

Survey of Clarinet Mouthpiece and Reed Preferences: Current Trends

by

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ABSTRACT

Many options for mouthpieces and reeds are available to clarinetists, which makes selecting the right equipment complicated. In addition to personal research, potential influences in this process included teachers, professors, and private instructors. To provide some clarity in the current trends impacting the selection of new equipment, a survey of clarinetists was conducted. All participants were asked what equipment they were currently using and to specify what elements of the purchase were most important. Aspects such as price, instructor influence, personal research, conferences, brand loyalty, new releases, and social media were ranked by level of importance. Additionally, questions were asked of participants who taught clarinet about what they recommended to their students at various skill levels. The opinions of clarinetists along with the analysis of the data confirmed which mouthpieces and reeds were being suggested for different skill levels. The results were analyzed by type of career with strong trends in the participants current equipment and their suggested equipment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES.....	iv
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 SURVEY INTRODUCTION.....	5
3 STRUCTURE OF RESULTS AND GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC.....	8
Statistical Relevance of Data.....	10
4 SURVEY RESULTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.....	28
Undergraduate Student Equipment	28
Undergraduate Student Suggestions.....	35
5 SURVEY RESULTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS	43
Graduate Student Equipment	43
Graduate Student Suggestions.....	49
6 SURVEY RESULTS FOR PROFESSIONAL CLARINETIST.....	59
Professional Clarinetist Equipment.....	59
Professional Clarinetist Suggestions	67
7 SURVEY RESULTS FOR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS	77
College Instructor Equipment	77
College Instructor Suggestions.....	82
8 SURVEY RESULTS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTORS.....	91
Middle/High School Director Equipment	91

CHAPTER	Page
Middle/High School Director Suggestions.....	98
9 SURVEY RESULTS FOR PRIVATE INSTRUCTORS	108
Private Instructors (Non-Collegiate) Equipment	108
Private Instructors (Non-Collegiate) Suggestions	111
10 SURVEY RESULTS FOR HOBBYISTS	115
Hobbyist Equipment	115
Hobbyist Suggestions.....	120
11 CONCLUSION	124
Application of Data.....	130
REFERENCES	133
 APPENDIX	
A DATABASE OF CURRENT AND SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT	134
B COMMENTS FROM SURVEY PARTICIPANTS	146
C IRB APPROVAL LETTER.....	161

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1 Mouthpiece Diagram	3
3.1 Age Distribution of Respondents	8
3.2 Careers of Participants	9
3.3 Question 8.....	12
3.4 Question 8: Average Response by Career	13
3.5 Question 9.....	14
3.6 Question 9: Average Response by Career	15
3.7 Question 10.....	16
3.8 Question 10: Average Response by Career	17
3.9 Question 11.....	18
3.10 Question 11: Average Response by Career	19
3.11 Question 12.....	20
3.12 Question 12: Average Response by Career	21
3.13 Question 13.....	22
3.14 Question 13: Average Response by Career	23
3.15 Question 14.....	24
3.16 Question 14: Average Response by Career	25
3.17 Question 15.....	26
3.18 Question 15: Average Response by Career	27
4.1 Secondary Clarinet Careers for Undergraduate Students	28
4.2 Mouthpiece Brands of Undergraduate Students	29

Figure	Page
4.3 Vandoren Mouthpieces used by Undergraduate Students	30
4.4 Backun Mouthpieces used by Undergraduate Students.....	30
4.5 Reed Brands of Undergraduate Students.....	31
4.6 Vandoren Reeds of Undergraduate Students.....	31
4.7 Undergraduate Student Vandoren Reed Strength.....	32
4.8 Légère Reeds of Undergraduate Students	32
4.9 D’Addario Reeds of Undergraduate Students	33
4.10 Undergraduate Students Mouthpiece and Reed Purchasing.....	34
4.11 Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces from Undergraduate Students.....	36
4.12 Suggested Beginner Reeds from Undergraduate Students	37
4.13 Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces from Undergraduate Students	38
4.14 Suggested Intermediate Reeds from Undergraduate Students.....	39
4.15 Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces from Undergraduate Students.....	40
4.16 Suggested Advanced Reeds from Undergraduate Students.....	41
5.1 Age Distribution of Graduate Students	43
5.2 Mouthpiece Brands of Graduate Students.....	44
5.3 Vandoren Mouthpieces of Graduate Students	45
5.4 Reed Brands for Graduate Students	45
5.5 Vandoren Reeds of Graduate Students.....	46
5.6 Additional Reeds used by Graduate Students	46
5.7 Graduate Student Vandoren Reed Strength.....	47

Figure	Page
5.8 Graduate Student Mouthpiece and Reed Purchasing.....	48
5.9 Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces from Graduate Students.....	49
5.10 Suggested Beginner Reeds from Graduate Students	50
5.11 Beginner Vandoren Reed Strength Recommendation.....	51
5.12 Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces from Graduate Students	52
5.13 Suggested Intermediate Reeds from Graduate Students.....	53
5.14 Intermediate Vandoren Reed Strength Recommendation	54
5.15 Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces from Graduate Students	55
5.16 Suggested Advanced Reeds from Graduate Students.....	56
5.17 Advanced Vandoren Reed Strength Recommendation	57
6.1 Age Distribution of Professional Clarinetists.....	59
6.2 Secondary Careers of Professional Clarinetists.....	60
6.3 Professional Clarinetist Mouthpiece Brands	60
6.4 Professional Clarinetist Reed Brands.....	61
6.5 Professional Clarinetist Vandoren Reeds.....	61
6.6 Professional Clarinetist Vandoren Reed Strength	62
6.7 Professional Clarinetist Légère Reeds.....	62
6.8 Professional Clarinetist D’Addario Reeds.....	63
6.9 Military Band Musicians Mouthpieces	63
6.10 Orchestral Musician Mouthpieces.....	64
6.11 Solo/Chamber Musician Mouthpieces	64
6.12 Professional Clarinetist Mouthpiece and Reed Purchasing	66

Figure	Page
6.13 Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces from Professional Clarinetists	68
6.14 Suggested Beginner Reeds from Professional Clarinetists	69
6.15 Beginner Vandoren Reed Strengths from Professional Clarinetists	70
6.16 Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces from Professional Clarinetists.....	71
6.17 Suggested Intermediate Reeds from Professional Clarinetists.....	72
6.18 Intermediate Vandoren Reed Strengths from Professional Clarinetists.....	73
6.19 Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces from Professional Clarinetists.....	74
6.20 Suggested Advanced Reeds from Professional Clarinetists	75
6.21 Advanced Vandoren Reed Strengths from Professional Clarinetists.....	76
7.1 Age Distribution of College Instructors	77
7.2 Secondary Careers for College Instructors.....	78
7.3 College Instructor Mouthpieces	78
7.4 College Instructor Vandoren Mouthpieces.....	79
7.5 College Instructor Reeds.....	79
7.6 College Instructor Vandoren Reeds	80
7.7 College Instructor Vandoren Reed Strength.....	80
7.8 College Instructor Equipment Purchasing.....	81
7.9 Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces from College Instructors	82
7.10 Suggested Beginner Vandoren Models from College Instructors	83
7.11 Suggested Beginner Reeds from College Instructors	83
7.12 Suggested Beginner Vandoren Reeds from College Instructors.....	84
7.13 Suggested Beginner Vandoren Reed Strengths from College Instructors	84

Figure	Page
7.14 Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces from College Instructors	85
7.15 Suggested Intermediate Vandoren Mouthpieces from College Instructors.....	85
7.16 Suggested Intermediate Reeds from College Instructors.....	86
7.17 Suggested Vandoren Reeds from College Instructors	86
7.18 Intermediate Vandoren Reed Strengths from College Instructors	87
7.19 Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces from College Instructors.....	87
7.20 Suggested Advanced Vandoren Mouthpieces from College Instructors	88
7.21 Suggested Advanced Reeds from College Instructors.....	88
7.22 Suggested Advanced Vandoren Reeds from College Instructors	89
7.23 Suggested Vandoren Reed Strengths from College Instructors.....	89
8.1 Age Distribution of Middle/High School Directors	91
8.2 Secondary Careers for Middle/High School Directors	92
8.3 Middle/High School Director Equipment Purchasing.....	93
8.4 Middle/High School Director Mouthpieces	94
8.5 Middle/High School Director Mouthpieces without Professional Clarinetists ..	94
8.6 Middle/High School Director Vandoren Mouthpieces.....	95
8.7 Middle/High School Director Backun Mouthpieces	95
8.8 Middle/High School Director Pyne Mouthpieces	96
8.9 Middle/High School Director Reeds.....	96
8.10 Middle/High School Director Vandoren Reeds	97
8.11 Middle/High School Director Vandoren Reed Strength.....	97

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
8.12 Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces by Directors.....	98
8.13 Suggested Beginner Vandoren Mouthpieces by Directors	98
8.14 Suggested Beginner Reeds by Directors	99
8.15 Suggested Beginner D’Addario Reeds by Directors	99
8.16 Suggested Beginner Vandoren Reeds by Directors.....	100
8.17 Beginner Vandoren Reed Strengths from Directors	100
8.18 Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces by Directors	101
8.19 Suggested Intermediate Vandoren Mouthpieces by Directors.....	101
8.20 Suggested Intermediate Reeds by Directors.....	102
8.21 Suggested Intermediate Vandoren Reeds by Directors	102
8.22 Intermediate Vandoren Reed Strengths from Directors	103
8.23 Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces by Directors	104
8.24 Suggested Advanced Vandoren Mouthpieces by Directors	104
8.25 Suggested Advanced Reeds by Directors.....	105
8.26 Suggested Advanced Vandoren Reeds by Directors	105
8.27 Advanced Vandoren Reed Strengths from Directors	106
9.1 Age Distribution of Private Instructors	108
9.2 Private Instructor Mouthpieces	109
9.3 Private Instructor Reeds.....	109
9.4 Private Instructor Equipment Purchase	110
9.5 Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces by Private Instructors	111
9.6 Suggested Beginner Reeds by Private Instructors.....	111

Figure	Page
9.7 Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces by Private Instructors	112
9.8 Suggested Intermediate Reeds by Private Instructors.....	112
9.9 Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces by Private Instructors.....	113
9.10 Suggested Advanced Reeds by Private Instructors	113
10.1 Age Distribution of Hobbyists	115
10.2 Hobbyist Mouthpieces	116
10.3 Hobbyist Vandoren Mouthpieces.....	116
10.4 Hobbyist Reeds.....	117
10.5 Hobbyist Vandoren Reeds	117
10.6 Hobbyist Vandoren Reed Strength.....	118
10.7 Hobbyist Equipment Purchase	119
10.8 Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces by Hobbyists	120
10.9 Suggested Beginner Reeds by Hobbyists	120
10.10 Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces by Hobbyists.....	121
10.11 Suggested Intermediate Reeds by Hobbyists	121
10.12 Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces by Hobbyists.....	122
10.13 Suggested Advanced Reeds by Hobbyists	122

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the many global manufacturers of clarinet reeds and mouthpieces, clarinetists have a variety of equipment options to consider when they purchase or recommend new equipment to others. The available mouthpiece and reed options can be overwhelming. In researching the selection process for clarinet equipment in today's market, it is important to understand how clarinetists determine what equipment they choose for themselves and what they potentially suggested to students. For non-clarinetists, a basic understanding of the features of mouthpieces is important. This will help clarinetists and educators understand what they are looking for in equipment. In this study, I surveyed clarinet players of different ages and careers about their current mouthpieces and reeds. In addition, I asked the participants what they suggested to students of different skill levels. The results of this survey revealed the relative importance of established factors including the influence of professionals, cost, experience, and social media. Having surveyed the clarinet community about mouthpiece and reed usage, a better understanding of the most commonly used equipment and the specifics of the selection process was gained. The goal of this survey was to help clarinetists and educators understand what products were currently being used and were suggested to students. By showing the commonly suggested equipment, we can start to compare what we personally suggest to students and what clarinetists in the survey suggested as well.

Some identifying features of mouthpieces are the material, facing, tip opening, tone chamber, table, and bore size as shown in Figure 1.1.¹ Vandoren, Backun, D'Addario, and other producers include broad product lines of mouthpieces with varying dimensions catering to different preferences. Common materials used for mouthpieces are plastic, hard rubber, crystal/glass, and metal. The facing length refers to the length of the mouthpiece curvature. The tip opening is the distance between the reed and the mouthpiece tip. The baffle is the inside wall of the mouthpiece and can be various shapes. The player must select a mouthpiece facing that enables them to play with as little effort to produce an adequate sound.²

Variables for reeds that are important to consider are material, strength, and cut. Reeds are commonly made from natural cane or synthetic materials. The strength of the reed is the level of resistance. Every brand has their own system of classifying reed strength. The most common system employs a numbering system from 1-5 with slight variations with half sizes and quarter sizes depending on the brand. The way the reed is cut can affect the comfort and overall sound. The edges and tip of the reed are cut narrower to allow for more vibration while the heart of the reed is more resistant.³ The reed has to be resistant enough to withstand lip pressure.⁴ Finding the right reed should be based on desired sound.

¹ Walter L. Wehner, "The Effect of Interior Shape and Size of Clarinet Mouthpieces on Intonation and Tone Quality" (University of Wichita, 1961) 9.

² Wehner. "The Effect," 10.

³ Daniel Bonade, "Clarinetist's Compendium," (Leblanc Publications, 2005) 13.

⁴ Ibid, 14.

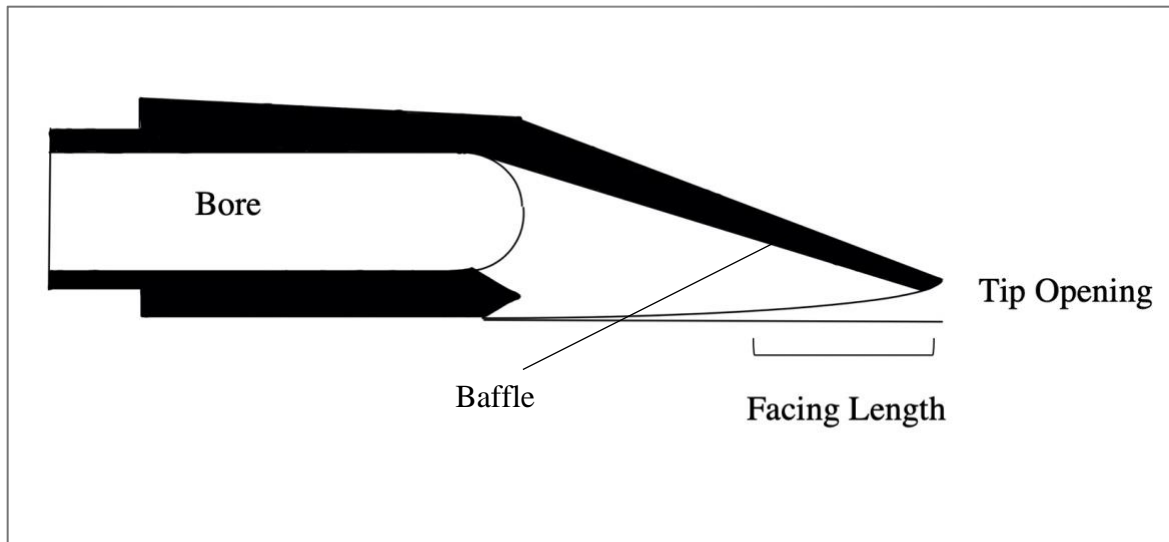


Figure 1.1. Mouthpiece Diagram

To learn what equipment was currently being purchased and used, I surveyed clarinetists through Facebook clarinet groups including The Clarinet Channel, Clarinet Class, ASU Clarinet Studio, Women Band Directors International, and Middle School Band Directors. These groups share a common interest in clarinet performance and teaching. The results of the survey were summarized graphically and analyzed by brand within age groups and current career positions of the respondents.

In addition to understanding what equipment the survey participants currently use, the survey shows how clarinetists arrived at their decision for selecting new equipment and what equipment was being recommended to players of different skill levels. The results of the survey will be categorized by participants age, current stage in their career, and whether they taught part-time or full-time. The outcome of this survey was not to determine which brands were better, but to identify trends in purchasing decisions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

SURVEY INTRODUCTION

The market is saturated with many mouthpiece facing options that make choosing the right facing a daunting task. The purpose of the survey was to determine what mouthpieces were currently being used within a sample of the clarinet community and what was currently being recommended to students.

The survey included clarinetists 18 years of age and older at various career stages. Career is a term used to categorize types of professional clarinetists and student clarinetists. The survey was posted on social media through Facebook clarinet discussion groups and band director pages. All submitted responses were anonymous and no follow-up interviews were requested. The questions were a mixture of free response, multiple choice, and rating scale questions. The survey questions included:

1. How old are you?
2. How many years have you been playing clarinet?
3. Do you teach clarinet? (full-time or part-time)
4. Where are you in your musical career? Select all that apply.
 - A. Undergraduate student
 - B. Graduate Student
 - C. Professional Musician (Solo/Chamber)
 - D. Professional Musician (Military)
 - E. Professional Musician (Orchestral)
 - F. College Instructor
 - G. Hobby
 - H. Other _____
5. What kind of mouthpiece do you use? Please include brand and model. (Sample Answer: Vandoren 5RV)
6. What kind of reeds and reed strength do you use? Please include brand, model, and strength. (Sample Answer: Vandoren V12 Size 3)
7. How long have you been playing on your current mouthpiece/reed combination?
8. How influential was a teacher recommendation when purchasing your equipment?

9. Was testing the equipment at a conference exhibit hall an influential part of your decision?
10. How influential was personal research in your purchasing decision?
11. How important was the cost of the mouthpiece and reeds?
12. How influential was a parent, guardian, or friend in your purchasing decision?
13. How important is brand loyalty to your purchasing decision?
14. How likely are you to purchase a newly released product?
15. Which way are you most likely to buy mouthpieces or reeds?
16. How likely are you to purchase a product based on a review by a professional clarinetist from social media?
17. What kind of mouthpiece and reeds do you recommend to beginner students? (include make, model, and strength)
18. What kind of mouthpiece and reeds do you recommend to intermediate students? (include make, model, and strength)
19. What kind of mouthpiece and reeds do you recommend to advanced students? (include make, model, and strength)
20. Provide any comments about mouthpiece and reed recommendations here:

As results were received, the data were organized by career group and presented graphically. Due to some questions having free responses, interpreting the data posed some challenges. Should participants provide no response about their equipment, they were placed in a “no choice” category. If they provided the brand information but no specific model, the response was placed in the general brand category. For example, should a participant indicate they had a Vandoren mouthpiece and not provide the model, their response will be labeled as a generic Vandoren entry rather than a specific Vandoren model. In some cases, the participants responded with more than one response for their equipment. In this scenario, the participants’ response was counted twice and the number of participants versus the responses were adjusted. The participant occupations were divided into the following categories: Undergraduate Student, Graduate Student, Professional Musician (Military, Orchestral, Solo/chamber), College Instructor, Hobby, and Other Professions. Should participants mark more than one profession, their

responses counted for each sub-group with which they associated. Several questions asking why they purchased certain equipment will be quantified by ranking their response on a scale from 1-5 (1= Very Unlikely 3=Neutral, 5=Very Likely). The graphs summarizing these responses were included in Figures 3.3-3.10. The questions for this survey provided a great selection as to the type of clarinetists responding.

The end goal for this survey was to create a database of mouthpieces and reeds that were currently used by clarinetists and the recommendations they provided for their students. By understanding the current mouthpieces and reeds clarinetists use, buying habits, and their recommendations for students of different levels, we gain a degree of insight into the clarinet community. The results, for the survey, were organized by age and profession, helping us understand whether specific groups followed particular trends about their personal equipment and their recommendations to others. The results of the data can be used by teachers and clarinetists as a reference to what their peers were using and currently recommending to their students.

CHAPTER 3

STRUCTURE OF RESULTS AND GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC

The number of survey respondents was n=305. Participants were categorized by age and profession. All participants were 18 years of age and older.

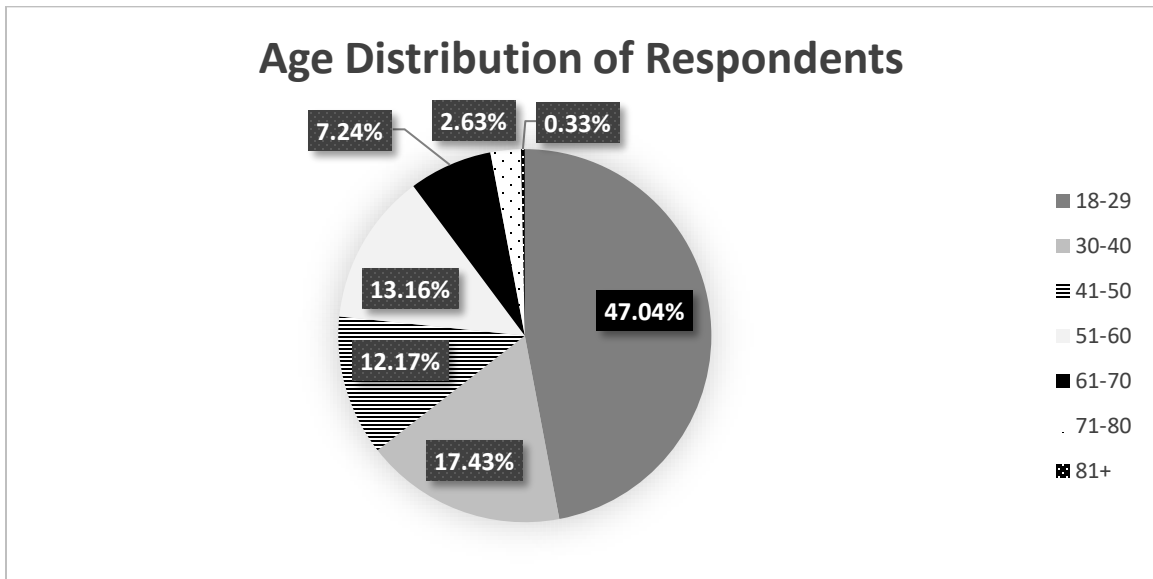


Figure 3.1. Age Distribution of Respondents

Figure 3.1 shows that nearly half the respondents were younger than 30 years of age. Due to the large number of respondents being under 30, the age distribution was not even. Therefore, no analysis based strictly on age was pursued.

In the following chapters, each major career mentioned by the respondents was analyzed separately. The career categories included undergraduate students, graduate students, professional clarinetists, college instructors, middle school and high school teachers, private instructors who were not collegiate, and hobbyists. With music being a multifaceted career choice, the participants were able to mention more than one career option. For individuals who mentioned multiple musical careers, their responses were counted in multiple groups. Once the careers were divided, the brands of mouthpieces

and reeds were represented graphically in a pie chart. For the brands that were an overwhelming majority in any group, the models of specific mouthpieces and reeds were displayed using pie charts. Some brands classify their reed strengths to the nearest 0.25 or 0.5. Vandoren has also included the plus size for certain reed models. Most individuals responded with a brand and no model. Since reed companies do not agree on a unified system for classifying reed strength. An overall average was not calculated.

Career groups were further divided by whether participants taught private lessons. The teachers and non-teachers were analyzed separately if the groups were approximately equal. Within these sub-groups, respondent suggestions for beginner, intermediate, and advanced students were represented graphically. Responses to this section of the survey were optional and not all participants suggested equipment. For those who did not include an answer for this section, their response was recorded in the “no choice” category. At the end of the survey, the participants were allowed to comment on their choices or the survey in general. Their comments are listed in Appendix B.

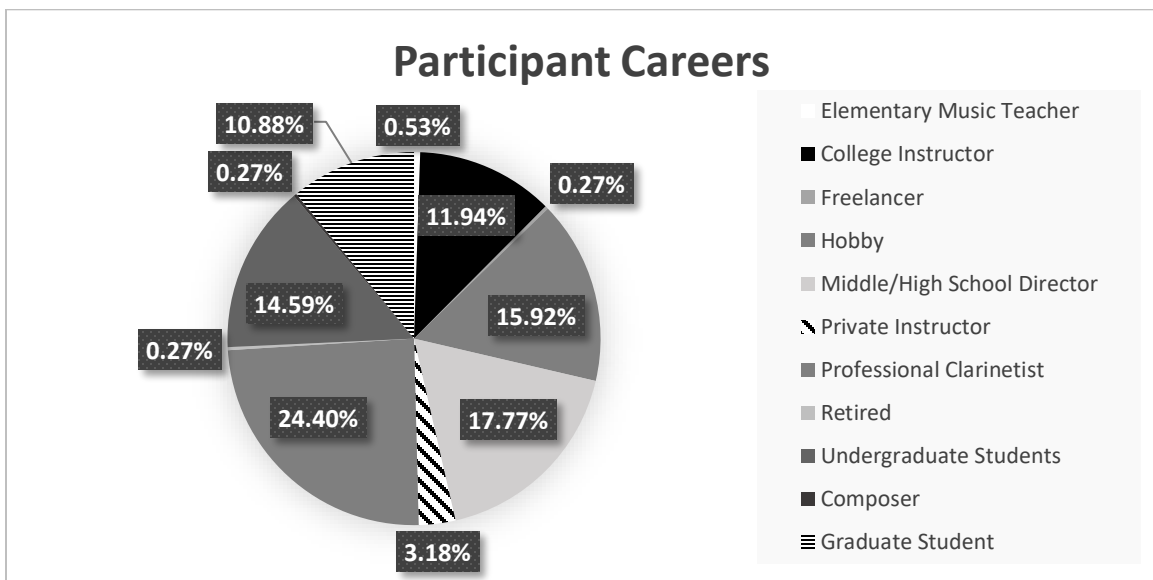


Figure 3.2. Careers of Participants. The percentage of participants who mentioned multiple careers was 23.28%.

Some respondents provided several responses for careers that were different from the options provided. If a response was not one of the career options included with the survey, the respondent was placed in what seemed to be the most similar category. While the majority of individuals were clear concerning their career path, some outlier occupations were present. For example, a few individuals classified themselves as retired. Fortunately, these individuals also mentioned their career leading up to retirement. With this information, their responses were sorted into one of the major categories such as band director or professional musician. Many individuals who labeled themselves as hobbyists also mentioned they were community band musicians. For most individuals, those who were members of a community band were hobbyists and therefore a separate category was not created.

Statistical Relevance of Data

Statistical information was calculated using an online confidence level calculator.⁵ A common confidence level for statistical analysis is 95%. This was the confidence level used within this study. For $n=305$ and the assumption that no answer was any more likely than another answer and a population of infinite size, the tool calculated a margin of error of $\pm 5.6\%$. This information was relevant to the questions relating to buying influences which were rated on a scale from 1-5. In particular, an average rating of 3 for a particular buying influence was considered to be neutral. However, applying the margin of error to that rating resulted in a range of 2.83-3.17. This means that an average rating within that range should be considered neutral. A rating above the range indicated that the buying

⁵ “Single-Sample Confidence Interval Calculator Using Z Statistic” Accessed February 15, 2021. <https://www.socscistatistics.com/confidenceinterval/default3.aspx>.

influence was important and a rating below the range suggested it was not important. The further away averages were from the neutral range indicated the relative strength of the rating.

Questions 8-16 in the survey pertain to buying influences that participants ranked on a scale of 1-5. In Figures 3.3-3.10, responses were shown by number and percentage in each career. Their responses were summarized in bar graph form showing separate charts for total number and percentage of each profession. This was done to provide clarity for careers that had more or fewer responses than the average.

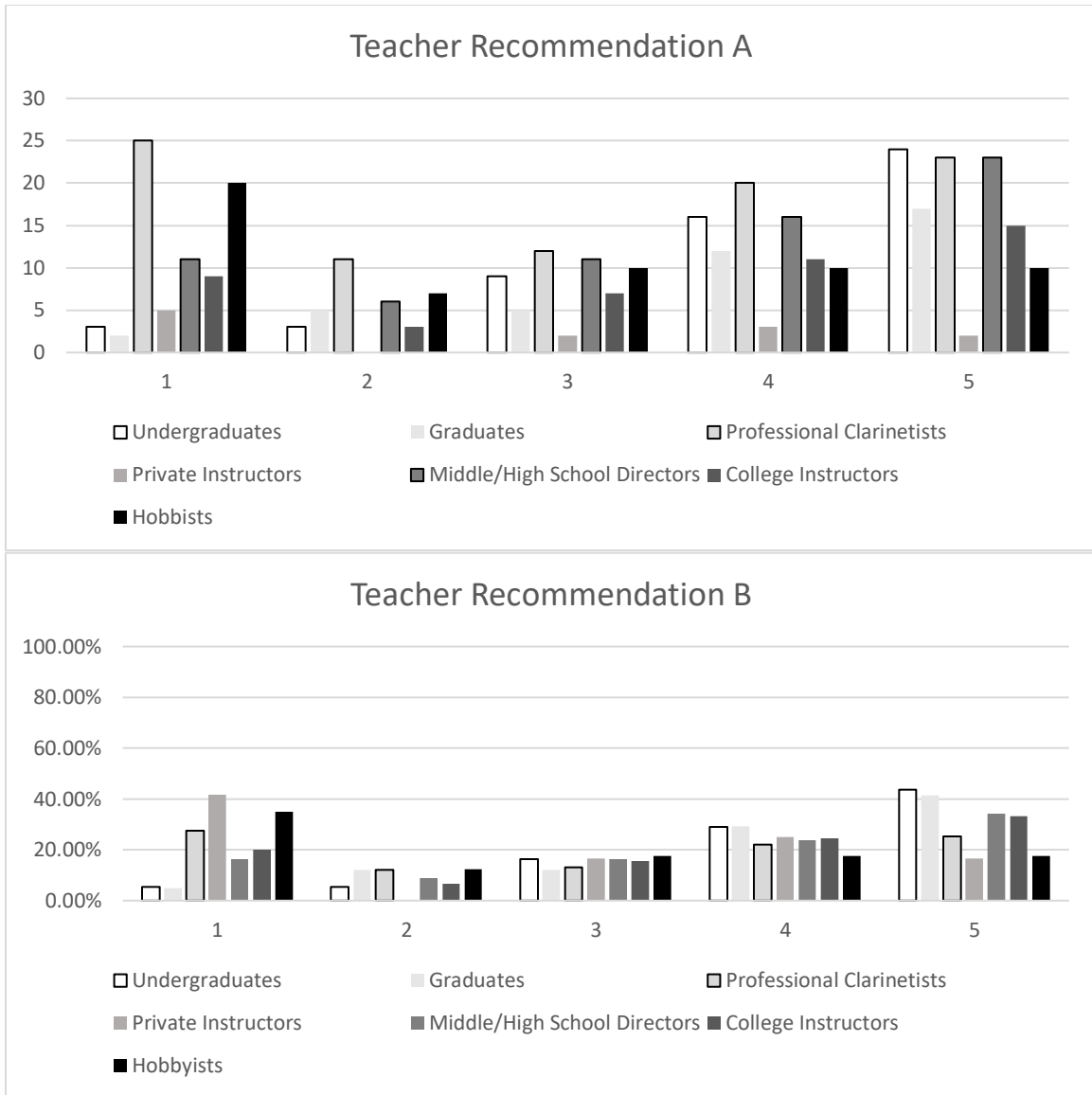


Figure 3.3. Question 8: How influential was a teacher recommendation when purchasing your equipment? Chart A is the total number of responses for each rank. Chart B is the percentage of responses for each rank.

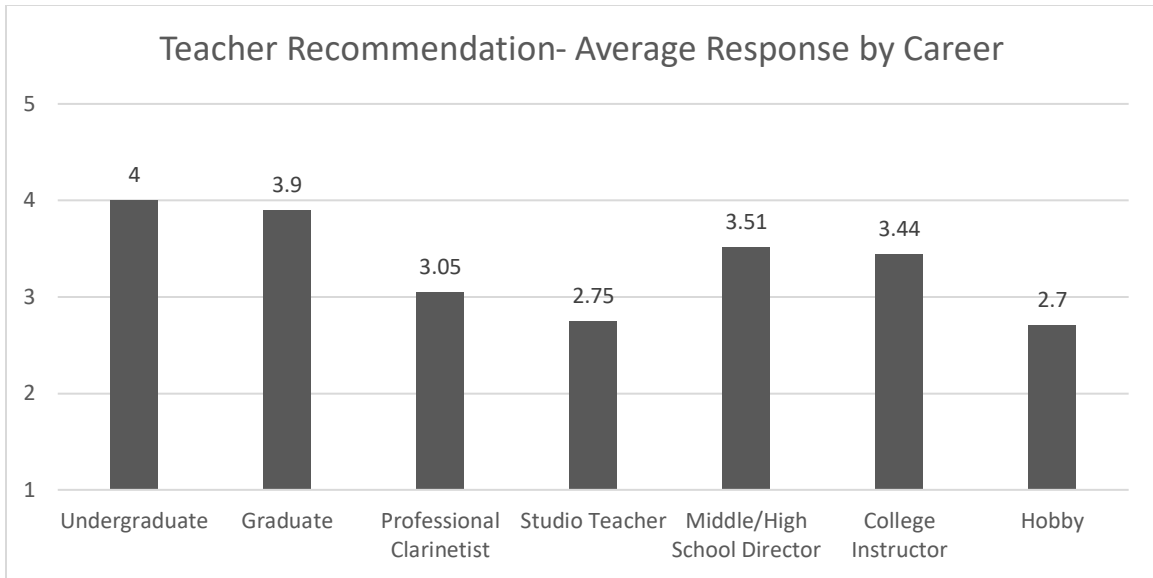


Figure 3.4. Question 8: Average Response by Career. The average response is 3.29 for the total sample.

These questions were asked to further understand how each career group was influenced in their purchasing decisions. As shown in Figure 3.4, undergraduate and graduate students considered a teacher recommendation a very important factor when buying equipment. The relative strength of this consideration was indicated by the average rating being well above the high-end neutral score of 3.17. Similarly, Undergraduate Students, Graduate Students, Band Directors, and College Instructors averaged above the neutral range. With teachers having such a strong influence in mouthpiece and reed selection, they need to be sure that their recommendations are appropriate and focused on the needs of the student. Teachers must consider the features of equipment options and how they will help their students produce the sound they are striving to achieve.

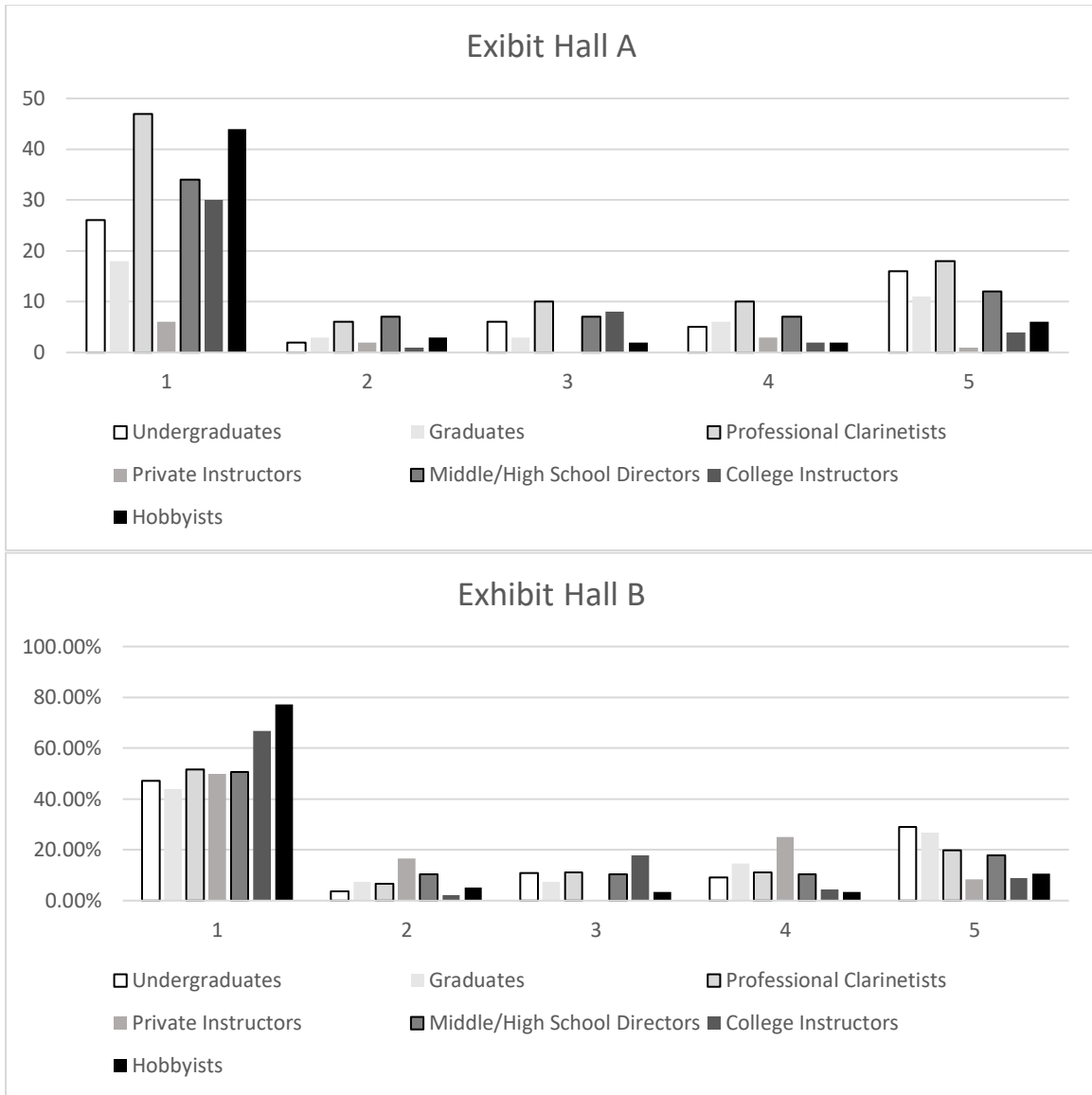


Figure 3.5. Question 9: Was testing the equipment at a conference exhibit hall an influential part of your decision? Chart A is the total number of responses for each rank. Chart B is the percentage of responses for each rank.

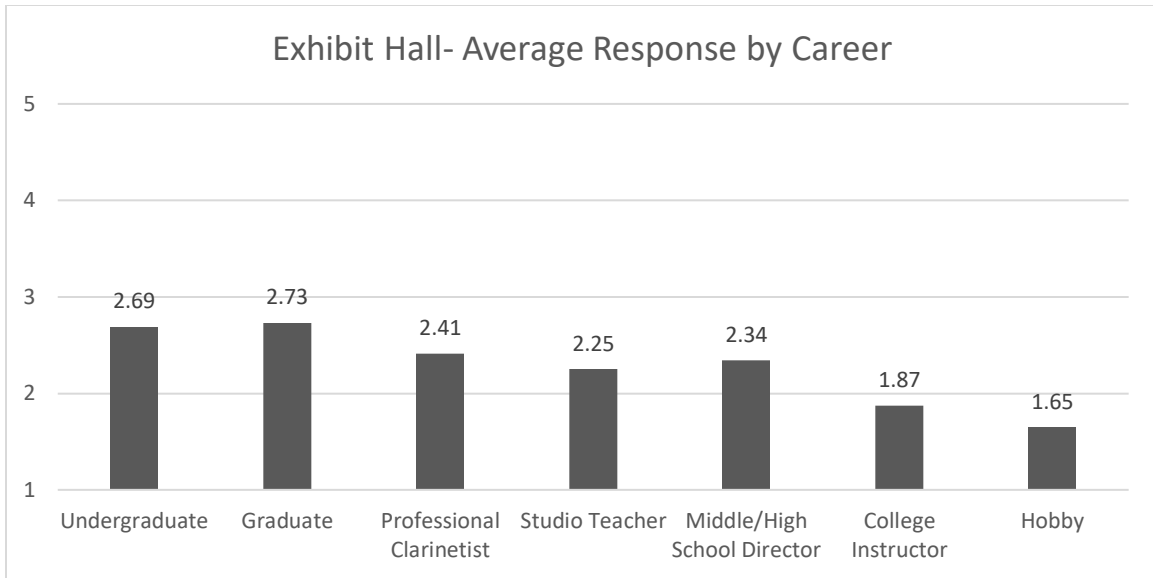


Figure 3.6. Question 9: Average Response by Career. The average response is 2.23 for the total sample.

Even though companies attend many conferences in order to allow clarinetists to sample their products, a distinct minority of clarinetists indicated that playing equipment in an exhibit hall affected their decision. All of the responses from all career groups averaged below the neutral range. Many companies show their products at conferences to create an awareness of their brand and support for the industry. Based on the response from Figure 3.6, it was not clear that companies' efforts at conferences were successful.

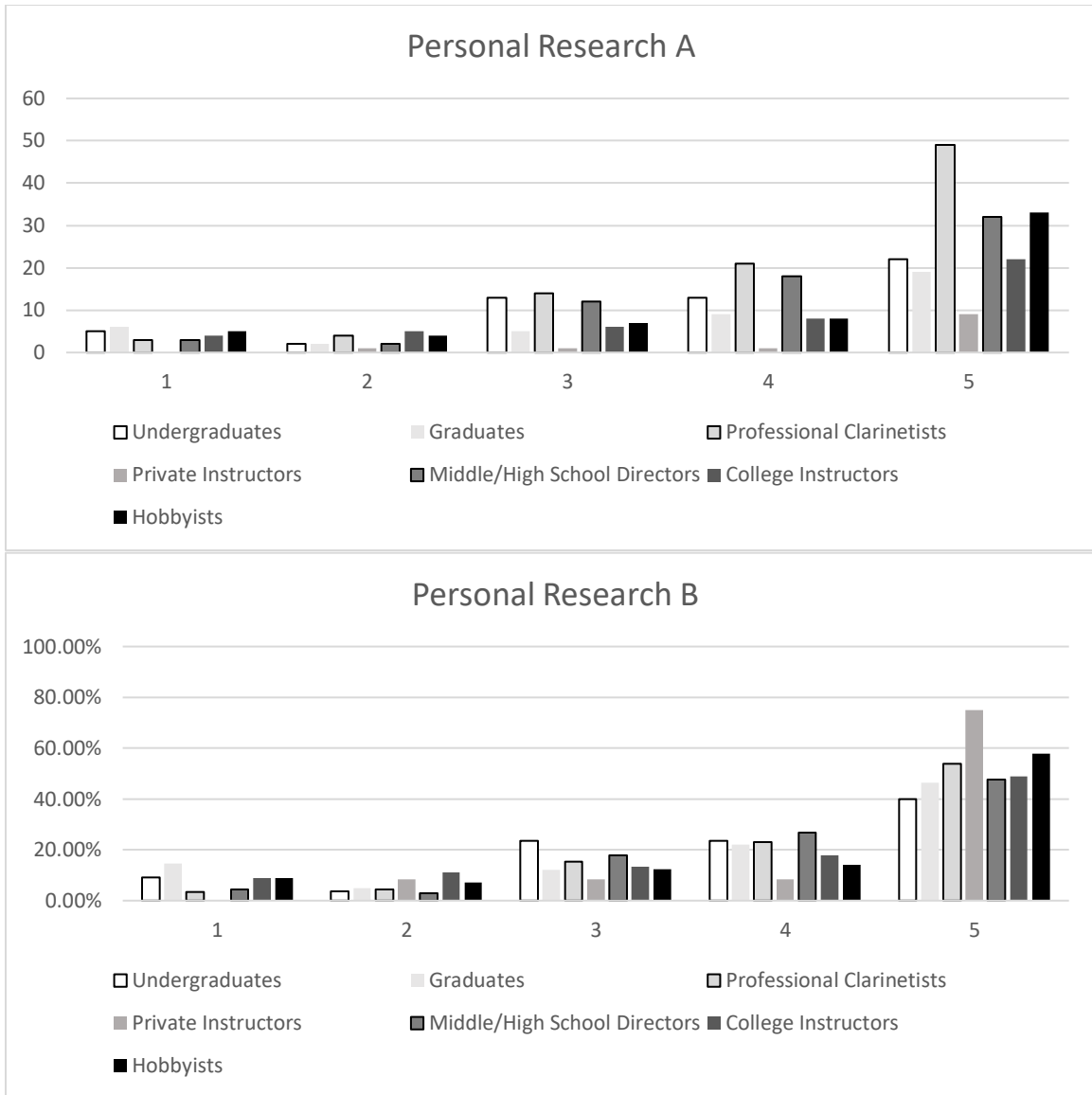


Figure 3.7. Question 10: How influential was personal research in your purchasing decision? Chart A is the total number of responses for each rank. Chart B is the percentage of responses for each rank.

The majority of participants indicated that personal research was highly valued in their purchasing decisions as shown in Figure 3.7. In their responses to the question, the participants make their own judgement as to what personal research includes. As determined by participants in this survey, personal research may include searching websites for equipment specifications such as tip opening, facing length, material, and

style of the reed cut. The actual testing of mouthpieces and reeds was considered vital personal research when determining what equipment to buy.

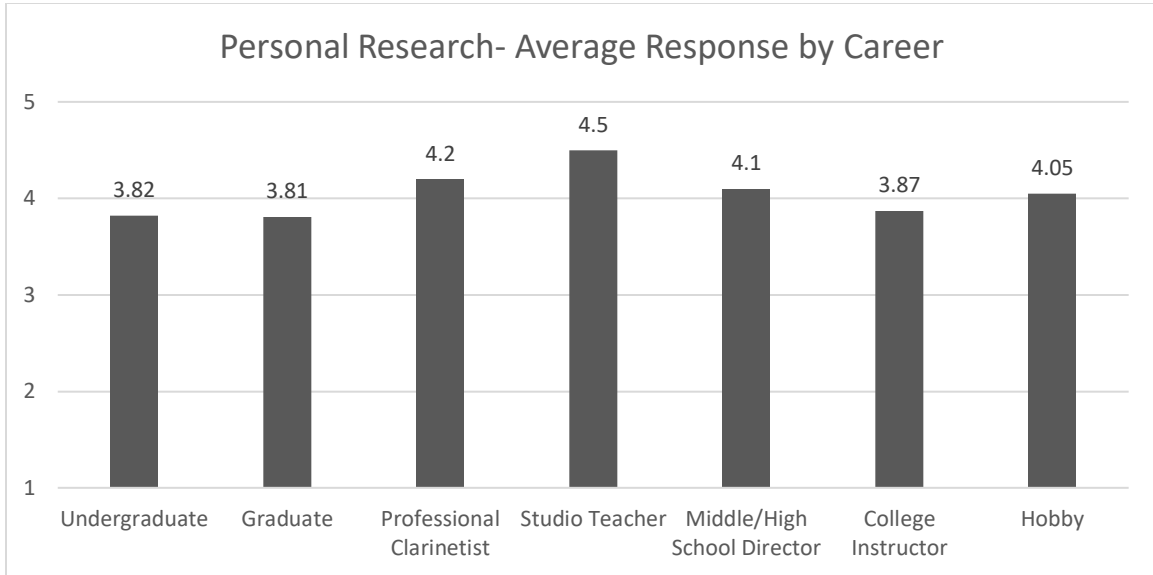


Figure 3.8. Question 10: Average Response by Career. The average response is 4.03 for the total sample.

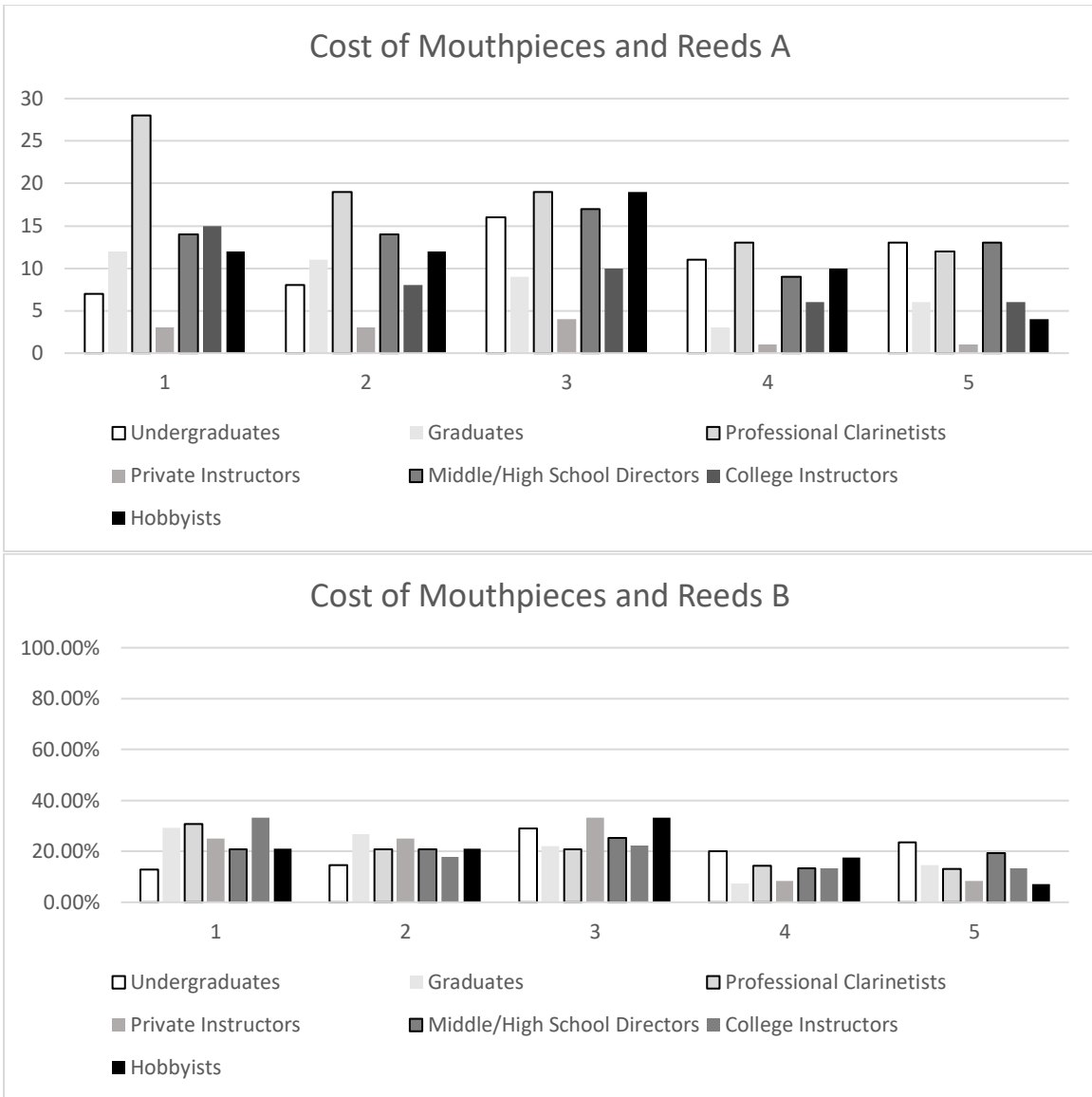


Figure 3.9: Question 11: How important was the cost of the mouthpiece and reeds? Chart A is the total number of responses for each rank. Chart B is the percentage of responses for each rank.

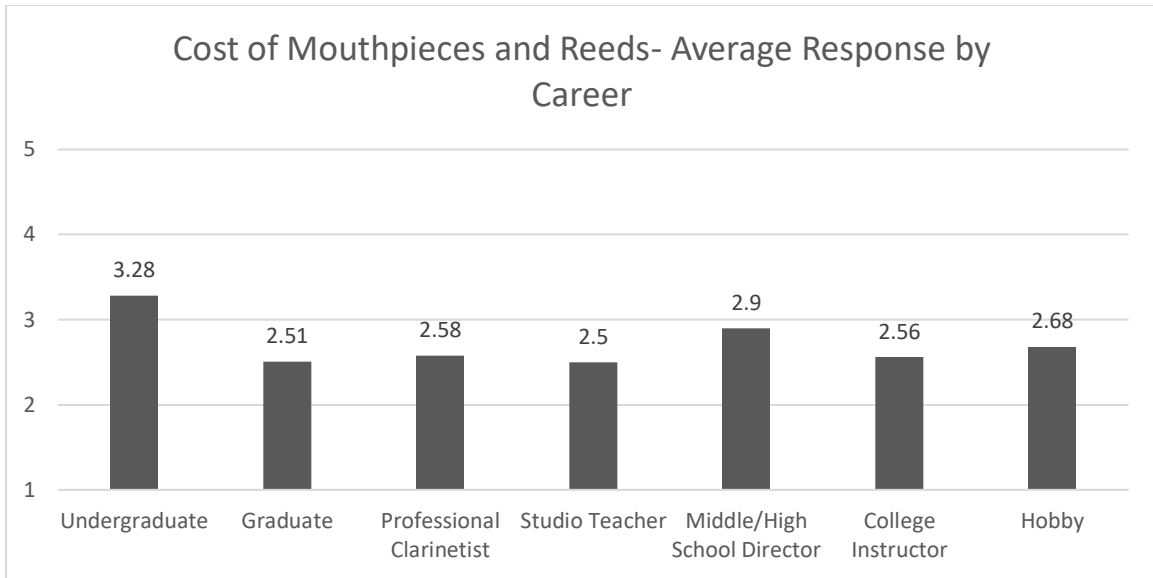


Figure 3.10. Question 11: Average Response by Career. The average response is 2.77 of the total sample.

The results from Figure 3.10 indicated only undergraduate students had an average response above the neutral range. Undergraduate students had the highest average response to this question since they may have limited funds. Many graduate students may be in a similar financial situation. The remaining groups were within or below the neutral range. Since cost was not a major factor in the purchasing decision for most participants in the survey, manufacturer’s pricing appears to be tolerated.

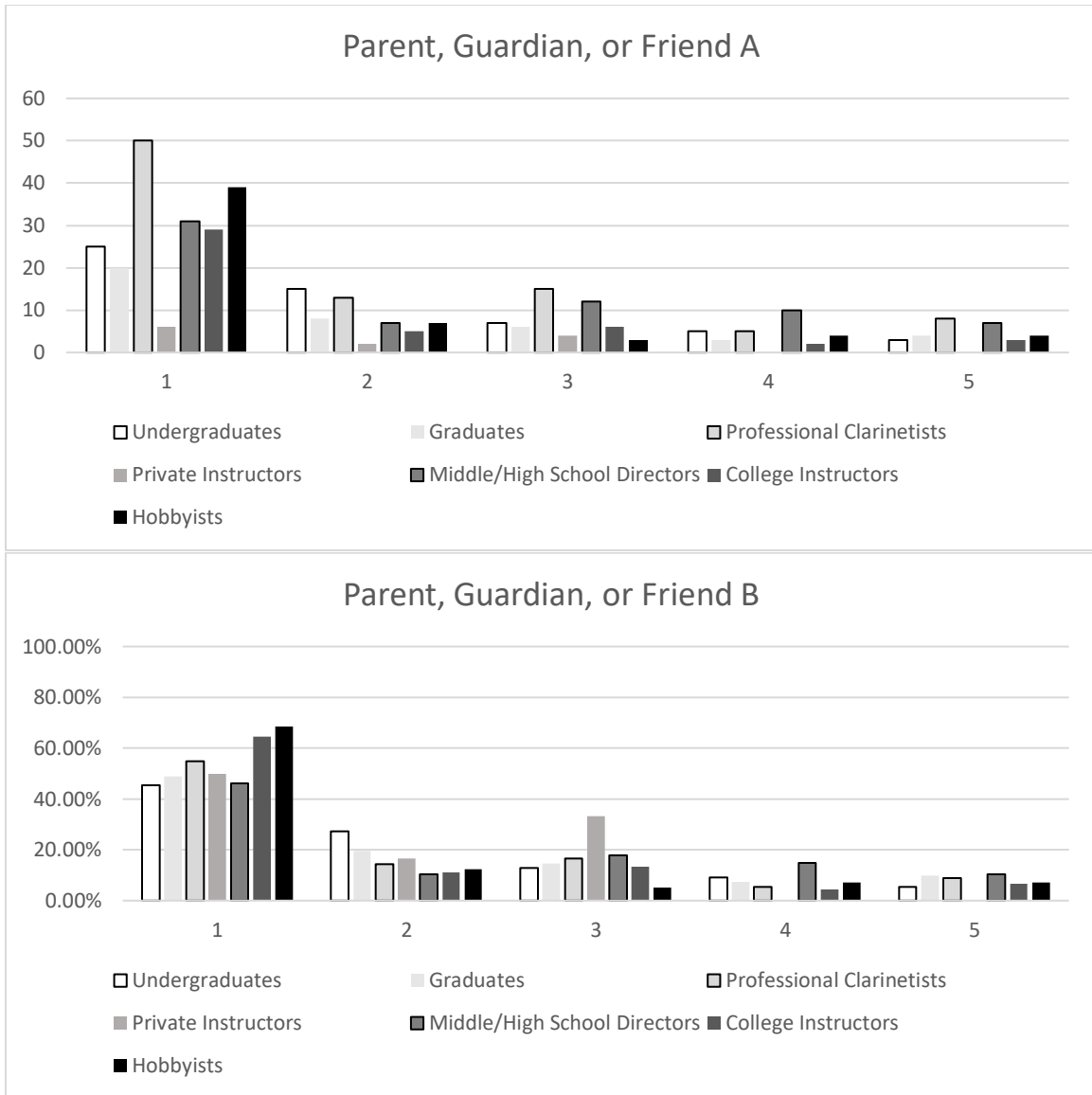


Figure 3.11. Question 12: How influential was a parent, guardian, or friend in your purchasing decision? Chart A is the total number of responses for each rank. Chart B is the percentage of responses for each rank.

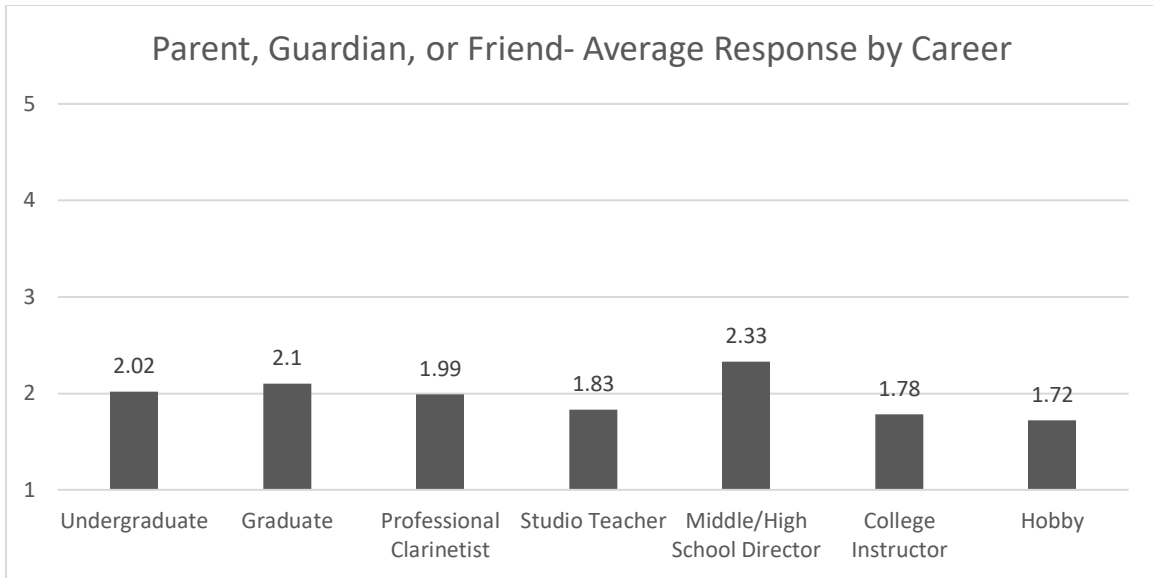


Figure 3.12. Question 12: Average Response by Career. The average response is 1.99 for the total sample.

The reason for asking Question Twelve was to understand whether personal relationships influenced the purchasing decision. As shown in Figure 3.12, all participant averages were below the neutral range. The greatest percentage in undesirable responses for this question was Hobbyists. Many hobbyists addressed in their survey comments that they were not influenced by an elder figure because they were elder themselves. The majority of Hobbyists were in the 51-60 age group. This explains why Hobbyists reacted even more negatively compared to other groups.

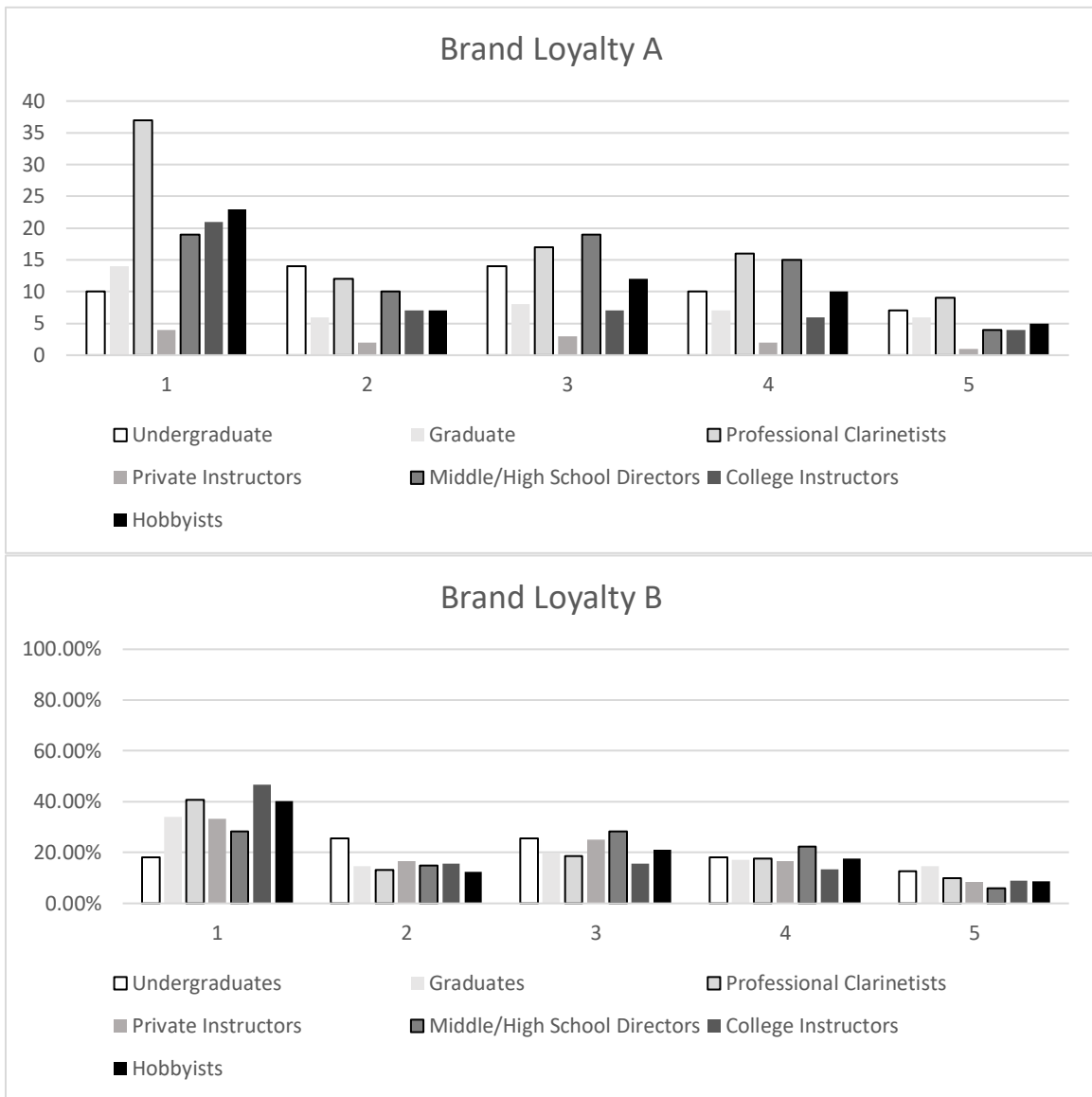


Figure 3.13. Question 13: How important is brand loyalty to your purchasing decision? Chart A is the total number of responses for each rank. Chart B is the percentage of responses for each rank.

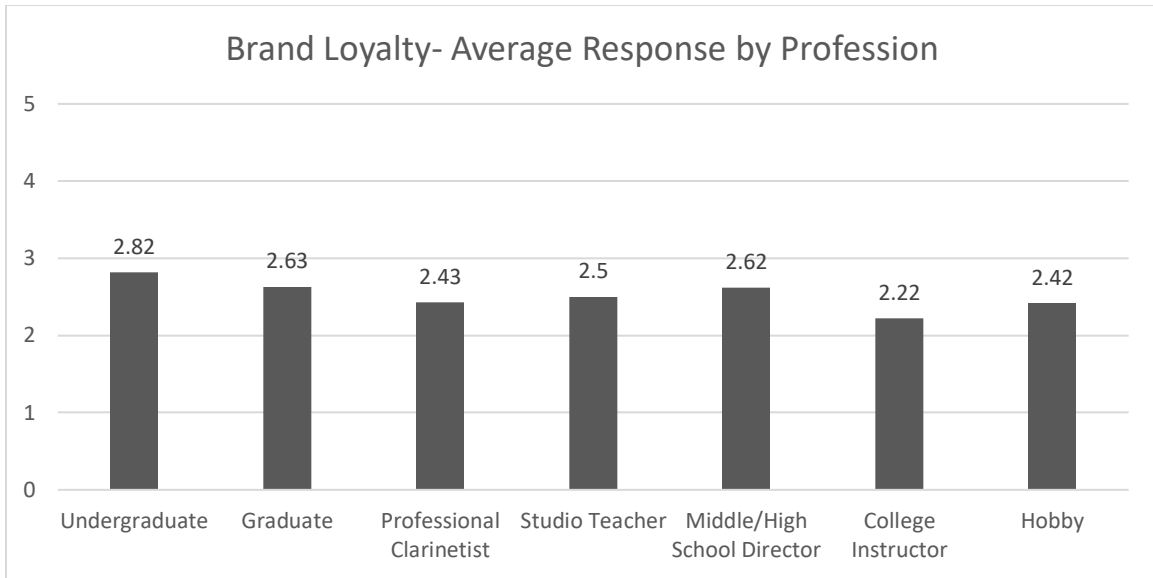


Figure 3.14. Question 13: Average Response by Career. The average response is 2.48 for the total sample.

The majority of participants in all career categories did not rely on brand loyalty when choosing mouthpieces and reeds. All career groups were below the neutral range in their responses. In the suggested equipment section of the survey, most individuals indicated that a product needed to be tested by the clarinetist before purchase. This would seem to indicate that the sound produced by the equipment set-up was more important than who made the equipment.

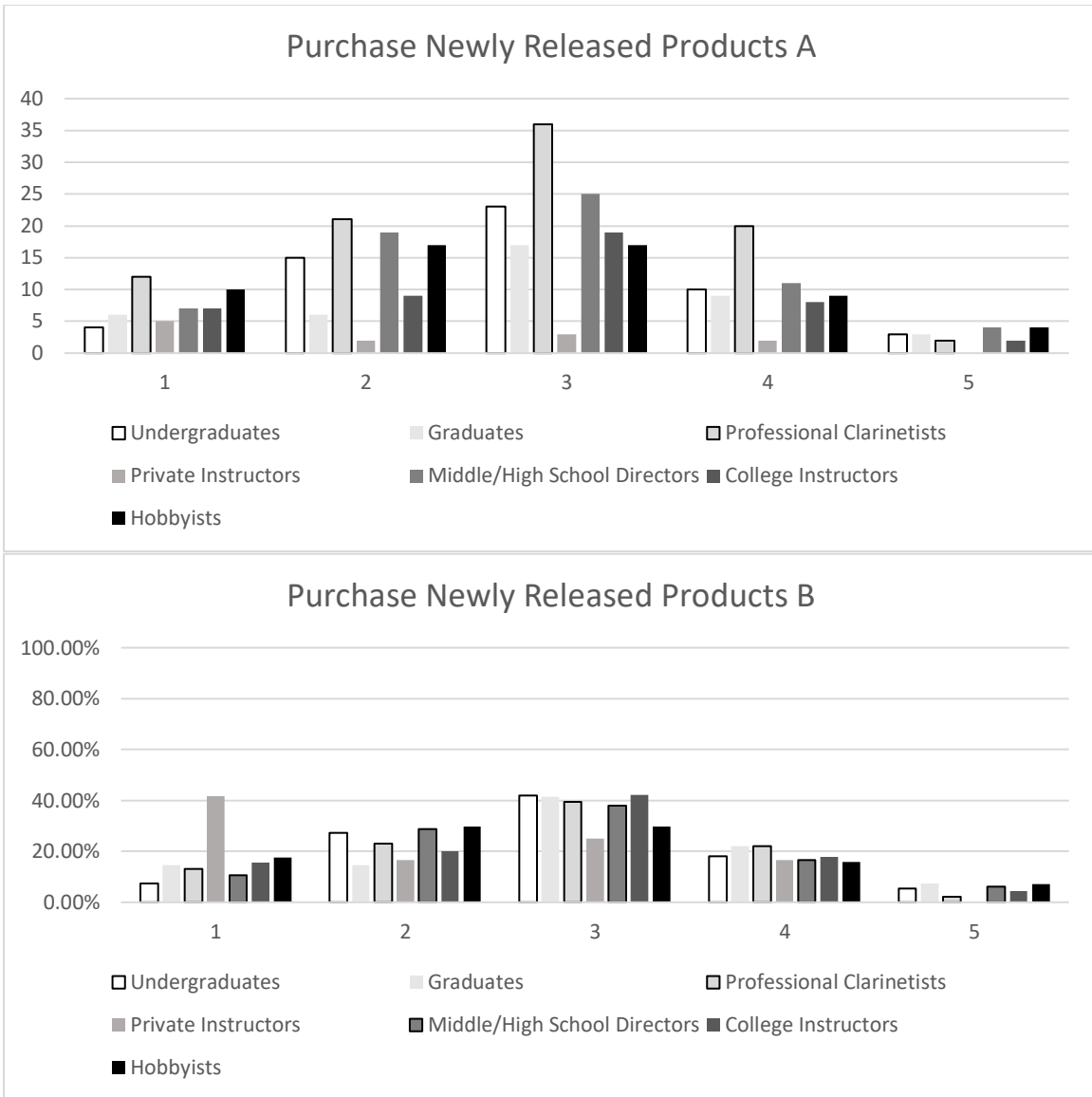


Figure 3.15. Question 14: How likely are you to purchase a newly released product? Chart A is the total number of responses for each rank. Chart B is the percentage of responses for each rank.

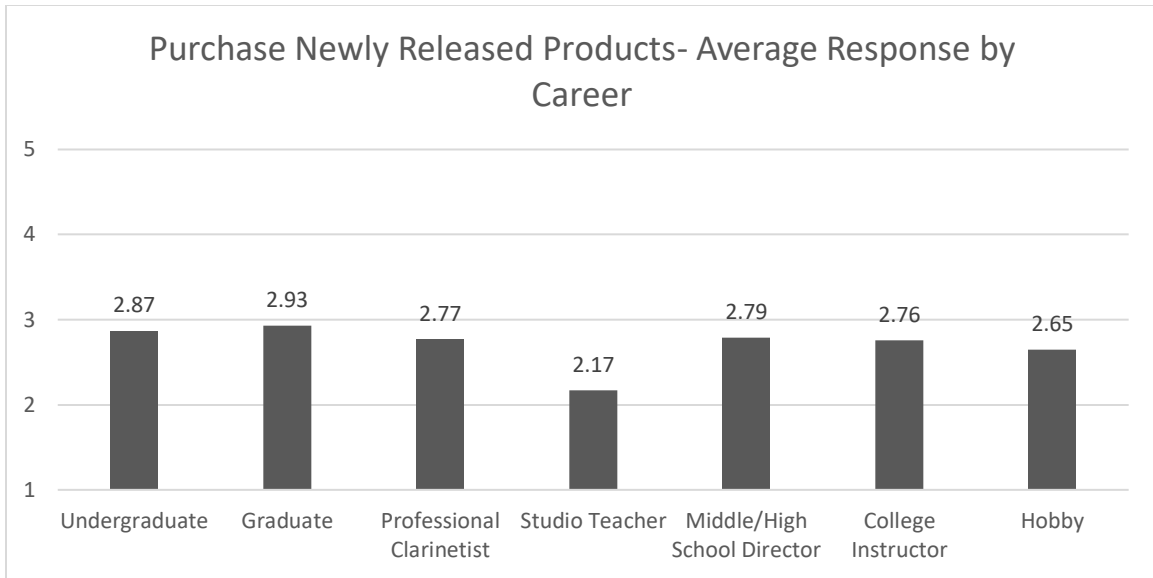


Figure 3.16. Question 14: Average Response by Career. The average response is 2.76 for the total sample.

Of all the career groups, the private instructors were the most unlikely to purchase new products. However, the undergraduate and graduate students were at least neutral when considering newly released products. The reluctance of studio teachers to try new equipment suggests that they were rather confident in the products they were using. They could also be comfortable with their current selections and did not desire to change. However, the private instructors who responded to the survey had been using their current equipment for an average of 5 years. The reason for the lower response from this group would require further investigation.

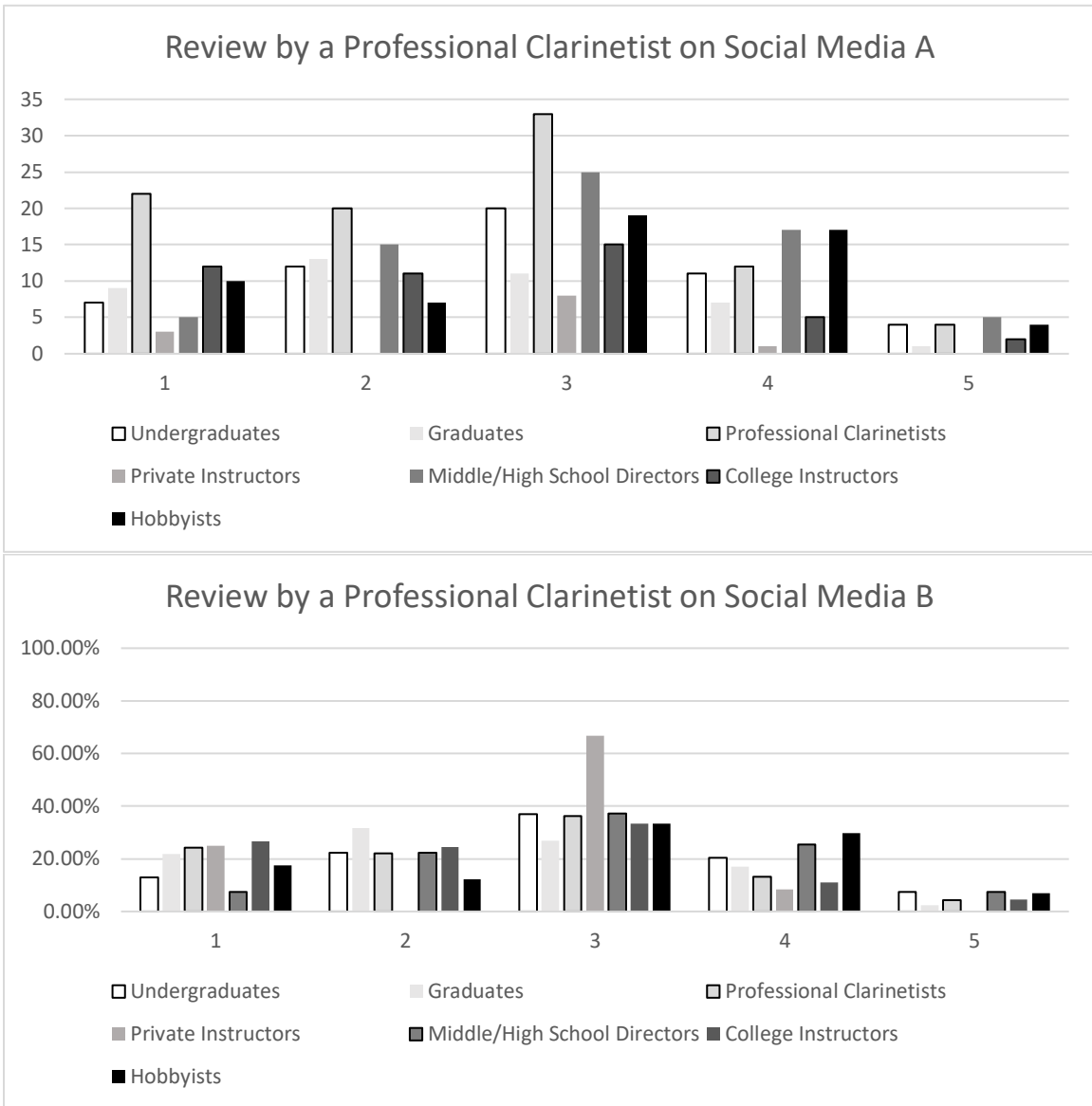


Figure 3.17. Question 16: How likely are you to purchase a product based on a review by a professional clarinetist from social media? Chart A is the total number of responses for each rank. Chart B is the percentage of responses for each rank.

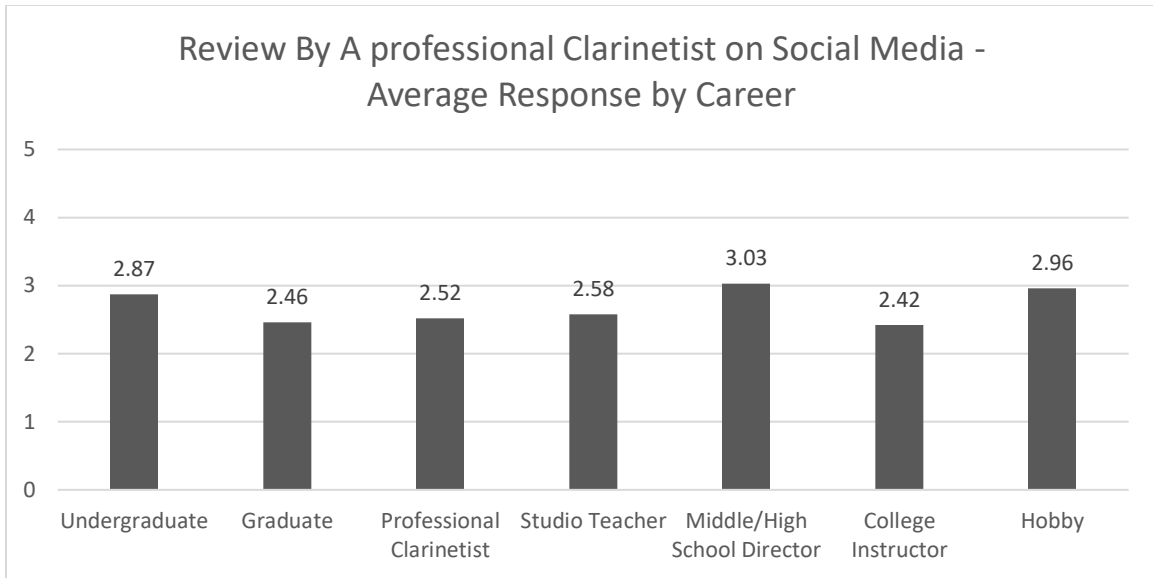


Figure 3.18. Question 16: Average Response by Career. The average response is 2.73 for the total sample.

With the wide use of social media, companies are including professional clarinet players in their advertisements. Despite the efforts of these companies, the results of this question were below the neutral range for all but three of the career groups. Because the responses of Graduate Students, Professional Clarinetists, Studio Teachers, and College Instructors fall below the neutral range, their reliance on professional endorsement were less statistically important. A possible reason behind the response could be that participants feel validated when an endorsement matched with their opinion, but an endorsement that does not agree with their opinion had little impact.

The observations noted above exhibit the average response with each career group on purchasing decisions. In the following chapters, the personal equipment and recommendations were analyzed. With this information, their purchasing habits and their personal equipment and recommendations can be compared.

CHAPTER 4

SURVEY RESULTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Undergraduate Student Equipment

Fifty-five undergraduate students responded to the survey. The average years of clarinet experience amongst undergraduate students was 10.42 years. 94.55% of the undergraduate participants were between 18 and 29 years of age and the remaining 5.45% were between 30 and 40. Of the undergraduate students, nine of them listed secondary clarinet related careers in addition to being an undergraduate student. 42% of undergraduates said they taught private lessons, but none considered themselves to be a private instructor.

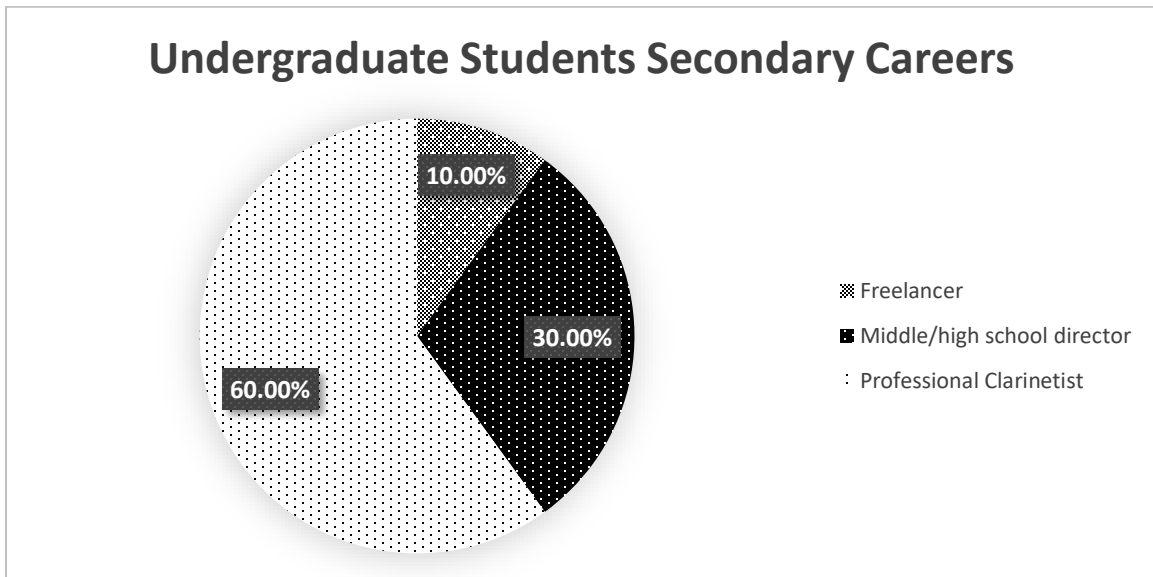


Figure 4.1. Secondary Clarinet Careers for Undergraduate Students. 16 percent of students mentioned a secondary career.

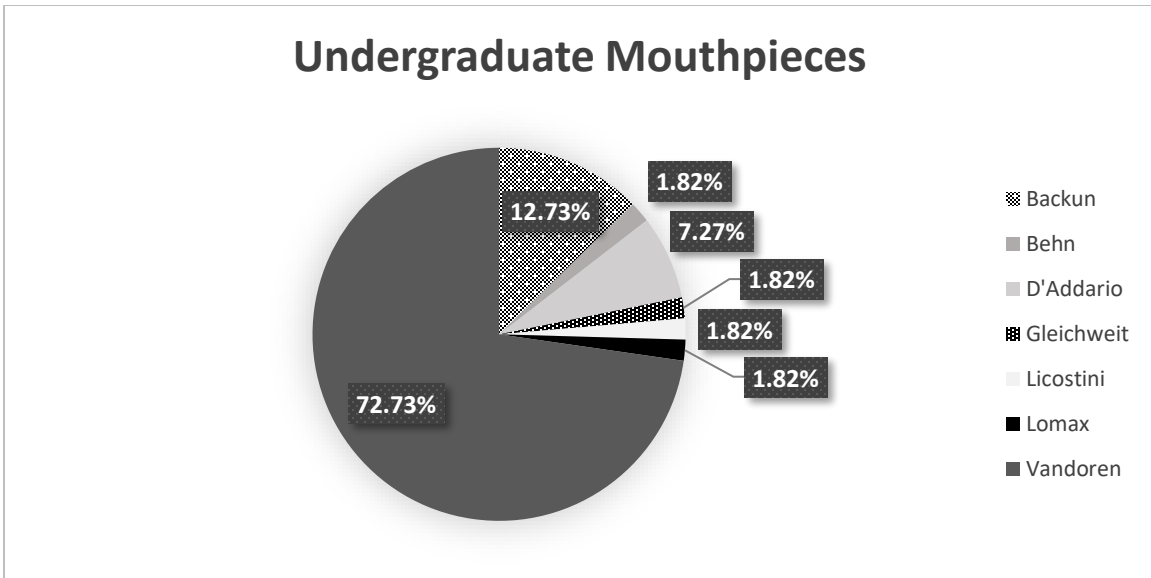


Figure 4.2. Mouthpiece Brands of Undergraduate Students

For undergraduate students, Vandoren leads the market in mouthpieces. As shown in Figure 4.2, only 27 percent of the undergraduates who completed the survey used a mouthpiece made by a company other than Vandoren. The following charts in Figures 4.3 and 4.4 provided the different model mouthpieces for Vandoren and Backun users.

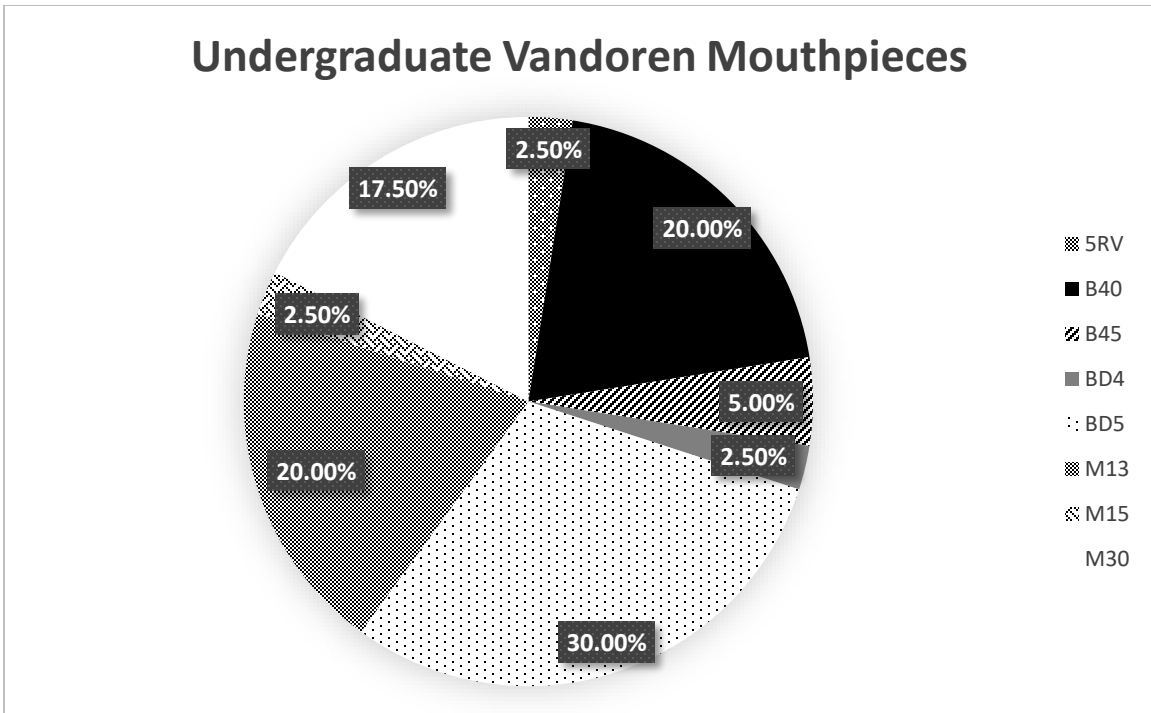


Figure 4.3. Vandoren Mouthpieces used by Undergraduate Students

The most popular Vandoren mouthpieces used by undergraduate students was the BD5 model. Other models used included the M13, B40, and M30.

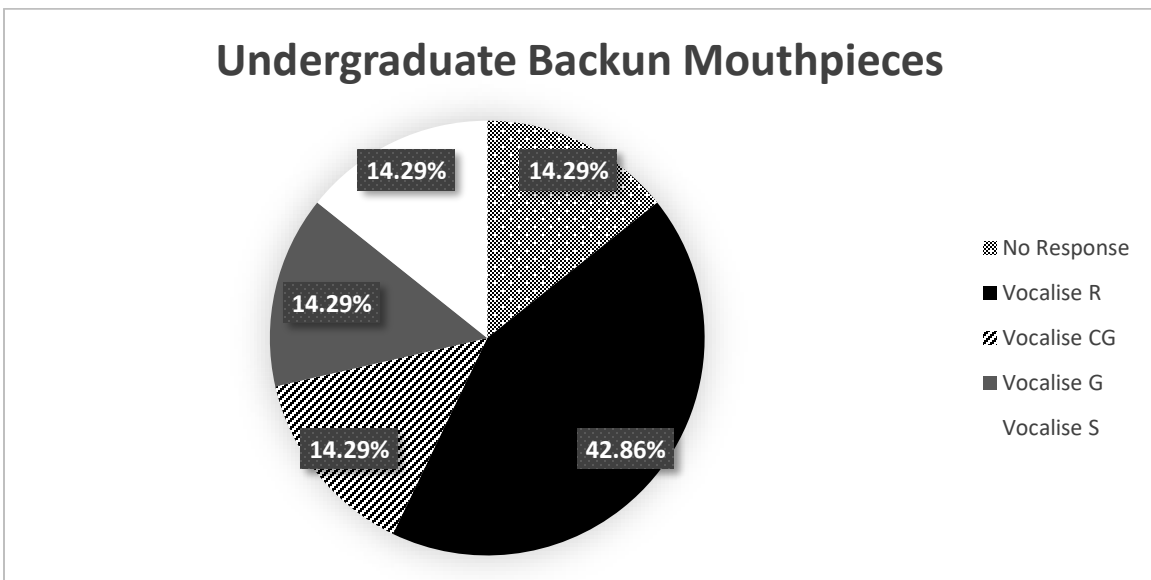


Figure 4.4. Backun Mouthpieces used by Undergraduate Students

Most undergraduate Backun users play on the Vocalise R mouthpiece. The rest of the replies were split amongst the Vocalise CG, Vocalise G, and Vocalise S.

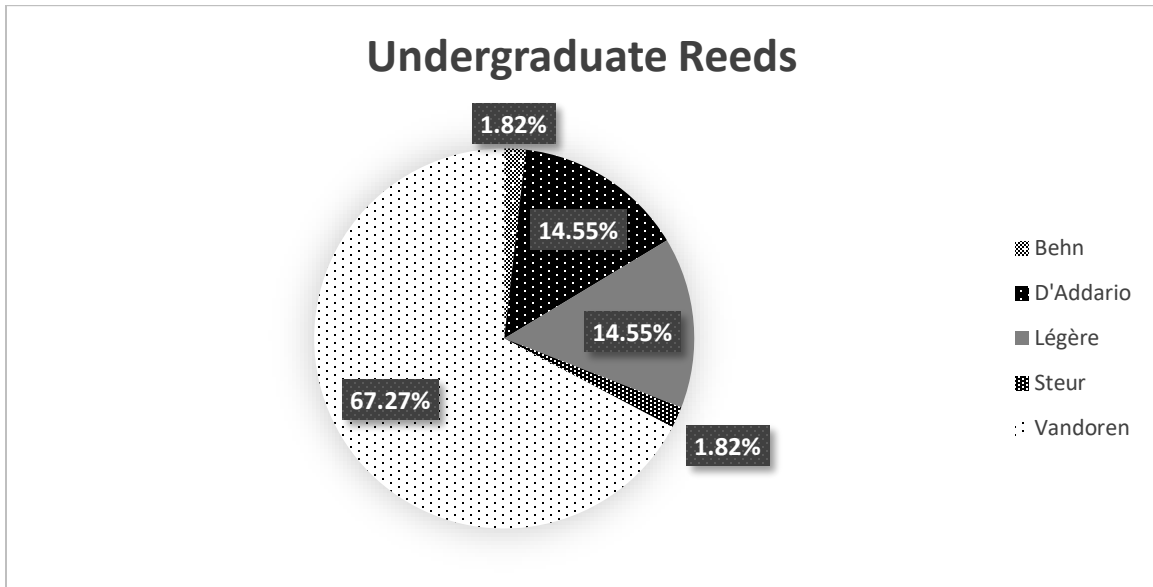


Figure 4.5. Reed Brands of Undergraduate Students

Figures 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8 exhibit reed models of the three most popular brands used by undergraduate students. D’Addario, Vandoren and Légère.

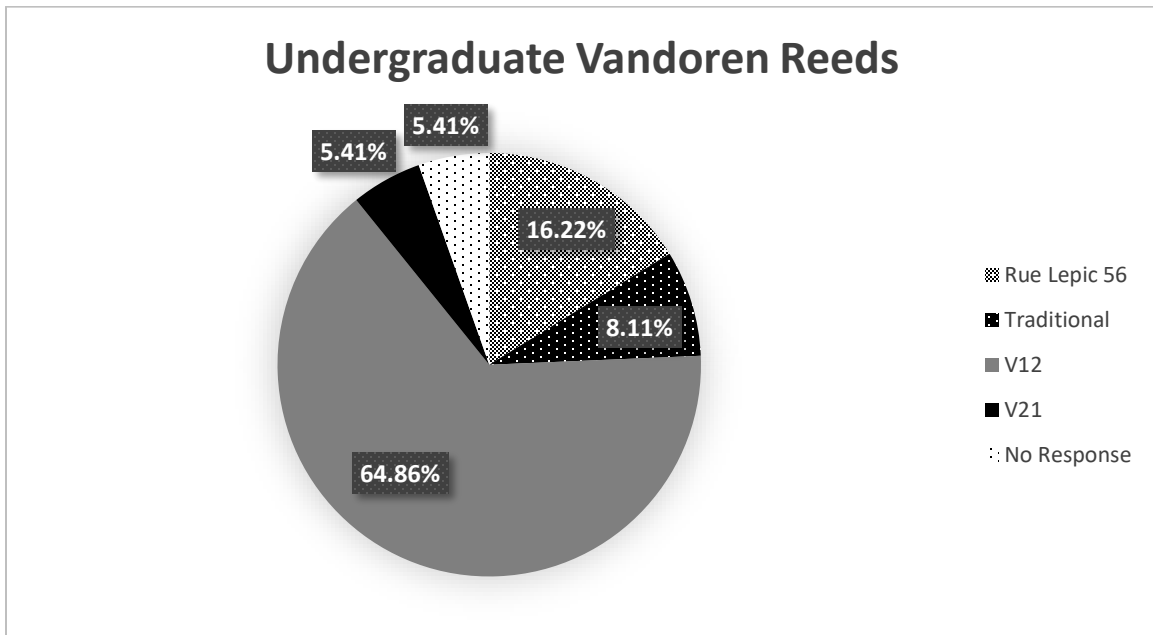


Figure 4.6. Vandoren Reeds of Undergraduate Students

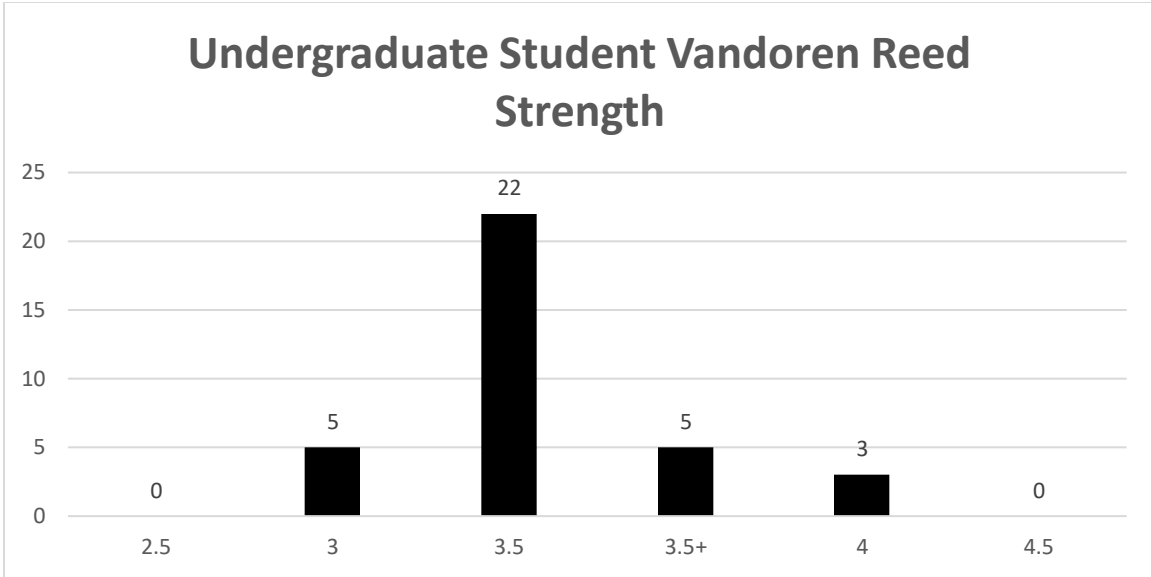


Figure 4.7. Undergraduate Student Vandoren Reed Strength

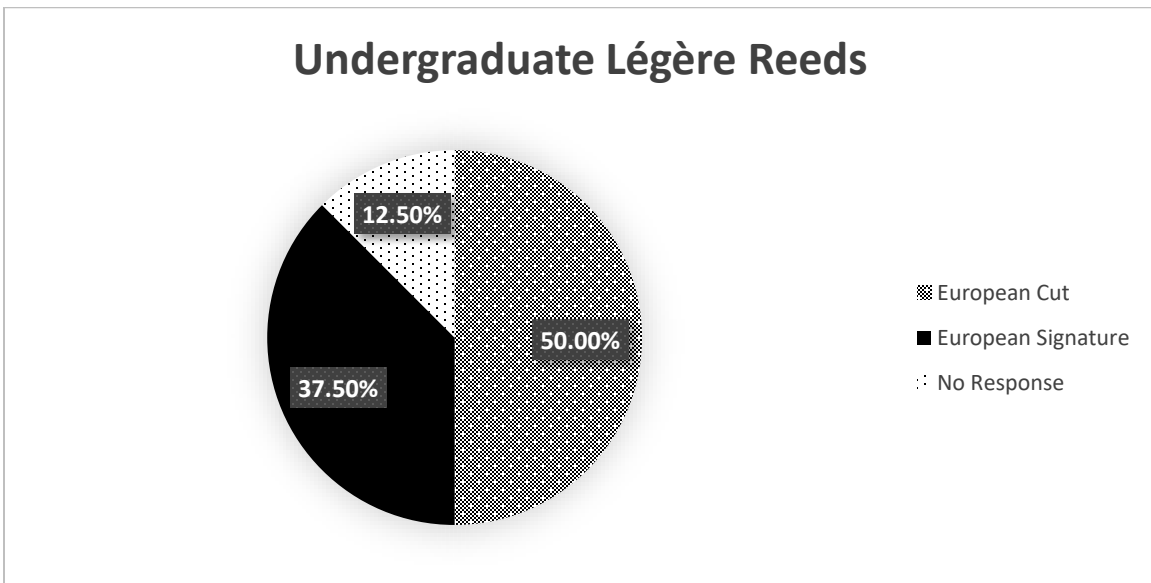


Figure 4.8. Légère Reeds of Undergraduate Students

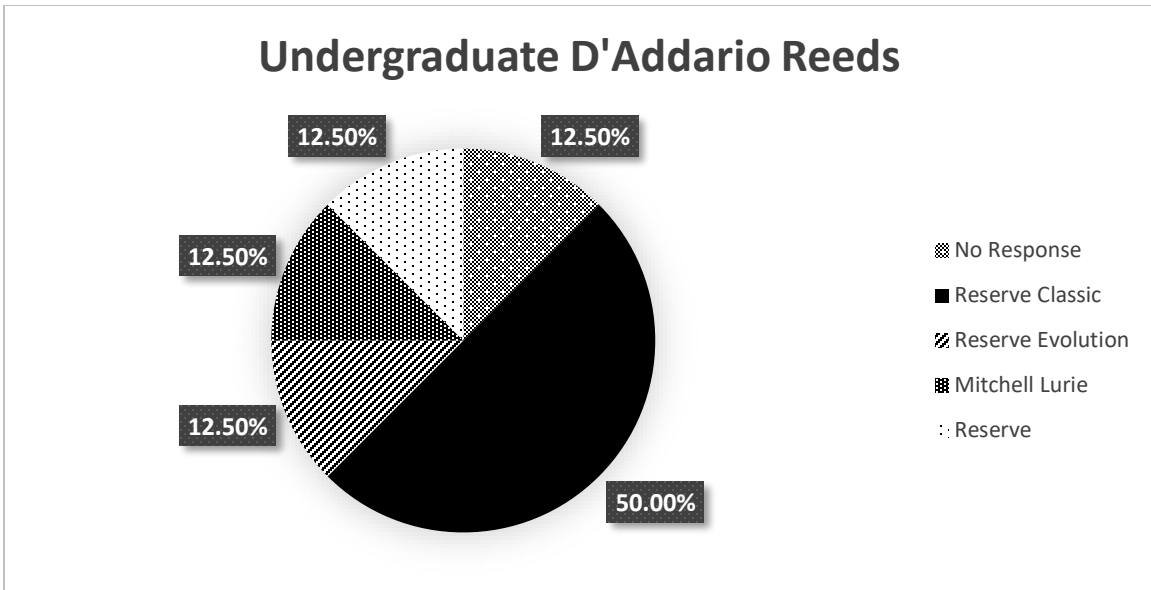


Figure 4.9. D'Addario Reeds of Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate students had been using their current equipment for an average of 1.77 years. 60% of undergraduate students who used Vandoren mouthpieces also used Vandoren reeds. The majority of Vandoren reed users played on a size 3.5 reed as shown in Figure 4.7.

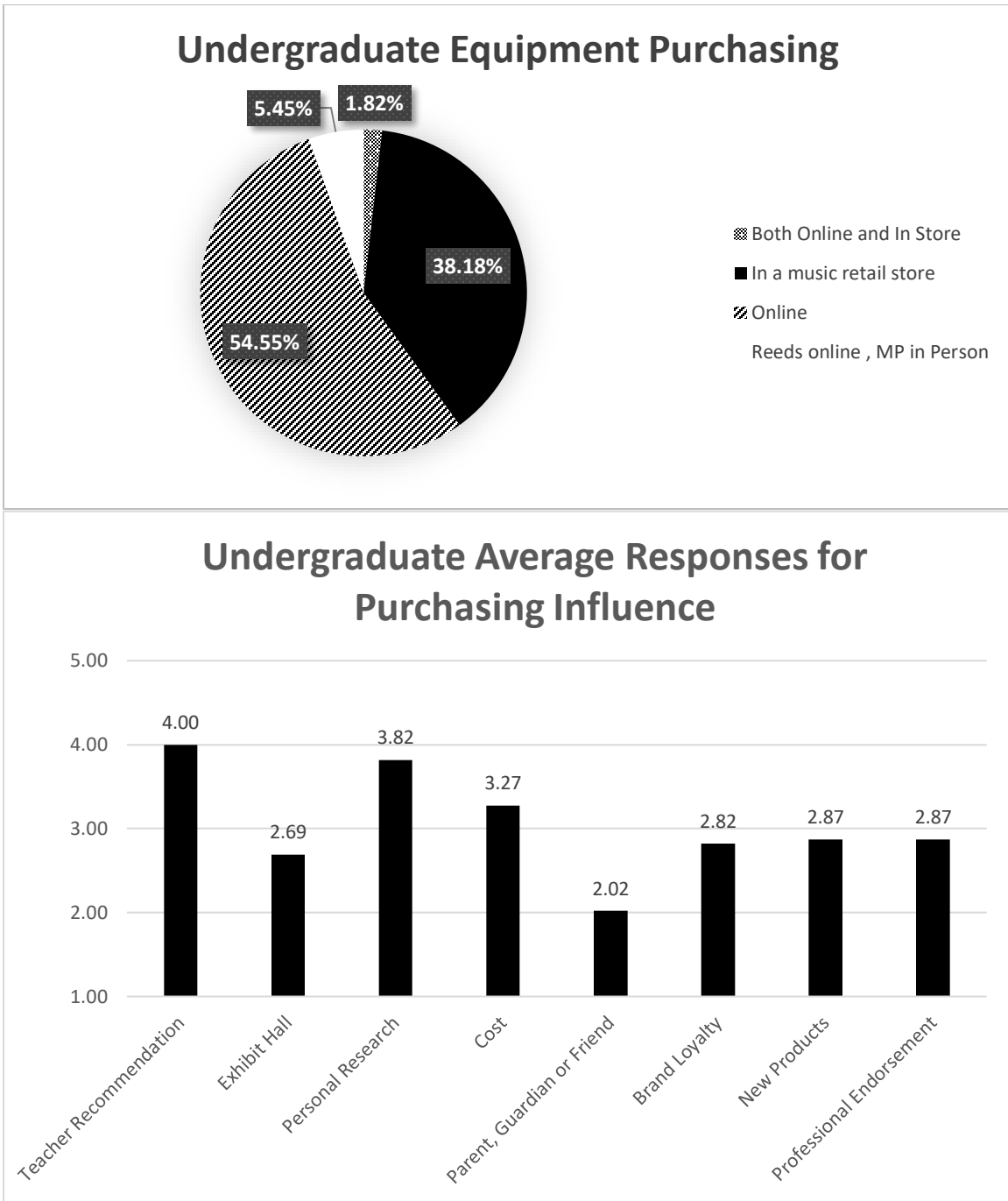


Figure 4.10. Undergraduate Students Mouthpiece and Reed Purchasing. Average response to all questions regarding equipment purchasing.

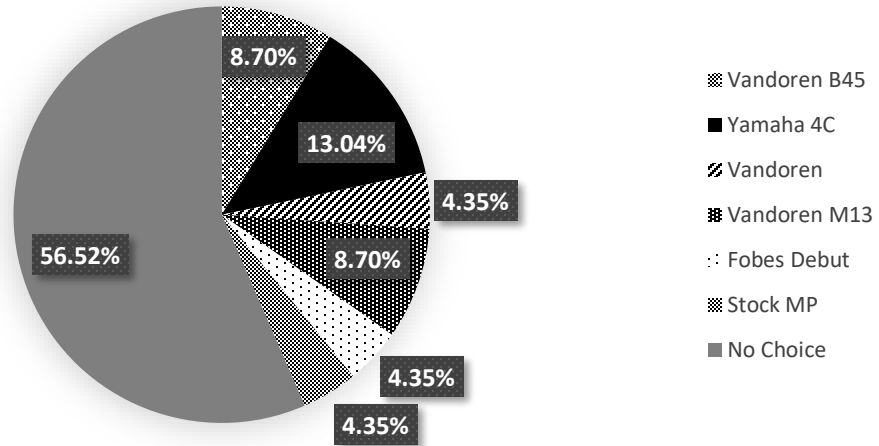
Figure 4.9 exhibits how undergraduate students purchased their mouthpieces. More than half of them purchased their equipment online, but a meaningful portion used a music retail store in their purchasing process. When choosing equipment,

Undergraduate Students trusted the opinions of their teachers for their mouthpieces and reeds. According to the data from Figure 3.3, undergraduates had the highest average for teacher recommendations compared to other groups. Personal research was the second highest category for undergraduates while this group also considered cost to be very important, having the highest average response of all groups. The least likely influence was that of a parent, guardian, or friend.

Undergraduate Student Suggestions

Undergraduate students responding to the survey were likely in various stages of their education. Whether they were in performance, education, music therapy, theory/history, or other music degree, their view toward what they suggested for equipment varied. The individuals in this stage were also learning how to be a professional in their field. Not many students were working as professional clarinetists in this category. When almost half of the undergraduate participants taught private lessons, they were still learning about what equipment to recommend to their students. Separating the private teachers from the non-teachers provided more consistency with suggestions. Amongst those teaching privately, they were less confident in their replies since there were a significant number of respondents indicating no choice.

Undergraduate Teacher Beginner Mouthpiece Suggestion



Undergraduate Non-Teacher Beginner Mouthpiece Suggestion

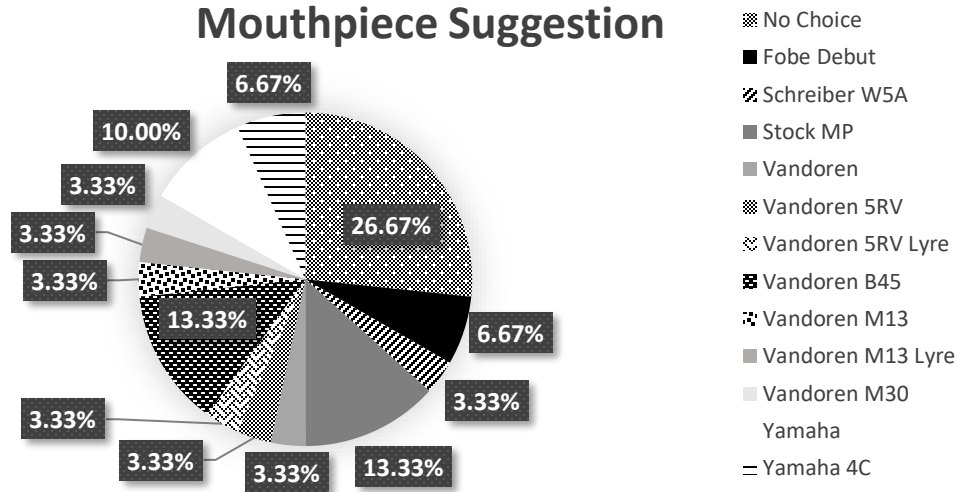
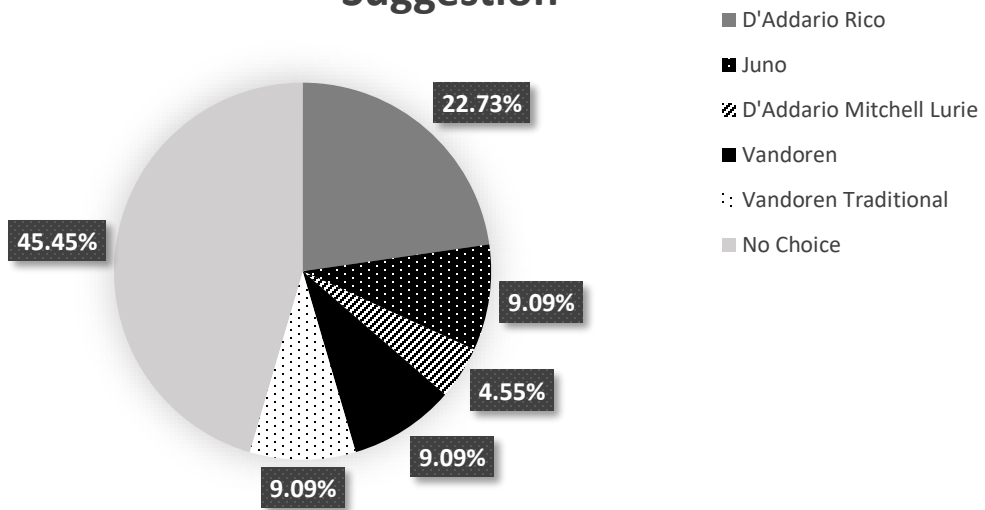


Figure 4.11. Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces from Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate Teacher Beginner Reed Suggestion



Undergraduate Non-Teacher Beginner Reed Suggestion

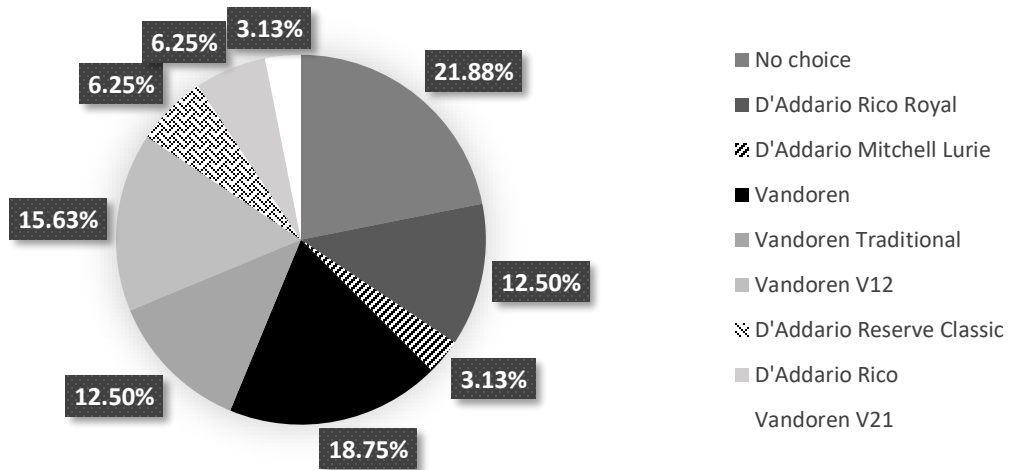
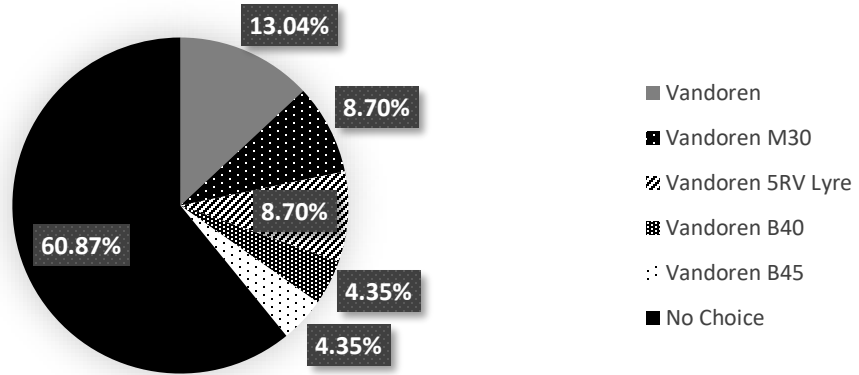


Figure 4.12. Suggested Beginner Reeds from Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate Teacher Intermediate Mouthpiece Suggestion



Undergraduate Non-Teacher Intermediate Mouthpiece Suggestion

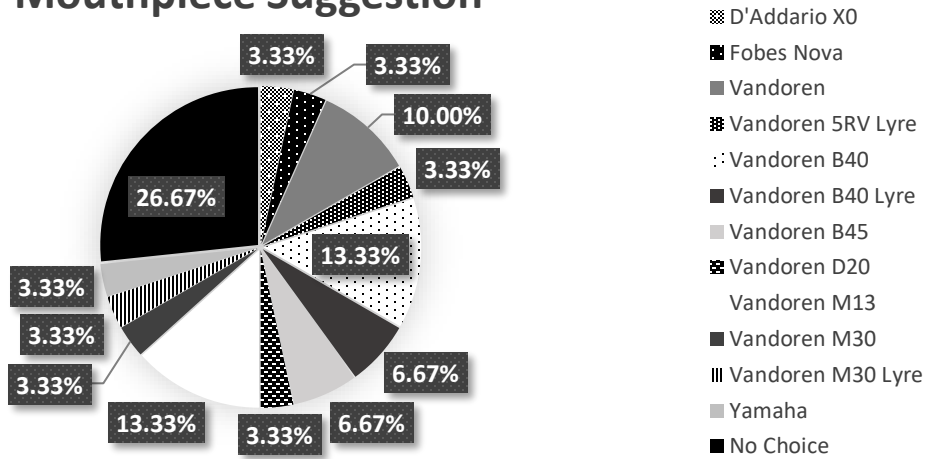
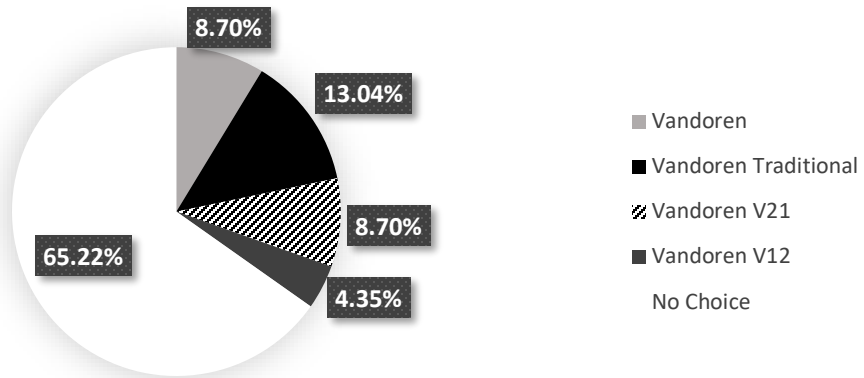


Figure 4.13. Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces from Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate Teacher Intermediate Reed Suggestion



Undergraduate Non-Teacher Intermediate Reed Suggestion

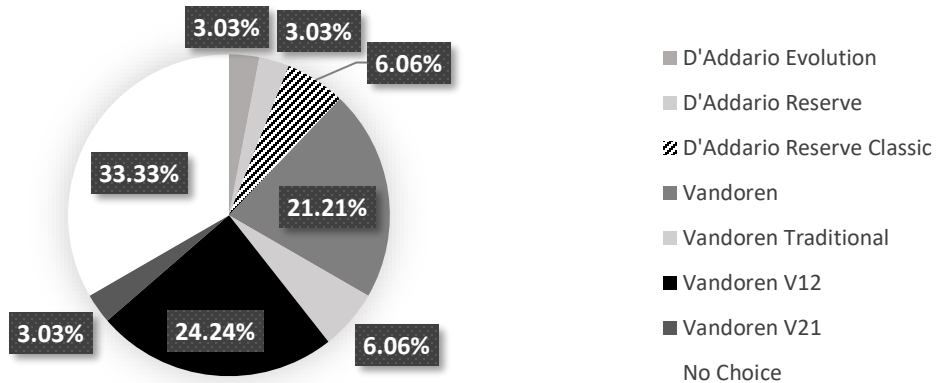


Figure 4.14. Suggested Intermediate Reeds from Undergraduate Students

The difference between the beginner mouthpiece choice and the intermediate mouthpiece choice were marginal. 76% of non-teaching undergraduates provided an actual response for a recommendation in both beginner and intermediate categories. Vandoren was the reed of choice for intermediate students by undergraduate private instructors. They suggested that the intermediate student should use an average 3.19 strength for Vandoren reeds.

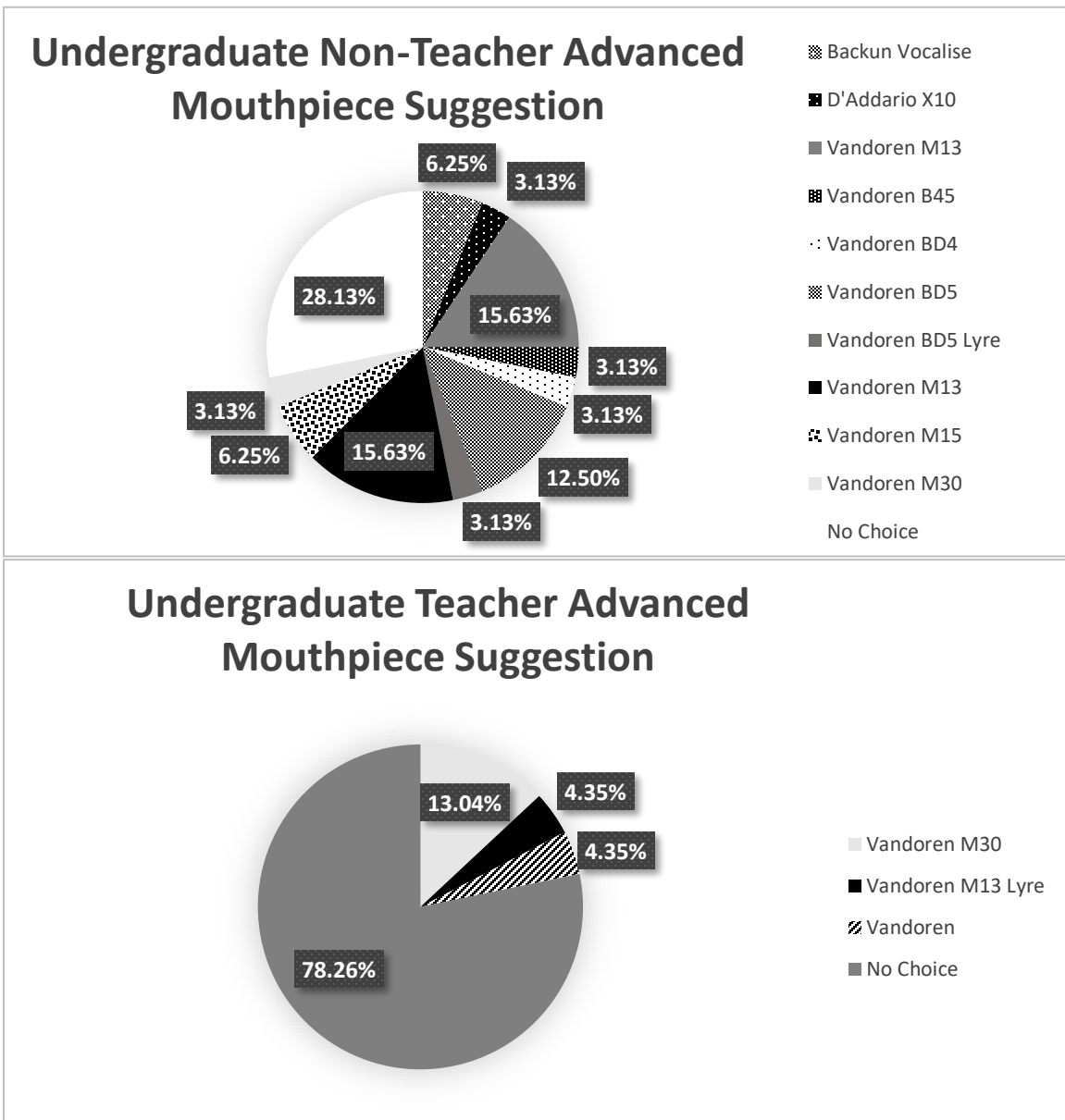


Figure 4.15. Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces from Undergraduate Students

As shown in Figure 4.15, undergraduate students who did not teach private lessons provided a wider range of options of what types of mouthpieces advanced students should use than undergraduate students who taught private lessons. A greater variety of types of mouthpieces were suggested by the non-teachers, especially for

Vandoren mouthpieces. For both teachers and non-teachers, they offered fewer options for advanced students.

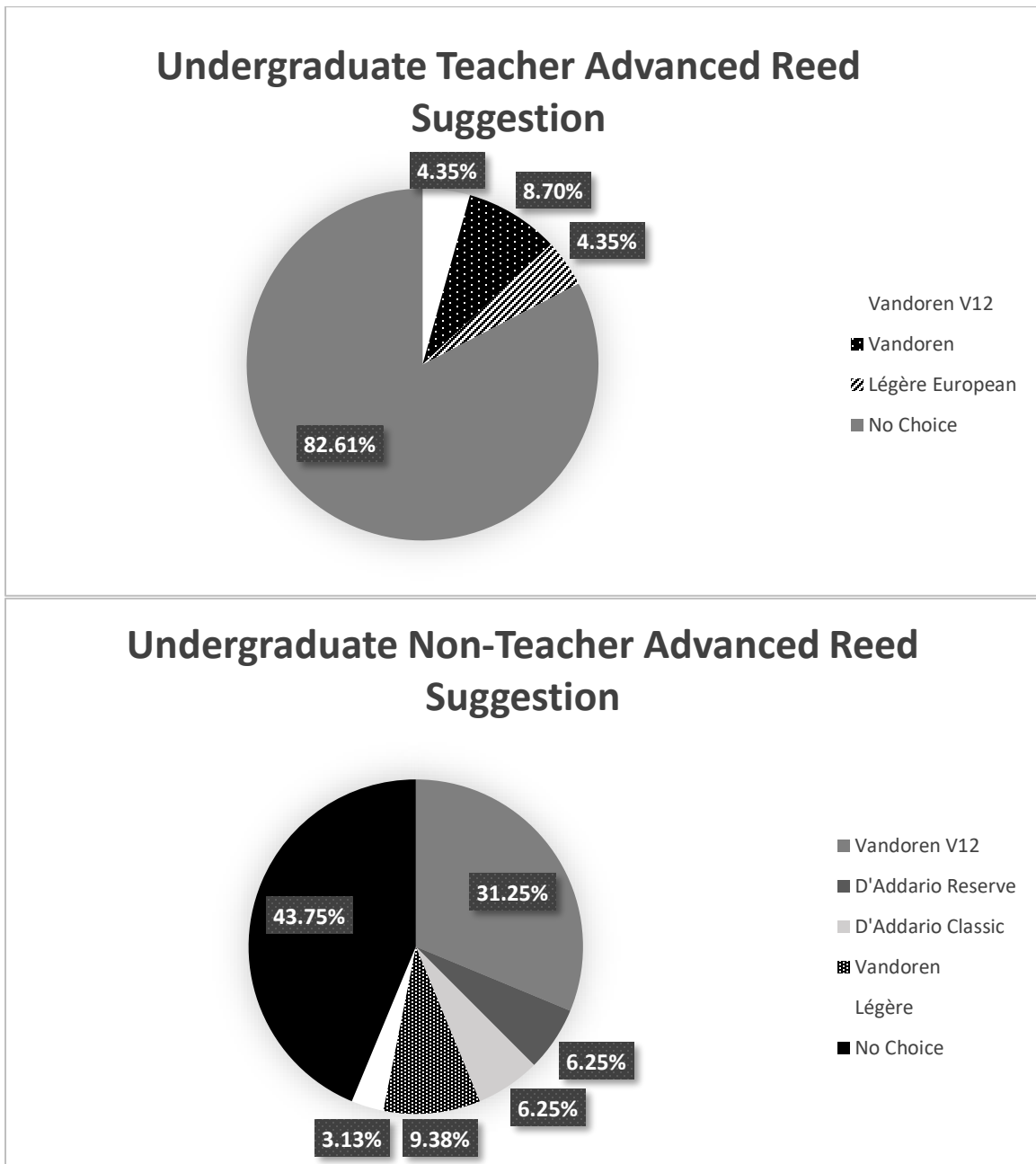


Figure 4.16. Suggested Advanced Reeds from Undergraduate Students

20% of all undergraduate students provided comments on their responses at the conclusion of the survey. Generally, undergraduate students were early in their career and

some commented that they did not have enough confidence to provide good recommendations for students. In this case, a “no choice” recommendation was more likely to mean undergraduates did not know what to recommend rather than suggesting it was a personal choice. A number of the responses from non-teachers included the same suggestions across beginner, intermediate, and advanced students. The majority of the responses were defending the choices they suggested or provided alternate choices if students could not afford certain equipment. A few were honest and stated they were not confident in their abilities to provide a good suggestion beyond a beginner mouthpiece. Few participants provided recommended reed strengths and was not included with suggested equipment data for Undergraduate students. A few students also mentioned that ligatures also play a large role in the sound and should be considered. Even though 73% of undergraduate students use Vandoren mouthpieces, that percentage does not translate into recommendations by those who taught students. Only 22% of undergraduates who gave lessons recommended Vandoren to their beginning students.

CHAPTER 5

SURVEY RESULTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate Student Equipment

Graduate students accounted for 13.8% of all survey responses. Of the 41 graduate students, a few were categorized as recent graduates. The average years of clarinet experience amongst graduate students was 16.39 years. 87.8% of graduate participants were between 18 and 29 years of age and the remaining 12.2% were between 30 and 60. Of the graduate students, 36.59% of them listed secondary clarinet related careers in performance, middle school/high school directors, college teachers, and private instructors.

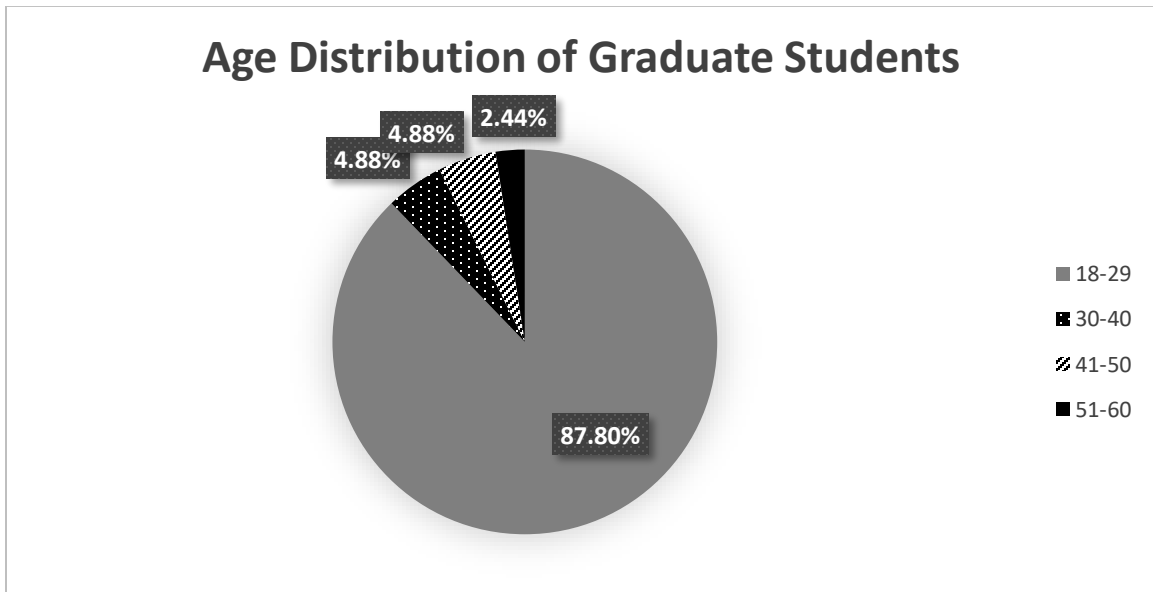


Figure 5.1. Age Distribution of Graduate Students

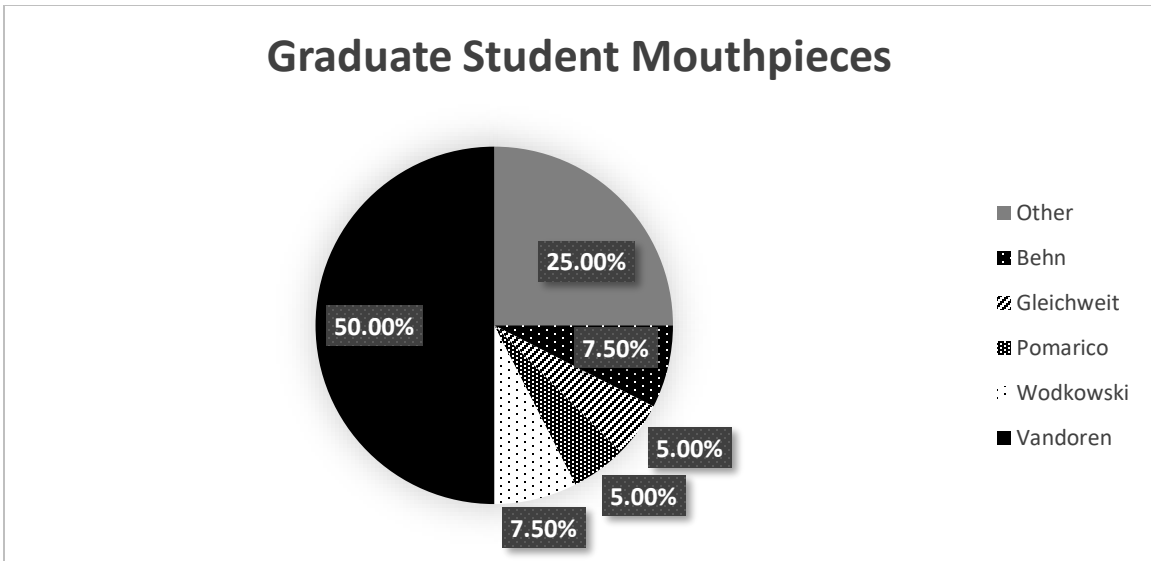


Figure 5.2. Mouthpiece Brands of Graduate students. Other brands mentioned are Backun, Custom, D’Addario, Dietz, Fobes, Kückmeier, McClune, Pyne, Storti, Theodore Johnson.

50% of graduate students currently use a Vandoren mouthpiece. The remaining 50% was comprised of 14 other brands ranging from custom made to larger brands such as D’Addario. Graduate students had been playing on their current equipment was for an average of 3.48 years.

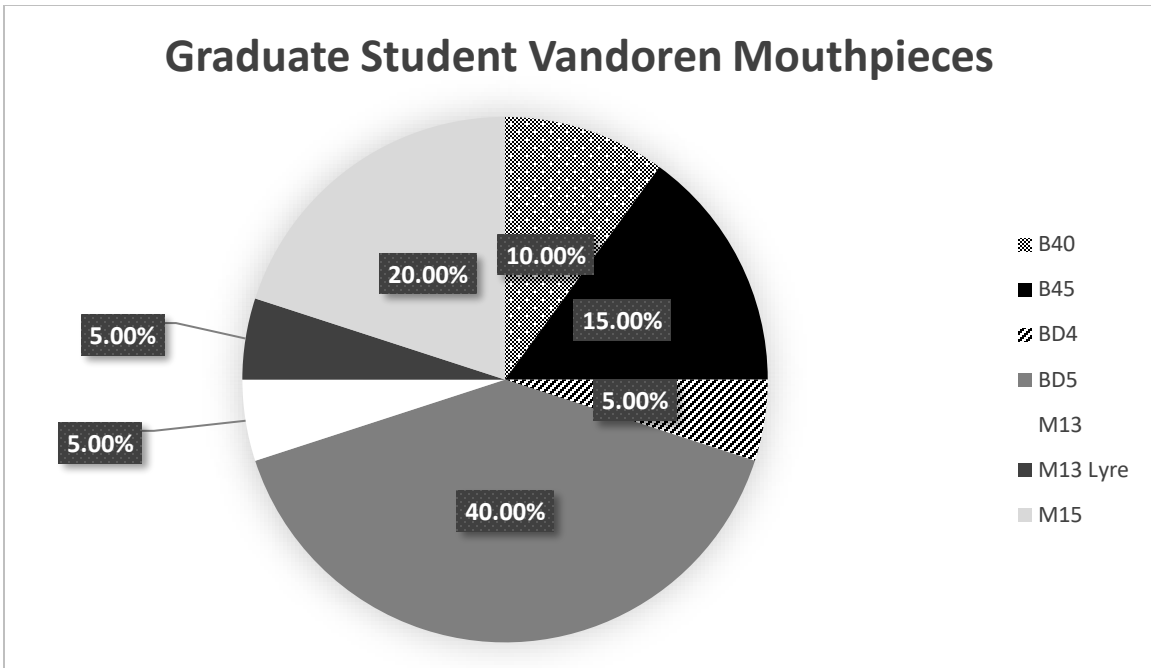


Figure 5.3. Vandoren Mouthpieces of Graduate Students

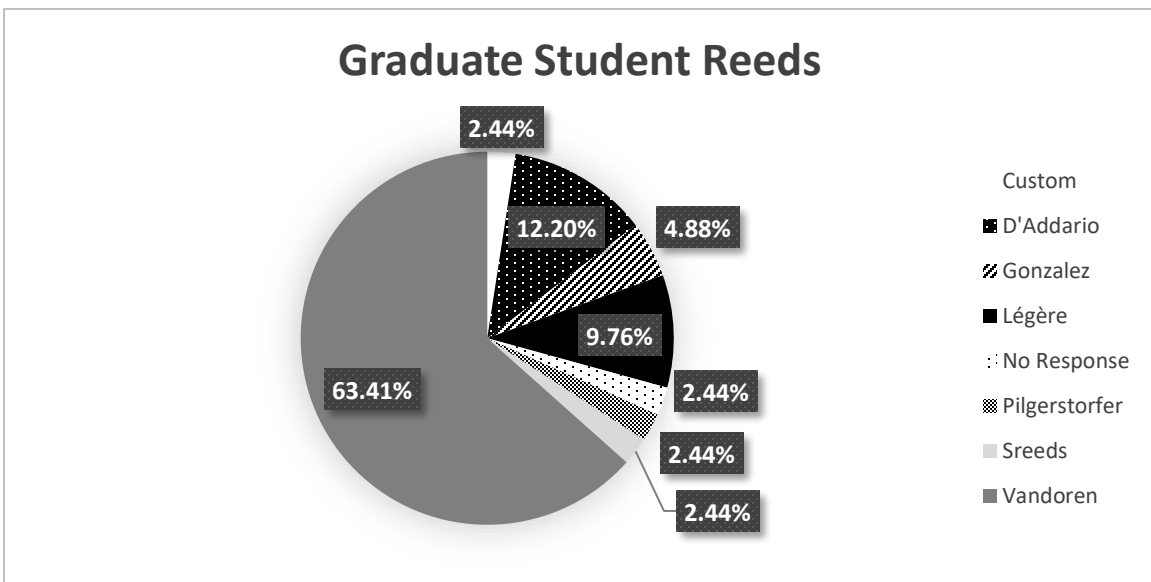


Figure 5.4. Reed Brands for Graduate Students

Graduate Student Vandoren Reeds

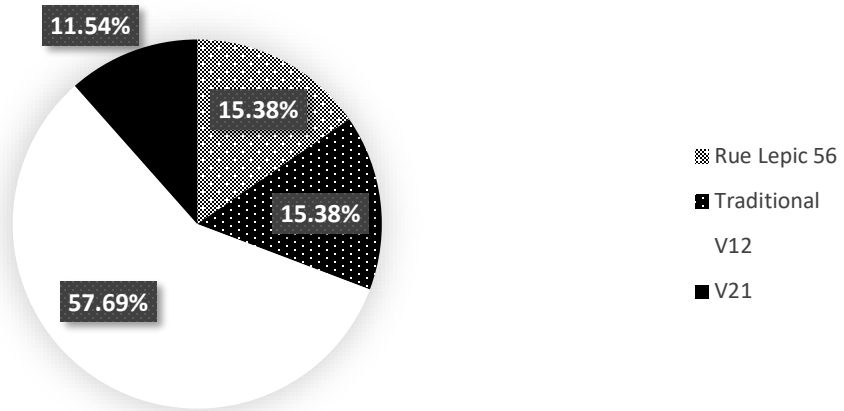


Figure 5.5. Vandoren Reeds of Graduate Students

Graduate Student Secondary Reeds

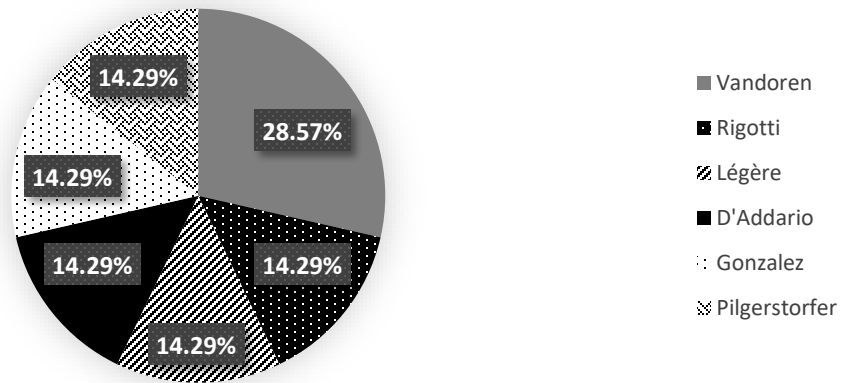


Figure 5.6. Additional Reeds used by Graduate Students

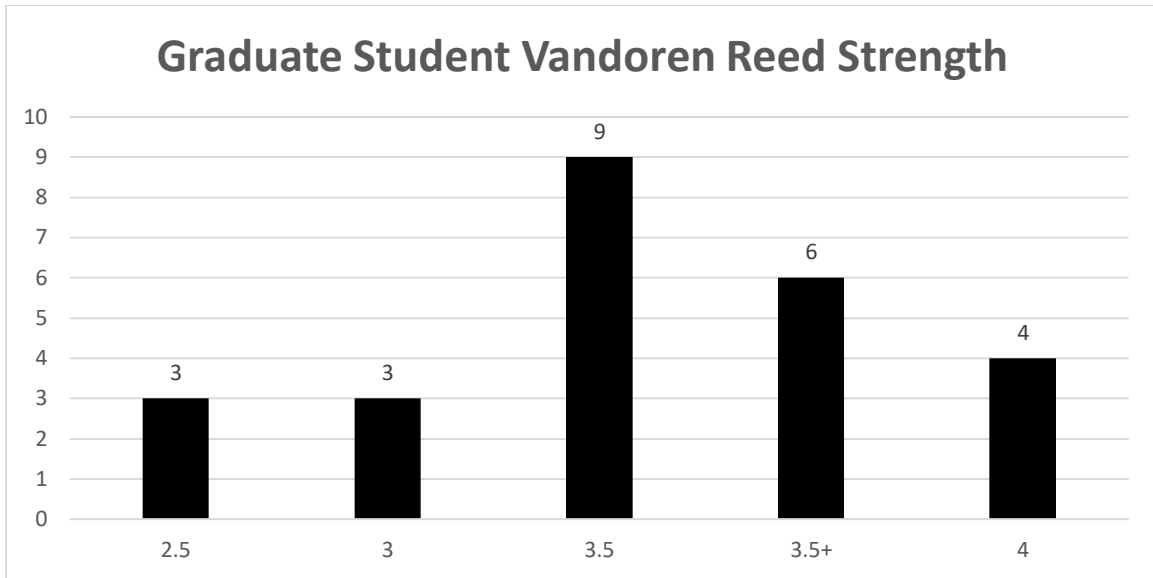


Figure 5.7 Graduate Student Vandoren Reed Strength

65% of Graduate students taught private lessons and the following examples show suggestions from both private teachers and non-teachers. Of the Graduate students who used Vandoren mouthpieces, 90% used Vandoren reeds and 63% of all graduate students used Vandoren reeds. Légère and D’Addario were the next largest categories of reeds graduate students use currently. Of the Vandoren reed users, the majority of them used Vandoren V12, as shown in Figure 5.5. 19.5% of grad students listed secondary reed choices such as D’Addario, Légère, Gonzalez, Rigotti, Pilgerstorfer, and Silverstein.

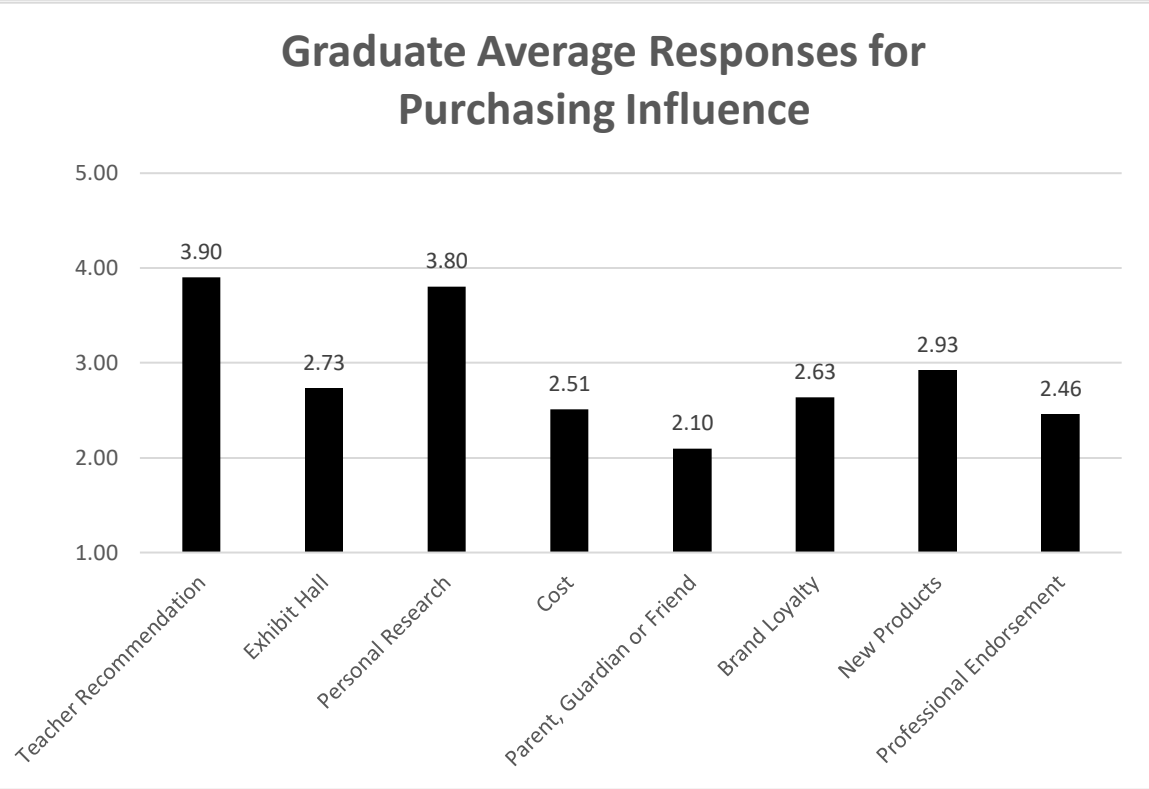
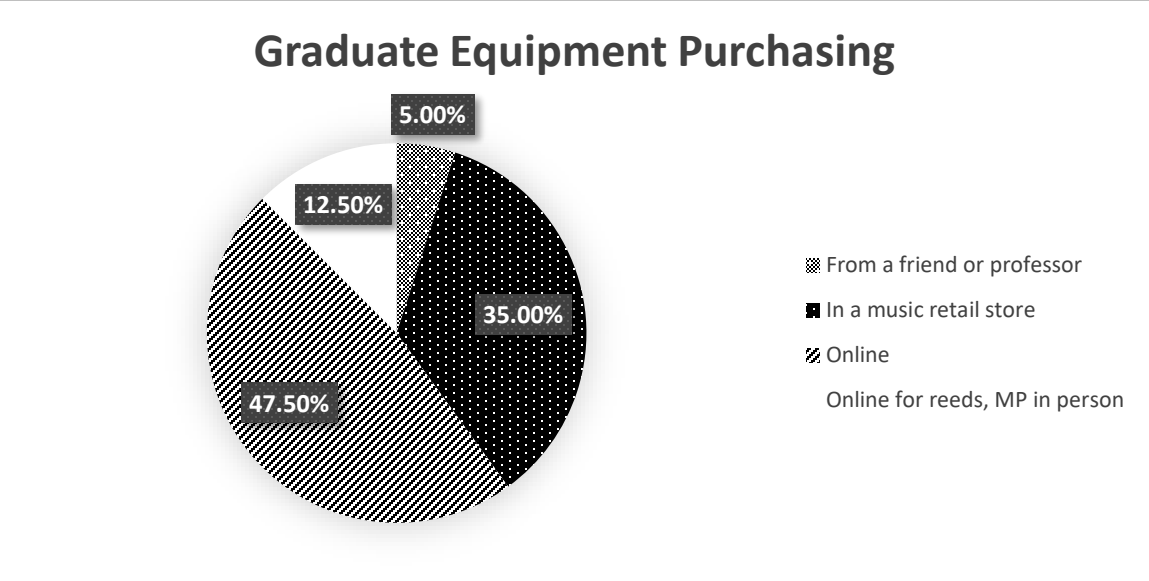


Figure 5.8. Graduate Students Mouthpiece and Reed Purchasing. Average response to all questions regarding equipment purchasing.

Similar to undergraduate students, the most popular purchasing method for graduate students was online and the second most popular was purchasing in a retail store. Again, teacher recommendation was the highest purchasing influence for graduate

students and personal research was the second highest. Interestingly, graduate students had the highest average willingness to try new products, which was the third most popular purchasing influence for this group.

Graduate Student Suggested Equipment

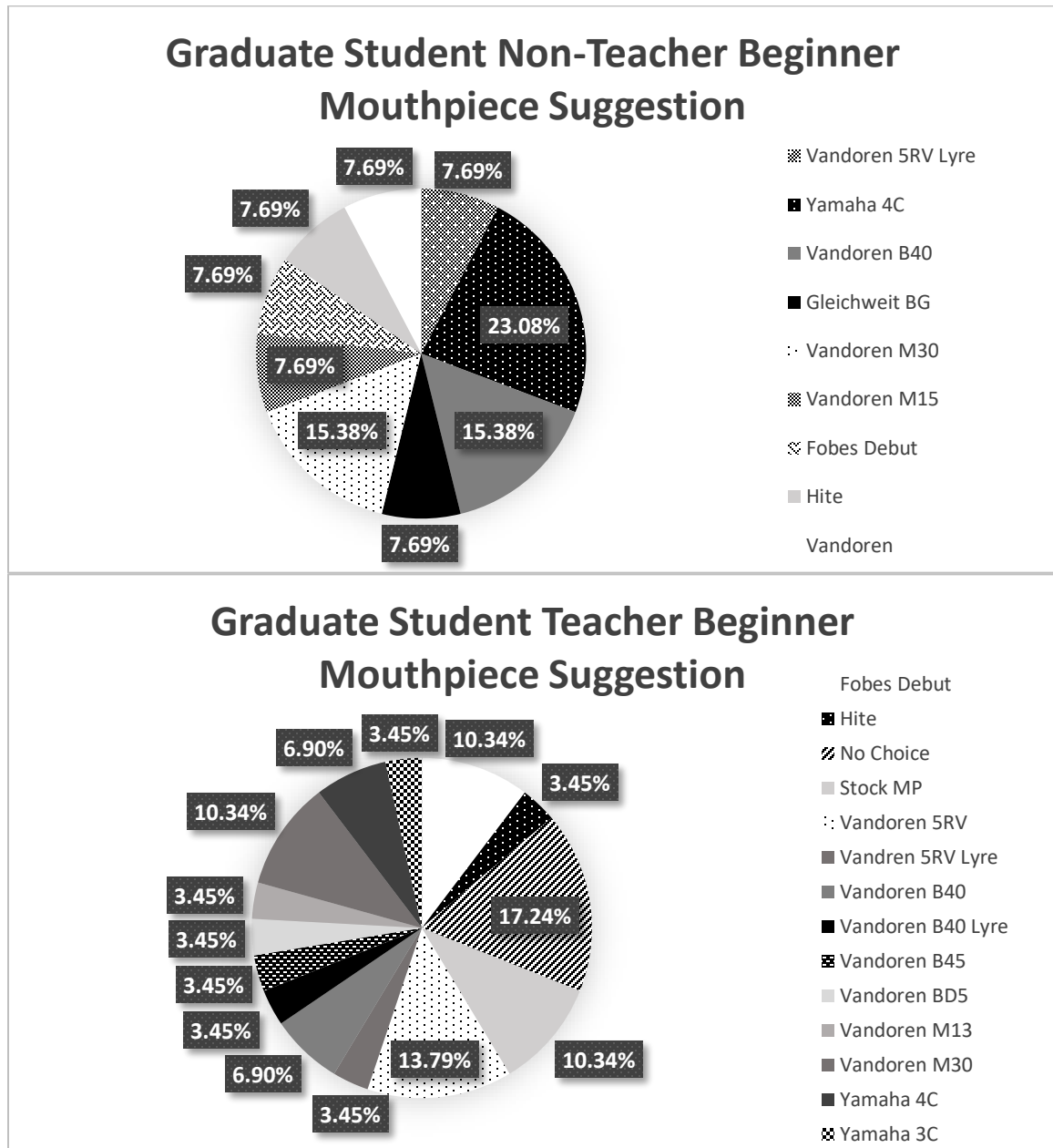


Figure 5.9. Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces from Graduate Students. Vandoren mouthpieces mentioned by graduate clarinet teachers included 5RV, 5RV Lyre, B40, B40 Lyre, B45, and BD5.

Compared to undergraduate students, graduate students had a stronger opinion about the brand and model selections for their beginning students. Vandoren was by far the most recommended brand by graduate students who also taught private lessons.

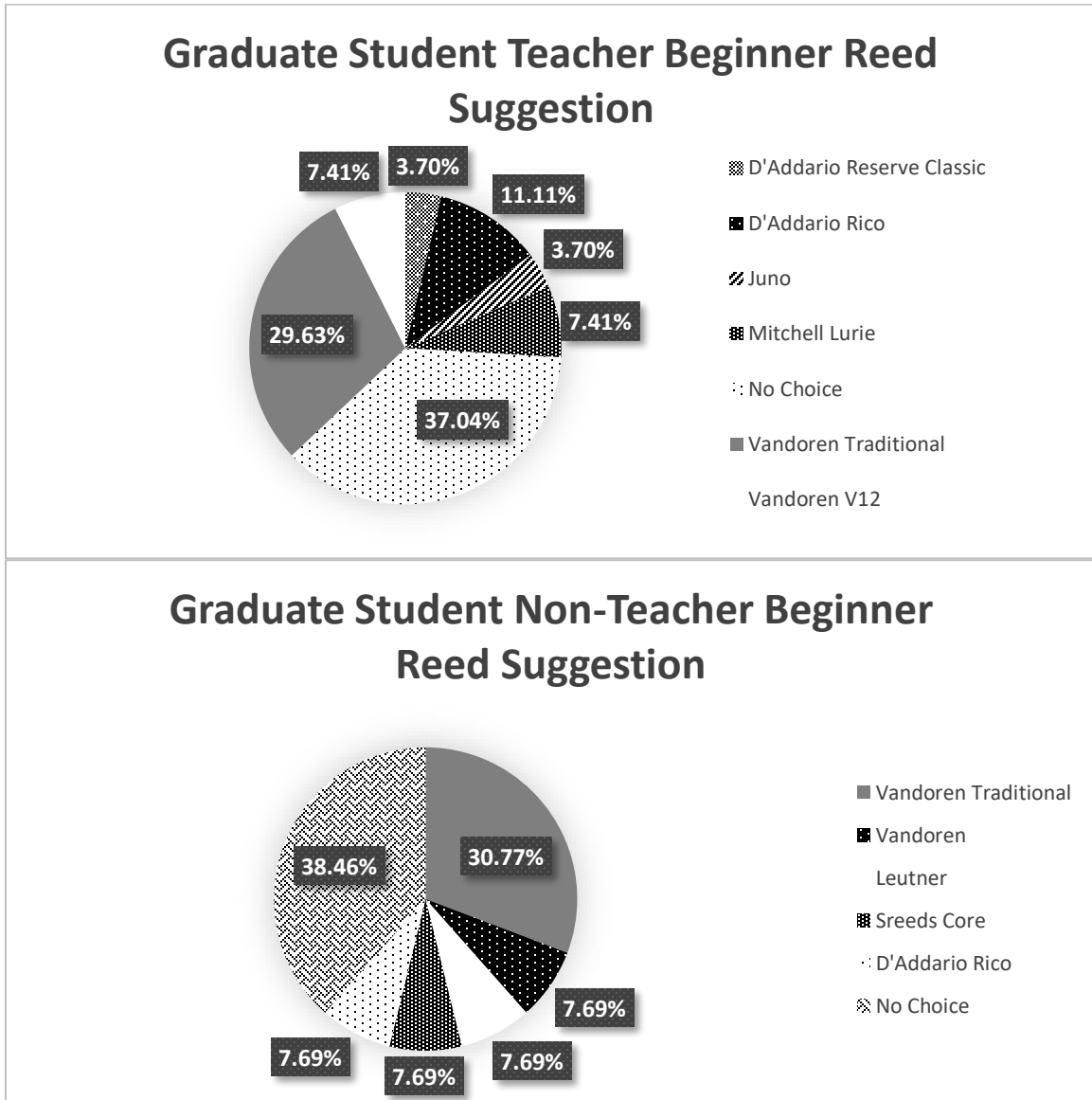


Figure 5.10. Suggested Beginner Reeds from Graduate Students

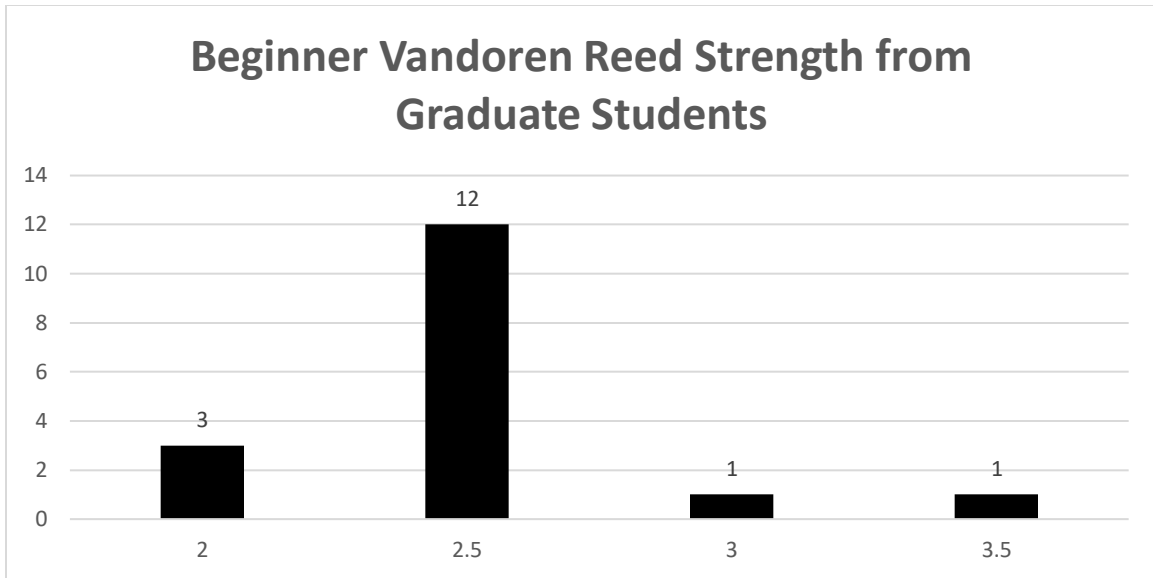
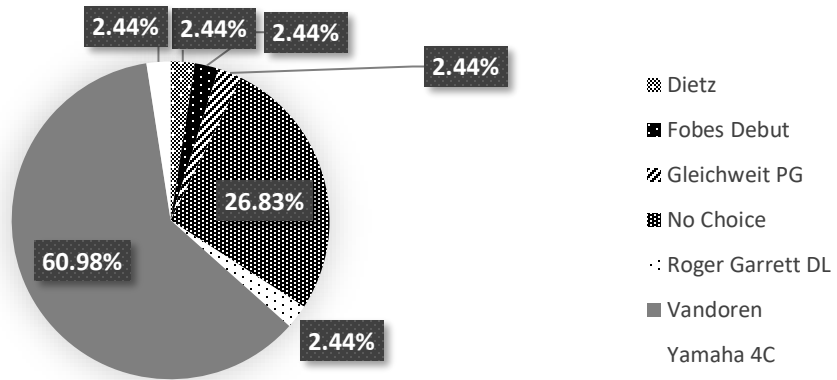


Figure 5.11. Beginner Vandoren Reed Strength Recommendation

Compared to mouthpiece recommendations, Undergraduate Students were more likely to make a “no choice” recommendation for reeds. Vandoren remained the majority selection for all graduate students.

Graduate Student Teacher Intermediate Mouthpiece Suggestion



Graduate Student Non-Teacher Intermediate Mouthpiece Suggestion

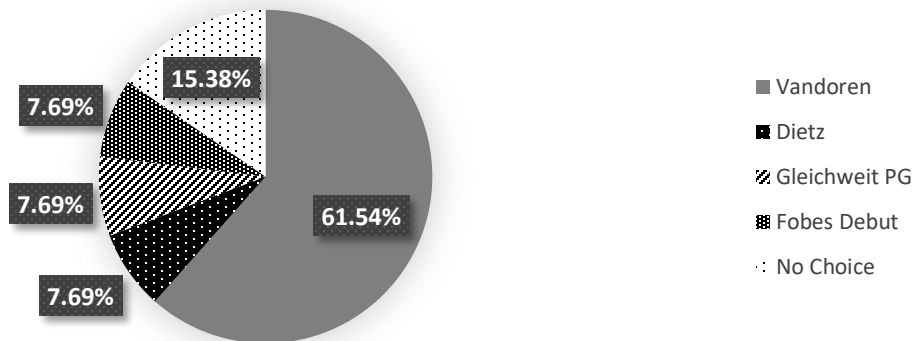
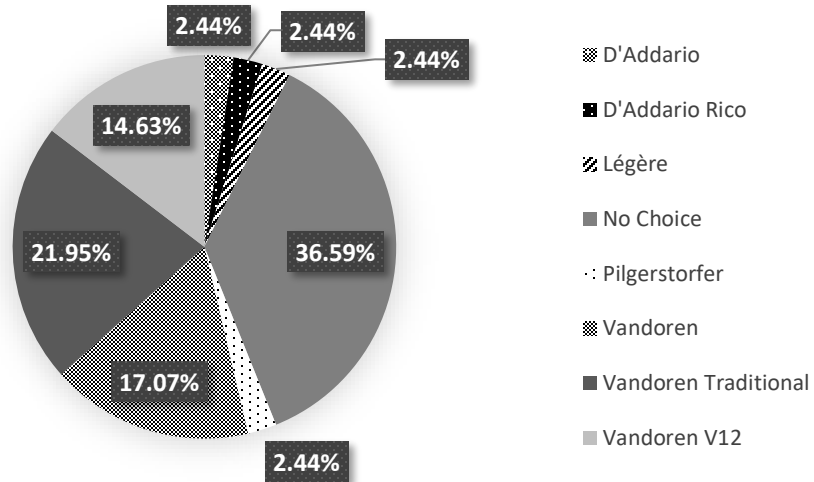


Figure 5.12. Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces from Graduate Students. Other Vandoren mouthpieces mentioned by graduate non-clarinet teachers included M13, B45, 5RV, B40 Lyre, M15, M30, and B40. Other Vandoren mouthpieces mentioned by graduate clarinet teachers included 5RV, B40, B40 Lyre, B45, BD5, M30, M13, M13 Lyre, M15.

Graduate Student Teacher Intermediate Reed Suggestion



Graduate Student Non-Teacher Intermediate Reed Suggestion

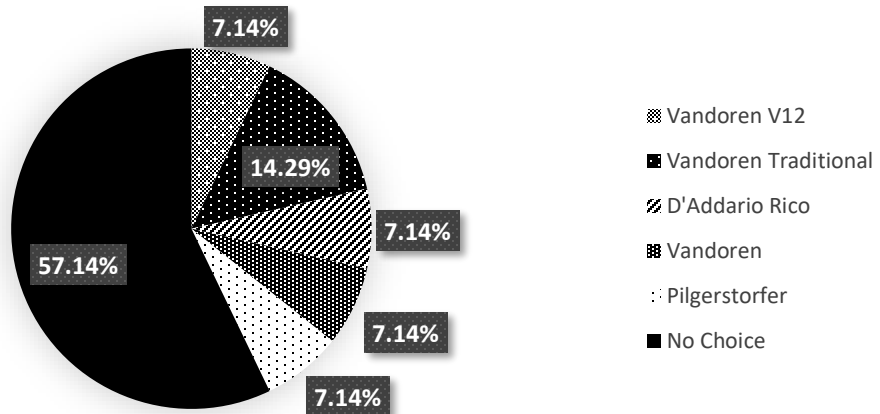


Figure 5.13. Suggested Intermediate Reeds from Graduate Students

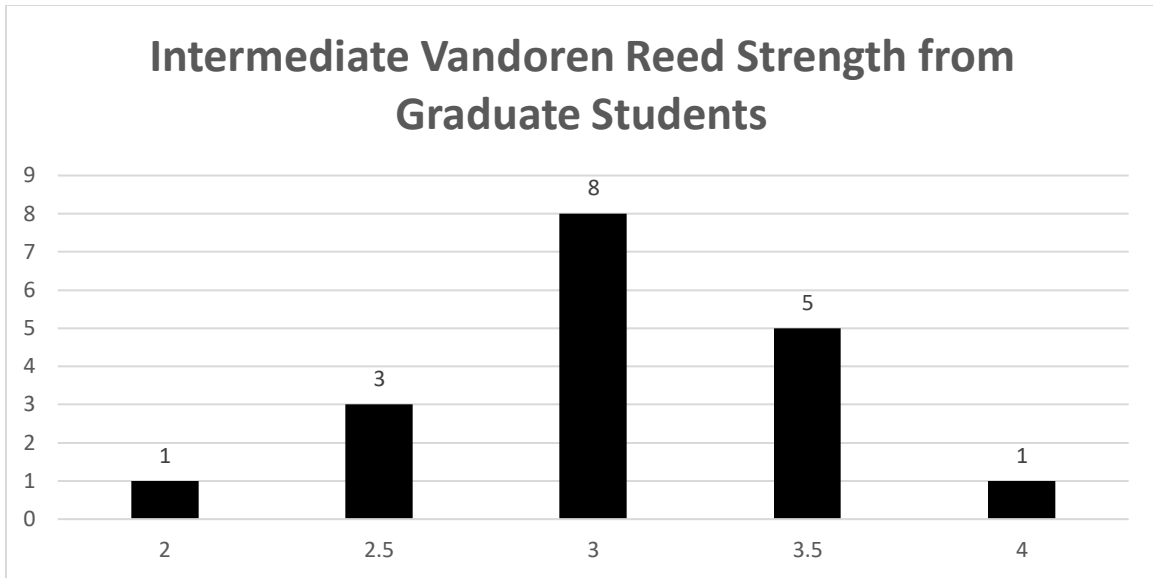
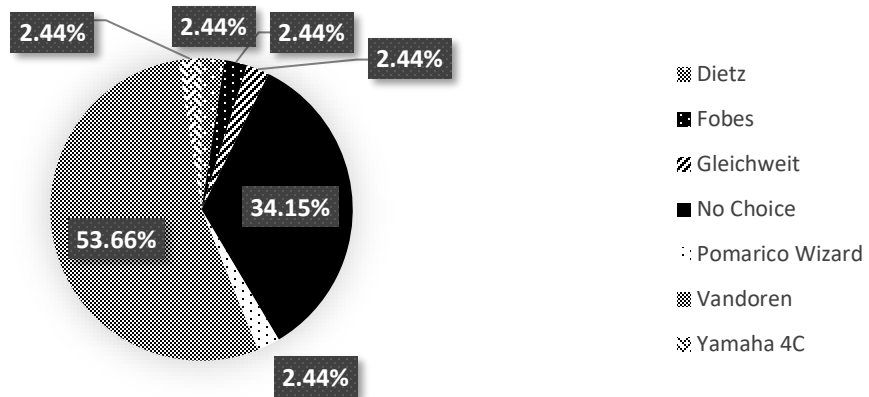


Figure 5.14. Intermediate Vandoren Reed Strength Recommendation

The “no choice” option represented a greater percentage for intermediate students than for beginners. The majority of recommended Vandoren reeds suggested a size 3.0 reed.

Graduate Student Teacher Advanced Mouthpiece Suggestion



Graduate Student Non-Teacher Advanced Mouthpiece Suggestion

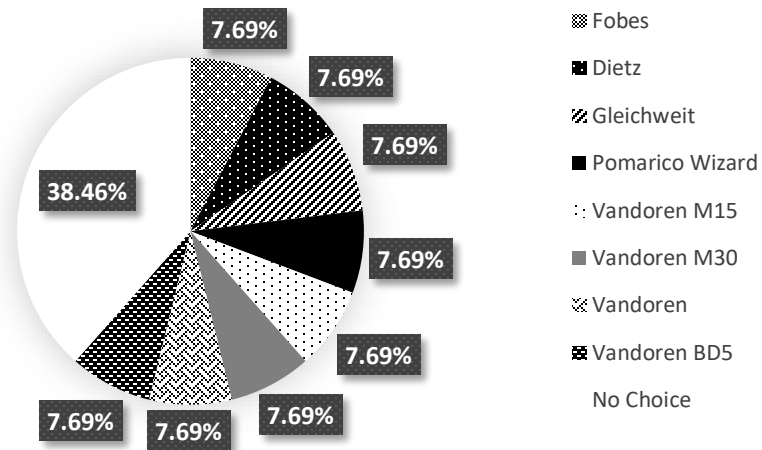
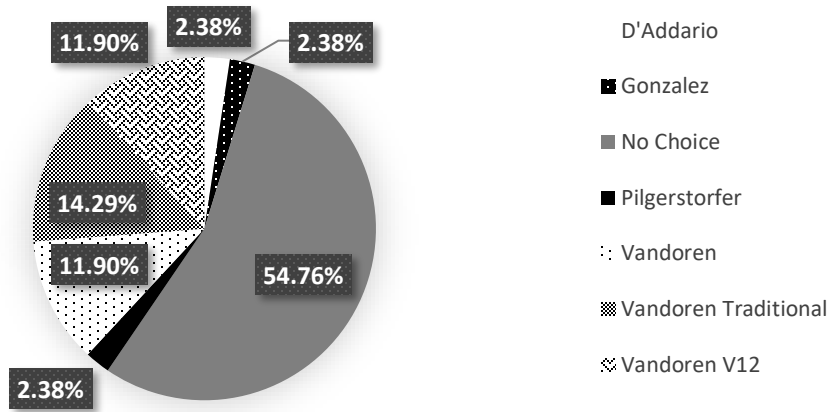


Figure 5.15. Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces from Graduate Students. Other Vandoren models suggested by graduate clarinet teachers included B40 Lyre, BD4, BD5, M13, M13 Lyre, M15, M30.

Graduate Student Teacher Advanced Reed Suggestion



Graduate Student Non-Teacher Advanced Reed Suggestion

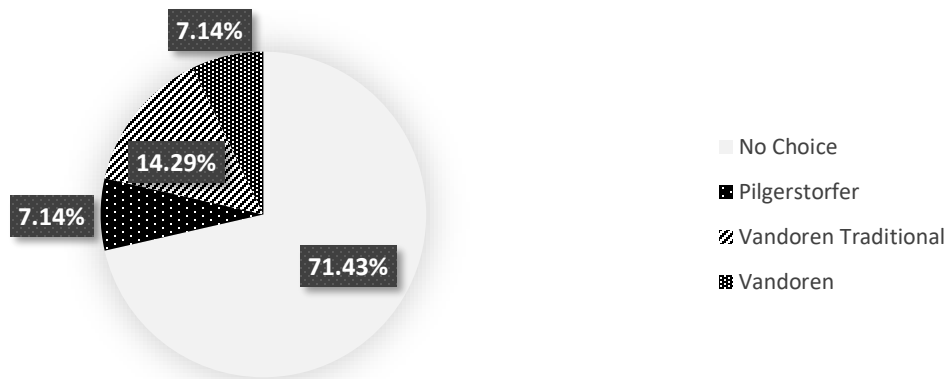


Figure 5.16. Suggested Advanced Reeds from Graduate Students

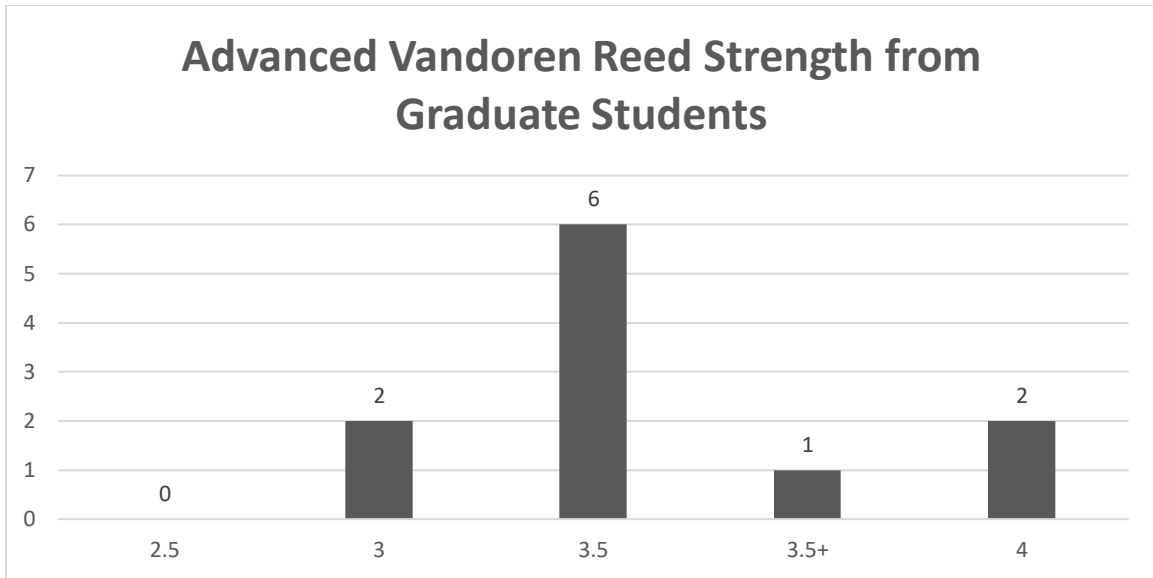


Figure 5.17. Advanced Vandoren Reed Strength Recommendation****

Regardless of whether graduate students taught private lessons, the majority of participants who recommended Vandoren reeds suggested they use 3.5. Again, this was a half strength higher than their intermediate recommendation. The “no choice” option increased for mouthpiece recommendations and was clearly the most frequent response for reeds. Overall, both sets of graduate students had similar ideas for what was suggested to beginner, intermediate, and advanced students. Similar to the undergraduate students in Chapter 5, the graduate students did not provide as many comments regarding recommendations for intermediate and advanced students versus the beginner level. The reason for no meaningful data of reed strength was that most of the graduate students did not respond with reed strengths or provided a partial response to reed recommendations. Non-teachers more frequently recommended various Vandoren mouthpieces versus other brands for intermediate students. The beginner and advanced students were recommended other brands such as Yamaha, Fobes, Dietz, Gleichweit, and Hite. As career groups were analyzed, fewer mouthpiece and reed brands were suggested for

intermediate and advanced students. Many of the respondents explained that mouthpieces and reeds were subjective due to skill level and needs of the students. Trying different mouthpieces was another important aspect of selecting a mouthpiece according to graduate students. Compared to undergraduate students, graduate students appeared to be suggesting a selection process more often than suggesting a specific brand. In addition to these comments, a few students commented on the affordability of Vandoren mouthpieces for the quality and wide range of styles.

CHAPTER 6

SURVEY RESULTS FOR PROFESSIONAL CLARINETIST

Professional Clarinetist's Equipment

Ninety-two professional clarinetists responded to the survey, with an average of 27.76 years of experience. 62% of professionals were between 18 and 40 years of age and the remaining 38% were older than 40. 60% of professional clarinetists mentioned a secondary career other than being a professional clarinetist. Of the professional musicians, 65.93% indicated that they perform as soloists and chamber musicians, 56% were orchestral musicians, and 20.88% were in military bands. Many clarinetists were multifaceted and associated themselves with a combination of solo/chamber, orchestral, and military band.

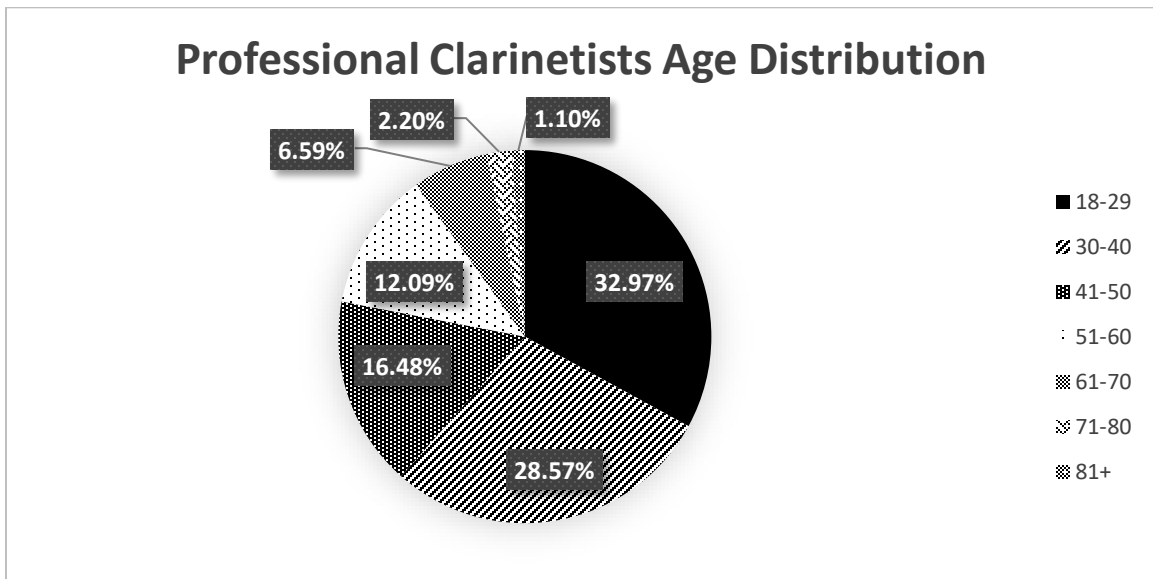


Figure 6.1. Age Distribution of Professional Clarinetists

Professional Clarinetists Secondary Careers

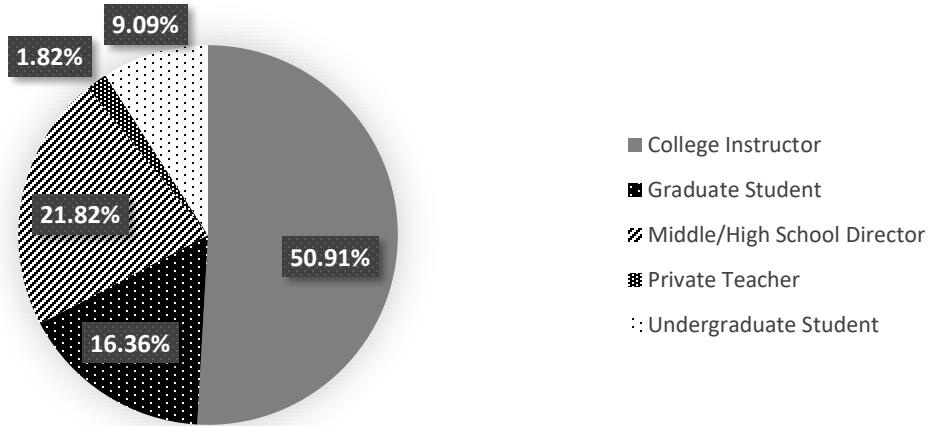


Figure 6.2. Secondary Careers of Professional Clarinetists. They represent 60% of all professional clarinetists.

Professional Clarinetists Mouthpieces

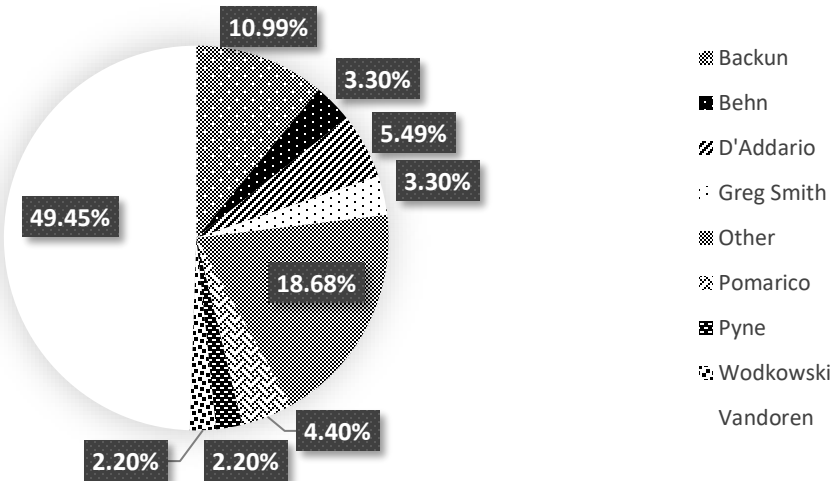


Figure 6.3. Professional Clarinetists Mouthpiece Brands. Other mouthpiece brands mentioned included Bettoney, Borbeck Bedeville, Dietz, Gigliotti, Gleichweit, Kanter, Kasper, KJG-3, Kückmeier, Licostini, McClune, Morgan, Oscar Oehler, Peter Eaton, Playnick.

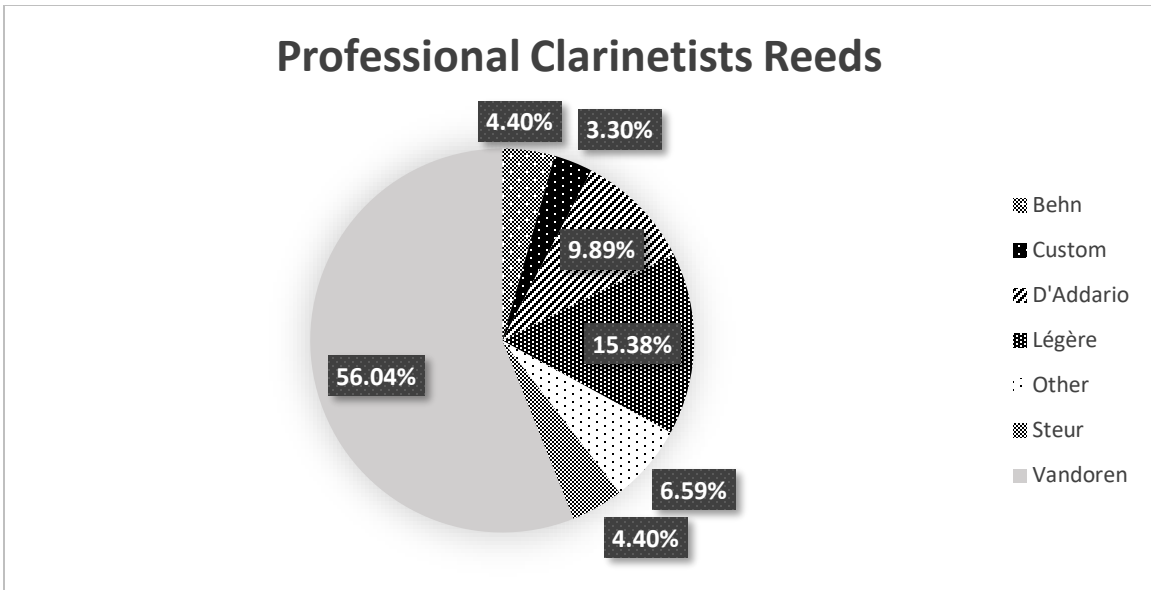


Figure 6.4. Professional Clarinetists Reed Brands. Other reed brands mentioned included Fedotov, Gonzalez, No Response, Pilgerstorfer, Silverstein. Sreeds.

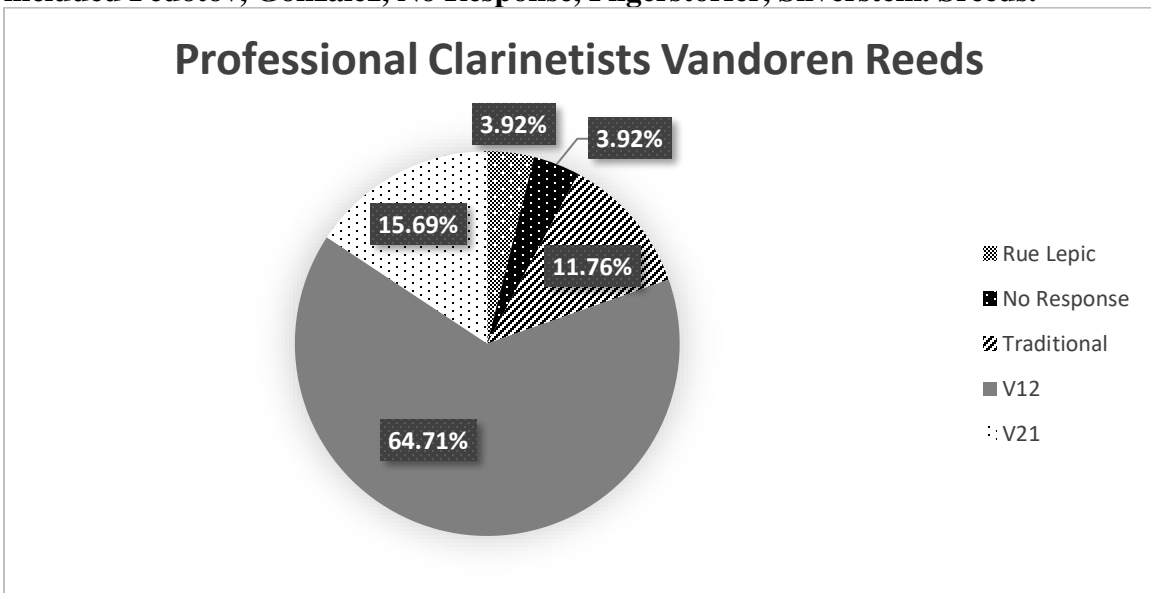


Figure 6.5. Professional Clarinetists Vandoren Reeds

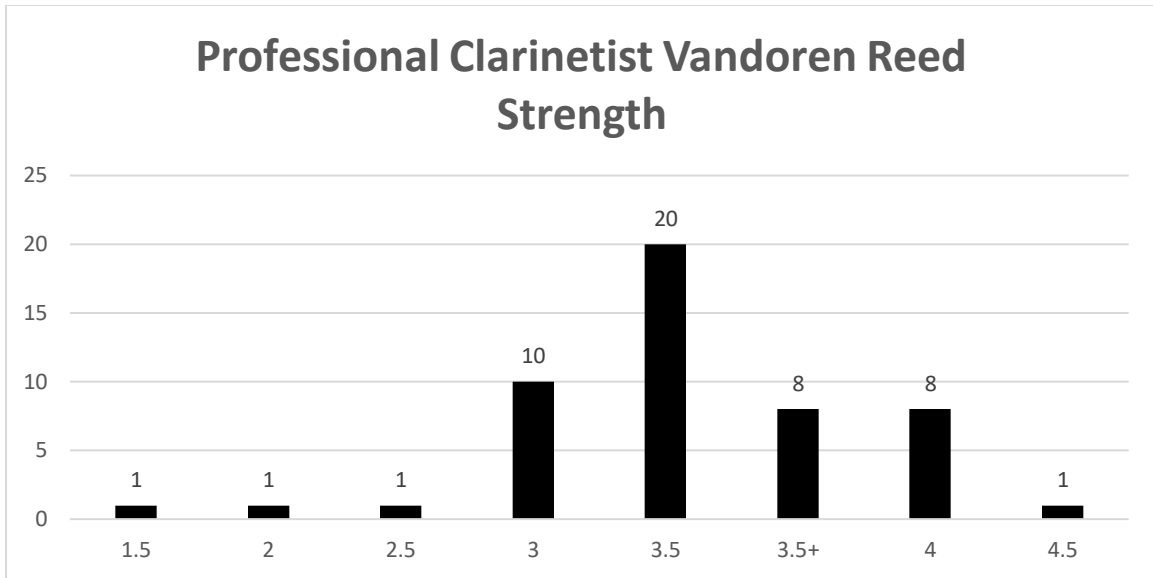


Figure 6.6. Professional Clarinetists Vandoren Reed Strength

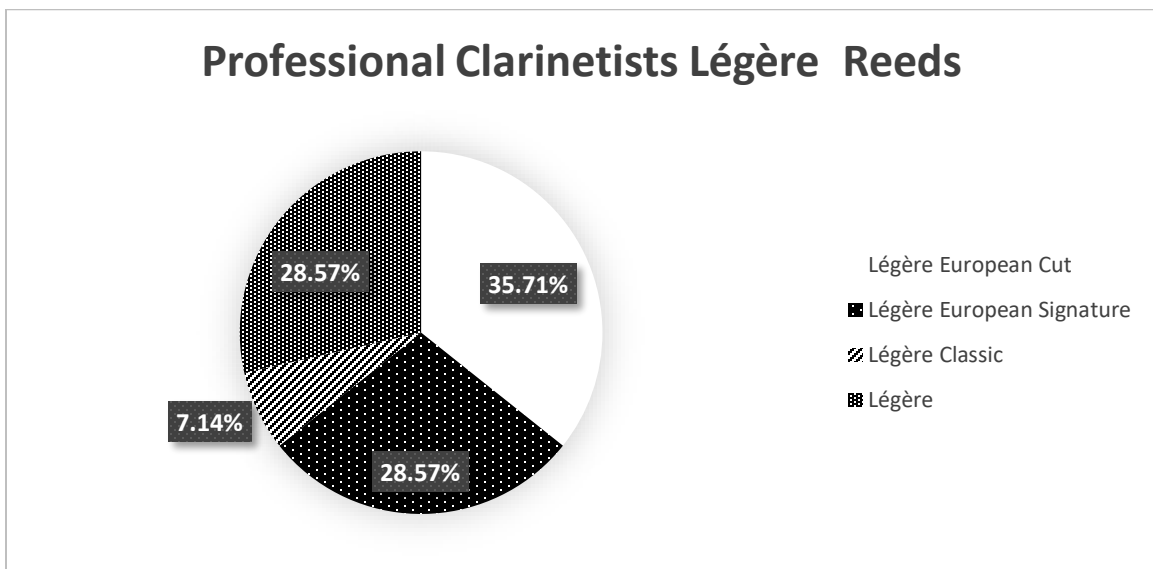


Figure 6.7. Professional Clarinetists Légère Reeds.

Professional Clarinetists D'Addario Reeds

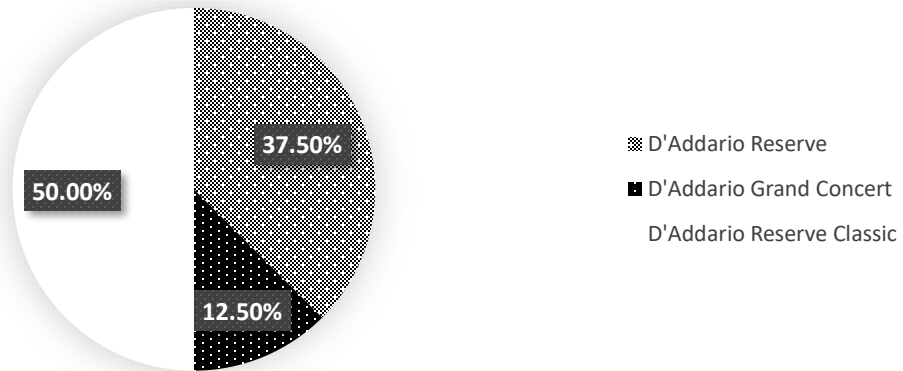


Figure 6.8. Professional Clarinetists D'Addario Reeds.

As with mouthpieces, the reeds that professional musicians use were the most diverse of all career groups. Vandoren reeds were used by 56% of professional musicians with Légère and D'Addario being other major brands. For Vandoren, the most popular model was the V12. Of the Légère users, the European cut represented 36%. Half of the D'Addario reed users played on the Reserve Classic model.

Military Band Musician Mouthpieces

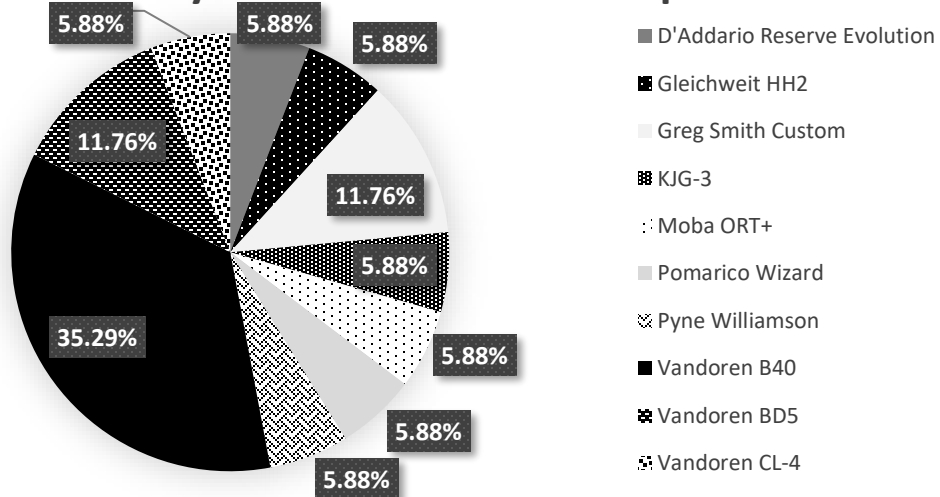


Figure 6.9. Military Band Musicians Mouthpieces

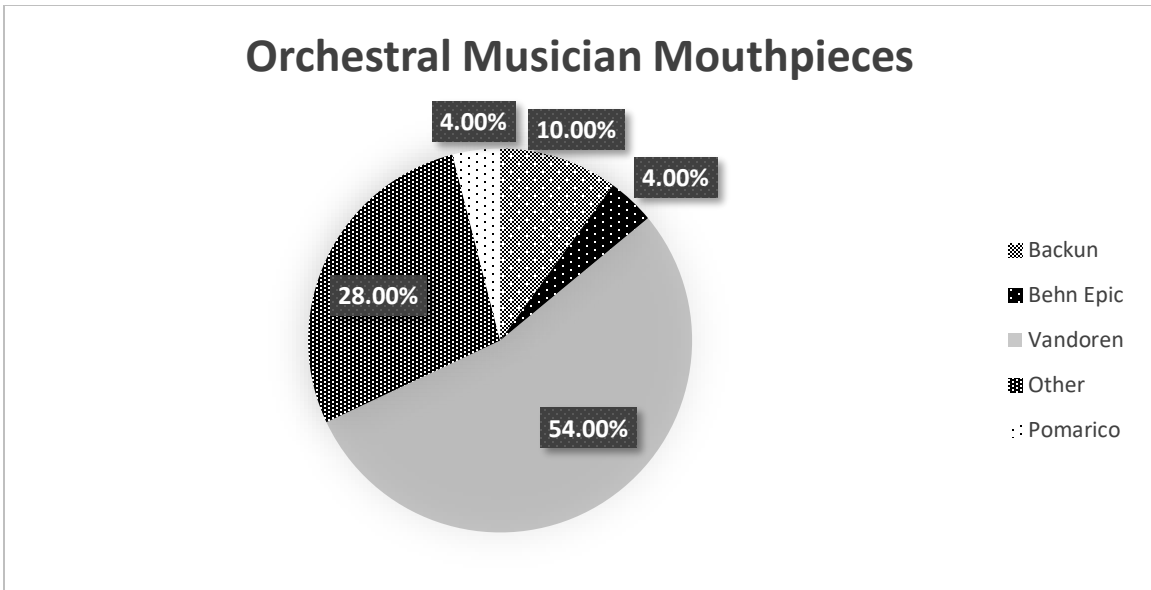


Figure 6.10. Orchestral Musician Mouthpieces. Other brands mentioned by orchestral musicians included Bettoney, D’Addario, Dietz, Gigliotti, Greg Smith, Kanter, Kasper, Kückmeier, Licostini, Peter Eaton, Playnick, Pyne, and Wodkowski.

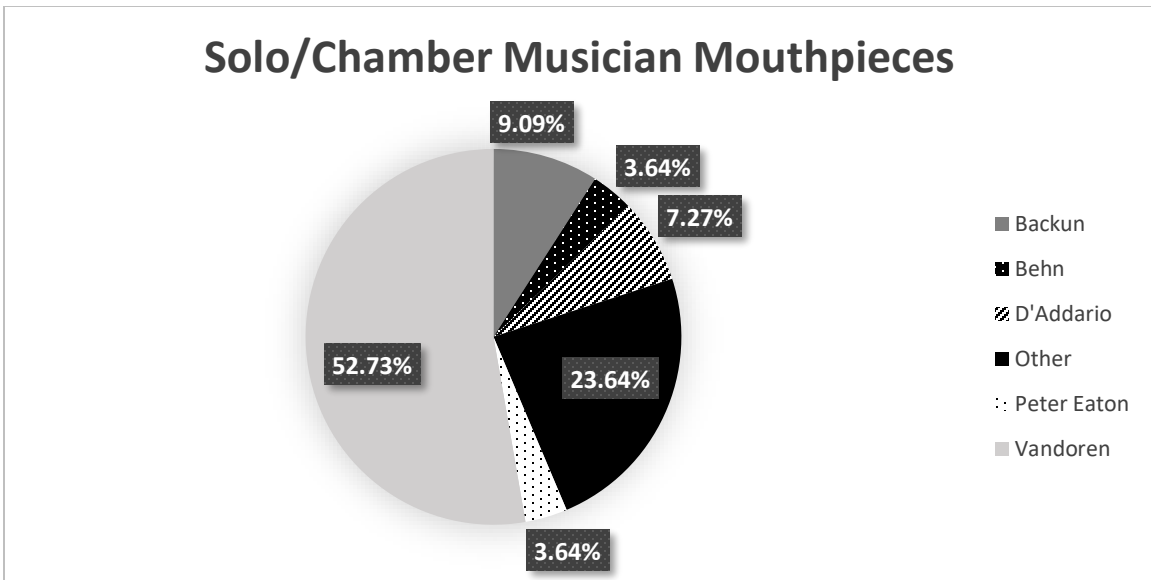


Figure 6.11. Solo/Chamber Musician Mouthpieces. Other mouthpiece brands chosen included Bettoney, Borbeck, Chedeville, Dietz, Gleichweit, Greg Smith, Kanter, Kasper, KJG-3, Kückmeier, McClune, Morgan, and Oscar Oehler.

Compared to all the other careers, professional clarinetists used the most diverse selection of mouthpieces. Despite this diversity, Vandoren still accounted for half of the mouthpieces used. When the mouthpieces were divided by type of professional group,

certain brands had a greater market share. For military musicians, Vandoren mouthpieces were 58% of the total responses with the B40 model being the most popular. Greg Smith mouthpieces were used by 11% of the military band musicians. For orchestral musicians, 49% used Vandoren models with the BD5 the most popular at 18% and the M30 at 15%. 58% of solo and chamber musicians used Vandoren mouthpieces with the most popular being the BD5 at 19%, followed with the B40 at 12% and the M30 at 7%. The remaining brands included Backun, D'Addario, and a few smaller makers. Professional clarinetists had been playing on their current equipment for an average 5.75 years.

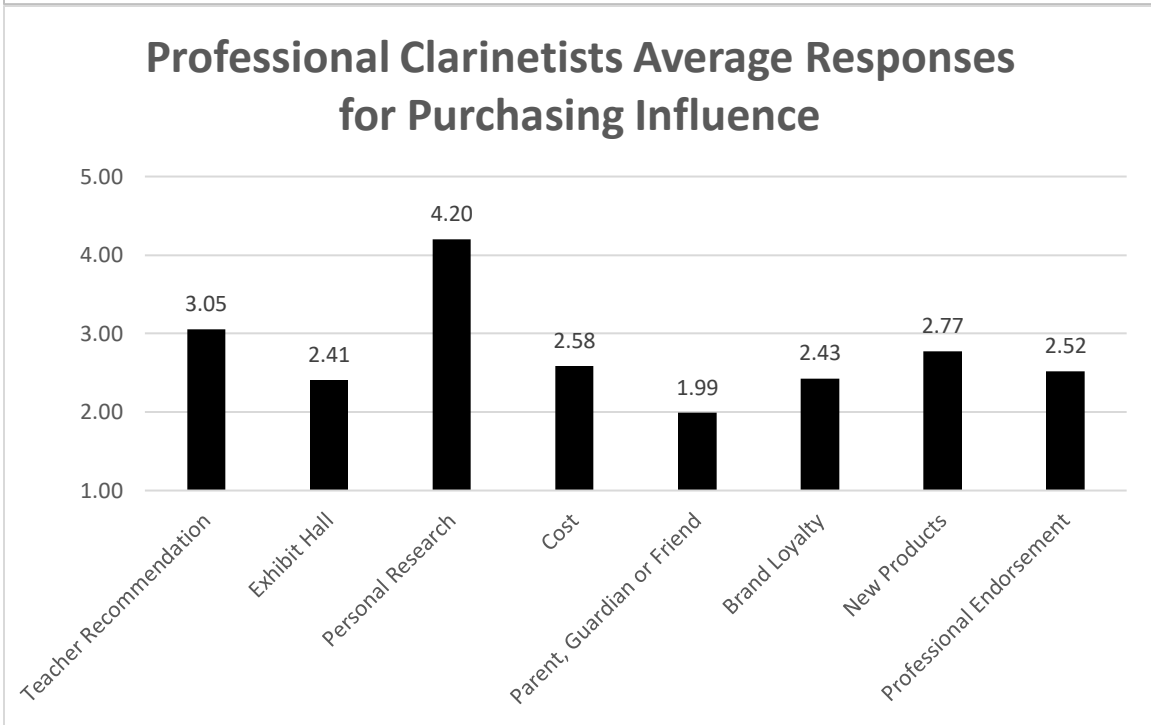
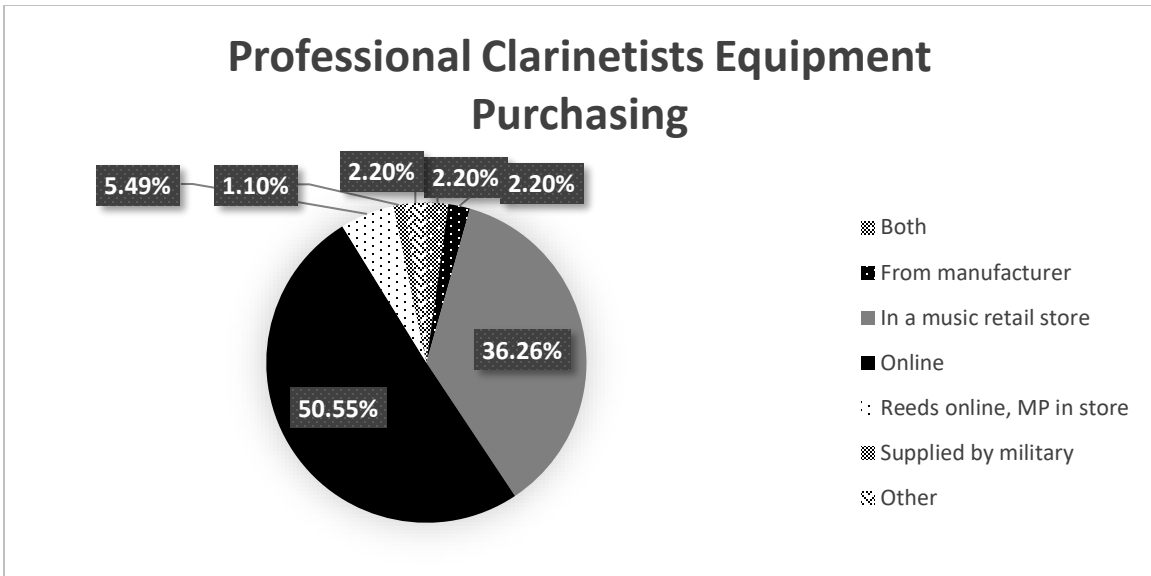


Figure 6.12. Professional Clarinetists Mouthpiece and Reed Purchasing. Average response to all questions regarding equipment purchasing

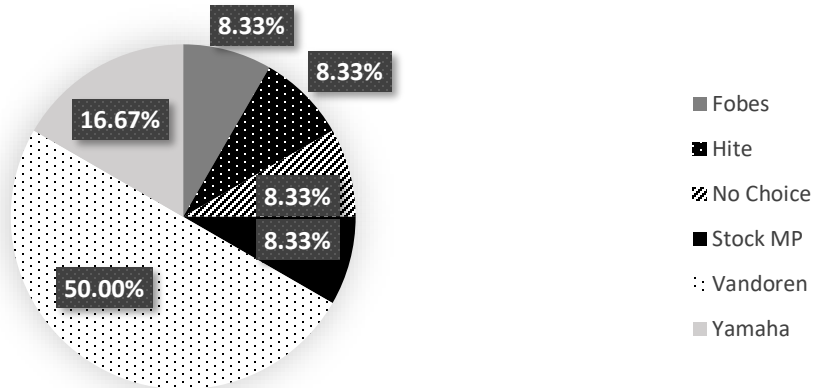
Professional clarinetists primarily used online resources and music retail stores for purchasing equipment. Professional clarinet players relied primarily on their personal research when purchasing equipment. However, they still valued input from their teachers. Compared to other career groups, Figure 6.12 indicated more ways professional

clarinetists obtain their equipment. Some professional clarinetists were sponsored by certain brands as they obtained their equipment directly from that manufacturer. The military also pays for their musician's equipment and therefore did not use traditional methods of purchasing equipment.

Professional Clarinetist Suggestions

Of the professional clarinetists, 85.7% mentioned that they taught private lessons. Of all professional musicians, those who taught private lessons incorporated more diverse brands of mouthpieces and reeds. "No Choice" responses were more common with the intermediate and advanced student suggestions.

Professional Clarinetists Non-Teacher Beginner Mouthpiece Suggestion



Professional Clarinetist Teacher Beginner Mouthpiece Suggestion

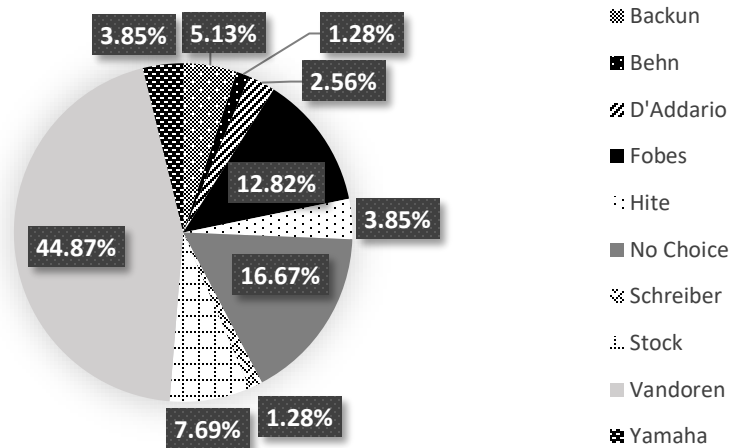
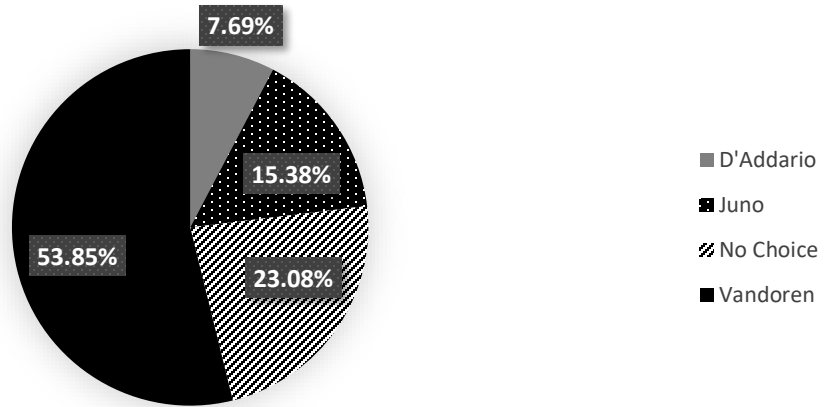


Figure 6.13. Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces from Professional Clarinetists

Professional Clarinetists Non-Teacher Beginner Reed Suggestion



Professional Clarinetist Teacher Beginner Reed Suggestion

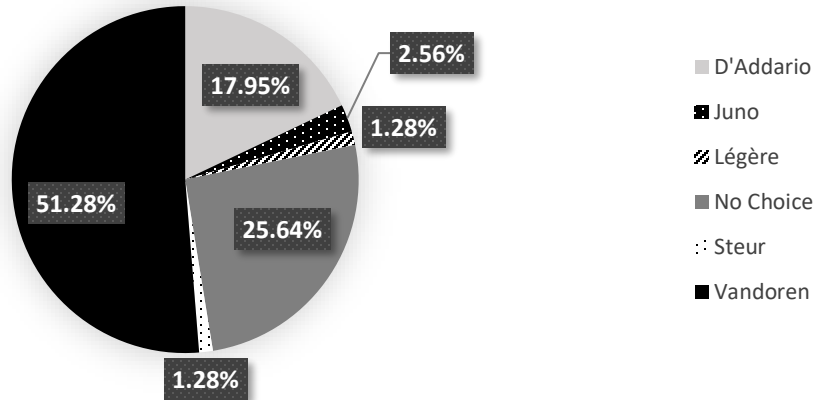


Figure 6.14. Suggested Beginner Reeds from Professional Clarinetists

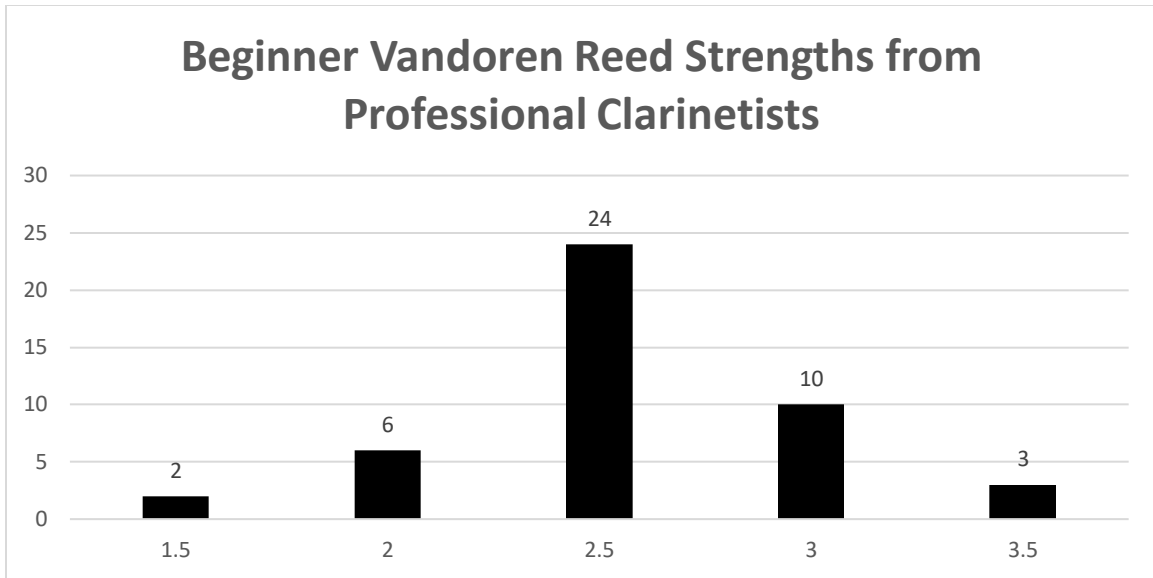
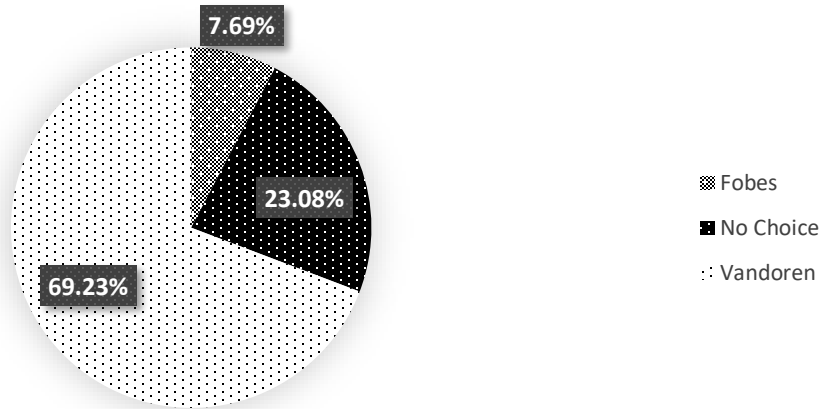


Figure 6.15. Beginner Vandoren Reed Strengths from Professional Clarinetists. All Vandoren suggestions are based on multiple Vandoren reed models.

Professional Clarinetists Non-Teacher Intermediate Mouthpiece Suggestion



Professional Clarinetist Teacher Intermediate Mouthpiece Suggestion

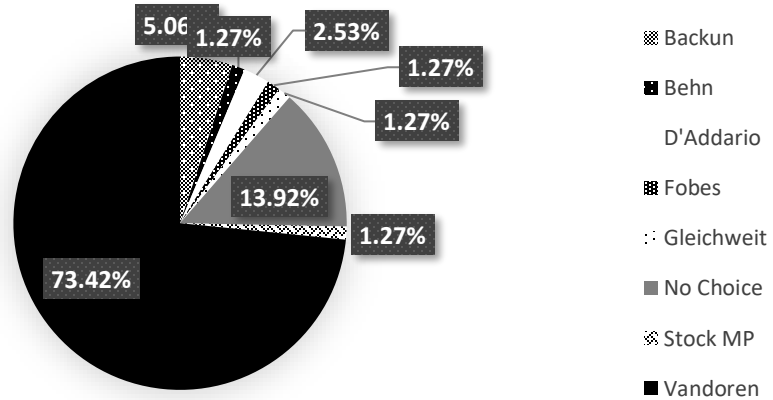
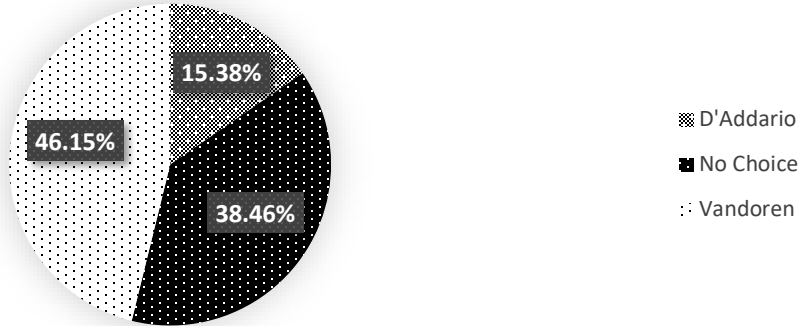


Figure 6.16. Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces from Professional Clarinetists

Professional Clarinetists Non-Teacher Intermediate Reed Suggestion



Professional Clarinetist Teacher Intermediate Reed Suggestion

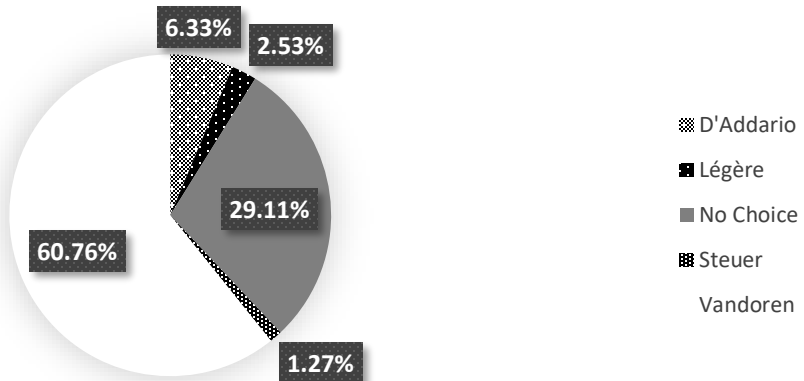


Figure 6.17. Suggested Intermediate Reeds from Professional Clarinetists

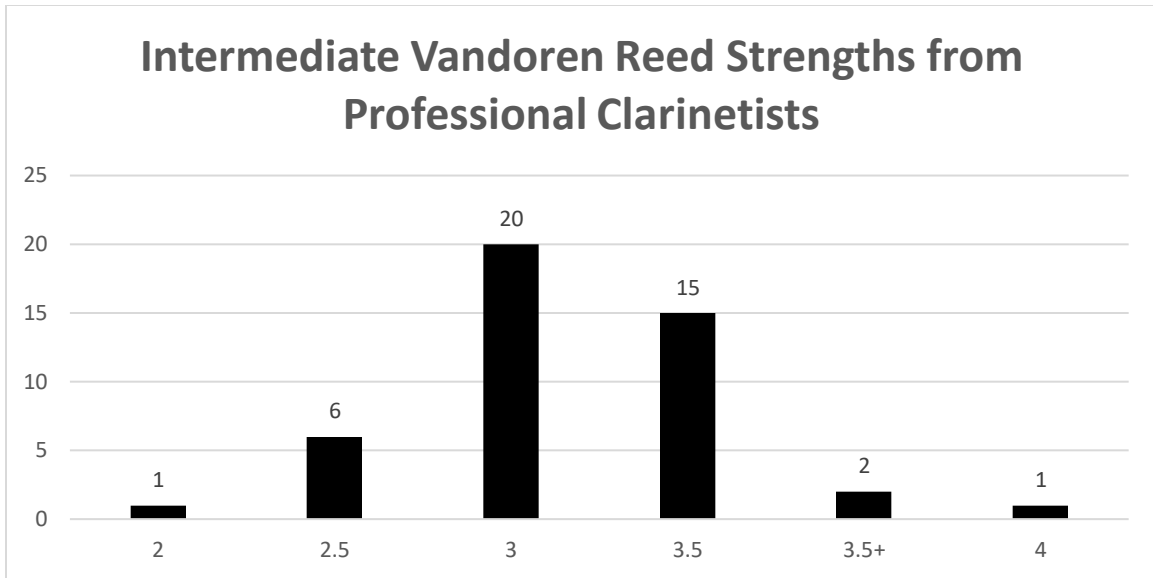
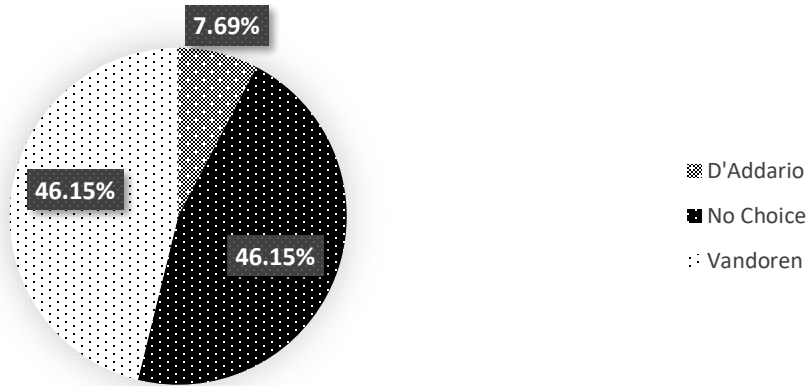


Figure 6.18. Intermediate Vandoren Reed Strengths from Professional Clarinetists. All Vandoren suggestions are based on multiple Vandoren reed models.

Professional Clarinetists Non-Teacher Advanced Mouthpiece Suggestion



Professional Clarinetist Teacher Advanced Mouthpiece Suggestion

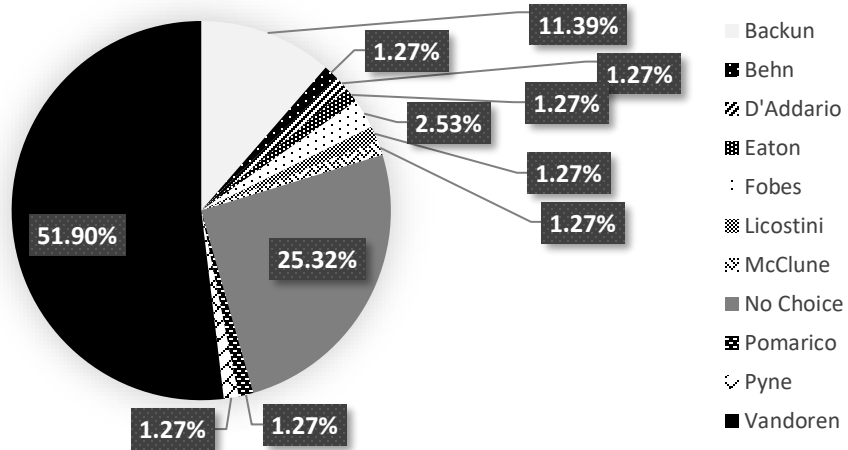
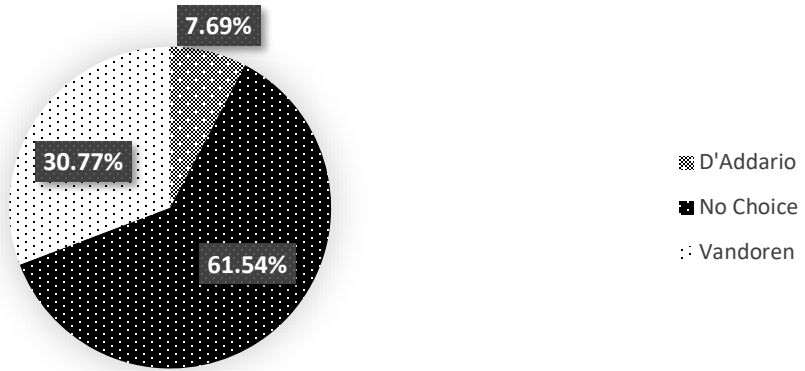


Figure 6.19. Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces from Professional Clarinetists

Professional Clarinetists Non-Teacher Advanced Reed Suggestion



Professional Clarinetist Teacher Advanced Reed Suggestion

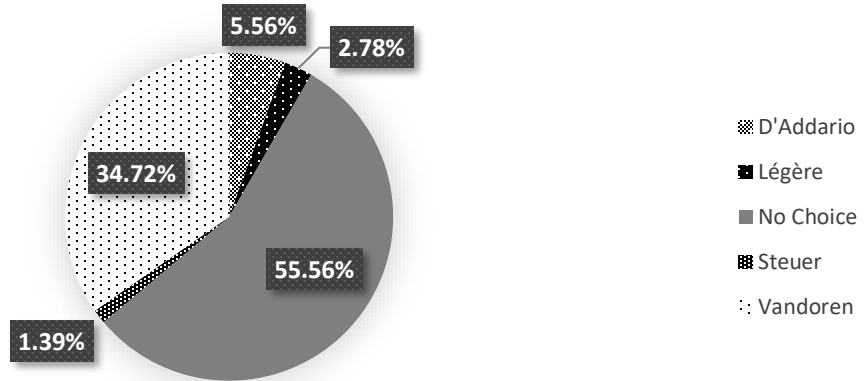


Figure 6.20. Suggested Advanced Reeds from Professional Clarinetists

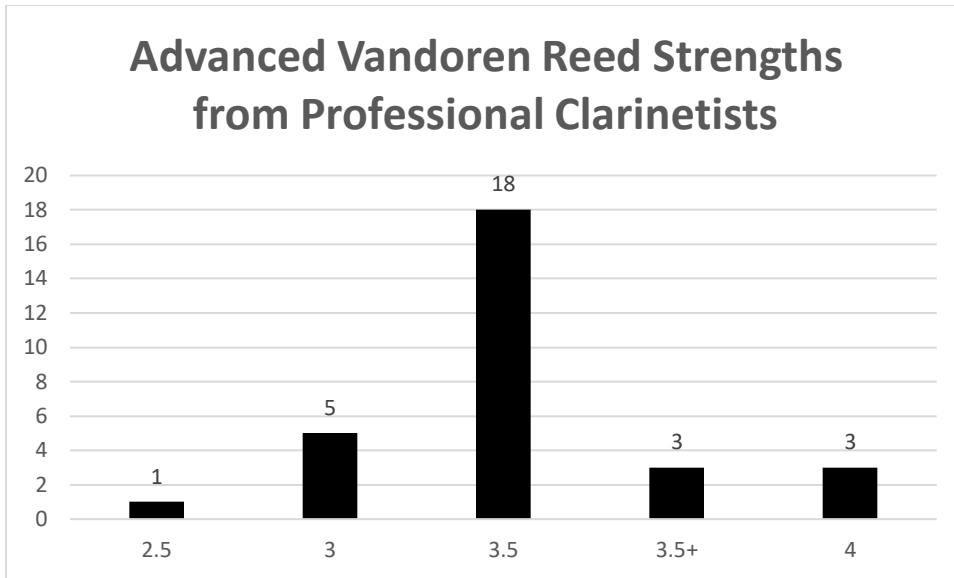


Figure 6.21. Advanced Vandoren Reed Strengths from Professional Clarinetists. All Vandoren suggestions are based on multiple Vandoren reed models.

Many of the musicians commented that testing the mouthpieces beforehand was the best way to find the perfect set-up. Of the Vandoren mouthpiece users, 80% used Vandoren reeds. Both teachers and non-teachers were less definitive about specific reed choices, especially for advanced students as more than half of them did not respond to this portion of the survey. Professional Clarinetists suggested that advanced students playing on Vandoren reeds should use a 3.5 size reed as seen in Figure 6.21.

CHAPTER 7

SURVEY RESULTS FOR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS

College Instructor Equipment

Total number of participants for college instructors was n=46 with 88% having professional clarinetist as their secondary career choice. As a result, this group should be very similar to the professional clarinetist category. For college instructors, the age of participants was fairly evenly spread between 18-50 years of age with 22% being above 51 years old. 71% of college instructors mentioned secondary careers such as professional playing, middle/high school director, and graduate students. The average years of clarinet experience in this group was 30.69 years.

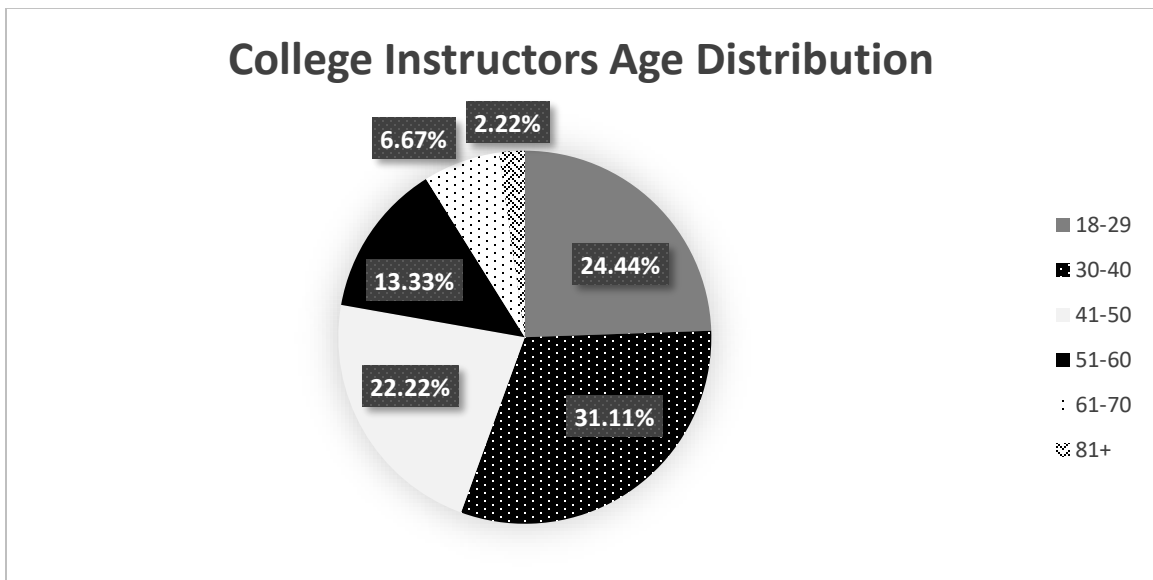


Figure 7.1. Age Distribution of College Instructors

College Instructor Secondary Careers

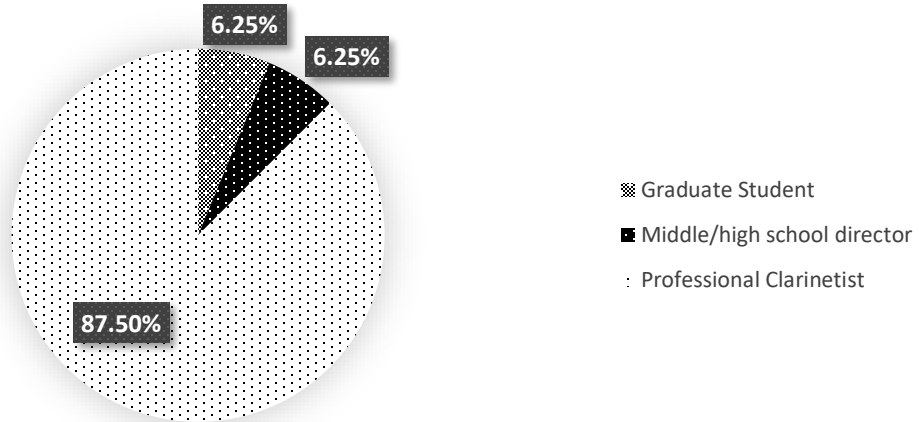


Figure 7.2. Secondary Careers for College Instructors

College Instructor Mouthpieces

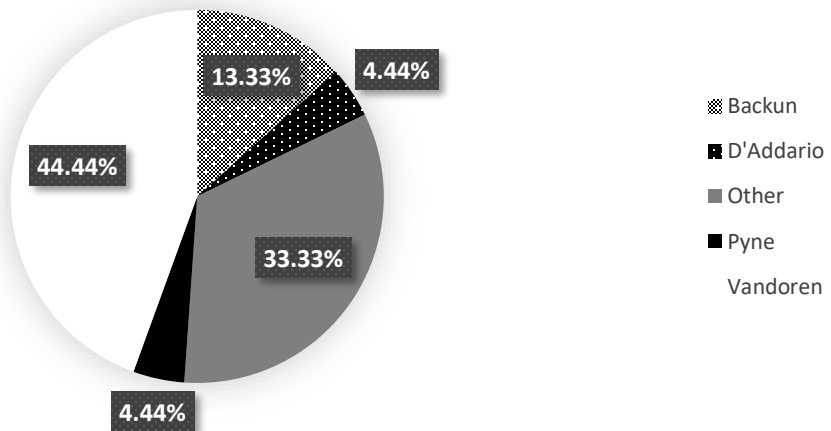


Figure 7.3. College Instructor Mouthpieces. Other brands mentioned included Behn, Bettoney, Chedeville, Gigliotti, Greg Smith, Kanter, Kasper, KJG-3, Lomax, McClune, Oscar Oehler, Peter Eaton, Pomarico, Portnoy, and Selmer.

College Instructors Vandoren Mouthpieces

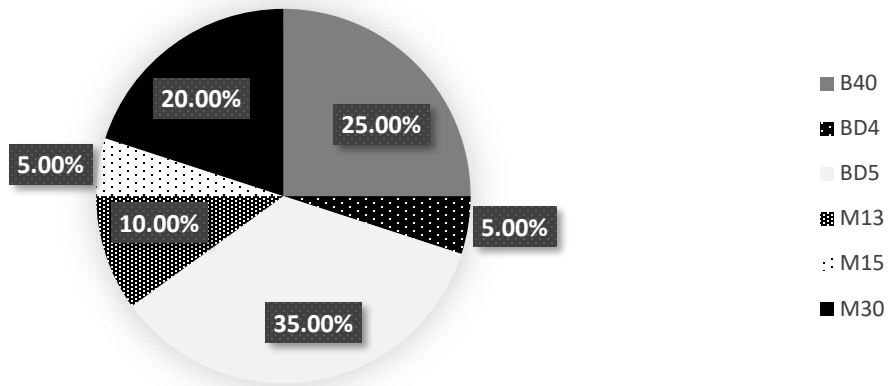


Figure 7.4. College Instructor Vandoren Mouthpieces

College Instructors Reeds

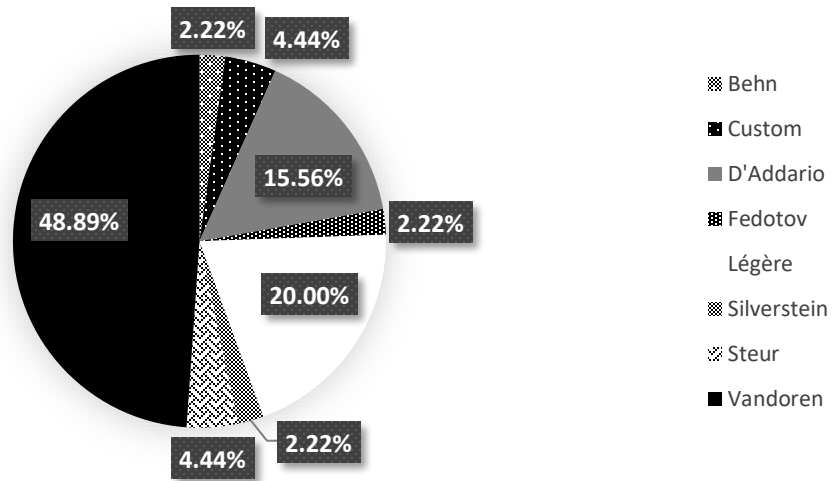


Figure 7.5. College Instructor Reeds

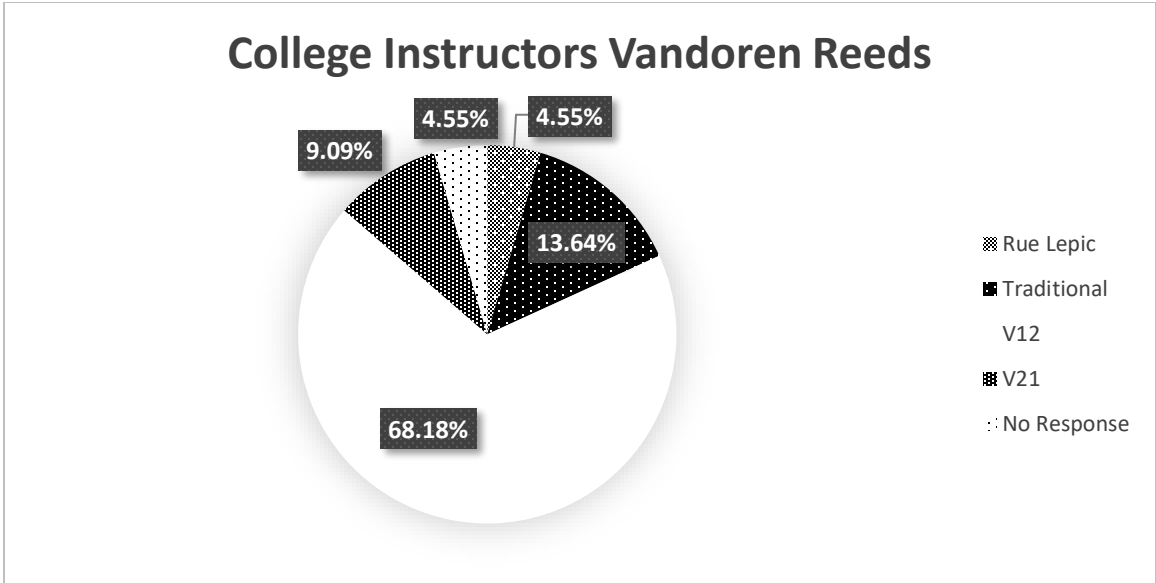


Figure 7.6. College Instructor Vandoren Reeds

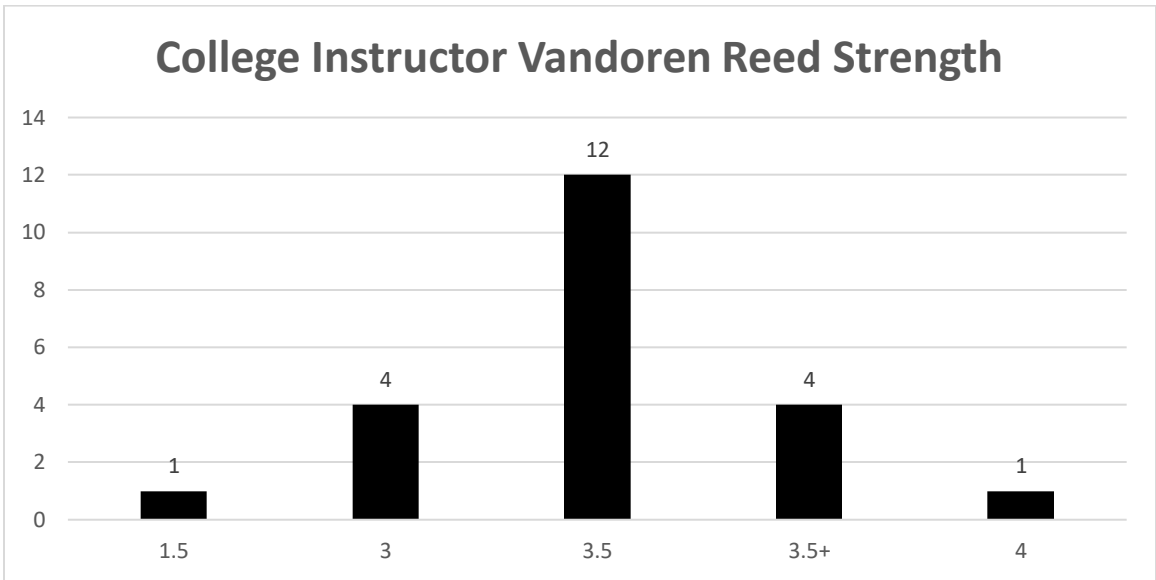


Figure 7.7. College Instructor Vandoren Reed Strength

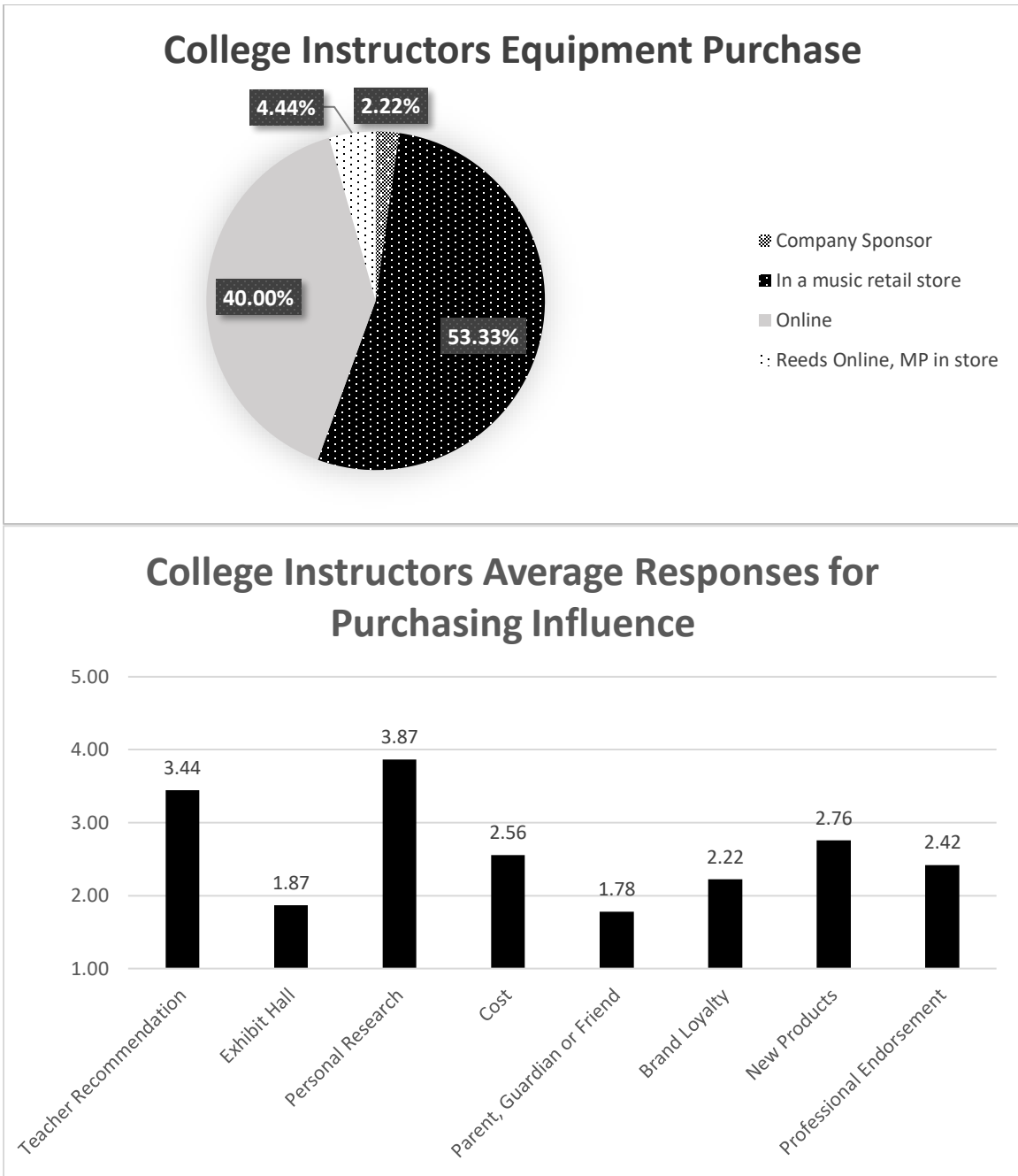


Figure 7.8. College Instructor Equipment Purchasing

As with the professional clarinetists, college instructors used a diverse selection of mouthpiece brands. 44% of college instructors used Vandoren mouthpieces. Backun was the second most popular brand in this category with 13% of the participants using their products. Of the Vandoren mouthpieces, the BD5 was the most popular with 35% and the

B40 model was used by 25% of the college instructors. Slightly more popular than Vandoren mouthpieces, the Vandoren reeds were used by 49% of the college instructors. The V12 model was most popular with 68% of Vandoren participants using this reed. Of the Vandoren users, 90% of them mentioned they used both Vandoren mouthpieces and reeds. The majority of this group preferred purchasing their equipment at a retail store. This was the only career group that did not have online purchase as their primary resource for purchasing new equipment. The average years that college instructors had been playing on their current equipment was 5.9 years. There were also participants who mentioned they received their equipment from a company sponsor. As shown in Figure 7.8, the participants primary purchasing influence was personal research but they also valued recommendations from a teacher as well.

College Instructor Suggestions

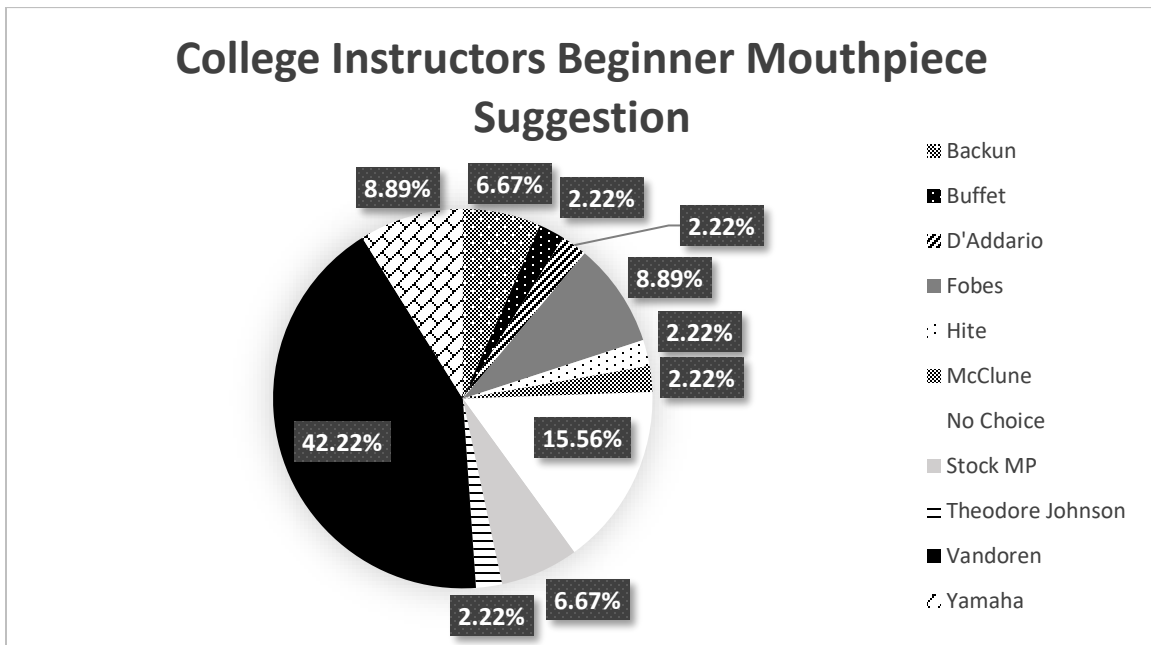


Figure 7.9. Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces from College Instructors

College Instructors Beginner Vandoren Mouthpieces

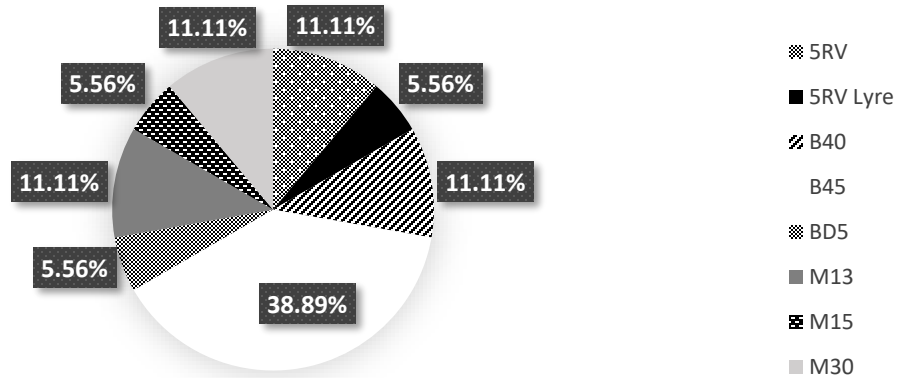


Figure 7.10. Suggested Beginner Vandoren Models from College Instructors

College Instructors Beginner Reed Suggestion

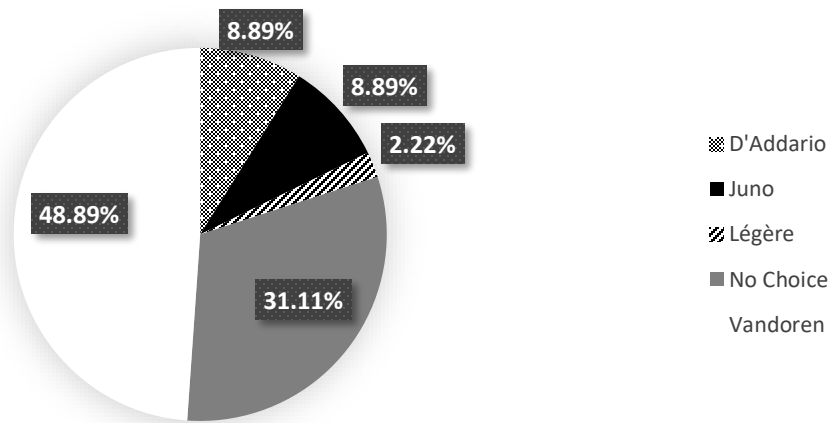


Figure 7.11. Suggested Beginner Reeds from College Instructors

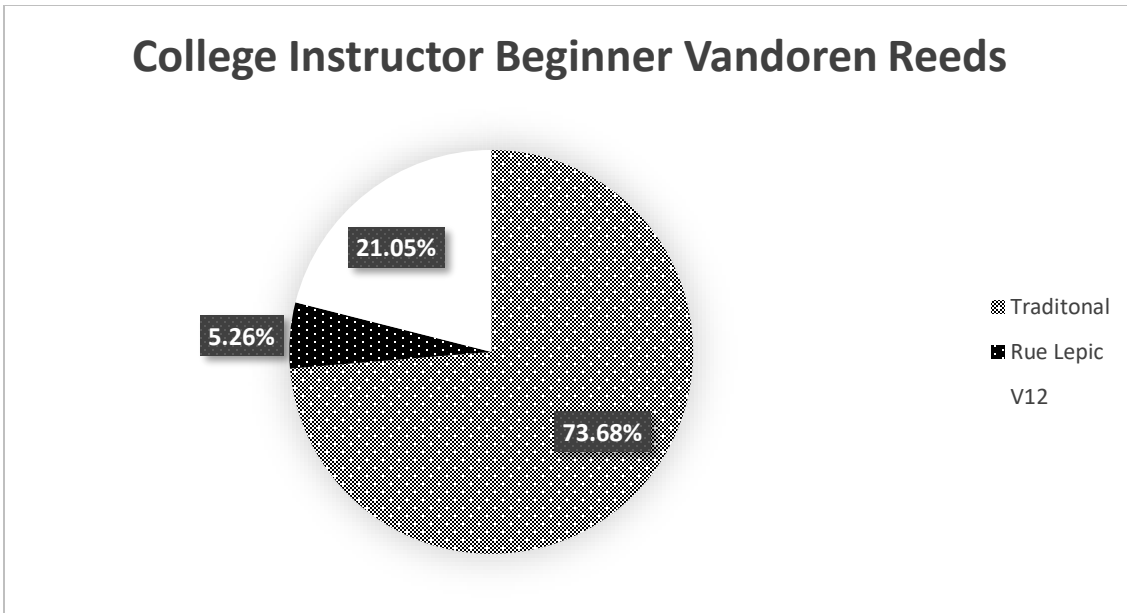


Figure 7.12. Suggested Beginner Vandoren Reeds from College Instructors

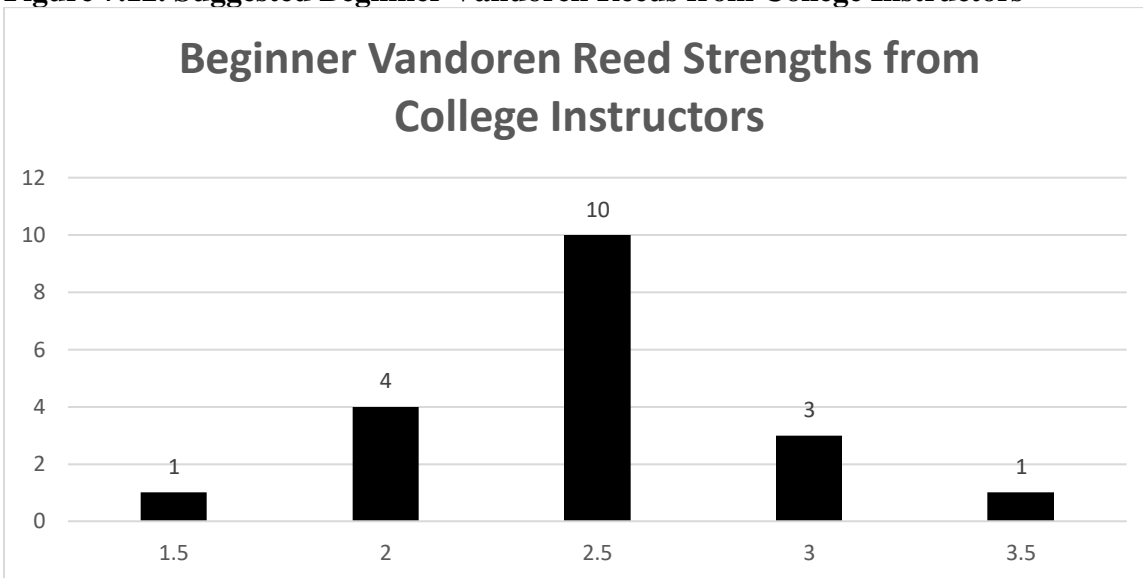


Figure 7.13. Suggested Beginner Vandoren Reed Strengths from College Instructors.

College Instructors Intermediate Mouthpiece Suggestion

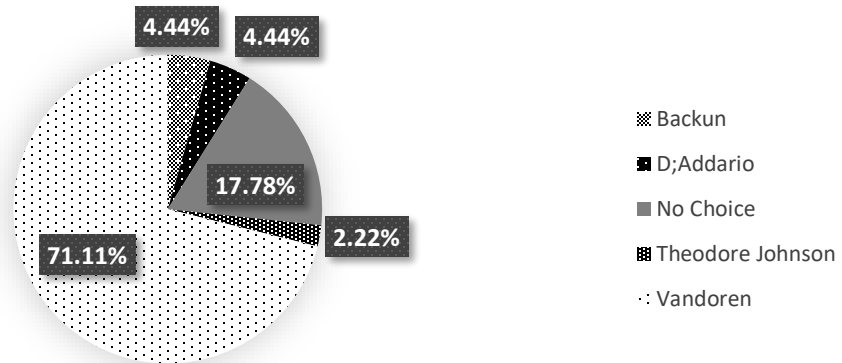


Figure 7.14. Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces from College Instructors

College Instructor Intermediate Vandoren Mouthpiece Suggestion

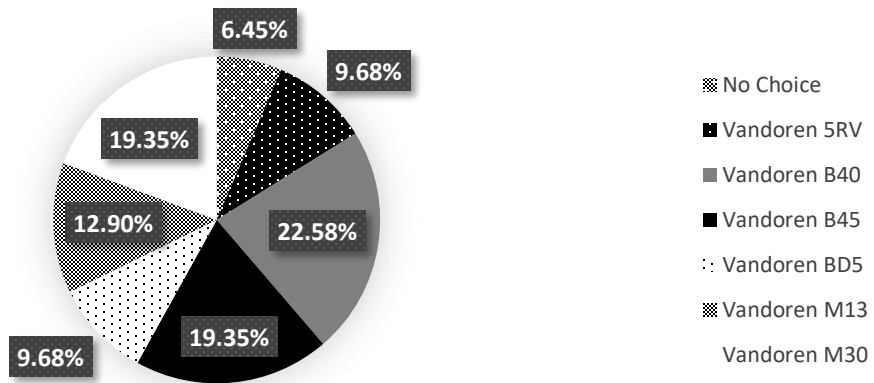


Figure 7.15. Suggested Intermediate Vandoren Mouthpieces from College Instructors

College Instructors Intermediate Reed Suggestion

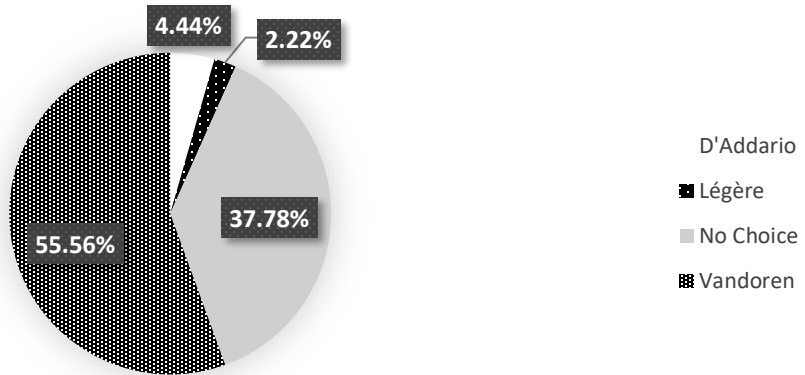


Figure 7.16. Suggested Intermediate Reeds from College Instructors

College Instructors Intermediate Vandoren Reed Suggestion

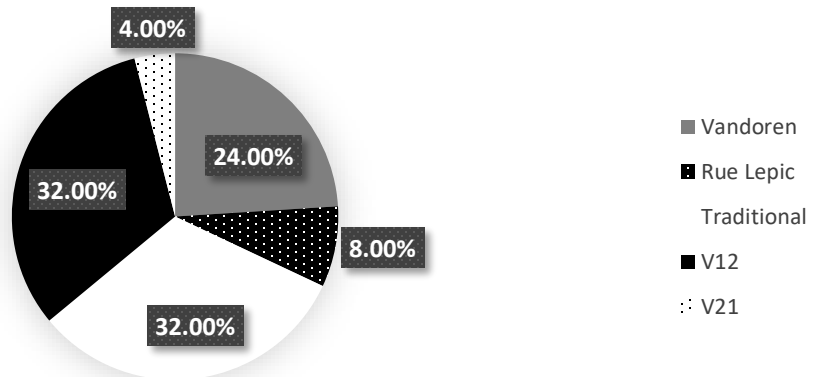


Figure 7.17. Suggested Vandoren Reeds from College Instructors

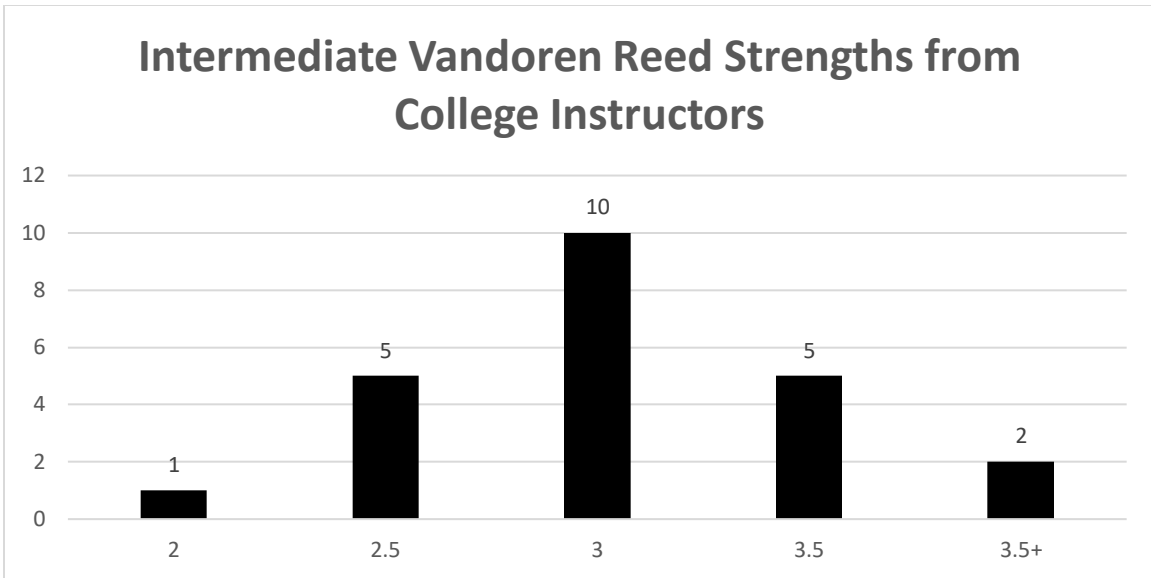


Figure 7.18. Intermediate Vandoren Reed Strengths from College Instructors

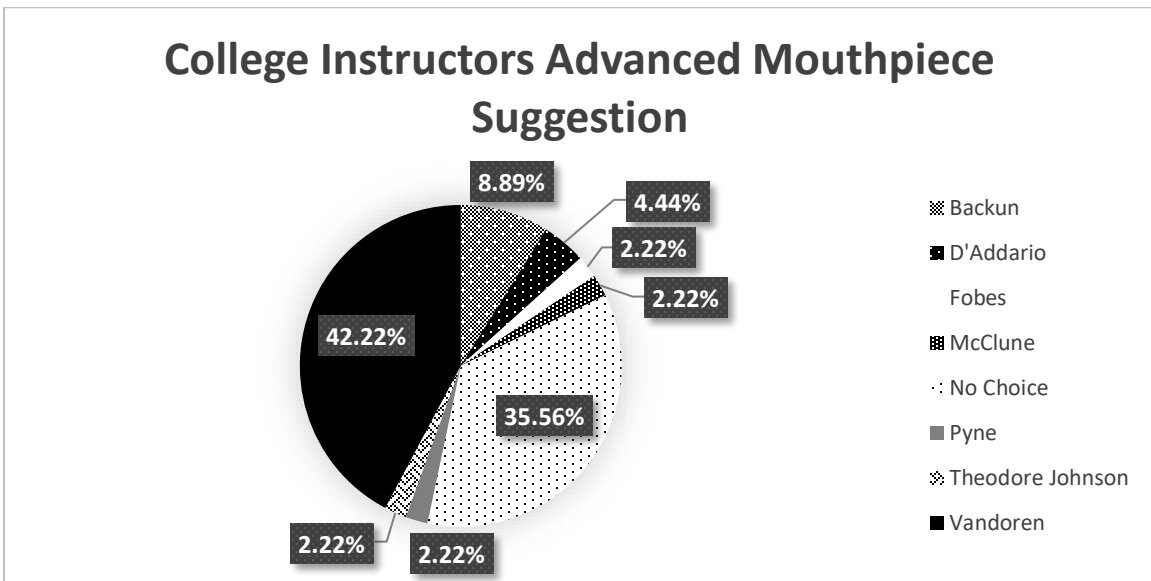


Figure 7.19. Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces from College Instructors

College Instructor Advanced Vandoren Mouthpiece Suggestion

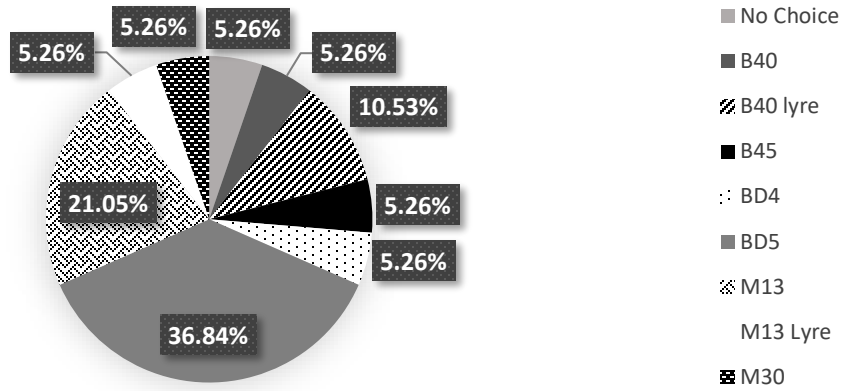


Figure 7.20. Suggested Advanced Vandoren Mouthpieces from College Instructors

College Instructors Advanced Reed Suggestion

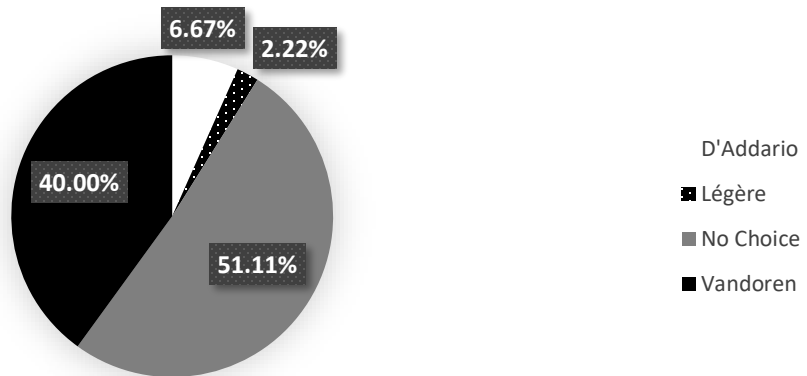


Figure 7.21. Suggested Advanced Reeds from College Instructors

College Instructors Advanced Vandoren Reed Suggestion

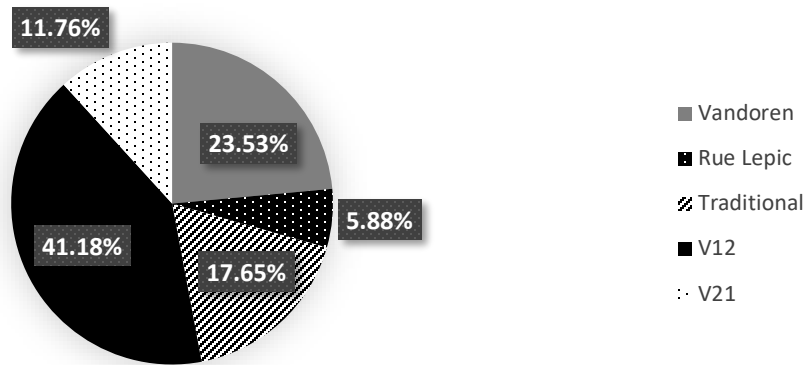


Figure 7.22. Suggested Advanced Vandoren Reeds from College Instructors

Advanced Vandoren Reed Strengths from College Instructors

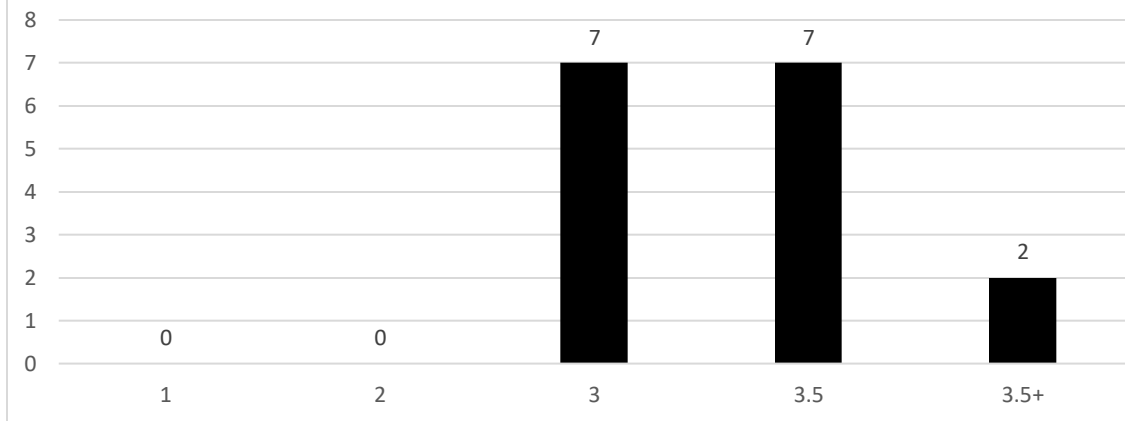


Figure 7.23. Suggested Advanced Vandoren Reed Strengths from College Instructors.

Since the vast majority of college instructors also taught private lessons, their responses were not analyzed separately. The majority of beginner mouthpiece brands were Vandoren with the top Vandoren model being a B45. 50% believed that beginners would be suited for Vandoren reeds and the majority indicated the Vandoren traditional were suitable for them as well. Not many private instructors provided reed strength recommendations for students. College instructors suggested fewer specific mouthpiece

brands and models for Intermediate students. The most popular brand for intermediates was Vandoren with the most popular Vandoren model being the B40. Vandoren reeds were also the most popular choice for intermediate students with 56% of the college instructors. However, they were split between the Vandoren traditional and the Vandoren V12 for specific models. Advanced players had more mouthpiece brands suggested than intermediate players. The most popular was Vandoren with 42% followed by “no choice” with 36%. The majority of Vandoren mouthpiece models suggested to advanced students was the BD5. Most of the responses for reeds for advanced players resulted in “no choice.” 40% of the college instructors still recommended Vandoren reeds with 41% being Vandoren V12.

CHAPTER 8

SURVEY RESULTS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Middle School/High School Director Equipment

The total number of participants that were middle/high school directors was n=67. The largest age group in this career was ages 18-29 years at 43%. 25% of directors were between the ages of 30-40. Of all middle/high school directors, 31% mentioned a secondary career with more than half of them being professional clarinetists. The average years of playing experience was 26 years.

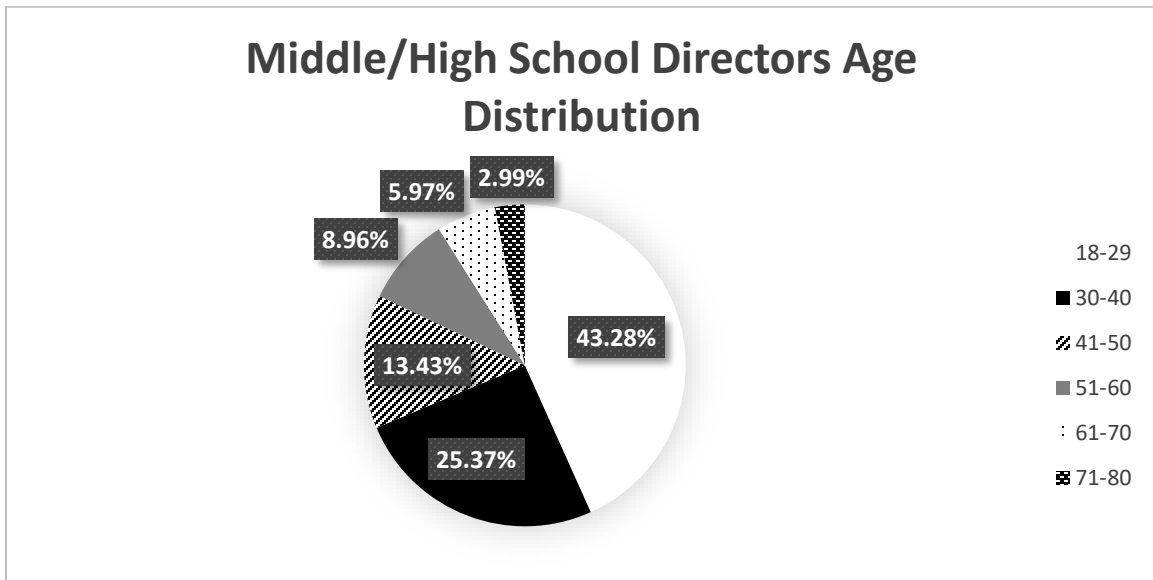


Figure 8.1. Age Distribution of Middle/High School Directors

Middle/High School Directors Secondary Career

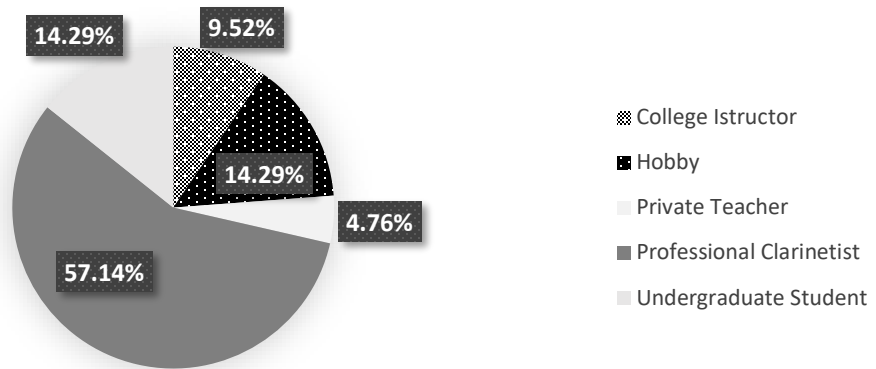


Figure 8.2. Secondary Careers for Middle/High School Directors

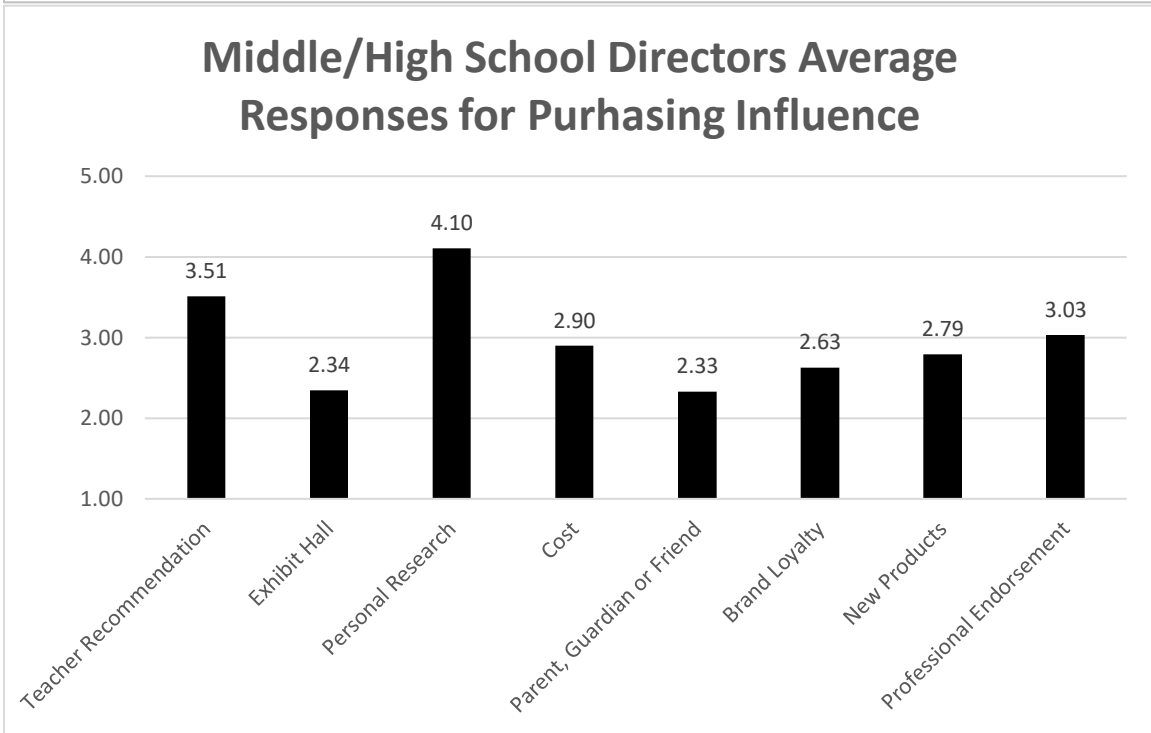
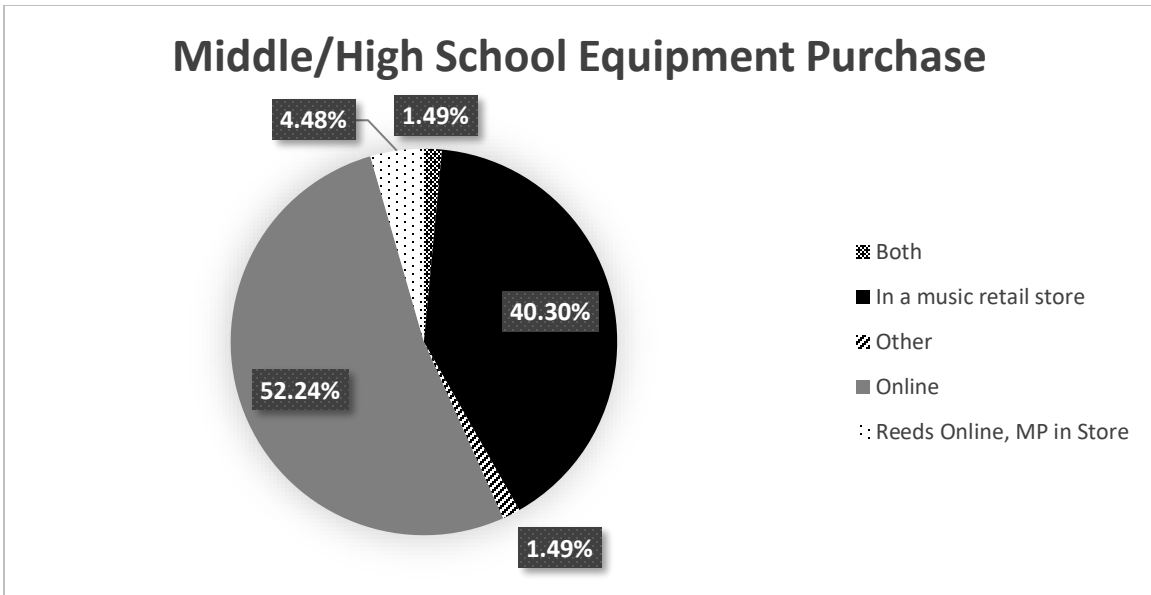


Figure 8.3. Middle/High School Director Equipment Purchasing

Similar to other careers, band directors relied primarily on online resources when purchasing equipment. Again, the second most frequent choice was purchasing through a music retail store. For this group, personal research had the highest average response while teacher recommendations were also highly valued.

Middle/High School Directors Mouthpieces

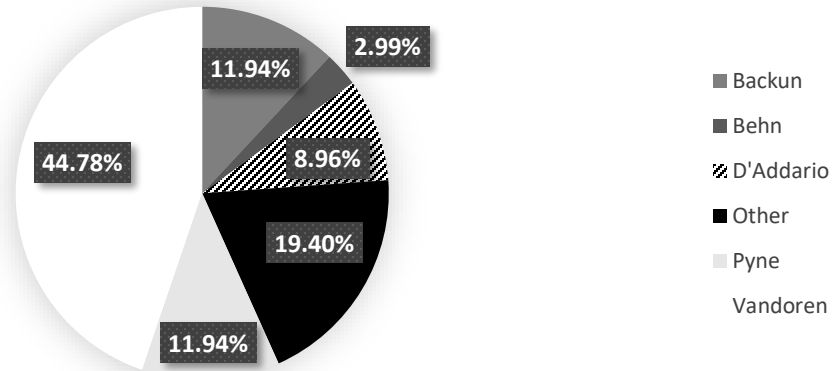


Figure 8.4. Middle/High School Director Mouthpieces. Other mouthpiece brands mentioned included Charles Bay, Custom, Fobes, Gleichweit, Greg Smith, Leblanc, Licostini, McClune, Morgan, Portnoy, Selmer, Walter Grabner, and Wells.

Middle/High School Director Mouthpieces without Professional Clarinetists

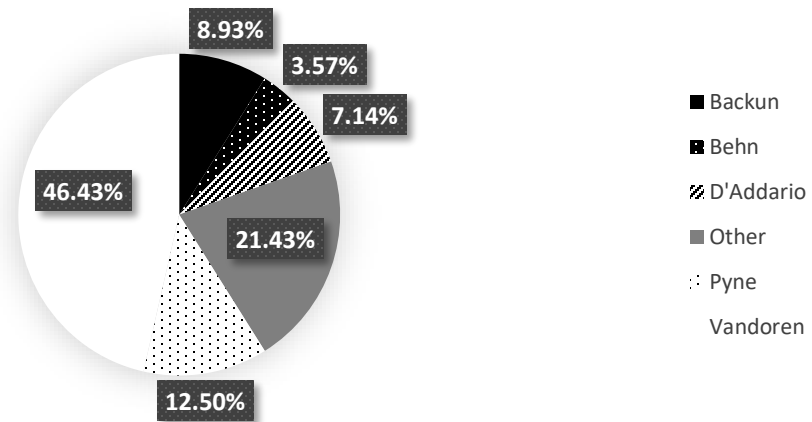


Figure 8.5. Middle/High School Director Mouthpieces without Professional Clarinetists. Other mouthpiece brands mentioned included Charles Bay, Custom, Fobes, Gleichweit, Greg Smith, Leblanc, Licostini, McClune, Portnoy, Selmer, Walter Grabner, Wells.

In Figure 8.4, Vandoren had the greatest market share at 44.78% with Backun, D'Addario, and Pyne also with significant percentages. Due to about 15% of band directors being professional musicians, a second chart was generated to see the impact of

eliminating the participants who noted professional clarinetists as a secondary career. Of interest, Figure 8.5 shows mouthpiece brands for band directors who were not professional clarinetists. Vandoren continued to have the majority of responses with Backun, Pyne, and D’Addario having significant shares. Despite the elimination of professional clarinetists in Figure 8.5, the chart is similar to Figure 8.4.

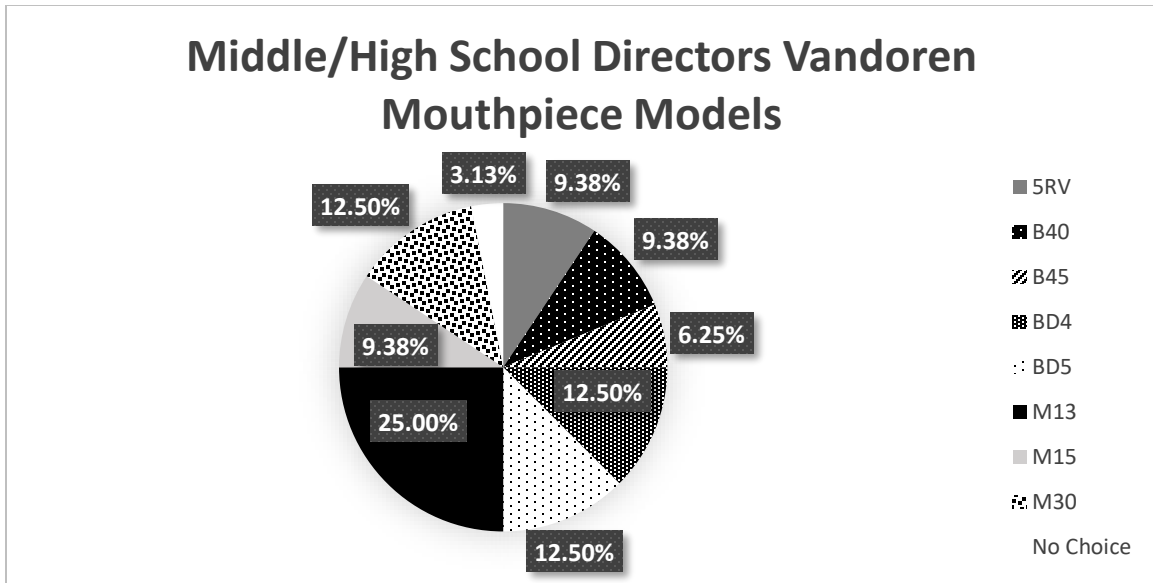


Figure 8.6. Middle/High School Director Vandoren Mouthpieces

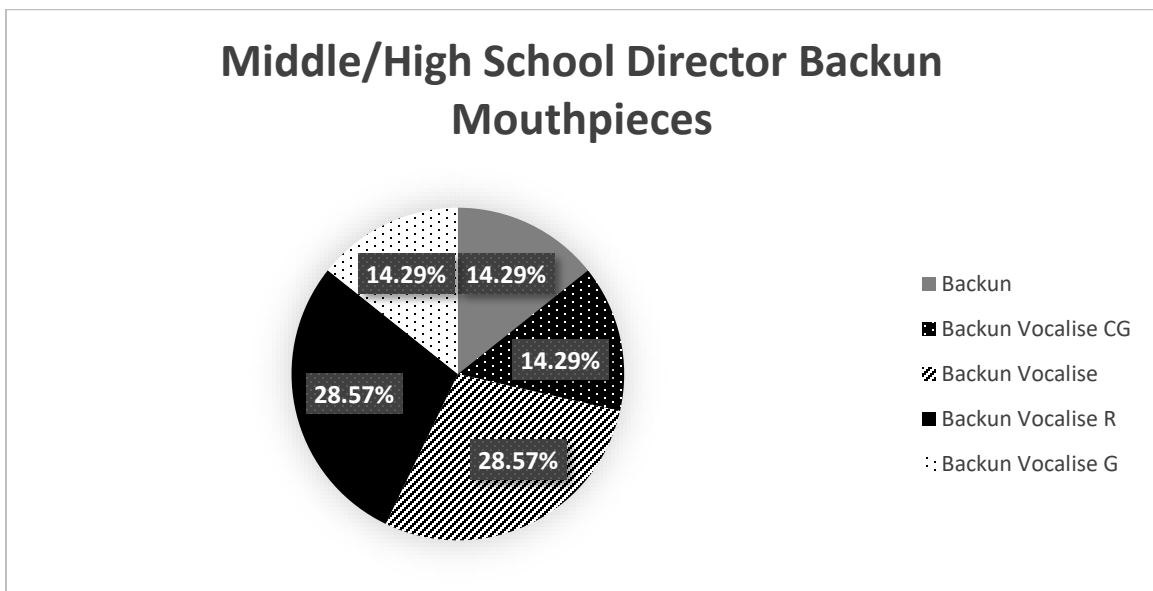


Figure 8.7. Middle/High School Director Backun Mouthpieces

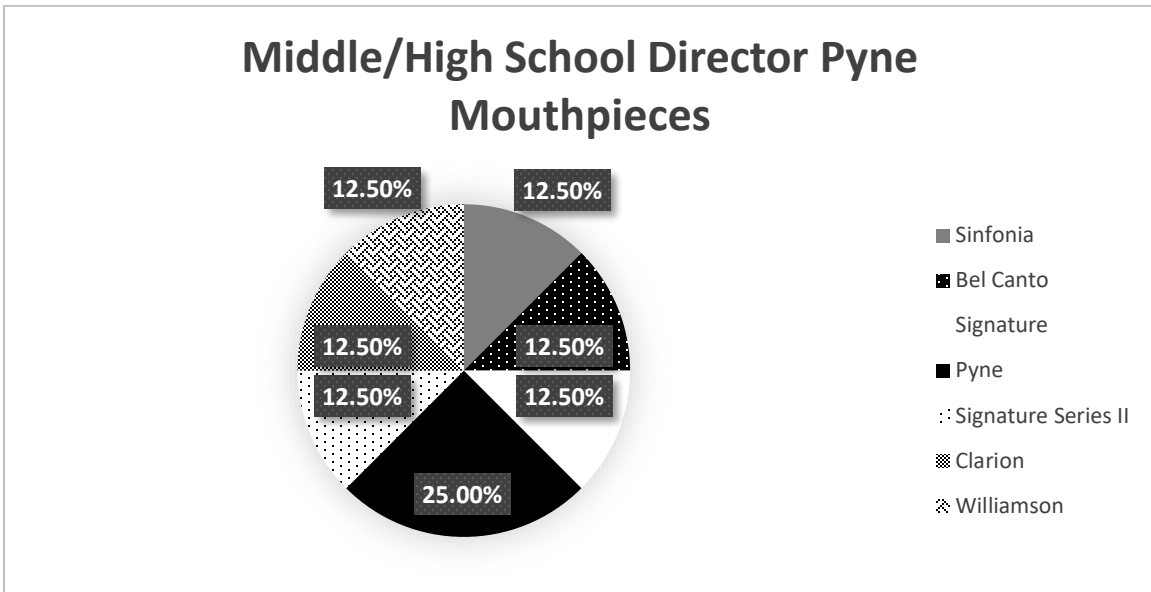


Figure 8.8. Middle/High School Director Pyne Mouthpieces

Figures 8.6 through 8.8 show the mouthpiece models used by band directors for Vandoren, Backun, and Pyne. The charts show that a number of different models were used for each of these mouthpiece brands.

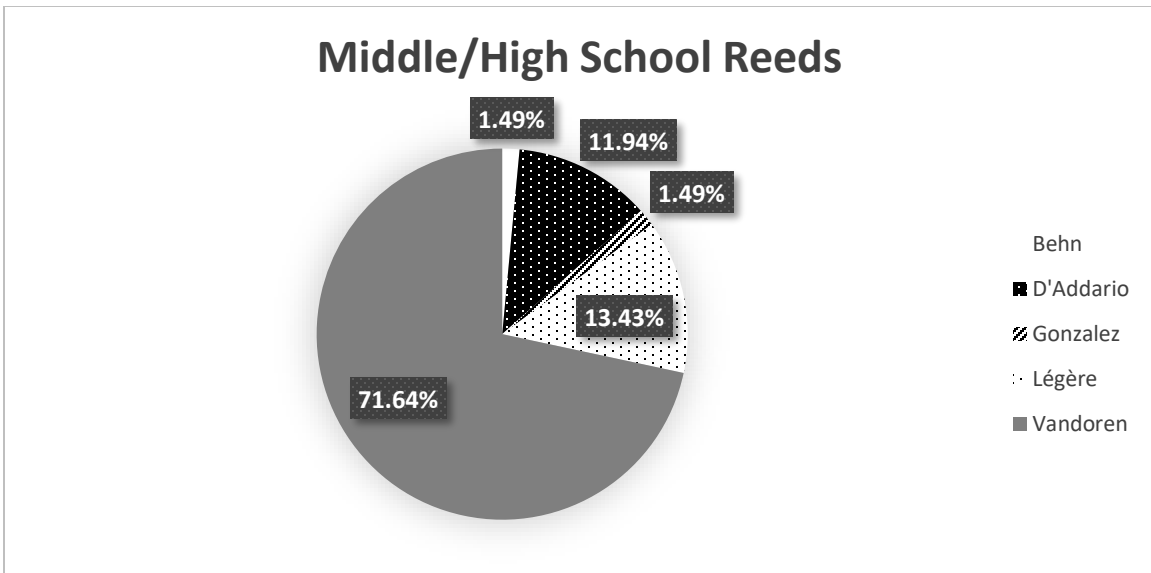


Figure 8.9. Middle/High School Director Reeds

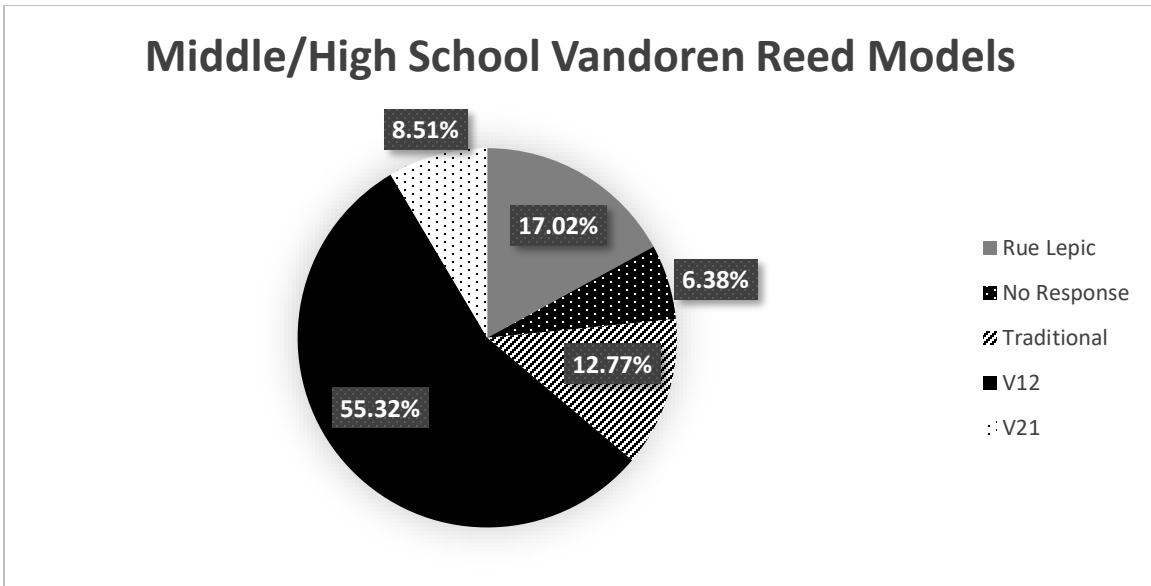


Figure 8.10. Middle/High School Director Vandoren Reeds

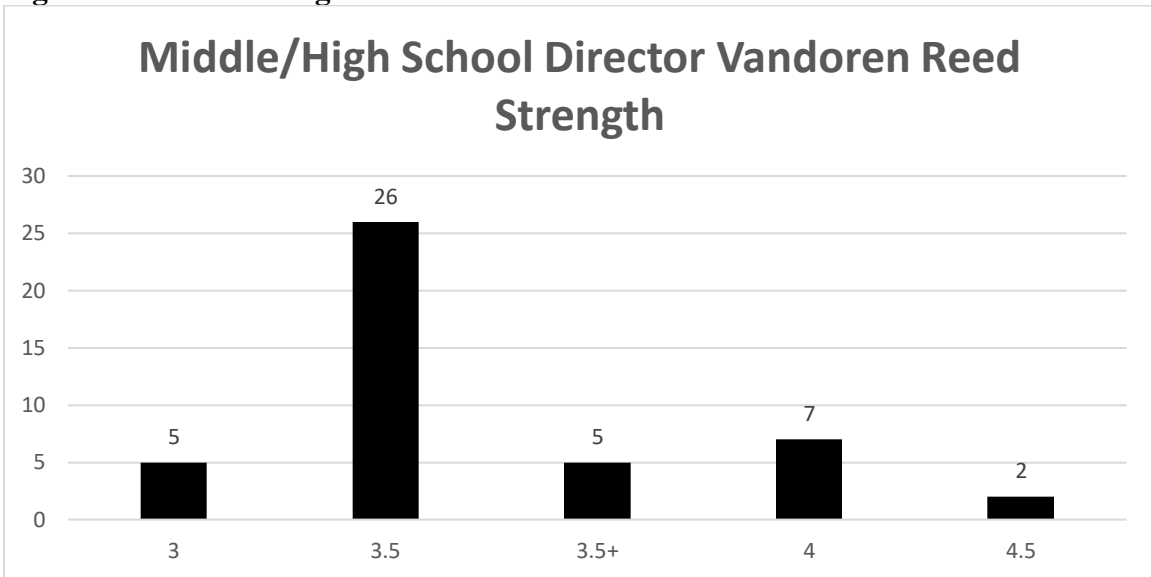


Figure 8.11. Middle/High School Director Vandoren Reed Strength

As shown in Figure 8.4, 45% of band directors used Vandoren mouthpieces. Within that group who used Vandoren mouthpieces, 80% also used Vandoren reeds. As shown in Figure 8.9, 72% of all band directors used Vandoren reeds with other major groups being Légère and D’Addario. In Figure 8.10, the Vandoren V12 reed model was the vast majority of all Vandoren reed models used by band directors. The majority of

Vandoren reed users prefer the 3.5 strength. Average years of current equipment was 6.94 years.

Middle/High School Director Suggestions

16% of directors mentioned they did not teach private lessons so the suggestions of directors were analyzed as a whole.

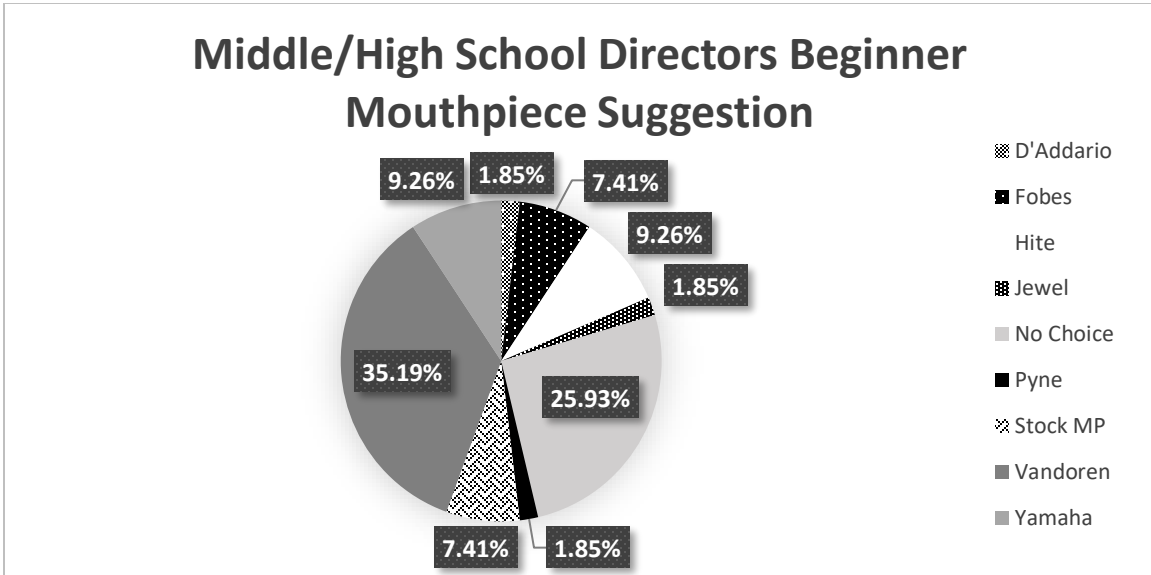


Figure 8.12. Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces by Directors

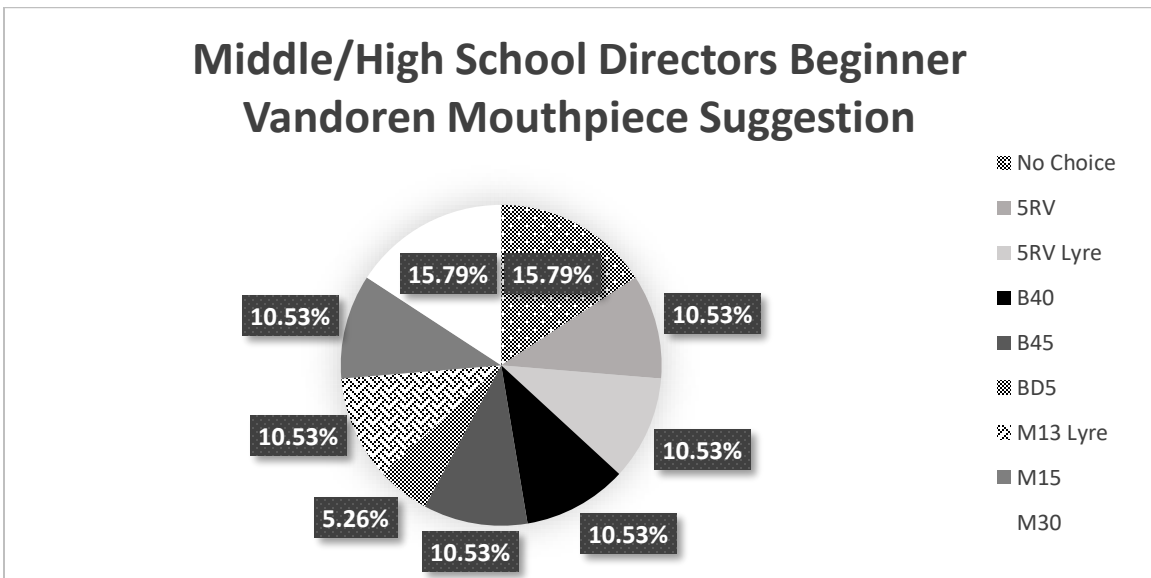


Figure 8.13. Suggested Beginner Vandoren Mouthpieces by Directors

In Figure 8.12, Vandoren continued to have the greatest share at 35%, but the “No Choice” share was more significant at 26%. Despite the fact that 45% of band directors used Vandoren mouthpieces, the percentage of recommendations for the Vandoren brand declined by 22%. Compared to other career groups, band directors had the lowest Vandoren recommendation for beginners. Band directors recommended a number of different Vandoren models in relatively equal numbers.

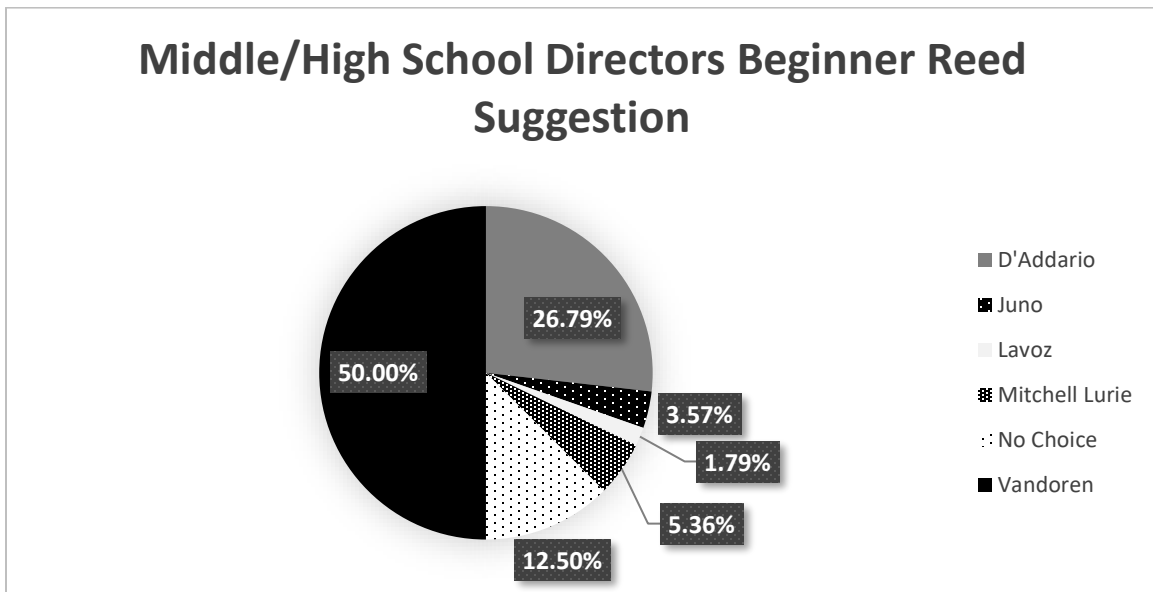


Figure 8.14. Suggested Beginner Reeds by Directors

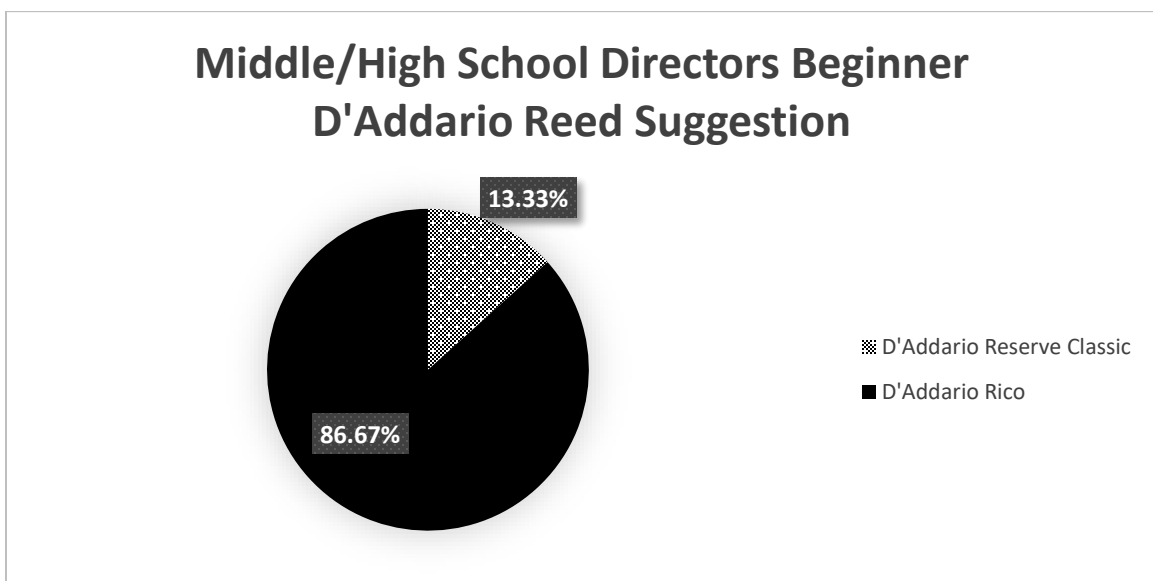


Figure 8.15. Suggested Beginner D’Addario Reeds by Directors

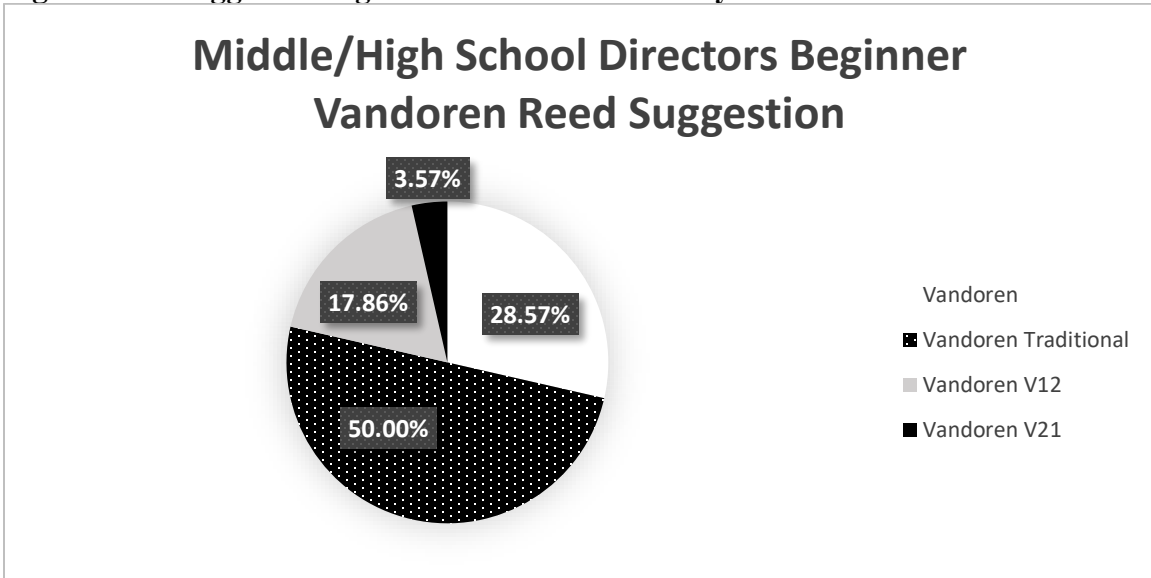
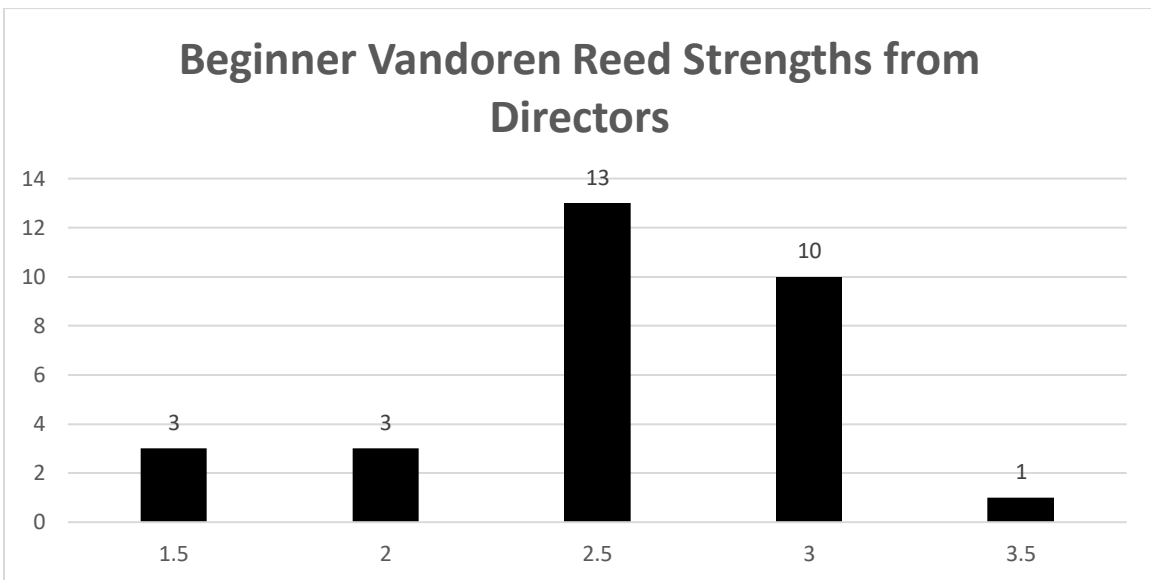


Figure 8.16. Suggested Beginner Vandoren Reeds by Directors



8.17. Beginner Vandoren Reed Strengths from Directors

Band directors recommended Vandoren reeds 50% of the time with D’Addario being the second most popular option. For the D’Addario brand, 87% used the Rico model which was a low-cost option for beginner players. The most popular Vandoren option was the Vandoren Traditional.

Middle/High School Directors Intermediate Mouthpiece Suggestion

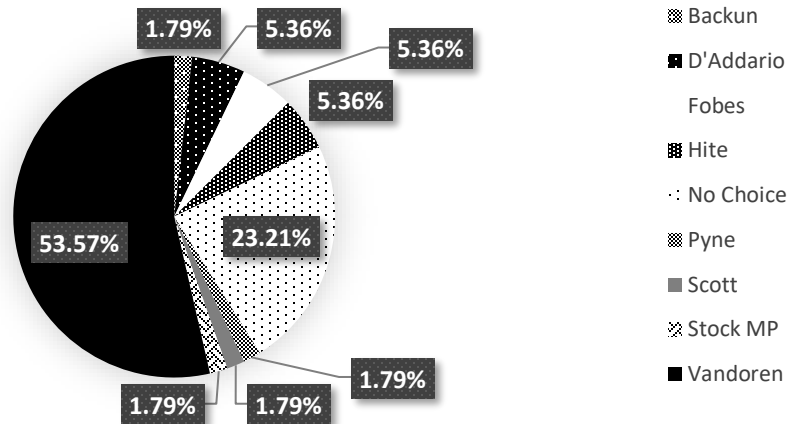


Figure 8.18. Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces by Directors

Middle/High School Directors Intermediate Vandoren Mouthpiece Suggestion

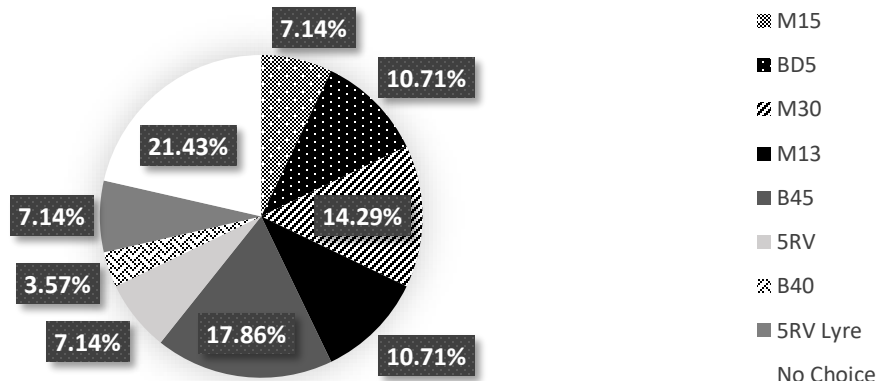


Figure 8.19. Suggested Intermediate Vandoren Mouthpieces by Directors

Figure 8.18 shows that Vandoren was recommended by 54% of the Band Directors while “no choice” remained the second most popular option at 23%. Compared to Figure 8.12, the intermediate recommendation by band directors for Vandoren increased from 35% to 54%. Again, the Vandoren mouthpiece models recommended by band directors were diverse.

Middle/High School Directors Intermediate Reed Suggestion

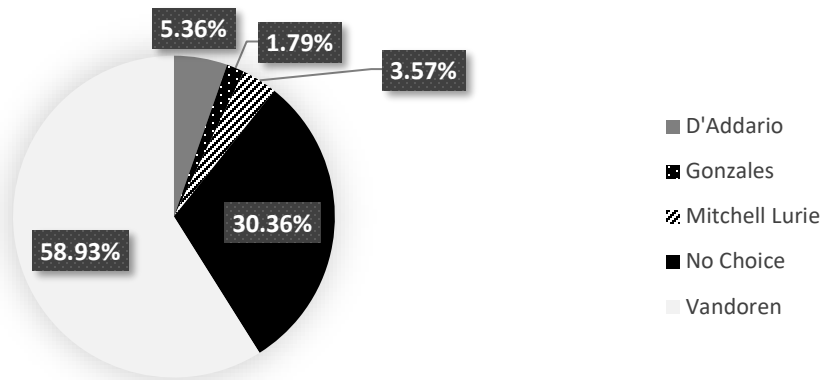


Figure 8.20. Suggested Intermediate Reeds by Directors

Middle/High School Intermediate Vandoren Reed Suggestion

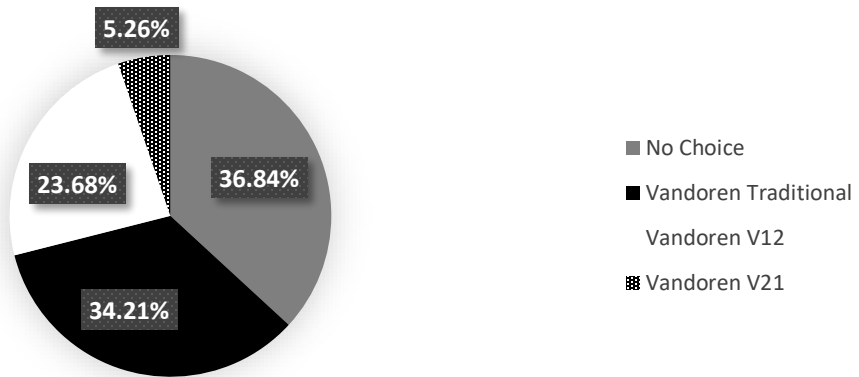


Figure 8.21. Suggested Intermediate Vandoren Reeds by Directors

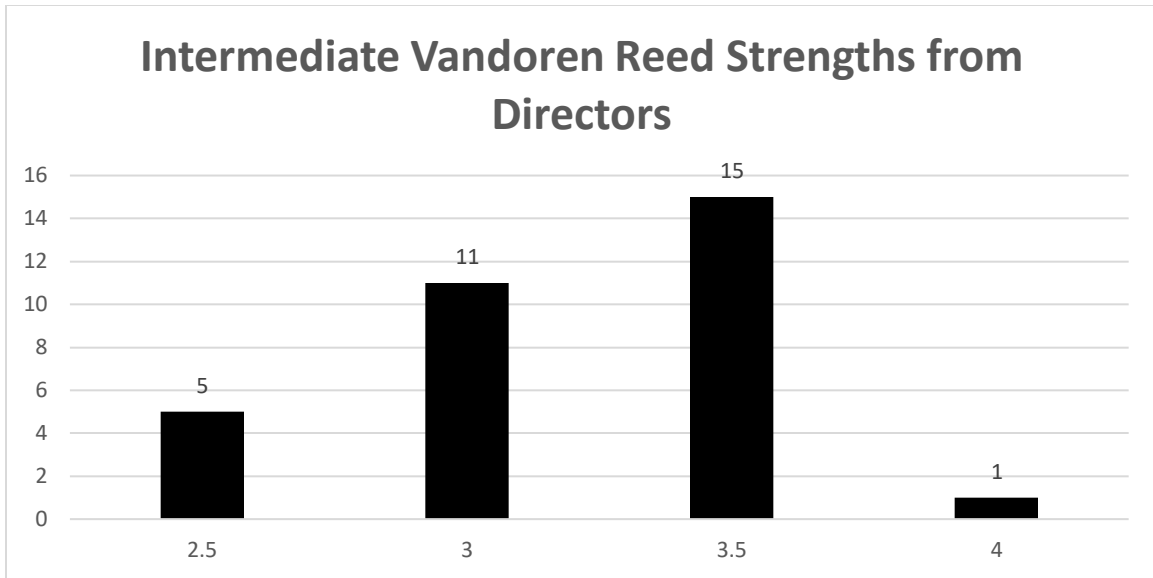


Figure 8.22. Intermediate Vandoren Reed Strengths from Directors

In Figure 8.19, the percentage of Vandoren recommendations to intermediate students by Band Directors was 59% compared to the beginner students at 50%. The D’Addario brand recommendation slipped to only a 5% recommendation while the “no choice” option has increased to 30%. Although Vandoren had a large increase in recommendations, Band Directors did not specify a particular model of Vandoren 37% of the time.

Middle/High School Directors Advanced Mouthpiece Suggestion

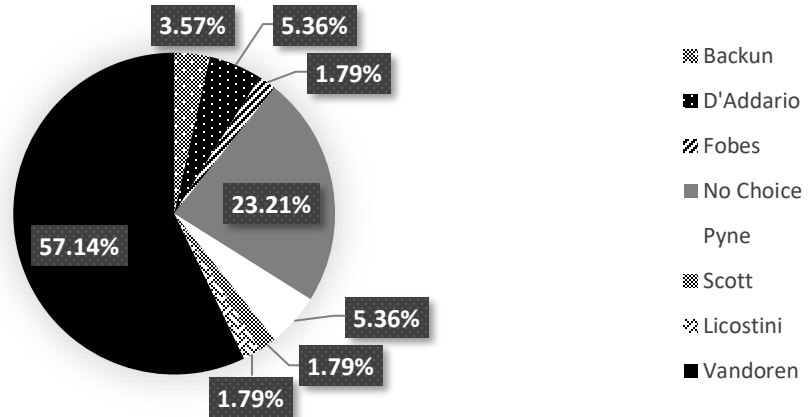


Figure 8.23. Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces by Directors

Middle/High School Advanced Vandoren Mouthpiece Suggestion

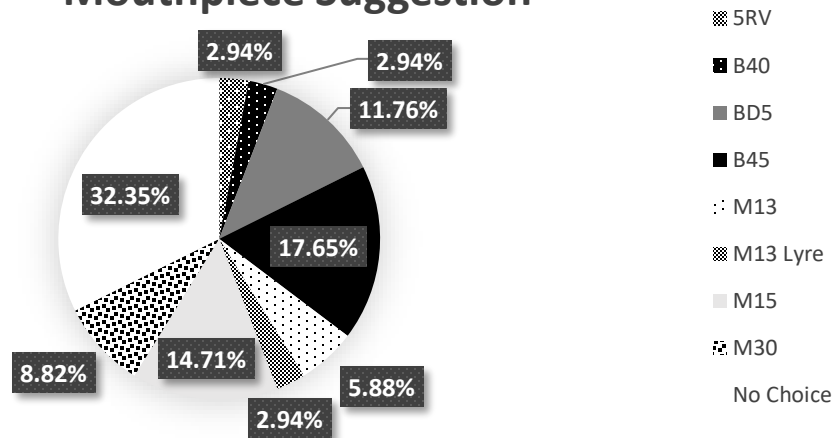


Figure 8.24. Suggested Advanced Vandoren Mouthpieces by Directors

Middle/High School Directors Advanced Reed Suggestion

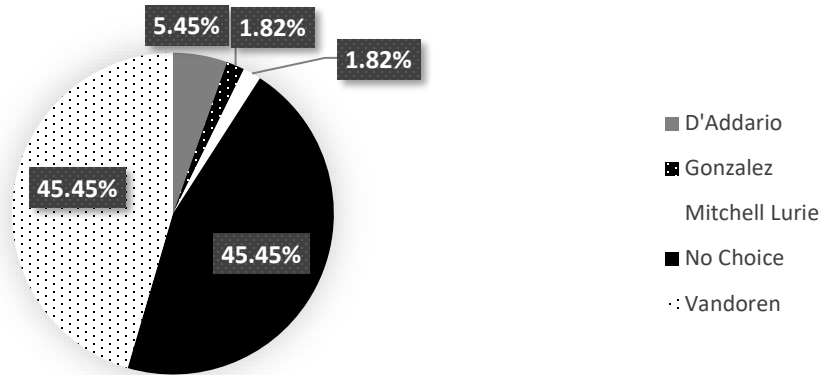


Figure 8.25. Suggested Advanced Reeds by Directors

Middle/High School Advanced Vandoren Reed Suggestion

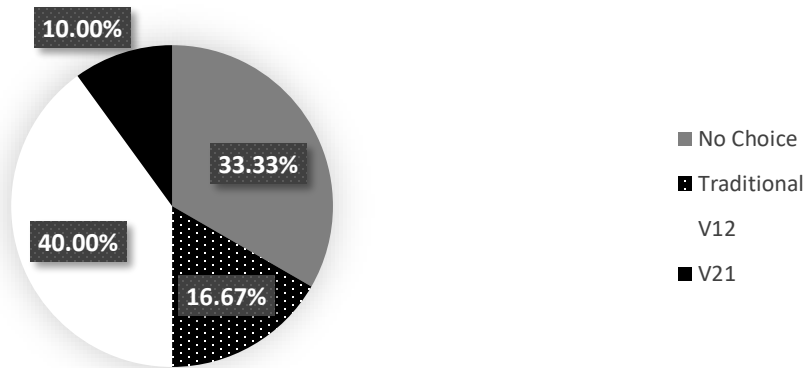


Figure 8.26. Suggested Advanced Vandoren Reeds by Directors

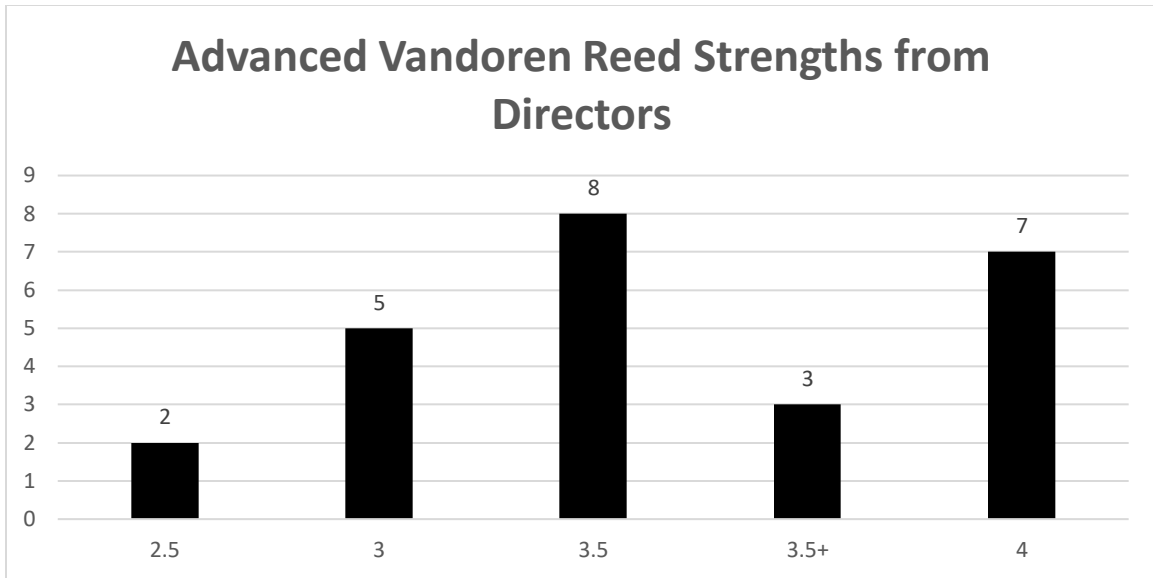


Figure 8.27

Figure 8.23 shows that band directors favored Vandoren mouthpieces 57% of the time with the “no choice” option at 23%. Of the Vandoren models shown in Figure 8.24, the significant change was in the “no choice” option, which grew to 32%. For reed choices, Figure 8.25 shows that the “no choice” was equally popular with the Vandoren recommendation. Figure 8.26 shows that the “no choice” option for advanced Vandoren reed suggestions was higher than the intermediate student recommendations.

For beginner students, 35% of band directors suggested Vandoren for their first mouthpiece and the most popular Vandoren model was the M30 at 16%. 54% of directors recommended Vandoren mouthpieces for intermediate students with the most popular model being “no choice” and the M30. The majority of Vandoren mouthpieces recommended for advanced students was the B45 and the most popular reed was the V12. Beyond beginner recommendations, the “no choice” option increased significantly which shows that band directors encouraged their better players to find their own equipment. The comments of these directors mentioned that students should test mouthpieces before purchase. A few of the directors also mentioned that the testing should be done in a large

space to listen to how the sound fills up the room and overall response. Since band directors teach in large spaces, they want their students to have equipment that complements that space. Of all the recommended mouthpiece options, it was surprising that the Vandoren B45 mouthpiece had a significant number of band directors recommending its use for their intermediate and advanced students. Since this mouthpiece requires more air due to its wide tip opening, better students who are able to moderate their air can benefit from a different mouthpiece model.

CHAPTER 9

SURVEY RESULTS FOR PRIVATE INSTRUCTORS

Private Instructors (Non-Collegiate) Equipment

Participants who identified themselves as private instructors were those who taught private lessons but not at the college level. The total number of participants that were private instructors was n=12. The majority of participants were between 18-29 years old with 50% in this age range. 41-50-year-olds represented 25% of the private instructors as shown in Figure 9.1. A third of the participants mentioned a secondary career which consisted of graduate students, middle/high school directors, and professional clarinetists. The average years of clarinet experience for private instructors was 27.83.

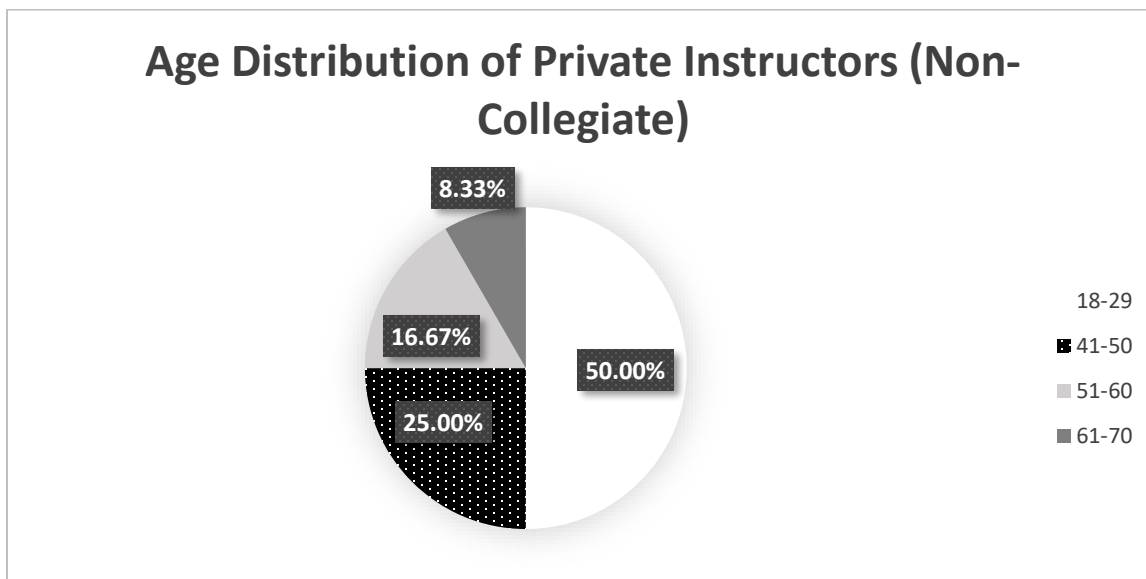


Figure 9.1. Age Distribution of Private Instructors

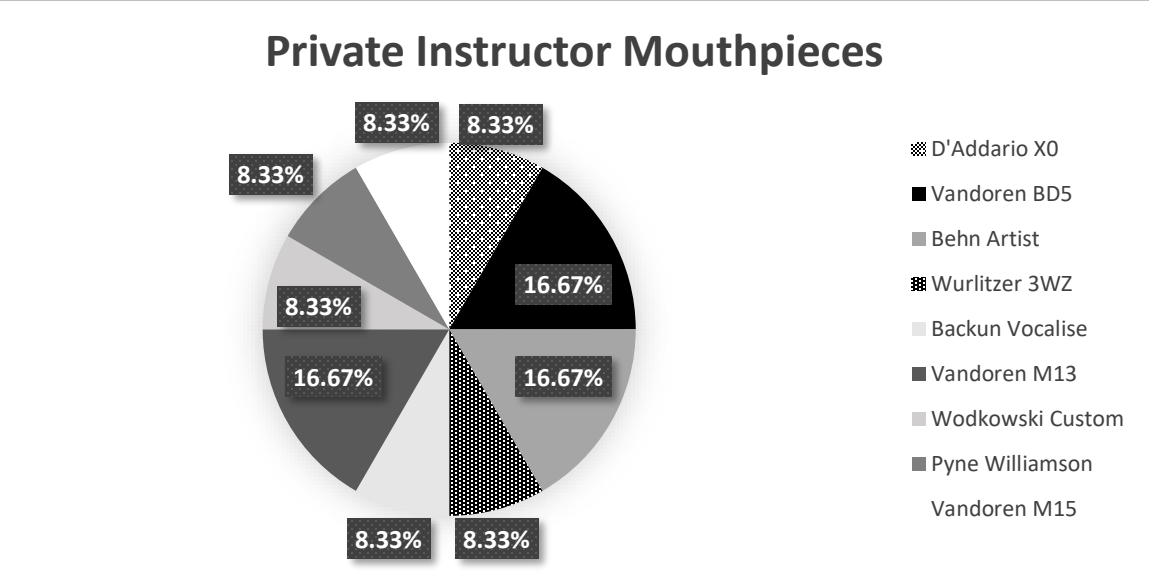


Figure 9.2. Private Instructor Mouthpieces

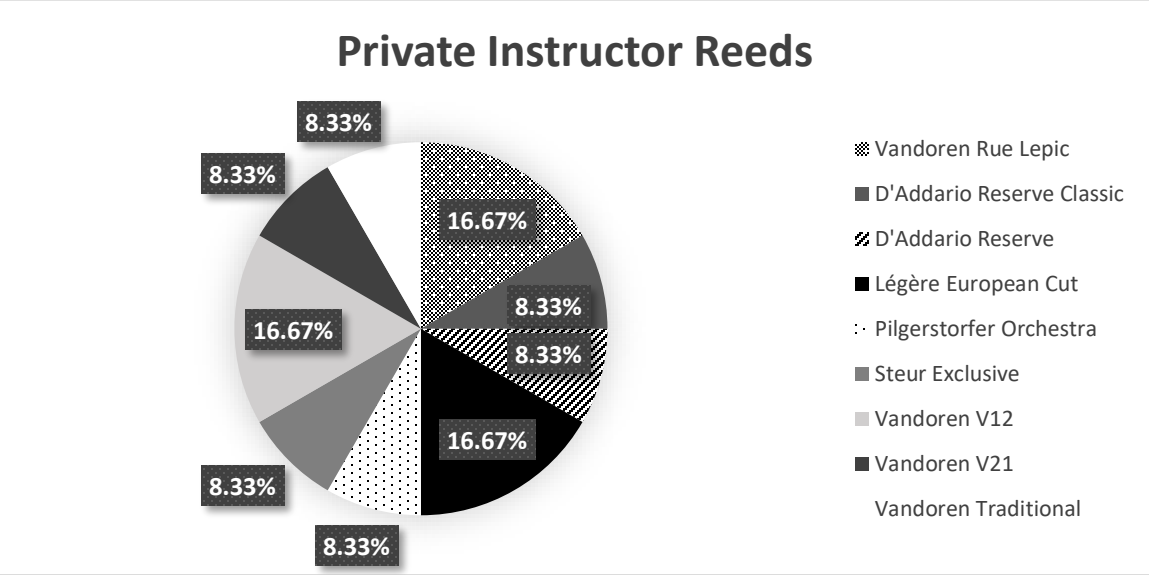
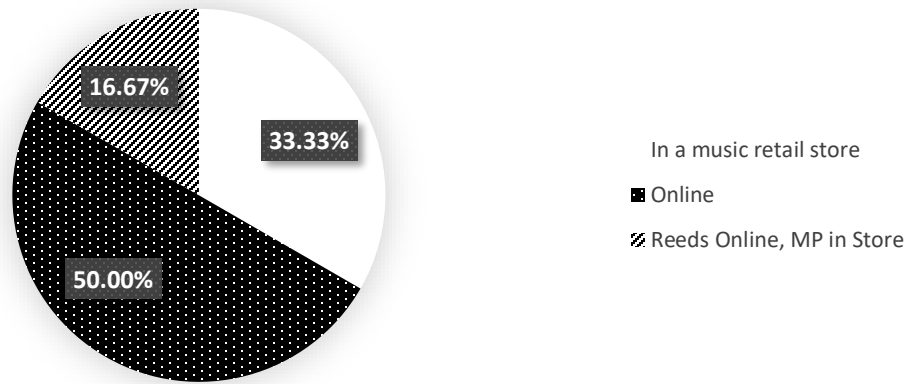


Figure 9.3. Private Instructor Reeds

Private Instructor Equipment Purchasing



Private Instructor Average Responses for Purchasing Influence

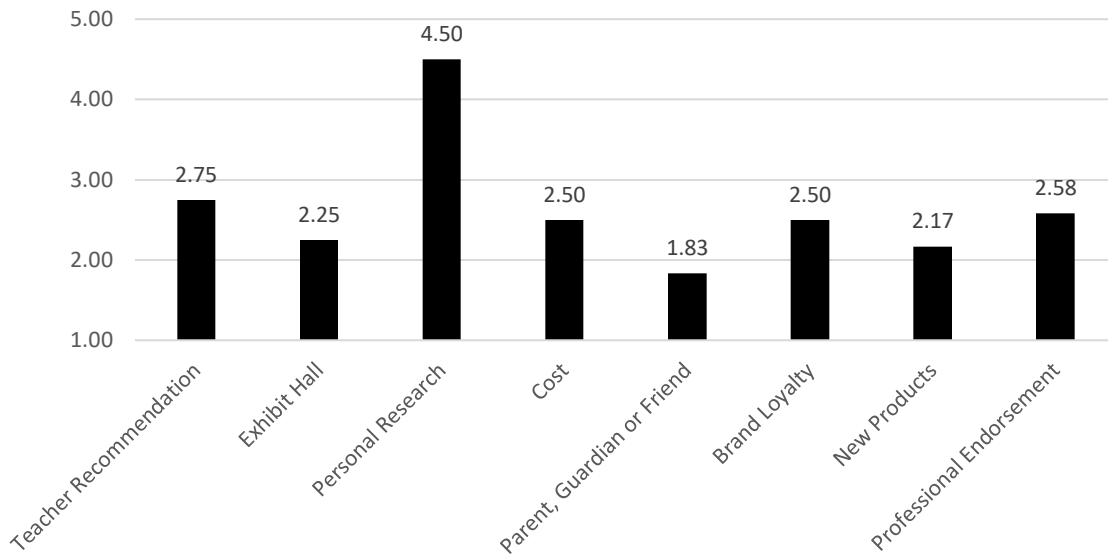


Figure 9.4. Private Instructor Equipment Purchase

Average years private instructors had been playing on their current equipment was 5.08 years. Vandoren represented 51% of private instructors' mouthpieces and 60% of Vandoren mouthpiece users also used Vandoren reeds. This was the lowest percentage of Vandoren mouthpiece users also using Vandoren reeds. The most popular Vandoren

reed models used the Rue Lepic and the V12 at 17% each. In Figure 9.4, Private Instructors were most likely to purchase their equipment online with personal research being the most important factor in their purchasing decisions.

Private Instructors (Non-Collegiate) Suggestions

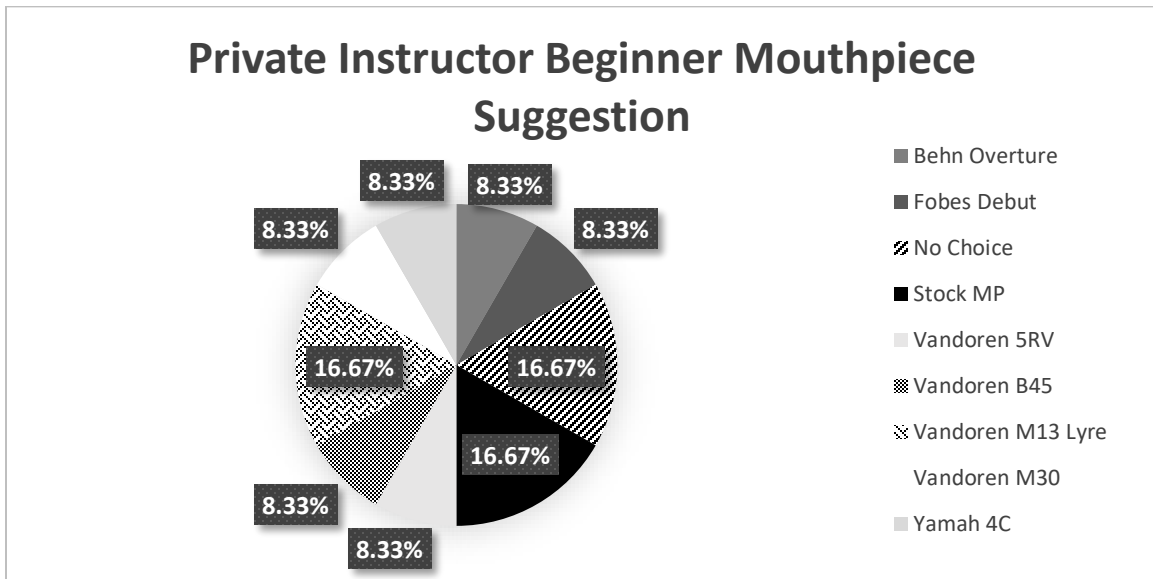


Figure 9.5. Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces by Private Instructors

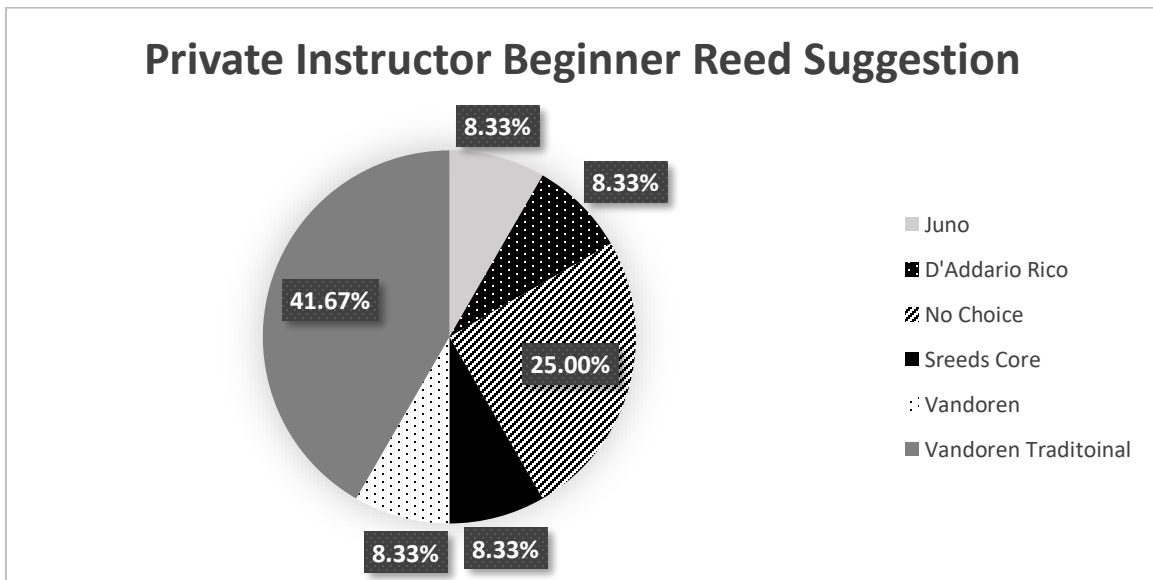


Figure 9.6. Suggested Beginner Reeds by Private Instructors

Private Instructor Intermediate Mouthpiece Suggestion

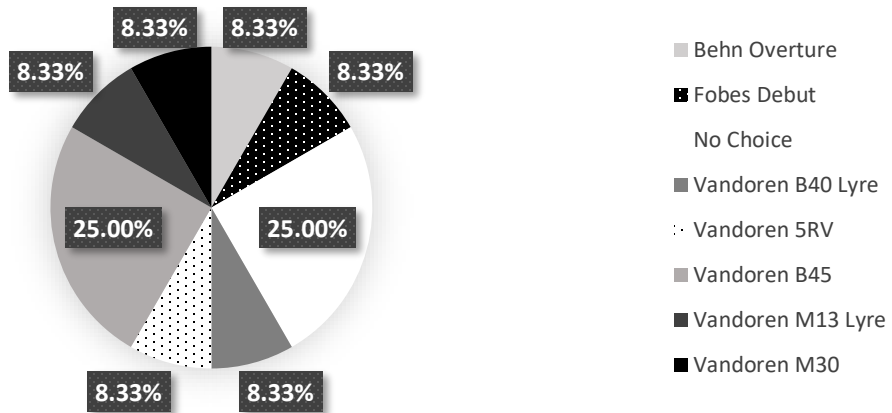


Figure 9.7. Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces by Private Instructors

Private Instructor Intermediate Reed Suggestion

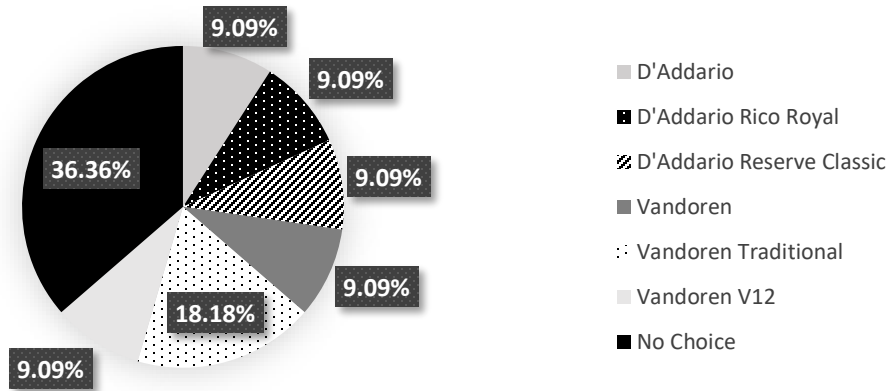


Figure 9.8. Suggested Intermediate Reeds by Private Instructors

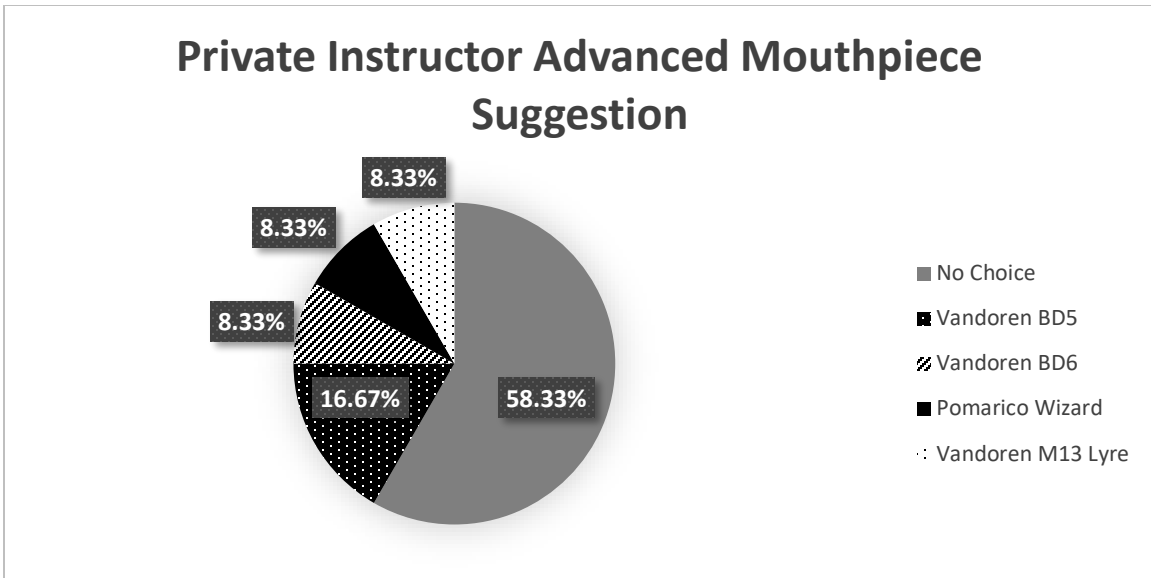


Figure 9.9. Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces by Private Instructors

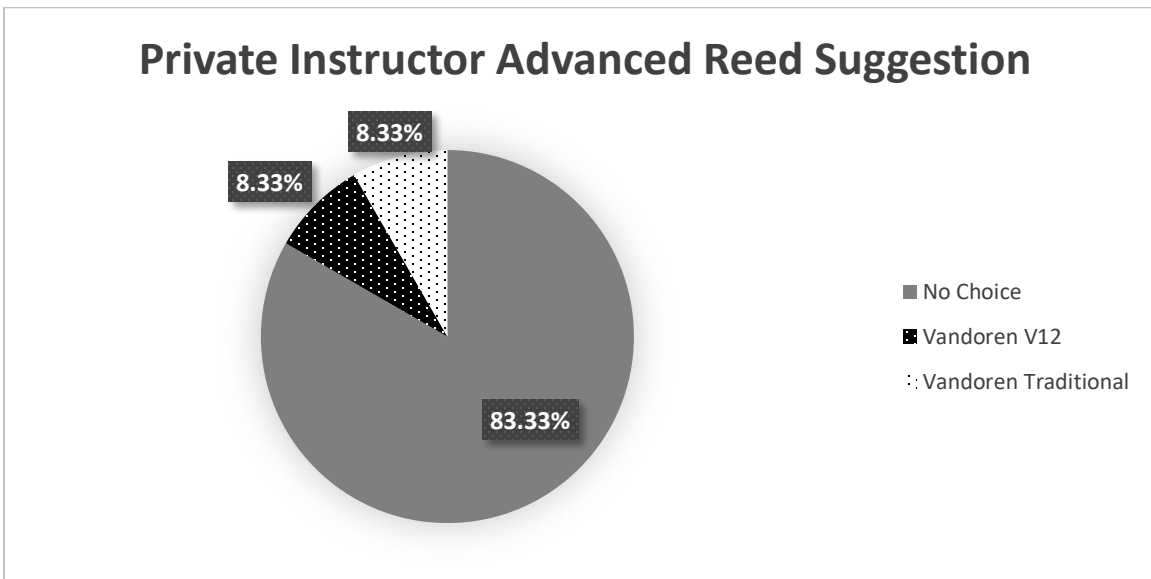


Figure 9.10. Suggested Advanced Reeds by Private Instructors

Of all the career groups, the private instructors had the smallest sample size. 50% of respondents suggested a Vandoren mouthpiece for beginner students, which was consistent with other career groups suggestions. Many of the Private Instructors agreed that the students needed to find the right fit for themselves regarding equipment. The equipment the instructor personally used may not necessarily work for the student and

therefore not be the best recommendation for them. As the recommendations were indicated for each group, the “no choice” option increased significantly for intermediate and advanced students. This correlated with their comments about how students needed to test mouthpieces and reeds that suited their needs.

CHAPTER 10

SURVEY RESULTS FOR HOBBYISTS

Hobbyist Equipment

There were 57 hobbyists who responded to the survey. The average years of clarinet experience amongst hobbyists was 24.34 years. The age distribution of hobby clarinetists, as shown in Figure 10.1, had 51-60-year old with the largest share at 35%. The second highest group was 18-29-year old with 18%. Only 15.5% of the participants mentioned that they taught private lessons so all suggested equipment was analyzed as a whole.

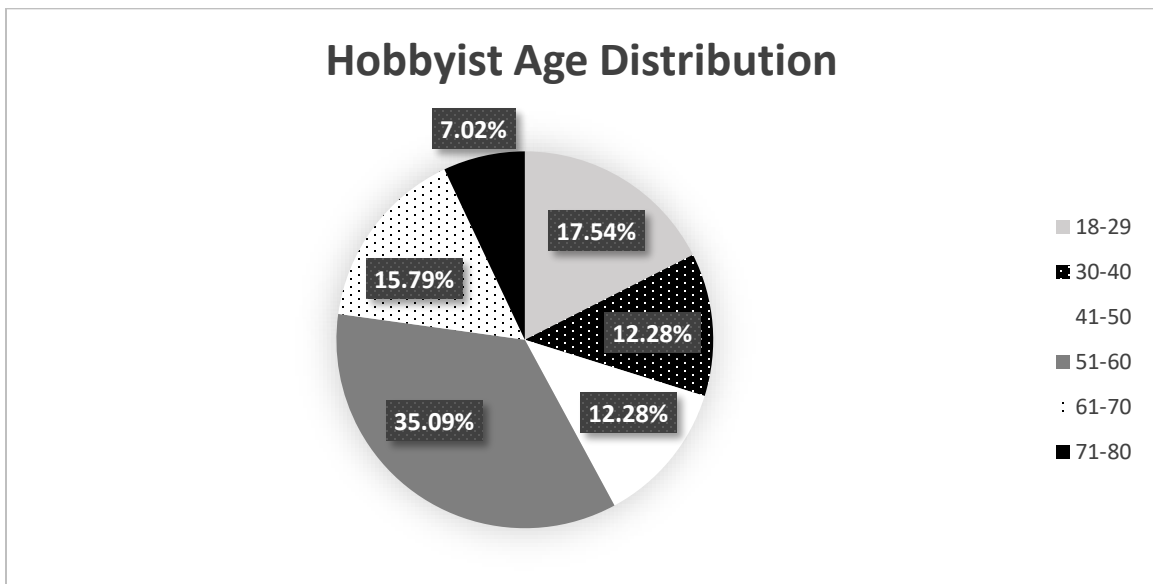


Figure 10.1. Age Distribution of Hobbyists

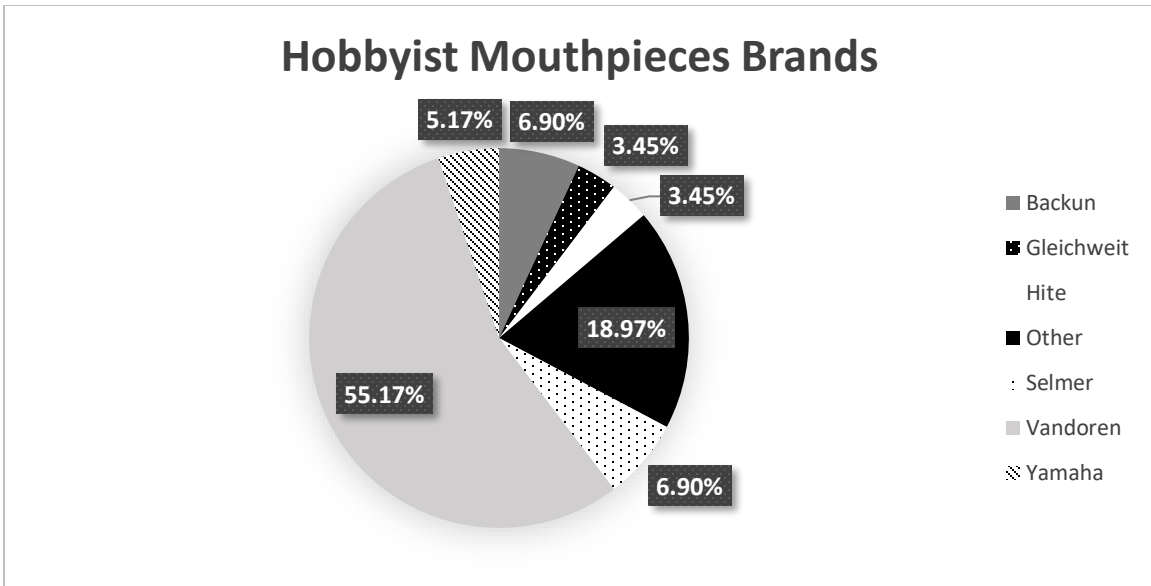


Figure 10.2. Hobbyist Mouthpieces. Other mouthpieces mentioned included Buffet, Bundy, D’Addario, Fobes, Kasper, Pillinger, Portnoy, and Theodore Johnson.

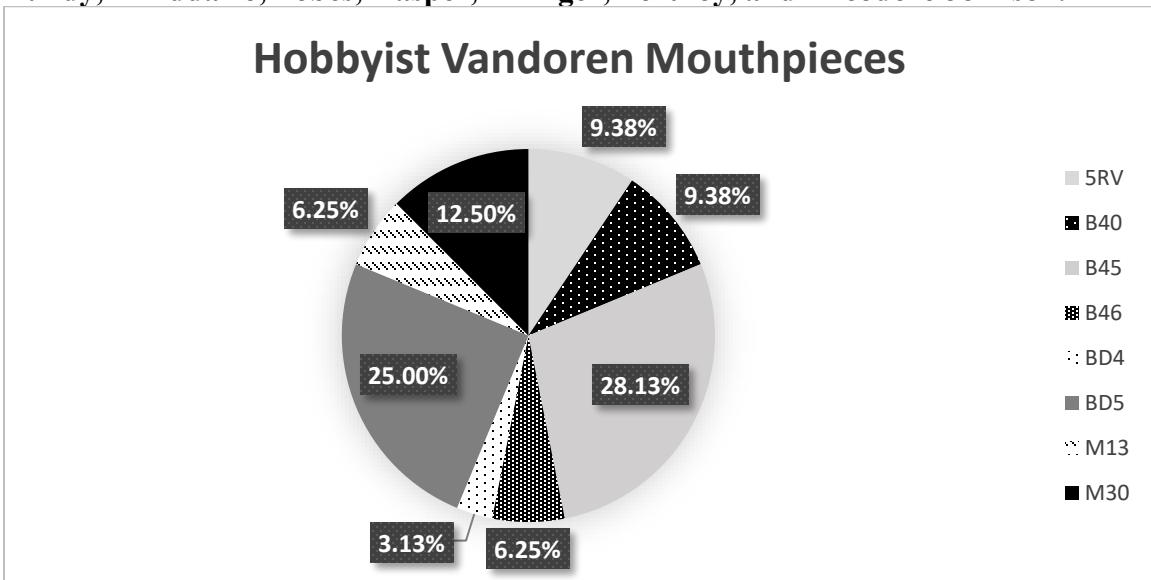


Figure 10.3. Hobbyist Vandoren Mouthpieces

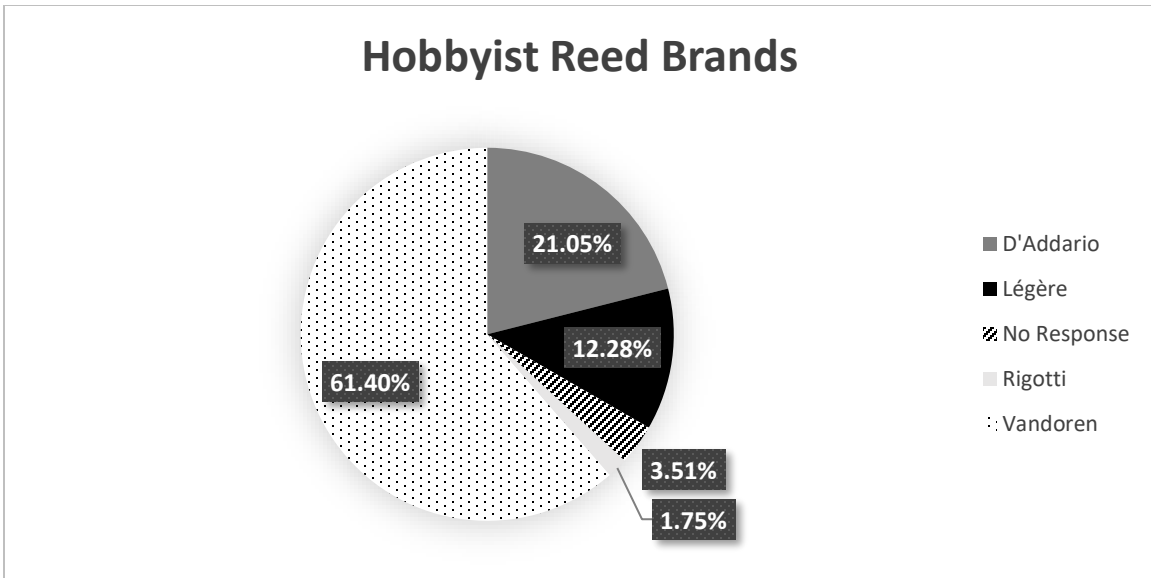


Figure 10.4. Hobbyist Reeds

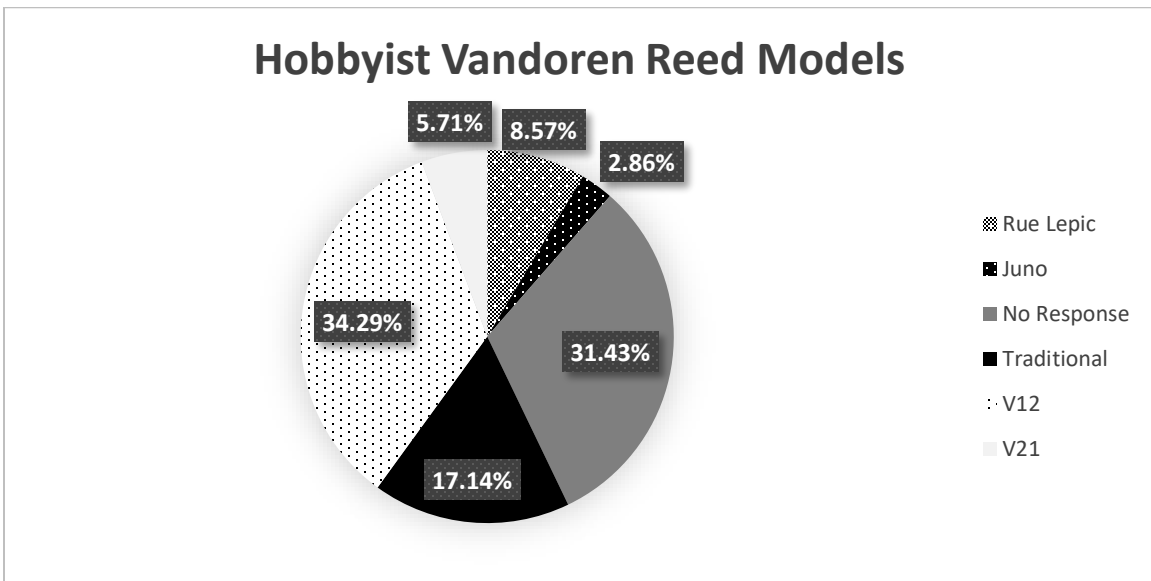


Figure 10.5. Hobbyist Vandoren Reeds

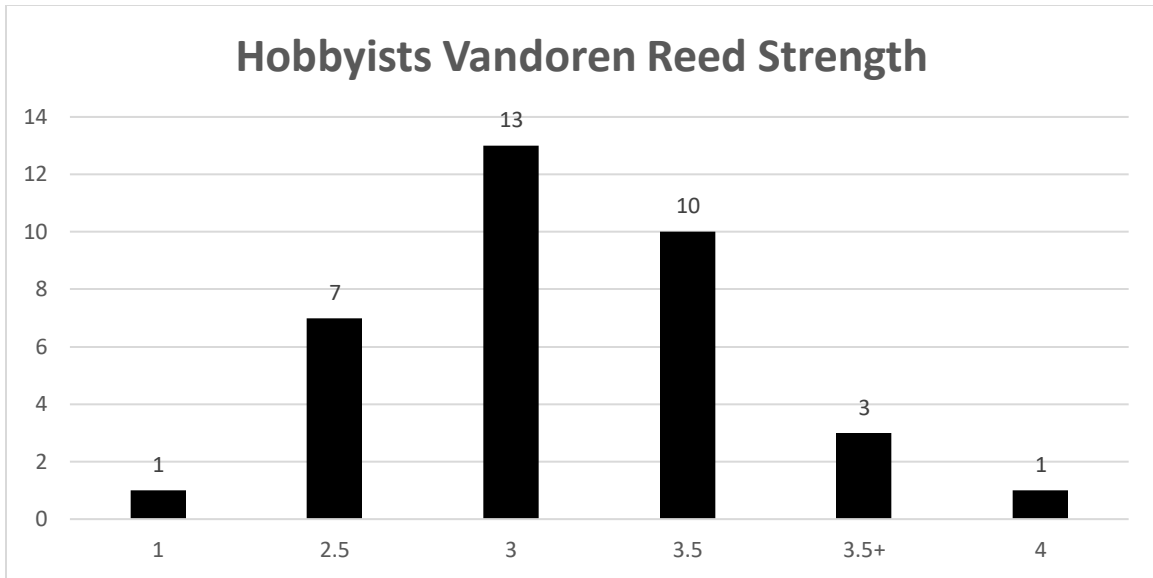


Figure 10.6. Hobbyist Vandoren Reed Strength

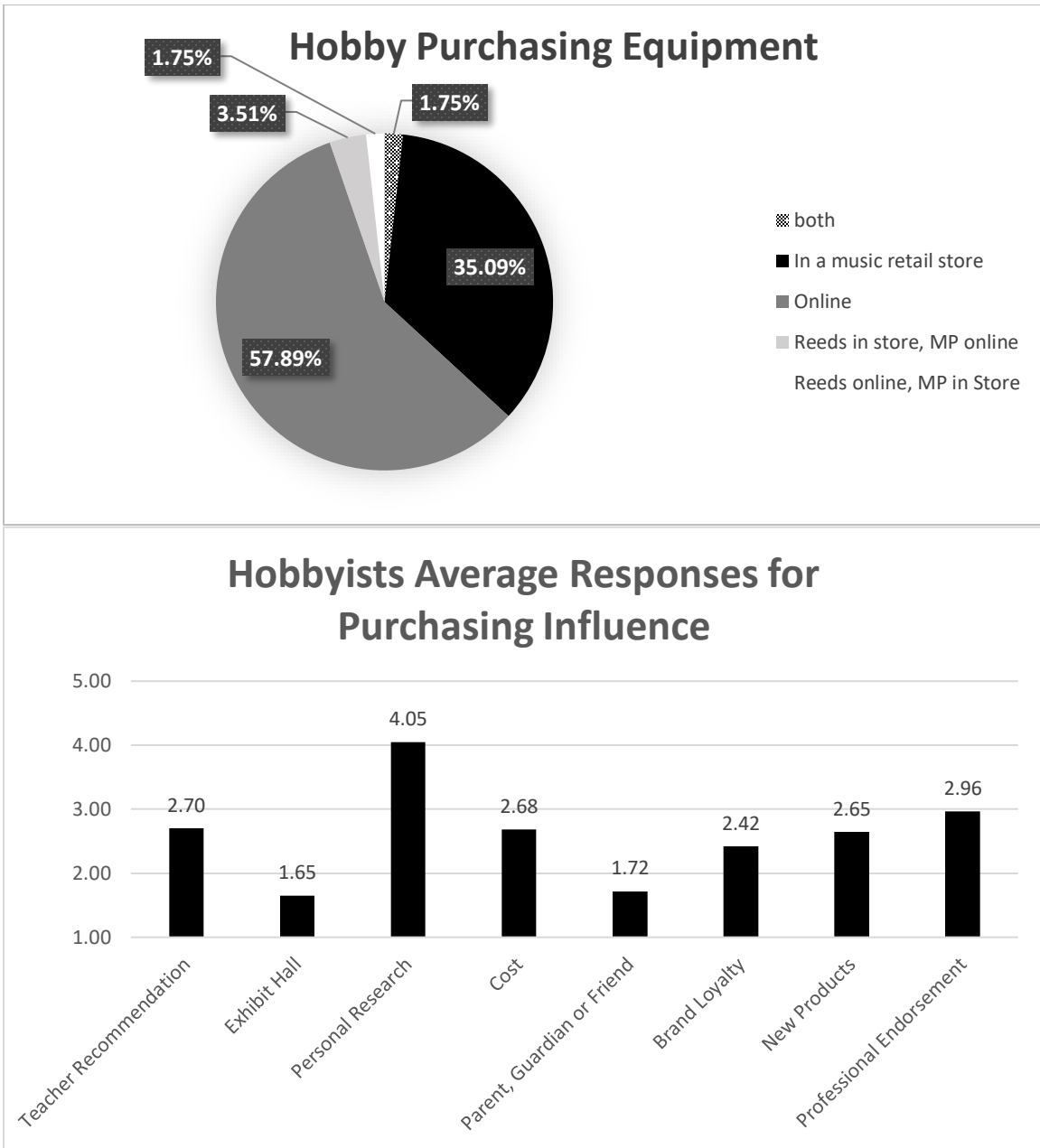


Figure 10.7. Hobbyist Equipment Purchase

For Hobbyists, the most popular mouthpiece brand was Vandoren with 57% of the recommendations and the most popular Vandoren mouthpiece model was the B45. Average strength of Vandoren reeds was 3.08. Hobbyists had been using their current equipment on average 5.87 years. The majority of participants also purchased their equipment online while 35% still preferred to shop through a retail store. They also

prioritized personal research when selecting their equipment. Of all careers, hobbyists were least likely to be influenced in their equipment purchasing at an exhibit hall because they were the least likely group to attend a conference.

Hobbyist Suggestions

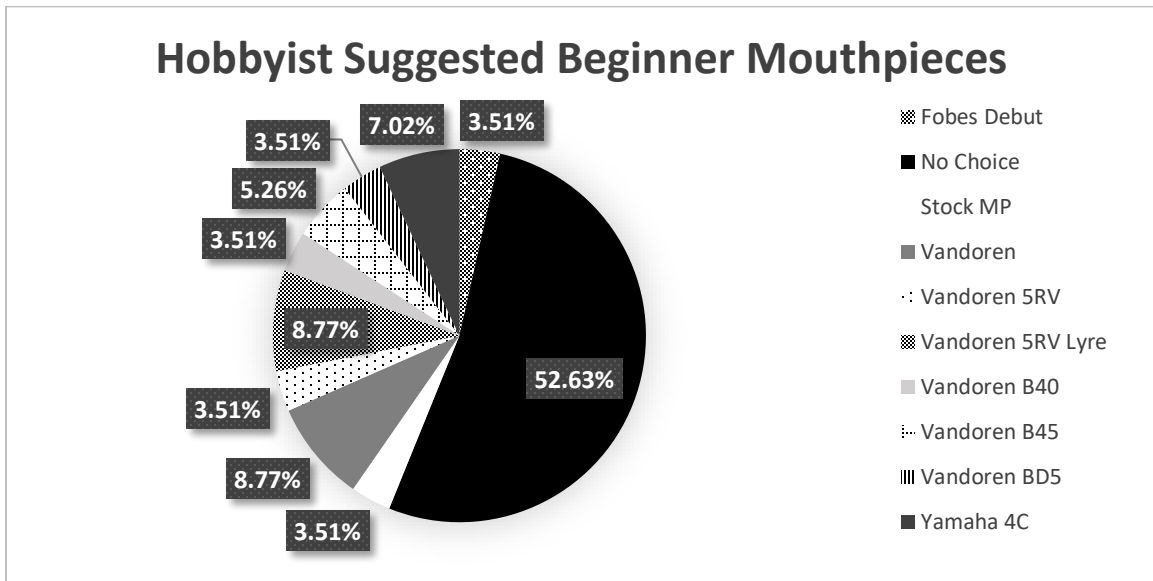


Figure 10.8. Suggested Beginner Mouthpieces by Hobbyists

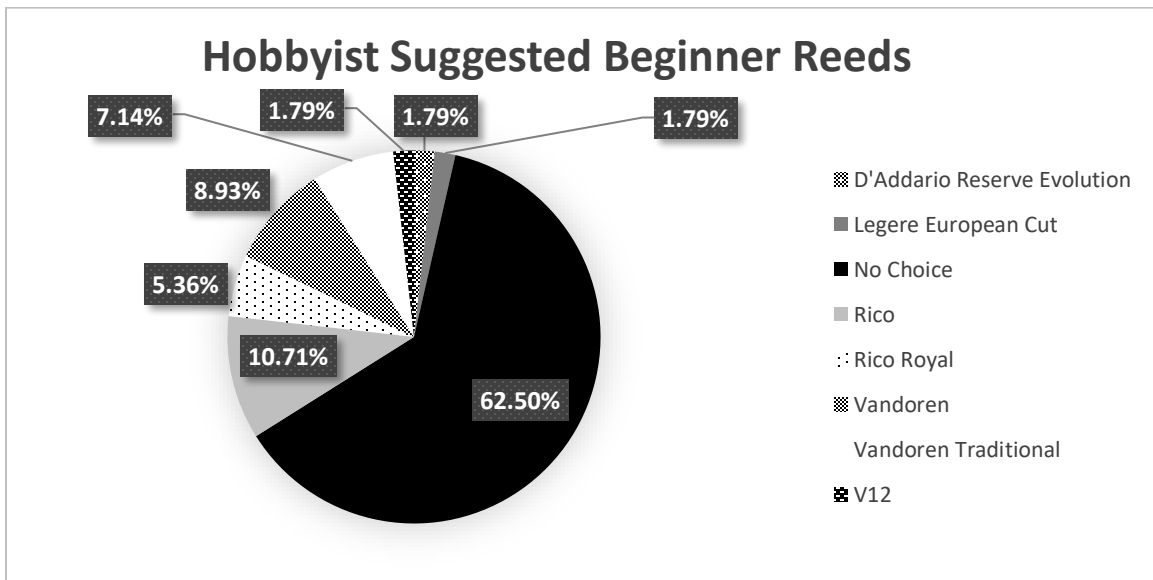


Figure 10.9. Suggested Beginner Reeds by Hobbyists

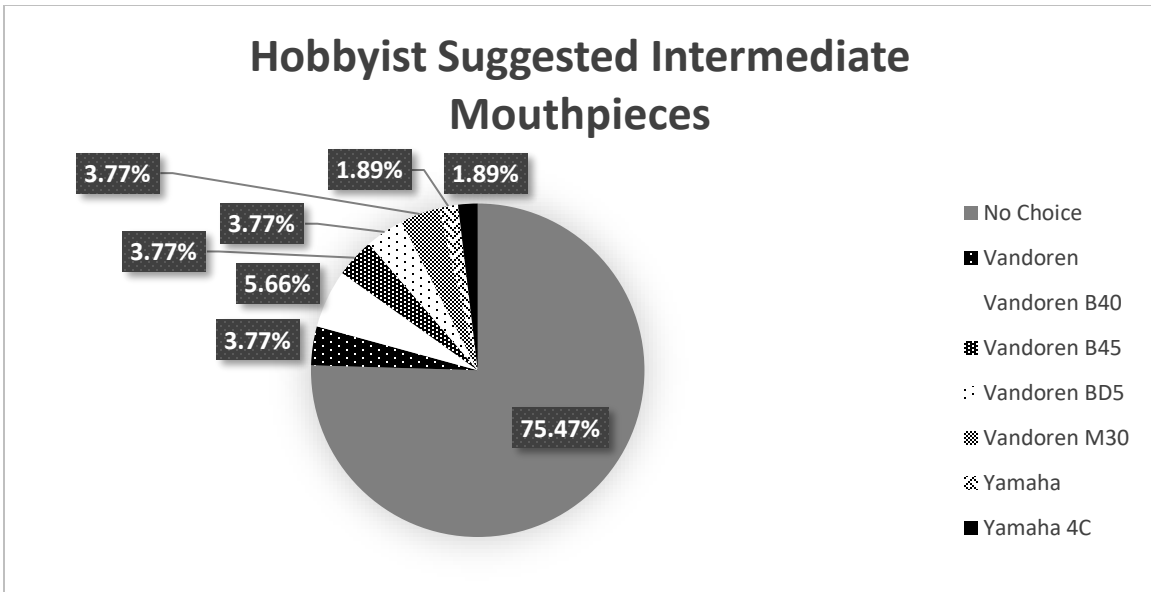


Figure 10.10. Suggested Intermediate Mouthpieces by Hobbyists

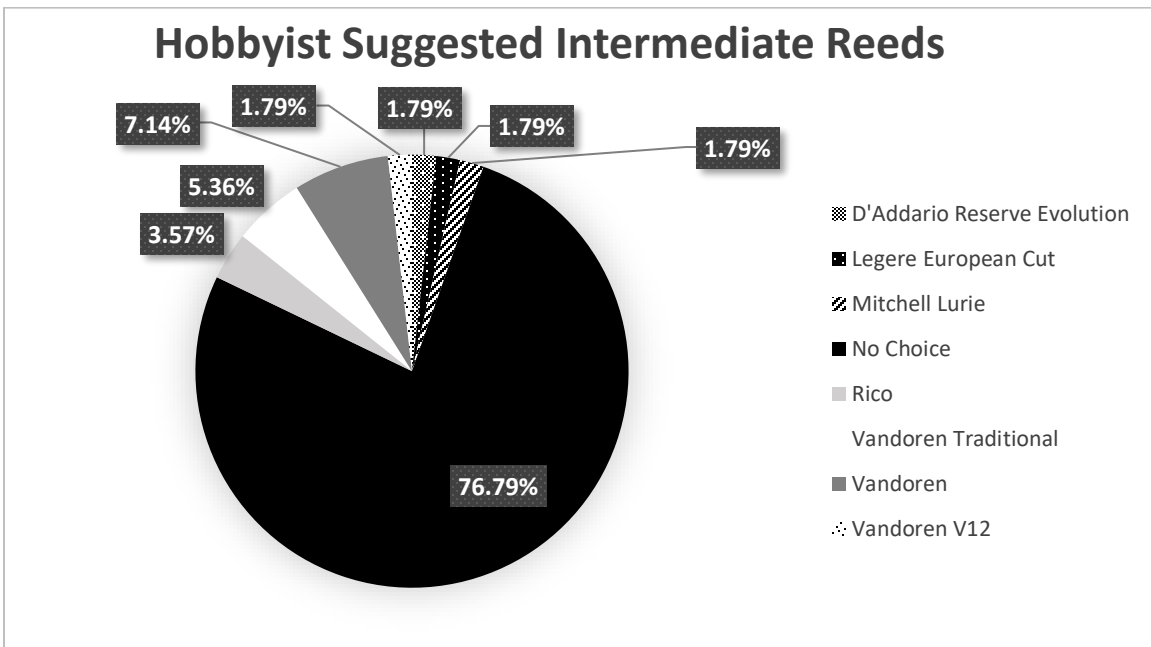


Figure 10.11. Suggested Intermediate Reeds by Hobbyists

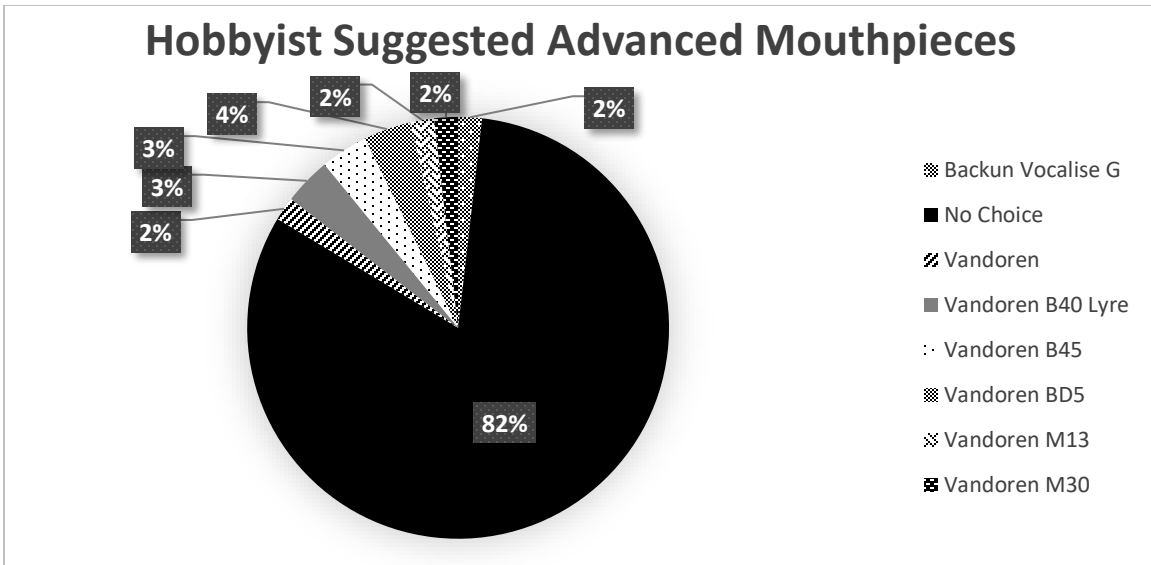


Figure 10.12. Suggested Advanced Mouthpieces by Hobbyists

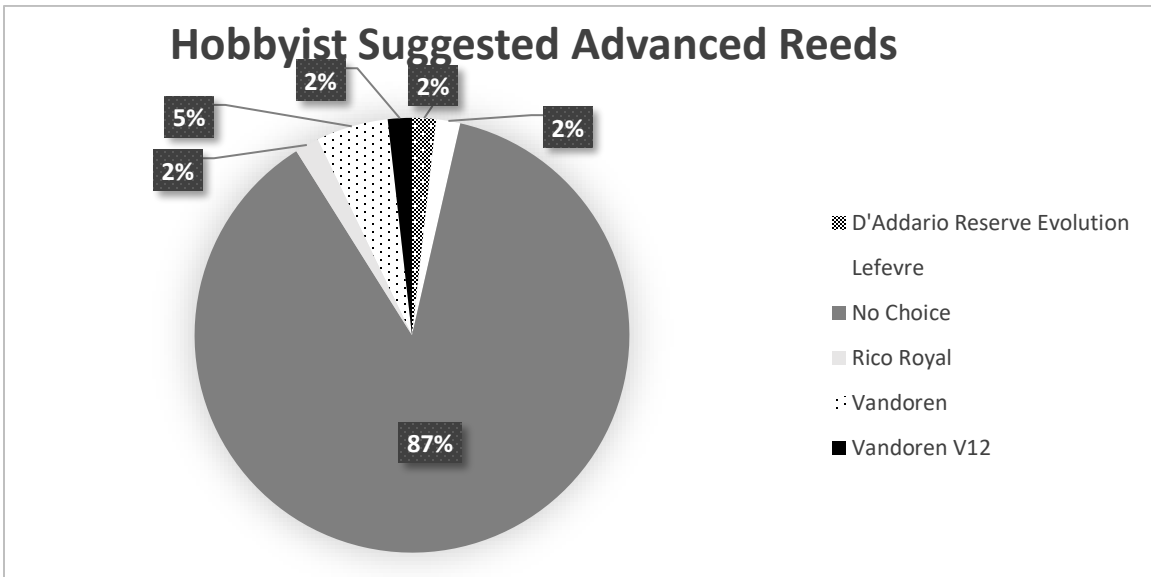


Figure 10.13. Suggested Advanced Reeds by Hobbyists

For beginner, intermediate, and advanced players, the hobbyists generally did not provide recommendations. 53% of respondents did not provide an answer for beginner mouthpieces, but the highest recommended brand was Vandoren at 34%. This was the lowest number of Vandoren mouthpieces recommended to beginner students compared to other career groups. 62% of hobbyists did not recommend a specific brand of reeds for

beginner students neither did they provided reed strength recommendations. 18% recommended Vandoren reeds with the majority recommending a 2.0 for beginners. Rico was another significant group suggested to beginners, representing 16% of the total. More than 75% of the hobbyists did not mention choices for intermediate and advanced mouthpieces and reeds. Suggested reed strengths were not determined due to the lack of response from respondents. Many of the participants commented that they did not feel qualified to provide recommendations to most if not all skill levels. Another hobbyist commented about how companies were not clear with the specifications of their mouthpieces which consumers use to make decisions on equipment. A few suggested, like many other career groups, that the student needed to test out equipment and choose the one that worked best for them. Out of all the career groups, there was no overwhelming majority of any particular brand in the suggested equipment category.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION

For many aspects of this survey, most of the responses were as anticipated. The survey data confirmed that companies such as Vandoren, Backun, and D'Addario lead the market for clarinet mouthpieces and reeds. Not only are they well-known, but they also have a wide variety of products from which to choose. Due to some vague responses, the data acquired from the surveys proved to be a challenge to analyze. In order to make an appealing survey for participants to use, questions were simplified and open responses were permitted for some questions. However, due to some vague responses, the data acquired from the surveys proved to be challenging to analyze.

In questions 8 to 16 of the survey, participants selected a rating of 1-5 for various factors that may influence their purchasing decisions. To determine the relevance of the data acquired in the survey, a statistical analysis was applied. In practice with normal confidence levels, a 95% confidence level was selected for this study. Using this confidence level, a margin of error of $\pm 5.6\%$ was calculated. Since a neutral response was considered to be a 3 on a scale of 1-5, this means that the neutral range was from 2.83-3.17. If the study was repeated with the same number of participants, the average results for a new study should be within $\pm 5.6\%$ of the average results 95% of the time. Due to the relatively narrow margin of error, the survey results can be viewed as being representative of the population.

The total numbers of mouthpieces and reeds mentioned by the participants are shown in Appendix I. 54% of all participants use Vandoren mouthpieces and 64.6% use Vandoren reeds. The most popular Vandoren mouthpiece model was the BD5,

representing 14.4% of the entire sample. The Vandoren V12 was the most popular reed model representing 35.7% of the total sample. The second most popular mouthpiece brand was Backun representing 9.18% of the participants and their most popular mouthpiece model was the Backun Vocalise R representing 2.62%. The reed brand following Vandoren was D'Addario representing 14.4% of the participants and their most popular reed model was the Reserve Classic representing 3.93%.

Participant age was mostly in the 18-29 age category. A possible reason for this was the use of social media to solicit responses. Fewer older clarinetists may be as well versed with all the options to participate on social media as younger students. Social media presence with clarinetists has grown and many were establishing their clarinet careers through social media and therefore were able to find the survey in one of the Facebook groups.

Career group categorization was difficult. Initially, the suggested groups in the survey were undergraduate, graduate, college instructors, professional clarinetists (orchestral, military, and solo/chamber), hobby, and middle/high school directors. Question three in the survey asked whether the participants taught private lessons. How involved the participants were in teaching private lessons was unclear especially if they mentioned other facets to their music career. Another issue with categorizing careers were freelance musicians. There were not enough freelance musicians to create their own category. The freelance musician participants did not specify what type of music they frequently performed. From their comments, I understood that many freelance musicians performed in solo and chamber recitals, orchestras, jazz, and other musical types. But the lack of clarification made it difficult to sort. The easy choice was to link them with

professional musicians; however, many of the professional musicians indicated that they were orchestral, solo/chamber, and military. Since the classification of this freelance musician was difficult, they were placed in the undergraduate category since they also mentioned they were still an undergraduate. This is one of several instances where asking follow-up interview questions would have provided more information.

Another issue with data analysis was that some participants responded with the multiple answers. Typically, the first answer the participant mentioned as a recommendation would be the information used for the study. If they commented at the end of the survey as to why they liked a particular brand over another, the favored brand would be considered their final choice.

In addition to career groups and recommended equipment, other issues with the survey were encountered. Since fill in the blank questions were asked, many responses were left unanswered. Even though the recommendations section of the survey was optional, there were likely many reasons for not responding to this section of the survey. For example, a number of individuals such as hobbyists explained that they did not feel qualified to provide a recommendation. Some undergraduates made similar comments. Similarly, several teachers and professionals commented that they highly recommend a trial before selecting a particular piece of equipment. For the above reasons, a “no choice” option was included for many survey participants. If a follow-up survey was possible, an explanation as to why participants left their answers blank would further clarify this choice.

Another aspect requiring additional clarification occurred when partial answers were provided. If the participants were suggesting a particular mouthpiece, many

included the brand rather than a specific model. Where reeds were indicated, most did not provide a reed strength recommendation. According to Daniel Bonade, the reed strength to use correlates to the mouthpiece facing. A closed tip opening would require a reed that is strong near the tip, but also very flexible at the tip.⁶ A softer reed is necessary for a wider tip opening while a closed tip opening requires a harder reed. Even though the survey instructions clearly stated respondents provide make, model, and reed strength, many did not complete their answers fully. The last difficult aspect about the analysis for the survey was the approximation for years of experience and approximate length of time with current equipment. Most expressed these with years and months. A significant number of participants also stated “about a decade” or “since 5th grade.” Additional time was needed to go through and provide the best approximation for the number of years of experience and ownership of equipment. In general, data were not modified unless there was some indication in the comment section providing clarity of their choices.

Due to the fact that this survey was published in an online forum, many international clarinetists provided their recommendations as well. Since this provides another perspective, it was difficult to ascertain what brands were recommended or used for French, German, and other systems. When it comes to purchasing decisions, a Polish survey taker mentioned that in Poland they only have one method of purchasing mouthpieces and that is by trial purchase online. In the United States, retail stores are still a viable option for purchasing equipment while some geographical areas may not have

⁶ Bonade, “Compendium,” 16.

access to a retail location. A number of participants also replied in their native language. Thankfully, there are resources available to translate these responses accurately.⁷

Overall, Vandoren leads the clarinet market with both mouthpieces and reeds, based on this dataset. Even if the participants did not currently use Vandoren mouthpieces and reeds, a majority still recommended Vandoren equipment for beginner, intermediate, and advanced students.

If there were any discrepancies with the data, it would be how specific the participants were with the exact mouthpiece models. This included what type of mouthpieces they currently used and what they recommended to students. For example, Vandoren makes a wide variety of mouthpieces including variations for those models such as the 5RV and the 5RV Lyre. Very few people actually mentioned the Lyre specification. This may or may not have an impact on whether the respondents were accurate in their response concerning their equipment. Vandoren also makes a variety of their mouthpieces with the Profile 88 and the 13 Series options.⁸ The Profile 88 refers to the beak angle of the mouthpiece allowing for a smaller angle between the clarinet and the person's body. The 13 series is designated for American clarinet mouthpieces which desire A440 pitch. Without knowing if Vandoren participants play American mouthpieces, it makes it difficult to know if they use the 13 Series. No one who responded to the survey mentioned that their Vandoren mouthpiece was a Profile 88 nor did anyone suggest that a Profile 88 would be a good fit for any students.

⁷ "Google Translate" Accessed February 2, 2021. <https://translate.google.com/>.

⁸ "Clarinet Mouthpieces Comparison" Accessed October 20, 2021. <https://vandoren.fr/en/clarinet-mouthpieces-comparison/>.

Another company that is becoming more popular is Légère. The quality of synthetic reeds has drastically improved since they first became available for purchase. Their reliability has become more attractive especially to those who double instruments such as for musicals. It was also surprising to see that many participants recommended Légère to students of all skill levels. This could be because of the Légère reeds relative resistance to chipping and being able to last for a long period of time without warping. They also resist atmospheric changes as well as deterioration over time. Although not a factor in this study, D’Addario recently released a synthetic reed model to compete with Légère.⁵⁵ Silverstein Works also released their second generation Ambipoly synthetic reeds several months after the conclusion of this survey.⁹ Synthetic reeds are becoming a consistent product choice irrespective of the level of musicianship.

In the undergraduate, graduate, and professional clarinetist career groups, the data were divided into private teacher and non-teacher for recommendations. For graduate students and professional clarinetists, the private teacher groups were more specific with their recommendations than the undergraduate private instructors. All groups provided less guidance for intermediate and advanced students. However, the large brands such as Vandoren, D’Addario, and Backun had similar recommendations between teachers and non-teachers. The data between teachers and non-teachers of undergraduates, graduates, and professional musicians does not differentiate significantly.

Many of the comments that the participants provided were regarding student equipment whether they were beginner, intermediate, or advanced. However, another

⁴ “A New Species of Reed.” Accessed October 3, 2021. <https://www.daddario.com/venn/>.

⁵ “World’s First 6 Month Guarantee All New Ambipoly Single Reeds” Accessed October 28, 2021. <https://www.silversteinworks.com/alta-ambipoly-reeds/clarinet-reeds/>.

group of respondents mentioned that equipment selection depended on the needs of students. These participants did not provide further instruction to clarify what the needs included. We know that mouthpieces have major differences with tip opening, facing length, material, beak angle, baffle, and bore shape. It is important to know which developmental needs are best met with different features of mouthpieces and reeds. If a clarinetist looks at the Vandoren line of mouthpieces, they will see that all their models have different tip openings and facing lengths. However, they did not say how they may affect a student's sound who has a weak air stream or a weak embouchure.

As shown on Vandoren's website, the description of their mouthpieces includes only basic sound quality and characteristics but does not show a clarinetist what about the mouthpiece will affect certain aspects of their playing.¹⁰ Therefore, more research is needed to understand the developmental challenges of students and what different styles of mouthpieces do to affect sound and ease of playing. The perfect fit for students happens with help from experts in the field such as teachers, other professionals, and pedagogical resources.

Application of Data

It was understood with confidence what various groups were using and what they recommended to others. What was not revealed in the data was the importance of teachers recognizing specific needs of students and what equipment their students should be considering to address those specific needs. It was also observed that many students were being recommended equipment that was likely inappropriate for them. In my experience, beginning students typically have issues with air support, embouchure

⁶ "Clarinet Mouthpieces" Accessed July 15, 2021. <https://vandoren.fr/en/clarinet-mouthpieces/>.

strength, tongue placement, and articulation, to name a few. It was observed that many of these students appeared to be using equipment which required strong air support to make a decent sound. A personal example of this is the use of the Vandoren B45. If the student lacks air support, the result can be an unsupported or weak sound which B45 will only amplify this issue. The student is forced to overcompensate for this equipment by using a lot of air and therefore reinforce bad habits. Not all beginning students react this way to the B45 but careful consideration is needed before recommending this product. For those teachers interacting with beginning students, better guidance needs to be provided.

With respect to equipment manufacturers, Vandoren was the most popular amongst respondents. If other manufacturers seek to be recommended more often, they need to have a range of product options addressing the needs of all levels of clarinetists. Since the survey participants indicated that the major influences in their purchasing decisions were personal research and teacher recommendations, manufacturers need to be sure that clarinetists are aware of their products and how their products differentiate from others. Since the majority of purchases are made online, manufacturers need to maintain a strong online presence in order to promote the value of their products.

For retail stores, a significant portion of their sales have been taken over by online sellers. The majority of participants expressed that they purchase both mouthpieces and reeds online. For retail stores to remain an important part of the buying process, they may want to increase their online presence.

For future research, it would be interesting to determine what equipment teachers are recommending to their students who have specific issues with their technique. When a change in equipment set-up is recommended by the teacher, it would be helpful to

understand the issues they were trying to resolve and if the change in setup was successful in improving these issues.

With regard to equipment manufacturers and the marketing resources they employ, it was noted that the influence of a brand's presence at an exhibition hall and the use of professional clarinetist endorsements was not a direct factor in the purchasing decision. Many of these professional clarinetists who endorse products can also be private instructors themselves and have a great influence on their students. It would also be interesting to understand the level of trust a student has with a professional clarinetist who endorses a specific product.

As evidenced by this survey, the market for clarinet mouthpieces and reeds is complicated by the options available as well as the many purchasing influences. With the growing online presence of brands along with their use of endorsements and social media, the influences of consumer equipment purchases will continue to evolve. Many aspects of this survey were not shocking. This research provides the possibility for future surveys as the mouthpiece and reed market change.

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APPENDIX A

DATABASE OF CURRENT AND SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Respondent	Mouthpiece Brand	Mouthpiece Model	Count Per Model	Total Per Brand
Ann Arbor		No Choice	1	1
Backun		No Choice	5	28
Backun		Vocalise S	2	-
Backun		Vocalise G	4	-
Backun		Vocalise R	8	-
Backun		Vocalise CG	4	-
Backun		3	1	-
Backun		Legend	1	-
Backun		Vocalise	1	-
Backun		Vocalise H	1	-
Behn		No Choice	2	10
Behn		3	1	-
Behn		Epic	3	-
Behn		Vintage	1	-
Behn		Artist	1	-
Behn		Sono	1	-
Behn		Hero	1	-
Bettoney		7	1	1
Bohm		Other	1	1
Borbeck		13	1	1
Buffet		No Choice	1	1
Bundy		No Choice	1	1

Respondent	Mouthpiece Brand	Mouthpiece Model	Count Per Model	Total Per Brand
Charles Bay		H1	1	1
Chedeville		Elite F2	1	1
Custom		Custom	2	2
D'Addario		Reserve Evolution	2	17
D'Addario		Reserve Evolution+	1	-
D'Addario		X0	9	-
D'Addario		X10	1	-
D'Addario		X15	1	-
D'Addario		X5	3	-
Dietz		+21	1	1
Fobes		CF+	1	3
Fobes		Nova	1	-
Fobes		Custom	1	-
Gigliotti		P	1	1
Gleichweit		HH2	1	4
Gleichweit		8	1	-
Gleichweit		K-PS	1	-
Gleichweit		DW B 10	1	-
Greg Smith		Custom	1	4
Greg Smith		No Choice	1	-
Greg Smith		Cicero	1	-
Greg Smith		Custom	1	-

Respondent	Mouthpiece Brand	Mouthpiece Model	Count Per Model	Total Per Brand
Hite	No Choice		1	2
Hite	Custom		1	-
Kanter	D		1	1
Kasper	No Choice		2	2
KJG	3		1	1
Kückmeier	Tosca		1	1
Leblanc	Cadenza		1	1
Licostini	MM Brass		1	3
Licostini	LN		1	-
Licostini	Classic 37		1	-
Lomax	No Choice		1	2
Lomax	Classic A1G		1	-
McClune	DM8		1	3
McClune	Professional		2	-
Moba	ORT+		1	1
Morgan	No Choice		1	1
Oscar Oehler	No Choice		1	1
Other	No Choice		1	1
Peter Eaton	1.21/21/A		1	1
Pillinger	No Choice		1	1
Playnick	Puccini Tosca		1	1
Pomarico	1010		1	4

Respondent	Mouthpiece Brand	Mouthpiece Model	Count Per Model	Total Per Brand
Pomarico		Wizard	2	-
Pomarico		O	1	-
Portnoy		No Choice	1	2
Portnoy		Bp01	1	-
Pyne		Bn	1	11
Pyne		Pk	1	-
Pyne		Sinfonia	1	-
Pyne		Bel Canto	1	-
Pyne		Signature	1	-
Pyne		No Choice	2	-
Pyne		Signature Series II	1	-
Pyne		Clarion	1	-
Pyne		Williamson	2	-
Ramon Wodkowski		Custom	1	1
Selmer		V20	1	6
Selmer		HS*	2	-
Selmer		No Choice	2	-
Selmer		HS**	1	-
Storti		Blue	1	1
Theodore Johnson		TJ3+	2	2
Vandoren		5RV	7	166
Vandoren		B40	28	-

Respondent	Mouthpiece Brand	Mouthpiece Model	Count Per Model	Total Per Brand
Vandoren		B45	20	-
Vandoren		B46	2	-
Vandoren		BD4	6	-
Vandoren		BD5	44	-
Vandoren		CL-4	1	-
Vandoren		M13	23	-
Vandoren		M13 Lyre	1	-
Vandoren		M15	9	-
Vandoren		M30	24	-
Vandoren		No Choice	1	-
Walter Grabber		K11*	1	1
Wells		B2	1	1
Wodkowski		1B	1	4
Wodkowski		Philadelphia	2	-
Wodkowski		Custom	1	-
Wurlitzer		3WZ	1	1
Yamaha		4C	1	3
Yamaha		No Choice	2	-

Respondent	Reed Brand	Reed Model	Count Per Model	Count Per Brand
Behn		Leuthner	2	5
Behn		Brio	2	-

Respondent Reed Brand	Reed Model	Count Per Model	Count Per Brand
Behn	Aria	1	-
Custom	Custom	4	4
D'Addario	Classic	2	44
D'Addario	Classic Reserve	12	-
D'Addario	Evolution	1	-
D'Addario	Grand Concert	3	-
D'Addario	Mitchell Lurie	7	-
D'Addario	No Response	4	-
D'Addario	Reserve	8	-
D'Addario	Reserve Evolution	6	-
D'Addario	Royal	2	-
Fedotov	Sonore	1	1
Gonzalez	Silver	1	3
Gonzalez	FOF	2	-
Légère	Classic	2	38
Légère	European Cut	16	-
Légère	European Signature	12	-
Légère	No Response	8	-
No Response	No Response	3	3
Pilgerstorfer	Vienna	1	2
Pilgerstorfer	Orchestra	1	-
Rigotti	Gold	1	1

Respondent	Reed Brand	Reed Model	Count Per Model	Count Per Brand
Silverstein		Ambipoly Primo	1	1
Sreeds		Core	1	1
Steur		Exclusive	3	5
Steur		No Response	2	-
Vandoren		56	25	197
Vandoren		Juno	1	-
Vandoren		No Response	20	-
Vandoren		Traditional	24	-
Vandoren		V12	109	-
Vandoren		V21	18	-

Beginner Reed Suggestion	Reed Models	Count of Reeds per Brand
D'Addario Reserve Classic	6	45
D'Addario Reserve	2	-
D'Addario Rico	34	-
D'Addario Rico Royale	3	-
Lavoz	1	1
Légère	1	2
Légère Signature	1	-
Leutner	1	-
D'Addario Mitchell Lurie	10	1
No Choice	66	-
Sreeds Core	1	-
Steur Exclusive	1	-
Vandoren	33	121
Vandoren Rue Lepic	2	-
Vandoren Traditional	54	-
Vandoren V12	17	-
Vandoren V21	2	-
Vandoren Juno	13	-

Intermediate Mouthpiece Brands/Model Suggestion	Count of Mouthpiece Models	Total Mouthpieces per Brand
Backun	1	5
Backun Vocalise	2	-

Intermediate Mouthpiece Brands/Model Suggestion	Count of Mouthpiece Models	Total Mouthpieces per Brand
Backun Vocalise G	1	-
Backun Vocalise R	1	-
Behn Overture	2	2
D'Addario 5	1	7
D'Addario Reserve	2	-
D'Addario Reserve Evolution	1	-
D'Addario X0	2	-
D'Addario X25E	1	-
Dietz	1	-
Fobes Debut	6	7
Fobes Nova	1	-
Gleichweit	1	2
Gleichweit PG	1	-
Hite Premier	3	3
Pyne Sonata	1	1
Roger Garrett DL	1	1
Scott	1	1
Stock Mouthpiece	2	2
Vandoren	24	145
Vandoren 5RV	13	-
Vandoren 5RV lyre	5	-
Vandoren B40	18	-
Vandoren B40 Lyre	5	-
Vandoren B45	22	-
Vandoren BD4	1	-
Vandoren BD5	13	-
Vandoren D20	1	-
Vandoren M 30	19	-
Vandoren M13	18	-
Vandoren M13 Lyre	3	-
Vandoren M15	6	-
Vandoren M30 Lyre	1	-
Yamaha 4C	1	2
Yamaha B6	1	-
No Choice		66

Intermediate Reed Brands/Model Suggestions	Count of Reed Models	Total Reeds per Brand
D'Addario	4	17
D'Addario Evolution	1	-
D'Addario Mitchell Lurie	3	-
D'Addario Reserve	2	-
D'Addario Reserve Classic	6	-
D'Addario Rico	3	-
D'Addario Rico Royal	1	-
Gonzales	1	1
Légère	3	3
No Choice	90	90
Pilgerstorfer	1	1
Steuer Exclusive	1	1
Vandoren	44	133
Vandoren 56	3	-
Vandoren Traditional	41	-
Vandoren V12	39	-
Vandoren V21	6	-

Advanced Mouthpiece Brands/Models Suggestions	Count of Mouthpiece Models	Total Mouthpieces per Brand
Backun CG	1	1
D'Addario X10	1	1
Dietz	1	-
Fobes	1	-
Gleichweit	1	-
Légère European Signature	1	-
Pomarico Wizard	1	-
Pyne	1	-
Vandoren	10	29

Advanced Mouthpiece Brands/Models Suggestions	Count of Mouthpiece Models	Total Mouthpieces per Brand
Vandoren B40 Lyre	3	-
Vandoren BD4	1	-
Vandoren BD5	7	-
Vandoren M13	3	-
Vandoren M13 Lyre	1	-
Vandoren M15	2	-
Vandoren M30	2	-
Yamaha 4C	1	1

Advanced Reed Brands/Model Suggestions	Count of Reed Models	Total Reeds per Brand
D'Addario	1	2
D'Addario Reserve	1	-
Gonzalez	1	1
Pilgerstorfer	1	1
Vandoren	7	20
Vandoren Traditional	7	-
Vandoren V12	7	-

APPENDIX B
COMMENTS FROM SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Undergraduate Students

“If students can’t afford a Vandoren mouthpiece, I would recommend a Forbes Debut mouthpiece with V12 reeds size 3 to 3.5. With all the mouthpieces, I would recommend using a Daniel Bonade ligature or D’Addario H ligature. If students can afford more of the pricier ones, I would recommend an Ishimori!

Vandoren BD5, D’Addario mouthpiece Evolution, Reeds: Vandoren V12, D’Addario reserve classic

All of these recommendations are what works great with my personal setup. Each person may be different as they may have different setups as well as all play differently than you and I. Finding the right mouthpiece/ reed combo takes time and patience to learning what’s best for you.”

“I’ll recommend a Vandoren B40LYRE because of its uniqueness, and flexibility. It gives a player more dynamic range and more projections.”

“I would mostly have students buy the multi pack with one of each reed to try with their mouthpiece so the student can decide what they like the best.”

“I’ve been using this combination for more than two years, and I’m pretty satisfied. I sometimes have the problem that my reeds are not strong enough, but it’s not the case for all of them of course

I think that any mouthpiece can be great for anyone but it all comes down to what strength and shape reed you’re using. Before buying a mouthpiece - if you have the opportunity - try it out (with different reed strengths/types).”

“The Rico D’Addario Mouthpiece and reeds go great together! They produce a warm sound with good articulation.”

“Just don’t change a lot about the clarinet and the equipment at the same time.”

“Test everything, most companies allow you to do a test trial and if you’re going to spend the money it’s more than worth it to try it out. Everyone is different so take recommendations with a grain of salt.

Resistance of material depends on the strength of the players breath; sound is not only made by the mouthpiece and reeds, but also in combination with the players anatomy, so I personally think there can’t be one working solution for everybody.”

“Ligatures can change the comfort of your mouthpiece/reed combo completely. Focus on mouthpiece and ligature combos before worrying about settling down on a certain kind of reed to use.”

“For any level of clarinet player, upgrading a mouthpiece is the biggest change one can make, besides getting a new instrument and I think it is never too early to do so. Ultimately, it doesn’t matter what works for me because things vary from person to person. You need to have an idea of what you want to sound like and then choose the

mouthpiece that allows you to do that with the least struggle. Brand loyalty and that type of thing doesn't matter much to me for that reason."

"Try them out before buying."

"I think reed adjustment is a necessity regardless of brand and model."

"Mouthpiece and reed combination are as personal and varied as the shapes and sizes of people's faces and oral cavity. No one thing works for every clarinetist. Not in an optimal sense anyway. My recommendation is that advancing clarinetist (High school or 4+ years of experience) should sit down with a mouthpiece refacer or maker and have a proper mouthpiece optimized for the player. Reeds should be tried in varying brands, strengths, cuts, and materials."

"I don't want to make any particular suggestions for mouthpieces at different levels since I don't have a huge amount of knowledge. That being said, I chose a B45 as my first (proper) mouthpiece and found it played very easily. Based on what I hear, I think M30 would make a good intermediate choice. Its medium closed so it's easy to control and focus the sound even at quiet dynamics. However, I've heard from several teachers and personally noticed that B40 works very well for me, and I especially like it now that I'm playing on legeres, which respond really well. Apparently, these reeds only work with mouthpieces that are already quite open and resistant so that the sound is focused. Otherwise the reed tends to flatten the sound. I think since legeres are very consistent, long lasting, and easy to play on, they make for great student reeds. I still believe that intermediate students should experiment with different kinds of cane reeds however, since there a very different experience."

"Ligature choice is a valid consideration as well in recommending mouthpieces and reeds, though admittedly not as important."

"It's a personal preference. :)"

Graduate Students

"Mouthpiece and reeds are dependent on how the equipment helps the student achieve the best tone they can produce"

"Own choice is the most important factor."

"Try as much as possible, find one suit their tonal preference then works on their embouchure control! That my philosophy on mouthpiece and reed, everyone has their own embouchure shape, which there is no such a thing called "perfect combo", the suggestion us teacher provide should only be a guidance, and mostly is just for the variety of different openings design and the product consistency.

"The mouthpiece and reeds are personal of each one. We have to try and try and try....and try."

“Vandoren’s 13 series M15 is such a well-rounded mouthpiece that is affordable. Great articulation response, warm tone and projection. It’s also produced on a large scale so if there ever was an accident or damage to your mouthpiece you can always find one online and even for it’s not your preferred mouthpiece, it’s a comfortable alternative to have just in case.”

“I never require my students to play on a specific setup; I only ask that they change their setup if something seems to be hindering them. Not every mouthpiece works for every player, so if my students sound good on something I personally wouldn’t play on, that’s awesome.”

“It’s an extremely personal experience and the player has to understand exactly what they want to change before searching to change a part of their set-up.”

“Trying out mouthpieces over several days is the most important thing to me.”

“I always suggest trying a selection, and don’t make specific recommendations to my pupils.”

“Always looking for comfortably and stability in the material. In tune and centered sound. Balance between inner sensations and external results.”

“They help you to get the sound you want. There’s nothing wrong, but there are too many options”

“Do not use the mouthpiece that comes with the clarinet for the love of everything please.”

“It’s tough. There are blueprints for success but once you get to a certain point there are so many different avenues on can go down, and what works for some people might not work for you. You just have to experiment and find out what’s best for you. Once you’ve gained a high level of proficiency, of course.”

“Just try as many as possible before you really go for one!”

“I don’t let my students play on anything higher than a 3.5 reed. I recommend using a humidity-controlled reed case to lengthen the life of the reed, I soak my reeds in water versus putting in mouth.”

“Also the Vandoren MO ligature! For all levels!”

“I usually encourage students to try different combinations of Reed strengths and mouthpieces, I prefer mostly Vandoren, but also encourage them to try other brands.”

“It typically takes little time to see if a student works better with an open-tip mouthpiece or a close-tip mouthpiece once they've tried it. I keep examples of Vandoren mouthpieces for student testing purposes. From there, we find an appropriate reed strength and cut to match that mouthpiece and their sound preferences.”

“I may suggest other equipment based on student's needs. Sound quality, voicing etc. Generally, once a student has reached an "advanced" level, they need to test out a couple different mouthpieces and find what works for them personally. I also recommend that students (and myself if I still bought commercial reeds) purchase reeds that are a strength or two harder than needed because then there is something left to adjust and correct on the reed. Alternatively, once a student has developed a decent tone, switching to synthetic reeds is also an option. I decided instead to start making my own reeds because I don't like the lack of control I have over synthetic reeds and how awful commercially produced reeds are.”

“Obviously, the most important thing is to try them out before you buy. With more advanced students, I'll spend more time testing equipment than with younger students.”

“Any student advanced enough, I would recommend them to do trials on most companies because it'll become more personal. Intermediate and beginners, I would look towards Vandoren because it is affordable and high quality.”

“BD 5 offers a very balanced sound, easy to play.”

“I was very happy with combination I mentioned, although I tried another...”

Professional Musicians

“I never require my students to play on a specific setup; I only ask that they change their setup if something seems to be hindering them. Not every mouthpiece works for every player, so if my students sound good on something I personally wouldn't play on, that's awesome.”

“I think mouthpieces for middle school/high school don't make too much of a difference for students who aren't interested in continuing with playing after high school.”

“It's subjective to what the student needs with regards to air support, continuity through the range of the instrument, articulation, voicing concerns, etc.”

“If students have a mouthpiece and reed combination that works for them I won't make them switch to my typical Vandoren M30. We often will explore other possibilities as well to find what works best for them. I have a lot of other mouthpiece makes and models that I let them borrow. Many of my students have had success with my typical Vandoren M30.”

“It gets easier with years. I easily find a reed I can play now than 15 years ago. As for mouthpiece, I tend to stick to current but will try eventually some new products.”

“It’s an extremely personal experience and the player has to understand exactly what they want to change before searching to change a part of their set-up.”

“Zinner mouthpiece were very good but I don't know why they disappear from the clarinet world.”

“The clarinet community should have a web with these kind of information (the best or better combinations of mouthpiece-reeds-ligature).”

“My favorite mouthpiece ever was made by Iggy Genussa off a Zinner blank. Mike Lomax has made a couple of great replicas of this one.”

“Anything that doesn’t sag or have tubby articulation is a good mpc recommendation. Vandoren’s 13 series M15 is such a well rounded mouthpiece that is affordable. Great articulation response, warm tone and projection. It’s also produced on a large scale so if there ever was an accident or damage to your mouthpiece you can always find one online and even for it’s not your preferred mouthpiece, it’s a comfortable alternative to have just in case.”

“I always suggest trying a selection, and don't make specific recommendations to my pupils
Always looking for comfortably and stability in the material. In tune and centered sound. Balance between inner sensations and external results.”

“They help you to get the sound you want. There's nothing wrong, but there are too many options.”

“Test many models and many MP of same model before chose.”

“The previous recommendations are standard: it depends on the student and I change adapting it to their particular case.”

“You need to find your own sound. This is the most important thing when I am looking for something new stuff.”

“It depends on the students ability and their budget mostly!”

“The ligature I feel also plays a strong role. For what it's worth, I use a Rovner van gogh. Many people use Silverstein, but I find it lacks the refinement of the van gogh. I also tried the Ishimori Kodama II and I thought this was incredibly helpful in voicing wide intervals, as well for projection - it's been on my wish list for months, but it's a bit expensive for this starving artist.”

“Although recommendations can help, it truly is down to the individuals preference and facial muscles on which mouthpiece and reed sounds/feels best for them”

“The most important is to listen to your or your student's body needs. Many people try to solve their problems by changing their mouthpiece/reeds/clarinet etc. but all this gear is been created to make our work more pleasant and comfortable. The main thing is to work hard with what you have in your hands at the moment and achieve what you want by working, not by buying and changing the material.”

“I encourage everyone to try everything to decide if they like it. I'm not one of those teachers that demands their students play the same equipment. Everybody is different and different things will work for different players. What I make sure is that whatever the mouthpiece or reed is, the concepts of maintaining center and focus, and being comfortable to play are present in the equipment people use.”

“There're also two schools of thought regarding balance between equipment. I tend to gravitate towards a free blowing mouthpiece and a harder reed, where the working resistance I need to produce a good sound is in the reed. Others do the opposite, using a more resistant mouthpiece and lighter reeds. Both can work, as long as balance is maintained and the sound is focused without biting.”

Depends on individual use of air, bite (occlusion), reed choice, and tonal preferences.

“Try for yourself.”

“Choose a mouthpiece and reeds that allows you to express yourself freely and artistically.”

“These are my general recommendations, but I try to base specific recommendations on the needs of the individual student and consider the brand/model of instrument they play.”

“The softer reeds that I use here at 7,200 - 8,000 ft. altitude feel and sound like hard reeds with the Vandoren BD4. It's very different from where I grew up and later worked in coastal cities, using hard reeds and more open mouthpieces. For more depth in your research, you could have asked about ligature preferences as well. For what it's worth, I'm an artist for Rovner Products and use their Platinum Gold ligature in an inverted position.”

“Mouthpieces and reeds are very personal and should be comfortable to the student/player.”

“I have mouthpieces and reeds on hand for students to play test before making a decision Prior to 2000 I used a Vandoren V360, almost identical to the 5RV and no longer made.

Bradford Behn mouthpieces and reeds.”

“Se fier aux premières impressions pour ne pas s'habituer au bec d'essai, et tester surtout l'aigu de la main gauche.”

“Try to feel more comfortable as possible when you play, I think reeds and mouthpieces are only a small part of the idea of the sound.”

“There are many, many more mouthpieces made by individual craftsmen like Clark Fobes, Brad Behn and Richard Hawkins that are also excellent and should be considered by very advanced players. But they cost a lot more and so should only be recommended to the most advanced students with a developed sound concept. There are also lots of reed makers and I experiment with reed brands a lot. I think students can benefit from experimentation as well, as they may find a brand that works better for them and their setup than the most common reed brands.”

“I am not into creating clones and I am willing for students to try whatever the latest and greatest thing out there happens to be. Vandoren presents a solid product that is super affordable. I know that I will be able to blend and be in tune with my colleagues. They should have me work for them. My Vandorens have gone many places with me! :-)”

“I teach Woodwind Pedagogy at The Boston Conservatory at Berklee so I recommend a variety of mouthpiece/reed combinations for different situations.”

“Trying out mouthpieces over several days is the most important thing to me.”

College Instructors

“Although recommendations can help, it truly is down to the individual’s preference and facial muscles on which mouthpiece and reed sounds/feels best for them.”

“At the advanced levels, mouthpiece recommendations ought to reflect the desired sound and genre the student wishes to play - band, orchestra, chamber, solo, jazz.”

“Depends on individual use of air, bite (occlusion), reed choice, and tonal preferences.”

“European cut Légère synthetic reeds, Backun CG & Storti mouthpieces.”

“I believe a mouthpiece will sound accurately in a large room or auditorium where the sound can fill the room. This is the time a trained ear is most helpful. The clarinetist will always hear the sound much differently than the listener.”

“I definitely need to do some more research in This area .. it’s incredible what a difference those 2 things make! Good luck.”

“I encourage everyone to try everything to decide if they like it. I'm not one of those teachers that demands their students play the same equipment. Everybody is different and different things will work for different players. What I make sure is that whatever the mouthpiece or reed is, the concepts of maintaining center and focus, and being comfortable to play are present in the equipment people use.

There's also two schools of thought regarding balance between equipment. I tend to gravitate towards a free blowing mouthpiece and a harder reed, where the working resistance I need to produce a good sound is in the reed. Others do the opposite, using a more resistant mouthpiece and lighter reeds. Both can work, as long as balance is maintained and the sound is focused without biting.”

“I studied mouthpieces with Mr.Pyne.”

“If students have a mouthpiece and reed combination that works for them I won't make them switch to my typical Vandoren M30. We often will explore other possibilities as well to find what works best for them. I have a lot of other mouthpiece makes and models that I let them borrow. Many of my students have had success with my typical Vandoren M30.”

“It depends on the students ability and their budget mostly!”

“It's subjective to what the student needs with regards to air support, continuity through the range of the instrument, articulation, voicing concerns, etc.”

“Learn to adjust reeds. Long narrow facings provide freedom.”

“Mouthpiece and reeds are dependent on how the equipment helps the student achieve the best tone they can produce.”

“Once you find a good set-up, stick with it!”

“The ligature I feel also plays a strong role. For what it's worth, I use a rovrer van gogh. Many people use silverstein, but I find it lacks the refinement of the van gogh. I also tried the Ishimori Kodama II and I thought this was incredibly helpful in voicing wide intervals, as well for projection - it's been on my wish list for months, but it's a bit expensive for this starving artist.”

“The most important is to listen to your or your student's body needs. Many people try to solve their problems by changing their mouthpiece/reeds/clarinet etc. but all this gear is been created to make our work more pleasant and comfortable. The main thing is to work hard with what you have in your hands at the moment and achieve what you want by working, not by buying and changing the material.”

“There are many, many more mouthpieces made by individual craftsmen like Clark Fobes, Brad Behn and Richard Hawkins that are also excellent and should be considered

by very advanced players. But they cost a lot more and so should only be recommended to the most advanced students with a developed sound concept. There are also lots of reed makers and I experiment with reed brands a lot. I think students can benefit from experimentation as well, as they may find a brand that works better for them and their setup than the most common reed brands.”

“Try for yourself.”

“Try to feel more comfortable as possible when you play, I think reeds and mouthpieces are only a small part of the idea of the sound.”

“You need to find your own sound. This is the most important thing when I am looking for something new stuff.”

Middle/High School Directors

“At the advanced levels, mouthpiece recommendations ought to reflect the desired sound and genre the student wishes to play - band, orchestra, chamber, solo, jazz.”

“Learn to adjust reeds. Long narrow facings provide freedom”

“European cut Légère synthetic reeds, Backun CG & Storti mouthpieces”

“I definitely need to do some more research in This area .. it’s incredible what a difference those 2 things make! Good luck”

“This combination between mouthpiece and reed is a very soft blow equipment that let you search and develop your own sound.”

“I studied mouthpieces with Mr.Pyne.”

“Once you find a good set-up, stick with it!”

“Personal experience is the way.”

“Mouthpiece and reeds are dependent on how the equipment helps the student achieve the best tone they can produce.”

“Own choice is the most important factor”

“Try as much as possible, find one suit their tonal preference then work on their embouchure control! That my philosophy on mouthpiece and reed, everyone have their own embouchure shape, which there is no such a thing called "perfect combo", the suggestion us teacher provide should only be a guidance, and mostly is just for the variety of different openings design and the product consistency.”

“The mouthpiece and reeds are personal of each one. We have to try and try and try....and try

Vandoren’s 13 series M15 is such a well-rounded mouthpiece that is affordable. Great articulation response, warm tone and projection. It’s also produced on a large scale so if there ever was an accident or damage to your mouthpiece you can always find one online and even for it’s not your preferred mouthpiece, it’s a comfortable alternative to have just in case.”

“I never require my students to play on a specific setup; I only ask that they change their setup if something seems to be hindering them. Not every mouthpiece works for every player, so if my students sound good on something I personally wouldn’t play on, that’s awesome.”

“It’s an extremely personal experience and the player has to understand exactly what they want to change before searching to change a part of their set-up.”

“Trying out mouthpieces over several days is the most important thing to me.”

“I always suggest trying a selection, and don’t make specific recommendations to my pupils

Always looking for comfortably and stability in the material. In tune and centered sound. Balance between inner sensations and external results.”

“They help you to get the sound you want. There’s nothing wrong, but there are too many options

I believe a mouthpiece will sound accurately in a large room or auditorium where the sound can fill the room. This is the time a trained ear is most helpful. The clarinetist will always hear the sound much differently than the listener.”

“I think it’s important to try and see how well response, flexibility, and pitch are as well as reed friendliness. The brand doesn’t matter too much. I also think it’s important to have someone reface your favorite pieces periodically and have a knowledge of reed adjustment.”

“For me, as students get more advanced, the recommendations become more individualized, so I recommend that they go and play the different mouthpieces. For reeds, I’ll give them a specific recommendation based on their playing.”

“Test many models and many MP of same model before chose.”

“The previous recommendations are standard: it depends on the student and I change adapting it to their particular case.”

“I think mouthpieces for middle school/high school don’t make too much of a difference for students who aren’t interested in continuing with playing after high school.”

“I believe that the mouthpiece and reed combination are much more crucial than any single piece of equipment. I find that many students play on reeds that are exceptionally soft, especially on more closed mouthpieces. Personally, I aim to try any new mouthpiece with at least 2-3 different reed strengths to determine how much control I can actually achieve with it.”

“Choose which one provides a rich sound in chalumeau register, and clear full and bright tones in the throat, clarion, and altissimo registers.”

“Make sure they fit the no (same cut) try out different brands before you decide on something long term.”

“Ligature also makes a big difference with a good Reed and mouth piece combination. I recommend a Silverstein ligature.”

“I think choices depend on the student.”

“Don’t forget about ligatures. They make a huge difference, too.”

“The more advanced the student gets, I tell them to try out different mouthpieces and reeds. I don’t make them get a certain type.”

“I encourage students to try several kinds of mouthpieces with different tip openings and reeds to make sure it’s comfortable at all volumes and the full range they play. Being a middle/high school band director, I see a lot of growth and change over 7 years so letting kids try different combinations to find what fits them best is one more thing to keep them excited and in band.”

“You have to sit with the students individually and have them try at least 5 different kinds of mouthpieces.”

“I feel like the last three questions are flawed because no teacher should ever have a standard recommendation. Teachers should know enough about mouthpieces and reeds to know what might suit an individual student so they can give a suggestion based on that individual student’s body shape, capabilities and playing needs. But they should always recommend that a student try out some mouthpieces and give them a list of criteria that is important when choosing a mouthpiece (rails that are of even thickness on both sides, free-blowing, consistent intonation, ease of articulation, tone and projection that suits the student’s playing needs, a facing that works well for their airflow, and comfort regarding jaw shape). My students have often come back with something unexpected but works incredibly well for them after trying various options at the store. We can never assume. Trying mouthpieces is essential whenever possible. The reed type and strength is then determined based on the mouthpiece choice (open, closed facing etc.) and the individual’s airflow. Can I recommend that you find someone who specializes in refacing

mouthpieces to explain to you the workings of mouthpieces and why individual choice is so important. Best wishes with your survey and the path to discovery regarding mouthpieces and reeds in instrumental music teaching!”

“I do not like the current Fobes mouthpieces but I have not found a better mouthpiece than my custom Fobes.”

“Balanced response, timbre, articulation and dynamic range. Tuning!”

Mouthpieces should be tried out by the student before purchase.”

Private Instructors

“I was very much raised on Vandoren but I did a blind test of about 7 different mouthpieces of all sorts and picked the D'Addario. My professor always hated that company, but we both thought I sounded the best on it AND it felt the easiest to play. Just goes to show that everyone is different and you should be aware as a teacher that what is best for you is not always best for your students. It is important for more advanced students to be involved in choosing a set up instead of just buying what their teacher recommends.”

“Also, it is good to have variety in reeds. I like the sound depth of Vandoren but the box is hit or miss. The D'Addario reeds are very consistent even though they compromise the sound slightly. They are great for rehearsals or practice.”

“Ligature also plays a huge role in your mp/reed set up.”

“I always tell my students that equipment is based on what makes them have a full, rich tone rather than what a professional play on. That being said, my recommendations are based on what I have personally played on and what is popular among the schools that I teach in.”

“The most important thing is to find the right fit for each person. Students often need guidance in this until they're able to recognize the beneficial qualities on their own.”

“The lig is also important. Plastic reeds remove the interplay of sound and space which removes from the player the ability to tailor their sound to the space they're playing in. I believe this is a great shame.”

I truly believe there is not a cookie cutter formula for clarinet players. If the setup does not harm the student, and it works, then cheers :)

Hobbyists

I play double-lip and have a specific sound I strive for, hence the combo I use.

With such a wide variety of product available, the best way to select your own combination is to try a lot of combinations. Thankfully, retail stores will let you try mouthpieces before you buy them. Private lesson teachers may also do this as well. Picking out a combination becomes more difficult as the player progresses, but it's a fun journey though.

I have discovered after struggling to increase the hardness of reeds to show my improvement that it is not of the greatest importance. quality of sound is the most important factor when choosing a reed and different styles of music can require different reeds.

I won't buy unless I am able to test several mouthpieces at home and make my choice calmly. +200euros for a mouthpiece isn't cheap and must be carefully chosen as many within the same brand and model sound differently.

Am waiting for covid to subside to get a new mouthpiece

It's personal. There's no "best" option for everyone - just a "best for you"
"I'm in favor of synthetic reeds for consistency, I expect that reducing the number of variables will allow for faster learning. Plus more time for actual clarinet practice as opposed to fiddling with reeds."

"I am not in a school program so I did not have a teacher when I bought my most recent clarinet mouthpiece when I started playing again in 2003. The woodwind person at Sam Ash (local music store) provided very helpful recommendations in selecting a mouthpiece and ligature. I was a little disappointed that my favorite reeds from high school (in the late 1970s and 1980s) were no longer available. I played clarinet since 1973-74 (4th grade). Moved to bass clarinet in 7th grade (1976). I played bass clarinet all through college and grade school and played in an amateur group from 2009 through 2012 (Manhattan Wind Ensemble). If there was a community band or orchestra near me, I would play more."

"Thanks for the opportunity to participate. Best wishes."

"I like the BD4 and BD5 because of the nice tone I have with it."

"Recommendations are simply that. There is no substitute for putting the reed on a mouthpiece and the combination atop a clarinet, then blowing and listening."

"Reeds start at 2 and work up as mouth becomes stronger."

"The ligature that is used is also just as important as the mouthpiece and reed that is being used."

“I know many of my friends and myself have different reed and mouthpiece preferences depending on whether or not we’ll be playing a classical/composed piece vs. a jazz chart, so definitely encourage people trying new things if they feel like their current set up isn’t working! Also, dont feel bad if you dont like vandorens kids! :)”

“I have always just used the mouth piece that came with my clarinet it is only because I dropped it and it broke I needed a replacement.”

“Mouthpieces are very personal, friends were very enthusiastic about Black Diamond but for me in a blind test the b40lyre was better! So find your own wat, never go with the flow but try, test...!”

“If I've had a teacher I would probably listen to her recommendations but since I've been learning the instrument myself I would rather listen to the Guy in the local wind music shop and buy a Yamaha student mouthpiece if he thinks it better than THE One I already got. But I think I first have to try out another ligature.”

“Try as many as you can.”

“I always refer people to a qualified teacher for mouthpiece/reed choices, although sometimes people persist in asking me when they like my tone. My setup is out of fashion (understatement- my mouthpiece isn't even made anymore) and heavily influenced by my first teacher, an Englishman and contemporary of Brymer/Kell/dePeyer. That's the kind of tone I aspire to and I can best produce it on the setup I use.”

“I wish manufacturers are more factual about their mouthpieces. Sizing etc. And the impact of those nummers on the sound.”

“My mouthpiece came with the Yamaha clarinet, I love it.”

“Good players can make anything work. Obsession masks good technique.”

“I own a Yamaha YCL-255 (very good student model) and a Yamaha 650 .. both excellent.”

APPENDIX C
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

EXEMPTION
GRANTED

[Joshua
Gardner](#)
[MDT:](#)
[Music](#)
480/965-
0324

Joshua.T.Gardner@asu

.edu Dear [Joshua](#)

[Gardner](#):

On 12/2/2020 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Clarinet Mouthpiece/Reed Preference Survey
Investigator:	Joshua Gardner
IRB ID:	STUDY00013009
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Druesedow_Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • Druesedow_Recruitment, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Druesedow_Survey Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 12/2/2020.

In conducting this protocol, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc:

Elizabeth Druesedow