

Public Abstract

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Department:Learning, Teaching and Curriculum

Degree:PhD

Title:A Study of Social Comparisons and their Effects on High School Choir Directors

This study was designed to examine social comparison usage by high school choir directors, and possible attributes that may affect the types of comparisons that are utilized. Directors from four Midwestern states were invited to participate in a survey designed to answer research questions pertaining to the extent to which they engage in social comparisons, the different ways that they socially compare, and potential relationships between job attributes, perceived control, and social comparison types. Three hundred and sixty-three participants returned usable surveys for a response rate of 31.6%. Results indicated that directors were engaging in social comparison, mostly to seek information, problem solve, and validate opinions. These comparisons were upward assimilative, which research has found to have positive emotional outcomes, such as inspiration and admiration. Two attributes, perceived control and number of years taught, played a role in three comparison types, Upward Assimilation, Upward Contrast, and Downward Assimilation. A qualitative component of the survey confirms that the participants were engaging in upward assimilative behaviors, but also provide evidence that some directors experienced the negative effects of comparisons, as well. Future research to examine the possible effects and emotional outcomes of social comparison use by choir directors.