o	o
Involvement with social justice	o	o	o	o	o

Being around like-minded people	o	o	o	o	o
Looking for a place to belong	o	o	o	o	o
Looking for a stress reliever	o	o	o	o	o
The quality of the choir's performance	o	o	o	o	o
The type of music the choir sings (repertoire)	o	o	o	o	o
Receiving recognition for musical talent	o	o	o	o	o
Improving musical skills and abilities	o	o	o	o	o
The director's knowledge/skills	o	o	o	o	o
The director's personality/affect	o	o	o	o	o
My past musical experiences	o	o	o	o	o

Q34. Did you start singing with the chorus for a different reason than the ones already mentioned? Please describe any other reasons why you joined the chorus. If none, please leave blank.

_____

Q35. Physical: I feel that singing with my chorus...

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
helps increase my breath control/support	o	o	o	o	o
helps with breathing difficulties/asthma	o	o	o	o	o
strengthens my cardiovascular system/exercises my heart	o	o	o	o	o
wakes me up/helps me feel more alert/energized/active	o	o	o	o	o
exercises/improves my lung capacity	o	o	o	o	o
exercises/strengthens my diaphragm, abdominal, and/or chest muscles	o	o	o	o	o
improves my posture	o	o	o	o	o
improves my ability to project my voice	o	o	o	o	o
helps me feel fitter, stronger, better	o	o	o	o	o

Q36. Mental/Emotional/Spiritual: I feel that singing with my chorus...

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
makes me feel positive/good/ happier	o	o	o	o	o
induces powerful emotions when I sing	o	o	o	o	o
helps to release or reduce stress; makes me feel calmer	o	o	o	o	o
makes me feel refreshed, enthusiastic, energized	o	o	o	o	o
diverts my thoughts/helps me cope with stressors	o	o	o	o	o
feels therapeutic	o	o	o	o	o
helps me express my emotions	o	o	o	o	o
improves my self-confidence	o	o	o	o	o
makes me feel safe	o	o	o	o	o
gives me a sense of self-identity	o	o	o	o	o
is spiritually uplifting	o	o	o	o	o
enhances my spiritual beliefs	o	o	o	o	o

Q37. Social: I feel that singing with my chorus...

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
helps me meet/get to know new people/helps me make friends	o	o	o	o	o
gives me the opportunity to be in a friendly space	o	o	o	o	o
allows me to socialize with people	o	o	o	o	o
gives a unified experience, lets me feel like I'm part of a group/gives me a sense of group identity	o	o	o	o	o
gives me opportunities to engage with my LGBTQ+ peers	o	o	o	o	o
helps me feel more connected to the LGBTQ+ community	o	o	o	o	o

gives me positive opportunities to sing about/engage with social justice	o	o	o	o	o
helps me learn from others around my age	o	o	o	o	o
helps me learn from others younger than me	o	o	o	o	o

Q38. Is there anything else you would like to add about how singing in your chorus makes you feel? If not, please leave blank.

_____

End of Survey

Appendix D

Survey Question Map

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?

2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?

3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

4. What relationships exist among LGBTQ+OAs' musical experiences, their motivations to initially join Pride Choruses, and LGBTQ+OAs' self-perceived benefits from participating in Pride Choruses?

Table D 1

Survey Question Map

Question	Research Question Connection
Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	Informed consent; screeners
Q5 What is your age in years?	4. Do **personal** demographics, choral demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q6 How would you describe your gender identity? Choose all that apply.	4. Do **personal** demographics, choral demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q7 How would you describe your sexual orientation? Choose all that apply.	4. Do **personal** demographics, choral demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q8 What is your race/ethnicity? Choose all that apply.	4. Do **personal** demographics, choral demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q9 In what state do you currently live?	4. Do **personal** demographics, choral demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q10 What is your religious faith?	4. Do **personal** demographics, choral demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q11 Are you currently retired?	4. Do **personal** demographics, choral demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q12 What is your gross annual household income? Include all sources of income (wages and salaries, social security, unemployment, etc.)	4. Do **personal** demographics, choral demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q13 What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?	4. Do **personal** demographics, choral demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q14 How would you describe your relationship status? Choose all that apply.	4. Do **personal** demographics, choral demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q15 Have you ever served in the military?	4. Do **personal** demographics, choral demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q16 Which of the following terms best describes your chorus?	4. Do personal demographics, **choral** demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q17 How are new members admitted to the chorus?	4. Do personal demographics, **choral** demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q18 What is your primary voice part in chorus?	4. Do personal demographics, **choral** demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q19 How did you hear about the chorus initially? (Choose all that apply.)	4. Do personal demographics, **choral** demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?
Q20 How many years have you been a member of your current chorus?	4. Do personal demographics, **choral** demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q21 What styles of music does your chorus sing? (Choose all that apply)

4. Do personal demographics, **choral** demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q22 Which option best describes the age range of your chorus?

4. Do personal demographics, **choral** demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q23 What are the dues/fees to participate in your chorus?

4. Do personal demographics, **choral** demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q24 Do you have any artistic or administrative responsibilities in your chorus? Check all that apply.

4. Do personal demographics, **choral** demographics, and musical background impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q25 How often did you perform music, either by yourself or with a group, when you were growing up?

4. Do personal demographics, choral demographics, and **musical background** impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q26 Did your parents listen to music when you were growing up?

4. Do personal demographics, choral demographics, and **musical background** impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q27 Did your parents perform any kind of music when you were growing up?

4. Do personal demographics, choral demographics, and **musical background** impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q28 Do you feel like your parents encouraged you to participate in music-making activities growing up?

4. Do personal demographics, choral demographics, and **musical background** impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q29 Do you feel like your teachers encouraged you to participate in music-making activities growing up?

4. Do personal demographics, choral demographics, and **musical background** impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q30 Did you participate in any music-related classes/ensembles in secondary school (grades 6-12)? Check all that apply.

4. Do personal demographics, choral demographics, and **musical background** impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q31 Did you participate in any music-related classes/ensembles in college? Check all that apply.

4. Do personal demographics, choral demographics, and **musical background** impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q32 How many years total have you participated in musical ensembles throughout your life? An estimate is okay.

4. Do personal demographics, choral demographics, and **musical background** impact LGBTQ+OAs' motivations and self-perceived benefits of chorus participation?

Q33 When you FIRST started singing with the choir, how important was:

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

Making music with others
(Social/Emotional Motivators)

Meeting new people/socialization

(Social/Emotional Motivators)

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

Involvement with the LGBTQ+ community

(Social/Emotional Motivators)

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

Involvement with social justice

(Social/Emotional Motivators)

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

Being around like-minded people

(Social/Emotional Motivators)

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

Looking for a place to belong

(Social/Emotional Motivators)

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

Looking for a stress reliever
(Social/Emotional Motivators)

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

The quality of the choir's performance
(Musical Motivators)

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

The type of music the choir sings
(repertoire)
(Musical Motivators)

1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

Receiving recognition for musical talent (Musical Motivators)	1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
Improving musical skills and abilities (Musical Motivators)	1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
The director's knowledge/skills (Musical Motivators)	1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
The director's personality/affect (Musical Motivators)	1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
My past musical experiences (Musical Motivators)	1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
Q34 Did you start singing with the chorus for a different reason than the ones already mentioned? Please describe any other reasons why you joined the chorus. If none, type N/A.	1. What motivates LGBTQ+OAs to initially join Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
Q36 Physical: I feel that singing with my chorus… helps increase my breath control/support	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?
helps with breathing difficulties/asthma	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
strengthens my cardiovascular system/exercises my heart	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
wakes me up/helps me feel more alert/energized/active	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
exercises/improves my lung capacity	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

exercises/strengthens my diaphragm, abdominal, and/or chest muscles	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
improves my posture	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
improves my ability to project my voice	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
helps me feel fitter, stronger, better	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
Q38 Mental/Emotional/Spiritual: I feel that singing with my chorus... makes me feel positive/good/happier	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
induces powerful emotions when I sing	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
helps to release or reduce stress; makes me feel calmer	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
makes me feel refreshed, enthusiastic, energized	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
diverts my thoughts/helps me cope with stressors	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
feels therapeutic	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
helps me express my emotions	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
improves my self-confidence	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?</td></tr>
<tr><td>makes me feel safe</td><td>2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?</td></tr>
<tr><td>gives me a sense of self-identity</td><td>2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?</td></tr>
<tr><td>is spiritually uplifting</td><td>2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?
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<tr><td>enhances my spiritual beliefs</td><td>2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?
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<tr><td>**Q37 Social: I feel that singing with my chorus…**
helps me meet new people/helps me make friends</td><td>2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?
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<tr><td>allows me to socialize with people</td><td>2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?</td></tr>
<tr><td>gives a unified experience, lets me feel like I'm part of a group/gives me a sense of group identity</td><td>2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?</td></tr>
<tr><td>gives me opportunities to engage with my LGBTQ+ peers</td><td>2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?</td></tr>
<tr><td>helps me feel more connected to the LGBTQ+ community</td><td>2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?
3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?</td></tr>
<tr><td>gives me positive opportunities to sing about/engage with social justice</td><td>2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses?</td></tr>
</table>

	3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
helps me learn from others around my age	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
helps me learn from others younger than me	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?
Q40 Is there anything else you would like to add about how singing in your chorus makes you feel? If not, type N/A.	2. What are the self-perceived benefits of LGBTQ+OAs' participation in Pride Choruses? 3. Are there any relationships between motivational factors and self-perceived benefits?

Appendix E

IRB Approval Notification

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

Principal Investigator:	Matthew Garrett
	Title: LGBTQ+ Older Adults' Motivations for and Benefits of Participating in LGBTQ+ Affinity Choruses
IRB Number:	STUDY20241167
IRB Office:	CWRU IRB
Approval Date:	10/11/2024
Effective Date:	10/11/2024
Exemption Category:	(2)(i) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation (nonidentifiable);
Documents Reviewed:	• Steuver Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • Recruitment Script, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Informed Consent Document, Category: Consent Form; • Survey Instrument (Exported from Qualtrics), Category: Other;

The IRB determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review.

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If you wish to make changes to this protocol, please submit a modification.

The UH IRB operates under HHS Federalwide Assurance (FWA) number 00003937 and IRB registration numbers 00000684, 00001691 and 00008600. The CWRU IRB operates under DHHS FWA00004428 and IRB registration number 00000683.

Appendix F

Complete Participant Demographics

Table F1

Frequencies for Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
50	8	3.16
51	2	0.79
52	11	4.35
53	9	3.56
54	14	5.53
55	7	2.77
56	11	4.35
57	15	5.93
58	8	3.16
59	7	2.77
60	13	5.14
61	13	5.14
62	8	3.16
63	4	1.58
65	13	5.14
66	11	4.35
67	25	9.88
68	8	3.16
69	12	4.74
70	11	4.35
71	10	3.95
72	5	1.98
73	11	4.35
74	1	0.40
75	5	1.98
76	2	0.79
77	2	0.79
78	2	0.79
79	1	0.40
80	4	1.58

Table F2

Frequencies for Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Cis Male	150	59.29
Cis Male and NB/GE	2	0.79
Cis Female	79	31.23
Cis Fem and NB/GE	4	1.58
NB/GE	6	2.37
NB/GE, Trans Female	1	0.40
NB/GE, other	1	0.40
Trans Male	5	1.98
Trans Female	2	0.79
Other	2	0.79
Cis Male, NB/GE, Other	1	0.40

Table F3

Frequencies for Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Frequency	Percent
Gay	142	56.13
Gay, Lesbian	2	0.79
Gay, Bi	1	0.40
Gay, Asexual	2	0.79
Gay, Queer	7	2.77
Lesbian	49	19.37
Lesbian, Bi	1	0.40
Lesbian, Queer	5	1.98
Bisexual	13	5.14
Bi, Pan	1	0.40
Bi, Queer	2	0.79
Pansexual	2	0.79
Pan, Queer	1	0.40
Asexual	3	1.19
Asexual, Queer	1	0.40
Queer	5	1.98
Queer, Other	1	0.40
Other	3	1.19
Prefer not to say	1	0.40
Gay, Bi, Pan, Queer	1	0.40
Gay, Lesbian, Queer	2	0.79
Bi, Pan, Queer	4	1.58
Lesbian, Bi, Queer	1	0.40
Gay, Asexual, Other	1	0.40
Lesbian, Bi, Pan	1	0.40
Bi, Pan, Asexual, Queer	1	0.40

Table F4

Frequencies for Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, non-Latinx	1	0.40
American Indian or Alaska Native, White, non-Latinx	2	0.79
Asian	4	1.58
Black or African American, non-Latinx	4	1.58
Latinx	9	3.56
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0.40
White, non-Latinx	229	90.51
Unknown or prefer not to answer	1	0.40
American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, White, non-Latinx	1	0.40
American Indian or Alaska Native, Latinx, White, non-Latinx	1	0.40

Table F5

Frequencies for Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Christian	92	36.36	36.36	36.36
Christian, Buddhist	1	0.40	0.40	36.76
Christian, Agnostic	1	0.40	0.40	37.15
Jewish	14	5.53	5.53	42.69
Buddhist	10	3.95	3.95	46.64
Agnostic	31	12.25	12.25	58.89
Agnostic, Atheist/no religious beliefs	1	0.40	0.40	59.29
Agnostic, Other	1	0.40	0.40	59.68
Atheist/no religious beliefs	42	16.60	16.60	76.28
Atheist/no religious beliefs, Other	1	0.40	0.40	76.68
Other	53	20.95	20.95	97.63
Prefer not to answer	3	1.19	1.19	98.81
Buddhist, Agnostic, Other	1	0.40	0.40	99.21
Christian, Agnostic, Other	1	0.40	0.40	99.60
Christian, Buddhist, Agnostic	1	0.40	0.40	100.00

Table F6

Frequencies for State

State	Frequency	Percent
Arizona	5	1.98
California	24	9.49
Colorado	9	3.56
Connecticut	2	0.79
Florida	7	2.77
Georgia	10	3.95
Illinois	5	1.98
Indiana	5	1.98
Iowa	6	2.37
Kansas	3	1.19
Kentucky	2	0.79
Maine	9	3.56
Maryland	4	1.58
Massachusetts	3	1.19
Michigan	8	3.16
Minnesota	5	1.98
Missouri	8	3.16
Nebraska	7	2.77
Nevada	1	0.40
New Jersey	1	0.40
New Mexico	6	2.37
New York	12	4.74
North Carolina	15	5.93
Ohio	20	7.91
Oregon	19	7.51
Pennsylvania	12	4.74
Rhode Island	9	3.56
Tennessee	1	0.40
Texas	13	5.14
Virginia	4	1.58
Washington	11	4.35
Washington D.C.	6	2.37
Outside of US	1	0.40

Table F7

Frequencies for Relationship Status

Relationship	Frequency	Percent
Married	125	49.41
Married, Partnered	1	0.40
Partnered	35	13.83
Partnered, Single	1	0.40
Partnered, Divorced	2	0.79
Partnered, Other	1	0.40
Single	53	20.95
Single, Divorced	10	3.95
Single, Other	1	0.40
Divorced	9	3.56
Widowed	11	4.35
Other	3	1.19
Married, Partnered, Other	1	0.40

Table F8

Frequencies for Retirement Status

Retired	Frequency	Percent
Yes	87	34.39
Yes, but I work a part-time job	24	9.49
No	129	50.99
Other	11	4.35
Yes, Yes but part-time job	1	0.40
Yes, Other	1	0.40

Table F9

Frequencies for Income

Income	Frequency	Percent
less than $20,000	4	1.58
$20,000-$39,999	17	6.72
$40,000-$59,999	34	13.44
$60,000-$79,999	31	12.25
$80,000-$99,999	38	15.02
$100,000-149,999	65	25.69
more than $150,000	52	20.55
Prefer not to say	12	4.74

Table F10

Frequencies for Military Service

Military	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	5.93
No	238	94.07

Table E11

Frequencies for Education Level

Education	Frequency	Percent
HS/GED, Some college but no degree	1	0.40
Some college but no degree	18	7.11
Some college but no degree, trade school/specialty training	5	1.98
Associate degree	12	4.74
Associate degree, trade school/special training	3	1.19
Bachelor's degree	74	29.25
Bachelor's degree, Trade school/specialty training	5	1.98
Master's degree	94	37.15
Master's degree, Trade school/specialty training	3	1.19
Doctoral degree	15	5.93
Doctoral, professional degree	1	0.40
Professional degree	21	8.30
Trade school	1	0.40

Appendix G

Participants' Musical Experiences

Early Musical Exposure

The first survey items regarding participants' musical experiences pertained to their exposure to music as a child. I asked participants three 5-point Likert-type questions regarding their early exposure to music: (1) How often did you perform music, either by yourself or with a group, when you were growing up? (2) Did your parents listen to music when you were growing up? (3) Did your parents perform any kind of music when you were growing up? Response choices on the Likert-type scale ranged from 1, "never" to 5, "extremely frequently." I calculated a computed variable to determine the mean of all Likert-type responses for each early music exposure question per participant. This mean of each computed variable per question gave the overall early music exposure mean ($M = 2.97$). I grouped participants into categories of having little ($M < 2$; $n = 24$), some ($M = 2$–3; $n = 130$), or frequent ($M > 3$; $n = 99$) early music exposure.

Encouragement

I investigated participants' perceptions of musical encouragement they received as children to further learn about their past musical experiences. I asked two 5-point Likert-type questions regarding their perceived level of adult encouragement: (1) Do you feel like your parents encouraged you to participate in music-making activities growing up? (2) Do you feel like your teachers encouraged you to participate in music-making activities growing up? Response choices on the Likert-type scale ranged from 1, "never" to 5, "extremely frequently." I calculated a computed variable to determine the mean of all Likert-type responses for each encouragement question per participant. This mean of

each computed variable per question gave the overall encouragement mean ($M = 3.41$). I then grouped participants into categories of having little ($M < 2$; $n = 26$), some ($M = 2$–3; $n = 71$), or frequent ($M > 3$; $n = 156$) encouragement to participate in music-making activities growing up.

Past Choral Participation

I asked participants to indicate whether they participated in a music ensemble in secondary school or in college/university to gain more insight into their history of group music involvement. For the purposes of analysis, I categorized participants into groups: those who had participated in secondary school choir ($n = 172$) and those who had not participated in secondary school choir ($n = 81$), and those who had participated in college or university choir ($n = 111$) and those who had not participated in college or university choir ($n = 142$).

Pride Chorus Leadership and Duration of Membership

I asked participants to select all Pride Chorus leadership roles they held, both currently and in the past, to learn more about their experiences as a member of a Pride Chorus. Nearly half of the participant sample did not hold any leadership roles (49.01%, $n = 124$), while 25.69% of participants ($n = 65$) served in administrative roles (such as Executive Director, President, and Treasurer), 11.07% ($n = 28$) served in musical roles (such as section leader, composer/arranger, and instrumentalist), and 14.23% ($n = 36$) took on both administrative and musical roles within their choral tenure. In total, ($n = 129$) participants held a leadership role during their Pride Chorus involvement. Participants also provided an estimate of the number of years they had been a member of

their current Pride Chorus, which ranged from less than one year to 42 years ($M = 12.58$,

$SD = 10.59$).

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