

CAPSU Main Chorale: A success story

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Abstract: This qualitative study explored the historical journey and sustained success of the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC), established in 1973. Using narrative inquiry within a constructivist framework, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving 15 current members, 5 alumni, and 5 stakeholders including conductors and administrators. Findings revealed that CMC evolved from a modest university ensemble into a well-respected cultural institution. Its repertoire—featuring Filipino folk, Western classical, and contemporary genres—helped maintain its relevance across generations. Artistic excellence was enhanced through participation in competitions at regional, national, and international levels, which exposed members to innovative techniques and elevated performance quality. Strong, evolving leadership and structured rehearsal protocols were key to the chorale’s success. Systematic training, sectional rehearsals, and coaching fostered not only vocal and artistic development but also personal growth, including self-confidence, discipline, and leadership skills. Alumni engagement contributed to continuity by mentoring current members and supporting operations. The chorale’s resilience was demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, when it swiftly transitioned to virtual rehearsals and digital outreach to sustain activities. Beyond music, the CMC made a cultural impact through community engagement and by promoting Filipino heritage, significantly enhancing the university’s cultural identity and reputation. Despite facing challenges such as limited funding and recruitment pressures, the chorale’s achievements were sustained through institutional support, alumni involvement, and member commitment. CMC stands as a model of how university-based musical groups can preserve cultural traditions while nurturing artistic and personal excellence among students.

Keywords: CapSU Main Chorale, choral ensemble, student development, cultural advocacy, sustainability, success story

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INTRODUCTION

Music, often regarded as a universal language, possesses the profound ability to connect individuals, transcend cultural and geographical boundaries, and evoke emotions that words alone cannot convey. Across civilizations, music has served as a medium for expression, identity, and unity. Within this vast artistic domain, choral music—the performance of vocal music by an ensemble—holds a unique place. Chorales, historically rooted in religious traditions, have evolved into powerful platforms for communitybuilding, cultural expression, and educational engagement around the world.

In the Philippine context, choral singing has long been an integral part of the cultural and religious fabric. From liturgical performances in centuries-old churches to competitive showcases on national and international stages, Filipino choirs have gained recognition for their harmony, discipline, and emotional depth. The country’s choral tradition is vibrant and diverse, supported by a strong network of school-based ensembles, community choirs, and prestigious

groups such as the Philippine Madrigal Singers, whose international acclaim has inspired generations of singers and conductors alike. Choral groups have played vital roles not only in preserving Filipino musical heritage but also in promoting social cohesion and artistic excellence (Delgado, 2021).

In educational institutions, musical ensembles such as chorales foster creativity, discipline, and collaboration among students, contributing to their holistic development (Stewart, 2023). These groups often serve as incubators of talent and passion, nurturing the next generation of artists, educators, and cultural advocates. Among these ensembles, the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) stands out as a shining example of unwavering dedication, exceptional talent, and a collective pursuit of excellence.

The CMC, the official choral group of Capiz State University – Main Campus in Roxas City, Philippines, has journeyed from humble beginnings to become a celebrated and distinguished ensemble. With a steadfast commitment to musical excellence and cultural advocacy, the chorale has captivated audiences and earned numerous accolades over the years. Its evolution from a modest group of student singers into a dynamic and award-winning ensemble is a testament to the enduring power of music, the support of the university, and the unwavering spirit of its members.

As a long-standing ensemble, CMC has established a legacy rooted in musical excellence and institutional pride. This heritage began in 1973 under the leadership of Prof. Lourdes Guzman, who first referred to the singers as the CITnian larks—a name reflective of the university’s former identity as the Capiz Institute of Technology (CIT). As CIT transitioned into Capiz State University and other campuses formed their own choir groups, the ensemble was formally renamed the CapSU Main Chorale (CMC), preserving its foundational spirit while embracing its evolving identity.

Despite the cultural and educational value of university chorales, a noticeable gap persists in scholarly literature concerning the comprehensive analysis of the elements contributing to their success and the outcomes of their accomplishments. This lack of academic attention limits the broader understanding of their influence on both institutional development and community engagement. As Stewart (2023) notes the crucial role of musical ensembles in universities, further research is needed to specifically investigate the factors behind their sustained success and broader impact (e.g., Johnson & Lee, 2020; Williams et al., 2018). Therefore, this study addresses this gap by offering a descriptive exploration of the Capiz State University Main Chorale’s evolution—documenting its milestones, challenges, and the pivotal factors that shaped its identity and achievements.

Problem Statement

The main purpose of this study was to determine the major achievements, challenges, and factors influencing the success of CapSU Main Chorale. Specifically, this study sought to address the following key questions to provide a comprehensive understanding of the ensemble's journey to success:

1. What is the humble beginning of the CapSU Main Chorale?
2. What are the achievements of CapSU Main Chorale?
3. What are the factors that contributed to its success?
4. What are the benefits gained by the members?
5. What is the perception of the audience and the cultural influence of the CMC in the community?

6. What are the sustainability strategies and future directions of the CMC?

Theoretical framework

This study was anchored in the constructivist epistemological perspective, which posits that knowledge is not passively absorbed but actively constructed by individuals through social interaction and personal experience. In the context of the Capiz State University Main Chorale, this perspective emphasized that the meanings and understandings of success, cultural impact, and artistic value were shaped by the lived experiences of the chorale members, their mentors, and their audiences.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), constructivism asserts that individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences, which are often influenced by their cultural background and social interactions. Applying this to the study, the narratives and perceptions of chorale members and community stakeholders were seen as valuable sources of knowledge that helped reconstruct the group's history, achievements, and influence. The constructivist approach allowed for the exploration of multiple realities and embraced the richness of diverse perspectives, recognizing that each participant's interpretation was meaningful within their specific context.

Furthermore, this research aligned with the theoretical lens of social constructivism, which recognizes that knowledge is co-constructed through communication, dialogue, and shared cultural practices (Schunk, 2020). The CapSU Main Chorale, as a musical ensemble rooted in both academic and community settings, provided a fertile ground for this theoretical approach. The ensemble's development over time was understood not as a linear or purely institutional achievement but as a collaborative construction shaped by social relationships, collective memory, and cultural expression.

Through this lens, the study aimed to understand how the chorale's identity and legacy were continually shaped by its members, leaders, and audiences, and how the ensemble functioned not only as a musical group but as a dynamic cultural agent. This perspective enabled the researcher to deeply engage with participants' reflections, values, and emotions, thereby uncovering nuanced insights about the ensemble's role within the university and the broader community. By adopting a constructivist stance, the study did not seek universal truths but instead focused on understanding the how and why of the chorale's sustained success and cultural significance through the voices of those who lived it.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study adopted a qualitative method using narrative inquiry. Finlay and dela Cruz (2023) describe narrative inquiry as a method that "serves both as a research methodology and a means of understanding experience," highlighting its capacity to capture the complexity of human experiences over time. The methodology involves a collaborative relationship between the researcher and participants, where stories are coconstructed and interpreted within a three-dimensional narrative space encompassing temporality, sociality, and place., which posited that knowledge is co-constructed through human interaction, interpretation, and lived experience. Recognizing that the journey, achievements, and impact of the CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) could not be adequately captured through numbers alone, this research employed qualitative methods to explore the multifaceted nature of the chorale's development and influence. Through

this lens, the research aimed to understand the narratives and subjective meanings constructed by the members, leaders, and audiences of the CMC.

The study relied on descriptive and exploratory approaches to gather rich, contextual data that illuminated the chorale's historical beginnings, achievements, contributing factors to success, benefits gained by members, perceptions from the audience, and sustainability strategies. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis were utilized to collect firsthand accounts and experiences. These tools allowed participants to express their stories and insights freely, facilitating a deep understanding of the communal and cultural values embedded within the chorale's activities.

This methodology also enabled the researcher to engage in reflexivity and iterative analysis, consistent with the constructivist view that knowledge emerges through the research process itself. The themes derived from participants' responses were interpreted not as universal truths, but as context-specific constructions that reflected the shared realities of those involved in the CMC. In this way, the methodological perspective of the study was purposefully aligned with its intent to capture the authentic voices and collective meaning-making of a community-based musical ensemble.

Phenomenology according to Creswell (2013) is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon. Typically, interviews are conducted with a group or individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. Through this process, the researcher may construct the universal meaning of the event, situation or experience and arrive at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon. With roots in philosophy, psychology and education, phenomenology attempts to extract the most pure, untainted data and in some interpretations of the approach, bracketing is used by the researcher to document personal experiences with the subject to help remove him or herself from the process

Locale of Study

This study was conducted at Capiz State University (CapSU) Main Campus, located in Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines. As the premier campus of the university system, CapSU Main served as the central hub for academic, cultural, and extracurricular activities within the institution. The campus housed various colleges and departments, including those dedicated to the Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH), which provided the environment that nurtured the talents and artistic pursuits of the students.

The CapSU Main Chorale, the focal subject of this research, was based within this campus. The group regularly rehearsed, performed, and represented the university in various events and competitions both locally and nationally. Its members were composed of students from different academic disciplines, brought together by their shared passion for choral music.

The setting offered a rich cultural and academic environment that significantly influenced the development and sustainability of the chorale. The university administration's support, the presence of competent musical mentors, and the active involvement of students provided a conducive backdrop for the study. This location was chosen not only for its accessibility to the researcher but also because it embodied the cultural dynamics and institutional framework that shaped the chorale's journey and success.

Respondents of the study

The participants of this study were the key informants who were directly involved in and had participated in the CapSU Main Chorale: A Success Story. These included 15 current student members, five (5) former alumni members, and five (5) stakeholders including the choir conductor, faculty advisers, and selected university administrators who had direct involvement or oversight of the chorale's activities. Their perspectives were essential in capturing the historical background, achievements, success factors, personal benefits, community impact, and future directions of the group

Selection and Description of Respondents

Purposive sampling was used to identify the informants of the study. According to Grey (2016), this form of sampling relies on the researcher's judgment in selecting participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The researcher intentionally selected individuals who could provide rich, relevant, and insightful data regarding the CapSU Main Chorale.

Data Gathering Instruments

The research instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide, designed to gather in-depth information from the key informants involved in the CapSU Main Chorale: A Success Story. This instrument was chosen due to its flexibility, allowing for both standardized questions and the opportunity to explore themes that emerged during the interviews.

The semi-structured interview guide was developed based on the objectives of the study, ensuring that it covered all relevant areas, including the chorale's history, achievements, factors contributing to success, members' experiences, audience perceptions, cultural influences, and sustainability strategies. The guide consisted of openended questions to encourage participants to share their experiences and perspectives freely. Follow-up questions were also included to prompt deeper reflection when necessary.

The validity of the instrument was ensured through a thorough review process. The researcher consulted experts in choral music and qualitative research methodology to refine the interview guide. Additionally, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of participants who met the criteria for inclusion in the study. The feedback obtained from the pilot test was used to revise and improve the clarity and relevance of the questions.

For data collection, interviews were conducted face-to-face, either in person or virtually, depending on the participants' availability and preferences. Each interview was audio-recorded (with participant consent) and transcribed for analysis. The data collected through these interviews were analyzed thematically to identify patterns, trends, and significant insights related to the success and sustainability of the CapSU Main Chorale.

The data gathering procedure for this study employed a combination of qualitative research methods, including structured interviews, observations, video documentation, and audio recordings, to ensure the collection of comprehensive data that would provide a deep understanding of the CapSU Main Chorale's success story. Data for this research were primarily gathered through participant observation, interviews, and documentation, which facilitated the collection of rich, firsthand accounts of the chorale's history, members' experiences, and sustainability strategies. In this study, ethnographic methods were employed, specifically participant observation and interviews, as outlined by researchers such as Silverman (2016).

Participant observation allowed the researcher to engage directly with the key informants, maintaining a professional distance while being involved in their setting. This approach enabled the researcher to observe the interactions and activities of the informants while simultaneously participating in their context. Interviews, a key tool in ethnography, were used to facilitate in-depth conversations with participants to gather their insights and perspectives on the chorale's success.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first sought and obtained permission from the appropriate authorities, including the Dean of the College of Education and the Adviser of CapSU Main Chorale. This ensured that the study was ethically sound and adhered to university guidelines. Additionally, coordination with the members of the chorale was made to ensure their participation and to explain the study's objectives. The data collection process was carried out in three stages. In the first stage, a preliminary visit to the Capiz State University Main Campus was conducted to establish the purpose of the study and identify potential informants. This visit included obtaining approval from the University President and administration before proceeding with the study. In the second stage, structured interviews were conducted with the identified informants, focusing on the success stories and experiences related to the CapSU Main Chorale. Open-ended questions were designed to explore the research questions in detail, allowing for rich responses. All interviews were audio-recorded and, where appropriate, video-recorded to ensure accuracy and thorough data capture. In the third stage, the collected interview data were transcribed, creating a written record of the conversations. The transcriptions were then analyzed through coding and theme identification to uncover patterns and insights related to the chorale's success and sustainability.

Throughout the data collection process, the researcher ensured that ethical considerations were strictly followed. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before interviews began, and confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed for all informants. To ensure the validity of the gathered data, the interview questions and survey instruments were subject to a validity test before implementation. In summary, the data gathering process integrated a mix of observation, structured interviews, and multimedia documentation, which provided a comprehensive understanding of the CapSU Main Chorale's experiences, success factors, and challenges. Ethical considerations were adhered to, ensuring the integrity of the data and protecting the rights of the participants involved in the study.

Data Analysis Procedure

The study employed thematic analysis to interpret the qualitative data collected through observation, interviews, recordings, and documentation, focusing on the success stories of the CapSU Main Chorale. This method allowed the researcher to systematically identify, analyze, and report patterns within the participants' perspectives, offering a flexible yet detailed approach to understanding the complex cultural and social dynamics involved. The analysis followed Dudovskiy's (2020) three-step framework.

First, the researcher engaged in developing and applying codes by breaking down the responses from structured interviews into manageable segments. Through open coding, initial raw data were organized; axial coding allowed connections across categories; and selective coding helped construct a coherent narrative from these categories. Second, the researcher identified themes, patterns, and relationships by critically examining recurring phrases, emotional tones, and meaningful patterns in the data, comparing primary findings with

secondary literature, and noting not only what was said but also what was absent. Metaphors and analogies were used to contextualize insights by comparing them with broader phenomena.

Finally, the data were summarized by linking key findings back to the research aims and hypotheses. Direct quotations from participants were highlighted to emphasize important themes and illustrate their significance. This comprehensive summary illuminated both consistent themes and contradictions, offering a nuanced understanding of the CapSU Main Chorale's success stories. Through this systematic thematic analysis, the study provided meaningful insights into the cultural and educational practices shaping the chorale's achievements and the lived experiences of its members.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Humble beginning of CapSU Main Chorale

Capiz State University- Main Chorale is an established chorale group of Capiz State University- Main Campus Philippines. The CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) is a long-standing choral ensemble at Capiz State University - Main Campus in Roxas City. CMC has demonstrated its legacy over the years.

Prof. Lourdes Guzman began this heritage of CapSUwordnian singers, which she first referred to as CITnian larks, in 1973, and from there the crescendo of CMC reverberated. As CIT evolved and other campuses started their own choir groups, the group's name was changed to CapSU Main Chorale (CMC).

The Capiz State University (CapSU) Main Chorale (CMC) has undergone significant development over the years, establishing itself as a premier choral group known for its musical excellence and adaptability. The group has continually evolved in terms of repertoire, training, leadership, and technological advancements, allowing it to maintain a competitive edge in national and international choral scenes. This study employs Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019) to examine the developmental trajectory of CMC, focusing on key themes that have shaped its identity and success. By exploring musical growth, structural changes, mentorship, and technological innovations, this analysis provides insights into how the chorale has sustained its relevance and artistic integrity.

A fundamental aspect of CMC's development lies in its ability to expand its musical repertoire. The transition from traditional choral pieces to more contemporary genres reflect a strategic adaptation to modern musical trends. Exposure to competitions has further influenced this evolution, enhancing the group's technical and artistic capabilities. These developments demonstrate how musical organizations must balance tradition with innovation to remain dynamic and engaging.

Leadership and structural transformations have also played a pivotal role in shaping the group's development. Different conductors have introduced varied techniques, rehearsal structures, and organizational approaches, all of which have contributed to the overall growth of CMC. The increasing discipline and organization within the group reflect a maturing structure that ensures sustainability and long-term success. These changes highlight the importance of strong leadership in fostering artistic excellence and maintaining group cohesion. Additionally, the role of alumni in mentoring current members has been a significant factor in CMC's continuous improvement. The return of former members to guide and support new choristers ensures knowledge transfer and strengthens the group's traditions. This mentorship fosters a

sense of continuity and community within the ensemble, reinforcing the importance of intergenerational collaboration in artistic organizations.

Lastly, technological advancements have reshaped the way CMC operates, particularly during challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The adoption of digital learning tools, online rehearsals, and social media engagement has enabled the group to adapt and thrive despite external constraints. These innovations underscore the importance of flexibility and modernization in sustaining choral excellence in the digital age. This analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of CMC's developmental journey and its broader implications for choral groups seeking longevity and artistic relevance.

The beginning and developmental journey of the CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) showcases how a collective commitment to excellence, integrity, and teamwork has shaped its success. Through the lens of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA), this study delves into the narratives of respondents to identify key themes that have contributed to CMC's growth. Understanding these factors is essential, as research suggests that choral success is not solely dependent on musical talent but also on organizational purpose, cultural identity, and performance dedication (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2017). By examining the lived experiences of CMC members, this analysis offers insights into the mechanisms that sustain a thriving musical group.

The CMC's development is rooted in its strong organizational foundation, which fosters integrity, teamwork, and a deep sense of purpose. Studies indicate that highperforming teams, whether in music or other disciplines, thrive on shared goals and mutual accountability (Katzenbach & Smith, 2015). Similarly, the cultural dynamics within CMC, which emphasize camaraderie and belonging, align with social identity theory, reinforcing the idea that individuals draw motivation from their group affiliations (Tajfel & Turner, 2016). These theoretical perspectives highlight the importance of structured leadership and social cohesion in the sustainability of choral groups. Furthermore, CMC's commitment to performance excellence is evident in its rigorous training, discipline, and resilience. Research on deliberate practice underscores the necessity of structured and repetitive training in achieving expert-level proficiency (Ericsson et al., 2023). Additionally, the growth mindset framework suggests that musicians who embrace continuous learning are more likely to overcome setbacks and reach higher levels of artistic achievement (Dweck, 2016). By synthesizing these perspectives with the respondents' narratives, this analysis sheds light on the multifaceted elements that have propelled CMC toward artistic and organizational success.

Musical identity and legacy

The CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) has firmly established itself as a distinguished musical ensemble recognized for its excellence at local, national, and international levels. According to respondents, the group's reputation is grounded in its remarkable achievements, particularly its consistent victories in prestigious competitions such as the PASUC Regional and National events and international choral festivals. These accomplishments have reinforced CMC's identity as a legacy-driven group committed to excellence, with one informant describing it as "a group full of legacy because of their exceptional achievements." Beyond competitions, CMC's reputation extends to their frequent invitations to perform at major events across Panay Island, further solidifying their status as one of the most sought-after choral groups in the region.

The historical trajectory of CMC reflects a steadfast dedication to musical mastery, with each generation of singers building upon the accomplishments of their predecessors.

Achievements in competitions not only validate the ensemble's talent but also inspire future members to uphold its tradition of excellence. One participant highlighted how the group's commitment motivates members to fully engage in rehearsals, sharpen their skills, and unite through harmony, resulting in numerous awards and recognitions.

Moreover, the identity of CMC is not solely defined by accolades but also by the deep sense of pride and connection shared among its members. Research underscores that choirs focused on long-term development and cohesion achieve greater artistic success, which aligns with CMC's continuous pursuit of improvement (Brown, 2019). The group's distinctive performance style, characterized by heartfelt and emotive delivery, further elevates their artistic presence. As one informant put it, "What makes them exceptional is that they perform every piece with heart," allowing them to connect deeply with audiences and strengthen their standing in the choral community.

Despite facing setbacks, such as the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, CMC demonstrated resilience and eventually returned to the spotlight with renewed vigor. Their historical growth showcases an unwavering commitment to artistic excellence, enabling them to navigate the increasing challenges of competitive and performance environments while maintaining their core identity. Through consistent high-quality performances, the CapSU Main Chorale ensures its legacy remains intact, continually inspiring both current and future generations of choristers.

Commitment and discipline

A defining hallmark of the CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) is its deep-seated culture of discipline and unwavering dedication. Members commit to rigorous training, enduring long hours of rehearsals and intensive in-house preparation, especially in the lead-up to competitions. This sustained commitment is not merely short-term; as one respondent shared, "Commitment means staying with the chorale, whether for one year, two years, or even after graduating," reflecting how the group cultivates long-lasting loyalty and engagement among its members.

The chorale's focus on technical mastery—particularly through the structured learning of vocal techniques like head tones and voice placement—plays a critical role in elevating the quality of their performances. According to research, disciplined rehearsal frameworks significantly enhance choral outcomes by refining individual skills and ensuring cohesive, synchronized vocal delivery (Brown, 2019). For the CMC, this disciplined approach does not just build technical proficiency; it also reinforces the group's collective identity and fortifies its reputation as a leading choral ensemble. Ultimately, it is this foundation of commitment and discipline that enables the CapSU Main Chorale to uphold its high artistic standards, ensuring sustained success and excellence across generations of singers.

Evolution and adaptability

A central pillar of the CapSU Main Chorale's (CMC) discipline is its highly structured approach to vocal training. Members undergo detailed instruction in techniques such as head tones, voice placement, and proper breathing, which serve as the technical backbone of their polished performances. As one informant noted, "They teach proper beating and how to sing using head tones," underscoring the meticulous attention given to refining vocal precision. Research by Brown (2019) supports that disciplined rehearsal structures play a crucial role in enhancing choir performance by sharpening individual skills and ensuring synchronized delivery.

Beyond technical training, CMC has demonstrated remarkable adaptability, expanding its repertoire over time to include not only traditional European choral works but also diverse selections like pop, folk, and nationalistic songs. This shift, influenced by international exposure, reflects a broader trend in choral music where ensembles embrace contemporary styles to connect with wider audiences (Johnson, 2020). Participation in international competitions has further enriched CMC's artistic evolution, as they apply constructive feedback and integrate new performance strategies to continually elevate their artistry. One participant emphasized, "Through these experiences, we have received constructive criticism, which we have applied to improve the group," highlighting their openness to cross-cultural learning and innovation.

Importantly, CMC's culture of discipline extends beyond rehearsals and into personal responsibility. Members are expected to manage their time effectively, balancing academic demands with chorale commitments—a training that fosters professionalism both on and off stage. As Miller (2017) notes, disciplined choirs achieve superior synchronization, which directly translates to more polished and impactful performances. Through this blend of rigorous training, adaptability, and personal accountability, the CapSU Main Chorale sustains its artistic excellence and ensures its ongoing relevance in the evolving landscape of choral music.

Camaraderie and family culture

The CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) thrives not only on musical excellence but also on a deeply rooted culture of commitment, accountability, and camaraderie. The members' high level of dedication fosters a shared responsibility for consistently maintaining performance quality, with the group's organizational structure ensuring smooth leadership transitions between generations. This framework sustains the ensemble's artistic standards over time, reinforcing a tradition of excellence.

Yet beyond technique and discipline, what truly sets CMC apart is its strong sense of family. Many respondents describe the chorale as more than just an organization; it is a nurturing and supportive community where members forge deep personal bonds. As one participant reflected, "For me, the CapSU Main Chorale is not just a group or an organization, but a family," while another emphasized that it is about "upholding integrity and values" and performing as a united team, not merely focusing on competition. This atmosphere of camaraderie extends even beyond active membership, as alumni frequently return to mentor and guide the next generation, strengthening the continuity and unity of the group (Participant 15).

Research supports that social cohesion within choral groups enhances teamwork and elevates performance quality, as members develop mutual trust and a shared sense of purpose (Miller, 2017). This tight-knit community contributes not only to the emotional depth of CMC's performances but also to its sustained success across the years. Importantly, the discipline and values instilled in members leave a lasting impact that transcends music; alumni often credit their chorale experience for shaping their professional work ethic and personal growth. By embedding discipline, accountability, and community into its core identity, the CapSU Main Chorale consistently produces individuals who excel not only in the realm of music but also in their broader life and career pursuits.

Challenges and overcoming Adversity

The CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) has demonstrated remarkable resilience throughout its history, overcoming numerous challenges to maintain its status as a leading choral ensemble. One of the most significant setbacks the group faced was the COVID-19 pandemic, which, like for many

choral groups worldwide, severely disrupted rehearsals and performances due to strict health protocols. As one informant reflected, “This enjoyment was interrupted by the strict implementation of COVID-19 measures, which prevented the group from continuing their passion” (Respondent 3). Yet, despite the halt in activities, CMC rebounded with determination once restrictions eased, underscoring its capacity to persevere through crisis.

Beyond the pandemic, CMC encountered structural and organizational difficulties, particularly the absence of a permanent rehearsal space in its earlier years, which affected the consistency of their practice. However, through gradual improvements—such as securing a designated rehearsal room and refining organizational leadership—the group strengthened its coordination and sustainability. As one participant observed, “Compared to before, when we were quite unruly, now they are more organized” (Respondent 1).

Financial constraints have been another persistent challenge, limiting the group’s ability to participate in prestigious international competitions due to the costs of travel, costumes, and registration. Nevertheless, CMC has actively sought sponsorships and external funding, reflecting its adaptability and determination to secure the resources necessary for artistic growth. Research suggests that financial stability is crucial for choral groups to thrive (Johnson, 2020), and CMC’s efforts to gain support from the university and local community have been pivotal in sustaining its operations.

The group’s collective sense of purpose and community has been a key force driving its resilience. As one informant shared, “Support and recognition played a significant role in the success of CMC. These served as a testament that what we do mattered significantly” (Respondent 16). This shared passion has enabled the group to navigate adversity and maintain its artistic endeavors, demonstrating that resilience and adaptability are vital to long-term success in the performing arts.

Tracing its history, CMC evolved from its origins as the CapSUNian Larks (1973–2010) under Prof. Lourdes De Guzman, who laid the foundation for the chorale’s cultural significance within the university. Between 2010 and 2016, under leaders such as Prof. Cheery Medina-Dequina, Prof. Shannie Libiano-Balahay, Prof. Carmel M. Ong, and Prof. Mico Lauron, the group expanded its role in campus life and community events, strengthening both its technical capacity and outreach. Moving into the period from 2016 to 2025, under the direction of Dr. Vivian B. Apuang and Kimble A. Arcangeles, CMC has strategically aimed for greater participation in prestigious local, national, and international events, signaling its ambition to expand its influence and contribute meaningfully to the broader cultural landscape. By maintaining strong leadership, securing institutional backing, and fostering deep commitment among its members, the CapSU Main Chorale is poised to continue building its legacy of excellence well into the future.

Achievements of CapSU Main Chorale

The success of the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) is shaped by an intricate interplay of leadership, discipline, rigorous training, teamwork, and institutional support. These elements together sustain the choir’s excellence and enable it to thrive across local, national, and international stages. Applying the Reflexive Thematic Analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019), the study reveals that while awards and recognitions affirm CMC’s elevated status, the group’s deeper achievement lies in the transformative experience it offers members—helping them progress from novices to accomplished performers who can compete alongside renowned

choral groups. As one participant shared, the real fulfillment comes not merely from titles but from the opportunity to unlock one's full potential through choral performance (Participant 16).

At the heart of CMC's success is strong and effective leadership. Conductors and senior members play a pivotal role in maintaining discipline, motivating members, and ensuring smooth coordination during rehearsals and performances. Research supports that clear direction and encouragement from leaders enhance group cohesion and performance quality (Northouse, 2021). This leadership is complemented by the group's structured training and development system, which sharpens members' technical abilities through vocal exercises, sectional practices, and mentorship. Such organized training, paired with team-building efforts, strengthens both musicality and interpersonal bonds, promoting collaboration and mutual support (Gackle, 2019).

However, the path to success is not without challenges. CMC faces issues such as attendance concerns, scheduling conflicts, and financial limitations, all of which test the group's resilience. Members must balance academic obligations with demanding rehearsal schedules, requiring exceptional time management, while limited resources make institutional backing crucial for sustaining the group's activities. Research emphasizes the importance of institutional funding and logistical support in helping student choral organizations navigate such challenges (Hewitt, 2020).

Ultimately, institutional support and community recognition serve as vital pillars in maintaining CMC's momentum. University administration provides the necessary financial and logistical backing, while public recognition nurtures pride and inspires members to continually push their artistic limits. This synthesis underscores how leadership, training, resilience, and support systems intertwine to fuel the continued growth and success of the CapSU Main Chorale, offering valuable lessons and best practices for other choral groups striving to achieve similar excellence.

Leadership and Management

The success of the CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) is deeply rooted in its strong leadership and management, which have fostered a culture of discipline, commitment, communication, and personal growth among its members. Effective communication between leaders and choristers ensured smooth coordination during rehearsals and performances, as noted by one respondent who emphasized how well the group collaborated to achieve its goals (Respondent 1). This aligns with leadership studies showing that clear directives and open dialogue are essential for collective success (Northouse, 2021).

Leadership initiatives within CMC were particularly influential in maintaining discipline and commitment. As Respondent 8 shared, leaders took proactive roles during rehearsals, ensuring that all members stayed aligned with the group's vision and making rehearsals more productive. Such proactive leadership not only maintained order but also inspired dedication, consistent with research highlighting the link between leadership and group discipline (Durrant, 2017). Commitment, moreover, was seen as an indispensable quality, with senior members and conductors stressing that talent alone was insufficient without dedication (Respondent 6). This shared sense of responsibility motivated members to actively engage and contribute to the ensemble's achievements.

Beyond logistical coordination, moral support from mentors played a crucial role in sustaining the group's morale. As Respondent 4 pointed out, their adviser's constant encouragement and reminders to stay humble reinforced intrinsic motivation, an essential driver of artistic performance (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The unity and brotherhood within CMC further

strengthened its dynamic, allowing members to support one another through challenges. As one respondent described, their strong bond enabled the group to collectively compensate for individual weaknesses, creating a resilient and adaptive team (Respondent 14).

Importantly, leadership within CMC extended beyond musical direction, contributing significantly to members' personal growth. Performing before audiences and navigating the responsibilities of group membership helped individuals develop self-confidence and overcome personal fears, highlighting the transformative impact of participation in the chorale (Respondent 12).

In summary, CMC's success is anchored in a leadership framework that balances clear communication, disciplined practice, deep commitment, moral support, and opportunities for personal development. These interconnected elements have enabled the chorale to thrive as a cohesive and high-performing musical ensemble, ensuring that members remain motivated and united in pursuit of artistic excellence.

Training & Development

The CapSU Main Chorale's (CMC) excellence is strongly rooted in its well-structured training system, which integrates vocal mastery, mentorship, leadership development, and team-building activities to foster both technical skill and group cohesion. As Respondent 7 emphasized, the foundation of the choir's success lies in disciplined practice, mastery of vocal techniques, and the careful step-by-step learning of musical pieces. Research supports that systematic training in choral ensembles leads to superior vocal performance (Gackle, 2019), and CMC's approach reflects this, particularly through sectional rehearsals that help members refine their parts before combining them into full-group performances (Respondent 13).

Mentorship plays a vital role in this developmental process, with senior members—fondly called “manoy” and “manang”—guiding younger members by teaching new songs, vocal techniques, and performance practices (Respondent 6). This peer-led transfer of knowledge fosters a culture of learning and strengthens intergenerational bonds, aligning with studies that highlight how mentorship enhances group learning (Carr & Claxton, 2018). Leadership roles within training sessions, such as conductors and section heads, provide essential guidance and set standards that continually elevate members' technical proficiency and stage presence (Respondent 7).

CMC's development strategy goes beyond technical rehearsals, incorporating workshops, seminars, and team-building exercises that reinforce collaboration and group cohesion. As Respondent 4 noted, these activities not only sharpen individual skills but also unify the ensemble, building trust and teamwork—factors widely recognized as crucial for cohesive performance (Hargreaves, 2016).

Additionally, performance exposure and the preservation of the group's legacy play key roles in sustaining CMC's identity and standards. Respondent 10 described how the chorale's traditions and values are passed down from one generation to the next, ensuring continuity and consistent artistic growth. Underpinning all these efforts is the importance of attitude and discipline, with Respondent 12 stressing that consistent attendance and a positive approach are critical for maximizing the impact of training.

In sum, CMC's success is the result of an integrated training framework that not only sharpens musical talent but also cultivates leadership, mentorship, discipline, and teamwork. This holistic approach enables the chorale to function as both a refined musical ensemble and a resilient, value-driven community.

Challenges & Resilience

Despite its many successes, the CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) has faced a range of challenges that tested its resilience and adaptability. Attendance issues emerged as a central concern, with Respondent 8 emphasizing that even a single member's absence can disrupt the ensemble's completeness. Such problems are common in performance groups and are often mitigated through strict attendance policies (Bennett, 2022). Alongside attendance, scheduling conflicts posed significant difficulties, as members struggled to balance the demands of academics with the intense rehearsal schedule. As Respondent 9 noted, managing both commitments required careful time management, a factor widely recognized as critical in balancing extracurricular and academic responsibilities (Gurung, 2019).

Financial limitations further strained the group, as highlighted by Respondent 8, who shared the personal struggle of managing expenses tied to chorale participation. Research underscores that without institutional or community support, funding constraints can hinder the growth and operations of performance groups (Hewitt, 2020). Beyond logistical and financial challenges, CMC members also encountered artistic hurdles, particularly when learning unfamiliar pieces, which required perseverance and teamwork (Respondent 2).

Internal conflicts and misunderstandings occasionally disrupted group dynamics, but Respondent 1 stressed that these challenges were typically resolved through effective communication. In addition, some members grappled with self-doubt and a lack of confidence, as Respondent 13 observed, noting that a bit of encouragement and motivation often helped them overcome these barriers.

Perhaps one of the most persistent challenges was the constant turnover of members, as the natural cycle of graduation and attrition required the group to continually train newcomers and rebuild. As Respondent 16 explained, "Members come and go," making it necessary for the chorale to sustain itself through ongoing recruitment and training.

By proactively addressing these issues through structured attendance expectations, strategic time management, financial planning, and a culture of communication and support, CMC demonstrated remarkable resilience. These adaptive strategies enabled the chorale to maintain its excellence and thrive despite the inevitable difficulties that arose, underscoring the group's capacity for sustained success.

Institutional support

The success of the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) is deeply shaped by the vital role of institutional backing, which has been a determining factor in the group's achievements. As Respondent 16 highlighted, the unwavering support of the university has played a pivotal role in enabling the chorale's endeavors. Research confirms that financial and logistical support from academic institutions is crucial for enhancing the operations and impact of extracurricular organizations (Hickey, 2017). This support has gone beyond funding, encompassing administrative encouragement, rehearsal spaces, equipment, and transportation—resources that have allowed CMC to operate smoothly and focus on artistic excellence.

The broader findings of the study reveal that CMC's success is the result of a dynamic combination of leadership, structured training, resilience, and institutional support. Effective leadership, grounded in discipline, motivation, and clear communication, has been central to the group's ability to align members with its artistic vision and achieve high levels of performance (Durrant, 2017). Structured training programs, including sectional practices, vocal workshops,

and mentorship from senior members, have further enhanced the technical and artistic growth of the ensemble, fostering a culture of continuous learning and skill development (Carr & Claxton, 2018).

Despite its achievements, CMC has navigated significant challenges, including attendance issues, time management struggles, financial limitations, performance-related pressures, internal conflicts, and member turnover. Addressing these requires not only internal strategies like attendance policies and teamwork but also institutional interventions such as academic accommodations, financial assistance, and logistical support (Gurung, 2019; Hewitt, 2020). Strengthened institutional backing—including scholarships, grants, and performance sponsorships—has the potential to further ease members' burdens and sustain the longevity of the group.

Beyond internal factors, community engagement and public recognition are vital in sustaining enthusiasm for choral music. Performances, competitions, and collaborations increase visibility, build local support, and encourage continued participation, underscoring the cultural and social value of choral singing (Bresler, 2018).

The achievements of the CapSU Main Chorale from 2014 to 2024 reflect the collective power of these elements. CMC has consistently excelled in the Regional and National PASUC Competitions, culminating in the prestigious “Best Choral Group” award at the 31st Annual Aliw Awards in 2018. On the international stage, they were finalists in the 2022 Medici International Music Competition and earned both Golden and Silver Diplomas at the 2023 World Choir Games. In 2024, they continued their winning streak, becoming champions in the Acapellove Competition and securing top placements in regional festivals like the ‘Mga Tingug sang Paswa’ Iloilo Choral Competition.

Together, these accomplishments solidify CMC's position as a leading choral ensemble locally, nationally, and internationally. The synthesis of leadership, disciplined training, resilience, institutional and community support, and an enduring commitment to artistic excellence ensures that the CapSU Main Chorale will continue to thrive and inspire future generations of choristers.

Factors that contributed to the success of CapSU Main Chorale

The developmental progression of the CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) highlights significant improvements in discipline, organization, and structure. Over time, the group has refined its rehearsal methods, transitioning from an informal setup to a more structured and systematic approach. This transformation has been facilitated by institutional support, which has provided a designated practice space, ensuring continuity and stability. The structured environment has enhanced the group's professionalism, allowing members to develop both musically and organizationally. Such improvements have laid a strong foundation for sustained excellence in choral performance.

One of the most notable milestones in CMC's journey is its expansion to the international stage. Achieving recognition beyond national borders has not only elevated the group's prestige but has also instilled a sense of pride and ambition among its members. Competing on international platforms has provided exposure to diverse choral techniques and cultural exchanges, further enriching the group's artistic quality. This international recognition serves as a testament to the members' dedication and the effectiveness of their training regimen, inspiring newer members to strive for higher standards.

Additionally, the increase in membership has played a crucial role in reinforcing the group's sustainability. The influx of new members has fostered stronger interpersonal bonds, creating a supportive and cohesive community. Alumni engagement has further strengthened the group's continuity, as former members continue to contribute through mentorship and advocacy. This sense of belonging and commitment has ensured that the CMC remains a thriving organization, capable of maintaining its artistic and organizational excellence across generations.

The developmental progression of the CMC highlights significant improvements in discipline, organization, and structure. Members have noted that rehearsals have become more systematic, and the chorale now has a designated practice space, demonstrating institutional support for its continuity.

One of the most notable developmental milestones is the group's expansion to the international stage, which has elevated its prestige beyond national recognition. This has also contributed to the group's sustained excellence, motivating newer members to aspire to higher standards.

Additionally, an increase in membership has fostered stronger bonds among members, ensuring the sustainability of the group. Alumni engagement continues to reinforce the sense of commitment and identity, with former members remaining involved even after graduation.

Musical growth and repertoire expansion

The CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to artistic evolution by continually expanding its repertoire and adapting to contemporary musical trends. While the group has traditionally been rooted in classical choral pieces, recent years have seen a conscious shift toward incorporating folk, pop, and nationalistic songs, broadening its appeal and ensuring relevance to modern audiences. As Respondent 11 highlighted, this exploration of diverse musical styles has been significantly influenced by alumni contributions, reflecting the importance of intergenerational mentorship in sustaining musical innovation. Research supports that choirs embracing evolving repertoires are more likely to achieve long-term engagement and artistic growth (Johnson, 2020).

Participation in national and international competitions has played a critical role in refining CMC's musical style. Exposure to new performance techniques and standards at these high-level contests has elevated the choir's overall sound and strengthened its identity. As Respondent 10 observed, the current group's singing style has notably evolved compared to past years, largely due to international competition experiences. Brown (2019) emphasizes that such competitive exposure fosters technical improvement and deepens the artistic identity of choral groups.

Leadership and management practices, particularly discipline and effective communication, have underpinned CMC's success. Participant 1 reflected on how the chorale's conductress instilled discipline, while Participant 4 noted that the adviser's constant moral support and emphasis on humility motivated members to remain committed. These leadership efforts were reinforced by opportunities for individual and team development through workshops, expert-led seminars, and team-building activities, creating a comprehensive training environment.

Alumni influence has also been pivotal, as former members introduce contemporary techniques, recommend new repertoire, and mentor current choristers. This intergenerational knowledge transfer not only enhances technical proficiency but also enriches artistic interpretation (Miller, 2017). Furthermore, the integration of modern choral arrangements alongside traditional elements has allowed CMC to preserve its distinctive identity while

embracing innovation. According to Smith (2018), this balance between adaptability and tradition is a defining characteristic of enduring and successful choral ensembles.

In sum, CMC's musical evolution reflects its unwavering dedication to artistic excellence and versatility. By embracing diverse musical styles, integrating alumni influence, and continuously refining performance techniques, the CapSU Main Chorale ensures that future generations inherit a dynamic and well-rounded musical legacy—solidifying its reputation as a progressive and forward-looking choir poised for sustained success.

Leadership and structural changes

The CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) has undergone significant leadership transformations over the years, shaping its organizational structure, group dynamics, and overall artistic trajectory. Different conductors have introduced unique techniques, discipline levels, and rehearsal structures, enriching the choir's approach to performance and training. As Respondent 6 noted, "Every batch brings different techniques, levels of discipline, and structures," reflecting how leadership diversity contributes to a dynamic and evolving ensemble. Research supports this, showing that leadership in choral groups greatly influences their artistic direction and sustainability (Gordon, 2021).

These structural changes have led to more disciplined and efficient rehearsals. Where practices were once loosely organized, recent leadership has implemented stricter routines and clearer scheduling, resulting in improved cohesion and performance quality (Brown, 2019). Additionally, the formalization of hierarchical roles—such as appointing active section leaders—has enhanced peer learning, accountability, and mentoring within the group, fostering an environment of shared responsibility (Miller, 2017).

At the heart of CMC's success is its rigorous commitment to performance excellence through structured training. Vocal techniques, including breath control, tone blending, voice modulation, and posture correction, are emphasized in every rehearsal to strengthen both individual skills and group synchronization (Smith, 2018). As Respondent 13 observed, "We have strict voicing techniques trained in every rehearsal," underscoring the meticulous attention given to technical mastery. Sectional rehearsals allow members to focus on harmony and detail, while strict time management ensures that discipline remains central to the group's operations (Respondent 15).

Beyond technical training, CMC places strong emphasis on stage performance preparation, coaching members on emotional expression, stage presence, movement, and audience connection. As Respondent 9 explained, "We are taught not just to sing but to perform with emotion and connection," which aligns with research highlighting the importance of emotional engagement in enhancing artistic impact (Johnson, 2020).

Altogether, CMC's leadership evolution, structured training regimen, and adaptive learning environment ensure the choir's sustained excellence and artistic growth. By blending strong leadership, disciplined practice, technical refinement, and emotional performance, the CapSU Main Chorale has built a resilient foundation that not only supports current success but also secures the ensemble's future as a high-caliber, evolving musical institution.

Alumni Contributions and Mentorship

The CapSU Main Chorale (CMC) has greatly benefited from the active and sustained involvement of its alumni, who play a crucial role in mentoring new members, transferring knowledge, and strengthening the group's legacy. As Respondent 15 noted, a key tradition within

the chorale is the continual return of alumni, creating a strong sense of unity and intergenerational connection. These former members not only offer technical training and vocal coaching—helping refine the current group’s musical style and confidence (Respondent 12)—but also provide career guidance, inspiring younger choristers who aspire to professional music careers. Research supports that alumni mentorship enhances performance quality and cultivates leadership skills in younger members, contributing to a sustainable and interconnected artistic community (Miller, 2017; Brown, 2019).

Beyond mentorship, alumni also contribute financially, supporting the group’s participation in competitions and the acquisition of training materials. This financial assistance strengthens the choir’s sustainability, enabling CMC to continue evolving artistically while preserving its traditions (Gordon, 2021). The combination of alumni expertise, mentorship, and material support ensures that CMC not only honors its past but also continuously enriches its artistic growth.

In parallel, technological advancements have revolutionized CMC’s training, outreach, and performance capabilities. The incorporation of digital tools—such as online rehearsals, digital learning platforms, and social media—has allowed the choir to adapt to modern demands without compromising its artistic integrity. Looking ahead, further technological innovations are likely to shape CMC’s development, offering new avenues for cross-cultural collaboration and global exposure.

The study’s findings highlight several key implications for the future sustainability and success of CMC and similar choral organizations. First, maintaining a dynamic and evolving repertoire is critical; CMC’s balance between integrating modern musical styles and preserving traditional elements ensures it stays relevant and engaging, serving as a model for other choirs aiming for long-term success. Second, strong leadership and structured organization are essential. Leadership transitions significantly influence a choir’s direction, discipline, and performance quality, underscoring the need for formal leadership training programs and structured rehearsal systems to sustain group cohesion and efficiency.

Furthermore, the role of mentorship and alumni engagement carries powerful implications. CMC’s example demonstrates how integrating alumni as mentors preserves institutional knowledge, strengthens the group’s continuity, and secures valuable resources. Future research could explore the long-term effects of alumni involvement on sustaining artistic organizations. Finally, embracing technology can greatly enhance training efficiency, audience reach, and artistic innovation. By leveraging digital platforms, choirs can improve their visibility, foster global collaborations, and stay attuned to emerging trends in choral music. Together, these strategies ensure that ensembles like CMC continue to thrive artistically and institutionally well into the future.

Benefits gained by the members of CapSU Main Chorale

The Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) has profoundly shaped the lives of its members, offering far more than just musical training — it has fostered holistic personal and professional development. Using the Reflexive Thematic Analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019), this study reveals that CMC membership nurtures essential life skills such as teamwork, discipline, leadership, and resilience, which extend well beyond the rehearsal room. While many members initially joined out of a passion for music, they soon discovered that their involvement was also about cultivating responsibility, commitment, and a sense of belonging,

aligning with research that underscores the role of music organizations as platforms for personal growth (Durrant, 2017).

Participation in performances, competitions, and workshops provided real-world applications of their training, enhancing members' confidence, stage presence, and networking abilities. Several respondents reflected on how CMC shaped their career paths, particularly in fields such as music, education, and leadership, reinforcing findings that structured artistic experiences build discipline and career readiness (Gackle, 2019). Importantly, the impact of CMC extended into members' professional and personal lives long after graduation. Former members reported carrying forward values like time management, resilience, and collaboration, which continued to serve them in diverse work and life contexts — evidence of the lifelong benefits of musical ensemble participation (Hickey, 2017).

Through this thematic exploration, key insights emerged around personal growth, skill development, career influence, challenges, and the importance of institutional support. Members described how their experiences within CMC not only honed their musical abilities but also shaped their character, boosted their confidence, and taught them humility and teamwork — all critical elements in sustaining an effective and cohesive choral group.

Overall, this synthesis highlights the transformative power of CMC in shaping its members into well-rounded individuals prepared for success both within and beyond the realm of music. The findings offer valuable lessons for current and future chorale participants, providing guidance on how to maximize personal growth, embrace commitment, and contribute meaningfully to the ongoing legacy of the CapSU Main Chorale.

Personal growth

Personal growth stands out as one of the most meaningful and transformative experiences reported by members of the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC). Many members shared how their participation in the group helped them develop confidence, overcome shyness, and conquer stage fright. As Respondent 1 reflected, “Before, I was shy and hesitant to communicate and stand on stage. But after joining the CapSU Main Chorale, I was no longer afraid to face the audience.” This shift aligns with research showing that musical performance boosts self-confidence and enhances social skills (Gurung, 2019). Emotional growth was equally profound, with members developing patience, discipline, and humility. For instance, Respondent 3 emphasized that the chorale taught them the importance of believing in themselves and viewing struggles as steppingstones to success, underscoring how emotional resilience is central to both artistic and personal development (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Beyond personal growth, CMC members experienced significant skill development, particularly in musical and performance techniques. Regular rehearsals, guided by conductors and senior mentors, sharpened their vocal control, breath management, harmonization, and stage presence. As Respondent 7 shared, “Through regular rehearsals, I have enhanced my vocal techniques, breath control, and harmonization skills,” echoing findings that structured musical training fosters technical mastery (Gackle, 2019). Some members expanded their musical literacy by learning instrumental skills like piano playing and music reading, as noted by Respondent 15, who credited CMC for significantly improving their abilities in these areas (Carr & Claxton, 2018).

Leadership within the group has played a pivotal role in cultivating discipline, accountability, and commitment. Mentors and conductors not only provide technical guidance but also serve as role models, setting clear expectations and demonstrating strong leadership

values. As one informant affirmed, “Our leaders set a good example for discipline and commitment,” aligning with research that shows effective leadership in artistic organizations is key to sustaining member motivation and elevating performance quality (Garcia & Torres, 2020; Santos & Villanueva, 2018).

Together, these insights reveal that CMC’s influence goes far beyond music, shaping members into confident, skilled, disciplined individuals who carry the lessons and growth they gained into their careers and personal lives. This synthesis highlights the powerful, multidimensional impact of choral participation on both individual development and collective artistic achievement.

Career influence

The Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) has had a profound and lasting impact on the careers of its members, equipping them with essential life and professional skills that extend well beyond music. Many respondents credited the chorale for instilling leadership abilities, strong time management, and a sense of professionalism. As Respondent 5 shared, “My experience in CapSU Main Chorale has greatly impacted my career, especially in terms of time management,” highlighting how the discipline gained from balancing rehearsals, academics, and performances developed into a transferable skill that enhances productivity in the workplace (Durrant, 2017).

Moreover, the performance opportunities provided by CMC played a critical role in shaping the career paths of those who pursued music, education, or related fields. Respondent 10 reflected on how being part of the chorale allowed them to perform across the province and even internationally, offering exposure that broadened their horizons and opened doors to professional opportunities. Research supports the idea that early performance experiences can be pivotal in launching careers in the arts (Hickey, 2017).

In essence, CMC has not only cultivated musical excellence but has also served as a vital training ground for developing leadership, time management, confidence, and career preparedness—ensuring that its members are well-equipped to excel in both artistic and professional endeavors.

Challenges faced

While membership in the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) offered numerous personal and professional benefits, it also presented significant challenges, particularly in balancing academic demands with the intense rehearsal schedule. As Respondent 9 described, “The biggest challenge we face during rehearsals and performances is balancing our academics with our choir practice,” highlighting the broader issue of student workload management common in extracurricular activities (Gurung, 2019).

In addition to time pressures, financial difficulties were another major obstacle for some members. Participation in competitions and performances often came with additional costs, such as travel, attire, and training expenses, which not all members could easily afford. As Respondent 8 shared, “Another challenge is financial difficulties, as sometimes I struggle with expenses related to the chorale.” Research emphasizes that institutional support is essential in alleviating such financial burdens, helping to ensure that talented students can fully engage and excel in artistic groups without being hindered by economic barriers (Hewitt, 2020).

Overall, while CMC has been a powerful space for growth, its members’ experiences also underscore the importance of balancing commitments and providing adequate institutional support to sustain participation and success.

Institutional support

The role of institutional support in sustaining CMC was evident in members' responses. University backing provided financial assistance, logistical support, and recognition of the chorale's contributions. Respondent 16 affirmed, "The support of the university plays a vital role in the success of CMC's endeavors." Research supports that institutional engagement enhances student participation in the arts (Bresler, 2018). Additionally, community outreach programs extended the impact of CMC beyond the university, fostering cultural appreciation and advocacy. Respondent 16 added, "CMC extends services by doing outreach programs to schools & the community, relating to choral music." Such initiatives align with global efforts to integrate music education into community development (Hickey, 2017).

Contribution to CAPSU's reputation and cultural identity

The Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) plays a vital role in elevating CAPSU's reputation, serving not only as a symbol of artistic excellence but also as a cultural ambassador for the institution. Stakeholders consistently highlight the chorale's talent, discipline, and high-caliber performances as key contributors to CAPSU's positive image. As the Museum Director of Ang Panublion (P8) remarked, "Their world-class talent, their discipline, and their performance definitely help and give CAPSU a very good reputation... they certainly level up not just CAPSU but also all other choirs here in Roxas City." This underscores how CMC's artistic achievements enhance the university's standing both locally and regionally.

Beyond building reputation, CMC also plays a crucial role in projecting CAPSU's cultural identity. Their performances provide a platform for cultural exchange and diversity, showcasing the region's rich heritage through music. As one professor (P12) observed, CMC serves as a vehicle for uniting diverse elements, offering students meaningful opportunities to engage with cultural expression. Mary Therese Encina, Information Officer for Tourism, emphasized that when CMC performs, they carry not only their own identity but also the name and image of the university, reinforcing the deep connection between the group's public presence and CAPSU's institutional brand.

In essence, the chorale is more than just a musical ensemble — it is a living representation of CAPSU's values, creativity, and cultural commitment. As the CCPM student president (P12) summarized, CMC plays a significant role in shaping the university's reputation and cultural identity, influencing how the institution is perceived far beyond its academic offerings. Through dedication to both artistic and cultural expression, the CapSU Main Chorale continues to strengthen the university's image and broaden its impact within the wider community.

Community engagement and cultural exchange

The Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) plays a transformative role not only within the university but across the broader community, extending its influence well beyond musical performance. As highlighted by P8, CMC generously shares its time and talents with local schools, the Ang Panublion Museum, and city events, demonstrating a strong commitment to community engagement. This involvement goes beyond entertainment — it reflects a deep-rooted dedication to public interaction and cultural enrichment.

Functioning as cultural ambassadors, CMC promotes cultural exchange by bridging different musical traditions and showcasing the rich heritage of Capiz. As P12 noted, the chorale brings together diverse cultures and fosters shared experiences, reinforcing the idea that music is

a powerful tool for cultural diplomacy. P7 further emphasized that CMC's participation in community events creates spaces for collective memory, where audiences not only enjoy performances but also engage in meaningful cultural exchanges, strengthening the social and cultural fabric of the community.

From an academic and artistic perspective, CMC exemplifies how music organizations foster both individual growth and community cohesion. Through performances, competitions, and outreach initiatives, the chorale enhances musical skills while cultivating values such as discipline, teamwork, and cultural appreciation. Importantly, the impact of CMC is not limited to its performers; it also deeply affects audiences. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2019) Reflexive Thematic Analysis, the study explored audience reactions, uncovering the emotional, artistic, and participatory responses evoked by CMC's performances. This analysis sheds light on how the chorale's cultural influence helps preserve local traditions, promote appreciation for Filipino music, and strengthen communal identity.

While existing research highlights the benefits of choral participation for self-confidence, social engagement, and cultural identity (Durrant, 2017; Hickey, 2017), few studies focus on audience perceptions and their role in sustaining cultural traditions. This study bridges that gap, offering a holistic view of how CMC operates as both an artistic institution and an agent of cultural preservation. Ultimately, the findings emphasize the need for sustained institutional support and funding for university-based choral groups, recognizing their invaluable contributions to education, cultural diplomacy, and heritage conservation. By providing empirical insights, this research serves as a resource for educators, cultural policymakers, and performing arts leaders in shaping strategies that integrate music more fully into cultural and academic initiatives.

Audience reception

The audience reception of the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) is overwhelmingly positive, with community members expressing deep emotional and artistic appreciation for the group's performances. Many audience members shared that CMC's music evokes powerful feelings of inspiration and nostalgia, with one respondent reflecting, "Watching the CMC perform brings back memories of my younger days singing in a choir." This aligns with research by Welch and Howard (2019), which highlights the ability of group singing to stir personal and collective memories, fostering emotional and psychological well-being.

Audience engagement further amplifies the impact of CMC's performances. Respondents frequently described how they actively participated during concerts, whether by singing along or applauding with enthusiasm. One audience member remarked, "Every time they perform, the audience sings along or claps enthusiastically," supporting the idea that interactive performances strengthen audience connection and deepen appreciation (Durrant, 2017).

In addition to emotional and participatory responses, the audience also demonstrated a strong artistic appreciation, particularly for CMC's technical excellence. As one attendee noted, "Their harmonization and stage presence are captivating," underscoring how vocal precision and expressive delivery significantly enhance audience satisfaction (Gackle, 2019).

Overall, these insights reveal that CMC's performances resonate on multiple levels—emotionally, interactively, and artistically—highlighting the choir's profound ability to connect with its audience and reinforce its role as a treasured cultural presence within the community.

Cultural influence

The cultural influence of the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) reaches far beyond its performances, as it plays a vital role in preserving and promoting local traditions and musical heritage. A key aspect of this cultural work is the choir's deliberate inclusion of Hiligaynon folk songs and regional language in its repertoire, which, as one community member expressed, "reminds us of our heritage." This reflects research by Hickey (2017), which highlights how the performance of folk music fosters cultural pride and strengthens local identity.

Audience perceptions further reveal CMC's critical role in cultivating music appreciation within the community. Informants noted that the chorale introduces traditional and folk music to younger generations, helping reinforce the value of Filipino musical heritage. This aligns with Koops' (2019) findings, which emphasize that music ensembles serve as vital channels for making traditional music accessible and relevant to new audiences.

Beyond cultural education, CMC's performances create profound emotional connections between performers and audiences. Respondents noted that even when language barriers exist, the choir's music conveys deep, universal emotions, reinforcing a shared sense of community. This observation is supported by Juslin and Sloboda (2017), who argue that music has powerful psychological effects, evoking emotions that strengthen social bonds.

In essence, the CapSU Main Chorale not only preserves local traditions through its music but also enriches the emotional and cultural life of the community, fostering a collective appreciation for heritage while building meaningful connections across generations.

Cultural preservation is another crucial aspect of the chorale's influence. Several respondents noted that without active efforts, traditional music could fade away. The chorale ensures continuity by partnering with local government units (LGUs) and institutions such as the Panublion Museum. Studies suggest that these collaborations are vital for sustaining cultural heritage (Bartleet et al., 2019). By actively engaging in these partnerships, the chorale contributes to the longevity of Capiz's musical traditions.

Beyond preservation, the chorale serves as an educational tool for its members and the community. Informants highlighted that younger generations are introduced to folk music through their involvement with the chorale. This aligns with theories on cultural transmission, which emphasize the importance of direct participation in sustaining traditions (Turino, 2018). Through consistent practice and performance, the chorale ensures that local music remains relevant. In summary, the CapSU Main Chorale's cultural influence extends beyond performance. It promotes, preserves, and educates communities about traditional music, strengthening Capiz's cultural identity. The respondents' testimonies reflect the broader role of choral groups in safeguarding musical heritage, reinforcing that music serves as both an artistic and a cultural institution (Wong, 2019).

Sustainability strategies and future directions of the CMC

The Capiz State University (CapSU) Main Chorale (CMC) has been central to shaping the university's musical and cultural identity, serving as a platform for artistic expression, camaraderie, and excellence. With its long-standing presence, ensuring both the sustainability of its legacy and the potential for future growth has become a crucial priority. This study, using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019), explores strategies for sustaining the CMC by drawing insights from current members and alumni.

Sustaining a choral group like CMC requires a careful balance between preserving artistic traditions and maintaining organizational stability. Core factors such as commitment, discipline, mentorship, and adequate infrastructure have been identified as essential to the choir's longevity. Without these, the group risks challenges like declining membership, funding shortages, and stagnant skill development. Importantly, CMC's future also depends on its capacity to adapt to evolving trends in choral music, ensuring it stays vibrant and competitive in the broader musical landscape.

Modern advancements in music education and performance, particularly the integration of technology, advanced training, and opportunities for global exposure, are critical for elevating CMC's artistic capabilities. As the group aspires toward international recognition, embracing innovative rehearsal techniques, performance formats, and audience engagement strategies will be key to maintaining relevance and expanding its reach.

Through qualitative analysis of respondent perspectives, this study organizes findings into thematic categories that shed light on the factors driving CMC's development. Direct statements from informants enrich the discussion, providing authentic insights into the group's needs and aspirations.

Ultimately, this analysis aims to inform CMC's strategic planning by identifying practical sustainability strategies and forward-looking improvements. The findings underscore the importance of strong leadership, engaged membership, and external support in securing the choir's continued success. By focusing on these elements, CMC can confidently preserve its rich legacy while charting a dynamic and innovative path for future generations.

Sustainability strategies

The sustainability of the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) is anchored in a combination of member commitment, continuous musical development, strong social bonds, robust infrastructure, financial stability, and alumni involvement. As respondents emphasized, long-term engagement in the group requires time management and discipline—skills that not only benefit the choir's operations but also enrich members' personal and academic lives (Brown, 2017; Jones & Smith, 2020). A culture of commitment ensures that members remain active contributors, while effective time management helps balance the demands of academics and rehearsals, preventing burnout and promoting sustained participation.

Musical excellence is another critical pillar. Respondents acknowledged the need for ongoing training, professional coaching, and the adoption of advanced vocal techniques, drawing inspiration from internationally acclaimed groups like the Philippine Madrigal Singers. This focus on continuous skill development guarantees that CMC maintains its high performance standards and relevance within the choral community (Harrison & Grant, 2019; Davies, 2018). Equally important are the bonds of brotherhood and camaraderie, which foster a sense of belonging and loyalty. Strong interpersonal relationships and structured mentorship programs, where senior members guide newcomers, help preserve traditions and reinforce the group's internal cohesion (López & González, 2021). These social dynamics are essential in creating a resilient, unified ensemble.

Infrastructure and financial support also play decisive roles. Respondents pointed out the challenges caused by the lack of a permanent rehearsal space, emphasizing that a dedicated studio and sufficient funding for essentials like costumes, instruments, and travel are crucial for the choir's growth (Carter & White, 2020). Sustainable funding strategies, including

partnerships, fundraising, and alumni contributions, are key to ensuring long-term financial stability (Williams, 2022).

The study's findings suggest several important implications for CMC's sustainability and future development. First, cultivating a disciplined, committed membership base through structured training programs strengthens both artistic and personal growth. Second, continuous professional development through workshops, collaborations, and exposure to renowned vocal coaches enhances performance quality. Third, the establishment of a dedicated rehearsal space and the securing of stable funding are critical to operational efficiency and long-term success.

Furthermore, leveraging digital technologies for virtual rehearsals, online performances, and recruitment allows CMC to expand its reach and adapt to modern trends (Miller & Johnson, 2023). Finally, aiming for international representation through global competitions and cultural exchanges not only elevates CMC's reputation but also provides enriching experiences that inspire future generations (Hernandez, 2020). Together, these strategies create a roadmap for ensuring the CapSU Main Chorale's enduring legacy and ongoing artistic excellence.

Future directions

The future of the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC) is shaped by several critical strategies aimed at enhancing its artistic excellence, organizational strength, and global reach. Central to this vision is the need for continuous musical training and skill refinement. Respondents emphasized their desire to master advanced techniques, recognizing that exposure to expert coaching and professional workshops can significantly elevate vocal quality and artistic expression (Dawson & Palmer, 2021). To meet this need, institutions are encouraged to establish partnerships with vocal coaches, music educators, and industry professionals, offering specialized masterclasses and mentorship programs that ensure ongoing artistic development.

Technological integration is another key pillar for CMC's advancement. With digital platforms playing an increasingly important role in music education and performance, expanding the choir's social media presence, conducting virtual rehearsals, and collaborating with other choirs online can enhance both engagement and learning (Miller & Johnson, 2023). These innovations will not only broaden CMC's reach but also introduce members to diverse musical styles and global perspectives, enriching their artistic experience.

Infrastructure improvements are also vital for the choir's sustainability. Many respondents stressed the urgent need for a dedicated, well-equipped rehearsal space, as current facilities are often inadequate. Research confirms that a high-quality rehearsal environment enhances musical precision, discipline, and efficiency (Clark & Adams, 2019). To address this, the university and external stakeholders should prioritize securing funding through alumni sponsorships, grant applications, and institutional investments to create a permanent, acoustically appropriate music studio.

Recruitment and member development will play a critical role in shaping CMC's future. A structured audition process, combined with a robust mentorship system, can help maintain high artistic standards while fostering inclusivity and nurturing diverse talents (Rodriguez & Fernandez, 2022). Implementing a systematic approach to scouting, training, and retaining members will ensure that each new cohort strengthens the choir's artistic foundation and contributes to its evolving reputation.

Finally, CMC's aspiration for international representation marks an exciting frontier for its growth. Competing in global choral events, participating in cultural exchange programs, and forging partnerships with international music organizations will allow CMC to showcase Filipino

talent on the world stage (Hernandez, 2020). To realize this ambition, the choir will need to secure travel grants, sponsorships, and strategic alliances that make overseas participation feasible.

Overall, CMC's future success depends on a holistic strategy that combines advanced training, technological innovation, infrastructure investment, strategic recruitment, and international engagement. By addressing these interconnected areas, CMC can reinforce its artistic legacy, expand its cultural influence, and establish itself as a leading force in both the local and global choral community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the comprehensive findings of this study, several key conclusions emerge regarding the sustained excellence, organizational strength, and cultural importance of the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC).

The CMC exemplifies a model of enduring artistic and organizational success within the higher education setting. Its evolution from a modest singing group to a highly respected choral institution demonstrates that musical excellence is not solely the result of talent but is deeply rooted in a culture of discipline, integrity, and shared purpose. The ensemble's consistent ability to uphold high artistic standards reflects its collective dedication to musical growth, performance mastery, and cultural preservation.

A major factor driving this success has been strong, visionary leadership combined with a well-defined organizational framework. The succession of conductors over the years brought diverse techniques and fresh leadership styles, enriching the choir's artistic output while ensuring innovation and continuity. Structured rehearsals, consistent vocal coaching, and an emphasis on discipline cultivated professionalism and accountability among members. Alumni involvement further bolstered the group's tradition of excellence by fostering multigenerational mentorship and sustaining institutional knowledge.

Participation in the CMC has significantly shaped the holistic development of its members. Beyond enhancing their musical abilities, members gained essential life skills such as time management, perseverance, teamwork, leadership, and self-confidence. These experiences not only supported academic and professional success but also contributed to students' personal growth and identity formation, underscoring the transformative power of performing arts organizations within student development.

Equally important has been the chorale's role as a cultural agent within and beyond the university. By incorporating traditional Filipino compositions, regional languages, and indigenous musical styles into its repertoire, CMC has actively preserved and promoted local heritage. Through community engagements, university events, and national and international competitions, the ensemble has served as a cultural ambassador, showcasing the values, talent, and traditions of CapSU to wider audiences. Its performances inspire public appreciation for the arts and foster cultural pride both within the university and the local community.

Despite its achievements, the CMC's long-term sustainability depends on proactive strategies to address ongoing challenges such as limited funding, recruitment difficulties, and balancing academic responsibilities with performance obligations. Notably, the chorale's resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic — including its integration of digital tools and remote training — highlights its adaptability and innovative capacity in the face of adversity.

Looking ahead, CMC's continued growth will require sustained institutional support, including financial investment, dedicated rehearsal facilities, and formal recognition of the chorale's academic and cultural contributions. Alumni engagement as mentors, sponsors, and advocates will be crucial for maintaining the group's legacy and morale. Additionally, embracing technological innovations in performance and outreach will ensure CMC remains visible, relevant, and competitive in the increasingly digital global cultural landscape.

In conclusion, the CapSU Main Chorale stands as a powerful testament to the transformative role of music, the strength of community, and the impact of structured leadership in the arts. It is a living example of how student-led artistic groups can preserve tradition, foster personal and collective growth, and serve as vital agents of cultural continuity and innovation within Philippine higher education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions of this study, several key recommendations are presented to ensure the continued growth, sustainability, and artistic excellence of the Capiz State University Main Chorale (CMC).

First, strengthening institutional support is essential. The university administration is strongly urged to provide a dedicated, acoustically suitable rehearsal space and increase budget allocations to cover training, competition participation, uniforms, and other essential needs. Logistical assistance, such as transportation and travel coordination for local, national, and international performances, is also crucial to ensure the group's operational stability and cultural visibility.

Second, establishing a formal alumni mentorship program is highly recommended. Alumni who have contributed to CMC's past success are well-positioned to serve as mentors, technical coaches, and facilitators in leadership development, vocal training, and event organization. Their involvement would preserve institutional memory, inspire current members, and create a vibrant multigenerational learning environment grounded in shared experience and cultural pride.

Third, the integration of digital tools—successfully used during the COVID-19 pandemic—should be further institutionalized. By adopting a hybrid rehearsal model that combines in-person and virtual sessions, incorporating asynchronous learning materials, maintaining digital performance archives, and expanding the group's social media presence, CMC can enhance flexibility, promote self-assessment, and engage wider audiences, ensuring adaptability in an evolving cultural landscape.

Fourth, leadership development within the choir must be formalized through structured training initiatives. It is recommended that CMC implement leadership programs to prepare future conductors, sectional leaders, and coordinators, focusing on conducting techniques, group facilitation, stage management, and administrative tasks. Cultivating leadership from within will reinforce accountability, ensure organizational continuity, and strengthen members' ownership of the chorale's mission and vision.

Fifth, to maintain a strong flow of talented members, CMC should expand its recruitment efforts by reaching out to secondary schools, organizing performances to showcase its culture and artistry, and collaborating with student councils and campus organizations. Additionally, offering scholarships, academic incentives, or elective credits could help attract committed and musically inclined students, particularly those facing financial barriers, thereby diversifying and enriching the membership.

Sixth, pursuing strategic partnerships with local cultural institutions, government agencies, and international choral organizations will provide access to valuable training opportunities, funding support, and broader performance platforms. These collaborations would position CMC as a cultural ambassador for the university, advancing artistic excellence while promoting cross-cultural dialogue and global recognition.

Lastly, developing a long-term strategic plan is strongly advised. This plan should define clear goals for artistic development, recruitment, international exposure, and community outreach and should be crafted collaboratively by student leaders, faculty advisers, alumni, and administrators to align with the university's broader institutional vision. A well-designed strategic plan will serve as a roadmap for the chorale's future, guiding its progress and ensuring it remains responsive to emerging opportunities and challenges.

By adopting these recommendations, the Capiz State University Main Chorale will be well-equipped to preserve its legacy, nurture new generations of talent, and elevate its role as a premier university-based choral institution committed to musical excellence, education, and cultural preservation.

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