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Role Identities in Colombian Music Education Graduates

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Abstract

The tension between performer and teacher identities in music education is a widely recognized phenomenon within the profession. However, in Colombia, previous research has mainly focused on curricular evaluations, profile, and labor market conditions, leaving a significant gap in our understanding of identity. This study aimed to investigate the role identities among graduates of the Adventist University Corporation. Two focus groups were conducted to explore the existing condition of teacher and performer identities and the impact of government-mandated curricular modifications on recent graduates' teacher identity. The results revealed a persistent dichotomy among participants in their working lives despite institutional efforts. The major causes of identity imbalance were less than ideal working conditions in public schools, hidden curricula, and career breadth. To address these issues, future governmental and institutional endeavors should focus on improving working conditions, adapting curricula to the labor market, and providing active support for teacher identity based on experiences.

Keywords

intrinsic case study, focus group, curriculum, graduates, identity, music education

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Role Identities in Colombian Music Education Graduates

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The tension between performer and teacher identities in music education is a widely recognized phenomenon within the profession. However, in Colombia, previous research has mainly focused on curricular evaluations, profile, and labor market conditions, leaving a significant gap in our understanding of identity. This study aimed to investigate the role identities among graduates of the Adventist University Corporation. Two focus groups were conducted to explore the existing condition of teacher and performer identities and the impact of government-mandated curricular modifications on recent graduates' teacher identity. The results revealed a persistent dichotomy among participants in their working lives despite institutional efforts. The major causes of identity imbalance were less than ideal working conditions in public schools, hidden curricula, and career breadth. To address these issues, future governmental and institutional endeavors should focus on improving working conditions, adapting curricula to the labor market, and providing active support for teacher identity based on experiences.

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Introduction

The conditions of music education in Latin America vary by country. However, a study of the curricula in the region conducted by Mateiro (2011) indicates that most programs can be classified into three main areas of emphasis: music, pedagogy, and other arts such as visual arts, performing arts and cinematographic arts. Although occupations in this field usually include teaching music, instrument, theory, singing, conducting or cultural management, most students have the desire to become musicians. In Colombia in particular, the professional musician/professional music educator dichotomy has taken firm root (Casas, 2015; Miñana, 1998); indeed, although this duality is not exclusive to music educators, the field is notably susceptible to conflicts arising from the demands of performance and the intricacies of effective pedagogy.

It is inarguable that some students who enter the field expect to train to become professional musicians, not instructors. Additionally, institutional factors contribute such as university instructors who are untrained in basic and secondary music education, lack of pedagogical and disciplinary research (Cárdenas, 2013; Corredor & Ramírez, 2009) and program scopes that do not clearly distinguish professional musicians from music educators (Mateiro, 2011). Added to this is an unstable, fiercely competitive labor market: Graduates and institutions alike must compete for limited vacancies in private entities, non-profit organizations (NGOs), and public education (Cárdenas, 2013). A competent, employable graduate of music education must have well-developed music skills, pedagogical competence, and experience. Additionally, interdisciplinary training in other arts, such as visual arts or theater, is essential for teaching in public schools.

The Colombian government, through Decree 2450 of 2015 and Resolution 02041 of 2016 (MEN, 2015; MEN, 2016), introduced new guidelines for quality in education that mandated changes for all educational programs nationwide. A new path was created for institutions to register in compliance with the new guidelines (*registro calificado*) and then be recognized as high-quality programs (*acreditación en alta calidad*). The guidelines were a response to Decree 2566 (MEN, 2003), which gave universities ample autonomy to construct their education curricula. This led to the inclusion of many disciplinary courses and the undermining of pedagogy and teacher practice (Jiménez, 2016).

The 2015-2016 legislation's most notable mandate was the inclusion of at least 50 credits of teaching practice in the curriculum. To put it into perspective, the Adventist University Corporation's (UNAC) music education program consists of 169 credits and each credit corresponds to 48 hours of student work. The measure was supported on the premise that in-person learning and teaching practice influence the performance of graduates and stated that to achieve an integral education teachers should have both pedagogical and disciplinary skills and knowledge (MEN, 2016). Yet, despite these efforts to enhance educators' competencies, challenges persist in bridging the gap between theory and practice in teacher training (Urrutia, 2022).

For UNAC's music education program, this translated into curricular changes that affected both pedagogy and music courses. A plan was implemented to transition from the 2011 curriculum to one compliant with the legislation. As depicted in Table 1, while only three music courses were discontinued, the total credits for music saw a significant reduction. Conversely, the number of pedagogy or teaching practice courses more than doubled, with their credits increasing in a parallel manner. By 2017, music and pedagogy/teaching practice both had an equal number of courses, though the latter had slightly more credits.

Table 1

Changes in the UNAC's Music Education Curriculum before and after 2016 Legislation

	2011		2017	
	Courses	Credits	Courses	Credits
Music courses	37	90	34	66
Pedagogy / teaching practice courses	15	41	34	70

Considering both curriculums had the same total number of credits (169), there was a clear shift towards pedagogy courses and teaching practices. Notably, alongside these curricular modifications, the occupational profile for the major was updated, incorporating roles such as cultural manager, educational researcher, and innovative educator. Conversely, while the number of music courses decreased, the emphasis on instrument specialization (primary instrument) continued as a mandatory component for students, starting from their third semester. Given the shifts in the curriculum, it became imperative to study the implications of these changes on both students and graduates.

With this research, I focused on the role identities of UNAC's music education graduates. I was particularly interested in exploring the impacts of the curricular changes on the participants' teacher and performer identities and the negotiation of these identities after graduation. The significance of this study lies in the focus on the first four years after graduation, a period in which most graduates are experiencing the challenges of professional life for the first time. According to Hellman (2007), this period is crucial for developing the network of relationships necessary for a career in music education.

Literature Review

Role identity is defined as “the meanings people attribute to themselves while in various roles” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 112). According to Hallman (2017) music can constitute a central element in a person’s identity and this depends on the role of music in their lives. Researchers have studied role identities in music education from a variety of perspectives. For instance, Bouij (2004) identified three components of role identity, namely cultural, social, and individual, that can be observed simultaneously and cannot be separated. Although researchers have generally accepted this framework, authors such as Bernard (2005) argued that identity is constructed mainly through social interactions. Other researchers identified two critical periods of socialization in a music context. The first socialization takes place in childhood, when we are socialized to music by our parents, relatives, and significant others, and the second occurs during later stages of music education, where students perceive their teachers as role models (Woodford, 2002). This second socialization greatly supports the performer identity as soon as students audition to enter a music education program (Hellman, 2007).

At any given situation individuals have multiple identities that interact with each other and that attempt to control resources and meanings, in some cases the identities are at odds (Burke & Stets, 2009). Owing to the multidimensional aspects of music education such as artistic goals, expectations, professional environment, and social structure in music schools, music education as a major can create tensions between the student’s performer and teacher identities (Mark, 1998; Prescesky, 1997; Roberts, 1991). The literature indicates that most music education students see themselves primarily as musicians; they relegate their identities as teachers to the background (Aróstegui, 2004; Bouij, 1998, 2004; Hellman, 2007; Mark, 1998; Roberts, 1991; Woodford, 2002). These tensions can result in a lack of congruence between students’ expectations as performers and teachers, which can be detrimental for their performance in either role (Pellegrino, 2009).

On the other hand, role identities are constantly evolving. They don’t have to be contradictory and may well be complementary (Hallman, 2017). In the same order, Stephens (2007) argued that if musicianship and teaching are treated as complementary, they may produce positive outcomes.

Musical identity can be challenged when music education graduates begin their immersion in the working life and encounter an environment that doesn’t involve performance (Freer & Bennett, 2012). Negotiation of music identity takes place at different stages of an individual’s career: the very fact of entering music education programs engenders renegotiation of musical identities. The same is true for professional life in music, those who have portfolio careers may see themselves primarily as performers and have peripheral identities such as teacher, or arranger (Hallman, 2017). López-Íñiguez et al. (2022) documented a strong sense of music identity in postgraduate classical music students that informs their future selves. Positive outcomes such as music calling, and emotional attachment were balanced with negatives like exhaustion as freelancers while pursuing their studies and short-term contracts.

Context

Qualitative studies require researchers to disclose their personal connections with the participants and the study topic to enhance their credibility (Patton, 2015). I am an alumnus of the same program and institution as the participants, having completed my studies 15 years prior. My experiences during the concluding year of the program and the initial years of my professional journey shaped my understanding of teacher and performer roles. I’m presently pursuing my Ph.D. at the Catholic University of Argentina (UCA) and serve as a faculty member at UNAC. One of my research interests lies in music education.

The motivation for this research was influenced by my professional interactions with students and alumni of the music education program, coupled with the curriculum changes it has seen over time. In executing this study, I conducted an extensive literature review, devised the research methodology, collected and analyzed the data, and authored the manuscript. While the study was largely an individual effort, I consulted with experienced colleagues and tutors who provided valuable feedback and insights to refine the content.

Method

This research was carried out using an intrinsic case study approach. The study intersects with government guidelines for education programs; however, its primary focus is on the evolving identities of graduates influenced by these directives. As Stake (1995, p. 3) articulates, “We are interested in it, not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular case.”

Sampling Procedures and Research Participants

The participants were selected using purposeful sampling. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), in this strategy “the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (p. 224). Using this method, 17 music education bachelor’s degree graduates were chosen (female $n=4$, male $n=13$, mean age= 27) who had graduated between 2017 and 2020, and interviews took place during the first and second semester of 2021. Specifically, I created two focus groups of seven and 10 participants, based on proximity of graduation year to encourage the participants to sense that they were peers and thereby to encourage the dialog and complementarity of the most effective group settings. Although I was interested in the individuals, the group setting offered the possibility of interesting insights. This is because, while the groups consisted of individuals with many similarities, they weren’t strictly homogeneous. Some participants were more interested in music performance, while others aspired to be music teachers. This diversity provided opportunities for discussions about contrasting experiences and differing views on the phenomenon.

Data Collection and Analysis

I chose focus groups because they organically aid in evaluating processes, especially those of a program. In education, focus groups have been successfully used to evaluate curriculum and reform initiatives, as well as to assess students’ needs, interests, and problems (Gizir, 2007). These themes align closely with the present study. Another reason to use focus groups to interview the graduates is that they have been shown to be effective in research, thanks to the “synergy, snowballing, stimulation, and spontaneity” they introduce within group dynamics (Williams & Katz, 2001, p. 3). Comments from one participant can inspire new trains of thought in another, leading to the emergence of new ideas and establishing connections between personal experiences and specific situations. This dynamic is pertinent in this study as the synergy created by the group can prompt the sharing of potential vulnerabilities common across participants. For each group, I asked four main questions that gradually introduced role identity:

What was your motivation for entering the program in the first place?

During your studies, did you experience tensions between your expectations and what the program had to offer? What did you prioritize?

Between performer and music educator, which role identity do you think the program reinforces more? Why?

In your work life, how do you balance performance and teaching?

After collecting the data, I used an inductive analysis approach based on Liu's (2016) generic inductive strategy. This strategy involves: an initial reading of the text data for familiarization; identification of specific text segments pertinent to the research objectives; labeling of these segments to form categories; refining categories to minimize overlap; and, while Liu suggests the creation of a model as a concluding step, the emphasis in this study was placed on the emergence of themes. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, in alignment with principles like those of Verbal Exchange Coding described by Saldaña (2016), which emphasizes the importance of precise transcription of verbal exchanges to capture the personal meanings and nuances of key moments in the dialogue. Each relevant line of dialogue was then color-coded. This coded text was grouped into overarching categories, leading to the emergence of the themes presented in this article.

Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

The study proposal was reviewed and accepted by the Ethics Committee of the university where the study took place. The committee reviewed the results and data of the study and determined that it met the necessary requirements for publication. Participants gave signed and verbal consent and were thoroughly informed of the purpose of the study. Member checking was used as a validation strategy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The transcriptions of the interviews were returned to the participants who gave valuable feedback and helped to avoid misinterpretation of the results. Additionally, the names of the participants were omitted throughout the manuscript to protect anonymity.

Findings

Here, I discuss the results that were most relevant to the identity conflict from the perspective of focus groups. I also present the other themes that emerged along with brief analysis of group dynamics when necessary.

Learning Music is the Primary Motivator

Among the respondents in this study, the main reason for choosing a music education program was the desire to practice and study music. However, two participants expressed a prior intent to pursue a career as music teachers.

The vast majority indicated that their primary drive was music itself, as evidenced by statements such as: "I entered the university thinking I wanted to become a musician;" "I didn't enter because I wanted to be a teacher; I entered because I wanted to learn music;" and "My intention was to be a performer, not a teacher." A divergent perspective was encapsulated in the remark: "From the start, I wanted to be a music teacher. Some of my old teachers told me how tough it is for most people who try to make it exclusively as performers."

These responses suggest a deep-rooted passion for music among the participants. Their primary motivation for joining the program appears to have been musical advancement rather

than a teaching vocation. The decision for many to enroll in UNAC seems not to have been based on the prestige or specific nature of the program, but rather on a fundamental desire to engage deeply with music.

Validating Identities through Institutional Choice

Economic considerations and the institution's higher acceptance rate were significant factors in participants' decision to select UNAC for their studies. It was highlighted by several participants that the tuition fees at some private universities in the city substantially surpassed those of UNAC. Additionally, they noted that gaining admission to UNAC was more straightforward compared to other public and private institutions.

Participants shared their views on tuition with statements such as: "I applied to all universities that offered music. They accepted me in three of them but this one was the most affordable;" and "I wasn't interested in the UdeA, and EAFIT was very expensive. I was accepted at the Adventist university where I resumed the piano." In terms of acceptance, they expressed: "I really liked the fact that they accepted me without knowing much about music;" and "A lady from my church told me about the Adventist university and told me that it was easy to get in."

For many participants, the relatively modest tuition and higher acceptance rate at UNAC were more than just practical benefits. They were opportunities to validate their identities, suggesting the importance of being acknowledged in roles such as musicians or music educators in shaping and affirming their social standing.

Commitment to Performance

While most participants acknowledged the school's emphasis on teaching music rather than performing, their educational priorities leaned more towards music than pedagogy.

For instance, one participant expressed: "During my studies, I prioritized music above pedagogy; I didn't pay much attention to the latter." Similarly, another revealed: "During my studies, I put instrument learning above everything else," while another stated: "I always prioritized music courses; in the pedagogical ones I didn't put in one hundred percent."

These testimonies underscore a pronounced commitment to the role of a performer during their studies. Furthermore, they imply that the institution's efforts to reinforce the teacher role might not have been as impactful as intended, hinting at the presence of a potential hidden curriculum.

Socialization of Roles

The participants' perception of their roles, whether as teachers or musicians, was deeply influenced by their interactions with educators and peers. Certain interactions gave rise to pronounced perspectives and expectations about performance.

This is encapsulated by statements such as: "In some courses and with certain teachers, there is more emphasis on the musical aspect;" and:

At first, I didn't know much about music; I knew more or less how to play little church songs. Things changed for me with a professor who began to influence me with a new understanding of music, another way of thinking about the guitar.

Moreover, participants expressed opinions about the competency and dedication of their peers and instructors, observing that: “Some students don’t know what it really is to study music. They have no professional commitment;” and “There are many teachers who are not competent in their area, and they are also going to produce incompetent students.”

Given that many faculty members who engaged closely with students have a background in performance, it’s plausible to suggest they reinforced and affirmed the performer identity in some students. These students, in turn, sought to verify this identity in other educators and in their peers.

Instrumental Proficiency as a Means of Identity Verification

Proficiency in a primary instrument is described by participants as crucial for their professional trajectory. While mastery in their primary instrument establishes their credibility, participants also acknowledge the importance of broad musical knowledge and teaching skills for different facets of the job market.

This perspective is evident in comments such as: “I feel a primary instrument is necessary because, anyway, as a musician, your credibility comes from the performance you can produce;” and “I think that instrument specialization is important because it opens up other opportunities such as working in a private institution as an instrument teacher.” Some participants further noted the weight of their instrumental skills over teaching in job stability: “My work stability doesn’t depend on my teaching abilities; it depends on my ability to sing;” However, the role of diversified musical knowledge and pedagogical abilities was highlighted in remarks such as: “You need to have a decent level in your instrument to compete. Now, if you work in high school then pedagogy is more important;” and “My instrument is the saxophone, but I don’t teach it to any of my twenty students. I teach them flute, guitar, or piano, which I should have strengthened in my studies.”

The skillful performance of an instrument offers graduates an avenue to assert their performer identity beyond academia and engage in professional opportunities that prize such expertise.

Self-Efficacy in Middle/High School Teaching Contexts

A prominent theme among the graduates is their inclination towards musical teaching roles beyond the confines of middle or high schools. Despite these educational settings providing the most stable employment opportunities and being the primary context where most graduates underwent their pre-service training, there exists a discernible reluctance to operate within them.

Statements like “The labor market is not only about teaching in schools, although there are fewer technical requirements;” “For those of us who don’t want to be schoolteachers, I think it is good to have very advanced and profound tools in our instrument;” and “The way they taught us at the university was to teach in schools; in a certain way I never wanted that,” exemplify this sentiment.

The findings suggest that the teacher identity, specifically within middle and high school contexts, remains inadequately affirmed. This potentially contributes to the diminished self-efficacy observed among graduates when facing the challenges associated with teaching music in these environments.

Identity Salience - Balancing Teaching and Performance Roles

The topic of identity salience emerged prominently when participants discussed the balance between their roles as performers and teachers. For many, tensions arose from navigating these two identities, often compelling them to adopt coping strategies such as diligent time management or considering a job change. In contrast, a minority of participants achieved a harmonious integration of these roles, viewing them as complementary or focusing exclusively on teaching.

Illustrating the tensions felt, one participant remarked: "I like to teach, but I feel that at this point in my life, teaching doesn't allow me to fully develop as an artist;" Another shared: "Last year was very difficult to get used to. I used to spend a lot of hours a day to my instrument. When I started working, I could hardly practice. There were days when I could not play the guitar because I had a lot of work;" Meanwhile, strategies to manage these tensions are evident in statements like: "I try not to work overtime; then, when my work is done, I take a break and then I practice a minimum of two hours a day;" and "I try to set aside two or three hours early each morning to practice the trumpet or other instruments that I need to practice that day."

In contrast, a minority perspective revealed a more integrated or teaching-focused approach: "My livelihood comes from teaching, and that's where my focus is. I believe the tension is real, but not for me." and "The good thing about my job is that I can teach my instrument, so I generally study guitar all the time. I don't have much to negotiate because I'm doing what I love."

Through these reflections, the salience of each identity in the graduates' professional lives becomes evident. For many, there's a noticeable gap between their aspirational self and their situational self. However, for a select group, their teaching environment sufficiently amplifies the salience of their teacher identity or their music educator identity, bringing congruence and fulfillment.

Discussion

The tendencies toward divergent role identities, the struggle to reconcile them, and the predominance of the performer identity over the teacher identity are some of the parallels between music educators in Colombia and those in other parts of the world (Bouij, 2004; Cárdenas, 2013; Roberts, 2007; Scheib, 2007; Woodford, 2002). Additionally, it appears that many programs fail to follow the recommendations found in the literature (Haning, 2021), or their advertised curricula do not align with actual program efforts to maintain balance between pedagogy and musicianship (Cárdenas, 2013).

In the case of the UNAC, the government's actions, implemented by the institution, aimed at filling the gap between the major and the working life conditions in the country, with the intention of supporting the teacher identity to a certain extent. The current professional profile of a UNAC graduate emphasizes innovation, research, and service, which aligns with the Christian values and the institution's mission. Nevertheless, the existence of a culture that values music abilities over teaching abilities puts the students in a position where they are socialized and assessed in terms of their music performance, creating a disparity between their aspirations and the realities of work life. Previous researchers have identified these conflicts (Roberts, 2007; Scheib, 2007; Woodford, 2002).

The present study and other sources in similar contexts confirm that music remains the primary motivator for entering a career (Mateiro, 2007). Literature shows that a strong identification with music, meaning having a career calling and emotional attachment to music, is a process that can extend from childhood to postgraduate levels of music education (López-

Íñiguez et al., 2022), across diverse types of musicians (Burland et al., 2022), and is likely to carry into the working life of music education program graduates.

On the other hand, this study found that some graduates had reached equilibrium with their dual roles as teachers and performers or had never perceived tension between them in the first place, which corresponds to previous findings (Prescesky, 1997; Stephens, 2007). Additionally, authors like Woodford (2002) believe this to be ideal and a responsibility of the institution, and Mateiro (2007) recognized that music and teaching are traditionally intertwined. Situated identities (Pellegrino, 2009) suggest that identities gain focus or recede into the background depending on contexts (Roberts, 2007; Stephens, 2007). The salience of an identity depends on the likelihood of being activated, meaning the identity is trying to verify itself (Burke & Stets, 2009). In the case of the graduates, their teaching and performing contexts differed in time, place, and even type of music, causing the salience of their identities to vary in any given situation. For example, this study found that popular music is favored in general for music education outside universities and conservatories, a trend that is present in other contexts (Carroll, 2019). However, whether it is possible to keep these working identities separate over the long term is worth investigating in the context of music education in Colombia because evidence from other settings shows that teacher identity grows with age and experience (Isbell, 2008).

In this study, participants perceived that UNAC's music education program prioritized pedagogy over musicianship, but they reported focusing most of their study efforts on music practice. This finding is consistent with previous research that has found a greater emphasis on developing musical abilities than pedagogical abilities in music education programs (Haning, 2021; Hart, 2019). Previous studies have also identified the presence of a hidden curriculum that reinforces the performer identity (Bouij, 2004; Hellman, 2007).

Although some participants argued for the need for instrument specialization, focusing too much on acquiring music skills could be detrimental to the teacher's identity. Nonetheless, musicianship is still an essential part of the music educator's identity, providing personal fulfillment, individual meaning, and professional development (Aróstegui, 2004; Bernard, 2005; Dolloff, 2007; Stephens, 2007). Negotiations of working life for music education graduates indicate the persistence of the identity conflict, reflecting the numerous challenges in the Colombian public education landscape.

According to Casas (2015), music educators in Colombia face a lack of clarity on how to incorporate music into institutional plans and articulate it with the rest of the curricula, inadequate environments for music, lack of didactic material, very high numbers of students per classroom, improvisations in extracurricular activities, expectations of short-term demonstrations, and lack of interest in long-term processes. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that many music educators, at least during the first few years of their professional life, might actively avoid teaching in schools.

Paradoxically, while most of the reliable employment for music teachers is in education (Corredor & Ramírez, 2009; Goubert et al., 2009), conditions are less than ideal. For instance, most of the positions available in public schools are for arts education, but music is only one of the arts offered, with time devoted to music being shared equally with dance, theater, and visual arts. Furthermore, lack of resources and infrastructure means that even these offerings are poorly developed (Casas, 2015). In 2022, there were 1146 openings for teachers in public schools of the region, 62 of those positions were for arts educators in general and only 13 specifically for music (Comisión Nacional del Servicio Civil, 2022). Work not related to music has also been identified as causing an increase in stress and workload (Jääskeläinen et al., 2020).

Given the circumstances, improving working conditions should be a priority for any government action aimed at education, including taking a more conscious approach to music

and other arts. This can have a direct impact on the quality of the sector and potentially support educators' identities as teachers over the long term, which could encourage more prepared professionals to fill the jobs. Schools of music and education faculties have an important role in constructing instructors' professional identities (Allen, 2003). Reflective assignments, early and extended field experiences, e-portfolios, guided practice, and feedback are some possible components of improvement efforts (Haston & Hourigan, 2007). Although professors should act as role models to inspire the love of teaching in their students (Gillespie & Hamann, 1999), influential experiences have been found to be more important than influential people in the development of occupational identity (Isbell, 2008). Nonetheless, educators should account for the individuality of their students and provide personalized guidance (López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2020). Other actions such as interacting with the broader academic community beyond the music department and developing relationship networks early on could also help create a robust teacher identity (Hellman, 2007).

This study has some limitations that need to be considered. Firstly, by selecting only graduates from the last four years, it is not possible to determine the development of identities in experienced music educators. Longitudinal studies or cases with participants of a wide range of experience could shed light on this issue. Secondly, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the development of music educators' identities in Colombia, it is necessary to conduct investigations with different approaches. For example, a comparison of the music education curriculum with that of other education majors, the use of popular and Colombian music in the music classroom, or an examination of the differences between the music education profession in public and private institutions could be helpful.

Conclusion

The UNAC graduates of music education who I studied here showed evidence of a persistent strong performer identity and a struggle to reconcile teaching music and performing. Although this dichotomy of identities unfolds similarly in Colombia as in other parts of the world, I believe that it is amplified here by the conditions of music education and the labor market. The measures UNAC has taken to improve curricula do not appear to have directly affected the identities of the music education program graduates.

Various factors and experiences contribute to imbalances in the identities of graduates. Among the primary contributors in this study were the breadth of the music education program at UNAC, which pointed in many directions including toward performing and toward teaching in public schools, poor working conditions at public institutions in Colombia, and a hidden curriculum that promotes the performer identity. Although instrument specialization is certainly one of the main contributors, the characteristics of the labor market for music educators in Colombia are such that just this feature alone opens many job opportunities that would not otherwise be available.

Role identity dichotomies are framed and embedded in cultural settings in which self-concept and what is expected in most cases conflict with reality. In the context of this study, for recent graduates of a music education program in Colombia, musical competence is only one of the requirements for a successful music educator. Well-intentioned governmental and institutional actions do not appear to have adequately considered the weight of cultural constructs around music programs. Rather, it appears that efforts were channeled into serving the immediate labor market, but results failed to assist music education students and graduates in negotiating their role identities as performers versus teachers or as both.

One important aspect of this study is that it stems from governmental and institutional actions, which can serve as feedback for future endeavors, and I suggest that future researchers take a three-dimensional approach. First, current governmental and institutional measures to

align program expectations and work realities are already progress toward consolidating a professional identity. Second, although service, education, and human development are rooted in the values and mission of UNAC as an institution, actions aimed at developing a student's identity as teachers should be a priority; this is especially true for institutions that offer music education within an arts faculty, where emphasis should be placed on experience. Finally, better public education conditions are fundamental for consolidating a professional identity in music education program graduates.

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