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Higher Music Teacher Education Programs in Mexico from the Professors' Perspective. A Descriptive Study

Los programas de formación de educadores musicales a nivel superior en México desde la perspectiva de los profesores: un estudio descriptivo

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RESUMEN

Introducción. A pesar del importante impulso dado a la educación musical en México y su incuestionable crecimiento, tres factores han impedido su plena consolidación y adecuado desarrollo: 1) Existen pocos programas de educación musical superior; 2) La matrícula en esos programas es extremadamente baja; 3) Hay un déficit de educadores musicales bien formados. Lamentablemente, en México se han desarrollado pocas investigaciones en torno a este objeto de estudio y la mayoría de ellas se han centrado en el diseño curricular. *Objetivo.* Con el fin de comprender la situación antes mencionadas, el autor realizó un estudio cuantitativo de carácter descriptivo destinado a determinar el perfil de los docentes de educación musical que trabajan en el nivel superior, así como explorar sus percepciones sobre el funcionamiento de sus programas académicos, el perfil de sus estudiantes y las condiciones de enseñanza-aprendizaje. *Metodología.* Los datos fueron recolectados a través de una encuesta creada ad hoc por el investigador y validada por juicio de expertos y expertas. La encuesta fue enviada a los 14 programas de educación musical que figuran en el Anuario de la ANUIES 2022-2023. Los datos fueron analizados estadísticamente mediante el software SPSS, 2.0. *Resultados.* El estudio arrojó luz sobre las fortalezas y debilidades que percibe el profesorado y ha proporcionado algunas pistas que podrían explicar la situación actual. *Conclusiones.* Si bien existen fortalezas relevantes, también hay debilidades importantes que deben atenderse, incluida la contratación de profesores y profesoras de tiempo completo mejor preparados, la implementación de mecanismos eficaces para incrementar la matrícula, y el establecimiento de programas adecuados de apoyo psicopedagógico y financiación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación musical, Formación de educadores, Profesorado de educación musical a nivel superior, Estudiantado de educación musical, Condiciones de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Despite the significant promotion and undeniable growth of music education in Mexico, three major issues have hindered its full consolidation and appropriate development: 1) There are few higher music education programs; 2) Enrollment in these programs is extremely low; 3) There is a deficit of well-trained music educators. Unfortunately, few studies in Mexico have addressed these issues, with most focusing on curriculum design. *Objective.* To address these concerns, this study conducted a quantitative, descriptive analysis to determine the profile of tertiary music education faculty and explore their perceptions regarding the functioning of their academic programs, their students' profiles, and the teaching-learning conditions. *Methodology.* Data was collected through an ad hoc survey created by the researcher and validated through the expert-judgment validation process. The survey was sent to the 14 music education programs listed in the ANUIES Yearbook 2022-2023. Data was statistically analyzed by using the software SPSS, 2.0. *Results.* The findings highlighted the

strengths and weaknesses perceived by professors and provided insights that may explain the current situation. *Conclusions.* While there are notable strengths, significant weaknesses need to be addressed, including the hiring of more well-prepared full-time professors, the implementation of effective recruitment mechanisms, adequate psycho-pedagogical support, and appropriate funding programs.

KEYWORDS: Music Education, Teachers' Training, Tertiary Music Education Faculty, Music Education Students, Teaching-Learning Conditions.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, music education in Mexico has made significant progress across all educational fields and levels. In the formal realm, arts have become a compulsory and formative subject in basic education (*Secretaría de Educación Pública [SEP], 2006, 2009, 2017a, 2017b*). In non-formal education, music stands out as a resource that, through social programs (such as children's and youth music ensembles), has contributed to rescuing young people in vulnerable situations and reconstructing the social fabric (*Secretaría de Cultura, 2020*). Additionally, music is beginning to be explored in informal education to promote a more spontaneous development of people's sensibility and creativity (*Carrillo & González-Moreno, 2019*). The most recent significant advancement occurred when the Mexican government conferred constitutional status to music education (*Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 2019*).

In spite of that significant promotion, three issues have hindered its consolidation and development: 1. The number of higher music education programs in the country is insufficient (the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions Yearbook lists only 14 programs in a country conformed by 32 states); 2. The total enrolment of 638 students in those programs is extremely low (*Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior [ANUIES], 2023*) compared to the 38.5 million children and young people who must receive music education (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática [INEGI], 2020*); and 3. As a consequence, there is a deficit of well-trained music educators (*González-Moreno, 2015; Navarro, 2017*). All three issues revolve around two main topics: music educators and their academic formation. Their importance is crucial since degree programs are intended to meet social needs (*Roldán, 2005*) and satisfy the labor market (*Lauder & Mayhew, 2020*). Moreover, teachers are responsible for designing significant teaching and learning processes that foster the benefits of music education for human development (*Hallam, 2010*).

Unfortunately, as the literature review will reveal, research on higher music education programs in Mexico is scarce and has had limited scope and impact. Concerned about this situation, the author conducted a quantitative, descriptive study to achieve the following goals: a) To determine the profile

of music education faculty at the higher education level; b) To explore their perceptions concerning the functioning of their academic programs; c) To characterize the profile of music education students; and d) To examine the teaching-learning conditions. The researcher expects this paper will contribute to the knowledge regarding this important topic.

This article has been structured in seven sections: 1) Introduction; 2) Literature review; 3) Research goals; 4) Method and materials; 5) Contextualization; 6) Results and discussion; and 7) Conclusions.

Literature Review

An important contribution to the study of higher music education programs is the monograph “Music Teacher Training: Curricula in Europe and Latin America,” published in *Profesorado. Journal of Curriculum and Teacher Training*. The studies in this monograph aimed to understand the actions taken in each country, learn from them, and, where appropriate, apply that knowledge elsewhere (Aróstegui, 2010).

According to Aróstegui & Cisneros-Cohernour (2010), the articles focusing on European curricula revealed that despite the convergence in university education, the application of criteria and the resulting effects varied due to contextual differences. For example, there were different models of teacher training, ranging from an education focused on content and music development to one focused on the educational attributes of music.

Mateiro (2010) analyzed the contents of 45 degree plans from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Venezuela and detected three formative tendencies: 1) The one that conceives the educator as a musician; b) The one that focuses on the formation of a pedagogue; and c) that which seeks the integration of the arts in education.

Cisneros-Cohernour & Canto-Herrera (2010) studied 3 programs from Mexico, 2 from Guatemala, and 1 from Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. These authors found that each degree plans had a different professional orientation, as well as important differences in the relevance, clarity, and congruence of various aspects, such as: objectives, entry and exit profiles, procedures for evaluating previous musical knowledge, teaching methods, systems to evaluate student performance and mechanisms for obtaining the degree. Therefore, they concluded one of the main weaknesses regarding the design of these degree plans was the absence of deep-rooted criteria that reflected in a clear and consistent structure.

In concluding the monograph, Aróstegui & Cisneros-Cohernour (2010) synthesized the outcomes, highlighting that the general lack of research in music education has led to the absence of a clear model for music educators and a well-defined conception of what a curriculum should be.

Aróstegui (2011a) edited the book *Educating Music Teachers for the 21st Century*, analyzing seven music education programs in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden from a comparative education perspective. According to Heiling & Aróstegui (2011), the most common type

of educator was the generalist teacher specialized in music. In Sweden, this educator studies various subjects and must teach multiple subjects. In Spain, the music teacher is supposed to be a specialist but is trained as a generalist. In Brazil and Argentina, programs emphasize instrumental skills, allowing graduates to combine elementary music education with instrumental teaching. The selected Mexican program trained teachers in the arts, reflecting the subject taught in elementary schools. [Aróstegui \(2011b\)](#) noted that academic programs often lack a clear concept of a music educator in real contexts, with differences stemming from the types of institutions offering the degrees (conservatories, colleges of education, schools of music, etc.).

[Pliego \(2011\)](#) analyzed the music education program offered by the National Autonomous University of Mexico and concluded it was not consistent with the intrinsic nature of music and music education. This author emphasized the importance of [Elliott's \(1992, 1995\)](#) praxial philosophy, as a foundation to design music education curricula, highlighted the importance of pre-service music education in real contexts and demanded the opening of more programs in Mexico.

The most recent work is *The Preparation of Music Teachers: A Global Perspective*, edited by [Figueiredo & Finck \(2015\)](#). The book provides an overview of the training given to music teachers in 15 countries from five continents. Concerning the Mexican situation, [González-Moreno \(2015\)](#) pointed out that most of the 94 music education programs that she analyzed included subjects that aimed to develop four basic competences: musical, pedagogical, administrative and research skills. However, she found two important weaknesses: a significant unbalance between the general pedagogy courses and the music education courses and a number of programs that not included pre-service music teaching. Other weaknesses include the lack of subjects on project administration and management in 31.9% of the programs, and the absence of subjects that develop research competencies in 39.3% of them.

In conclusion, while existing studies shed light on the structure, orientation, and approach of higher music education programs and provide insights into their strengths and weaknesses, much remains to be done. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to this research field by achieving the following goals.

Research goals

1. To determine the academic profile of the specialized music education teaching staff
2. To describe the general characteristics of the tertiary music education programs from the professors' perspective
3. To describe the students' vocational and musical attributes from the professors' perspective
4. To characterize the teaching-learning conditions from the professors' perspective.

METHOD AND MATERIALS

This study was developed in October of 2021. Data was collected through an ad hoc survey that was created by the researcher. This instrument consisted of general questions and 24 items that in-

cluded Likert scales, and dichotomic and multiple option answers designed to gather information concerning 4 categories: 1) The academic profile of the specialized teaching staff; 2) General characteristics of the music education programs; 3) The students' vocational and musical attributes; and 4) The teaching-learning conditions. Four university professors with a doctorate level and experience in the field of tertiary music education research participated in the expert-judgment validation process.

The survey underwent expert-judgment validation by four university professors with doctoral degrees and experience in tertiary music education research. The validation process followed the model proposed by [Escobar & Cuervo \(2008\)](#), where judges rated each item on a scale from 1 to 4 for sufficiency, clarity, coherence, and relevance (1 = does not fulfill the criteria; 2 = meets the criteria at a low level; 3 = meets the criteria at a moderate level; 4 = meets the criteria at a high level). Judges also provided written feedback on each item's weaknesses and strengths, allowing for survey improvements.

To determine the level of content validity and agreement among judges, the statistic of Hernández Nieto was used. As shown in [Table 1](#), items received validity coefficients above 0.80 (categorized as good) and above 0.90 (categorized as excellent). In line with recent descriptive studies like [Sorenson \(2021\)](#), the researcher did not calculate statistical reliability indicators due to the predominant descriptive nature of the study and the heterogeneous nature of the survey items.

Table 1.

Hernández Nieto content validity coefficient per item

| Ítem | P_{ei} Probabilidad de error | Coficiente validez de contenido | Ítem | P_{ei} Probabilidad de error | Coficiente validez de contenido |
|---------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Item 1 | 0.00390625 | 0.980 | Item 13 | 0.00390625 | 0.918 |
| Item 2 | 0.00390625 | 0.996 | Item 14 | 0.00390625 | 0.809 |
| Item 3 | 0.00390625 | 0.980 | Item 15 | 0.00390625 | 0.809 |
| Item 4 | 0.00390625 | 0.980 | Item 16 | 0.00390625 | 0.918 |
| Item 5 | 0.00390625 | 0.887 | Item 17 | 0.00390625 | 0.918 |
| Item 6 | 0.00390625 | 0.918 | Item 18 | 0.00390625 | 0.965 |
| Item 7 | 0.00390625 | 0.934 | Item 19 | 0.00390625 | 0.949 |
| Item 8 | 0.00390625 | 0.855 | Item 20 | 0.00390625 | 0.949 |
| Item 9 | 0.00390625 | 0.902 | Item 21 | 0.00390625 | 0.965 |
| Item 10 | 0.00390625 | 0.809 | Item 22 | 0.00390625 | 0.965 |
| Item 11 | 0.00390625 | 0.855 | Item 23 | 0.00390625 | 0.840 |
| Item 12 | 0.00390625 | 0.965 | Item 24 | 0.00390625 | 0.887 |

Source: Table created by the author.

Procedure

The coordinators of the 14 programs listed in the Yearbook 2022-2023 from the National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education (ANUIES, 2023) agreed to participate in the study and send a Google Form's link with the survey to all the professors directly involved in the music education program. Participants took part in the study freely and without any coercion conforming a convenience sample. The survey was available for four weeks. Coordinators send three more emails (one per week) inviting participants to respond. The author analyzed resulting data with the *Statistics Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS, 2.0) to obtain descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means, and did inferential statistics, such as the Z test to examine if the differences in percentages and means were statistically significant or not.

Contextualization

In Mexico, there are two types of programs that focus on general music education at the basic level: university programs and non-university programs. This study included these nine university programs: Veracruz University (UV), National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), University of Guadalajara (U de G), Juárez University of the State of Durango (UJED), Meritorious Autonomous University of Puebla (BUAP), Autonomous University of Coahuila (UADEC), Autonomous University of Nayarit (UAN), Autonomous University of Nuevo León (UANL) and University of Guanajuato (UG).

Institutions like Conservatory of Music of the State of Mexico (COMEM), State School of Music of San Luis Potosí (EEM-SLP), School of Music of the State of Hidalgo (EMEH), Superior School of Music of the Sinaloa Institute of Culture (ESM- ISIC) and the National Conservatory of Music (CNM) are non-university programs. There are many differences regarding their organization. The most important is represented by the teachers' distinctions and benefits.

The Secretary of Public Education (SEP) has promoted the development of higher education through a series of incentives and benefits. Full-time university professors can earn the "Desirable Profile" (Perfil Deseable) granted by the Teachers' Professional Development Program for Higher Education, known as PRODEP. This distinction is awarded to teachers with doctoral degrees and outstanding careers. PRODEP professors receive economic support to equip their offices and an extra income for the first working year. Only PRODEP professors can fully belong to Academic/Research groups and apply for financial support to develop educational projects and engage in academic mobility (SEP, 2022). Non-university institutions, although regulated by the SEP, do not participate in this benefit system.

Additionally, the federal government, through the National Council for the Humanities, Sciences, and Technology (CONAHCYT), created the National Researchers System (SNI) to foster scienti-

fic research. This organization grants the title of National Researcher to individuals with doctoral degrees who engage in systematic research, demonstrated through scientific publications. SNI professors receive a monthly extra income and can apply for additional benefits ([Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología \[CONACYT\], 2021](#)).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The academic profile of the specialized teaching staff

At the time when the study was developed, sixty-two professors taught the music education courses taken by 638 students. 44 (71%) of them participated in the survey ($N = 44$) (see [Table 2](#)). 19 (43%) participants were men and 25 (57%) were women and their ages fluctuated between 27 and 71.

Concerning the type of contract, 24 participants (54.6%) were part-time teachers, while 20 (45.4%) were full-time professors. Moreover, three programs only had part-time professors. This information is relevant since only full-time professors are granted the time and resources to prepare their classes, develop empirical studies and perform extension activities (extramural studies and continuing education), considered as substantive functions of higher education institutions. Part-time teachers are usually responsible for teaching several classes in different schools; thus, as soon as they finish teaching in one institution, they must hurry to be on time for the next teaching job. Therefore, most of them do not have the time nor the support to organize academic events, such as music education festivals, seminars and colloquiums, or research and publishing articles. Furthermore, they might not have enough time to carefully prepare their courses, nor have an office for students' visits. In addition, they have a lower salary than full-time professors, almost no benefits, and very little recognition ([Buendía & Acosta, 2016](#)). This information has been confirmed and pointed out as an important weakness by the [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development \[OECD\] \(2019\)](#):

The adjunct teacher often works in areas that are hardly related to the courses taught. In addition, they are not fully integrated into teaching teams or programs, and almost never benefit from training and continuing education, despite the fact that adjunct professors teach 40 hours a week. (p. 56)

Administrators may argue that there are not enough students to justify hiring full-time teachers. However, schools need full-time faculty to better promote this career. [Pilati \(2006\)](#) explains that the tendency to hire part-time professors stems from a desire to do more with less. Conversely, Pilati lists four key benefits of having full-time faculty: 1) They integrate different committees and participate in decision making, taking an important role in promoting better education; 2) Because of their presence throughout the school day, they can help students overcome the challenges of higher education or guide them to the appropriate personnel; 3) They get fully involved in the revision of degree plans and other academic matters; 4) They develop a sense of ownership, therefore they are more willing to voice their concerns and promote changes.

Table 2.

Academic programs, number of professors and student's enrolment

| Institution | Number of professors | Number of participants | Students' enrolment |
|-------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| UV | 4 | 3 | 169 |
| EEM SLP | 3 | 3 | 71 |
| UNAM | 9 | 4 | 65 |
| U de G | 6 | 3 | 56 |
| COMEM | 7 | 7 | 40 |
| CNM | 5 | 3 | 33 |
| UJED | 5 | 4 | 45 |
| BUAP | 6 | 4 | 70 |
| UADEC | 2 | 2 | 27 |
| UAN | 2 | 2 | 14 |
| UANL | 4 | 3 | 14 |
| UG | 5 | 2 | 18 |
| ESM-ISIC | 2 | 2 | 13 |
| EMEH | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 62 | 44 | 638 |

Source: Table created by the author.

Note. Information was obtained from two sources: a) the *Anuario 2022-2023* (Yearbook 2022-2023) from the Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior de México (ANUIES) and b) directly from the programs' coordinators.

According to [Hargreaves \(1999\)](#), society and the knowledge economy of the 21st century have imposed enormous obligations and responsibilities on teachers, making them essential agents in promoting education. Therefore, tertiary professors must have a solid mastery of their subject and strong pedagogical preparation ([Bailey-Moreno, 2021](#); [Villalobos & Melo, 2008](#)) to fully equip future music educators with the necessary competencies to face real-world challenges. Results indicate that 14 (32%) participants have a bachelor's degree, 16 (36%) have a master's degree, and 14 (32%) hold a doctoral degree, all specialized in general music education at a basic level.

While having a graduate degree does not guarantee good teaching, a master's degree is crucial for higher education ([Porta, 2014](#)) and is considered a quality indicator ([CIEES, 2018](#); [Ocegueda et al., 2014](#)). Unfortunately, results indicate that a third of participants only hold a bachelor's degree, which may imply their domain in music education might not be as solid as it should be.

Similarly, a doctoral degree implies competences in research needed to promote advances in the state of knowledge and to develop critical thinking skills in students ([Porta, 2014](#)). In that respect, data suggests that almost two thirds may not have adequate preparation to guide their students in areas

like music education research, for only a third of participants hold a doctoral degree. At this point it is extremely important to highlight that in Mexico only the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in the capital of the country offers graduate studies in music education. Therefore, one cannot blame professors for not having this type of degree. Indeed, from the author's perspective, is quite commendable that some professors try to advance their own education by achieving the graduate degrees at their disposal (Capistrán-Gracia, 2021a). Yet, is evident the need to have more graduate programs specialized in music education.

Non-university music institutions are not eligible for PRODEP distinctions and benefits. Data indicates that out of the 29 university professors, only 17 are full-time, and of these, only 12 (70.6%) have achieved the PRODEP distinction. Unfortunately, only professors with this distinction may apply for financial support to acquire pedagogical resources and enhance the teaching-learning process, promoting a more holistic approach to music education.

Regarding the distinction as a National Researcher, data reveals the situation is rather worrying for none of the 14 university professors holding a doctoral degree has received it. This result might suggest professors do not develop research projects on a regular basis and/or their academic production is not enough to apply for that distinction.

Five of the nine participating universities have academic/research groups focused on music education, but only two have groups working on research lines that focus on evaluating and improving teaching practices. This raises concerns, as it may indicate a lack of emphasis on this crucial aspect of education. As Villalobos & Melo (2008) state:

An adequate teacher training is a key factor for the quality of the academic processes of the university and the professional and human excellence of its graduates, since it influences, among other aspects, the economic, social and cultural development of the country. (p. 3)

This fact might also explain why 76% of university participants' considered research influences *nothing* (38%), *little* (10%) and *somehow* (28%) their music education programs. Then, it is not surprising that researchers like Bonilla (2015), Capistrán-Gracia (2021a) and Ortiz-Lefort (2010), have pointed out there is a lack of connection between the research results and their application in real life situations

Concerning the collaboration of participants with the programs' coordinators in the institutional decision making, results indicate that 22 (50%) of them collaborated with the program's coordinator in the institutional decision making through the designing of strategies for educational improvement, the preparation of the annual budget, the evaluation of the academic program, the analysis and preparation of academic schedules, the reviewing of the degree plan, as well as the follow-up of graduates. 15 of those participants (34%) were full-time professors, and 7 (16%) were part-time teachers. Participants from EMEH and ESM-ISIC declared they did not get involved in that matter.

In relation to the organization of academic and artistic events, 25 teachers (57%) affirmed they collaborated with the program's coordinator by organizing rehearsals for concerts, as well as coordinating academic events such as festivals and seminars. 15 of them (34%) were full-time and 10 (23%) were part-time teachers. Participants from ESM-ISIC and UADEC declared they did not take any role.

From the author's perspective, it is quite commendable that some part-time professors sacrifice their free time to further their education without receiving well-deserved extra paid work hours. However, it is unfair to them, as their effort should be adequately compensated. On the other hand, the fact that some full-time teachers do not participate in these efforts raises concerns. It might indicate that these professors lack a sense of ownership and commitment to their roles in the academic program (Pérez-Santos, 2019), or it may suggest they are not being considered by the administration. These hypotheses deserve further attention, as results from interviews with coordinators highlight a consistent lack of interest from administrators regarding these programs.

General characteristics of the music education programs

This category includes aspects such as the music education model that is promoted, the mechanisms to foster enrolment, the admission process, the participation of students in the degree plan adaptation, as well as the challenges students face to graduate.

To begin with, results indicate most participants considered their degree plans promote a music education model that gives equal importance to both musical and educational content. This outcome suggests a good balance in music educators' formation, fostering a more holistic education through music and better responding to the demands of society and the knowledge economy (Aróstegui et al., 2021). However, this outcome does not represent the curricular design of some programs, like those at the EEM-SLP and EMEH, which include only a single course in music education compared to a greater number of other subjects.

Regarding matriculation in music education programs, 57% of participants affirmed their school administration implemented mechanisms to promote enrolment, 32% said no procedures were put into practice, and 11% did not know. Strategies employed for advertisement included informative meetings with candidates (38%), publicity through the institution's webpage and posters (30%), informative visits to high schools before the admission process (8%), and orientations at career fairs (8%). This outcome suggests that the deficit of music education students in Mexico might persist unless administrators take a more active role and implement a robust educational marketing plan to disseminate the programs, promote the institutions' image, and raise enrolment (Gómez & Granda, 2020; Ospina & Sanabria, 2010).

According to 84% of participants, candidates must take an examination designed to determine their knowledge in music theory as well as their ability with a musical instrument, so a committee

may take a decision about their admission. On the other hand, 16% affirmed candidates must undertake this test to determine their strengths and weaknesses. This measure seems appropriate to admit students who really want to become music educators and explains why participants believe students chose the career because of their true vocation (Hemsey de Gainza, 1987), an information that contradicts a common prejudice in Mexico, that establishes this degree is the destiny of students who lack talent (De la Rosa, 2013).

Concerning how students show their worries regarding specific aspects of the degree plan, 66% of participants affirmed they did it through informal comments expressed among classmates that professors gathered and presented to the administration; 10% expressed they did not know about any concerns on behalf of the students; 7% of the teachers explained students did it through the group's representative; 2% stated students did it through the administrators, while another 2% declared they did it through their final papers.

In that respect, Öncü & Sengel (2010) explain how an education process will be more satisfactory if the students' interests are taken into consideration. This pedagogical approach is precisely what student-centered teaching consists of and represents one of the latest trends in the education field to the point that it has become the slogan that currently governs the European Higher Education Area (European Higher Education Area [EHEA], 2024). However, results show that almost two thirds of professors believe students demonstrate interest in changing aspects of the music education degree plan only through informal comments. If we take into account the arguments of Öncü & Sengel, as well as the European Higher Education Area, then, teachers and coordinators must provide a formal way for students to express their concerns and give serious consideration to their interests in order to improve the overall success in school.

The ANUIES Yearbook 2022-2023 (ANUIES, 2023) indicates that graduation rates in many programs are extremely low. For instance, out of 42 students who finished their studies at CNM, only 9 completed the graduation process and received their certificates. The primary reasons for non-graduation include difficulties in completing the final research paper (68% of professors), lack of interest in fulfilling degree requirements (46%), lack of economic resources (32%), and general lack of interest in studying (21%).

Concerning the challenges students face to complete the final research paper, the author strongly believes authorities and administrators need to be aware that in order for students to successfully develop a research project, they must have a professor with a solid knowledge and experience in that field (Capistrán-Gracia, 2021a). However, as it was explained before, only a third of participants hold a doctoral degree. Therefore, it is crucial to solve the lack of research preparation of the teaching staff, so they may support their students and the graduation rate may improve (Díaz-Barriga et al., 1990).

Regarding the other three reasons why students do not graduate, it is important to remember that the social, economic and cultural diversity of 21st century students represent a great challenge for teachers; therefore, educational institutions must equip them with the necessary resources to address situations that arise in the classroom in order to efficiently meet the challenges of higher education (Planas, 2008). Furthermore, students must be supported both, academically, through adequate psychopedagogical guidance and assistance (Capistrán-Gracia, 2021b); and economically, through pertinent funding programs (Ocegeda et al., 2014). If one considers that music education has become a constitutional right and that there is a tremendous deficit of music educators, efforts must be doubled in order to remediate that situation.

The students' vocational and musical attributes

The category of students' vocational and musical attributes encompasses data related to students' motivations and musical abilities from the professors' perspective. According to the survey's outcomes, students choose the music education degree primarily due to their vocation (84%), followed by considerations of job accessibility compared to other specialties (49%), perceptions of easier completion compared to other music specialties (49%), the sole possibility of pursuing a profession related to music (42%), complementing their musical training (30%), and lack of other options (28%). This emphasis on vocation is crucial as it represents the foundation for a genuine passion for education and a lasting desire for learning (Hemsey de Gainza, 1987).

In relation to the musical level of students when entering the program, results indicate this falls right underneath the category of *regular* ($M = 1.82$). This result deserves attention on behalf of the programs coordinators, since this less than regular academic level of students when attending the admission examinations, is usually connected with serious formation weaknesses at the previous educational levels (Navarro, 2017). In consequence, from the author's perspective, remedial courses might be needed to help students cope with the challenges of the discipline and ensure a better graduation rate.

In terms of motivation and creativity levels, professors perceive them to be between regularly motivated and motivated enough ($M = 2.61$) and almost the same for creativity ($M = 2.70$). Motivation and creativity are essential elements in music education (Abramo & Reynolds, 2015; Jones & Parkes, 2010), and fortunately, they do not seem to be significant concerns in this context.

Finally, regarding the jobs students will have when they graduate, professors believe they: a) *will take up a position as a music teacher in a public educational institution at the basic level* (93%); b) *they will give private music lessons* (68%); c) *they will take up a position as a music teacher in a private educational institution at the basic level* (64%) and d) *they will take a position as music teachers in a house of culture* (50%). This outcome is certainly important, since the actual urgency is represented by the demand of music educators in all areas and levels. However, it is also expected

that graduates further their education and achieve postgraduate degrees. This will not only help them to have a solid preparation and become competitive but promotes the growth and development of the nation in all directions and ways (Reynaga, 2002). Unfortunately, an extremely low percentage of professors believed this will happen

The teaching-learning conditions

Adequate school facilities, appropriate instructional resources as well as satisfactory academic and financial support are crucial conditions that exert a great impact on the effectiveness of teachers and promote a significant and successful student learning (European Commission, n.d.). In this respect, results indicate teachers consider infrastructure and materials adequacy as between the categories regularly adequate and adequate ($M = 2.82$). In relation to general resources, results indicate most programs had the basic elements to carry out the teaching-learning processes. However, data showed the more specialized the equipment is, the less the availability. Furthermore, when data was compared according to the type of institution, it was obvious that non-university schools had more restrictions than universities.

Concerning the availability of specific music education resources and materials similar results were obtained. In this matter, it is necessary that institutions take all the necessary actions so that higher education may contribute with all its potential to the progress of society, by providing spaces for young people who demand studies, as well as offering a good quality education that guarantees graduates successfully enter the labor market and, in the case of doctoral graduates, to the activities of research and technological development (Ocegueda et al., 2014).

To determine if there were statistically significant differences (SSD) between the two types of programs, the researcher did a two-proportion Z test (see Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 3.

Comparison of availability of general resources between university and non-university institutions

| Resource | Type of Institution | | | | Statistically significant difference (SSD) |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---|
| | University | % within type | Non university | % within type | |
| Traditional library | 27 | 100% | 13 | 76.5% | There is SSD for $Z > Z_{\alpha/2}$ (2.64 > 1.96) |
| Practice rooms | 26 | 96% | 12 | 70.6% | There is SSD for $Z > Z_{\alpha/2}$ (2.41 > 1.96) |
| Group practice rooms | 21 | 78% | 10 | 58.8% | There is not SSD for $Z < Z_{\alpha/2}$ (1.34 < 1.96) |
| Open access computer lab | 21 | 78% | 1 | 5.9% | There is SSD for $Z > Z_{\alpha/2}$ (4.64 > 1.96) |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|-----|----|-------|--|
| Access to the digital library | 18 | 67% | 2 | 11.8% | There is SSD for $Z > Z_{\alpha/2}$ (3.56 > 1.96) |
| Carrels for quiet study | 14 | 52% | 10 | 58.8% | There is not SSD for $Z < Z_{\alpha/2}$ (-0.45 < 1.96) |
| Audio-visual resource room | 12 | 44% | 3 | 17.6% | There is not SSD for $Z < Z_{\alpha/2}$ (1.82 < 1.96) |
| Recording studio | 3 | 11% | 1 | 5.9% | There is not SSD for $Z < Z_{\alpha/2}$ (0.58 < 1.96) |

Source: Table created by the author.

Table 4.

Comparison of availability of specific resources between university and non-university institutions

| Resource | Type of Institution | | | | Statistically significant difference (SSD) |
|--|---------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---|
| | University | % within type | Non university | % within type | |
| Percussion instruments such as maracas, claves, tambourines, drums. | 22 | 81.5% | 6 | 35.3% | There is SSD for $Z > Z_{\alpha/2}$ (3.10 > 1.96) |
| Orff keyboards such as xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels. | 19 | 70.4% | 2 | 11.8% | There is SSD for $Z > Z_{\alpha/2}$ (3.78 > 1.96) |
| Baroque recorders of different tessituras. | 6 | 22.2% | 2 | 11.8% | There is not SSD for $Z < Z_{\alpha/2}$ (0.87 < 1.96) |
| Guitars | 13 | 48.1% | 7 | 41.2% | There is not SSD for $Z < Z_{\alpha/2}$ (0.45 < 1.96) |
| Hoops and fabrics for body expression activities. | 4 | 14.8% | 0 | 0.0% | There is not SSD for $Z < Z_{\alpha/2}$ (0.90 < 1.96) |
| Didactic materials, such as books, didactic-musical games, etc. | 11 | 40.7% | 2 | 11.8% | There is SSD for $Z > Z_{\alpha/2}$ (2.05 > 1.96) |
| Sound players and speakers. | 23 | 85.2% | 13 | 76.5% | There is not SSD for $Z < Z_{\alpha/2}$ (0.72 < 1.96) |
| Digital screen and/or projector. | 27 | 100% | 16 | 94.1% | There is not SSD for $Z < Z_{\alpha/2}$ (1.27 < 1.96) |

Source: Table created by the author.

As evident from the data, there are statistically significant variances indicating that university programs boast superior libraries, practice rooms, computer labs, and digital libraries compared to non-university programs.

Regarding, specific resources, results suggest there are statistically significant differences that indicate university programs have more percussion instruments, Orff instruments and didactic materials.

Seminars, colloquiums and symposiums, represent important sources of information for innovation, as well as for the generation of knowledge (Angulo-Marcial, 2009). However, according to 52% of participants the institutions they worked for did not have policies to provide professors with funds to do it. On the other hand, 25% declared they did not know about it, while only 23% affirmed they counted with some guidelines for that purpose.

Regarding the presence of policies facilitating financial support for inviting external professors to deliver lectures, workshops, and master classes, 32% of participants confirmed their academic programs offer such provisions, while 34% admitted to being unaware of any such initiatives, and another 34% reported the absence of such regulations within their programs. This outcome is concerning as the involvement of guest lecturers or professors with specialized knowledge and expertise enhances the credibility of the subject matter, inspires students, offers diverse academic perspectives, and provides additional learning resources that can benefit both professors and students in subsequent courses (Leor, 2015). Moreover, it serves as a quality indicator in the evaluation of academic programs (CIEES, 2018). As emphasized by the European Commission (n.d., paragraph 1):

Achieving effectiveness and efficiency in higher education depends on public authorities creating the right framework, within which higher education institutions can operate. This is characterized by adequate funding and effective quality assurance policies, among other factors.

Furthermore, in the author's experience the resulting synergy may promote the interest and determination of students to continue studying and foster the feeling of doing something that is worthwhile.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study have successfully achieved the four predetermined goals. Regarding the profile of tertiary music education faculty, it is imperative to increase the number of professors holding graduate degrees. This enhancement would elevate the quality of education imparted to students, thereby empowering future music educators to make a more significant academic impact on their own students. Professors should establish academic groups to collaborate on promoting music education through symposiums and conferences, disseminating research and pedagogical proposals, and fostering the development of academic agreements. Consequently, administrators must allocate additional funds and recruit full-time professors to support these endeavors effectively. This would

enable professors to dedicate sufficient time and effort to these demanding tasks, fostering a synergistic environment that ignites student interest and engagement, instilling in them a sense of belonging, a lifelong passion for learning, and a conviction that their career contributes to creating a better world. While most students exhibit the requisite vocation, motivation, and creativity, they require exemplary role models to emulate as future educators.

In terms of the functionality of academic programs, administrators must implement robust recruitment strategies to raise awareness among high school students about bachelor's degrees in music education. Students need guidance regarding their career goals, the educational opportunities available within the discipline, and the corresponding job prospects. The undeniable deficit of music educators must be addressed to meet societal needs effectively. Given that 21st-century students pose significant educational challenges for professors and school administrators, institutions must provide comprehensive support mechanisms to facilitate their graduation, including psycho-pedagogical assistance and relevant funding programs. Professors require adequate resources to address classroom challenges and must prioritize student input to design more enriching and impactful teaching-learning processes.

Lastly, teaching-learning conditions must be enhanced to provide professors with optimal environments for effective instruction and to optimize student learning outcomes. This necessitates spacious classrooms, appropriate educational resources, and pedagogical tools to facilitate knowledge construction and skill development in students. Additionally, robust assessment mechanisms are essential to gauge learning quality and contribute to professional development. In summary, while there are notable strengths, it is imperative to address significant weaknesses to cultivate a cadre of well-prepared teachers capable of delivering high-quality music education and positively impacting the lives of millions of school-age children and young adults in Mexico.

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APPENDIX 1**MUSIC EDUCATION CURRICULA****Questionnaire for Teachers****LOS PLANES DE ESTUDIOS EN EDUCACIÓN MUSICAL****Cuestionario para Maestros**

Estimado/a profesor/a:

Agradecemos su colaboración en esta investigación al responder a la siguiente encuesta cuyos resultados podrían verse reflejados en la mejora de este tipo de programas educativos. La información que surja de esta encuesta será manejada estadísticamente, por lo que se mantendrá el anonimato de los y las participantes a efectos de su posterior publicación. Para responder a este cuestionario proporcione los datos que se le piden en el recuadro inferior y después, proceda a contestar las preguntas, señalando la casilla correspondiente o rellenando con la información requerida el espacio dispuesto para tal efecto. No debería llevarle más de diez minutos realizarlo.

¡Muchas gracias!

Datos Generales

Institución en la que labora

Facultad, centro o departamento de adscripción

Edad

Sexo: Hombre Mujer

Tiempo de dedicación:

Profesor de Tiempo Completo

Profesor de Medio Tiempo

Profesor de Asignatura.

1. ¿Grados académicos con que cuenta?

2. ¿Cuenta con Perfil PRODEP? Sí No

3. ¿Pertenece al Sistema Nacional de Investigadores (SNI)? Sí No

4. ¿En su institución, usted colabora con el director o coordinador en la toma de decisiones y en la implementación de acciones?

a) Sí

b) No

c) No sé

En caso afirmativo, especificar:
