

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MOTIVATION IN THE INSTRUMENTAL  
MUSIC CLASSROOM

by

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(Under the Direction of Jo Blase)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe students' perceptions of motivation in the instrumental music classroom. This study was guided by a symbolic interactionist framework and grounded theory research design. Data were collected in a high school setting. Open ended and semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted, audio-taped, and transcribed. Constant comparative analysis was used to generate a theoretical idea, grounded in the data, illustrating music students' perceptions of motivation.

Findings of this study indicate that *self-perception* is the overarching theme relevant to students' experiences with motivation. This study found that: (1) students' definition of self is an outcome of experiences with their environment, (2) this self-perception influences how students act, and (3) these actions materialize into what students perceive to be motivation. In their discussions, students gave accounts of their experiences and subsequent outcomes of from these experiences with motivation. This study revealed that students experience motivation through fun, success, competition, goal setting, role-models, discipline, praise, and learning. Perceived outcomes of these indicators of motivation were commitment and increased effort. In contrast, students' motivation diminished when they experienced the lack of "fun," a negative

relationship with their teacher, excessive discipline, and a negative social climate. As a result of these demotivators students displayed indifferent attitudes.

Based on the findings, a theoretical idea emerged. This study found that motivation was gender-specific. That is, female students readily accept intrinsic forms of motivation while male students identified with extrinsic motivators. In fact, female students viewed some extrinsic motivators (such as praise and discipline) to be controlling and as a result, lost interest.

Implications for future research, director preparation and practice are discussed. Prospective music teachers should note that motivation is gender-specific and be aware of the affects that their teaching practices have on male and female students. In preparing music directors, colleges and universities should consider the implications of this research and extant literature. Such consideration would initiate data-driven decisions in curricula. Lastly, the topic examined is open to further research. There remains a need for additional qualitative studies that illustrate connections among recognized influences on student motivation.

**INDEX WORDS:** Motivation, Music education, Self-perception, Self-concept, Gender

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## DEDICATION

To mom and Shannon, the leading ladies in my life.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of motivation stands at the center of the educational enterprise (Covington, 2000). Indeed, student motivation is viewed by many as an aspect of education that is of utmost importance (e.g., Sandene, 1997; Asmus & Harrison, 1990; Asmus, 1986). In 1997, Terrel Bell, Secretary of Education, noted, “There are three things to remember about education. The first is motivation. The second one is motivation. The third one is motivation” (Maehr & Meyer, 1997 p. 1).

Researchers have also drawn similar conclusions. Deci remarked, “countless people have suggested that motivation is the key to success in education” (1995, p.47). Moreover, “Few educators would argue with the premise that student motivation is an important influence on learning” (Anderman & Midgley 1998, p. 1). Indeed, motivation in the classroom has been shown to affect student achievement (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Sideridis, 2002).

For example, research links student motivation and achievement in some subject areas (e.g., Dai, 2001; Lee, Fredenburg, Belcher, & Cleveland, 1999; Schutz, Drogosz, White, & Distefono, 1998). However, researchers have noted gaps in student motivation research in music education (Asmus, 1986; Asmus & Harrison, 1990; Sandene, 1997). While we have indicators of a link between student motivation and musical achievement (Asmus, 1986), the research about this phenomenon is scant (Asmus), limited (Sandene, 1997), and the object of little empirical work (Eccles, 1982).

## Background of the Study

In 1982, the University of Michigan and the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) sponsored a series of meetings among music teachers, educational psychologists, and researchers at the first session of the Ann Arbor Symposium. The purpose of this meeting was to summarize current knowledge and theory in motivation, to examine research concerning motivation in music education, and to discuss extant gaps in research.

These gaps were described as: (1) a lack of research linking motivation and performance of amateur musicians (Maehr, 1982), (2) inadequate theoretical and empirical knowledge about motivation for achievement in music (Raynor, 1982), and (3) a lack of research focusing on young students' diminishing commitment to learn in music as they grow older. (Covington, 1982). The following illustrates the primary discourse of the conference participants.

First, Maehr (1982) underscored the importance of motivation in understanding achievement in the arts. He suggested that motivation for achievement is a particularly fascinating topic in the case of truly talented musicians. Yet, while interest is directed to the musically elite few, less empirical attention focuses on the musically common majority. Maehr stated that:

The motivation of these rank amateurs must also receive the attention of music educators.

Indeed, a case can be made that this should and must be a primary concern. After all, we amateurs... ultimately pay the cost of maintaining a musical elite. (p.6)

According to Maehr this is a problem. He suggested that these are not essentially problems of motivating people (i.e., activating them) but rather problems of directing behavior. He notes that in most cases, it is misleading to suggest that a student is not motivated; it is more appropriate to suggest that he or she is motivated in one but not another way.

Ultimately, Maehr suggested that while serious questions about the special needs of elites should not be ignored, motivation and achievement linked to the common music student requires further empirical attention.

Second, Raynor (1982) addressed the topic of motivation in music by using assessments, opinions, and speculations where inadequacies in current theory and research were apparent. He stated that, “the theoretical problem of motivation concerns specification of the various determinants of action at a particular point in time or how these factors combine and change over time.”(p.17) In other words, there is a need for investigations of student motivation relating several psychological and background categories to achievement. Raynor’s suggested strategy for understanding human motivation is to use as many categories as possible in a coherent and systematic approach so that the joint influence or functioning of these variables might account for the complexity of human behavior. “This reflects the judgment that there are many different reasons for action, that have important impact on behavior.” (p.18) The understanding of such actions must not combine incompatible, preconceived assumptions and implications.

Theoretical and empirical weaknesses exist in research literature about motivation for achievement in music. Raynor made the argument that, though many views of motivation exist, there is no agreement as to “the” conception of human motivation that has both wide acceptance and considerable empirical support. He finds that the most difficult question to answer concerns what motivates people to perform, create, and appreciate music. Raynor’s analysis suggested that many different factors function simultaneously, and they interact in a complex and not always discernable way.

Last, Covington (1982) raised the question, who drops out of music instruction and why? He examined the motivational basis of the teaching-learning act, particularly as it relates to the

goals of music education and to young students' diminishing commitment to learn music as they got older.

Are teachers using the wrong methods to motivate these students? Covington challenged motivational tactics commonly used in academic classrooms. He stated that these tactics are often extrinsically oriented (that is, learning is valued as a means of achieving future occupational success). Music education is widely held to be intrinsically oriented (of value primarily for its recreational, cultural, and self-expressive worth). This means that the widespread use of extrinsic motivational practices (which he asserts are used in most classrooms), while effective in academic classes, would not be as productive in the music classroom.

As a solution to diminishing interest in music, Covington suggested that motivation and its link to achievement receive further consideration from researchers. He emphasized that the more individuals tie their sense of value to achievement and to ability, the less failure should occur.

The views of the participants of the Ann Arbor Symposium suggested that a link between motivation in music and student achievement exists. Though this link is apparent, these researchers cited vast gaps in the literature ranging from inadequate understandings of motivation to achieve in the arts (Maehr, 1982) to scant theoretical and empirical underpinnings (Raynor, 1982). In fact, few studies since the Ann Arbor Symposium have attempted to diminish these gaps in literature. In three published studies, researchers examined students' perceptions of motivation. These studies attempted to fit data into single, predetermined categories.

#### *Motivation in Music Research*

Eccles (1982) targeted age as a predictor of motivation in his study. He examined young music students' perceptions of success in music and motivation for studying music. Eccles

concluded that younger band students tend to achieve more success with less anxiety than their older counterparts. That is, concerns about low self-esteem, sex-role stereotypes, and the result of success or failure at a given task are not great determinants of young student's motivation to achieve in music.

While Eccles' (1982) investigation focused on younger students, Asmus and Harrison (1990) examined older undergraduate students to determine what they attributed success and failure to in music classes. Their findings suggest that by the time students are in college, the reasons that they cite for success and failure in music have stabilized. That is, age does not significantly impact these college students' attributions of success and failure.

In an investigation similar to the Asmus and Harrison (1990) study, Harrison et al. (1994) examined the same age group with respect to additional possible determinants of success (musical aptitude, academic ability, gender, and music experience). Confirming the findings of the Asmus and Harrison study, Harrison et al. also found a link between motivation and student achievement; that is, a relationship indeed exists between the motivation variables and students' motivation for music.

Collectively, this research contributed to understanding motivation in music literature. However, these studies were restricted to examination of separate, preconceived categories using quantitative methods. It would seem prudent to verify the importance of motivation in musical achievement by using research methods that would illustrate specific details of recognized predictors of achievement in music.

Clearly, there is a need for motivation research in music education (Asmus, 1985; Asmus & Harrison, 1990; Harrison et al., 1994; Sandene, 1994). Researchers have revealed some understanding of student motivation in music education literature; however, because these

empirical works were conducted using quantitative methods only, there remains a need for investigations of categories related to student motivation in instrumental music classes using a qualitative approach. Such research would serve to bridge apparent gaps in research of motivation and music education literature.

## Description of the Study

### *Purpose of the Study and Research Questions*

The purpose of this study was to examine music students' perceptions of experiences with motivation. In doing so, it illustrated the meanings that these experiences had for students. The research questions that guided this study were open-ended and process-oriented. These questions are: (a) How do music students experience motivation? (b) What meanings do these experiences have for them?

### Research Design

Students' perceptions of motivation in the music classroom is the focus of this qualitative study. Grounded theory methods guided the research. Grounded theory is based on the systematic generating of theory from data that are systematically collected from research (Glaser, 1978). A major strategy emphasized for furthering the discovery of grounded theory is constant comparative analysis. In constant comparative analysis, the researcher compares each new piece of data collected to previous data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This strategy was used to collect data, analyze data, and generate theoretical ideas based on music students' perceptions of motivation. Data collection procedures include interviews and document collection.

### Interviews

Interviews were the primary source of data for this study. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), an interview is a purposeful conversation that is used to gather descriptive data in the

subjects' own words. Preliminary interviews were unstructured, to allow the participants to convey a general understanding of their perspective on a range of topics. Thereafter, more structured interviews were conducted in order to focus on particular themes that emerged during the preliminary interviews. These interviews were guided by the following interview questions. As participants responded to these questions the researcher used probes to distill meanings and perspectives brought forth.

Tell me what were you like as a band student when you first started.

What do you think of when you hear the word, "motivation"?

What does it mean to be motivated?

What has motivated you?

Describe students that are highly motivated.

### *Documents*

Documents were also used as data. The researcher collected what Bogdan and Biklen (1982) refer to as "official documents." Official documents collected include: communications from the central office, pages from the school website, the school's state report card, and test scores.

### *Theoretical Significance*

This research generated theoretical ideas based on students' perceptions of motivation. Theories of motivation inform the contexts of this study, however; this study was not driven by these theories nor was it the goal of the study to test a particular grand theory. It was intended that this research would generate theoretical ideas based on music students' perceptions of motivation. That these generated ideas would bridge gaps in music education literature.

Researchers have completed studies on students' perceptions of motivation; however, few studies exist that determined the motivators and outcomes related to music achievement. Research in music education has linked the study of attributions, self-esteem, and motivation to student achievement in fields of education. Less work, however, explains the relationships among these recognized influences on motivation.

Further, this study provided unique findings because of its methodological approach to a knowledge base that has primarily received quantitative attention. The qualitative findings of this study provide further illustration of indicators and outcomes of motivation in music.

#### Practical Significance

The results of this study produced significant findings for teachers of music grades k-12 and practitioners on the university level. One objective of this study was to provide useful information that would aid music educators in their practices. By providing further insight into how students define and perceive motivation, teachers would be able to more effectively teach their students. This informed insight will aid educators in making more data driven decisions with regard to their planning and teaching.

#### Theoretical Framework

Symbolic interactionism is the theoretical framework that informed the research design and interpretation of this study. The symbolic interactionist places primary importance on the social meanings people attach to the world around them (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). According to this framework, the meanings students and teachers in the music classroom derive from their experiences are social products, formed in and through defining activities as they interact (Blumer, 1969).

### Limitations of the Study

A limitation associated with this study is that it represents one public high school in North Georgia. This high school demographically does not represent the school system as a whole. To reduce this limitation, the study's focus was to provide a thorough, qualitative examination of student motivation in one setting.

### Assumptions

The researcher assumed that student motivation in instrumental music classes is a key determinant for many outcomes desired by musical directors. It was also assumed that the students would express honest opinions to the researcher with regard to motivation.

### Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used within the context of this study:

1. *Motivation* is defined as the biological, emotional, cognitive, or social forces that activate and direct behavior. (Goble, 1974)
2. *Perception* is defined as an attitude or understanding based on what is observed or thought. (Mead, 1934)

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The following review summarizes literature and research relevant to the present study. The purpose of this section is to give a research-based rationale for the study and determine what conclusions have been reached by leading officials in the field of motivation in music education. This section will also review the evolution and present state of theory and research pertinent to the topic.

The focus of this study is students' perceptions of motivation in instrumental music. Existing research in this field has been done primarily using quantitative methods. Research indicates that in an investigation of the effect of different classrooms upon student motivation, one must use a variety of student psychological and background variables (Sandene, 1997). This sparse research, quantitative in nature, investigates single, preconceived categories pertaining to students' perceptions of motivation in music. It would seem prudent to investigate students' perceptions of motivation using qualitative methods. Such research would render emergent categories and provide further illustration of the relationship between them.

Research pertaining to these categories will be reviewed regarding students' motivation in instrumental music classes. Gaston (1958) and Graham (1975) asserted that categories such as positive motivation, adequate social status, and perception of self are believed to be attributes and potential outcomes of musical experiences. For this reason, socio-economic status and self-concept will be reviewed as psychological and background categories respectively. Lastly, the evolution of Self-determination, Attribution, and Goal Theory will be reviewed.

## Socio-Economic Status

Several studies have been conducted that examined socio-economic status (SES) and differences of motivation among students of all grade levels. Cooper and Tom (1984) overviewed primary research in the field. The accumulated research clearly demonstrated that higher SES is associated with stronger need for achievement and motivation (Cooper & Tom, 1984). The authors further posited McClelland, Rosen, Katz, and Maehr as the leading authorities in the field.

McClelland (1955) found that SES was closely tied to the nurturance, assistance, and training given by the parents. In support of this conclusion, student motivation was found to be stronger in middle SES community than in lower SES communities.

Rosen's (1956) basic premise supported McClelland's findings. Specifically, he found that student motivation levels were usually expressed in terms of educational and occupational strivings. These terms have direct influence on socio-economic status. Rosen found that SES was connected to variances in motivation because of its focus on status improvement.

Katz (1967) delineated another point of view. He reached conclusions similar to Rosen and McClelland; however, Katz questioned whether the child's motivation was general or independent for specific achievement domains. For example, a child might be motivated to achieve in academics but not music. Katz further asserted that a lower SES student's interest in classroom learning might not be a matter of his/her lacking motivation. That particular student's motivation may be more directed by nonintellectual pursuits. Like Rosen, Katz also speculated that SES differences contributed to variances in motivation (Cooper & Tom, 1984).

In line with Katz' thinking, Maehr (1974) maintained that the development of motivation must be examined from the context of the individual and the SES group to which he or she

belongs. According to Cooper and Tom (1984), Maehr found that students in various SES groups may respond differently depending on the mode of feedback employed, the cultural and social setting in which the person exists, and the goals perceived as being worthwhile by the student.

Of the forty-three studies Cooper and Tom (1984) compiled, thirteen compared the achievement strivings of different SES groups in the United States. Their review overwhelmingly supported the notion that a stronger need for achievement (motivation) is associated with higher SES (Cooper & Tom, 1984).

### *SES Research in Music Education*

Studies show that social status can also be related to attitudes of music. However, apart from research by Broquist (1961) and Noble (1976), very little insight has been gained about the predictive relationships of social status on music attitude formation in music students (Vander Ark, Nolin, & Newman, 1980). Further, the existing literature shows findings that are inconclusive, indicating a strong relationship between student motivation and SES, a weak relationship, or no relationship at all.

Peters (1973) suggested a strong relationship exists between student motivation and SES. He found that middle socio-economic students gave higher ratings to their class music experiences than students from low to high social class backgrounds.

Nolin (1973) studied the attitudinal growth patterns of music students in grades three through six. He found a significant decline in the attitudes of those music students as they got older. Nolin and Vander Ark (1977) conducted a similar study. The purpose of this study was to find if students maintained the same decline in motivation through the seventh grade. Using two schools from varying SES areas, they researched the attitudinal growth patterns & self-esteem patterns of sixth- and seventh grade students toward music. Similar to Peters' findings, they

found that the students in higher socio-economic areas expressed a significantly higher motivation toward their school music experiences than the students at the lower socio-economic areas.

In a replication of the Nolin and Vander Ark (1977) study, Vander Ark, Nolin, and Newman (1980) investigated the relationships between motivations for music and social status using a curvilinear model. It was their assertion that all of the previous research tended to look at only linear (straight-line) relationships. They felt strongly that the relationships between motivation in music and variables such as social status could not be adequately measured using a linear model. Finding several significant curvilinear relationships between social status and attitudes toward music, Vander Ark et al. (1977) concluded that the curvilinear relationship increased the ability to predict attitudes toward music experiences.

The previous studies suggest that a strong link exists between motivation for music and socio-economic status. However, a few researchers have reached different conclusions (Williams, 1972; Fisher, 1951; Wapnick, 1976).

For example, Williams (1972) and Fisher (1951) reported that social status and musical instruction did not appear to influence high school students' or college students' attitudes toward music. Williams' study suggests that of three measures used to determine socio-economic status and three measures used to assess musical aptitude, none emerged as high predictors of musical attitude. Fisher also asserted that research dealing with the connection between socioeconomic status and attitudes toward music yielded mixed results. Williams and Fisher reached similar conclusions; that is, of the studies that found a link between SES and attitudes toward music, only two categories of socio-economic status were compared, rather than the traditional three (upper, middle, and lower class)(Wapnick, 1976).

It is evident that findings on this topic vary. Most empirical works emphasize that high socio-economic status can be directly related to high student motivation. On the other hand, other research suggests a very weak link between socio-economic status and motivation. Though findings vary on the topic, all investigations cite inadequacies and gaps in research. Researchers also frequently reported the need for the examination and control of variables such as culture, race, student attributes, and self-concept (Sandene, 1997) in studies.

### Self-Concept

Self-concept involves understandings of how students appraise themselves (Bong & Clark, 1999). Regarding self-concept, researchers use terms ranging from self-descriptive behavior (Mintz & Muller, 1977) to feelings about oneself as a person (Caplin, 1969). However, because of these ranging terms, difficulties associated with defining self-concept exist.

According to Strien (1995), self-concept is an illusive and often poorly defined construct. Moreover, “complications emerge from the interchangeable use of such terms as self-esteem, self-worth, self-identity, self-acceptance, self-regard, and self-evaluation” (Reynolds, 2003, p. 2). Because so many terms are used, this construct is regarded as ambiguous (Wylie, 1974), with no clear and concise definition (Byrne, 1984).

Though many definitions of self-concept exist, music researchers have primarily used a model created by Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976) when investigating the relationship between self-concept and music education. They defined self-concept as:

...a person’s perception of himself. These perceptions are formed through his experience with his environment... and are influenced especially by environmental reinforcements and significant others. We do not claim an entity within a person called “self-concept.” Rather, we claim that the construct is potentially important and useful in explaining and predicting

how one acts. One's perceptions of himself are thought to influence the ways in which he acts, and his acts influence the ways in which he perceives himself.... Seven features can be identified as critical to the construct definition. Self-concept may be described as: organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, stable, developmental, evaluative, and differentiable. (Shavelson et al., p. 411)

The concept underlying the Shavelson et al. (1976) model is the view of self-concept as a multi-faceted construct that focuses on perception of self. These perceptions are continually reinforced by evaluative inferences that reflect both cognitive and affective responses. Supporting these notions of self-concept, investigators proposed similar views of self-concept (Scheirer and Kraut, 1979; Pajares, 1996; Markus and Nurius, 1986).

Scheirer and Kraut (1979) asserted that self-concept is a complex construct whose descriptive, evaluative, comparative, and affective aspects can and should be discriminated. Pajares (1996) suggested that self-concept includes competence judgments along with evaluative reactions and feelings of self-worth. In an earlier study, Markus and Nurius (1986) viewed self-concept as "a system of affective-cognitive structures... about the self that lends structure and coherence to the individuals' self-relevant experiences" (p. 955). Taken together, these assertions support the Shavelson et al. (1976) model as a multi-faceted construct.

### *Self-Concept and Music Education*

Few researchers have investigated self-concept with respect to music education. According to Reynolds (2003), there is a wealth of educational literature regarding self-concept; however, this wealth contrasts sharply with the scarcity of research regarding music education and self-concept. Among the few researchers who have contributed to this literature, Vispoel (1993) researched music education and self-concept. Using the Shavelson et al. (1976) model in all

instances, Vispoel examined self-concept's link to artistic attributions (Vispoel, 1995) and perceptions of skill in music for adolescents (Vispoel, 1993) and adults (Vispoel, 1996).

Vispoel (1995) sought to integrate the arts into the Shavelson et al. model and to assess the relationship between artistic and non-artistic facets of self-concept. In this study he assessed the self-perceptions of 831 college students enrolled in arts classes. Vispoel found a uniformly weak relationship between artistic and nonartistic facets of self-concept. In other words, students not enrolled in arts classes had different attributes of self-concept from students who were enrolled in arts classes. This finding justified the use of self-concept as a multi-faceted construct. In order to fully assess students in both academic and non-academic classes, a hierarchical construct of self-concept is needed. A unidimensional measure could not adequately examine students in both academic and non-academic classes.

In an earlier study, Vispoel (1993) developed an instrument to measure perceptions of skill in music. This study involved two categories: adolescents in the arts and self-concept theory. The purpose of this investigation was to validate the Arts Self-Perception Inventory (ASPI). This tool for measuring adolescent self-concept was a multidimensional inventory designed to measure perceptions of skill in music. The study provided strong evidence that early adolescents can reliably appraise and distinguish among their skills in four major arts-related domains. Findings from this study also included that the ASPI is an effective tool for measuring these perceptions.

More recently, Vispoel (1996) used the same study design but adapted it for assessing adults' self-concept. The purpose of this investigation was to develop and validate an adult form of the Arts Self-Perception Inventory (ASPI). This study suggested findings similar to Vispoel's 1993 model for adolescents. Vispoel added that this valid instrument should be helpful to educators, clinicians, and researchers in

- (a) assessing self-concept dimensions that are not measured by most existing self-concept instruments,
- (b) evaluating change and development in artistic self-concept,
- (c) identifying and targeting areas of low artistic self-concept for possible attention,
- (d) comparing the structure of artistic self-concept in different populations (males vs. females, performing arts students vs. other students, etc.),
- (e) extending theoretical models of self-concept to encompass artistic areas, and
- (f) evaluating potential causal linkages between artistic self-concept and artistic accomplishments (Vispoel, 1996 p. 7).

### Theories of Motivation

Theories of motivation inform and guide the theoretical contexts of this study. Anderman and Midgley (1998) assert that three theories have particular relevance for students and their teachers: Goal Theory, Self-determination Theory, and Attribution Theory. These theories have primarily been used by researchers of motivation in music education.

### Self-determination Theory

Self-determination Theory describes students as having categories of needs: a sense of competence, of relatedness to others, and of autonomy. Competence involves understanding how to, and believing that one can, achieve various outcomes. Relatedness concerns developing satisfactory connections to others in one's social group. Autonomy involves initiating and regulating one's own actions. Of the three categories described, autonomy has been the focus of most research in self-determination theory (Anderman & Midgley, 1998).

Autonomy, as a category of needs within self-determination theory, maintains that students take a more active role in decision-making, causing self-directed resolve and intrinsic

motivation. Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan (1991) found that features such as the provision of choice over what types of tasks to engage in and how much time to allot to each are associated with students' feelings of self-determination.

### *Self-determination and Music Education*

Few examinations in music education whose theoretical contexts are informed by Self-determination Theory have attempted to examine students' perceptions of motivation. Two unpublished doctoral dissertations indicate findings regarding students' motivation using this theory as a guide. These research efforts quantitatively fit data into one predetermined category, gender.

McAllister (1995) investigated students' motivation for music performance. In a study of 90 undergraduate music majors, he sought to determine whether levels of motivation differed across gender. The findings of this study indicated that females were more self-determined than males and that both females and males had relatively high levels of intrinsic motivation. Kiyoshi (1997) also examined students' motivation in band with respect to gender. He found that male students were more extrinsically motivated while female students were more motivated intrinsically.

### Attribution Theory

Numerous studies of student motivation have focused on attribution theory, which centers on students' beliefs about why they succeed or fail (Weiner, 1974). The degree of persistence that students demonstrate in the face of failure and the degree to which they are willing to undertake similar activities are influenced by causal attributions (i.e., the reasons students believe they succeeded or failed). Self-perception of causes for success and failure, as well as the

pride and shame associated with task performance, are greatly affected by the feedback and reinforcement students receive from others (Weiner, 1972).

According to attribution theory, there are four general causes to which people attribute their success and failure: luck, effort, ability, and task difficulty. These attributions are divided into four categories: internal and external, and stable and unstable. Internal attributions (ability and effort) are generated from within the person, while external attributions (luck and task difficulty) originate from outside the person. Stable attributions (luck and task difficulty) originate from outside the person. Stable attributions (ability and task difficulty) are perceived to be unchangeable, while unstable attributions (effort and luck) are believed to vary with each attempt at a task.

#### *Attribution Theory and Music Research*

Motivation for music learning has been empirically investigated primarily through the principles of Attribution Theory (Harrison, Asmus, & Serpe, 1994). This research has focused on student attributes and variables such as gender, culture, social status, music experience, academic ability, and musical aptitude. These research efforts have sought to fit data into categories through quantitative means.

In an investigation using Attribution Theory as a guide, Harrison et al. (1994) remarked that few studies have simultaneously incorporated all five categories (musical talent, academic achievement, intelligence, musical experience, and motivation for music) as predictors of music achievement. In this study of freshman college students, multiple regression analyses were used to determine the best predictors of course grades in two semesters of music theory. The researchers found that musical aptitude, academic ability, and music experience do affect achievement in aural skills. The findings from this study serve as useful contributions to the body

of research. These findings also indicate a great need for further research using multiple variables. Recognizing the need for future investigations, Harrison et al. (1994) noted the following:

Few studies exist in which investigators have attempted to use more than one or two types of predictors in analyzing influences on music achievement. Fewer researchers still have attempted to evaluate a model that clearly articulates the important relationships between these variable types and music achievement. (p. 133)

Conclusions reached in this investigation reinforced findings from an earlier study rendered by Asmus and Harrison (1990) who surveyed undergraduate nonmusic majors. In keeping with the Harrison et al. (1994) study, they also cited the need for research that investigates the relationship among categories relevant to music students' motivation. They noted:

Motivation may play a significant role in musical achievement. Few systematic attempts, however, have been made to identify the characteristics of motivation or to investigate its relationship to musical aptitude and one's propensity to achieve in music. The few researchers who have investigated the role of factors such as interest in music, home environment, and socioeconomic status in relation to music achievement have found them to be contributory. (Asmus & Harrison, p. 258)

Earlier research of student attributions in music indicated significant grade-level effects for student in grades four through twelve (Asmus, 1986). Upon completion of their research, Asmus and Harrison (1994) suggested that by the time students are in college the reasons that they cite for success and failure in music have stabilized.

Empirical studies involving college music students have reached similar conclusions. These studies have reported that college students place greater emphasis on affect for music as

the major cause for musical outcomes. Younger students however tend to emphasize effort and ability in their outcomes in music.

Lillemyr (1983), in a study of fourth-grade Norwegian students, found that students with high self-concept tended to have higher perceptions of their cognitive competence, greater interest in school music, more positive self-esteem, higher achievement motivation, and lower levels of failure avoidance than those with low self-concept. The study also found that students with a high level of interest in school music tended to have higher perceptions of their musical competence, greater success motivation, more positive perceptions of their ability as students, greater failure avoidance, and lower perceptions of their physical capability than those with low levels of musical interest.

Asmus (1985) classified sixth-grade music students' reasons of why some students succeed in music and why some students do not according to Attribution Theory. The study used Weiner's (1974) original two-dimensional attribution model of ability, task difficulty, luck, and effort. Results indicated that students cited ability and effort more frequently than task difficulty and luck as reasons for success or failure in music.

In an expansion of an earlier study, Asmus (1986) included a broader spectrum of elementary and secondary school music students. He also employed a greater number of independent variables in the analysis. The study produced more specific findings. It showed that students shift their attributions as they get older. "When young, students tend to use effort related attributions, while as they get older, their attributions change toward ability related attributions" (Asmus, p. 275). This replication showed that students' attributions change constantly according to age. It also produced more specific empirical evidence that further supported the earlier study.

### *Attribution Theory and SES*

Attribution Theory has also been the guide for research linking socio-economic status to motivation. Coleman et al. (1966) completed research that examined attribution in children of varying social class. They found a small but consistent relationship indicating that children from homes with a higher socio-economic level showed a higher sense of control over the environment than children from homes with lower socio-economic levels. Rosen (1959) reached different conclusions. He found no differences in achievement motivation among ethnic groups once social class was controlled. Both researchers cited a need for the inclusion of social class in future studies. Friend and Neale (1972) further reinforced this notion. In an investigation of children's perceptions of success and failure, they indicated that social class, among other variables, had not been included in many studies.

Investigations analyzing student attributes have produced dissimilar results. Researchers have reached conclusions that vary across a continuum from little to great significance. Empirical findings in the field differ; however, most researchers have noted a need for including additional variables in future studies. For example, Asmus and Harrison (1990) asserted:

Future studies should include musical achievement variables... Efforts in music motivation research have centered on determining the attributes of student motivation for music. The factors that influence these attributes in the music classroom should become a focus of these research efforts. Knowledge of what factors to manipulate in the music-learning environment that facilitate student motivation for achieving musically would have immediate import for the music teacher. (p. 266)

## Goal Theory

According to the Achievement Goal Theory, the primary goal of an individual in an achievement context is to demonstrate high levels of competence while avoid demonstrating low ability (Nicholls, 1984). Nicholls further argued that the goals selected by an individual will determine the conception of competence as well as establish the level of success within an achievement setting. Thus, achievement goals will influence the interpretation, assessment, and reaction to achievement information, and ultimately will influence the level of motivation (Treasure, 1997).

Researchers and theorists have used different labels for types of achievement goals. Goals that involve external confirmation of ability have been termed performance goals (Ames, 1984), ability goals (Maehr & Midgley, 1996), or ego goals (Nicholls, 1984). Goals that focus on the task itself have been termed mastery goals (Ames, 1984), learning goals (Dweck & Leggett, 1988), or task goals (Urduan & Maehr, 1995).

Though many labels exist, researchers have classified these goal orientations into two categories. Labels such as mastery goals and performance goals (Ames and Archer, 1987) and intrinsic and extrinsic goals (Pintrich, 1990) are often used. Taken together, these terms assert that achievement goals are either internal or external.

### *Goal Theory in Music Education*

As with attributional response, research examining the effects of various goal structures in music classrooms is limited (Austin & Vispoel, 1992). Austin (1988) completed a study of music classroom goal structures with beginning band students. The purpose of this study was to manipulate “competition” as a controlled variable in an experimental setting. Specifically, Austin was interested in the effect of two contest adjudication formats (rated and comments only) on

music achievement, self-concept, and achievement motivation scores of elementary band students. Results suggest that a rated competitive music contest format may benefit students, at least at the elementary level, without producing negative motivational side effects.

In a follow-up study, Austin (1989) examined the effects of competitive and non-competitive goal structures in fifth- and sixth-grade band students. As with the earlier study, students were divided into groups given either competitive or non-competitive goal structures. Results of the study indicated that student self-esteem in music had significant effects upon student motivation but not upon student performance achievement. Austin noted that there were significant differences in attributional patterns among the students with low self-esteem compared to those with high or moderate self-esteem. Students with low self-esteem believed that effort and affect were much less important for success than did other students.

Vispoel and Austin (1993) completed two related studies that examined the effects of attribution feedback for failure (ability, effort, strategy) on behavioral and affective responses to failure in music. Junior high students responded to a scenario describing the failure experience of a fictitious music student. Results indicate that most students believed that the student would feel badly about his/her failure experience, but would respond constructively in terms of future classroom behavior. The least constructive future behaviors occurred when failure was attributed to the use of inappropriate strategies, lack of effort, and lack of ability.

In the second study, Vispoel and Austin (1993) found that students who attributed failure to poor learning strategies or lack of effort anticipated increased effort and improvements in performance in the future. Conversely, students who attributed failure to lack of ability did not anticipate the same improvements in future musical experiences.

A severe limitation of the two studies is that they were hypothetical in nature. They found that the projective technique was perhaps ineffective, either because subjects did not experience the failure event themselves or because they did not identify with the fictitious student. Evidence supporting this comes from studies of competitive and individualistic goal structures where significant differences have emerged when subjects functioned as actors (Ames & Ames, 1981) but not when subjects served as interpreters (Ames & Felker, 1979; Vispoel & Austin, 1991).

#### Summary

A review of extant music education literature indicates the need for additional research relating categories relevant to student motivation through qualitative means. Researchers have completed studies in the field; however, few studies exist that analyze the influence of categories related to music achievement. Research in music education has linked the study of attributions, self-esteem, and motivation to student achievement in fields of education. Less work, however, illustrates the relationships among these recognized influences on motivation.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine students' perceptions of motivation in the instrumental music classroom. This study examined music students' experiences with motivation and meanings that these experiences had for them.

The chapter includes six sections. The first section addresses the framework of symbolic interactionism and its relationship to the present study. The second section gives rich, detailed description of the district, school, and band program where the study took place. The third section identifies the data sources. The fourth section describes data collection procedures. The fifth section explains the use of constant comparative analysis and its role in the study. The final section addresses credibility and the means by which reliability and validity were ensured.

#### Theoretical Framework: Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is the theoretical framework for this study of student motivation in the music classroom. Interaction means mutual social action, that is, individuals communicating to each other in what they do, orienting their acts to each other. Humans are constantly acting in relation to each other, communicating symbolically in almost everything they do (Charon, 1985). This interaction has meaning to both the giver and the receiver of the action, thereby requiring both persons to interact symbolically with themselves as they interact with each other.

Symbolic interactionism has principally evolved from the writings of Mead (1934) and has been further illustrated by his student Herbert Blumer. Blumer (1969) emphasized the

sociological implications of Mead's work, most importantly the importance of the self-conscious social actor and how he/she "defines his situation" and acts accordingly due to his possession of "self." According to Blumer (1969), the meaning that these social actors generate is not a product of "typical psychological and sociological explanations" (p. 3) nor is it structural factors such as society's institutions, social conflict or consensus, or other deterministic factors. Rather, symbolic interactionism defines meaning as social products, creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact.

Blumer stated that symbolic interactionism rests on three premises. First, human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings the things have for them. When they do this, meanings and objects become centrally relevant rather than being taken for granted or pushed aside as he suggests is the case with conventional sociology and psychology.

The second premise outlines the major difference between symbolic interactionism and conventional sociology. This premise refers to the source of meaning. According to Blumer (1969), the meaning of a thing for a person emerges from the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing. For instance, we only recognize a desk as a place to work because we are taught this through interaction with others.

Blumer's (1969) final premise for symbolic interactionism stated that meanings are handled and modified through a "process of interpretation" (p. 5) by the person who is interacting with any given object. This process has two steps:

First, the actor indicates to himself the things toward which he is acting; he has to point out to himself the things that have meaning. The making of such indications is an internalized social process in that the actor is interacting with himself. (Blumer, 1969 p. 5)

In short, the person engages in a process of communication with him/herself. The second step of this premise involves the actor interpreting the meanings determined in the first step and choosing the direction of his/her action. These two steps maintain that social life is an ongoing process of activity whereby the social actor interprets the situation that confronts him and acts accordingly.

The students involved in this study were the “actors.” As they interact with the objects, people, situations, and events in their surroundings, students constantly constructed meaning in the classroom. Thus, meaning was the result of ongoing interactions that constantly changed.

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) stated that:

People in a given situation often develop common definitions since they regularly interact and share experiences, problems, and background; but consensus is not inevitable. While some take “shared definitions” to indicate “truth,” meaning is always subject to negotiation. It can be influenced by people who see things differently. (p. 33)

The goal of this study was to examine this negotiated meaning with regard to students’ motivation in the classroom.

### Sample Selection

Theoretical sampling was used to select research participants. This method of selection is driven by and relies heavily on the data itself. That is, the specific sampling decisions evolve during the research process. These sampling decisions involve “making comparisons, whose purpose is to go to places, people, or events that will maximize opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify categories in terms of their properties”(Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 201).

In contrast, data collected according to a predetermined plan may force the analyst into irrelevant directions and harmful pitfalls (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Glaser & Strauss the analyst may discover unanticipated contingencies in the respondents, but be unable to adjust data collection procedures. They state:

...the researcher is admonished to stick to his prescribed research design, no matter how poor the data. That he is controlled by his impersonal rules and has no control over the relevancy of his data, even as he sees it go astray (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 48-49).

In this study, 6 participants were initially interviewed based on their ability to provide theoretical insights into the topic of study. Three additional participants were chosen according to the emerging categories.

### Context of Study

This section provides rich and detailed description of the setting in which the research took place. It discusses, first, the school district, then the school, and finally the band program where research took place.

#### *The School District*

The school district is among the largest districts in a large metropolitan area of a southeastern state. Serving more than 98,000 students, it is the mission of the district to give each of these students an excellent education. The school district consists of 139 school buildings: 83 elementary schools, 18 middle schools, 20 high schools, and 18 specialized centers. These schools and learning centers account for more than 5,067 classrooms. The buildings are situated on more than 2,300 acres of land and consist of more than 10 million square feet of floor space.

The school district is made up of 77% African American, 11% Caucasian, 6% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 2% multi-racial students. Taken together, 10% of these students are enrolled in

gifted programs. Over half of the students in the district are also eligible to receive free or reduced-cost lunches.

The district is considered to be technologically adept. It is one of the few school systems nationally that offers students access to three electron microscopes at its science center and museum. More than 30,000 computers, 6,000 printers, and 600 servers bring technology, distance learning, and software to students and teachers across the district. This district is continually growing and undergoing change.

### *The School*

Dream High School opened in fall of 2001 in a predominately African American community. This school opened with grades 6-7 and 9-10. The socio-economic status of the student population is middle to lower class, as defined by the number of students receiving free and reduced-cost lunch (80%). Dream High School currently serves more than 1,500 students in grades nine through twelve. In the school population approximately 98% are African Americans, 0.5% are Caucasians, and 1.5% of students identify themselves as multi-racial. Of the students enrolled in the school in 2003-04, fewer than ten students speak English as a second language.

Seventy-two certified personnel serve this school. This number includes 61 full-time teachers, 1 part-time teacher, 4 administrators, and 6 counselors. Fewer than half of the teachers hold advanced degrees. One teacher has a doctoral degree, while 3 teachers hold specialist certifications and 21 have master's degrees. The remaining 37 have four-year bachelor's degrees. Teaching experience varies from one year to more than thirty years. The average teacher has about eight years of experience.

### *The Band Program*

The researcher has four years of teaching experience, two of which have been devoted to the band program at Dream High School as an assistant to the marching band. As formerly mentioned, Dream High School opened the fall of 2001. However, the band program started the spring before the school's opening in 2001 at its feeder middle school. Since its inception, this band program has grown in student participation and benefited from an increase in administrative, community, and parental support. Both successes and shortcomings have been inherent in this growing process, all of which can be attributed to the band director, staff of instructors and constituents of the school.

The program consists of an average of 240 students. These students vary in grade level (from grade nine to twelve) and years of experience. The majority of the students have band experience dating back to elementary and middle school, while others—who wish to start band—enroll in beginning band classes. Altogether the students comprise various performing organizations: percussion ensemble, sax quartet, jazz, marching and concert bands. These groups perform in an array of events throughout the school year. In efforts to maintain the program financially, parents of these students are asked to participate in fund-raisers and to pay \$300.00 (marching band) and \$100.00 (symphonic band) dues.

Monetary support for band programs in the county has been dwindling for the past four years. The school district relies heavily on the band programs themselves to provide instructional items and instruments. For instance, the responsibility of repairing or replacing a \$3,000 instrument rests solely upon the program itself. Diminishing support has been detrimental to the success of the program in this study. Because the band receives so little financial support from the school district, it operates on average with a self-generated budget of \$78,000 annually to

cover the many items such as allotment for new instruments, instrument repairs, maintenance of uniforms, and activities such as “band day” and the spring events.

The band program maintains a regimen of activities throughout the school year. In the first semester the students participate in pep rallies, winter concerts that feature holiday music and various marching band functions. Students take part in second-semester activities such as solo and ensemble festival, Georgia Music Educator’s Association (GMEA) large ensemble festival, district honor band, spring concert, and the Spring Jamboree, an expansive marching band event. During its three years of existence, the notable accomplishment of this band program is the fact that it had sustained two consecutive years of superior ratings in both marching and GMEA large ensemble festivals.

#### Data Sources

Students participating in the band program from tenth through twelfth grades were interviewed. All subjects were interviewed on a voluntary basis. The sample size for the study was determined as data were collected and analyzed. The students were interviewed at the school during the latter part of the 2nd semester, then member checked as additional data were gathered and preliminary findings emerged. Interviewing ceased once theoretical saturation was reached.

#### Data Collection Procedures

The students chosen for this study were interviewed by the researcher. Interviewing was the dominant strategy for data collection. The length of initial interviews was approximately 45 minutes. A second interview was conducted to confirm and further examine preliminary findings reached in the 1<sup>st</sup> interview. This collection of data was gathered, not to fit preconceived or pre-existent categories, that is, not forcibly fitting round data into square categories. Rather, the procedures to collect data changed as the researcher’s understanding of

the setting, subjects, and other sources of data through direct examination (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982) evolved with regard to the purpose of the study. The purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions of motivation in the music classroom. Data collection was guided by the following research questions: (a) How do music students experience motivation? (b) What meanings do these experiences have for them?

As earlier stated, data for this study were collected through interviews. Additionally, field notes, "the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 74) were recorded immediately after interviews whenever possible.

### Interviews

An interview is a purposeful conversation that is directed by one in order to get information from the other (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Kvale (1996) refers to this process as literally an *inter view*, an inter change of views between two persons, "the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 96).

In conducting the interview, Bogdan & Biklen (1982) assert that the researcher not act as a top-down official eliciting information from the participant. Rather the participant should be treated as an expert on the subject. That is, the participant is the one who knows while the researcher is the one who has come to learn. In learning the participant's perceptions on a particular topic it is certainly a key strategy for the qualitative interviewer in the field to avoid as much as possible questions that can be answered by "yes" or "no." Sought particulars and details come from probing questions that require explanation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). For instance, "Were you a good band student in elementary school?" can be answered in one word if

the respondent chooses, but “Tell me about what you were like as a band student in elementary school,” urges description.

How do you invite participants to give rich description? Good listening usually stimulates good talking. According to Bogdan & Biklen (1982) it is important that the researcher listen carefully, “treating every word as having the potential to unlock the mystery of the subject’s way of viewing the world”(p.96). Other forms of positive reinforcement work too. “Being empathetic by expressing appropriate feelings when subjects tell about the ups and downs of their lives, good eye contact, and showing the informants that you take them seriously all contribute to getting the subject to open up”(p.97).

In this study, students were asked to participate in a one-hour interview. A time was then set for the interview. Initially the participants and their parents were informed of the study’s purpose, assured confidentiality, and asked to sign an informed consent form. The researcher also sought the subjects’ permission to audio-tape the interview. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) suggest the use of a tape recorder in studies that involve extensive interviewing or interviewing as the major technique in data collection. As a result, the researcher preserved the exact words of the participants and later reviewed the tapes as well as transcriptions for further reflection (Merriam, 1998).

The researcher used both structured and unstructured interviews. In qualitative research, structured interviews, although relatively open-ended, are focused around particular topics or may be guided by general questions. Unstructured interviews are very open-ended and encourage subjects to talk in the area of interest. “The subject plays a stronger role in defining the content of the interview and the direction of the study in this [unstructured] type of interview” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 97).

Initial interviews were unstructured. The purpose of these interviews was to gain a general understanding of the subjects' perspective on a range of topics. Thus it may be important to use a more "free-flowing, exploratory interview" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 97) to allow the open exchange of perspective views. Then, more structured interviews were conducted in order to focus on particular themes that emerged during the preliminary interviews. These member checks were conducted to elaborate on particular topics and ensure the accuracy of data collected. In this study, the researcher conducted nine unstructured interviews. Thereafter, nine additional follow-up interviews were conducted to confirm preliminary findings and illustrate emerging categories based on students' perspectives. After each interview the researcher wrote personal reflections and field notes.

#### Field Notes

Field notes are descriptions of the people, objects, places, events, activities, and conversations that the tape-recorder misses. Additionally, field notes contain "ideas, strategies, reflections, hunches, as well as note patterns that emerge" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 74). In short, field notes, as a supplement to tape-recorded interviews, help capture the meaning and context of the interview. This supplement provided the researcher with a log that helped to keep track of the development of the study, to envision how the research plan has been affected by the data collected, and to remain aware of how he has been influenced by the data.

#### Data Analysis Procedures

The data were analyzed inductively. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), qualitative research does not search out data to prove or disprove hypotheses held before entering the study; rather, the emerging themes are built as the details are gathered and grouped together. Theory developed this way emerges from the bottom up from many "pieces of collected evidence that

are interconnected” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982 p. 29). This way of generating theory is called grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

### *Grounded Theory*

Grounded theory aims at "the systematic generating of theory from data, that itself is systematically obtained from social research" (Glaser & Strauss 1967, p. 2). Theory evolves during actual research, and does this through “continuous interplay between analysis and data collection” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273).

Grounded theory was chosen as an appropriate methodology for this study. The few studies that have focused on students’ motivation in music have centered on inserting data into predetermined categories and proving or disproving hypotheses, thus yielding primarily quantitative information. The purpose of this study was to examine music students’ perceptions of motivation and how these perceptions shape meanings through their classroom experiences. Put simply, this method of data analysis can be described as constructing a picture that takes shape as parts are examined and collected rather than putting together a puzzle, whose picture the researcher already knows (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

A component central to grounded theory methodology is constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1978). The purpose of constant comparative analysis is continually to compare concepts and themes with other concepts and themes to identify similarities and differences that can lead to a better understanding of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Constant comparative analysis is discussed in the following sections. Glaser and Strauss (1967) described constant comparative analysis in four stages: (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory. Further, the following components of constant comparative

analysis will be described: theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation, and theoretical pacing.

### Stages of Constant Comparative Analysis

#### *Stage One: Comparing Incidents*

In stage one the researcher developed initial codes. Coding is “the analytic procedures and techniques for gathering and analyzing data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 3). The researcher starts by “coding each incident in his data into as many categories of analysis as possible, as categories emerge or as data emerge that fit an existing category” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 105). These coded incidents are small units of data that tell what is happening in the research (Glaser & Strauss).

According to the basic, defining rule for constant comparative method, the researcher, while coding an incident for a category, compared it with previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category. This required the researcher to review the previously collected data continually and assess the categories as they evolved.

Throughout this joint coding and analysis, the researcher recorded all ideas by writing memos. Memos are “written records of analysis that may vary in type and form” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 217). These memos provided the researcher with immediate illustration of ideas and theoretical notions. These memos were sorted and integrated along with the data that were being analyzed.

#### *Stage Two: Integrating Categories and Their Properties*

As coding continues, the comparisons change from incident with incident to comparison of incident with properties of the category that resulted from initial comparisons of incidents. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), in stage two, “constant comparison causes the

accumulated knowledge pertaining to a property of the category to readily start to become integrated; that is, related in many different ways, resulting in a unified whole” (p. 109). Through fitting many incidents into multiple categories, the researcher was able to refine categories while determining those that were either prevalent or superfluous to the emerging theory. This refinement led to what is termed delimiting of theory (Glaser & Strauss).

### *Stage Three: Delimiting the Theory*

Delimiting occurs at two levels: the theory and the categories. First, the theory is founded in the sense that major changes become fewer and fewer as the researcher compares the next incidents of a category to its properties. “Later modifications are mainly on the order of clarifying the logic, taking out non-relevant properties, integrating elaborating details of properties into the major outline of interrelated categories and-most important reduction” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 110).

Through reduction it is meant that the researcher will discover underlying similarities in the original set of categories or their properties. Glaser and Strauss (1967) assert that the researcher can then “formulate the theory with a smaller set of higher level concepts” (p. 110). The purpose of this reduction of terminology and consequent generalizing is to achieve two major requirements of theory: (1) economy in the use of variables and formulation, and (2) scope in the applicability of the theory to a wide range of situations.

The second level for delimiting the theory is reducing the original list of categories for coding. In doing so the researcher cuts down the list of categories for collecting and coding data, according to the emerging theory. Thus, the coding and analyzing of incidents can become more select and focused.

#### *Stage Four: Writing the Theory*

At stage four in the process of analysis, the researcher possesses coded data, a series of memos, and a theory. Writing the theory began with integrating the memos on each category. These memos are used to create an analytic framework.

#### Components of Constant Comparative Analysis

Components of constant comparative analysis are discussed in the following section. These components are: theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation, and theoretical pacing.

#### *Theoretical Sensitivity*

Theoretical sensitivity consists of disciplinary knowledge or professional knowledge, as well as both research and personal experience, that the researcher brings to his or her inquiry (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researcher increased theoretical sensitivity by becoming familiar with the literature related to the study, entering the research setting with as few predetermined ideas as possible.

#### *Theoretical Sampling*

Theoretical sampling, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967), is the process of data collection for generating theory in which the researcher jointly collects, codes, and analyzes data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop theory as it emerges.

The process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory and not a preconceived theoretical framework. The basic question in theoretical sampling is: “what groups or subgroups does one turn to next in data collection? And for what theoretical purpose?” (Glaser & Strauss,

1967, p. 47) In short, the researcher selects multiple comparison groups according to theoretical criteria.

In this study, 9 participants were selected based on their ability to provide theoretical insights into the topic. Initially, 6 participants were interviewed. Subsequent sampling produced 3 additional participants. Demographic information regarding these participants is presented in figure 1.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Years of Music Experience</b>
April Showers	Female	African American	6
Latrice Malcolm	Female	African American	5
Kendall Smith	Male	African American	5
Ebony Richardson	Female	African American	6
Taylor Smith	Male	African American	5
Dion Harris	Male	African American	8
Elaine Shaw	Female	African American	5
Douglass Reisling	Male	African American	8
Denise Love	Female	African American	5

*Figure 1. Demographic Information*

*Theoretical Saturation*

Theoretical sampling stops when a category is theoretically saturated. Saturation means that no additional data emerges where the researcher can further develop properties of categories. As the researcher sees many reoccurrences of similar instances, the category is saturated (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Theoretical saturation is reached by joint collection and analysis of data. When one category is saturated, the researcher goes on to other groups in attempt to saturate new categories as well. Consequently the researcher maximizes the variety of data bearing on a category, thus developing many diverse properties of the category. At this point, Glaser and Strauss (1967) assert that the criteria for determining saturation are “the combination of the empirical limits of the data, the integration and density of the theory, and the analyst’s theoretical sensitivity” (p.62).

### *Theoretical Pacing*

Theoretical pacing refers to the pace at which the study proceeds. Theoretical pacing includes the two processes of input and saturation (Glaser, 1978). Input includes collecting data, analyzing data, and writing memos. Saturation occurs when all ideas have been fleshed out in memos and new data does not provide new insight.

### Reliability and Validity

Qualitative researchers view reliability and validity differently than their quantitative counterparts. Guba and Lincoln (1981) stated that all research must have “truth value”, “applicability”, “consistency”, and “neutrality” in order to be considered worthwhile, however, the nature of knowledge within the rationalistic (or quantitative) paradigm is different from the knowledge in naturalistic (qualitative) paradigm. Consequently, each paradigm requires paradigm-specific criteria for addressing ‘rigor’ (the term most often used in the rationalistic paradigm) or ‘trustworthiness’, their parallel (Guba and Lincoln) for qualitative ‘rigor’. (Morse, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002, p. 5)

Reliability for qualitative researchers centers on whether or not the findings of a subsequent researcher will be consistent with earlier findings. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) assert,

“Qualitative researchers tend to view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than the literal consistency across different observations” (p. 44).

Silverman (2000) refers to validity as another word for truth. This truth is interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the phenomena that it refers to (Hammersley, 1990). Morse et al. (2002) argue that strategies to ensure validity should be employed as the research evolves rather than serve as post hoc evaluations. That these verification strategies should be used to shape and direct the research during its development. To strengthen the validity of this study, the researcher used strategies prior to and during the commencement of data analysis. These constructive (during the process) methods include techniques to (a) reject preconceived theoretical frameworks (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and (b) verify data during the conduct of inquiry (Meadows and Morse, 2001). To increase “theoretical sensitivity” (Glaser, 1978) the researcher became familiar with the literature relevant to music students’ perceptions of motivation. Further the researcher verified data (as suggested by Silverman, 2000) through the use of triangulation and member checks.

Triangulation conveys the idea that to establish a fact, more than one source of information is needed. For example, to be confident that a plane arrived in a certain airport on a certain day, one would need more than the entry from the diary of person who was on the plane. Someone would feel more confident if he/she had the diary entry, along with a plane schedule and a newspaper covering the arrival. In short, multiple sources of data lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena being studied (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In this study, multiple participants were interviewed to gain multiple perspectives. Documents and field notes were obtained to verify participants’ responses.

Member checking involves the researcher going back to the subjects with tentative results and refining them in light of the subjects' reactions (Reason & Rowan, 1981). Formal and informal member checks were conducted throughout this study. The researcher clarified participants' responses during interviews and also conducted follow-up interviews to verify, change, or elaborate findings.

#### Control of Bias

Analysts, as well as research participants, bring to the study beliefs, assumptions, and biases (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These biases are products of persons' cultures, the time in which they live, their genders, and their experiences. Strauss and Corbin emphasize that it is not possible to be completely free of bias; however, the researcher should be mindful of certain "gross indicators" (p. 97) that bias is intruding into the analysis of data. In this study the researcher acknowledged his own biases as a method of dealing with subjective influence on data.

#### Subjectivity Statement

There are specific sensitivities pertaining to students' motivation in music that the researcher has developed throughout the years. As an "insider" (Kvale, 1996), the researcher holds beliefs that are firmly founded in personal experiences in music as a student and a teacher. As a teacher, the researcher can be considered somewhat new to the profession. The scope of the researcher is limited to four years of teaching experience in the field. Moreover, this experience has taken place at one work site. This lack of practical experience and exposure to other schools could affect the researcher's subjective mind-set. As a student, all musical experiences have taken place primarily in the Southeast region. The researcher's experiences with music vary however, these experiences as a student of music took place primarily in Georgia and Florida.

Further, the researcher is an African American male with limited experiences with different races. The researcher experienced private instruction from teachers of other races through high school however, most public school and college music instruction came from other African American males. To guard against these biases, the researcher conducted follow-up interviews to confirm his interpretations. Along with these potential biases, other factors could change the subjective scope of the researcher as well.

Personal interests shape the researcher's subjective stance. He believes that motivation is key to classroom success and that many successes rest solely on motivation: motivation of the students and the teacher, and attitudes formed through student/teacher interaction. It is the personal interest of the researcher to learn more about perceptions of motivation in the music classroom. The intent is that this research will contribute to literature and aid in future teaching practices of the researcher.

Lastly, theoretical perspectives affect the researcher's subjectivity. The researcher believes that *symbolic interactionism* (Blumer, 1969) is the proper theoretical mind-set to assume when investigating the perceptions of subjects who constantly interact with each other. By identifying his biases through critical self-reflection, understanding of one's own perspectives, logic, and assumptions (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984), the researcher seeks to reduce the subjectivity of this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

The focus of this study was students' perceptions of motivation in the instrumental music classroom. Through qualitative means, the research done for this study produced a theory grounded in the data pertaining to those perceptions. The two sections of this chapter present the findings of the study. The first section introduces the participants, gives (from the participants' standpoint) contextual information about the schools they attended, and provides a summary of their perspectives on motivation in the music classroom. In the second section, two main themes, and 15 categories are presented. The two main themes include *motivators* (dynamics that caused self-directed resolve) and *demotivators* (factors in the students' environment that caused them to lose interest).

#### Individual Participants

In this section, 9 research participants are introduced and described. Information relevant to their perceptions of motivation will emphasize contexts that were central to the participants' definition and understanding of motivation.

#### *April Showers*

April Showers was a senior attending Dream High School with six years of band experience. She considered herself a hard-working and very determined band student. She attributed her industrious approach toward band to caring and not settling for mediocrity. April's active participation in both marching and concert bands, along with various experiences with honor groups, collectively contributed to her extensive band resume.

These experiences took place in elementary, middle, and high school. At Margaret Candler Elementary School, April began band as a clarinet student in the sixth grade. This school consisted of 500 students and was described briefly by April as a pretty good school. At Margaret Candler, she participated as a beginning band student for a year under the direction of one band director, Mr. V. April described Mr. V as “a good band director” who was versatile, meaning that he played all the instruments.

The following year, she continued in band at Chapel Mill Middle School. April described this school, with an enrollment of about 1400 students, as chaotic. According to April, this chaos was resulted from students who were slated to attend different high schools and who therefore considered themselves rivals. Though three band directors taught at this school, April described one director in particular, Mrs. B. April described Mrs. B as being an effective teacher; however, April did not have a strong relationship with her: “I guess she was pretty good, but personally I didn’t like her too much. We had a couple of conflicts leading until I left the school...she was a good band director.” April participated in band at Chapel Mill Middle School through her 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years. After leaving Chapel Mill, she attended Central Park West High School for one year. During this year, April participated in the concert and marching bands. Ultimately, April left Central Park West and enrolled in Dream High School in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. April cited maturity as the biggest difference between the two schools.

April used the word *fun* to summarize her views on motivation. When recalling memorable motivational experiences in band, she used the word *fun* frequently. In describing an instance when she felt motivated, she stated, “We played W. Robbins and we lost terribly, but that was our best performance, and we knew it. We just had so much fun that game.” When describing students who had lost motivation, she summed up her ideas with statements such as,

“she wasn’t having fun anymore.” She explained, “When you’re so busy worrying about discipline and this has to be right and this has to be right, eventually you’re not having fun anymore. And that’s what a lot of people lost.”

*Latrice Malcolm*

Latrice was an 11<sup>th</sup> grade trombone player attending Dream High School. Since beginning band in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Latrice had considered herself to be a dependable and overall good band student. She ascribed her reliability as a band student to doing what she was supposed to do, being easy to work with, and not giving people a hard time. Throughout her 5 years of experience, Latrice had been in band in elementary, middle, and high school.

Latrice started band at Cedar Downs Elementary School. Latrice typified Cedar Downs students as those who wore uniforms and were fairly well disciplined. She was attracted to band because it was unique and because her friends participated. Though she had two band directors, Latrice could only recall one, Mr. Franklin. She described him as a patient band director who took his time. Ashley’s 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years in band were at Stanton Middle School. From her perspective, the defining features of this school were more mature students, strict consequences for breaking rules, and higher student enrollment (about 1400 students). Rules at Stanton were stricter than Cedar Downs; however, Latrice maintained that students still did what they wanted to do and that the administration at this school was not strong. Following her 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, Latrice attended Dream High School, where she was currently participating in the marching and concert bands.

Latrice used the word *dedication* to describe motivation in band. She further illustrated the value of this quality: “In order to get top ratings when going places, you have to be dedicated. You have to come to practice with a good attitude and not slack off.” Along with having a good

attitude, Latrice indicated that dedicated students are cooperative, industrious pupils who enjoy what they do. Remarkably, her descriptions of motivated students matched those of herself.

*Kendall Smith*

Kendall Smith was an 11<sup>th</sup> grade trumpet player with 5 years of band experience. Kendall prided himself in participating in the “total program.” That is, he participated in all aspects of the band program, including brass ensemble, marching, concert, and jazz bands. Kendall’s principle reason for joining the band in sixth grade was to surround himself with successful people. He felt that most band students were intelligent people, and he wanted to be around people that were similar to him.

Like many other Dream High School students, Kendall began band at Margaret Candler Elementary School with one band director. He noted that this director was laid back and patient while being willing to guide students through the steps required to be successful. Kendall continued his band participation at Stanton Middle School in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. He stated that the school and the students who attended were both different from his previous elementary school experience. According to Kendall, this school was much bigger while the students there were increasingly social and judgmental. He explained, “In elementary school, you’re a little more innocent.” Kendall continued in band the following year at Dream High School, where he maintained a regimen of participation in all facets of the Dream High School band.

When reflecting on motivation, Kendall suggested that it is not something the teacher could produce in a student; rather, students have to motivate themselves. The student’s responsibility is to invoke motivation from within while the teacher directs this internal motivation. Research supports this assertion:

One might suggest that motivational problems are not essentially problems of motivating people (i.e. activating them) but rather problems of directing behavior. In most cases, it is misleading to suggest that a student is not motivated; it is more appropriate to suggest that he or she is motivated in one but not another way. He or she is investing personal resources differently. (Maehr, 1974; p. 6)

Kendall summed up his thoughts with, “you have to get motivated, to be motivated.” In other words, a student must be motivated internally before a band director can lead (or motivate) the student in positive directions.

*Ebony Richardson*

Ebony was also a junior trumpet player in the band at Dream High School. She viewed herself as a dedicated, hard-working, and dependable band student. Many students who were in the band at Dream High School had started in elementary school; however, Ebony signed up for band in 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Stanton Middle School. She described Stanton in a positive light, attributing its upbeat atmosphere to great teachers and students who were full of energy.

Rather than giving *motivation* a definition (as other participants did), Ebony described the actions of a motivator. She noted that a motivator is someone who guides her in directions that lead to success. This motivator also challenges her to do better and ultimately become a better person. Ebony maintained that people always want a challenge and consequently do their best not to fall short of their goals; thus, a person who is challenged is also motivated.

*Taylor Smith*

Taylor was a percussionist at Dream High School with 5 total years of band experience. He had enrolled in band out of his love for music. Like Ebony, Taylor started band in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Stanton Middle School. He attributed the positive aspects of the school to teachers who

were willing to help students both personally and academically. Taylor emphasized that he learned how to read music during his 3-year experience in the band at Stanton. This was a skill that he did not have prior to attending this school. Taylor continued his music education at Dream High School where he was currently a sophomore. He saw himself as a dedicated, well-rounded student, who not only participates in the total band program but also took part in school-wide organizations such as the swim team, Spanish club, dance teams, and other athletic groups. Taylor noted that he was a very active and dedicated musician who worked hard to improve upon his weaknesses in band.

Like Ebony, Taylor described the actions of a motivator. He depicted motivators as those who encourage him to do better. Taylor emphasized that a motivator is a role model who does not let him give up on a given task. He cited many instances when teachers, as well as his own peers in the band, motivated him to be able to overcome challenges. Taken as a whole, his perspective suggests that motivation is caused by positive, extrinsic influences.

#### *Dion Harris*

Dion was a junior in the band at Dream High School with eight years of playing experience. According to Dion, exposure to church music at an early age was most influential in his decision to join band. His pastor and pastor's brother both were band directors. Dion also mentioned his older sisters (who were band students) and stated that they had also influenced him to participate in band.

Dion began his band career as a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at Jackson Elementary School. During his stay at this school, he attended band twice a week, receiving instruction from one male band director. Dion referred to Jackson Elementary as a typical elementary school, with nice teachers and students who were well behaved, energetic, and friendly. Like Kendall, Dion suggested that

band helped him focus academically: “A lot of students I hung around with, they were in my advanced courses; all of them were in band too.” Dion participated in band for two years at Jackson Elementary. Thereafter, he maintained participation in band at Discovery Middle School for 6 months before attending Stanton Middle School the latter part of his 6<sup>th</sup> grade year. According to Dion, his 7<sup>th</sup> grade experience left an enormous musical impression on him. Dion frequently mentioned music, friends, competitions, and band trips in describing these memorable experiences. He stated, “It was so much that we could remember from that year specifically. We would remember conversations that we would have.” Dion noted that Dream High School was not very different from Stanton. He had many of the same teachers from Stanton, the same principal, and the same friends. From his perspective, the biggest difference between the two schools was age and the maturity of the students. At the time of the study he was currently participating in all facets of the Dream High School band program, where he saw himself as a student who had raised his level of musicianship, toleration for others, and discipline in music.

Dion depicted motivation as a continual process of setting goals and overcoming obstacles to accomplish them. Dion noted that during this process, both competition and learning motivated band students to persist and attain goals. He related this thought to himself, “I think competition was the main thing that played a part, as well as learning, in my motivation of band.”

*Elaine Shaw*

Elaine Shaw was a sophomore clarinetist attending Dream High School. During her 5 years of instruction, Elaine had received prestigious recognition in district and All-State honor bands, distinctions reserved only for the best students in the state of Georgia. Taken together,

her band experiences had spanned 3 schools: Dream High School, Stanton Middle School, and Mainberry Elementary Theme School.

At Mainberry Elementary, Elaine started band in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. This school was very focused on academics. *Intelligence* and *high achievers* were terms Elaine used in describing students attending this school. Unfortunately, the band program at Mainberry did not operate with the same rigor as its academic counterpart. According to Elaine, the program received scant attention from three different directors. Furthermore, band instruction was terse and infrequent: “We thought they all quit or got fired,” she explained. Nonetheless, Elaine persisted, remaining in band through 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. These years were spent at Stanton Middle School.

Elaine first experienced musical success at Stanton. She emphasized that she was motivated to become a better musician when she heard the band director playing. “That’s what I want to play! I’ve got to play that instrument!” she asserted. This desire for achievement in band lead Elaine to join the marching band the latter part of her 7<sup>th</sup> grade year. According to Elaine, marching band truly helped to improve her musical skills. Ultimately, Elaine felt that she experienced the most musical growth at Stanton Middle School. Following her tenure at Stanton, Elaine continued in band at Dream High School, where she was participating in many facets of the band programs.

At the time of the study, Elaine was seeking to improve in band. Regardless of her accomplishments, Elaine described herself as an underachiever. She stated, “I know I made District Honor Band, I made All-State, but I don’t necessarily try to be a leader in the program.” To be a leader in the band, Elaine noted that she should assert discipline in the band and help her own peers. At length, Elaine believed that she could become a better band student through working harder, studying clarinet privately and leading by example.

Like Dion, Elaine also described motivation in terms of goals. She perceived motivation to be the catalyst for students to do better and strive to reach goals. Elaine emphasized that without goals, band would be just another class and that students who dropped out of band were those who had no goals.

### *Douglass Reisling*

Douglass was a 12<sup>th</sup> grade tenor saxophonist with 8 years of band experience. Douglass described himself as a music “technician”; he was adept at learning and playing fast passages on his instrument. Douglass indicated that he was a well-traveled musician due to his band participation at a variety of schools in different locations. These school included: Kingsford Elementary, Miles Middle, and Lakeview and Dream High Schools.

Douglass started band in 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Kingsford Elementary. He revered Kingsford as a “really nice preparatory school” that successfully bridged the gap between elementary and middle school. Douglass spoke at length about his 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade band experiences, attributing his love for music to the band director. Ultimately, Douglass noted that he felt his initial connection to music at Kingsford. Thereafter, Douglass attended Miles Middle School, where he played saxophone, and took private music lessons. While learning the importance of focus and goals in band, Douglass recognized that this school taught him the difference between right and wrong.

At Lakeview, Douglass believed that he was able to take his playing ability to the next level. He believed that, while their band at Lakeview was not the best, it had a family bond that was unparalleled. This bond contributed to students’ motivation to stay in the band and excel, according to Douglass. He participated in Lakeview’s band for one year before enrolling in

Dream High School, where Douglass was currently participating in the school's jazz, concert, and marching bands.

Douglass also believed that goals were vital to students' motivation in band. He asserted that motivation was like "The Little Engine That Could." He illustrated this idea: "You have to get to the top, and you know you don't have a lot in you to make it, but you know you're going to make it. So, you just keep telling yourself, I'm going to make it." He further stated that goals were essentially the backbone of the band and that "there [was] no better feeling in the world than to reach a goal."

*Denise Love*

Denise was a Sophomore flute player with 5 years of band experience. She described herself as a dedicated student that could always be relied upon to know the music. Denise had maintained this dedicated approach to band at two schools: Dream High School and Stanton Middle School.

Denise's band experiences began in 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Stanton Middle School. She typified Stanton students as average, without any extraordinary or outstanding characteristics. On the contrary, her descriptions of the band at Stanton were exceptional: "It was nothing that could compare to my band experience at Stanton." She further expressed her admiration for the band, "I had more fun at Stanton than I'm having here at Dream High School. We sounded good. We were a very mature band." Denise remained in the Stanton band through 8<sup>th</sup> grade before attending Dream High School.

Denise did not hold Dream High School in the same high regard. Due to negative social climate in the band, Denise felt that she never fit in: "I feel like I'm by myself in this band

[Dream High] where at Stanton it was like everybody was a family.” Denise was participating in the Dream High School’s symphonic band and flute choir at the time of this study.

In describing motivation, Denise spoke about aesthetic concerns; her perceptions of motivation centered on heightened feelings and emotional aspects of music. She explained that these feelings of motivation were like a constant aura around her and that a relationship existed between her, the music and the director. Denise summed up her descriptions: “You have to have a passion. You have to want to play [an] instrument, you have to love hearing the sound that comes out of you instrument. Love knowing that you’re doing better.”

### Common Themes

Following rigorous data collection and analysis, two main themes emerged from the data: motivators and demotivators. Within these main themes were 15 categories relevant to students’ experiences with and perspectives on motivation. Figure 2 presents these themes and categories distilled from the data. Each category will be discussed at length in this section, with supporting examples from the participants’ own words.

### Theme 1:Motivators

Experiences	
Category 1: Fun	Category 5: Modeling
Category 2: Success	Category 6: Discipline
Category 3: Competition	Category 7: Praise
Category 4: Having Goals	Category 8: Learning
Category 9: Commitment	Category 10: Increased Effort

### Theme 2:Demotivators

Experiences	
Category 11: Lack of “Fun”	Category 13: Excessive Discipline
Category 12: Negative Director Relationship	Category 14: Negative Social Climate
Category 15: Indifference	

Figure 2. Common themes of students’ perceptions of motivation in instrumental music classes.

#### *Theme 1: Motivators*

Each participant readily stated what produced motivation. They explained what motivation meant to them and supported their assertions with narratives depicting experiences with motivation. In doing so, the students frequently cited the significance of fun in their clarification of the meaning of motivation.

#### *Category One: Fun*

Six of nine participants underscored the importance of fun in their descriptions of motivation. They emphasized that learning, a positive social climate, relationships, and

recognized progression were all determinants of fun. For example, Taylor, a sophomore percussionist, defined *fun* as

being able to see our show progress. Like we would perform. All the hard work that we look back on it like the first “dirty thirty” years, how good the band has improved; that’s just amazing that the program has grown like that. It makes it fun. It makes you want to stay in it. That’s fun.

Like Taylor, Dion defined *fun* in terms of seeing progress and being rewarded for hard work:

Fun in band is, some form of enjoyment or pleasure that you get out [of] what you’re doing. Some type of reward that you see yourself, some type of reward that you get in return for whatever it is that you put out.

Dion further indicated that learning made band fun:

I think learning is fun: learning your instrument, learning your music, learning the most, and everything. When you learn something, I think you really- you really want to test yourself and push your limits to see how far you can go, and still we do that to this day. During sixth grade you do learn your notes, your rhythms, your note values and everything, but seventh grade, we had more difficult music that used your dynamic contrasts, and your changing time signatures, and your articulation. I think learning that, and actually having to do that, and having to learn how to do that with control, made it more pleasurable, or put, gave us the motivation to keep trying, to keep wanting to fix it, and do it right.

Dion described an experience with fun and learning:

I had just moved from Atlanta to Lithonia, and then, of course, I was playing some other instrument. So, I was like learning something new. So, I think the fun part about it was

that I was learning something else instead of, I guess you will say, perfecting what I first picked up, which was the trumpet. So, I think the fun part about it was having someone to teach me something else.

Ebony also experienced fun through learning. She stated, “You’re learning new things. You’re going places. You just have fun. Coming up with dances, coming up with music, it’s just fun.”

Like Dion and Ebony, Taylor asserted that learning new concepts resulted in fun. He emphasized that fun contributed to the progress of the band:

Learning music, that’s really fun. We might be outside practicing, we come back in, we hear how good the band [is] doing on something new and it sounds good. That’s fun. I know a lot of people that couldn’t play Bb; that was hard, and looking at them now, they play fun songs. That’s good.

While these participants noted that learning contributed to fun in band, other students stressed the social nature of fun in band. Ebony stated,

Fun is like your friends. You create friends because you’re there so long. I remember, band camp is from 8 to 8 and you make friends. I met my best friend in band camp. It’s like your friends, you get to joke around, play around, come up with new stuff, and it’s just fun [be]cause you’re always there with each other.

Taylor stated that fun was “being able to be around your friends. All my friends are in band and you get closer to those people and just good relationship[s] with other people in the band.”

Denise also emphasized the social nature of band. She indicated that the band should be socially unified in her descriptions. She stated that fun was

A relationship with your peers; because all of you are together, it's to make one band.

So, you can't be in a section, and it's people that don't like you. You're supposed to all be together so you can make music together and be one band.

While these participants' descriptions depict social climate and learning as determinates of fun in band, other students asserted that the student/director relationship contributed to fun in band as well. Denise noted,

Fun is being able to feel confident with your director a personal relationship with your director, because that makes you feel like, you're worth something. You're doing something special, and you're important.

April also explained that "fun is knowing you can go in and talk to your band director about your boyfriend or something."

In summary, these 6 students identified motivation with respect to fun. Learning, social climate, and director relationships were all determinants of fun; however, fun diminished due to restrictions, which in turn made band seem like a job.

### *Category 2: Success*

All nine participants mentioned that they experienced motivation through success. These experiences were first-hand accounts where students were praised verbally and overcame personal obstacles. Students also felt success through competition and hard work.

According to April, the "meaning of motivation is success." She described this success in terms of students working hard in preparation for important band events: "A lot of hard work goes into [band events] and a lot of hours and sweat and tears. We got to put up with a lot of stuff, but to see the end product, to see that we succeeded in what we were trying to do." Taylor also noted that success was the result of hard work. He described success as "being able to see

our show progress. We would perform. All the hard work, we look back on it, how good the band has improved, that's just amazing that the program has grown like that." Like Taylor and April, Dion described the feeling of success in terms of reward for hard work:

The reward I get most times is in the marching band season when I know we work hard week after week 'till that Friday 'till we put on our show, come back the following week to see our tape and see how well the show was executed on the field, how good we sound because of what we work[ed] on, and just the look of the band. The look of everyone coming together on one exact accord; it just feels good.

Dion further gave an account of his personal success:

I'm a really, really, competitive person, and so, over the years, we would have chair placements in band class, and I would suck, and I would mess up. I would be nervous, about to have a breakdown, about to hyperventilate, and like I said, tenth grade year, I really came out that year, as far as a musician, with a high level of musicianship. So, that year, we had chair placements, and I basically smoked everybody. That's what really motivated me to keep going, because I knew I could do something, I did it, and I did it close to perfection.

Latrice experienced success through the acceptance of others. She described an experience where college band members praised the band:

After we played, we were getting ready to leave and like almost half the band [of Florida A&M University] came up to us and was like saying that we did a good a job and we played real well and that gave us a good feeling to know that other people even in college appreciate our music. It felt real good to know that people appreciate how we played.

Ebony emphasized that success is being better than perceived competition. She offered the following scenario to explain:

I think it was a pre-game or something like that. That was great, [be]cause when we went out there, we just shut it down. I mean [the] dance routine was nice. Everybody was cheering and it was great. They tried to challenge us in the front, but everybody in the audience was like, “we still got them.”

She summarized this experience: “Go[ing] up against a band that everybody think[s] is the best and for us, a 3-year band, we shut ‘em down.”

When asked what motivation felt like, he replied: “It feels like money. Because success brings money. And, it may not never be money that I’m, money like physical money. It may be mental money. It may be physical money, or it may be spiritual money.” He then gave a three-fold explanation:

Mental money is like, the more information you collect, the more intelligent, or wiser you become; that’s mental money. And, that’s paying you. If I can say this, it’s like God paying you. He’s paying you with wisdom because you’re collecting knowledge. Like people say, knowledge is power, and power is money. Spiritual money is like, when you see people out on the street, and you go and you give them something to eat, that’s spiritual money. It’s being good to your soul; it’s putting something back into your soul for mankind. Or it might not even be for mankind; it may be for somebody you don’t even know.... You may be helping a lost dog, or something. You know, something that’s feedback into your soul, that’s spiritual money. Physical money is that green that you get; that’s physical money. And that all ties back in with the spiritual and mental. When you have mental, then all it can do is jump to spiritual. When you have spiritual, all it

can do is jump to physical, and it manifests itself. If you have all three, then you have physical money.

He summarized this thought: “Success in band is when you can make others feel emotion from your playing. That’s the true essence in band is to make others feel emotion from your playing. That’s how you get money”. Denise and Douglass each told success stories. Denise began with an account from her middle school experience:

We learned music. I was first chair flute. I think I had a solo, and I was really into it. I took my instrument home, and I practiced, and I really, we sounded good. We were really a very mature band because it was fun. We went to festival and got superior ratings. So it’s nothing that can compare to my band experience at Stanton.

She described another successful experience: “I had to perform a solo at one of the concerts. I was nervous, but when I started, it just oozed out of me. I didn’t mess up. Then the whole song went well, and after that, got the standing ovation. I felt really good about myself.”

Douglass depicted times when he began to realize his potential as a band student:

When I was marching, everyone’s saying, “who’s that, who’s that?” They’re all looking at my parade, or my section of the parade, and I felt pretty good, because I’m a freshman, doing my thing. I’m hot stuff. I’m making grits back here. So I was determined to sound really good. I was really psyched about band. I can be Mr. Band...One time Mr. K came in the band room and asked where Mr. S was. He thought me playing was Mr. S playing. That was the greatest piece of gratification I could ever receive.

These participants cited first-hand experiences and perceived musical progress when describing success. However, Elaine was the only participant who, rather than defining what success was, characterized the absence of success and how its absence diminished motivation:

When I was in seventh grade, I was getting better, but it's like our band could not, would not, give a performance the director was asking for. After a while, it was just like, I am so tired of this. They are not going to get this music. We are not going to sound good. Even the band nerd people were starting to feel that. [The] concert [is] coming up, we sound like crap. When you feel like you sound like crap, you know your band sounds like crap. We didn't have motivation, and we didn't come to practice, or we didn't put out our best.

In summary, students had experiences with motivation through success and (in one instance) failure. Success spawned from students' first-hand experiences and recognized musical progress. The lack of success (or failure) caused students to become discouraged.

### *Category 3: Competition*

Competition was also related to motivation. Throughout their discussion, six of nine participants described the presence of competition in various ensembles (marching and honor bands), while ultimately stressing the vital role that competition plays in motivation. Douglass described this role of competition:

Competition is one of the roots of band. Competition is what gives you drive, and it's another thing that gives you motivation. It's kinda like what gives you the gas to keep going, because you know if this person beat you in the last competition, you're gonna do all you can, so you can find that person when you get better and show them out. Or if you're in a band and you guys just did horribly, at a pre-game or at a half-time show, you cannot wait until next year when you see that band where you can show them what you've done in that last year and say, "here." Competition is absolutely necessary to keep a band program because it gives you goals.

Dion also described competition's role in students' motivation:

It plays a really really big role. Say your section leader is a senior. Your section leader is about to graduate. There might be two or more students in that specific section that want that section leader title and whatever perks may come with it. There's gonna be some type of competition between those two or more students because they want that position. So they might start practicing more. They might step up their leadership qualities.

Ebony emphasized that competition was good for the band:

It's not like, "well I don't like that person [be]cause they're better than me." It's constructive. You're pushing to become better. Like I'm pushing to be like this senior in my section; I want to be just like him. So the competition is not like bad competition where you get into a fight or something like that.

While Douglass, Dion, and Ebony's discussion centered on the role of competition, other students emphasized the presence of competition in marching band. For example, April mentioned an instance when she was motivated by the competitive relationship she had with one of her peers in marching band:

The first year and this year when Justin was in marching band-- I don't mean to be cocky, but I don't think anybody on the field can touch me in marching, but I look over and see Justin, and I don't know how he did it, but he always seemed to be out-marching me. So that motivated me to step it up a little.

Ebony also described competition in marching band:

You got these people right here marching next to you. You [are] challenging each other because you want to see who can pop 90's the most. And then you can hear people

around you play. You try to out-play that person. You try to play louder and scream higher, out-march, [and] out-dance.

These students experienced motivation in marching band through competition. In contrast, Douglass and Elaine gave accounts of their experiences with competition in a concert band setting. They associated competition with an annual audition for All-State band, a distinction reserved only for the elite high school musicians in the state. Douglass explained,

Mainly, it's competition; every December's hard. All state is a competition, and I never made the group. Actually, I made it one year, but I turned it down, for some reason, I don't know. I still regret that decision to this day. When the first four or five times I tried out, I didn't make it every time I didn't make it, I would try the whole next year, try to make it, say I'm going to make it next year, and that was my motivation.

While Douglass attributed his failure to lack of effort, he continued steadily on his instrument. Elaine, on the other hand, experienced great success with all-state. A two-time finalist, Elaine described how competition motivated her to persist when auditioning:

All-state try-outs this year-- I was sitting there practicing on soprano and I was like, "I'm the only bass clarinet out here right now." I looked over and saw an alto clarinet practicing in the ninth and tenth grade room. I was like, "oh, no." I was listening to her. I was standing outside the door, I was listening to her, and she sounded good. I mean, really, she sounded better than me. It sounded good. I was listening to her play, and I was like, "dang, I can't believe I'm really not going to make all-state this year." I started thinking that [though] I hadn't practiced, I would do my best no matter how intimidating this was. I went in there, and I messed up a little bit, but the whole time I'm thinking, I got to do better than this girl. If I'm not better than this girl, I'm not going to make all-

state. So I went in there, and I did what I had to do, and I guess I must have [done] good, because I made it. I got a little bit of competition this year. So at least this year, I can't say I made it because they only had one spot, and I was the only person trying out.

Elaine developed meaning for motivation through competition. These venues of competition (all-state and marching band) provided a catalyst for students to persist.

#### *Category 4: Goals*

Four of nine students also stressed the importance of goals in the band and how goals motivated them. Goals were described as the very foundation for achievement. According to these participants, goals provided that initial structure which was needed for them to achieve.

According to Kendall, "Goals are what you set your standards on. So if you have no goals, you have no standards. That's why goals are important." Elaine underscored this importance:

It's very important, because if you don't have something to strive for, then it becomes boring. It's like, it's just another class, or you got to sit through fifty minutes of hearing this man talk, and go through it over and over again. You just don't care...It's just your own personal goal, and sometimes your goals maybe outside of your band class. [For example], your goal maybe to learn all thirty-two major scales, and you band is still working on the twelve major scales. I think that's probably why a lot of students drop out of band. It is something they'd rather do, and I think that if they had some more goals, they would still be in it, and we could probably reach them.

Elaine summarized her thoughts on goals: "When somebody's got motivation, it can be so good, but what are they if they don't have any goals? What are they if they don't have any? Are they going to be anyone, or anything to make the world better? So, motivation is difficult."

Douglass also talked about the importance of goals:

The right track for me was band. It really showed me that it is important to stay focused on a goal. That if you don't have a goal, you have nowhere to go, because you don't know what your first step is...It is the most important thing you can have. You can always say, one day I'm going to be here. I think it is essential to always have a goal. It's the backbone of the band, for a musician, is a goal. That's what keeps you standing. That's what keeps you close to your instrument is the goal. You know eventually, one day, you'll reach that goal. There's no better feeling in the world than to reach a goal. Musical, or non-musical, there's no better feeling.

Douglass then talked about instances where goals were necessary:

Dream High, when it first opened, we wanted to be the best. We wanted not to be the baby group. We wanted to be *the* group. When I was at Lakeview, Mr. High always told us to be like Central Park West. That was his goal. When I was at Miles, they told us to be like a high school group; that was a goal.

Summarizing these thoughts, He said, "I think a goal is the first stepping stone to becoming a better musician." Dion also emphasized the importance of goals in band and described how goals motivated him:

It's very essential that you have goals. That might be the essence of what motivation is. Seeing some type of goal that you haven't quite met yet, that you want to get there. That's a big part of what motivation is...For the past few years, I've done the actual competition with the NAACP on my horn. I haven't made it past the local around here. So I think that I'm motivated to make it past that first round and go to state and eventually go to nationals before I graduate high school. Also, the District Honor Band, I haven't made [it] yet. I'm motivated to keep trying until I can get in that band.

These students described goals in terms of motivated students; however, some students also spoke about the lack of goals and how that diminished students' motivation. In describing an unmotivated student, Dion noted,

I know for a fact that he's passed his Georgia High School Graduation Test. He's got a good score on his SAT, and he's accepted to the school that he wants. I guess when you figure that you've accomplished those goals, that you don't need anything else right now. So I guess that he felt that he didn't need band, or anything else, because he did get a scholarship outside of band to go to Georgia Southern.

Dion went on to describe another unmotivated student that lacked goals:

Naima, she doesn't want to do anything as far as playing right now because there's basically nowhere she can go right now, because she's sitting first chair in the top band, and she is still so young. She's basically accomplished a very high goal, and there's nowhere else she can go.

Dion then compared Naima to a motivated student: "Jason is a motivated student in contrast to what Naima was. Jason isn't exactly in the top band, so he still has the goal where he wants to be in the top [band]." Douglass gave a more generic description of motivated students: "Their intentions are good. They have goals. It's important to have personal goals. They have aspirations. They have things that they want to do, with themselves and with other people."

#### *Category 5: Modeling*

Five students indicated that, through having a role model, they experienced motivation. These role models inspired ambition while providing students with the means to a desired end. According to Douglass, "Motivation ... is wanting to be like someone who's better than you. Trying to take things you like, and make them what you want to be."

When describing the look of motivation, Taylor said that it looked like Superman. He stated that motivation was a “mighty role model” and someone you could look up to. Taylor distinguished his band teacher as a role model and described an instance when, through modeling, he was motivated to learn a difficult piece of music: “He would stay at that certain part and keep going over it until he knew that I had it down.”

Kendall also depicted his band director as a model of motivation:

He shows us that you have to have confidence in whatever you’re doing. He always says, FAMU is the greatest university on the face of the Earth. That shows that you have to have confidence and you have to have school pride. He’s showing us that you have to have pride in what you’re doing.

He then described an instance when, through modeling, his teacher motivated the band:

It was one time when we were on the marching band field, and we were having practice for a game. We were going against some school, and everyone was dragging in the whole practice. We weren’t really marching that hard. So Mr. K ran down from the field, came on the field, and he showed us. He was like, “I’m not going to want to get on that field and get scuffed up by that other school.” So she said, “You all better keep on marching; you better put your legs up and march.” He started marching around the field and everybody was like, wow. Then everybody became motivated and started to march harder than what they were before.

He summarized this experience by emphasizing motivation:

I felt motivation. I felt motivated to do better than what I am now. I felt motivated to lift my legs higher. I felt motivated to snap harder. I felt motivated to sound off. For the

simple fact that he was motivated to motivate me. He was so motivated enough to motivate somebody else. That's my experience of being motivated.

Whereas Kendall and Taylor were motivated by an example set by their teacher, Elaine described a motivated band student who saw his father as a musical role model:

His father is deceased now. I asked him one day, "Why are you always talking about music?" He [said], "Music is the closest I [can] get to my dad. Music is one of the things I remember about my dad." He was like, I want to be like my dad, and I know what my dad would want. So part of his motivation is because he feels like he owes that to his father. You know, he's not here, but he owes it to him because his father was good. His father was good in band, so he wants to be [good], too.

These students held their teacher and parents in high esteem as role models. In contrast, Dion and Elaine described how motivation came from examples set by their own peers. Dion used his peers as models of improvement:

Tone was what I really, really paid attention to during the summer, and the following year, because, I motivated myself [by] looking at everybody else to see what they have, and what they don't have. Tone, tone, tone was what Mr. K would keep stressing to us. So that's exactly what I worked on. I noticed that a lot of people didn't have, I guess you would say, a big, rich tone on a horn. So that's what I would try to work on myself, and luckily it paid off, because tenth grade year, I jumped from basically last chair to first chair. That's where I'm at now, and I've been able to stay on top by making sure that my tone was pretty, sound good, and sound better than everybody else.

Elaine described a student who was motivated by his peers: “[He] feels like he needs to be better, feel[s] like he needs to be as good as people that are in the top band, and people that play first trumpet.” Dissimilar from others, Douglass’s role model was a jazz saxophonist, Sonny Stitt:

To find motivation, find someone who you most want to be like as a musician. Like, I have Sonny Stitt. Then, to me, you will find that kind of musician you really want to be. You will strive. For me, I’ve been striving ever since I found Sonny, to be like him as a musician. There’s no better feeling than when someone says, that sounds good...To be motivated for something, you have to first have a model of what you want to be. Like if you’re a basketball player, maybe you would want to be like Micheal Jordan. For me as a musician, I mentioned Sonny Stitt. You first have to have a model of what you want to be when you’re done with this journey that you’re about to embark on. So I think the first thing you would have to do was to first, find someone you would most want to be like and you listen to that person, intently....If you can see them, you can see how they move their fingers up and down the instrument, you can see how they practice, how they warm up, what reeds they use, many different things that go into the aspect of what makes them the musician that they are, and the motivation comes in where you’ll say, “I want to be like this person, so I’m going to try and imitate what they do.” So in saying that motivation is trying to be like somebody else is saying that when you’re motivated it’s because you saw something that was done better than you can do it and you want to do it as well as you saw it being done.

According to these students, role models established examples and standards while initiating students’ desire to achieve.

### *Category 6: Discipline*

Five students revealed that they experienced motivation in more structured environments. *Focus* and *discipline* were terms that recurred in their discussions of this structured setting. For example, Latrice stated that “focus in band is to be on top of your stuff. I guess it’s the same thing I said about being more disciplined.” Also, Kendall mentioned that focus in band was, “keeping your sight on what you’re doing at that particular time to reach that goal to what you want to do at that particular time.”

Kendall situated his discussion of focus around motivated and unmotivated students. He described an unmotivated student:

I’m sure you know David; he’s a tuba player. He’s kinda unmotivated a little bit. He’s getting a lot better than he was before; he would be [more] playful and stuff like that. He wouldn’t know how to get focused in the marching band-- he’d get in trouble a lot, but he was kinda unmotivated because he didn’t know how to be focused and how to not play when it’s time to work.

In contrast, Kendall clarified the qualities of a motivated student:

Motivated students are just the opposite of unmotivated students. They show up on time, even earl[ier] than everybody else. They [are] there before everybody else is there, even some times before the band director. And they play, they know everything about the music. They know the band director. They’re friends with the band director. They know how to get focused. They know how to play. They know how to be serious when it’s time to be serious.

In a way similar to Kendall's description, Elaine referred to unmotivated students as those who "tend not to put [forth] their full attention." Elaine continued by describing an instance where discipline was an outcome of motivation:

Eighth grade. James Swearingen came in eighth grade and worked all day while being there, and we had [a] concert that night. I don't think I've been as excited. Even at that school, we sounded good. It's just like, I don't know, it's just the concentration level's up and we really understood.

Denise emphasized that the look of motivation in band was "real mean...because band is discipline." Like Elaine, Denise also described instances where she experienced motivation through discipline in band. These experiences included concert and marching band:

That was my first marching band experience. The hours [were] long, the practices [were] long. We practiced in the rain, with dirt, with grass, just nasty. Bugs crawling on your face, but you knew you couldn't move. If you even winked, you [were] going to be in push-up position. So, it was just real strict. Mr. K walking around looking for anyone to mess up, because the band had to be perfect then, so we could be perfect out on the field at Jamboree. So, it was just, really disciplined...My first festival, when we were having after school practices. The band director wanted everyone to be focused. Some people were playing, and everything. Just getting tired at the practice, not really doing what they wanted to do. He wanted you to be focused. It's not about you; it's about the music, making good music. [You] just had to have your head straight.

Denise further underscored the importance of focus in band: "You just have to be focused. If you focus, I believe anyone, talent, not talent, can be focused, and be the best. You just have to be focused."

April, a former Central Park West band student, mentioned an activity that they actually called “motivation.” She remarked that this activity was very structured and that the students of the band took ownership of the discipline. She described the student leadership in the band:

Believe it or not, Central Park West did used to be disciplined, but it was more, I think there [were] so many leaders, [be]cause if you weren’t drum major, you [were] section leader. If you [weren’t] head section leader, you were assistant, if you weren’t assistant you were like an upperclassman or a rank sergeant. I mean there were so many people over you. They made sure that we were in check.

April emphasized in her descriptions that discipline was necessary in band programs, however; too much discipline could actually diminish students’ motivation. Nevertheless, students experienced motivation in disciplined environments. Though they used the terms interchangeably (focus and discipline), focus was described more so as a result of established discipline.

#### *Category 7: Praise*

Through praise, five of nine students were motivated to persist in band. This praise, according to the students, came principally from audiences of major performances (i.e., concert and marching festivals). In a dissimilar case, April experienced praise from her peers; she described a time where she felt motivation:

When it was festival for the ninth graders, when they were in eighth grade and it wasn’t even anything special, but for the longest time, I thought I was just marching and nobody was seeing and it wasn’t helping any, but I walked into the room when they were getting ready to go on the bus; everybody started clapping and cheering, “Hi April, hi, April!” I felt motivated then, felt like I’m touching the lives of the children.

Taylor also talked about an instance when he received praise at a major performance. This performance was Taylor's first experience with marching band:

I have to go back to third grade. That was my first time. That was really exciting to me, in front of everybody. It was my first time going into the Georgia Dome. Dancing! And everybody just looking at me. I got off the field, everybody clapping after I'm still walking off the field and they're like, "Good job! Good job!"

Like Taylor and April, Ebony mentioned an exciting experience when praise motivated her:

Our first marching band festival. It was, it was at Memorial Stadium? My 10<sup>th</sup> grade year right? It was great. [Be]cause when we walked out there on the field everybody just got up and started clapping, you know; I'm like, "these people don't even know us." I mean, when we got on that field, we just walked in. Everybody just got up and start[ed] clapping. I think that was [the] best band moment of my life, by far. Just that one time. Going out on that field and everybody just clapping. You know we just turned it out. It was great, and I remember one man stopped me when we were going to the bus. He was like, "Y'all know what?! Y'all are great! Y'all are awesome. How do you play like that?!" I was like, you know it was just great. I think that was the best band moment... For people to like us that much, I didn't think that we was gonna get that much recognition. When people, they just started clapping, it just made me feel good.

Ebony and Taylor both experienced praise through spectators' acceptance. Douglass also described instances where the band's audience praised him. These instances were his first parade and marching band performance:

When I did my first half-time show, with the program, I was really excited, but I was really scared, you know? I was trying to remember the drill, and placement on the field,

but I was so excited to see that many people cheer for a group of people. I've never seen that before. I've always gone to performances and cheered on other groups, but I've never, I felt like everybody was cheering for me, you know? Like I was the only one on that field, and I was stepping, doing my thing, and they were chanting for me. The second time was my first parade. It's a policy, you know, at some bands, no freshmen at the end. No freshman ever get put at the end of the line, or the field, or line at a parade. They always get put in the middle. Some reason, I got put at the end. When I was marching, everyone's saying, "Who's that, who's that?" They're all looking at my parade, or my section of the parade, and I felt pretty good, because I said, I'm a freshman, doing my thing, you know? I'm hot stuff. You know? I'm making grits back here.

Douglass, Taylor, Ebony, and April each readily recalled experiences of praise in marching band. Denise, on the other hand, described an instance where praise motivated her in concert band:

It was my first festival. After we had finished playing, we had a standing ovation, and we stood up. Everyone's clapping. They know we did a good job. We know we did a good job. There's goose-bumps on my arms, because it sounded so beautiful, and that was the time. That was the peak.

By receiving praise from either peers or band supporters, students were motivated. Collectively, all accounts of motivation through praise were students' first experiences, either in concert or marching band. Each experience was a depiction of a time when the student was excited about band.

### *Category 8: Learning*

Four students revealed that the educational aspect of music was motivating. They indicated that through learning, they began to realize their true potential as musicians. This learning in many instances held the interest of band students. For example, Dion noted: "It's always been learning of new things that's kept me motivated in, that kept me motivated in anything that I did. So, learning was the main thing, that motivated [me] to stay in band." Ebony emphasized the social aspect of learning in band: "It's like you're friends and you know, you get to joke around, play around, come up with new stuff, and it's just fun [be]cause you're always there with each other. You're learning new things. You're going places. You just have fun." Like Ebony, Taylor also stressed that learning in band was fun: I remember fast marching for a long time. I guess. Playing the cadences that I know we [are not ever going to] play 'em here at the school and going down there learning new cadences; that was fun." Dion agreed:

I think learning is fun. Learning your instrument, learning your music, learning the most, and everything. When you learn something, I think you really, you really want to test yourself, and push your limits to see how far you can go, and still we do that to this day. I mean, let's see, like, during sixth grade you learn your notes, your rhythms, your note values and everything, time signature. But seventh grade, we had more difficult music that used your dynamic contrasts, and your changing time signatures, and your articulation. I think learning that, and actually having to do that, and having to learn how to do that with control, and everything, made it more pleasurable, or put, gave us the motivation to keep trying, to keep wanting to fix it, and do it right. Because it was something new. If you try something new, you're going to want to perfect it to the best of your ability.

Ebony, Taylor, and Dion emphasized that learning was fun and, therefore motivating. April, rather than describing the motivational value that learning had for her, talked about another student who she felt was motivated:

Lance is motivated. I mean I don't know if he was thinking about majoring in music or anything, but he realizes that with music you're never done learning and he's continually trying to expand his playing capability. I guess it's the learning, that's keeping him motivated.

Learning caused students to experience motivation. In most cases, this learning was considered fun and was contrasted with social aspects of band. While these students valued it heavily, learning initiated their drive to focus on a given task.

#### *Category 9: Commitment*

Six students indicated that commitment was an outcome of motivation. When describing this commitment, students frequently used the term *dedication* while typifying committed students as those who "stuck with it." Commitment is presented as an outcome of students' experiences because it tended to be a result *of* motivation rather than an experience *with* motivation, as with the former categories.

Many students' discussions of commitment were actually self-perceptions while other students gave rather finite definitions of what commitment was. These students (as stated earlier) frequently used the term *dedication* in their descriptions. For example, Kendall explained that,

dedicated people are motivated people...Because you have to be motivated to be dedicated; if you're not motivated, you're not going to be dedicated. You have to have

some motivation to be able to keep on doing what you're doing. If there's no motivation, there's no dedication.

Like Kendall, Latrice also defined *commitment*. However, her definition was based specifically on marching and symphonic bands. When asked what she thought about when she heard the word *motivation*, Latrice responded,

Dedication on things. Being on time for stuff. Because now as far as like with marching band and symphonic, band you know in order to get top rating[s] when going places, you have to be dedicated. You have to come to practice with a good attitude, not slacking off.

While these students defined commitment, Kendall underscored the importance of commitment, asserting that dedication is central to being a good band student:

Well, you can't really be in band unless you [are] dedicated. For one, I know in this band, we have at least five or six practices a week. So, and some on Saturdays sometimes, so I know if you're not dedicated, you won't show up to [any] of the practices, and you won't get any better. If you don't get any better, that means you're hurting the group, because you're not getting any better, which means you're holding the group back from getting any better.

He then emphasized that dedication was an outcome of motivation and included supporting examples in his explanation. This dedication, according to Kendall, is self-initiated. He illustrated these ideas:

Motivation brings about dedication. Dedication brings about success, because motivation is the key to everything, because you have to motivate yourself. Sometimes people don't motivate you. Sometimes people unmotivated you-- if you can't motivate yourself, then nobody is going to want to motivate you. Like motivational speakers, they get paid a lot.

But I know they can motivate themselves; they not only motivate crowds, they probably can motivate themselves to be able to motivate others. If you can't motivate yourself, then you're pretty much not going to be dedicated to anything.

Kendall continued by describing himself as a committed band student. He emphasized that committed students were punctual and could be relied on:

I'm dedicated. My motto is "on time is late, and early is on time." So, if you're early, that means you're on time. If you're on time, you're late. I'm always early to performances, early to everything, because I know that, that on time is late. So, unless I have a good reason to be on time, I'm never on time.

Kendall summarized his views of commitment with a description of himself as a reliable band student who was never late. Like Kendall, Dion described himself as committed band student.

For example, Dion asserted that he "stuck with" band throughout his school years:

When I hear the word, motivation, the subject matter that comes to mind, when I think about motivation, actually, is band, because that's the one thing that I've stuck with so many years, and it had to be motivation that kept me in band for so long.

These students described commitment as an outcome of motivation through definition and self-perceptions. Rather than describing self, however, Ebony and Denise, characterized other students who were committed as a result of their motivation. For instance, Ebony described a motivated student, Lance. She agreed with April, who noted in the previous section that Lance experienced motivation through learning. Moreover, Ebony added that Lance was a dedicated student:

He's pretty smart. He's dedicated in a lot of his stuff [be]cause he actually comes to school on Saturday school and tutors 11<sup>th</sup> graders. After school, Lance's there. You need extra help, he's there. He's a pretty nice person.

Denise described another motivated student who showed commitment toward a goal in band:

John is very motivated. I think John wants to be the next drum major. I think his dream, his goal, is to be drum major. To be drum major, you have to have dedication, discipline, you have to be a leader. You have to practice. You have to be good. He practices; he might not be the best, but he tries to be the best. And that's what motivation is.

As an outcome of motivation, commitment was described as an attribute of motivated students.

At length, students defined the importance of commitment in band while describing it using self-perceptions and the term *dedication*.

#### *Category 10: Hard Work*

Seven of nine participants also described hard work as an outcome of motivation. As with the category *commitment*, most respondents described their highly motivated peers as hard workers. Other students expressed how vital hard work is to giving a successful performance. In one instance, April described how (hard work) helped the band achieve superior ratings at a band festival. When asked why receiving a superior rating at this particular function was so important, she responded, "Because a lot of hard work goes into them and a lot of hours and sweat and tears. We got to put up with a lot of stuff, but to see the end product, to see that we succeeded in what we were trying to do." Denise agreed with April, mentioning a band festival where she, along with her peers worked hard: "After school practices, morning practices, I used to be in the band room every morning practicing the instrument. Being on time to practice,

practice during class, it was just practice, practice, practice, and concerts really to just work up to festival.” Denise continued her discussion about hard working band students:

[I] see them in the hall, and they got their percussion sticks in the air, doing they’re rhythms. They got sheet music, and they [are] talking to their friends. They [are] talking about who messed up yesterday in class, have they [are] band uniforms on everyday. It’s just, they [are] trying to be the best at band.

Like Denise, Douglass also characterized hard working band students:

They are almost crazy. They take home the instrument every day. They practice. They say, “Douglass, come listen to this. Does this sound good?” After I tell them it sounds good, they’ll go and challenge somebody. This person kind of gives me motivation to be a better musician, because I want to better myself so they’ll want to do better.

Ebony agreed with both Douglass and Denise. When describing motivated students, she stated, They’ll always practice. No matter what, during free time, like in the morning, 7:30, they play their instrument. Like yesterday, we had a free day, but some people still pulled out their instrument, grabbed a practice room, or went out in the hallway and still played. They [are] always early [and] leave late. They always do extra stuff. That’s a motivated student.

Ebony added that Tyler, a hard working band student, was motivated:

Tyler is motivated because, yesterday he played when we had a free day. He actually played the whole class period. He’s here early practicing when I get to school. When I leave, he’s here. When Mr. K says, “Have this [for] me tomorrow.” He says, “I’ll have it to you by the end of the class.”

Taylor also mentioned a student whom he felt was a hard worker. He explained, “My friend Sugar Bear, he plays snare drum. He had a hard timpani part. We stayed after school and worked real hard on it.”

Like Taylor and Ebony, Latrice described a hard working student in particular:

This student, he comes to every practice. On the days that we don’t play in class, he is the main one out and goes into one of the practice room. Practices all the time, and he’s a senior too. He doesn’t have that many classes so, if he has a free class, he’ll come down to the band room and practice.

When asked why this student worked so hard, Latrice explained, “I think he probably enjoys what he does. It’s something that he likes and it’s probably something that he would want to keep doing.”

Ebony also described a hard-working, motivated band student; however, she emphasized that his success in music had led to arrogance:

He was an excellent player. I mean, practiced all the time and he just got really-- he was really good and could out-play just about everybody. But his head got big, and he got arrogant, like he didn’t want to be with us. He was like, “I can play better than you. I don’t want to be around you,” and then he just got so arrogant and just full of it. And I think that was [a] downfall.

In this rare instance, a motivated student was described using negative attributes. In a similar depiction, Ebony talked about another hard-working student who exhibited negative features:

John. He’s motivated, he just [has] a bad attitude. But other than that, he’s motivated. I mean real motivated. Like if you say, “Hey, that wasn’t good,” he’ll go home and practice. He’ll stay after school and practice. He’s there every morning at 7:30. He is

there in the band room with his instrument out playing. So he's real motivated; it's just that sometimes that cockyness just gets to people, but he's real motivated.

When asked why this student worked so hard, Ebony responded, "I guess he just got sick of people. I always stayed on him [be]cause his tone wasn't all that good. I guess he just got sick of people always on his case. And he would practice every morning. He's always here. Practicing. Always playing something."

Ebony talked about two students who had become hard workers as a result of their motivation. However, according to Ebony, arrogance was an unfortunate outcome of this drive and hard work. Thereafter, Ebony managed to describe an additional student using more positive descriptors:

Brian, he was not the best player when we first met and his tone was kinda bad, but he got sick of people talking about him, so he kept playing. He'd do everything because he wanted to be the best so bad. He switched to French horn [one] week; in a week, it sounded like he'd been playing for a year.

The participants, rather than giving first-hand accounts of their own experiences, talked about others whom they perceived to be hard-working band students. While contributing to students' personal achievement and success at various performance venues, hard work was an *outcome* of motivation.

### *Theme 2: Demotivators*

While participants readily described what motivated them they also placed emphasis on what did not motivate band students. These participants explained what students' lack of motivation meant to them and supported their contentions with narratives depicting experiences

and actual words of unmotivated students. Figure 3 presents categories pertaining to students' diminished interest.

**Theme 2: Demotivators**

Experiences	
Category 11: Lack of "Fun"	Category 13: Excessive Discipline
Category 12: Negative Director Relationship	Category 14: Negative Social Climate
Category 15: Indifference	

*Figure 3.* Common themes of students' perceptions of what diminished motivation in instrumental music classes.

*Category 11: Lack of "Fun"*

While students associated motivation with "fun" in the previous section, they also spoke at length about the lack of "fun" when describing the absence of motivation. According to these six students, fun diminished when band seemed to be more of a responsibility rather than an extracurricular activity. For instance, April said, "We don't have to be there. We are not getting paid, but we enjoy it so much, we are giving [Mr. K] our time anyway, so when you lack fun, we're just gonna be miserable." Denise also commented on the restrictive nature of band: "It doesn't seem like, it's not fun anymore, because it's so strict. It's like a job."

Like Denise and April, Latrice stated that the restrictions in the band had diminished motivation. In an account of her personal loss of motivation, she noted,

I lost motivation probably this past school year because... band wasn't really the top of my list. It felt like band wasn't really fun. It felt like it was something that I had to do.

We had Saturday practices, and I wasn't wanting to go to that. I had other stuff to do, and I felt that band was kinda getting in the way of it.

Dion described a student, Naima, who was not having fun. According to Dion, this lack of fun could be attributed to the fact that Naima had no goals:

Naima James, she's a clarinet player; she's a sophomore in the first band. She sits 1<sup>st</sup> chair and she's so young. Her experiences won't exactly be the same as what mine or any other student who's an upperclassman is in the band right now because she has no exact other goal to reach for, and I'm pretty sure that plays a big part in students' perceptions of band and how they might have fun or what they might categorize as having fun. But being so young and such a[n] elite part of the band program, it's really going to be difficult for her to get the same enjoyment we did at her age.

Dion further noted that Ebony had lost motivation in band because she was not having fun. This loss, according to Dion, was due to the restrictive nature of the band:

We're all getting older and we all want to venture out into something else, but sometimes you might feel stuck because we've been here for so long and we still get kind of a sense that we still owe something to the band. So that might play a role in her claim of no more fun in band.

Like Dion, other students said that too many restrictions led to students' not having fun. For example, Latrice stated,

It felt like band wasn't really fun. It felt like it was something that I had to do. Like doing Saturday practices. I had other stuff to do and I felt that band was getting in the way of it ... Fun in band is being able to. . . I mean, I know that we can't get too rowdy

or anything like that but every once in a while, do something out of the ordinary like, I guess, one day just go crazy or something like that.

Contrary to Latrice's description, Denise said, "Fun, in band, is not necessarily goofing off, because you have to have discipline. It's more like, making music and, I feel, for your music to be good. It has to give them chills while you're playing it." Denise emphasized that discipline was necessary to have fun in band; however, she, along with April, noted that too many restrictions in band made it seem like a job. April explained,

You have to enjoy yourself. It's extra curricular. It's not a job. We don't have to be there. We are not getting paid but we enjoy it so much we are giving him our time anyway. So when you lack fun we're just gonna get miserable because we don't wanna quit, but we don't wanna sit there and be bored either.

As a solution to the restrictive nature of the band, April added that directors should, "Encourage them (students) in their academics. Because everybody's not majoring in music, so don't make it like a job, like we're going to be marching for the rest of our lives." At this point, Denise stated, "It doesn't seem like, it's not fun anymore, because it's so strict. It's like a job."

Another phenomenon that occurred due to lack of enjoyment was student attrition in the band. A problem typically associated with older students, this was a growing trend in the band program. Students indicated that seniors as well as juniors began to grow tired of the arduous regimen that the program maintained and drop out of the band because of strict discipline. According to April, students dropped out of band because they were "so busy worrying about discipline" that eventually they were not enjoying themselves anymore. Dion, a junior in the band, made a similar assertion:

It's not just with the senior class. It's going on with my class, too. I know for a fact that my friends in the band are talking about quitting for unknown reasons. I couldn't tell you personally how they would feel about quitting band because I couldn't imagine myself quitting band for any reason. I hear a lot of talk going around about how band isn't fun, or band isn't what it used to be.

Dion suggested that this attrition problem was not an instance of students not having fun; rather, these students were immature and used to always getting their way. He expressed that the students were

being spoiled. When you get in ninth grade, a lot of that stuff doesn't happen. When you get in tenth grade, your junior year, and senior year, things really start to pick up as far as maturity. Some people [are] growing, and some people just stay where they are, kind of in their own maturity level. I think that's a pretty big part of everything, how people are claiming that they're not having fun anymore.

Latrice described an unmotivated band student who had transferred to Dream High School from another local high school. She emphasized that wasn't having fun either and that he had had more fun at his previous school where there were fewer restrictions in the band:

I remember he told me that he used to go to Cedar Shoals; he used to march with Cedar Shoals, and he was just saying how, at Cedar Shoals, things were different. They would do things differently there like, I guess they could have more fun there than he did here [Dream High]. Here it's more disciplined. Over there, you could just get away with anything and do whatever.

Like Ashley, April described a particular unmotivated student:

I guess she's not having fun either [be]cause she just, the energy is drained from her, and she does not care anymore. And like Mr. K keeps volunteering her for stuff like solo and ensemble and district and stuff. She [does not] want to do it; they get into it every time.

Dion described Ebony, who claimed she was not having fun either. He attributed her claim to changed attitudes and not being prepared for class:

I think since we've been around each other for long, for a good while, I can say that it's certain things that change around her that might make band different. Right now she doesn't have a horn, so she's not playing during class. That can't produce any enjoyment for her. Other things [change] such as [the] attitude that other people might portray in her specific area. They might act funny as in, act different around her, talking behind her back. It might be her attitude as well that's changed toward band. So that might also play a role in her claim of no more fun in band.

Finally, Elaine mentioned how she could not understand how one student, Naima, could be so unmotivated. She remarked, "Her being so good at something is a sharp contrast to her skills. You think that she would have the most fun, because she has the most skills, but it's really the other way around."

In summary, students who experienced the lack of "fun" mentioned the restrictive nature of the band. Diminished motivation led to older students dropping out while causing others a decrease in morale and overall effort.

#### *Category 12: Negative Director Relationship*

Six participants revealed that student motivation declined due to negative director relationships. These negative interactions with the director were usually ongoing and the

primary reason for students' dismissing themselves from the band program. To remedy this problem, students asserted the director should be more personal with his or her students. April expressed the importance of a healthy student-teacher relationship in the band: "We spend more time with Mr. K and more time at school than we do at home a lot of instances. If we can't have a relationship with him then we're never gonna have an understanding. We're never gonna see eye to eye on anything."

April expressed that the band director should care about his or her students. A defining moment in her tenure at Dream High School was an instance where she felt that Mr. K did not care:

I almost had a breakdown, and that's [when] I [knew] my attitude toward band changed, [when] my attitude toward Mr. K changed, because he didn't seem to care that I had SAT's this day, [or a] graduation test that I had to study for. I'm used to band directors like you [Mr. Crosslin] and Mr. Mac and Mr. Clifford. I mean like we could just sit here and talk, but Mr. K, he acts like he doesn't care. And that was new for me. That caught me off guard.

April continued, attributing her loss of motivation to insensitive comments made by Mr. K.

These comments assured her that he did not care. April, a senior, was also concerned that Mr. K [had] placed Naima James, a sophomore over her in their section:

He says things to make me feel like he doesn't care, he [doesn't] need me there anymore. I mean, which he doesn't, I'm about to graduate but I'm not gone yet. He said, "Come on Ms. James, I put you there for a reason; you can't just drop out whenever you feel like it." And he was saying all this other stuff. He cut me off a part that Naima wanted me to play, and I said, "No, he's gonna cut me off of it," so of course, he cut [me] off; he was like "yeah, that won't make it" and all this other stuff. And he was like "yeah, that

sounds better already” and that just made me feel really bad [be]cause I can’t just look at something and play it. I gotta take it in first. [Sophomores] don’t have to try as hard, and I do, but he’s not recognizing that.

At length, April felt that the time and effort she had invested in the band program went unappreciated by the director. While vividly discussing this negative relationship, April gave an example of the rapport that a director should have with the students:

I was gonna use you [Mr. Crosslin] for an example, but you’re conducting the interview. I’m gonna say Mr. Mac. He was caring; you could talk to him about anything. If you need help with your homework and you went to him, he would do what he could. You always had somebody to go to, and he wouldn’t just stand on top of the hill or whatever and dictate. He would come on the field with us and march with us and stuff like that. He wasn’t just a band director; he was something like a father figure. We spend most of our time up here at the school with the band directors, more time than with our own parents. A lot of people don’t [have] fathers around, so I mean, people need positive male influences ... people who do seem to care.

Like April, Denise and Elaine expressed their views of what a student-director relationship should be. Denise stated, “You should be able to talk to your director on a level besides band. If you just need somebody to talk to or whatever.” Elaine also emphasized that the director should be approachable:

I think that you [should not] feel like you can’t talk to your band director. You should feel like you’re able to come to him, ask for help with music [and] ask for help on playing your instrument. Sometimes you need to be able to come to him to talk about anything, and a lot of students just view their band director as another teacher.

Kendall described students who view their band director as just another teacher. According to Kendall, they have a “burnt bridge relationship” with the director:

Ok, I’m gonna give you a scenario. Say you’re crossing this bridge and you’re crossing a bridge from Dream High to Jackson Cookman [college] and the bridge could be Mr. K. He’s the one that’s [going to] bridge you from Dream High to Jackson Cookman [college], but if you burn your bridge before you get to the bridge, it’s no way you’re [going to] get to Jackson Cookman.

In his description of students who maintain a negative relationship with the director, Kendall used the analogy of a bridge that represents the transition from high school to college. The majority of students who were characterized in this fashion, however, were those closest to making this transition: seniors. Dion explained,

This would have been the first year we had seniors in our band. A lot of the seniors decided that they would quit marching band; they quit band, period. I guess, over the years, they had maybe grown tired of Mr. K fussing a lot, yelling, [and] fussing at us so hard, that they decided that they were going to get their senior service award and then leave band. I think their motivation changed drastically at that time.

Elaine agreed with Dion:

Sometimes they just get tired of having to deal with Mr. K and Mr. S always telling them what to do, because they feel like, “I’m eighteen years old, and I’m still listening to this man telling me what to do every night when I get home. Oh, my mama don’t even tell me what to do anymore.” They’re like, “Why am I listening to this man? I don’t have to deal with him. I can get out of band.”

Dion described one senior in particular:

Raymond is a senior right now. He dropped his band course basically because his demeanor and Mr. K's demeanor were conflicting. So in order to get rid of the conflict, so there wouldn't be anymore problems between the two, he decided to drop the band course.

While a negative director relationship was a phenomenon that existed primarily among seniors in the band, younger unmotivated students exhibited traits similar to their senior counterparts. For instance, Latrice asserted that an eleventh grade student lost motivation because of her relationship with the director:

It was a drastic change. It was a girl that was in marching band since we were in ninth grade, and she really didn't like it that much. Last year, it was kinda like she got sick of it and started slacking off and eventually she quit. She said she was just tired of the band directors. She said she was just tired of everybody trying to tell her what to do and stuff like that.

Students readily described unmotivated peers whom they felt had negative relationships with the band director. Like April, Denise gave a personal account of her relationship with the director. She expressed that many factors contributed to her decline in interest; however, the director was the principle reason for her loss of motivation.

Well, I don't [have to] think that far back. This year, folks in my section talking about me behind my back [and] not really feeling the music. It sounds stupid, and it's no big parts for me, and [I'm] just playing it, and it's just whatever. I'm not going to practice; [there's] no point. [I] don't want to stay after school with all these kids I don't like anyway. That's when I lost my motivation.

After this statement, Denise emphasized that Mr. K was to blame for her lack of interest and that he had contributed to other dynamics in the band that caused her to lose motivation.

In summary, it was important to students that they maintained a positive relationship with their band director. However, many students (typically seniors) “burned their bridge” with the band director. These conflicts of demeanor were the result of growing resistance to restrictions and discipline in the band.

### *Category 13: Excessive Discipline*

Five participants acknowledged that students lost motivation because of excessive discipline. In a previous section, these students pointed out that discipline was actually a motivating factor however, they maintained that too much discipline was a detriment. Their descriptions insisted that many students grew tired of the director yelling, fussing, and constantly telling them what to do. April explained their frustration: “When you’re so busy worrying about discipline and this has to be right and [that] has to be right, eventually you’re not having fun anymore.” Denise described this discipline:

There’s no talking, whatsoever. You cannot talk. You sit up, at the edge of your chair, with your instrument perfect, your hand on your knee, feet flat on the floor. I know that’s how you’re supposed to be, but it’s like, the whole time, just sitting, straight. Every once in a while, it’ll be a little joke, or whatever. But, most of the time, it’s just strictly business.

Denise continued, asserting that the band director was more focused on himself rather than on the band students:

It seems like it’s more the band director’s reputation than actually the learning of the students, and how the students feel. Especially around festival time, it’s like, “We’re

going to get superiors, because it's my name at stake." I mean, they won't actually come out and say that, but that's how it feels. They get really strict around festival time.

Denise indicated that she eventually grew tired of the restrictions in the band. Dion also commented on unmotivated students who resented discipline in the band:

Everyone gets tired of being fussed at by their parents. So, if you do something wrong at home, you get disciplined for it, and that's at home. So, you come to school, and you have to do the same thing over again; you're not, you[re] doing something you're not supposed to be doing, so, you get disciplined for it in band, as well. So I guess they couldn't handle that, handle themselves having to, I guess you would say, put up with double discipline that they had to go through with their parents and band put together.

Dion continued, describing a particular student who couldn't put up with these restraints:

Mike did play a lot in class. He did get called out a lot in class for messing around and everything. I think he was-- he just didn't want to have to be called out, be[ing] talked to about messing up and all that stuff anymore. I think the stern discipline actually did play a role in his dismissal from the band class.

Like Dion, Latrice discussed a student who wasn't motivated. This transfer student emphasized that he was more motivated at his previous school. Latrice explained,

At the other school [he] went to, I guess that had, I guess they had what he'd call more freedom. They could do whatever they wanted to. And I guess when [he] came over here, he had people telling him that he couldn't do those things, and it was something that he wasn't used to.

Elaine also commented on students who came to Dream High from other band programs:

They came from programs where discipline, I don't know, the discipline may not [have] been as stressed [as] it is here, and you know after festival, you don't have to bring your instrument to class anymore. The band director doesn't get quite so upset when you're late for practice or anything like that; they don't get upset when you leave, and Mr. K does that, he stresses all of that, he stresses all the stuff that bothers you. You know like showing up on time and sitting up straight, practicing all the time, and you just get tired of it.

In some cases, this rigorously maintained discipline caused students to lose interest. The seniors in the band were mainly cited in this loss in motivation (as with negative director relationships in the previous section). This lack of interest progressed as students got older and ultimately led to them getting out of band. Younger students who exhibited characteristics similar to these seniors stressed that they were subjected to undue restraints that reduced their freedom.

#### *Category 14: Negative Social Climate*

Six of nine students indicated that they, along with their peers, sometimes lost motivation because of the social climate in the band. Because of cliques, or small social groups within the band, it was difficult for students who did not fit in to interact socially with other band members. Those who were most affected by this negative social climate were existing band members who had not been accepted and new band students who could not fit in.

Ebony experienced this social phenomenon first-hand. She explained that as a freshman in the band, she found it difficult to find her place socially among band members:

We have those cliques and they're pretty big; like, when I go to band, it's like 10 of us that hang out together, and it's like we all scatter out around everywhere, and sometimes

if you're new, you're really not [going to] be able to get in that group. So you're probably [going to] think [that] band is not for you [be]cause that's how I felt my first year, and I was like, "This is not for me." [be]cause I didn't know [anybody]. Everybody was hanging out, well like [in] big groups, and I [thought] "I can't do this." That's probably why if you're new, we're [going to] get on you. You know, "That sucked," and "You don't know nothing." You just get scared because it's kinda overwhelming sometimes, especially if you have a big band and sometimes you just don't feel like you fit [in].

Dion, a friend of Ebony, described how sophomores were affected by the social climate in the band. These students were withdrawn from a class with their peers and placed in an advanced band class with older students:

The majority of the people who are in the top band grew together in the same band coming from Stanton, or coming from Chapel Mill, or coming from Cedar Grove. They grew together in the same band, in the same age group. A few people that are in the top band right now are sophomores like Naima James, Salome, and Elaine. I can see that they really, really want to be with their friends right now, in their friends' band class, because no matter how good you are, you still want somebody your same age to have fun with during band class, or maybe cut up, and act a fool [with] during band class while nobody's looking.

Dion continued by explaining that he, Ebony, and another student, who were in the trumpet section in this class had grown up together. This, shared background according to Dion, contributed to social stability within their group. He emphasized that "Naima can't exactly do

that because she's sitting with a senior; although they're really close, they're still not the same age."

Elaine, one of those sophomores that Dion mentioned, described the social problems that she and Naima had in this advanced class:

Naima James, phenomenal clarinetist, she sounds good. Her tone, I haven't heard anybody else in my band who had tone as good as hers, not even my section leader. She sits first chair right now. She came to the top band, and Mr. K expects us to do well, but as sophomores, [older band students were] like, "Ya'll are in tenth grade. We're seniors and juniors. We don't even know why y'all [are] here. It must be a schedule mix-up."

Denise, another sophomore, also described her social struggles with her peers in band. She insisted that cliques within the band contributed to a negative social climate, a source of frustration for her:

It's not how it was at Stanton [middle school], because it's not that unity. I feel like I'm by myself in this band. Where at Stanton, it was like, everybody was a family. This band is like, they're already cliqued up, and they don't accept me, or whatever ... We have, it's sort of like one big clique, because it seems like the whole marching band is cool with each other. But, ok, I'm different. I'm with the popular kids, and the band is more like, they're not so popular, but they're popular to each other because they're the whole band. All of a sudden, they just assume that I'm stuck up, or whatever, because I don't hang with them. I hang with who I hang with, and they don't accept me, even though I try to be nice to all of them, because I'm just a nice person. But it doesn't work like that. I'm nice with a few of the drum majors. I'm friends with all the drum majors, and a couple of other band members. But besides that, the whole band, as a whole, I don't really fit in.

Because of a social climate that was created by selective cliques and disparities in age, these students felt they did not fit in and lost motivation. In contrast, other students maintained a social regimen that would make them acceptable to their peers. These students were influenced by the way others perceived them. Consequently, if it were “cool” to be unmotivated, these students would be influenced to act accordingly just to fit in. Kendall referred to this influence as peer pressure. He noted, “Sometimes friends can motivate you to do things. Friends have [a] certain kind of motivation that can motivate you to do bad things. It’s kinda, I wanna say peer pressure. That’s what it is, peer pressure.” Denise also talked about peer pressure. In describing an unmotivated student who eventually dropped out of band, she said, “She kinda flows with the crowd. So if the crowd wasn’t in band, then she’s not going to be in band.”

Dion agreed, stating that students tend to act like the group they associate themselves with. He gave the following example:

Take band for example. If you’re usually a good student in band, you behave and do what you’re supposed to, and you’re sitting around a bunch of other students who aren’t exactly doing what they’re supposed to be doing, who like are constantly getting [in] trouble, you’re more likely to start acting like that group that you’re hanging around in that little setting. If you’re in that group again, you’re usually the student that behaves and your group that’s around you starts misbehaving, it’s more likely that you’re gonna get punished with that group by association, and that’s a big factor in how students might become unmotivated because they haven’t done anything to deserve any sort of punishment.

Dion then summarized his thoughts on peer pressure: “Motivated students may stand out a little bit more depending on the crowd that they’re around. If the crowd they’re hanging around is a

highly motivated crowd versus a small, unmotivated crowd, the unmotivated crowd will definitely stand out more.”

These three students (Kendall, Denise, and Dion) suggested that students acted in consensus with the groups or peers they associated themselves with. This adjusted behavior, according to them, was the result of peer pressure. Elaine agreed that students are influenced by their peers; however, she stated that this influence was not an issue of peer pressure. Instead, Elaine emphasized that students are influenced by certain trends, and that unfortunately, trends of unmotivation exist in the band:

I don't want to say peer pressure because part of me doesn't believe in that, but a lot them hear their friends say they're tired of it. They're like, "okay, well now the thing is to be tired of it, so I think I'm gonna go ahead and say I'm tired," and eventually they start to act like they're tired of it, and then they start to sound like they're tired of it, and then it doesn't really matter if they care anymore [be]cause they're not contributing anymore.

Elaine continued, characterizing this type of student: "They're like, 'okay, well, I don't want to look like a band geek to my friends. All my other little friends dropped out of band, so let me go on ahead and get out.' It's not important anymore."

The students described here recognized trends in motivation and acted accordingly to fit in socially with their peers. At times, students who actually were motivated acted contrary to their beliefs. To avoid being viewed as a "band geek" or "band nerd," students portrayed themselves as indifferent and nonchalant band members. In contrast, Douglass believed that the label "band nerd" was a compliment. In fact, he insisted that he was a band nerd and that he would not have it any other way. He discussed the term:

Band nerd is an earned right, responsibility. It is a chair. It is a brand. Like you could be a computer geek or a band geek, you know. It's like we should have our own little club and get our own letterman jackets for being a band nerd, you know, but not everybody is willing to step up to the challenge, because they think that band nerds are, what you consider a band nerd is exactly what it is, a nerd, when really it isn't. Being a band nerd is, it goes way beyond the name of band geek or band nerd. It is, it is basically saying that you have devoted so much time to band that whatever you do and say comes from band. Nevertheless, many students avoided this label. Rather than showing any excitement about band, students would act unmotivated to prevent being called a "band geek" or "band nerd." Elaine talked about these students:

You've [got] those that don't really have much to say because they like music, but then they don't want to risk being a band junky. You know, they don't want to, every time they go somewhere, they're referred to as the band geek or the band nerd, even though it doesn't seem like that much of an insult and now-a-days it's not anymore. You know, they'd rather just be neutral or to be one of the people that doesn't think it's fun anymore, than to be one of the people that just think about band all the time, and all they talk about is band and all they do is band. Even if that's not the type of person you are, they just don't want to be that type of person, so they're like, "okay, I'm just going to say I'm tired of it."

Elaine suggested that these students act contrary to their true feelings about band and discussed their hypocritical actions:

Those are the same people that sit and practice whether we don't have to play or the same people that take their instruments home even though they don't like to take their instruments home. Those are the same people that point out all the musical elements in the

song, they don't notice they're doing it, but they point out all the musical elements [of] the song, but then they want to call you a band geek.

Douglass added his perception of these band students:

They're the cool people. They're the cool people who don't want to become band nerds. So they hold back. To me, that's really sad, too. By them holding back, they missed out on a scholarship. They missed out on opportunities to learn life lessons that you can't learn anywhere else. They'll try to act like they're not excited, when they really are because it's hard not to get excited when you're out there on the field. You're marching, you're playing your music, and you're doing it right. That's a big step in itself is doing something right and doing it good, but they hold themselves back because they don't want to get caught up in the band "geekyness" because then they'll lose their cool points. They don't want to be seen as this person, this lover of band ... They have just a little bit of love for band, or else they wouldn't be in it.

Douglass summed up his discussion of peer pressure and how students are socially influenced to be unmotivated:

I hope most people got the experience that I got as a freshman, where they just welcome you in and they accept you as if you've been apart of that band for years. That's the positive side. On the negative side, people say, "Man why are you a part of the band? They're so geeky." And that can stray people away from band and that can cause them to lose out on an experience that they would carry with them for the rest of their life.

In summary, students experienced a decline in motivation through their efforts to fit in.

Whether finding their social place as neophytes or maintaining acceptance as existing band

members, students tended to exhibit behaviors that they perceived would keep them in good social standing among their peers.

#### *Category 15: Indifference*

Six participants of this study indicated that some students displayed indifferent attitudes toward band. These indifferent attitudes were the result of them being demotivated. Students that were demotivated exhibited attitudes that reflected a distinct lack of interest and concern. In fact, many stated blatantly, “I don’t care,” when their peers addressed their unmotivated behaviors. Ebony exclaimed that these students were:

Lazy. Nonchalant. They don’t care. They[re] just here and they just sit. They do nothing. They don’t want to practice. You ask them, “Are you going to practice?” [response] “No.” “Do you want of be better?” [response] “No.” They’ll say they don’t care. “I don’t care about band [any] more.”

Elaine also described students who acted indifferently:

They show up to practice thirty minutes late. Don’t come to practice. They come to a concert right before the buses leave. They’ll get an attitude with the band director. Really act like they don’t want to be there. They spend the whole day dreading having to go to band. They just don’t care anymore. They don’t motivate, and they don’t feel like they have any reason to still be stepping up. So, they don’t.

Latrice agreed with Ebony and Elaine. She also stated that some students didn’t care and had awful practice habits: “They slack off, they[re] just not into it. They don’t care. They say it [and] show it. [They come] to class late. [They come] to practice whenever they want to.”

Latrice continued, describing a student who exemplified these indifferent traits:

This person, he's kinda motivated, but like some days he could be like the best band person you've ever seen and other days it's like, "Why is he here?" Some days, he'll be here, come to practice, be on time, and do whatever he needs to do, and that'll be the end of it, and then some days, he'll just be like, "I just don't care anymore."

Ebony also described a student who showed little interest in the program. Like others, this student didn't care, which showed through his lack of effort:

He feels like he doesn't belong in the advanced band, so he [doesn't] try. So he just like give[s] up. Like if we speed up on a scale, he'll just sit there and laugh. He won't even try. He [doesn't] know how to write out scales. He [doesn't] know how to do [anything]. He say[s] he [doesn't] care, too.

When asked why this student didn't care, Ebony replied, "Because he say[s] he sucks and he was like, "I can't play better than y'all. Ain't no need in me trying. It's too late. We're gonna be seniors next year." Or some of 'em already are seniors. They say they don't care."

Elaine also described a student, Naima, who she felt did not care. Through her own talent and success, Naima had distinguished herself among other band students; however, she maintained an attitude that demonstrated an extreme lack of interest. Elaine explained:

She sits first chair. Usually we have a challenge, or something, she holds that first chair down. So, she may not care. She always know[s] what she needs to know. But she's not motivated. She comes to practices almost all the time, but you know, in practice, she's just like, "I really don't want to be here, but I'm here." She's just, she sits there, and she leans back in the chair and here she is sitting on the end, at a concert. She doesn't care, and she's not motivated. Mr. K get[s] all up in her face and she throws attitude right back. She's really not motivated. She spends a lot of time during the day talking about how she

doesn't want to go to sixth period band. She just doesn't have any motivation. She doesn't have any energy. She doesn't have any emotion. Personally, I think she was better when she was at Stanton, in eighth grade, than she is now, because she just doesn't care. She comes to class, she doesn't care. She doesn't care.

Elaine continued, emphasizing her frustration with Naima's indifferent attitude:

I feel like motivation is sometimes funny. Sometimes you don't even care, but sometimes you get kind of upset. You'll be like, "Man, I want to sit in your chair. I want to play your part. I may not be as good as you, [but] I know I'm good, or I wouldn't be here. I go to all [of Mr. K's] practices, learn all my scales, my articulation studies, and buy expensive reeds. You sit there and you don't even care. I guess I can't make her care. I can't make her think like I think, but sometimes I wish for a second she would just stop complaining.

Elaine also explained that entire sections in the band didn't care. She, along with other students, expressed that the trombone section in their class didn't care and showed this through their indifferent actions: "We've got a couple of trombones in our band, and they can play very good. That's what I don't understand. They don't sound like they have any energy. They don't sound like they have any emotion." April also mentioned that the trombone section did not care: "You might as well say that the trombones are on strike. We had seven trombones last year for festival season ... [We] ended up with three. Three and a half, one was there sometimes."

While Elaine and April maintained general perspectives on this section's indifference, Ebony spoke specifically about an individual who played trombone. This student was also a good player who wasn't motivated:

James. A good trombone player not motivated. [Doesn't] wanna practice. [Doesn't] wanna play in class half the time. He's not motivated. He left his music during festival. They had to play everything from memory. He just don't care. I don't know what to say about him. He's a good player though. He just [doesn't] wanna do nothing. He doesn't care.

Elaine also mentioned that James didn't care:

He's a pretty good trombone, one of our better trombones. In marching band, he contributes a lot to the sound even though sometimes it goes a little over the edge. I don't know him that well, but I think that he doesn't have very good motivation in band. I don't know how well his relationship is with the band directors, but he jokes a lot. He comes to class, he doesn't know his music sometimes. He knows marching music, but he doesn't know his symphonic band music. He doesn't know his scales and stuff even though we work on it every single day; he just kinda sits there like, "gon' graduate next year so, you know, whatever," and anything that Mr. K says to him to make him want to do better goes right over his head.

These students' descriptions focused principally on one student whose lack of motivation was indicative of his entire section. They insisted that, as an outcome of his lack of motivation, he had become indifferent to his participation in band.

Douglass and Ebony both discussed another student, George Fletcher. They depicted George as an introvert who really never said or did much in band. Douglass and Ebony maintained that, like other unmotivated students described in this section, George didn't care. Douglass stated,

This person, he's not the greatest player in the world, but he doesn't put much time into his instrument. He's kinda just in it for the grade. He's kind of a loner though. Not too many people talk to him. He's kinda off on his own little world. But, really, really smart kid. He just doesn't have that drive for band that I wish he had. He's kind of singled [out] because of the instrument that he plays, [be]cause not many guys play the instrument that he plays. So that kind of automatically gives him one under. He kinda starts at the negative one already, so he has to work extra hard to impress and be accepted, but that's not him. He really doesn't care. I mean he's kinda lackadaisical. He'll get his work done but he's just out there in his own little space....His love was not in band; it was in electronics, you know, computers. So he would like sacrifice his limbs for a computer, but for band it's almost as if band doesn't exist. It's almost as if band is just somewhere he sits and collects dust for you know like sixty minutes out of the day. It's like he's just there, like a leech; he's not serving any real purpose, just sucking up time, waiting for the bell to ring. You could really tell in his playing, [be]cause he's been playing for, I know he's been playing for at least four years, and he hasn't made the slightest improvement in his playing, so you can tell that he's just there. You know, it's like a tool in a box that you never use and it gets dull, and by the time you're ready to use it, you can't because the blade is worn down, it's all rusty, [and] the handle's falling off.

Douglass explained that this student's lack of interest was reflected by his indifference toward music, people around him, and the band class itself. As formerly mentioned, Ebony had similar descriptions of this student: "Fletcher. He just sits. I mean, some days he can't even get the concert pitch out of his clarinet. When he plays, you can't even hear nothing. It's just like air.

It's like he doesn't care. He just sits, long as he got his radio he's fine." Ebony, similar to Douglass, identified George as a quiet, laid back person.

To review, participants observed that unmotivated students maintained indifference toward the band. They supported their assumptions with descriptions of exhibited behaviors and exact statements made by unmotivated students. The phrase that recurred throughout these discussions was "I don't care."

### Summary

This chapter presented findings of students' perceptions of motivation in instrumental music classes in a high school. Individual participants were introduced and common themes were discussed in detail. The common themes, which emerged from the data, were motivators and demotivators. Within these themes, 15 categories were presented and supported by the actual words of the participants. The following chapter includes a summary of the research, discussion of the findings, and implications of the study.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter illustrates meanings most central to the emerging theory. It begins with a summary of the study, explains theoretical ideas through discussion and comparisons to extant literature, presents implications for director preparation and practice, and lastly presents implications for further research.

#### Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe students' perceptions of motivation in high school instrumental music classes and propose a theory emerging from and driven by the data. Initial research questions included: (a) How do music students experience motivation? (b) What meanings do these experiences have for them? The study took place at a high school during the spring of 2004. Theoretical sampling guided the selection of participants until theoretical saturation was reached, resulting in 9 research participants.

A grounded theory research design informed this study from initial data collection to final writing. Constant comparative methods guided data collection, coding, and analyzing. Face-to-face interviews and follow-up interviews were the primary source of data for this study. Documents also provided context for the study. As the researcher engaged in joint data collection and analysis, categories emerged. This analysis delineated connections among categories and yielded theoretical notions.

The findings of this research presented in chapter 4 produced two main themes and 15 categories that were central to students' perceptions of motivation. The main themes were *motivation* and *demotivation*.

This study found that students tend to develop meanings of motivation through their own experiences. Perceived outcomes of motivation are the result of these experiences. For example, because Taylor experienced motivation through success and competition, he was a more committed band student. This study also determined that students tend not to restrict their definition of motivation to positive experiences alone. They also depict understandings of motivation through negative examples of diminished interest.

### Discussion

The purpose of this section is to provide thorough discussion of major findings. These findings will be presented with supporting assertions from the data and contrasted with relevant findings in extant literature. This section begins with a discussion of the core theme-self-perception and finally presents a theoretical idea with supporting data.

#### *The Core Theme: Self-Perception*

The overarching theme that resonated through the data was self-perception. When describing both positive and negative musical experiences, students frequently related first-hand accounts that influenced perceptions of self. The following illustrates the core theme of the present study, that: (1) students' definition of self is an outcome of experiences with their environment, (2) that this self-perception influences how students act, and (3) that these actions materialize into what students perceive to be motivation.

This study found that students defined self according to their experiences with their environment. According to Mead (1934), the *self*, "arises in the process of social experience and

activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process” (p.135). This means that a student responds according to his/her social environment and continually interprets experiences with regard to perception of self. This self-perception influenced students’ actions.

Students acted according to their self-perception, which (as formerly mentioned) was an outcome of experiences with their environment. For example, this study revealed that students acted unmotivated when it was fashionable to do so. Dion clarified this point further:

[If] you’re sitting around a bunch of other students who aren’t exactly doing what they’re supposed to be doing, who are constantly getting [in] trouble, you’re more likely to start acting like that group that you’re hanging around in that setting.

Elaine also described this type of student, whose motivation is socially influenced:

A lot of them hear their friends say they’re tired of it [band]. They’re like, “Ok, well now the thing is to be tired of it so I think I’m gonna go ahead and say I’m tired,” and eventually they start to act like their tired of it, and then they start to sound like they’re tired of it.

Based on this study, students act according to what they perceive to be socially acceptable.

These actions, where students try to establish social affiliations, influence perceptions of motivation. In these efforts to “fit in,” students constantly manipulate self. Ebony stated that students who did not “fit in” would lose interest: “If you’re new, you’re really not going to be able to get in that [social] group so you’ll probably think band is not for you. That’s how I felt my first year and I was like, “This is not for me.” Denise also described a time when she lost motivation due to the fact that she did not fit in: “I feel like I’m by myself in this band. Where at

Stanton [middle school] it was like, everybody was a family. [Dream High band students are] already cliqued up, and they don't accept me.”

Students like Denise and Ebony lost motivation due to negative interactions with their social environment. These interactions impacted their perception of self, which in turn informed their actions, ultimately influencing their motivation to persist. In short, perceptions of self relied heavily on their need for social affiliation with their peers. This notion is consistent with extant music education literature whose contexts are informed by Self-determination Theory.

According to Self-determination theory, motivation develops from the innate needs of an organism (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci & Ryan, 1990). A component central to this theory is *relatedness* to others. The need for relatedness encompasses a person's strivings to relate to and care for others, to feel that those others are relating authentically to one's self, and to feel a satisfying and coherent involvement with the social world. This study showed that this need existed in the participants and that students' experiences with relatedness did impact their self-perception.

Another term that involves students' appraisals of themselves is *self-concept*. This construct has received some empirical attention; however, because many definitions of self-concept exist, it has been deemed ambiguous (Wylie, 1974) and regarded as a poorly defined construct (Strien, 1995). Moreover, few music education researchers have attempted studies that inform this construct. Though many definitions of self-concept remain, extant research by music education researchers has primarily used a model created by Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976). They defined self-concept as

a person's perception of himself. These perceptions are formed through his experience with his environment ... and are influenced especially by environmental reinforcements

and significant others. We do not claim an entity within a person called “self-concept.” Rather, we claim that the construct is potentially important and useful in explaining and predicting how one acts. One’s perceptions of himself are thought to influence the ways in which he acts, and his acts influence the ways in which he perceives himself.

This study (similar to the Shavelson et al. model) showed that students’ actions were indeed influenced by how they perceive themselves.

Taken together, self-concept is a construct that focuses on explaining students’ actions whereas self-determination theory centers on relatedness (students’ need for social affiliation). These definitions are consistent with the findings of this study, however; while *actions* and the need for *relatedness* are discussed as separate entities within self-concept and self-determination theory respectively, the core theme of this research (self-perception) illustrates a connection between the two. That is, the need for relatedness *impacts* students’ actions thus influencing their perceptions of motivation.

### *Theoretical Idea*

This section illustrates the theoretical idea of the present study. This idea will be presented with supporting prose from the data and related to existing research regarding students’ perceptions of motivation.

*Motivation in instrumental music classes appears to be gender specific.* This study found that males were motivated principally through external influences whereas females experienced motivation internally. When reflecting on motivation, female students’ responses were rooted in their feelings. Through these feelings, they often referred to existing relationships in the band. For example, these students emphasized that the band director should be more than simply

another teacher, that this teacher should be a role-model, a father figure, and someone in whom they could confide. Elaine expressed that a band director should be

A mentor. Like a guy that you can talk to about any and everything that you do not necessarily talk about [with] your parents. Somebody that's going to give you an experienced and mature response but would not chastise you like your parents would. You should feel like you can be open with [directors] and go to them about anything.

Denise had similar feelings: "You should be able to talk to your director on a level besides band, if you just need somebody to talk to, or whatever." This relationship, according to April, contributes to fun: "Fun is knowing you can go in and talk to your band director about like your boyfriend or something." While these students emphasized the importance of a relationship with the director, they also explained how a negative relationship diminishes student motivation.

These participants indicated that as students became older their relationship with the director suffered. Seniors, in particular were frequently described with statements such as, "She dropped her band course basically because her demeanor and Mr. K's demeanor were conflicting." Elaine explained, "Sometimes they just get tired of having to deal with Mr. K always telling them what to do. They feel like, 'I'm eighteen years old, and I'm still listening to this man telling me what to do. My mama don't even tell me what to do anymore.' So, they [say], 'I don't even have to deal with him.'" April suggested that this problem also existed in the junior class. She stated, "The junior class, I think that's where it's beginning and I guess we'll see next year. Your junior year is so demanding, it's so hard that you really don't have time to split time [with band]." April then gave a personal account regarding this phenomenon: "I almost had a breakdown, and that's [when] I knew my attitude toward Mr. K changed, because he didn't seem to care that I had SAT's this day, [and a] graduation test that I had to study for."

These examples support the notion that many female band students' motivation decreased primarily due to a negative relationship with the band director.

Covington (1982) raised the question, *who drops out of music instruction and why?* He examined the motivational basis of the teaching-learning act, particularly as it relates to young students' diminishing commitment to learn music as they grew older. Covington also found that this loss in motivation was the teacher's responsibility. However, while Covington questioned motivational tactics used by the teacher, the present study suggests that diminished interest was due to negative student-teacher relationships.

Nolin (1973) also studied the attitudinal growth patterns of music students. In his study of students in grades 3 through 6, he found a significant decline in students' motivation as they grew older. Additionally, Nolin and Vander Ark (1977) conducted a similar study of two junior high schools to determine if the decline in motivation continued through the seventh grade. Their findings were inconclusive: that is, while seventh grade music students attending one school continued this decline in motivation, students at the other school experienced increased motivation. Taken together these studies (Nolin, 1973; Nolin & Vander Ark, 1977) produced refutable findings; however, they offer empirical evidence relevant to students in grades three through seven. Similar to Nolin, (1973), the present study found that students' interest suffered as they grew older. Along with confirming conclusions reached by other research (Nolin, 1973; Kiyoshi, 1997), this study also produced gender-specific findings pertaining to this phenomenon. While the formerly mentioned research produced findings relevant to music students in grades three through seven, this study contributes findings for the same knowledge base but relevant to students in a high school setting.

While female students readily identified with intrinsic motivators, they also indicated that external controls diminished their interests. These students frequently cited instances when director-imposed controls caused them to lose motivation. Students felt these restraints at times when the director became too controlling, causing them to resent discipline. Denise described this discipline that was un motivating in class:

There's no talking whatsoever. You cannot talk. You sit up, at the edge of your chair with your instrument perfect, your hand on your knee, feet flat on the floor. It's strictly business. It seems like it's more the band director's reputation than actually the learning of the students, and how the students feel.

Elaine also remarked that they eventually grew tired of disciplinary controls imposed by the band director. She stated, "Mr. K, he stresses all the stuff that bothers you, you know like showing up on time, sitting up straight, practicing all the time and you just get tired of it."

This finding confirms conclusions reached by Deci, Cascio, & Krusell (1975). They also found that female students tend to view external motivators as restraining and as a result, lose motivation. For instance, we usually expect that positive feedback, such as praise, leads students to perceive themselves as more competent and to be intrinsically motivated. However, Deci et al. (1975) found that females are more likely to perceive praise as controlling, while males experience it as informational. The present study found that female students indeed gained interest through intrinsic motivators but recognized external motivators such as praise and discipline to be controlling. This finding was consistent with extant literature (Deci et al., 1975; Kiyoshi, 1997).

Males accepted extrinsic motivators. For example, they indicated that they were motivated in instances where the director imposed discipline upon them. These students

revealed that they were motivated when compelled to follow structure and discipline in band.

According to Kendall,

Mr. K bleeds motivation into us. He beats motivation into us. He beats motivation into us by showing that he's motivated and [by] telling us to be motivated and giving incentives to us, for us to be motivated. He just doesn't do that; he shows us by example; he's motivated himself. He shows us that motivation is the key to success.

Indeed, Kendall readily accepted extrinsic forms of motivation, such as established incentives for acceptable behaviors and examples set by the director. Douglass was also motivated by set examples: "Motivation, to me, is wanting to be like someone who's better than you. Trying to take things you like [about the person] and make them what you want them to be."

Data from this study also revealed that male students valued goals in music. Males identified with this extrinsic motivator and remarked that goals were "the very essence of motivation." Students determined that without goals, they would have neither the means nor a reason to achieve. The presence of goals gave male students initiative, while providing them with a point of reference to determine their progression. For example, many male students established role models for success and set their goals to be like these role models. They sought to emulate these exemplars and use them as a guide to reach their goals. Dion explained, "Knowing that you can have someone to ask questions about your horn who [knows] a lot more than you do about your horn; I think that motivates you to learn more." Other males set goals simply to impress the band director through their personal learning and achievement. Douglass stated,

I wanted to [impress] the band director. That was another goal of mine. Of course, Mr. K, Mr. S, and my other band director are not the easiest persons in the world to [impress]. My motivation was to try to impress those three people before I graduated."

While some students recognized what goals meant to them, others emphasized the importance of goals in band.

According to Dion, “It’s very essential that you have goals. That might be the essence of what motivation is. Seeing some type of goal that you haven’t quite met yet, that you want to [achieve]. That’s a big part of what motivation is.” Like Dion, Kendall also underscored the importance of goals, “Goals are what you set your standards on. So if you have no goals, you have no standards. That’s why goals are important.” Douglass agreed, supporting his assertion with examples,

a goal is what holds the band together. A band always has some place where they’d like to be. Like Dream High when it first opened, we wanted to be the best. We wanted not to be the baby group. We wanted to be *the* group. When I was at Lakeview, Mr. High always told us to be like Central Park West. That was his goal. When I was at Miles, they told us to be like a high school group, that was a goal. Goals are essential as a band, and as a[n] individual player. If you don’t have goals as a player, then why are you practicing? I think that a goal is the first stepping-stone to becoming a better musician.

Taken together, males relied on goals to provide structure and motivation to realize their potential as musicians. These students suggest that goals are a component essential to achievement in music. Extant literature supports this notion.

According to the Achievement Goal Theory, the primary goal of an individual in an achievement context is to demonstrate high levels of competence while avoiding the demonstration of low ability (Nicholls, 1984). Thus, achievement goals influence the interpretation, assessment, and reaction to achievement, and ultimately will influence the level of

motivation (Treasure, 1997). The findings of the present study are consistent with these assertions.

As with self-concept, research examining the effects of various goal structures in music classrooms is limited (Austin & Vispoel, 1992). This sparse literature consists of two related studies that examined music students' perceptions of failure (Vispoel & Austin, 1993a; Vispoel and Austin, 1993b). However, a severe limitation of this research is that they were hypothetical in nature. That is, students were asked to respond to hypothetical failure scenarios in these investigations. The present study is significant because its findings contribute to a knowledge base that has otherwise received little empirical attention. Furthermore, this study renders qualitative data that is informed by students' real life experiences.

There is a growing body of research on the effects of gender on motivation and learning. Some studies have found that motivation can be affected by the gender of the learner (Asmus, 1986; Deci, Cascio, & Krusell, 1975; McAllister, 1996; Werpy, 1995; Zinser, Young, & King, 1982). These works confirm the finding of this study that males and females experience motivation differently. Additionally, findings of the present study reveal that *success*, *teacher modeling*, *praise*, and *relationships* influence this gender-specific trend. This discovery, not found in extant music education research, is significant.

### Implications

This section presents the implications of the findings in this study. This section will illustrate implications for director practice and preparation. Thereafter implications for further research will be discussed.

### *Implications for Practice*

The findings of this study have implications for practice. These implications are significant because few research attempts neither reveal nor illustrate these indicators of students' motivation. The following discusses these indicators of motivation with regard to their significance to band directors' teaching practices. They include: discipline, rapport, modeling, gender, and social climate.

Participants' descriptions of both motivation and demotivation focused on discipline and their rapport with their director. While some students regarded discipline as a means to an end to achieve desired goals, others emphasized that excessive discipline contributed to their lack of interest. Directors should assess the practices they use to instill discipline in their programs with respect to their students' motivation. Further, they should examine how these practices portray them as directors. For example, students in this study who lost motivation due to excessive discipline also noted that they had a negative rapport with their director. In fact, they frequently related the two in their descriptions of demotivation. It may be more appropriate to say that excessive discipline wasn't the issue to these students, what mattered more was that the director cared about them. This finding implies that if the students feel that the director cares, imposed discipline would not be an issue. On the other hand, students who were responsive to discipline also indicated that they had a good relationship with the band director. This study found that these two indicators of motivation, discipline and student-director relationship, impact student interest. This is a discovery not found in extant literature.

This study also revealed that teacher modeling impacts student motivation. Many band students hold their directors in higher esteem than other teachers. They look to directors as role-models, mother or father figures, and confidants. This study showed that students lost

motivation not because of the ability of the director, but because they felt that the band director didn't care. In contrast, students who *were* motivated in this study highly revered the director but seldom remarked on the teaching ability of the teacher, rather these students spoke about the model that the director portrayed and what it meant to him or her. Motivated students made comments such as, "Motivation looks like Mr. K." or "He bleeds motivation into us by showing us that he's motivated." Directors should be mindful that they continually set examples for their students. These examples are rooted deeply in students' perceptions of how the director values them. Again, this discovery does not exist in the literature.

Indeed motivation to learn is gender specific. Using traditional practices of extrinsic motivation no longer suit the needs of all pupils. Directors should not consider how their current teaching practices impact the band as a whole, rather; they should consider the affect that their motivational practices have on male and female students respectively. The present study, along with other empirical works (Kiyoshi, 1997; McAllister, 1996; Asmus, 1986) emphasizes this notion. For example, this study showed that male students readily identified with traditional extrinsic approaches to teaching, however; female students perceived extrinsic motivators to be controlling and as a result, lost interest. Female students' remarks about motivation centered on their affective response. That is, their perceptions of motivation frequently dealt with emotions, feelings, and how others felt about them. Those participants of this study that were secure emotionally in their environment were motivated whereas, unmotivated female students showed that they were not comfortable with their social environment, relationship with their director or peers.

Directors in their practice should also be mindful of social phenomena that exist in their bands. Though directors may not directly influence the social climate in the band, it would be

useful to be aware of the impact that social phenomena have on students' motivation to learn. This study revealed that many students were motivated to enroll and continue in band for social reasons. That is, students frequently referred to their friends and existing relationships in the band when describing notable experiences with motivation. This study also found that students act according to what is perceived to be socially acceptable. For instance, students acted unmotivated because it was "cool" to do so. Directors should be aware that students in this age group are beginning to realize their potential as young adults. In doing so, they determine their social place in school according to their own self-concept. This study indicated that this self-concept is influenced socially.

#### *Implications for Director Preparation*

In preparing music instructors for the profession, colleges and universities should consider the implications of extant research pertaining to students' motivation to achieve. Research has recognized that gender (McAllister, 1996; Kiyoshi, 1997), age (Covington, 1982; Asmus, 1985), and self-concept (Lillemyr, 1983; Vispoel, 1993; Vispoel, 1996) determine students' motivation. It would seem prudent to educate potential music teachers about these recognized predictors of student motivation.

The findings of this study demonstrate that it is necessary for colleges and universities to make data driven decisions when planning curriculum for director preparation. Current undergraduate education programs tend to focus on the two orientations of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic. Rather than looking at the two motivation orientations in their simplicity, it would be more useful if undergraduate music programs focused specifically on how intrinsic and extrinsic motivators affect students of different gender and age. Such added detail would be consistent with current music education research. Moreover, undergraduate programs should

consider how self-perception impacts the students' motivation to achieve. These are ideas upheld by existing research and consistent with findings of the present study.

Also, band directors in preparation should learn not only about recognized determinants of motivation found in existing research. Further, the present study revealed discoveries not found in extant literature; that social surroundings, teacher/student rapport, and discipline influence students' motivation. These significant findings should be noted as directors are prepared for the profession. Lastly, colleges and universities should raise awareness within prospective music directors to recognize empirically founded particulars that influence student motivation.

#### *Implications for Further Research*

Music education researchers have contributed research that has demonstrated that self-concept, goals, and student attributes affect motivation (Asmus, 1985; Asmus & Harrison, 1990; Austin & Vispoel, 1992; Covington, 2000). These studies reveal particular determinants of motivation for students at all age levels, including those enrolled in college. A goal of this study was to examine this knowledge base from a qualitative perspective. This study provided illustration of recognized predictors of motivation and distinguished connections among these predictors. This study also allowed students' perspectives to emerge and resulted in several theoretical ideas supported by data. The findings significantly contribute to the literature by broadening understanding of students' experiences with motivation and the meanings those experiences hold for them.

The limitations of this study open up avenues for future research. For example, this study was conducted at one high school that demographically did not represent the entire school system. Researchers may want to investigate students' perceptions of motivation in other schools, as well as in middle and elementary schools. Participants of this study indicated that the

social climate in the band influenced students' motivation. This finding leads to questions concerning music students' motivation with respect to their social environment. How does social climate affect students' motivations in band? Do students sacrifice achievement in band in order to appear socially acceptable? Future research might also investigate the following questions: What are the most effective ways to motivate males and females in a high school setting? Do music students lose interest as they grow older? Why are their attitudes changing toward band? Are students more motivated in marching band than in concert band and if so, why?

Additionally, this study focused on students who were more experienced in band. The average student participating in this study had five or more years of experience. What about those students that have less than two years of band experience? Researchers may want to investigate relevant questions on: How do beginning band students experience motivation? Do beginning band students have problems fitting in socially, and if so, does this struggle influence their motivation?

The area of motivation in music education is clearly open to future research. Moreover, existing literature (as with most education research) is mostly quantitative. By conducting further qualitative examinations, researchers not only can fill apparent gaps in literature, but they can also contribute to understanding a concept that is a recognized determinant of student achievement.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH STUDY CONCENT FORM

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MOTIVATION IN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CLASSES

Consent Form

I agree that my child \_\_\_\_\_ take part in a research study titled *Students' perceptions of what motivates them in instrumental music classes* conducted by Neill Crosslin, III (Ph. 770-922-5799) of the University of Georgia. My child does not have to be in this study if he/she does not want to be. My child can stop taking part at any time without giving reason and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me or my child returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

- The purpose of this study is to investigate music students' perceptions of motivation in the classroom.
- There may be some benefit to my child for agreeing to take part. My child will be given an opportunity to reflect orally on experiences in the music classroom.
- There may be some benefit to others resulting from my child's participation. Educators as a whole may benefit from a greater understanding of students' experiences with motivation. Professional music education associations such as Music Educators National Conference and Georgia Music Educators Association could be further informed on a topic that has received little research.
- As a volunteer for this study my child will be asked to do the following:  
Participate in an interview (approximately 1 hour) with the researcher. The interview will be scheduled at a time and place convenient to both the researcher and myself. The interview will be tape-recorded. After the interview, the tape will be made into a written record that uses false names. If I request it, I will receive a written copy of the interview.
- No discomfort or stress is anticipated during the interview.
- No risks are expected.
- Any information obtained about my child as a participant in this study, including his/her identity, will be held confidential. My child's identity will be protected with a made-up name, and all data, including audiotapes, will be kept in a secured, limited access location for an indefinite length of time. My identity will not be revealed in any publication of the results of this study.
- The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project. The researcher, Neill Crosslin, III, can be reached at: (770) 922-5799.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree that my child may participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

---

Signature of participant

Date

---

Signature of researcher  
Ncrosslin1@aol.com (770) 922-5799

Date

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Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D. Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu)

## APPENDIX B

### RESEARCH STUDY ASSENT FORM

#### **Minor Assent Form**

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in my research project titled, "Student Perceptions of What Motivates Them in Instrumental Music Classes." Through this project I am learning about what motivates students in the music classroom.

If you decide to be part of this, you will talk to me about motivation in our classroom from your point of view. You will allow me to take notes and ask you questions about motivation in our classroom. Your participation in this project will not affect your grades in school. I will not use your name on any papers that I write about this project. However, because of your participation you will be able to reflect on your own views of motivation. I hope to learn something about what motivates music students so that I will more effectively teach other students in the future.

If you want to stop participating in this project, you are free to do so at any time. You can also choose not to answer questions that you don't want to answer.

If you have any questions or concerns you can always ask me or call my teacher, Dr. Jo Blase at the following number:

Sincerely,

Neill Crosslin, III  
The University of Georgia, Educational Leadership

---

I understand the project described above. My questions have been answered and I agree to participate in this project. I have received a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Participant/Date

**Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.**

For additional questions or problems about your rights as a research participant please call or write: Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D., Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, GA 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-mail Address: IRB@uga.edu