

Motivating Factors Affecting the Recruitment and Retention
of Suburban Middle School Band Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine various motivators associated with student decision-making and investigate the impact of those motivators on a student's band participation during their middle-grade years. The goal was to identify which motivation type had the greatest impact on student choice and to use that information to evaluate current recruiting and retaining strategies. Through the use of a questionnaire, this quantitative study surveyed a variety of motivational factors impacting student choice and decision-making for 10 to 14-year-old band students within a suburban area. Motivation types included in the study were teacher-student relationships, peer influence, family involvement, success/failure, intrinsic, extrinsic, and competition/ego. The sample contained in this study included 378 students from a suburban school district in East Tennessee. The participants were all members of the band program and were enrolled in grades 5-8 at the time of the study. Data gathered from the responses to the survey indicated that of the motivational topics that were included in this study, teacher relationship and intrinsic motivation were the two areas which had the greatest influence on whether or not a student would choose to remain in band or quit. Interest in becoming involved in another activity; such as sports, different organizations, or school curriculum, was also a strong factor in a student's decision as to their ongoing participation in band. Although the results of this study were unable to identify a specific motivational category that effects student decision-making more than the others, it was able to show that a combination of motivators are involved in a student's decision-making process.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Even though the consensus among adults is that exposure to music and arts education is important for the development of a well-rounded person, the reality is that many students are progressing through their middle and high school years without any type of meaningful or long-term connection to music instruction or performance (Lyons, 2003). Some of the contributing factors include an increased focus on test scores, class scheduling, and a heightened effort to create college and career ready students. Additionally, dwindling budgets, a disconnect with the instruction, technological distractions, and a diminishing relevance to life outside of school have each also aided in the diminishing number of students who are involved in instrumental music programs (Ng & Hartwig, 2011; Hruska, 2011; Dray, 2014; Weiss, 2015).

In order to grow and maintain the student enrollment of music programs, directors throughout the United States must address two different, yet similar, aspects of a prosperous band. Each year, thousands of music educators are responsible for recruiting and retaining future and current students. As one of those educators, it is important for me to know and understand what motivates students to participate and remain in instrumental music classes. Although motivation has been the focus of numerous educational studies, research related to the growth and maintenance of band programs as it connects to student motivation is still somewhat limited.

Developing a better understanding of the impact of motivators such as peer influence, family support, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and a student's perception of self-worth on student-decision-making can prove to be a valuable resource for music educators.

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Additionally, it is equally important to recognize and comprehend the effects of teacher-student relationships, teaching style, teacher word-choice, and the overall learning environment on a student's thought processes as well as their perception of value in the band program. Combined with the previously mentioned types of motivators, these feelings will also factor into a student's decision to join and stay in the band program. With this research, music teachers can gain a clearer picture of the motivations behind student-choice as well as the ability to positively affect those motivators. Knowledge of this kind will help empower band directors and enable them to build and maintain healthier music programs.

Specific to the local schools and band directors, this information will provide data and feedback related to the recruiting strategies currently in place as well as the reasons for long-term versus short-term student involvement and participation in the band program. On a broader spectrum, band directors from demographically similar areas can apply the findings of this study to their own programs and begin to develop program-specific strategies that can improve student motivation and foster a healthier band.

Statement of the Problem:

Nationally, enrollment in band and orchestra programs has been on a decline for decades (Williams, 2011). Locally, there has been a consistent and ongoing concern related to attrition. Recruitment of students at the beginner level is high; however, keeping those students involved in the band program through 8th grade has been a problem. Based on enrollment data gathered from the local bands' class rosters spanning the last 6 years, the rate of attrition within the band program has been as high as 60% (Johnson City Schools, 2013). To help battle this continuing

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trend, it may be necessary for music educators to be aware of specific motivational aspects which impact a student's decision to join or remain in an instrumental music program. With this knowledge, modified recruiting and retention strategies can be implemented to improve enrollment and combat attrition. Specifically, the problem being investigated through this study is the high attrition rates within the band program and what motivational aspects can be associated with the cause of that attrition.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the effects of various motivators on student decision-making as it relates to band participation in the middle-grade years. Through the use of a questionnaire, this study surveyed a variety of motivational factors impacting student choice and decision-making for 10 to 14-year-old band students within a suburban area. Gathering this information provided insights specific to the interests and decision-making practices of middle-grade students in order to establish a hierarchy of importance of the motivational aspects and apply that to the current recruiting and retaining methods within the music program.

Significance of the Study:

Several studies which pertain to students' musical motivation have been conducted in areas of low socioeconomics as well as in rural and urban areas. However, few have focused on suburban students and schools. In addition, some of the research which investigated music motivation in a suburban setting focused on either elementary-aged, high school-aged, or even collegiate-level programs.

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Previous research has also been conducted relating to the various aspects of student motivation. Topics such as teacher-student relationships, a student's perception of success and failure, intrinsic and extrinsic, ego-driven, goal mastery, peer influence, and parental support have all been a focus of motivational studies for students involved in music programs. While many of these topics have been studied independently and exclusive of each other, very little research has been done to evaluate the impact of the combination of these motivators.

Since recruiting for music ensembles is accepted as standard practice and retention is recognized as an area of critical importance, music directors from demographically similar regions can use data from this study to begin implementing new or adjusted strategies to help motivate students with the intention of building or maintaining healthy instrumental music programs.

Assumptions and Limitations

In this study, it is assumed that music educators are aware of certain recruiting and retention strategies. Additionally, those teachers are assumed to have knowledge related to the importance of implementing those strategies in order to achieve the highest rate of success. It is also assumed that students between the ages of 10 and 14 will be able to honestly and accurately respond to a questionnaire. With these assumptions in place, instrumental music educators will be able to improve upon their understanding of student motivation as well as their instructional practices as they pertain to recruiting and retaining students through the use of the data provided by this study. Possible limitations of the study would include:

- The inability to locate and survey students who have already left the program.

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- The sample used for this study only includes students from two schools within a localized region. Data and findings might not be applicable to music programs in other regions, even if those schools have similar demographics to those used in this study.

Definitions

Motivation is defined as the reason for a person's actions or decisions. Motivational categories which are being considered as a part of this study include teacher-student relationships, parent support, peer involvement, learning environment and teaching style, extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and competition/ego.

Teacher-Student relationships are defined as the connection and rapport between a student and their teacher. Simply put, it is the interaction that occurs on a daily basis.

Parent support would be described and measured in degrees of involvement, understanding, provision, encouragement, and approval. Shortcomings in these areas would be categorized as a lack of parental support while parents displaying high degrees of activity in these areas would be described as very supportive.

Peer involvement is defined as participation, vocal expression, and/or other forms of persuasion from students who are classmates of a given student.

Learning environment is a term which encompasses attributes such as the appearance, set-up, cleanliness, procedures, and structure of the room.

Teaching style encapsulates the instructional methods, "word choice", and tone/mood being used by the teacher each day.

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Extrinsic motivation is defined as the use of external incentives in order to modify or persuade student choice and personal satisfaction.

Intrinsic motivation is defined as the participation in an activity or making of a decision based on self-initiated achievement without the need for an external incentive. In other words, doing something for the sheer enjoyment of it without a need for additional rewards or recognition.

For the purposes of this study, ***Competition/Ego*** is defined as individual students competing against other students in the same music program, individual students competing against students from other programs, or full ensembles competing against ensembles from schools in other areas for ranking and direct comparison.

Recruitment is described as an active attempt to lure people into participating in an activity. Through the use of visual, aural, and physical methods, directors hope to encourage individuals to join band. Some examples of recruiting include: speaking to prospective students in younger grades, providing an instrument demonstration for them, taking an upper-level school band to perform, inviting prospective students to concerts, mailing letters or postcards, setting up an instrument petting zoo, and offering an instrument fitting event.

Retention is defined as the ability to keep current students as members of the program for consecutive years. High retention rates typically equate to a high level of student satisfaction.

Attrition is a measure of student loss. An ongoing decrease in the numbers of students who are participating in the band can be a strong indication that there is a problem within the program which needs to be identified and corrected.

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Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to focus on motivation and retention of students in grades 5-8 whose ages range from 10-14 within a suburban area and identify areas of strength and areas in need of refinement within the instrumental music program. Chapter one includes the introduction, statement of the problem, statement of purpose, significance, assumptions and limitations, definition of terms, and the overview of the study. Chapter two consists of a review of the literature that is relevant to this study. Chapter three includes the research questions and research methods. Chapter four presents the data analysis of the study. Chapter five includes a summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The vast majority of public-school instrumental-music programs are populated on the basis of student choice and voluntary enrollment. As with any voluntary organization which functions purely on the premise of enticing people to join and then keeping those participants actively engaged from one year to another, school bands are consistently faced with the topics of recruitment and retention. What are the best practices and methods to persuade people to join the band and what motivates those students to remain in the program year after year? While reviewing literature related to this topic, one can begin to identify shared themes among the research studies, journal articles, books, and professional observations. These themes include:

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successful recruiting strategies, reasons for attrition, suggestions for improved retention rates, the impact of teaching style and teacher-student relationships on student achievement, and motivators for student choice.

Recruiting

As with any elective course or voluntary group, in order to boost enrollment and publicize the availability of the group, some form of advertising or recruitment process is necessary. Without adequate public relations, beginning band programs run the risk of low enrollment. Recruiting students to participate in a voluntary organization, such as band, is a year-long process and should include a variety of methods (Rush, 2014; Watkins 2016). Flyers, posters, school announcements, personal visits, public performances, instrument demonstrations, instrument “petting zoos”, commercials, and social media are all potential avenues for increasing student interest and participation in a program (Berman, 2016; Kordella, 2014; Rush, 2014; Watkins, 2016).

In addition to some of the more standard recruiting methods, band directors are also encouraged to think outside of the typical norms in regards to ensemble performance and should consider offering music classes which cater to individual student interests. It is suggested that by incorporating unique and nontraditional music opportunities into a school’s course offerings music programs can attract students who might typically choose a different elective (Cogdill, 2015). It may be time to consider new forms of music education which appeal to a wider base of prospective students. According to Reimer (2004),

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We have tended to hunker down with our narrow preferences and limited opportunities and then, because we are dangerously irrelevant, we advocate, advocate, advocate – not for fundamental change in music education but for unquestioning support for what we have traditionally chosen to offer. (p. 34)

Cogdill (2015) suggests that students will be better motivated to engage in music activities that offer both a future benefit as well as an area of individual interest. In addition to traditional concert or marching band classes, providing performance opportunities related to jazz, pop/rock, bluegrass, electronic music, or small chamber ensembles should be considered as potential motivators for students who are looking for a great musical experience but might not be interested in the typical full-ensemble band classes.

Some students are likely to make their decision to join band based on influences other than music. In a study from 2010, Kinney investigated the impact of non-music factors on a student's decision to join band. His findings would suggest that non-music factors, particularly socioeconomic status, can have an effect on the enrollment rates for school music programs. Other non-music factors which can impact recruitment results are family support, peer influence, conflicting academic or elective choices, and extracurricular commitments (Bazan & Bayley, 2009; Rush, 2014; Wilcher, 2016). With his study, Kinney provides music teachers with some powerful truths regarding a student's decision to join band and how that decision is impacted by forces outside of the classroom. This knowledge can help teachers reach students in a different and perhaps more effective way. If the intention of school music programs is to be all inclusive and to reach students from every facet of the population, then understanding the many influences

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which exist, both in and out of the classroom, is crucial to the recruiting and retaining process (Kinney, 2010).

Connected to the outside influences noted by Kinney, public perception and the current reputation of the band program and director are also key contributors toward recruiting and enrollment. Some band classes come with a negative stigma. Opinions and observations such as: too much time commitment, too expensive, too difficult, or not cool can have a negative impact on band enrollment. During recruiting, “band” and its director must be presented in the best possible light and a focus on publicizing the fun, social benefits, and success that occurs through participation should occur (Berman, 2016; Dray, 2014).

Attrition

Student enrollment in school-based band programs has been on a steady decline for the past few decades (Ng & Hartwig, 2011; Weiss, 2015). Some of the decreases in population can be connected to a complete lack of recruiting while another explanation would be the use of antiquated recruiting techniques which no longer prove to be effective. Weiss (2015) shares that an additional reason for declining band numbers across the United States is the inability to hold the interests of current band students. This lack of interest provides motivation for students to drop out of the program. In other words, directors were successful at recruiting young students to join the band but were unsuccessful at maintaining the students’ interest and fostering a desire to stay in band. Since high rates of attrition can have devastating effects on band programs, recognizing the reasons why students choose to drop out can prove to be quite valuable to music

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educators. With this knowledge, proactive directors can take steps to prevent attrition before it becomes a problem.

Other leading reasons for student drop-out include a lack of connection to the music, boredom, a perceived lack of musical ability by the student, academic scheduling conflicts, monetary concerns, peer pressure, and poor student-teacher relationships (Ng & Hartwig, 2011; Rush, 2014; Weiss, 2015). As noted in an article by Andrew Berman (2016), attrition can also result from a lack of teacher-recognition of student value and competing outside activities. Band directors must respect a student's time and offer them reasons to stay in band instead of providing them reasons to quit. Students need to feel appreciated and valued. Sometimes, students can get overlooked and made to feel that their contributions to the organization are not important or recognized. Berman (2016) states, "*Acknowledge the unsung heroes in your group, and let each student know that they are equally valuable*" (p. 41).

Student self-confidence also plays a major role in their decision to continue or abandon their musical studies. In a study from 2012, Lowe discovered that all students share a need for a high level of positive reinforcement from their music teacher. Lowe's findings validate the fragile nature of middle school aged students in regards to this transitional stage of their life. Because of this sensitive period, a lack of positive reinforcement from music instructors can easily lead to a lower retention rate within the music program. According to Lowe (2012),

Students reported that a lack of positive reinforcement from their instrumental teachers undermined their competence beliefs and thus their expectancies for future success. In

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short, students who don't feel confident about their current playing abilities start to doubt their ability to improve. (p. 239)

Once a student no longer believes that they will be successful, they are much more likely to discontinue their participation in the program.

A teacher's perception of the problem can sometimes get in the way of the solution and thus continue the attrition dilemma. A teacher's beliefs towards a particular problem will likely influence their actions in the classroom. Having a clearer understanding of the reasons behind a problem can lead to a stronger plan for improvement. Ng & Hartwig (2011) state,

An understanding of how teachers think about declining enrollment in music and what they consider important for students' participatory decisions about music learning will help music educators and teachers understand the possible plans of action that these teachers may consider appropriate. (p.124)

Scott Rush, nationally known retired band director and co-author of the Habits of a Successful Band book-series emphasizes the importance of learning to evaluate your class from the students' perspective (2014). Directors should consistently ask themselves, "Would I want to be a member of this band program?" Answering that question from both the teacher and the student perspective will provide valuable insights and helpful information regarding student retention.

Retention

As stated previously, students have several valid reasons for considering a departure from

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a band program. Maintaining enrollment in band is an everyday, ongoing activity which begins the very moment a beginning student first enters the band room (Jones et al., 2018). Band directors, either consciously or subconsciously, make decisions each day that can have a tremendous impact on a student's decision to remain in band or quit. Decisions regarding musical repertoire, teaching style, student seating, uniforms, classroom environment, and pacing, as well as objectives, musical goals, performances, assessments, incentives, classroom management and rapport with students have the power to hold a child's interest or drive them away (Hruska, 2011; Rush, 2014; Jones et al, 2018). Jones et al. (2018) say, "*The director is the one person who can control the most elements in any music program*" (p. 13).

According to Berman, directors must design rehearsals to be efficient while providing feedback that is supportive if students are to be retained in band. Berman (2016) quotes educator and author Ron Kearns as stating, "*Retention comes from not wasting their time and showing that you value them*" (p. 39). In a publication by Jones et al. (2018), the authors are quoted as saying, "*Students' time, talent and energy is valuable. If you want high levels of student retention, then respecting those resources must be a part of the daily operations of the program*" (p. 13). Similarly, Lowe's research of 12 to 13-year-old music students revealed that a student's self-confidence plays a major role in their decision to continue or abandon musical studies. The students participating in the study, even those who displayed strong academic success, shared a need for a high level of positive interaction with, and reinforcement from, the music teacher. Information gathered during the study validates the fragile nature of middle school-aged students. Because of this sensitive and transitional stage, a lack of positive reinforcement from

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music instructors can easily lead to a lower retention rate within the music program (Lowe, 2012). These pieces of literature support the belief that a teacher's choices: including instructional style, wording and relationships, and recognition of student efforts, have a strong impact on student participation and retention.

In a study from 2014, Dray indicates that the students remained in band because of positive student-teacher relationships, peer-involvement, and a personal connection to music and the band organization. Dray (2014) states, "*In short answer responses, many students indicated that they participate in band because it is fun and makes them happy*" (p. 83). In reference to ongoing student participation and long-term retention, taking the time to get to know your students, gain their trust, and demonstrate a sincere level of care for them are some of the greatest assets to any band director. According to Rush et al. (2014), building a personal relationship with your students makes a positive and sizable impact on retention rates. Further advocating for the importance of quality relationships, the authors also indicate that students will often invest themselves in the band director long before they commit themselves to the subject of music. Musical enjoyment, social interaction, trips, concerts, and other band-related events are also cited as reasons for high levels of retention in the 2014 book, Habits of a Successful Middle School Director by Rush, Scott, and Wilkinson. In a literature review on recruiting and retaining band students by Wilcher (2016), the author states, "*Students will flock to an activity that makes them feel important and accepted*" (p. 16).

In a 2012 article, Poliniak states that while there are indeed variables which impact a program's retention rate that are out of the director's control, there is much that a director can do

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to encourage students to remain in their programs. Some of those strategies include: maintaining a good relationship with guidance counselors, offering an early-morning or after-school course for a full credit for students who would otherwise not be able to participate in band due to other academic requirements, and being flexible with practice and performance requirements for students who are involved in other school-sponsored activities. Poliniak (2012) shares,

Anticipating schedule issues and working directly with the people who can fix problems can alleviate many issues. Being flexible with students involved in multiple activities can pay off. Yes, you may not have every kid at every performance, but they also stick with your program as opposed to dropping out altogether. (p. 42)

In addition, Poliniak offers the following suggestions: maintain a core group of students to help positively influence students who might be less successful or who might be considering quitting; be prepared, organized, and offer strong classroom management; foster positive relationships with parents; and make the students feel welcome, important, and appreciated (Poliniak, 2012). To support these suggestions, Wilcher's review of similar literature also includes statements regarding the importance of fostering healthy student-teacher relationships, opportunities for parent involvement, a safe environment while creating a family atmosphere, and positive working relationships with colleagues and counselors (Wilcher, 2016). In short, retention rates can improve by building personal connections with students and strong relationships with parents and coworkers.

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Relationships and Teaching Style

A reoccurring theme throughout several articles related to student retention is the importance of fostering positive relationships. The literature would suggest that whether with peers, colleagues, co-workers, community members, or parents, the need for personal relationships with others is vital in regards to having successful retention rates (Poliniak, 2012; Wilcher, 2016). It would seem, however, that greater than those relationships is the need to establish a positive, caring, professional, and supportive relationship with the students (Hruska, 2011; Rush, 2014; Jones et al, 2018). According to the former educator, administrator, and public speaker Rita Pierson, "*Kids don't learn from people they don't like.*" (Pierson, 2013).

Although there are several reasons cited for student continuation or decline in their musical studies, one study suggests there is a lack of perception and understanding that the teacher's connection and relationship with their students would have any impact on a student's decision to continue with musical studies. Many teachers with poor retention rates will admit that a problem exists; few of them will stop to consider that they themselves are at the root of it (Ng & Hartwig, 2011). Music teachers should examine and evaluate their instructional styles, activities, and student connections when reflecting on the retention/attrition rates for their programs. To further support the importance of positive relationships, Weiss (2015) discovered that there is a strong connection between the quality of teacher-student rapport and the level of student engagement and motivation. In fact, Weiss' study revealed that the relationship between teacher and student had a stronger effect on participation than the actual daily activities and behaviors.

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In addition to building positive, caring, and professional relationships with students, teachers must also be aware that teaching style, instructional decisions, and learning environment can alter student motivation and engagement. According to a recent review of literature pertaining to student motivation and self-perception, positive teacher influence has the ability to improve a student's perception of themselves as well as motivate them to remain engaged and involved in the music program (Tucker, 2018). Research completed by Cogdill (2015) reveals the importance of knowing the academic needs and learning styles of your students. Teachers who consider the musical and personal development of their students tend to create a learning environment which is encouraging and welcoming to students. According to Cogdill (2015), *“Young students who engage in positive music experiences are more likely to develop positive beliefs about themselves as musicians”* (p. 50). Word choice, performance experiences, intrinsic motivation, and learning environment each represent areas of musical instruction of which teachers have the power to either positively or negatively impact their students.

In a multi-method study by Fitzpatrick (2011), teachers from urban environments throughout Chicago revealed that they adapted their instruction to meet the unique needs of urban schools and their students. The information gained through this study would suggest that the teachers not only recognized that specialized teaching skills and modifications to pedagogy were necessary in order to be effective but were also able to make the required adaptations in order to create a learning environment where the students could achieve success. Understanding the environment and specialized needs of the students and the community were key factors for these teachers (Fitzpatrick, 2011). The information contained in this study directly connects to

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the importance of teachers understanding their environment, building relationships with students, and making personal connections which support trust and dependability. By understanding the specialized needs of the students, in any area or demographic, band directors can begin creating learning environments which support their students and encourage their involvement. In an article published by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), Poliniak (2012) states, *“In general, students are less likely to leave when they feel that they’re not just another face behind a music stand. The most important thing I used was personal contact”* (p. 43).

Scalise (2015) conducted a study comparing traditional teacher-centered music instruction to a less structured, student-centered instructional format. The Music Self-Determination Scale and the Willingness to Play Scale surveys used in this study revealed that the group of students involved in the informal setting had a significant (27%) increase in their desire to be involved in music-making outside of class. Another relevant finding was that the students participating in the informal setting of instruction and who reported low levels of intrinsic motivation had an increased desire to engage in music making. According to Scalise (2015), *“It becomes necessary for teachers to understand the learning experience so as to effectively engage students in the process of growing in their musical abilities”* (p. 9). In short, when the students were given the opportunity to actively participate in the decision making and instructional format, their level of interest and engagement increased.

Student Motivation

Many things are to be considered when discussing student motivation. As noted in a study by Dray (2014), depending on the age/grade level of the student, motivators such as

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teacher-student relationships, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, approach success/avoid failure, competition/ego, peer involvement, and parental support, each played a factor in the students' decision. A review of the literature related to this topic provides further insights into the importance of understanding student motivation and how it affects a music student's decision-making process.

Included in Hruska's 2011 research findings is a section on the need for student input in the music-making process. Instrument selection, student leadership opportunities, and choice of repertoire were each listed as intrinsic motivators for students. Hruska (2011) states, "*One of the best ways to increase student motivation is by choosing high-quality music literature that students can personally identify with and use to grow as musicians throughout the learning process*" (p. 7). In a literature review from 2013, West focuses on student motivation and how the style of classroom instruction can either positively or negatively affect it.

We maintain intrinsic motivation when we feel competent, autonomous, and relevant. The need to feel competent represents our internal desire to master our surroundings. The need for autonomy represents our internal need to determine our course of action. The need to feel relevant represents our internal need to feel that what we are doing has some greater implications beyond the immediate. (p. 14)

This information supports the research done by Hruska (2011) stating that when students have some choice in their situation, they engage in the material more deeply and feel more self-determined. To help improve student motivation in the music classroom, West suggests giving

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students a voice in choosing literature and making musical decisions as well as rewarding student growth rather than achievement (2013).

Supporting the importance for teachers to create a positive relationship with their students and foster a healthy and professional culture in their classroom, a 2012 study was able to show that two factors primarily affecting student motivation are integrativeness (an interest in taking on the characteristics of musicians, positive attitudes toward learning instruments, and an interest in music learning) and student attitude toward the learning situation (Burns, MacIntyre, & Potter, 2012). Using an adapted socio-educational model developed by Robert C. Gardner, the researchers asked participants in the study to complete a questionnaire related to student motivation. The resulting data form a clearer picture of which motivational supports teachers can pinpoint in order to improve student attitude and engagement. According to Burns et al. (2012), *“It makes sense that students with positive attitudes toward the teacher and course might also feel a stronger sense of integrativeness with musicians and their music”* (p. 139).

In addition to the perception of the teacher and connection to the material being covered in class, student motivation is also heavily influenced by individual student beliefs regarding their ability to learn. Whether or not a student chooses to continue their involvement in a music program can be directly linked to their sense of personal potential and individual success. Cogdill (2015) states, *“Having a strong music self-concept is a crucial component as to whether or not students will have the motivation to persist in music”* (p. 49). According to Cogdill, continued student participation in an activity depends on a belief that they will be successful with it in the future as well as an understanding of the activity’s value in their lives. By offering

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positive and supportive music experiences to their students, music teachers are more likely to develop students who have positive beliefs about themselves as musicians (2015). The author provides suggestions to classroom teachers which are intended to help improve student motivation. Some of those suggestions include: a heightened level of teacher reflection, an awareness that students and society change over time, a recognition that music educators must adapt to the changing needs, an investment of time and energy getting to know students' backgrounds, as well as, choosing literature and activities that are ability and interest appropriate to foster motivation and engage learning, developing enrichment activities for students who have mastered the current lesson to enhance their creativity and foster student motivation, and providing a safe, welcoming, and engaging learning environment (Cogdill, 2015).

Due to its ability to strengthen the perceived value of a given task combined with boosting one's self-confidence, intrinsic motivation has been shown to be more effective for long term motivation and growth. Helping students develop and maintain intrinsic motivation is a key strategy for music teachers (Hruska, 2011). Using goal theory as a research topic, Hruska investigated the impact of mastery or performance learning achievements on peoples' natural goal selection. He states that a higher level of motivation can be achieved through student mastery of musical concepts. This research validates the need for music teachers to present clear and attainable learning goals to their students and that by helping their students achieve goal mastery, student motivation and engagement increases (2011). Empowering students to reach mastery goals and establish a pattern of individual success strengthens a student's intrinsic motivation. Researcher, Tucker (2018) calls a student's perception of their individual success

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self-efficacy, while Lowe (2012) calls it competence beliefs. Variance in labels aside, the research behind a student's perception of self and their individual musical success reveals that the level of belief in oneself affects future decisions. According to Lowe (2012), "*students who don't feel confident about their current playing abilities start to doubt their ability to improve*" (p. 239). This self-doubt can quickly and negatively affect student motivation and ultimately their participation in a music program.

A model of achievement motivation in music education was published in 1994 by Dr. Edward Asmus. According to Tucker (2018) this model helped to explain the connection between internal student motivation and perceptions of self and external teacher influences. Asmus (1994) is quoted as saying that achievement motivation in music is "*the driving force that promotes students to participate in music learning activities and to acquire the knowledge or skills that are the focus of these activities*" (p.6). His model provides information regarding teaching strategies, music materials, social value, success, teacher feedback, the interactions between student attributions and perceptions of self, and the music learning goal that each braid together to become achievement motivation in the music learning environment (Tucker, 2018). In Tucker's article, the author lists four areas of teacher influence: word choice, performance experiences, intrinsic motivation, and environments. Of the four, word choice category seemed to have the largest impact on student achievement motivation. According to Tucker's (2018) research, "*Students are more likely to make effort attributions if their teachers encourage them with effort attributions*" (p. 7).

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Conclusion

Review of the literature related to student motivation and student choice reveals that numerous outside influences can each play a role in a child's decision to join a beginning band program, while several other influences can be attributed to their decision to remain a part of the program throughout their educational career. Whether it is connected to recruiting strategies that allow directors to present the band program in a fun and positive way or retention techniques such as incorporating student choice, setting achievable learning goals, or offering appropriate and supportive feedback throughout the instructional process, student motivation plays a major role in the success or failure of a band program's enrollment. Understanding the many variables connected to this process and knowing how to implement appropriate strategies, foster positive relationships, and make instructional decisions based on reflection and understanding can be the motivational difference that attracts or repels band students.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Procedures

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the effects of various motivators on student decision-making as it relates to band participation in the middle-grade years.

Population

The population for this study came from an intermediate school, grades 5-6, and a middle school, grades 7-8. Participants (N = 378) in this study were current band students. These

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students, ages 10-14, represent twelve different instrumental band classes, separated by instrument family (brass, woodwind, and percussion) and grade level. The student population in this study comes from a suburban area within the Tri-Cities region of northeast Tennessee. The independent city-school system lies in Washington County and houses all of the Johnson City schools. Participants were chosen based on their enrollment in the schools' band program. All band students were provided a letter of consent and those students choosing not to participate were exempt from completing the survey. The remainder of the band students were included in the research sample for this study.

Sample

The sample for this study came from the 5th-8th grade band classes housed at two different schools. The sample consisted of 378 students from the 416 students enrolled in band. The breakdown of students by grade level was 140 fifth grade students, 85 sixth grade students, 76 seventh grade students, and 77 eighth grade students. All races and genders were used in this study. 167 of the students identified as female and 211 identified themselves as male.

Data Collection Instrument

A quantitative approach was used in the development of the research instrument for this study. Although the survey was anonymous and had no identifiable connection to the participant, a portion of the questionnaire included a request for demographic information. Outside of the demographic information, the remaining data was collected through the use of Likert-scale based questions. All measures were rated on a 5-point scale anchored by Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree. The questions were designed to gather responses which relate to various

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motivational categories. These categories include topics such as: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, peer influence, student-teacher relationships, family support, and self-efficacy.

Procedure

The two schools in which the beginning and middle school band programs are housed were contacted in order to receive permission to conduct the study. Once permission was granted by the principals at both schools, the head of the Curriculum Division of the school system, and the Superintendent of schools, letters of consent were distributed to the band population. The survey was then administered to the qualifying students during each of their regularly scheduled band classes. Through the use of both the informed consent document, as well as verbal instructions, participants were informed and reminded that their data and demographic information were going to be kept anonymous and confidential. Questionnaire administration and its completion were monitored by the supervising teacher of the classes. Although the survey was administered on two different days, it was completed in a single day at each school and under conditions similar to high-stakes testing (i.e. no talking, quiet environment, no distractions).

Research Questions

RQ: How important is the relationship between student and teacher in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?

RQ: How important is instructional style in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?

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RQ: How important are competition and ego in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?

RQ: How important is choice of musical literature in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?

RQ: Do performance activities, such as concerts, competitions, and trips, influence a student's decision to join and remain in band?

RQ: How does a student's rate of success or failure impact their motivation and effort in band?

RQ: How influential is family involvement in regards to motivation and decision-making for middle-grade band students?

RQ: Do social and peer influence impact a student's decisions regarding band?

RQ: How important are a student's sense of enjoyment and personal satisfaction in regards to motivation for a middle-grade band student?

Data Analysis

Several research questions were used to guide the creation of the survey questions as well as the analysis of the data for this study. The questions were categorized based on their relationship to a specific type of motivation. After all data were analyzed, responses were put into an Excel spreadsheet in order to create a frequency distribution. In an effort to consolidate information and provide more accurate statistical information, responses of strongly agree and agree were combined into one result as were the responses of disagree and strongly disagree. Additionally, responses to all questions with related intent and similar inquiry were averaged in order to achieve the statistical information being provided.

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Chapter 4

Results

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the importance of various motivators on student decision-making as it relates to band participation in the middle-grade years and to establish a hierarchy of the impact of those motivators. Motivational categories for this study included: Teacher Relationship/Teaching Style, Family Support, Peer Influence, Intrinsic, Extrinsic, Success/Failure, and Competition/Ego.

Data Collection

The data for this research were collected in a single day during each student's assigned band class. This was accomplished by administering a student interest and motivation survey to a sample of 378 band students enrolled in grades 5-8. The sample came from within the total band population of 416 students who are housed at two different middle-grade schools in suburban, East-Tennessee. The survey was created with a web-based survey tool, it was administered by the lead teacher of each band class, and the participants completed it using their school-supplied laptops. Once the student-survey responses were collected, the questions were organized into motivational categories and a frequency analysis was conducted. Due to age, development, and location differences among the population, the data were grouped by grades 5-6 and grades 7-8 in order to identify differences between the two demographic groups. The demographic profiles of the participating students are displayed in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.

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Table 1

Gender Profile of Participants

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Male	211	55.8%
Female	167	44.2%
Total	378	100%

Table 2

Grade-Level Profile of Participants

<i>Grade-Level</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
5	140	37%
6	85	22.5%
7	76	20.1%
8	77	20.4%
Total	378	100%

Table 3

Ethnicity Profile of Participants

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
African American	50	13.2%
Asian American	10	2.6%
Hispanic/Latino	36	9.5%
Indian	4	1.1%
Middle Eastern	5	1.3%
Native American	11	2.9%
White/Caucasian	208	55%
Other	34	9%
Do not wish to answer	20	5.3%
Total	378	100%

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Teacher Relationship/Teaching Style

Research Question 1

RQ: How important is the relationship between student and teacher in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?

When responding to questions related to teacher-student relationship, 53% (n=120) of 5th and 6th graders indicated that they liked their band teacher and that their retention in the band program is directly connected to that relationship. In addition, 90% (n= 203) of the 5th and 6th grade students indicated that they felt their band director was funny and supportive. 7th and 8th grade responses to these same questions demonstrated that 73% (111) stay in band because they like the teacher and an average of 95% (n=145) find the teacher funny and supportive.

Research Question 2

RQ: How important is instructional style in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?

Responses to questions which were connected to teaching style concluded that an average of 68% (n= 153) of the 5th and 6th grade students perceive their director as a kind, positive, and praise-providing instructor. Those same questions resulted in an average of 78% (n=119) of 7th and 8th grade students having the same perception of their instructor.

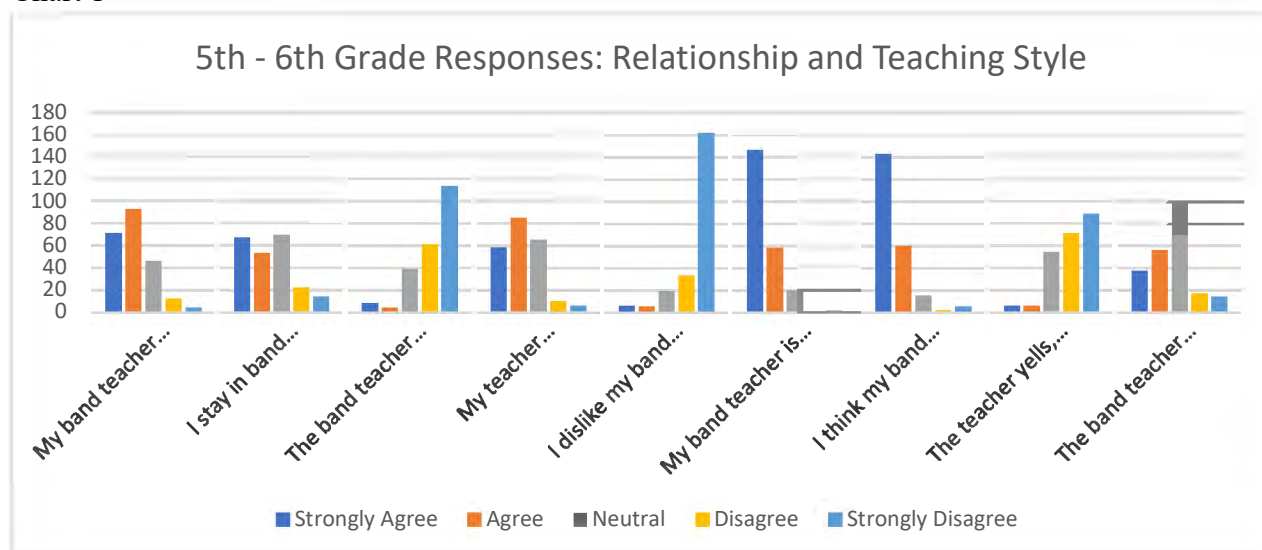
When asked to respond to questions related to teacher negativity (the teacher yells and complains a lot, the teacher doesn't value the student's time, etc.), the 5th and 6th grade students only yielded an average of .5% (n=12) who indicated that they have a negative perception of the director's teaching style. Likewise, 7th and 8th grade band student responses resulted in .5% (n=7) who had a negative impression of their instructor due to the director's teaching style.

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Table 4

5 th – 6 th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My band teacher gives praise and positive feedback often.	71	92	46	12	4
I stay in band because I like the teacher.	67	53	69	22	14
The band teacher doesn't seem to value my time or efforts.	8	4	39	61	113
My teacher consistently uses words that are kind and caring.	58	85	65	10	6
I dislike my band teacher and have considered quitting because of that.	6	5	19	33	162
My band teacher is helpful and supportive.	146	58	20	0	1
I think my band teacher is funny.	143	60	15	2	5
The teacher yells, fusses, or complains a lot.	6	6	54	71	88
The band teacher respects my commitments outside of band and helps me balance my schedule.	37	56	101	17	14

Chart 1

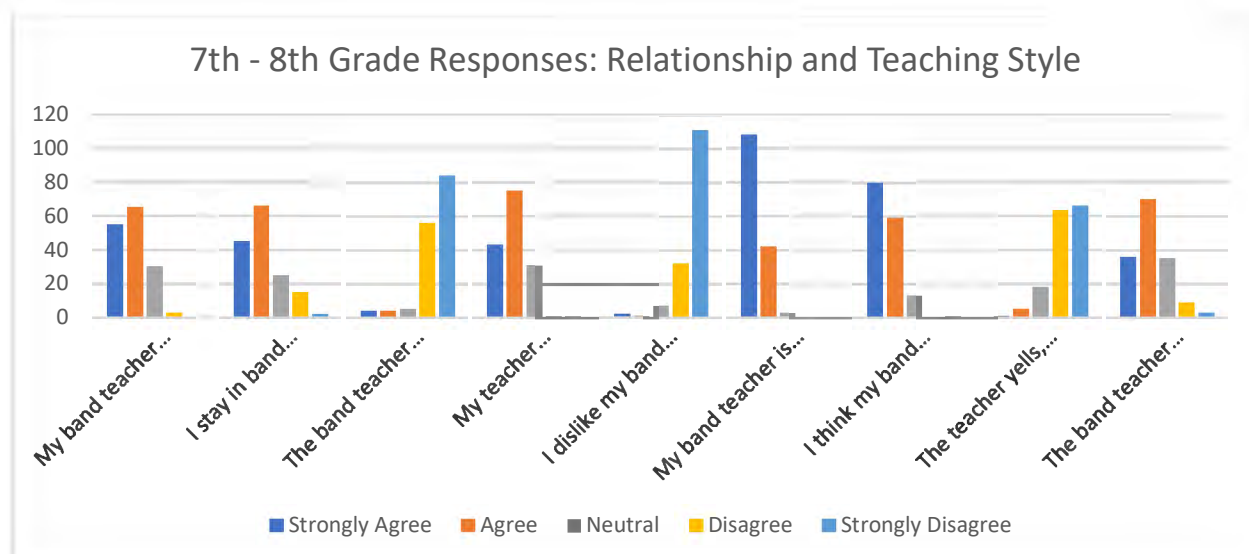


MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Table 5

7th – 8th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My band teacher gives praise and positive feedback often.	55	65	30	3	0
I stay in band because I like the teacher.	45	66	25	15	2
The band teacher doesn't seem to value my time or efforts.	4	4	5	56	84
My teacher consistently uses words that are kind and caring.	43	75	31	1	1
I dislike my band teacher and have considered quitting because of that.	2	1	7	32	111
My band teacher is helpful and supportive.	108	42	3	0	0
I think my band teacher is funny.	80	59	13	0	1
The teacher yells, fusses, or complains a lot.	1	5	18	63	66
The band teacher respects my commitments outside of band and helps me balance my schedule.	36	70	35	9	3

Chart 2



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Competition/Ego**Research Question 3**

RQ: How important are competition and ego in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?

When asked about competitiveness, 32% (n=71) of the 5th and 6th graders stated that they like competing against their classmates. However, 52% (n=116) indicated that they enjoy or would enjoy competing against other bands. Responses to the question about having a desire to be the best player on their instrument only 17% (n=38) indicated that they found being the best to be important to them. When answering those same questions, the 7th and 8th grade student responses resulted in 46% (n=71) as someone who likes to compete against their classmates, 69% (n=106) indicated that they like competing against other bands, and 23% (n=35) had a desire to be the best on their instrument.

Table 6

5th – 6th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I like competing against my classmates in band.	32	39	69	38	47
Playing better than everyone else on my instrument is important to me.	22	16	50	54	83
I like or would like going to band competitions.	69	47	69	24	16

MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Chart 3

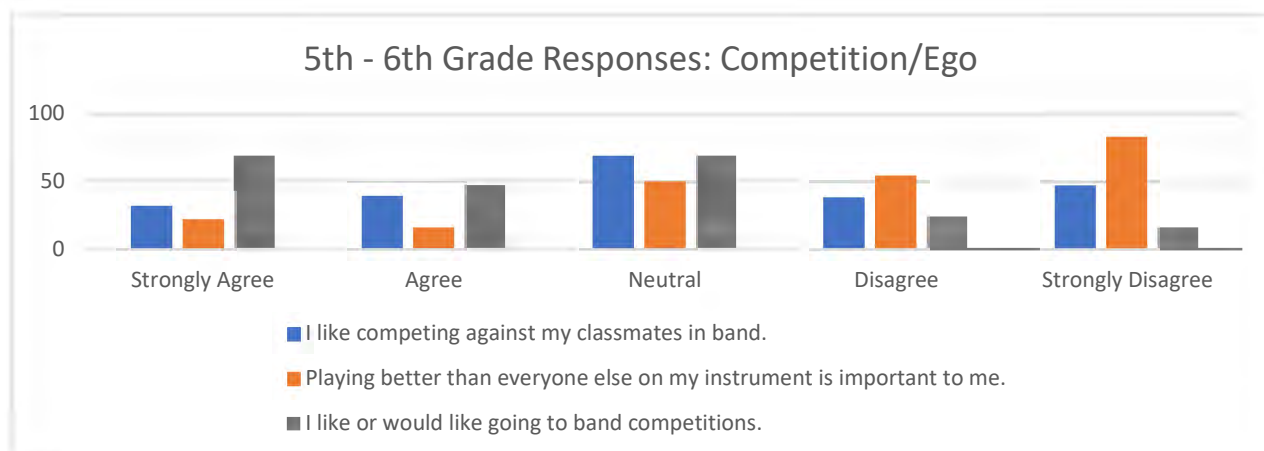
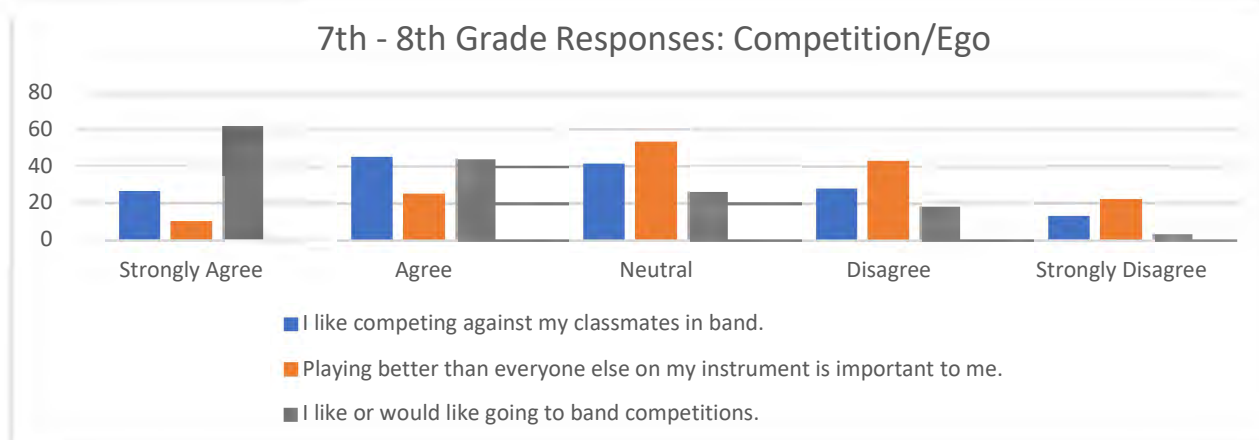


Table 7

7 th – 8 th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I like competing against my classmates in band.	26	45	41	28	13
Playing better than everyone else on my instrument is important to me.	10	25	53	43	22
I like or would like going to band competitions.	62	44	26	18	3

Chart 4



MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Extrinsic Motivation

Research Question 4

RQ: How important is choice of musical literature in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?

Responses to questions about performing in concerts and song selection resulted in an average 77% (n=173) of the 5th and 6th grade students indicating that they enjoyed performing in concerts and liked the songs they played. Similarly, 90% (n=137) of the 7th and 8th graders felt that same way. However, 49% (n=111) and 42% (n=64) also said that they wished the band would play more music that they like.

Research Question 5

RQ: Do performance activities, such as concerts, competitions, and trips, influence a student's decision to join and remain in band?

When asked questions which related to being in the high school band and going on trips with the band an average of just 8% (n=18) of the 5th and 6th graders indicated those areas as important or being a reason for staying in band. 7th and 8th grade responses to those same questions yielded an average of 11% (n=17) who believe those areas to be important and a reason for staying in band. However, 42% (n=95) of the 5th and 6th graders indicated that they would enjoy band more if there were more performance opportunities. 50% (n=76) of the 7th and 8th graders responded likewise when answering the same question.

When asked about other interests and activities that might interfere with band in the future 32% (n=71) of the 5th and 6th graders indicated that they would likely quit band at some point due to other interests. Similarly, 27% (n=42) of the 7th and 8th graders indicated the same.

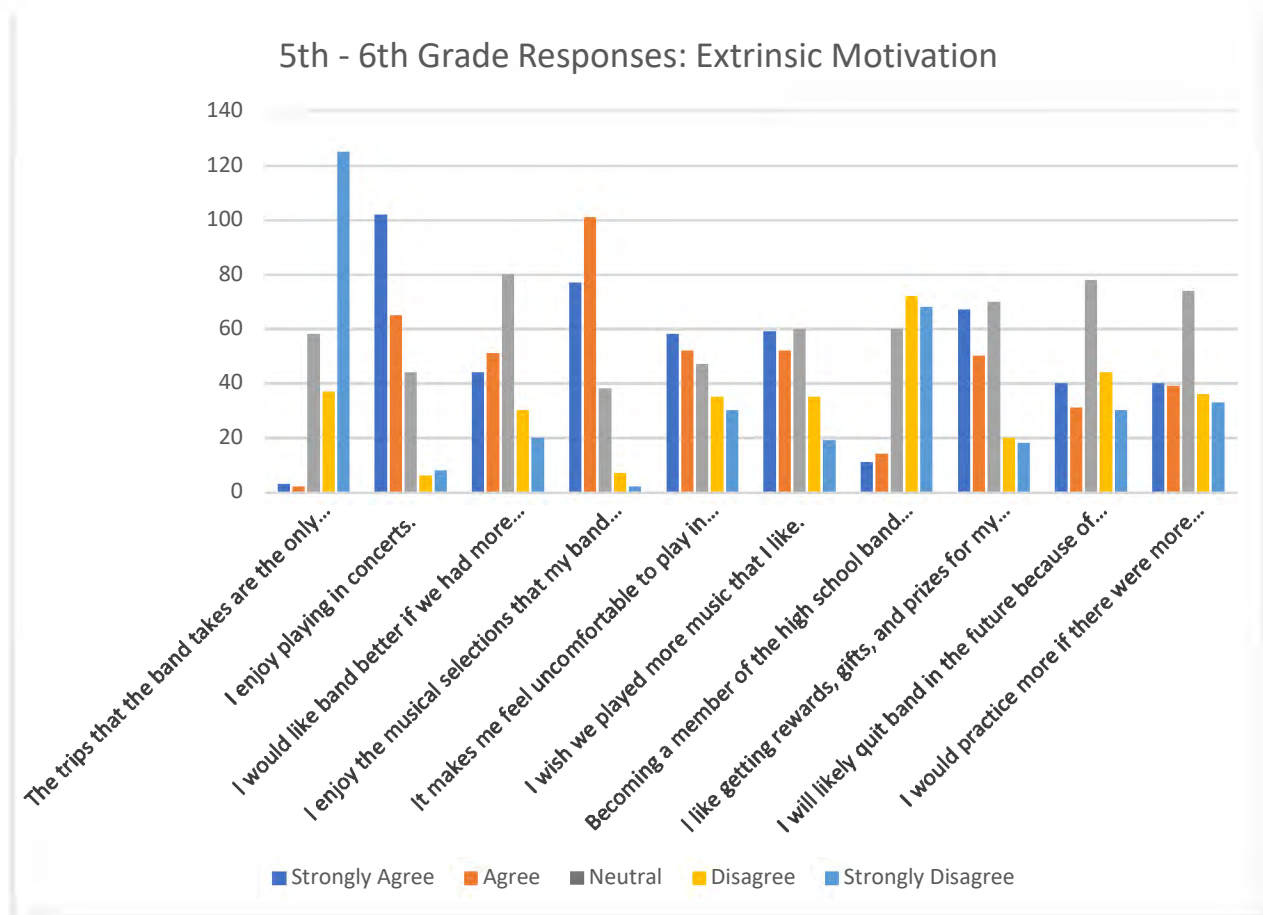
MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Table 8

5th – 6th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The trips that the band takes are the only reason I stay in band.	3	2	58	37	125
I enjoy playing in concerts.	102	65	44	6	8
I would like band better if we had more performances.	44	51	80	30	20
I enjoy the musical selections that my band plays.	77	101	38	7	2
It makes me feel uncomfortable to play in front of others.	58	52	47	35	30
I wish we played more music that I like.	59	52	60	35	19
Becoming a member of the high school band one day is the only reason I stay in band.	11	14	60	72	68
I like getting rewards, gifts, and prizes for my efforts.	67	50	70	20	18
I will likely quit band in the future because of other interests and activities.	40	31	78	44	30
I would practice more if there were more individual playing tests and assessments.	40	39	74	36	33

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Chart 5



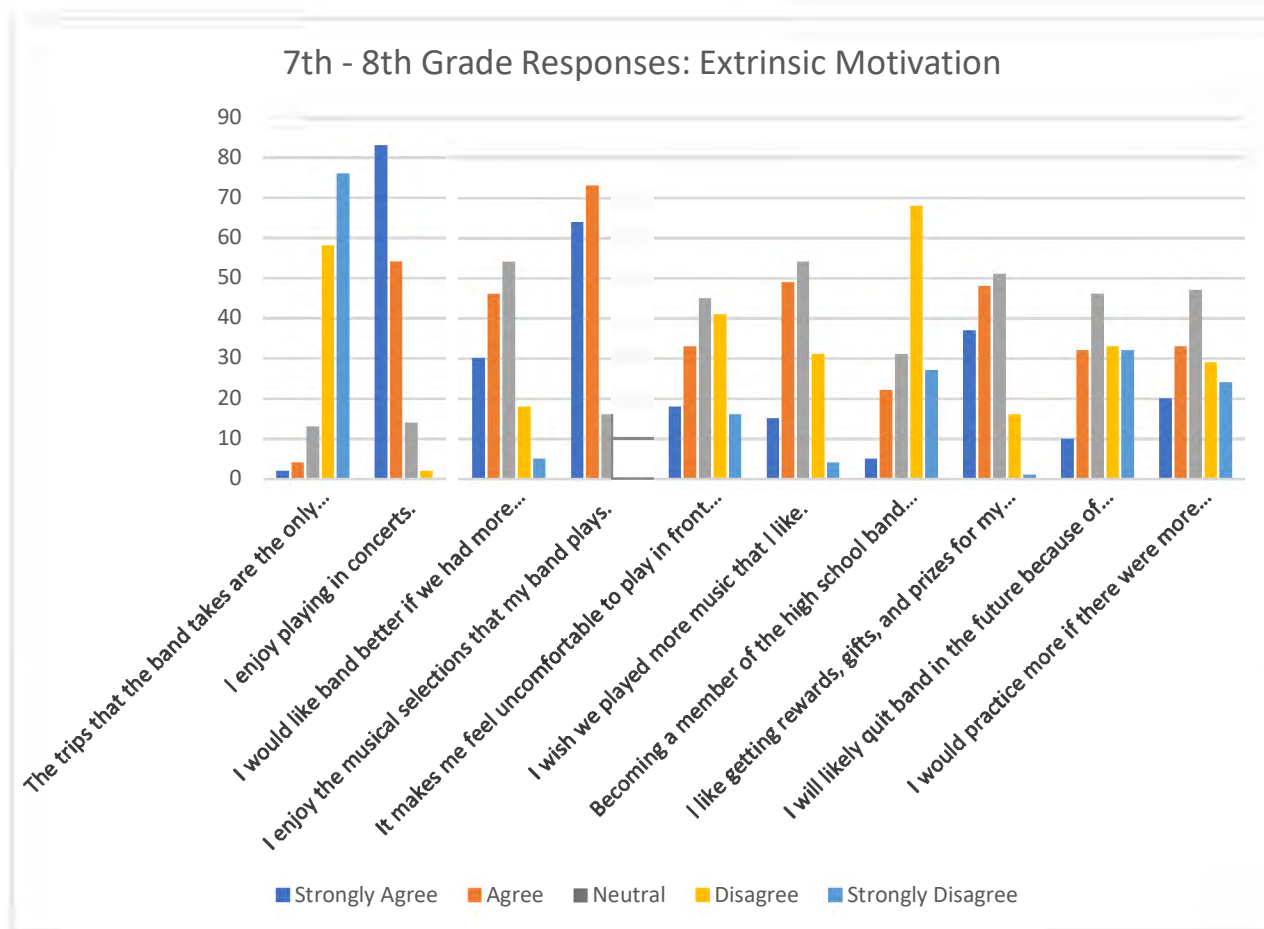
MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Table 9

7th – 8th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The trips that the band takes are the only reason I stay in band.	2	4	13	58	76
I enjoy playing in concerts.	83	54	14	2	0
I would like band better if we had more performances.	30	46	54	18	5
I enjoy the musical selections that my band plays.	64	73	16	0	0
It makes me feel uncomfortable to play in front of others.	18	33	45	41	16
I wish we played more music that I like.	15	49	54	31	4
Becoming a member of the high school band one day is the only reason I stay in band.	5	22	31	68	27
I like getting rewards, gifts, and prizes for my efforts.	37	48	51	16	1
I will likely quit band in the future because of other interests and activities.	10	32	46	33	32
I would practice more if there were more individual playing tests and assessments.	20	33	47	29	24

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Chart 6



MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Success/Failure

Research Question 6

RQ: How does a student's rate of success or failure impact their motivation and effort in band?

When responding to the question about considering quitting when they experience difficulty in class 16% (n=35) of the 5th and 6th grade band students responded that they do. Similarly, 71% (n= 159) of those grade levels responded that playing poorly in class makes them want to practice more. Responses from the 7th and 8th grade band students for those same questions resulted in 10% (n=15) who consider quitting and 78% (n=120) who want to practice when they experience difficulty in band.

44% (n=100) of the 5th and 6th graders recognized that if they played their instrument better that they would enjoy band more while 11% (n=24) indicated that they do not care if they play poorly. Of the 7th and 8th grade responses 53% (n=81) stated they would enjoy band more if they played better while 5% (n=7) responded that they do not care if they make mistakes.

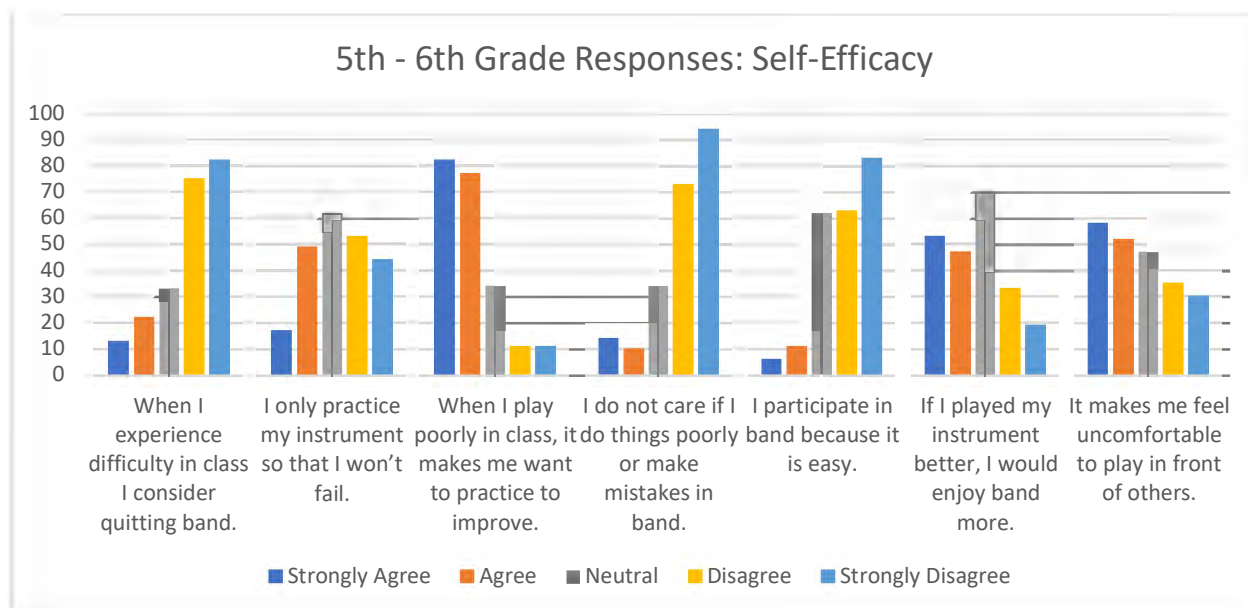
When asked if they participated in band because it is easy 8% (n=17) of the 5th and 6th graders agreed with that inquiry while 65% (n=146) disagreed. Likewise, only 6% (n=9) of the 7th and 8th graders stay in band because it is easy while 79% (n=121) do not remain because they find it to be an easy class.

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Table 10

5th – 6th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
When I experience difficulty in class I consider quitting band.	13	22	33	75	82
I only practice my instrument so that I won't fail.	17	49	62	53	44
When I play poorly in class, it makes me want to practice to improve.	82	77	34	11	11
I do not care if I do things poorly or make mistakes in band.	14	10	34	73	94
I participate in band because it is easy.	6	11	62	63	83
If I played my instrument better, I would enjoy band more.	53	47	70	33	19
It makes me feel uncomfortable to play in front of others.	58	52	47	35	30

Chart 7

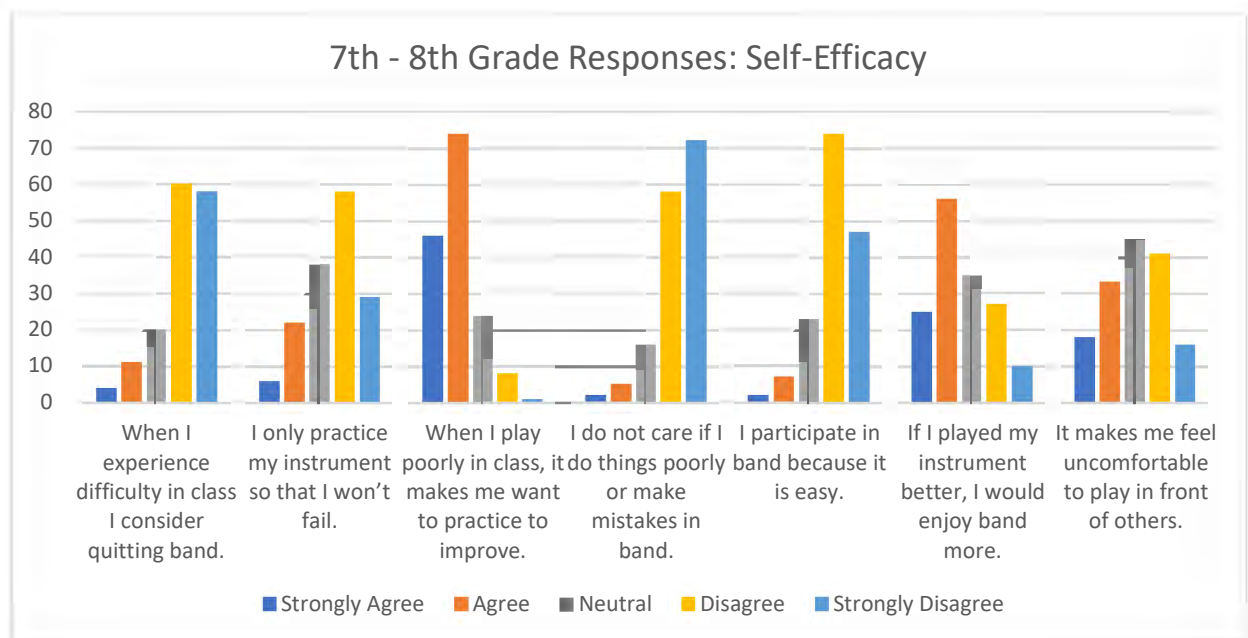


MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Table 11

7th – 8th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
When I experience difficulty in class I consider quitting band.	4	11	20	60	58
I only practice my instrument so that I won't fail.	6	22	38	58	29
When I play poorly in class, it makes me want to practice to improve.	46	74	24	8	1
I do not care if I do things poorly or make mistakes in band.	2	5	16	58	72
I participate in band because it is easy.	2	7	23	74	47
If I played my instrument better, I would enjoy band more.	25	56	35	27	10
It makes me feel uncomfortable to play in front of others.	18	33	45	41	16

Chart 8



MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Family Support

Research Question 7

RQ: How influential is family involvement in regards to motivation and decision making for middle-grade band students?

In response to the questions about band participation, 16% (n=37) of the 5th and 6th grade band students decided to enroll in band because their parents wanted them to while 60% (n=136) joined band for reasons other than parent request. Of the 7th and 8th grade band students, 27% (n=41) joined band because of parent involvement while 50% (n=77) joined band for other reasons. Similarly, when asked if their decision to join band was due to family members having previous band experience the responses were quite mixed. The 5th and 6th grade results show that 33% (n= 74) chose band because of their family members' band experience, 40% (n=90) did not take band as a result of family member's history in band, and 27% (n=61) were neutral. The 7th and 8th grade responses showed a similar spread. 44% (n= 67) chose band because of their family members' band experience, 41% (n=63) did not take band as a result of family member's history in band, and 15% (n=23) were neutral.

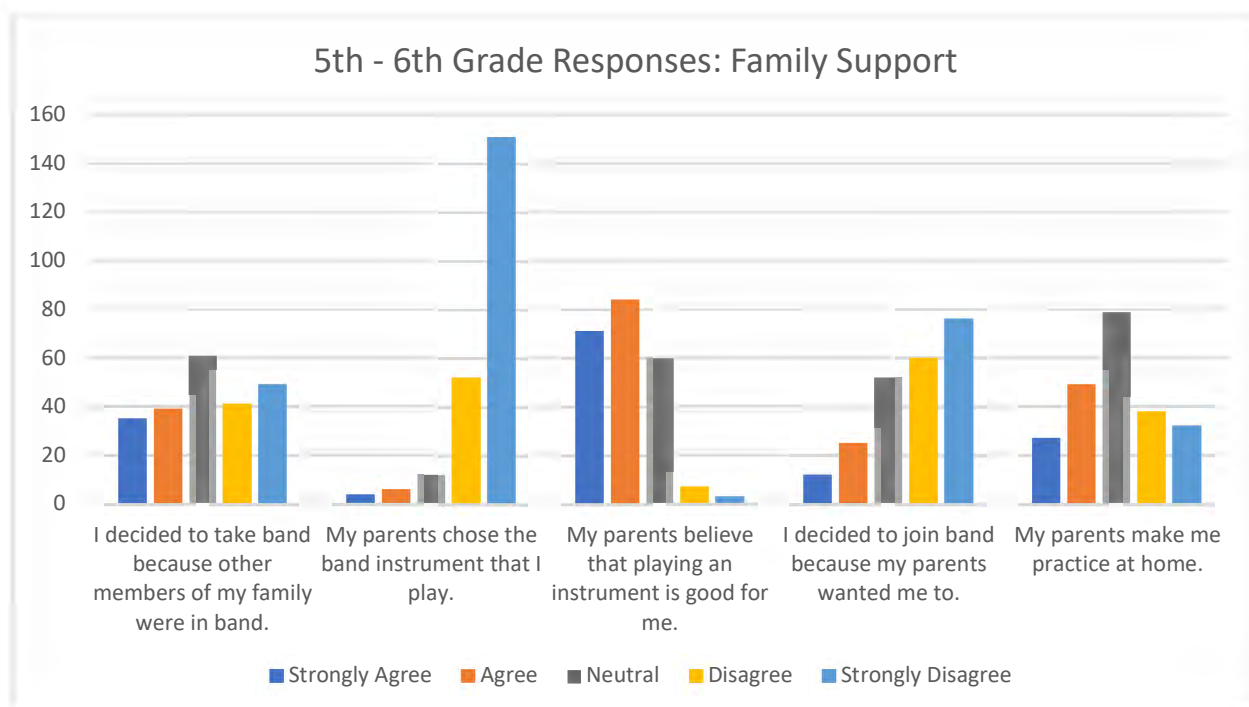
Related to the previous questions, the student responses to the inquiry about parental involvement in instrument selection revealed that only 4% (n=10) of the 5th and 6th graders' parents chose their instrument for them, while 90% (n=203) selected their instrument for reasons other than parental mandate. Similarly, 5% (n=7) of the 7th and 8th grade band students indicated that their parents picked the instrument while 92% (n=141) chose the instrument they play based on reasons other than parent choice.

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Table 12

5th – 6th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I decided to take band because other members of my family were in band.	35	39	61	41	49
My parents chose the band instrument that I play.	4	6	12	52	151
My parents believe that playing an instrument is good for me.	71	84	60	7	3
I decided to join band because my parents wanted me to.	12	25	52	60	76
My parents make me practice at home.	27	49	79	38	32

Chart 9

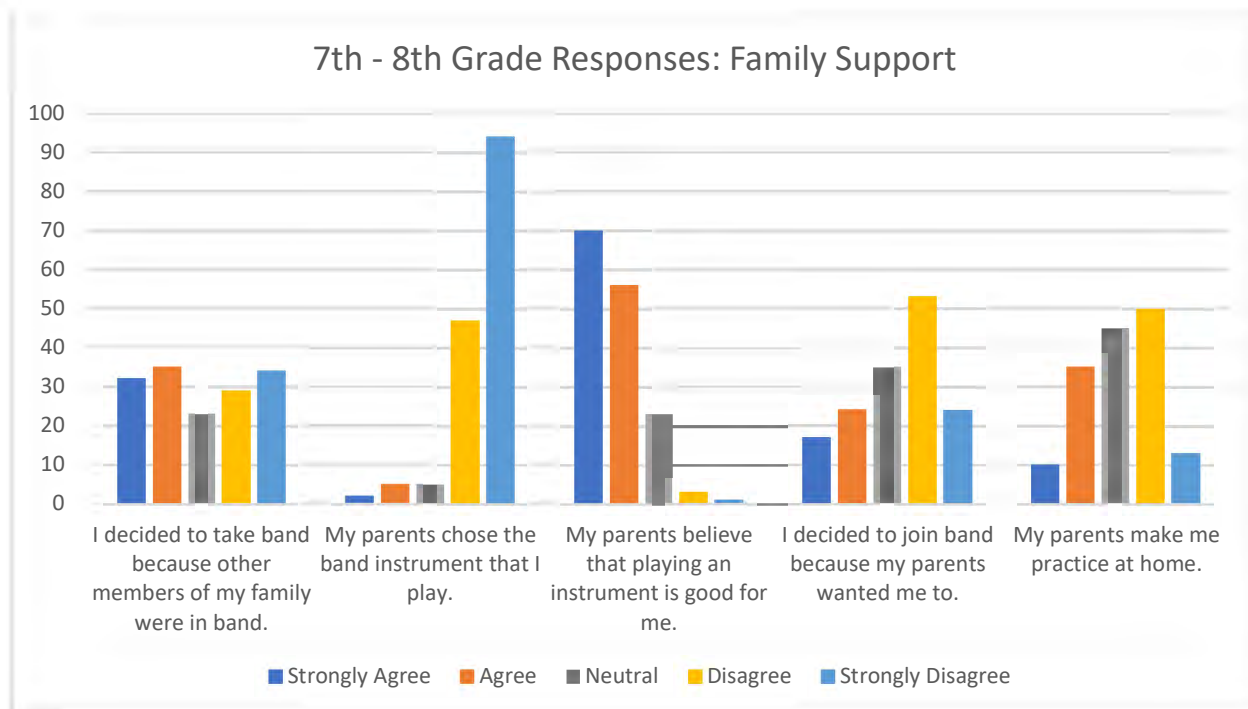


MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Table 13

7 th – 8 th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I decided to take band because other members of my family were in band.	32	35	23	29	34
My parents chose the band instrument that I play.	2	5	5	47	94
My parents believe that playing an instrument is good for me.	70	56	23	3	1
I decided to join band because my parents wanted me to.	17	24	35	53	24
My parents make me practice at home.	10	35	45	50	13

Chart 10



MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Peer Involvement/Influence

Research Question 8

RQ: Do social and peer influence impact a student's decisions regarding band?

Questions related to joining and staying in band because of friends also being band members resulted in an average of 57% (n=128) of the 5th and 6th grade band students did not choose to enroll and do not remain in band because of friendships with their classmates while an additional 22% (n=50) were neutral to the inquiries. Among the 7th and 8th grade band students, an average of 63% (n=96) did not choose to enroll and do not remain in band because of friendships with their classmates while an additional 22% (n=33) were neutral.

Regarding teacher-perception and peer-perception of band students, 70% (N=158) of the 5th and 6th graders indicated that they felt respected by their other teachers while an additional 23% (n= 51) were neutral to the question. An average of 84% (n=189) were not being picked on because of being a band member by non-band students and were not embarrassed to be in the band. Of the 7th and 8th grade band students, 71% (n=108) of them responded that their other teachers respected them with an additional 24% (n=36) choosing neutral. An average of 91% (n=139) of 7th and 8th graders indicated that they weren't picked on or were embarrassed due to being a band member.

Related to peer influence, only an average of 9% (n=20) of 5th and 6th graders say that they make decisions about school based on what their friends do or think. Similarly, an average

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of only 7% (n=11) of 7th and 8th grade band students make choices based on their friendships and peer influences.

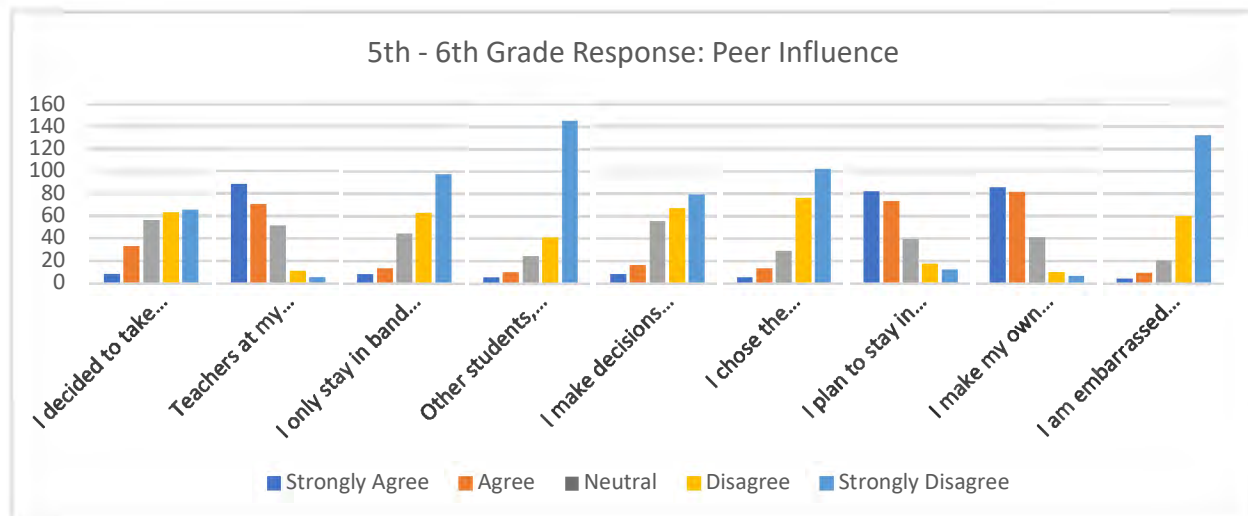
When asked about decision-making 74% (n=166) of the 5th and 6th grade band students revealed that they make their own choices about school activities regardless of their friend's approval. Of the 7th and 8th grade students, 87% (n=133) indicate that peer approval has no impact on their decision-making. In connection to peer influence on decision-making, 69% (n=155) of the 5th and 6th graders responded that they plan to stay enrolled in band even if their friends do not. Likewise, 67% (n=103) of the 7th and 8th grade students state that they will stay in band even if their friends decide to quit.

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Table 14

5 th – 6 th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I decided to take band because my friends joined band.	8	33	56	63	65
Teachers at my school appreciate and respect the students who are in band.	88	70	51	11	5
I only stay in band because my friends are in band.	8	13	44	63	97
Other students, who aren't in band, pick on or make fun of me for being in band.	5	10	24	41	145
I make decisions about school based on what my friends do and think.	8	16	55	67	79
I chose the instrument that I play because my friend plays it too.	5	13	29	76	102
I plan to stay in band even if my friends quit.	82	73	39	17	12
I make my own choices about participating in school activities even if my friends disagree or choose otherwise.	85	81	41	10	6
I am embarrassed to be in the band.	4	9	20	60	132

Chart 11

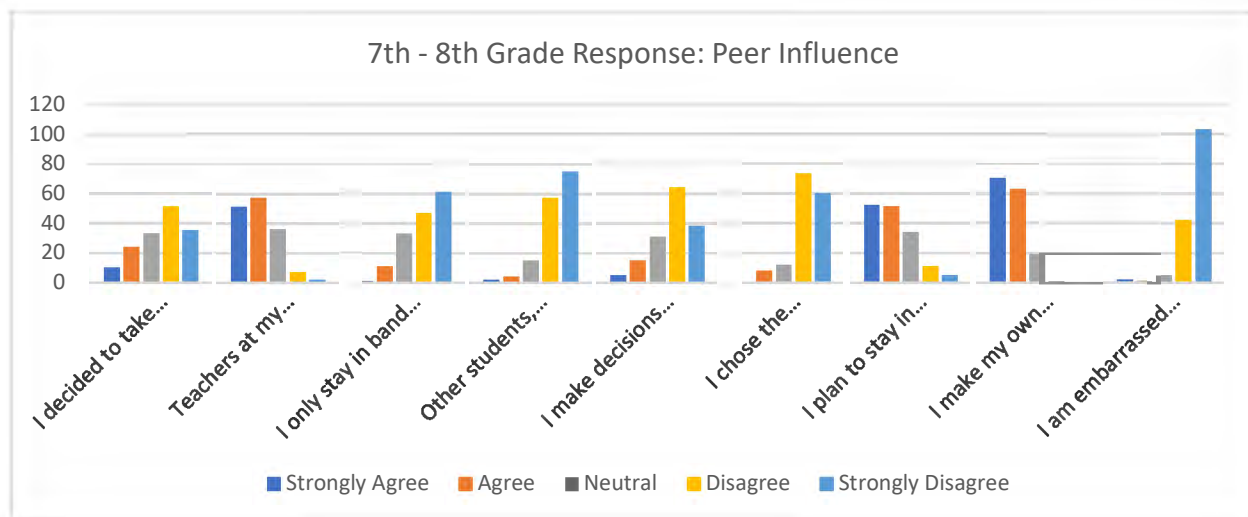


MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Table 15

7th – 8th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I decided to take band because my friends joined band.	10	24	33	51	35
Teachers at my school appreciate and respect the students who are in band.	51	57	36	7	2
I only stay in band because my friends are in band.	1	11	33	47	61
Other students, who aren't in band, pick on or make fun of me for being in band.	2	4	15	57	75
I make decisions about school based on what my friends do and think.	5	15	31	64	38
I chose the instrument that I play because my friend plays it too.	0	8	12	73	60
I plan to stay in band even if my friends quit.	52	51	34	11	5
I make my own choices about participating in school activities even if my friends disagree or choose otherwise.	70	63	19	1	0
I am embarrassed to be in the band.	2	1	5	42	103

Chart 12



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Intrinsic Motivation

Research Question 9

RQ: How important are a student's sense of enjoyment and personal satisfaction in regards to motivation for a middle-grade band student?

79% (n=178) of the 5th and 6th graders shared that they were able to choose the band instrument that they wanted to play when joining band. 91% (n=139) of the 7th and 8th graders responded in the same way. Related to that inquiry, 74% (n=167) of the 5th and 6th graders indicated that playing a musical instrument makes them happy while 83% (n=127) responded likewise. When asked about their enjoyment of band, an average of 62% (n=139) of the 5th and 6th graders indicated that they either look forward to attending band class or that it was one of their favorite classes at school. An average of 75% (n=116) of the 7th and 8th grade band students responded in the same manner.

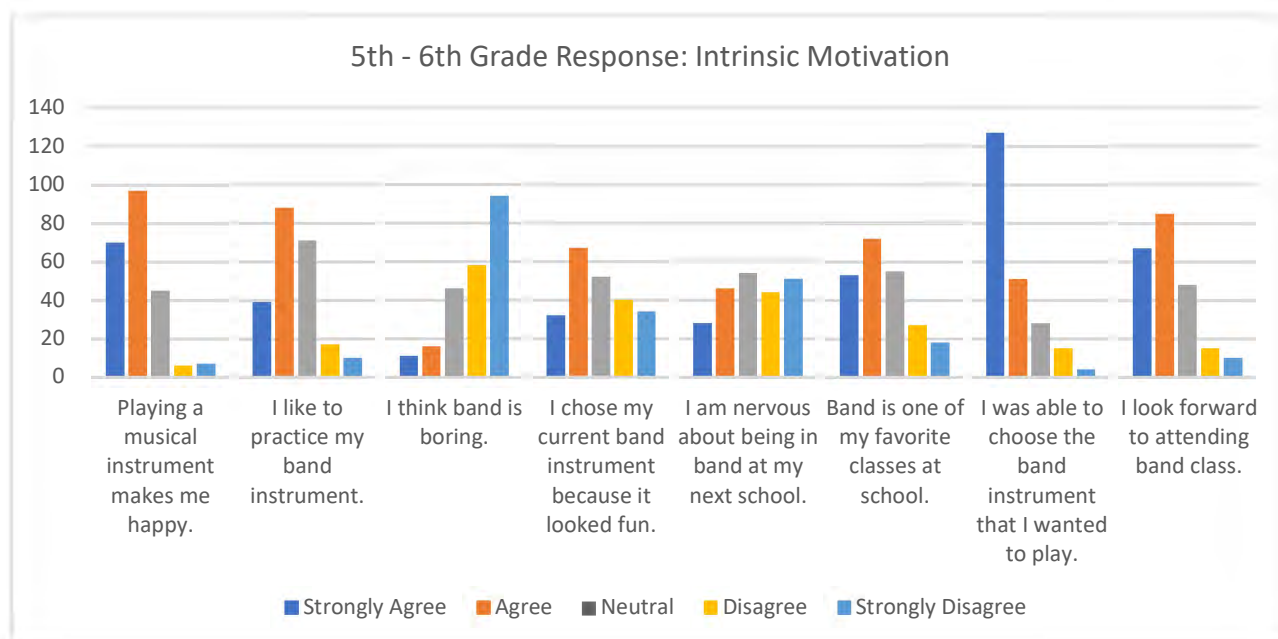
In response to the question about a lack of engagement 12% (n=27) of the 5th and 6th graders indicated that they thought band was boring while 68% (n=152) disagreed with that sentiment. For the same question, 3% (n=5) of the 7th and 8th graders indicated that they thought band was boring while 83% (n=127) disagreed. When asked about anxiety over future band participation, 33% (n=74) of the 5th and 6th graders indicated that they were nervous about being in band at their next school. In response to the same question, 31% (n=47) of the 7th and 8th graders revealed that they were nervous about joining the high school band.

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Table 16

5th – 6th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Playing a musical instrument makes me happy.	70	97	45	6	7
I like to practice my band instrument.	39	88	71	17	10
I think band is boring.	11	16	46	58	94
I chose my current band instrument because it looked fun.	32	67	52	40	34
I am nervous about being in band at my next school.	28	46	54	44	51
Band is one of my favorite classes at school.	53	72	55	27	18
I was able to choose the band instrument that I wanted to play.	127	51	28	15	4
I look forward to attending band class.	67	85	48	15	10

Chart 13

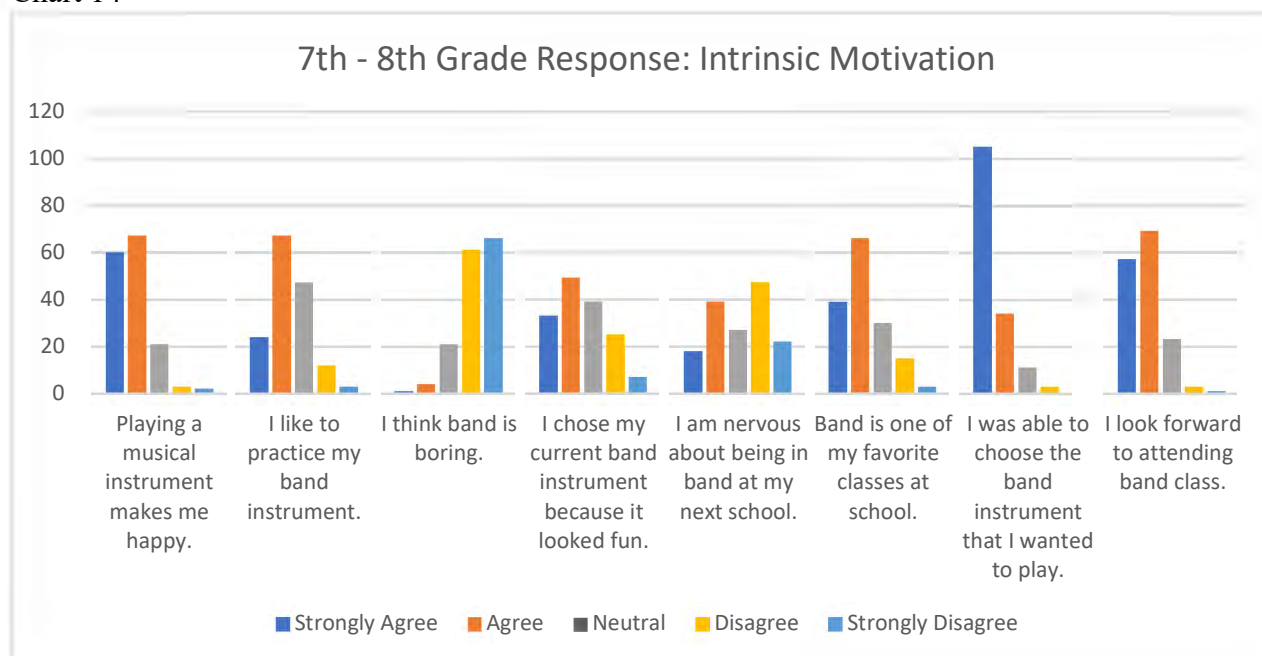


MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Table 17

7th – 8th Grade Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Playing a musical instrument makes me happy.	60	67	21	3	2
I like to practice my band instrument.	24	67	47	12	3
I think band is boring.	1	4	21	61	66
I chose my current band instrument because it looked fun.	33	49	39	25	7
I am nervous about being in band at my next school.	18	39	27	47	22
Band is one of my favorite classes at school.	39	66	30	15	3
I was able to choose the band instrument that I wanted to play.	105	34	11	3	0
I look forward to attending band class.	57	69	23	3	1

Chart 14



MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Chapter 5

Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

The purpose of this study was to investigate various motivators on student decision-making as they relate to band participation in the middle-grade years. The goal was to identify which motivation type had the greatest impact on student choice and to use that knowledge for the evaluation of current recruiting and retention strategies. Motivation types included in the study were teacher-student relationships, peer influence, family involvement, success/failure, intrinsic, extrinsic, and competition/ego. Through the use of a frequency analysis of the survey responses, the data was used by the researcher to arrive at the conclusions identified within the following chapter. In addition to a summary of findings, this chapter contains the conclusion, recommendations, and implications from the study.

Findings

The relationship between a teacher and their student has the potential to play a key role in the student's level of interest, engagement, productivity, and success in a class. Connected to the teacher-student relationship is the presentation and instructional style of the classroom teacher. Again, like forming a positive connection with the students, how a teacher presents the material and the environment, culture, and climate of the classroom that the teacher creates can have either a positive or negative effect on the students. Research questions 1 and 2, "*How important is the relationship between student and teacher in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?*" and "*How important is instructional style in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?*", were aimed at studying the effects of teacher connections, teacher likability,

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and overall classroom climate. A large majority of participants responded that they like their current band director, they thought the teacher was funny, they agreed that the teacher offered supportive and helpful feedback, and they stay in band because of the teacher. However, there were 14 students who indicated that they did not care for the teacher and have considered quitting band because of their dislike. This data aligns with research by Rush et al. (2014) which found that building a healthy relationship with your students makes a positive impact on retention rates. Without further research, it is difficult to tell if other factors may have also been involved in their decision-making and opinion of the teacher, but this information suggests that the relationship between the teacher and the student can be powerful enough to either secure a child's ongoing involvement in the band program or encourage their departure.

Research question 3, "*How important are competition and ego in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?*", investigated the interest of competing and internal drive as a motivator for young band students. Within the 5th and 6th grade students who participated in this study an average of 24% of them indicated a desire to be competitive with their classmates or a drive to be the best at their instrument, while another 26% had a neutral response. However, when asked about competing against bands from other schools, the percentage of students who indicated a desire to do that increased to 52%. Similarly, the 7th and 8th grade responses to competition among their classmates and being the best on their instrument yielded a 35% agreement while simultaneously had 69% indicate that they like or would like competing against other bands. This data would indicate that competing against classmates and striving for individual excellence among peers are relatively low motivators. With an increase in the percentage of student who expressed interest in competing against students from other schools,

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the researcher can state that competition/ego was somewhat important to the participants as long as it was not against their classmates. Findings from a related study by Dray (2014) were similar to this. Dray's research also included high school students. Both studies revealed that student interest-level in competition tends to increase as the students get older but that competing against friends was far less of a motivator than competing against students from other schools. Overall, competition/ego seems to only be an average motivator for students at this age level.

Extrinsic motivation was investigated by research questions 4 and 5. Data gathered from the questions, "*How important is choice of musical literature in regards to motivation for middle-grade band students?*" and "*Do performance activities, such as concerts, competitions, and trips, influence a student's decision to join and remain in band?*", were inconclusive. While a large majority of the students indicated that they enjoy the music being played, they also expressed an interest in playing more music that they like to listen to. In other words, they are happy with the selection of music being performed but also wish that more of their own musical interests were being reflected in the literature. Going on trips, performing in concerts, and participating in competitions was appealing to some band students, but many had neutral responses or indicated that those extrinsic motivators were not important to them. This was especially true for the 5th and 6th grade students. Some of this can be attributed to the fact that those students have very few travel or competition related experiences. Therefore, the younger students are not sure what those experiences are like in order to be able to accurately respond. Similarly, responses to questions in the survey about prizes and rewards yielded data that suggest current band students do not need a prize or reward to be offered to them. Studies by Hruska (2011), Rush (2014), and Jones et al. (2018) each found that external forces and activities such as

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song choice, student seating, performance opportunities, incentives, and musical goals all play a role in student motivation and have the ability to convince a student to remain in the program or provide them reasons to leave. Although results of the current study were not as conclusive, they did validate that those extrinsic motivators are being considered by students and, as such, song choice and all performance activities will be added to their feelings about their overall band experience. Independently, musical selections and performances may not retain or remove a student, but in combination with other motivators, they could certainly impact a student's decision about future involvement in the band program.

Responses to the survey regarding research question 6, "*How does a student's rate of success or failure impact their motivation and effort in band?*", yielded the following information. When asked if they could identify a connection between practicing their instrument and musical success, the majority of students indicated affirmatively. They were aware that increased practice would lead to greater musical success and indicated that playing poorly in class makes them want to practice more. Interestingly, when asked about their level of musical enjoyment, only half of the students stated that they would enjoy band even more if they played their instrument better. This leads the researcher to believe that a student's level of enjoyment and interest in band is not necessarily dependent on their musical success. In fact, very few students indicated that they consider quitting when they experience difficulty in band class. This is contradictory to the research conducted by Lowe (2012) which stated that a student's self-confidence plays a major role in their decision to stay in band. Additionally, although the percentage was low, there were even responses that indicated some students have no concern at all if they do poorly or make mistakes in band. This data contests previous research done by

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Cogdill on the same topic. According to Cogdill (2015), continued student participation in an activity depends on a belief that they will be successful as well as an understanding of the activity's value in their lives. The data from this study leads the researcher to speculate that the degree of a student's success or failure in class may not have as much of an impact on their decision to remain in band as previously thought.

Research by Bazan & Bayley (2009), Kinney (2010), Rush (2014) and Wilcher (2016) each suggests that family support and peer influence play a critical role in student motivation and decision-making. According to those studies, family support and peer influence are important variables in all aspects of a child's education and school activities and, as such, have the capacity to persuade a student to choose either with or against their own personal desires. Whether related to academics, athletics, music, clubs, or other extra-curricular activities, having the backing and involvement of the student's family and friends can impact the success of the child in a positive way. Research question 7, "*How influential is family involvement in regards to motivation and decision-making for middle-grade band students?*", investigated the impact of family involvement on a student's decision to join or remain in band. Data indicated that family support and involvement seemed to be present and were somewhat important. However, it did not appear to be a heavy influence on the decision-making of the students. A surprisingly low percentage of students joined band or selected their instrument as a result of family influence. Even if a family member was also a band student at some point, the choice of the student to take band and their choice of which instrument to play was minimally affected. As such, although family involvement existed it did not seem to play a key role in motivation.

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Regarding life choices, students can potentially be highly influenced by their peers throughout their school-years. Peer pressure and friend influence were investigated in hopes to reach a greater understanding of the extent to which these outside forces impact a middle-grade student's decisions as they relate to band. Similar to family involvement and equally surprising, peer influence also did not have the high level of effect on student decision-making that the researcher thought it would. Research question 8 asked, "*Do social and peer influence impact a student's decisions regarding band?*" While some students agreed that they joined band, stayed in band, or played a particular instrument because their friend did, many students indicated that they make their own choices, regardless of what their friends did or said, and would stay in band even if their friends did not. Related to pressure from external forces, the participants also indicated that they feel not only felt appreciated by their other teachers but are also largely not embarrassed about being in the band among their peers. While some students will certainly make choices to stay or quit based on peer involvement, a majority of the students indicated that friendships play only a small part in their decision making regarding band. Although the findings from this study do not fully align with previous research, without input from students who were in band at one time but are no longer in the program the information collected about the role of family involvement and peer influence may not be an accurate measure of their impact.

Research question 9 asked, "*How important are a student's sense of enjoyment and personal satisfaction in regards to motivation for a middle-grade band student?*" This question was designed to focus on the area of intrinsic motivation. Topics such as instrument choice, boredom, and general enjoyment were included in this category. Nearly all of the participants in this study indicated that they were able to choose the instrument that they wanted to play and that

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playing a musical instrument makes them happy. Interestingly, responses to the questions about looking forward to band class and band being one of their favorite classes during the day yielded lower percentages. When asked if band was boring 32% of the 5th and 6th graders agreed or were neutral. The 7th and 8th grade responses to that question yielded a 17% rate of agree or neutral response. From this data, the researcher speculates that the participants in this study are generally happy about playing an instrument but have a less-than-optimal perception of the structure, routine, or presentation of band class each day. This is especially true at the 5th and 6th grade level. After having compared that data to the average attrition rate of the school being used in this study the researcher believes that intrinsic motivation plays a key role in student choice and retention. A study completed by Dray (2014) had similar results regarding intrinsic motivation. Dray's research investigated overall enjoyment and interest in band and how those levels of positive or negative feelings toward band impact a student's decision to continue in the program. The findings of the current study, as discussed, also validate the impact of intrinsic motivation.

Conclusions

Upon comparison of the participants' responses, a trend is apparent as the students get older. Data gathered from the 7th and 8th grade student responses almost always yielded more favorable outcomes. A higher percentage of the older students responded positively to nearly all questions throughout the survey. This could be attributed to the simple fact that those students have been members of the band for a greater length of time and, as such, have already demonstrated a desire to remain in band as well as a fondness for playing their instrument. Another possible reason for the higher percentages could be that the students who might have

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answered the survey questions in a more negative way have already dropped out of the program.

Data from the study revealed that a large majority of the band students like their teacher and stay in band because of the connection they have with their director. This supports the research of Weiss (2015) which discovered that there is a correlation between the quality of the teacher-student relationship and the level of student engagement and motivation. Similarly, 2014 research by Dray discovered that students remain in band because of positive student-teacher relationships, peer-involvement, and a personal connection they have to music and the band. Dray's research also states that many students remain in band because they find it fun and it makes them happy (2014). Results of the current study revealed mixed responses to the questions related to band being fun, something they look forward to, or a favorite class of the day. With previous research indicating that feelings of enjoyment are connected to a student's decision to remain in band, the mixed responses from this study lead the researcher to speculate that some of the attrition problems within the program could be related to this area of motivation.

Further analysis revealed that the younger students generally liked to play their instruments, but experienced boredom and a lack of excitement about going to band. Even though those same students indicated a fondness of their teacher, they still expressed feelings of being disengaged. This low level of interest and lack of enthusiasm can easily motivate a student to want to try something else. The high level of excitement about band that once existed has fallen and, without intervention, can potentially lead to low retention rates. This is consistent with the research by Weiss (2015) which states that a reason for declining band numbers is the inability of the band director to hold the interests of his/her students. The same was true at the

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upper grade levels, although at a much lesser rate. Once again, the difference between the responses of the different grades could partly be attributed to a high level of commitment to band by the older students; but, in alignment with research by Hruska (2011) and Jones et al. (2018), it may also be connected to factors such as choice of musical literature, classroom climate, culture, instructional pacing, or social connections present during class.

Although there were many students who indicated that they liked the teacher and stay in band because of the teacher, there was also a small percentage who responded with negative feelings towards their teacher and plan to quit band because of that relationship. Research does not suggest that all students must be happy all of the time in order to remain involved in an activity. However, making efforts to connect with students and establish the kind of positive relationship which can withstand the occasional turbulence known to occur during the adolescent years is a required element of retaining students who may otherwise drop out.

One of the primary reasons given for potentially quitting band in the future was related to the student's interest in other activities. From the survey question about quitting band in the future because of other activities and interests, an average of 30% of the students indicated that they would likely quit band in the future. This is consistent with previous research regarding the effects of non-music factors on band enrollment. Research previously published by Bazan & Bayley (2009), Rush (2014), and Wilcher (2016) states that conflicting academic or elective choices and other extracurricular commitments can become reasons for students to drop out of band. For the band program involved in this study, that would equate to over 100 students who

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indicate that they will likely quit in the future due to other interests. This information leads the researcher to speculate that certain motivators must be more powerful influencers than others and that the motivators which most impact a student's decision-making can potentially change as the student gets older. Discovering what would motivate a student who seemingly enjoys band and who likes the director to quit band in order to do another activity would provide very useful information for band directors.

Although the data from this study were unable to identify a specific motivational category that effects student decision-making more than all the others, its findings were consistent with similar research studies. The results indicate that a combination of motivators is involved in a child's thinking process. A student's decision to join or remain in band is likely to be impacted by one or more of the many motivators which exist in a person's life. Basic curiosity, peer influence, family history, experiencing a live performance, meeting the teacher, or even the look of an instrument can all have some influence on a child's decision to join band. Emotional connections to the teacher, an event or activity, a piece of music, or simply the act of playing the instrument that they enjoy can each have a tremendous influence on a student's decision to remain in band. This study examined seven categories of motivation which could play a role in a student's choice to be involved in a middle-grade band located in a suburban school district of East Tennessee. Although data from this study was unable to provide a conclusive answer to the simple question "Why do students join and remain in band?", the survey responses, when analyzed as a whole, were able to provide a clearer picture of the factors that influence those choices as well as indicators that should be investigated further.

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Recommendations

The following are recommendations for this study:

1. If a student enjoys band, likes the teacher, was able to choose the instrument they wanted to play, feels supported in their efforts, then why would they choose to quit band due to some other interest? Why not simply do both? Future research should be considered regarding this topic.
2. Similarly, since the majority of participants in this study indicated that they liked band, thought that it was fun, enjoyed the music that they performed, and made decisions about school based on their own feelings and interests, then future research should be conducted on each individual motivation type with a focus on identifying specific contributors to each motivator. Questions related to what specifically makes the class, the teacher, or the music fun for students should be investigated.
3. Future research should include students who were enrolled in a middle-grade band class and have decided to quit at some point before entering high school. Investigating the reason(s) behind their decision to no longer participate would give valuable information related to motivation, student choice, and retention concerns.
4. Specific to the schools whose students participated in this study, since the greatest rate of attrition exists from year one to year two, further research on first-year band students which focuses on success/achievement as well as peer influence is recommended.

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Limitations

1. The possibility of inaccurate data related to neutral responses provided by students who may not have either the band experiences or cognitive awareness to choose the most accurate response on a Likert-Scale. An unusually high rate of neutral responses to some of the questions could be explained by this scenario.
2. A lack of short answer questions which specifically ask the participants to indicate their individual reasons for decision-making allows for a potential misinterpretation of their Likert-Scale responses. A mixed-method research study could have helped eliminate possible misinterpretations and may have provided more accurate data.

Implications

Results of this study suggest that students from suburban East Tennessee are motivated by a combination of various motivational topics. In some cases, student decision-making was truly impacted by a sole motivational area. However, the data demonstrates that students whose ages range from 10-14 make their decisions about joining and remaining in band based on input from numerous sources. Family support, peer influence, relationship with the teacher, the possibility of enjoyment and future performance opportunities, basic enjoyment, and musical success all play a role in the decision-making process for band students. Of the motivational topics that were included in this study, teacher relationship and intrinsic motivation were the two areas which had the greatest influence on whether or not a student would choose to remain in band or quit. Interest in other extra-curricular activities was also a strong factor in a student's

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choice of activity in which to be involved. Armed with the information from this study, band directors in similar demographic and regional situations can reflect on the numerous aspects of their own band programs and potentially modify areas of recruiting, teaching style, relationship building, performance opportunities, or student input in order to improve or maintain their own levels of recruitment and retention.

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Appendix



Institutional Review Board Decision Tree

Based on your responses, you do not need approval from the IRB.

It looks like your study is exempt from IRB approval. **You should have your study approved by the highest person in the department or area overseeing the targeted participants.** For example, a campus-wide survey should be approved by the President, a student or faculty survey should be approved by the Academic Dean, and a survey specific to a certain major should be approved by the Area Chair.



[Refer to 45 CFR 46.101\(b\)\(5\)](#)

However, you should carefully review all procedures and questions to ensure that anonymity is protected especially in the case of institutional surveys where questions such as age, race and gender could be used to identify participants even if they are not asked for their names.

[Return to Beginning](#)

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JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS
APPROVAL FORM FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALSREQUESTOR'S NAME Kevin HowardTITLE OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL "Motivating Factors Effecting the Recruitment and Retention of Johnson Middle School Band Students"

STEP 1: RESEARCH REVIEW OF CURRICULUM DIVISION

 We temporarily withhold approval of your proposal until you address the questions we have raised about it in the attached letter. (Include this form with re-submission of your proposal.) We conditionally approve your proposal and you may proceed with making contact with principal(s) of the appropriate school(s), but it is necessary for you to address the questions we have raised about your proposal in the attached letter. We approve your proposal. Proceed with obtaining approval of the principal(s) of the appropriate school(s).
Signature, Curriculum Division Reviewer12/18/18
Date

STEP 2: PRINCIPAL'S EVALUATION

 I temporarily withhold approval of your proposed research being conducted in my school for reasons stated in the attached correspondence. (Include this form with the re-submission of your proposal.)PRINCIPAL #1:  DATE: 12/18

PRINCIPAL #2: _____ DATE: _____

PRINCIPAL #3: _____ DATE: _____

 I approve your proposal. Please forward this form to the Central Office for approval of the Superintendent.PRINCIPAL #1:  DATE: 12/21/18PRINCIPAL #2:  DATE: 1-9-18

PRINCIPAL #3: _____ DATE: _____

STEP 3: SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION

 I withhold approval of your proposed research being conducted in our schools for the reasons stated in the attached correspondence. I am forwarding a copy of your proposal, a copy of this form, and a copy of our correspondence to the Curriculum Division reviewer. They will communicate with you further. I approve your proposal. Proceed with your research according to the conditions agreed upon in the preceding sections of this form and your research proposal.
Signature of Superintendent01-11-19
DateNOTE: The signed copy of this form should be returned to the Curriculum Division for their records.
(Reference: Johnson City Board of Education Policy 4.230)

MOTIVATION FOR JOINING AND STAYING IN BAND

Liberty Bell Middle School Band

Kevin Howard - Director

718 Morningside Drive
Johnson City, TN 37604Phone (423) 232-2192
howardk@jcschools.org

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Parents or Guardians,

I am in the final stages of completing my Master's Degree from Milligan College and, as a portion of this program, I am conducting a research study. The topic of the study is, "**Recruiting and Retaining: What Influences Students to Join and Remain in Middle School Band?**" The information and data received from this study will be used to help identify areas of strength and weakness within the band program as well as help to gain insights toward more effective recruiting and retaining strategies.

Participating students will be asked to complete an anonymous survey and the information gathered from those responses will be compiled for analyzation. The survey will consist of several questions related to the student's personal experiences in band and the results of the survey will only be reported as statistical analyses with no reference to specific individuals. There will be no questions that ask for information which could be used to individually identify the student. The survey will be administered and collected during band class.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Whether or not a student participates will have no consequence on the student or their grade. It will also have no impact on the relationship you or your child has with the current or future band director.

There is no need to return any documentation if permission is being given for your child to participate. Implied consent is assumed if we do not receive the attached form. This is the only document that will ask for a student's or a parent's name and it is only being used for the purposes of ensuring accurate participation in the study.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and support. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have regarding this survey or research study. Findings from this study will be made available upon request.

Detach and return only if you are declining to participate

I am aware that participation is completely voluntary and that my child can choose to remove themselves from the study at any point without consequence. I understand that the survey is anonymous and that all information will be kept confidential.

No, my child does not have permission to participate in this study.

Student's Name: _____ Parent's Name: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

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