

Correlational Analysis of Student Survey

After analyzing the director interview, it was determined that because of the high amount of crossover of terms and descriptions in their answers, it would be of benefit to perform a correlational analysis of the students survey statements. Moderate positive correlations were discovered between Statement 2 and Statement 10, Statement 3 and Statement 8, and Statement 4 and Statement 9 ($r = 0.50$ to 0.70). A possible explanation for the correlation between statements 2 (motivation to learn from a guest conductor) and 10 (affect on attitude towards music) is the relationship established by the guest conductor with the ensemble emphasizes motivation so they work together, and maintain a positive rehearsal atmosphere. A possible explanation between statements 3 (transfer of concepts acquired at the festival to long-term) and 8 (festival improving student confidence) is the guest conductor's use of various rehearsal technique and motivational strategies to increase student achievement and instill confidence within the students as they acquire new skills. One area of concern for all directors was the amount of preparation time they had available to work with students. The correlation between statements 4 (preparation by directors) & 9 (festival participation cultivating positive views in outside parties towards music) could be the student perceiving lack of preparation time as meaning the festival is not of importance to those outside their band program.



Recommendations—Future Research

The role of the guest clinician/conductor is of high importance in the festival process. They are chiefly responsible for cultivating positive attitudes, sharing new techniques and interpretation of literature, and instill confidence through development of ensemble skills. While there are other positives reasons for involvement, directors can use festivals to motivate advanced students, and evaluate literature in an ensemble with full and balanced instrumentation. The opportunity for students to perform in an ensemble of this quality and instrumentation appears to be an important part of the festival experience to both student and directors.

While the blend of qualitative and quantitative methods creates a good picture of the experience, there are limitations and need for further research. The primary limitation on the study is the small sample size and geographic region. Future research would need to use a larger pool of participants from a more diverse region. Additionally it would be of benefit to acquire the perspectives of the guest conductors and building level administrators who authorize student and director attendance at festivals.

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Student and Director Perceptions of an All-County Band Festival



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Introduction & Need for the Study

- Within Pennsylvania, there is more frequent participation in “honor band” festivals by instrumental music teachers and their students.
- Considering that festivals or “honor bands” have become a common part of a band program’s yearly schedule, it would be appropriate to examine research and related literature to frame a better understanding of their relevance and importance.
- Careful attention is necessary to determine whether or not experiences at these festivals actually facilitate students’ musical and educational growth.
- The purpose of this study will be to survey students and directors regarding their experiences and perspectives of an all-county intra-school concert band festival.

Themes from Literature Review

The four emergent themes from the literature included:

1. Components of festivals that provide a source of motivation for directors and students
2. The festival experience contributing to the development of self-concept in students

3. Perception of educational benefits and aspects of the festival by directors and students that contribute to long-term musical growth

4. Impact of festival participation in cultivating positive attitudes in participants and outside parties.

An absence from the literature was discussion regarding the value of students performing in an ensemble that would have a complete and balanced instrumentation. As the students that will participate in this study are from schools of varying sizes from small rural to larger suburban districts, it would be of interest to gauge the importance of this concept among the participants.

Methodology—Participant Description

Students in grades 9-12 (N=110) representing 12 school districts in a county in Western Pennsylvania. 47 Students returned consent forms to participate, and 41 students took the on-line survey. Seven of the twelve sponsoring directors took part in an interview with the researcher. The On-line survey was created using Google Docs and used Likert Scales to collect student answers.

An answer of 5 on a survey statement equated with “strongly agree” and an answer of 1 equated with “strongly disagree”. Director interview included 10 questions based on same themes, but structured as open-ended questions to allow for expanded answers.

Director Interview Findings

Among the many items discussed in a roundtable interview among the directors were: The Festival experience as motivation for advanced students, the opportunity to observe a guest clinician/conductor as motivation to attend, opportunity to listen and evaluate new literature in an ensemble with complete and balanced instrumentation, the festival experience improving student confidence levels and raising musical expectations, and directors using in-service opportunity to exchange repertoire ideas, teaching strategies, and administrative tasks unique to the position of a band director.

Student Survey Findings

The highest mean score and lowest standard deviation was found in Statement 6 (related to instrumentation balance of the ensemble) and Statement 10 (related to effect of festival on attitude) (4.83, SD=.44). The lowest mean was found in Statement 9 (related to the festival experience cultivating positive views in the community, M=3.78) and the highest standard deviation was found in Statement 4 (related to director preparation, SD=.99).