



Positive Effects in Adolescents of Performing In A Music Ensemble



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Research Goals

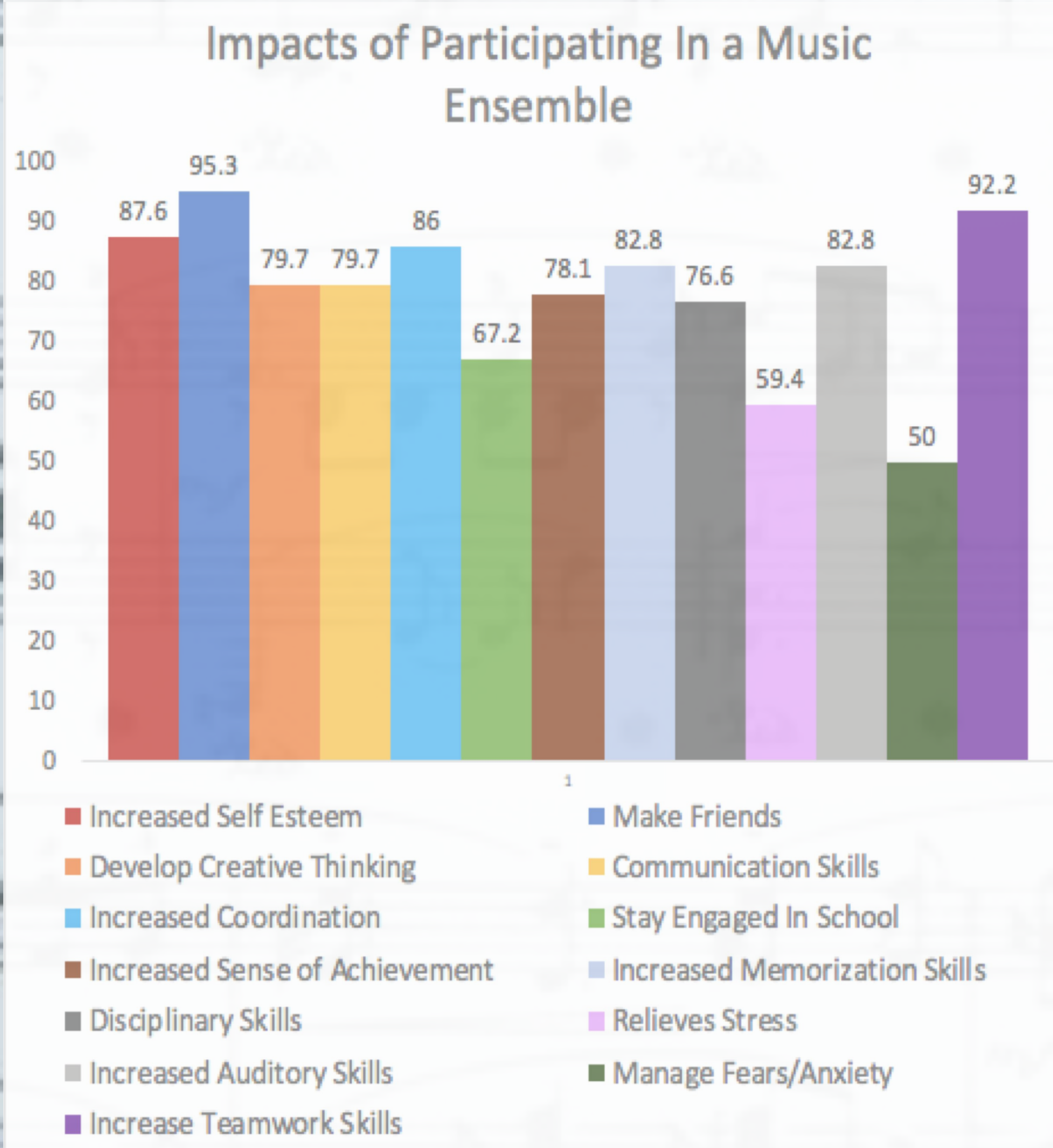
The purpose of this research project is to determine the positive impacts that performing in a music ensemble has on adolescents.

Methodology

This project was broken up into two parts. The first part consisted of gathering information using scholarly articles in order to learn more about the impacts of music on a number of different aspects of a person’s life—whether it be their social or academic skills, self-esteem, behavioral development, etc. This part of the project developed greatly as the research was conducted, focusing less on the narrow topic of performing in a music ensemble and more on music in general. The second part of the project consisted of conducting interviews and surveys with members and alumni of performance ensembles, specifically a high school marching band. Using the knowledge gained from the first part of project, the interviews were used to hear a more personal narrative of experiences with music.



Data



Findings

It was found that one of the most significant impacts of performing in a music ensemble was the on the social lives of the people involved, specifically helping make friends and increase teamwork skills. This was largely due to the fact that the music ensemble helped them not only form better relationships with people already in their lives, such as parents, but also form new bonds with their peers with whom they had a passion in common. It was also found that the least significant impacts involved staying engaged in school and managing anxiety and/or stress. Because of the extent that was read about how music can help greatly with academia as well as with mental health, this was a surprising finding. This impact was largely due to the nature of the ensemble—a rigorous and time-consuming activity that could foster pressure of achieving success.

Future Work

This information can be used to help advocate for better funding of music and arts programs in general education.

Conclusions

The impacts of music on not only adolescents but people in general are abundant, and new effects are indubitably being found each day. The most significant positive effects of this specific ensemble involved social aspects of life, specifically rebuilding and forming new relationships. This project was extremely valuable to me, as I was able to hear personal stories of how music impacts the lives of people I know.

Limitations

The data for this project was accumulated through interviews and surveys conducted with members of the community. A great effort was made to keep the interviews as objective as possible, but since the project is about the positive impacts of music, it focuses on that. However, negative experiences will also be touched on in order to keep the data accurate. Additionally, the sample size of interviewees was less than optimal, which could possibly skew the data.

A total of 64 interviews were conducted; 70.3% of interviewees were alumni (ranging from one year to four years since being in the ensemble) of the Urbana Mighty Hawks Marching Band, while the remaining 29.7% were current members. The bars of the graph represent the percentage of interviewees who feel as though their participation in a music ensemble helped certain aspects of their lives. Because this data is entirely objective, the number of alumni interviewees was significantly greater than current members due to the fact that alumni would be able to reflect more accurately on their time spent in and after the ensemble.

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Thanks to Dr. Craig Potter and Dr. Peel for guidance for this research project