

Intrinsic Motivation vs. Extrinsic Motivation: A Survey of Middle School Students to Determine  
Their Motivation for Taking Choir as an Elective Class

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify some of the reasons middle school students choose to take choir as an elective. This study has helped identify how a student in middle school is motivated: intrinsically or extrinsically when making the choice of a class like choir. The research includes findings that answer the questions, “What influenced you the most of join choir?”, “How did you feel about choir before you signed up for the class?”, “How do you feel about choir after having the class for 1 or 2 years?”, “What are the attributes that make choir a class to sign up for?”, “How does your family feel about you singing in choir?”, and “How do your peers feel about you singing in choir?” The research was conducted using an anonymous survey that was proctored by another teacher. The survey was given to middle school choir students at a Midwestern middle school. The findings were analyzed through Microsoft Excel and A Statistical Program (ASP) software. The findings indicate that there is more intrinsic motivation among middle-aged students to take choir. This can be useful knowledge for schools and districts needing to recruit and build numbers in choral programs. Knowing a middle school students may be more inclined to do a class like choir on their own choosing, not their families or friends, etc. would be a tool for teachers and districts in the recruitment of young singers.

## Introduction

### *Background, Issues and Concerns*

Choir teachers all across American deal with many issues that are particular to that subject. These issues can range from low numbers, no budget, no support, to huge numbers of students and great (almost too much) support. Some research suggests motivation is affected by more physiological and psychological changes in students. Considerable research has shown a decline in motivation and performance for many children as they move from elementary school into middle school. Often it has been assumed that this decline is due to physiological and psychological changes associated with puberty and, therefore, is somewhat inevitable (National Middle School Association 1997). For the improvement of teaching and retention of students the subject area of middle school vocal music was chosen. A common theme for middle school choir teachers is motivation. Within a middle school choral classroom there are typically large numbers of students, but most middle school vocal teachers see many reasons for motivation in taking choir as an elective class. Of course, building good student/teacher relations is important, but what motivates middle school students to sign up for choir as an elective? Most middle school students only have 1 or 2 choices for elective classes. Some throughout America don't have any choices. The analysis of the results will help to determine what motivates a middle school student to choose an elective class like choir and what drives them to that decision.

### *Practice Under Investigation*

The practice under investigation is how to best recruit and teach middle school choir students and potential choir students.

*School Policy to be Informed by the Study*

The middle school choral program used for the study serves 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The students in their 6<sup>th</sup> grade year have the choice of general music or speech. During their 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years the students have the between choir, band, orchestra, drama, art, foreign language, and tech. literacy. The students are forced to choose more or less 1 elective course to take along with the required P.E./Health course. The choral teacher must use as many means possible to recruit and retain these 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. If a middle school music teacher can better understand why 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students select choir as a choice over the others listed above, it could lead to better numbers in middle school choir in this given district.

*Conceptual Underpinning*

Intrinsic motivation (i.e. engaging in a behavior as an end in itself) and extrinsic motivation (i.e. engaging in a behavior as a means to an end) have both been part of an important topic and debate within middle school educational circles. Some research suggests that there is a disparity between the needs of children transitioning to middle school and their social environment such that this “mismatch” drives students’ decreasing levels of intrinsic motivation (Guerrero, 2005). This would indicate more outside factors potentially motivating the choices students in middle school are making. Many middle educators spend a majority of time trying to understand their students. There are many factors at play due to the pool of hormones and chemicals middle school or adolescent students and their teachers are dealing with daily. The decisions middle school students make are typically perceived as extrinsically motivated – motivated by friends, family, teachers, media, etc. Research is showing otherwise. It is the hope of this survey to understand how a middle school choir student is motivated.

### *Statement of the Problem*

Choice is a tough part of being in the middle school curriculum for middle school students. This results are lower numbers in all programs, as well as students who may or may not understand what a class like choir is all about at the middle school level.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of the study is to gain knowledge of what motivates middle school students (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders) to take a choir class. There are elements of intrinsic motivation as well as extrinsic motivation in these decisions. The information gained will be able to assist in building the choral programs with the school district of the study.

### *Research Questions*

*RQ1:* What intrinsic or extrinsic factors motivate 8<sup>th</sup> graders to sign up for choir?

*RQ2:* Is there a difference of intrinsic or extrinsic motivational factors between middle school boys and middle school girls?

### *Null Hypothesis*

Ho: There is no difference of intrinsic or extrinsic motivational factors between middle school boys and middle school girls.

### *Anticipated Benefits of the Study*

The results of this study will better inform school administrators and choral teachers of the district about the motivational reasons students sign up for, participate, and stay with choir

throughout their school careers. It will help with the recruitment and retaining of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students through high school.

### *Definition of the Terms*

Motivation - the act or an instance of motivating, or providing with a reason to act in a certain way.

Extrinsic Motivation - a type of motivation that comes from outside of a person.

Intrinsic Motivation - refers to motivation that comes from inside a person rather than from any external or outside rewards, such as money or grades. An intrinsically motivated person will work on a solution to a problem because the challenge of finding a solution provides a sense of pleasure.

ASP – A Statistical Package

### *Summary*

Choir in the middle school setting is an elective class, one of several choices students' have to choose from when selecting 2 elective classes to take. There are many potential factors that students must deal with when deciding on whether to take choir as an elective. The research investigates how middle school choir students are motivated, whether it is through intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation. The research also looks at the potential different motivational factors between boys and girls at the middle school level. These findings could aid choral programs in the recruitment of and the retaining of middle school choir students.

### *Review of Literature*

Motivation exists in a couple of forms: Intrinsic motivation (i.e. engaging in a behavior as an end in itself) and extrinsic motivation (i.e. engaging in a behavior as a means to an end) which have both been part of an important topic and debate within middle school educational circles (Guerrero, 2005). All middle school students face tough decisions when trying to decide on what classes to sign up for outside of their core classes. Motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) plays into the choices students make when deciding what class to sign up for. Choir is one of those classes. Thomas (1992) suggested that musical motivation was not simply a matter of musical factors, but may well be affected by environment and circumstance Neill (1998) states: motivation to enroll in music classes is a necessary first step to begin participation, but continued and increasing involvement is dependent upon the quality of musical experience. Another study found that students in successful programs were generally self-motivated by feeling competent and well prepared (Murdrick, 1997). The differences of young men and young women in choir can have an effect on students reasons for signing up or not signing up for choir. Research suggests that significant differences existed in involvement attitudes and behaviors for males and females (Stamer, 1995 & Gates 1989). Gender influences have been shown to affect attitudes of adolescent males toward singing (Lucas, 2011). Through a comparison, elementary and secondary vocals programs noted a decline in male participation by the high school level. Those males who stopped noted vocal insecurity and lack of relevance in the real-world as the top reason for non-enrollment. Music educators attributed peer pressure and whether a student was male or female as the strongest deterrents to secondary choral enrollment (Castelli, 1986). George (1993) states, "Adolescents are more likely to be influenced by their peers than by adult

authority" (p. 21). In other research, George (1993) states: "the most heavily used positive descriptor of anything young adolescent's experience, particularly in reference to school, is fun" (p. 21). Fun indeed could be a motivator for some, in particular male, students when it comes to signing up for choir. Most research shows: "Whether studying fifth-grade band students, junior high choir students, high school choir students, or college choir students, research shows that the major underlying reason why students sing and or participate in music classes is that they enjoy it" (Lucas, 2011, p. 49). Miziner (1993) states that "greater enjoyment of singing through improved singing skill might be assumed to lead to a more positive attitude toward music and toward participation in choir" (p. 234). Some of the research I have conducted can support this. Whether the motivation is from the inside, or from another outside persuader, it does play a role in student's decisions when it comes to choosing to take a class like choir. The study for this research topic examines some of the reasons student choose choir and whether that motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic.



## Research Methods

### *Research Design*

A non-experimental, one-time survey served as the research design. The alpha level was set at 0.25 for all tests with this research. The independent variable was the gender of the students. The survey will measure the results of several dependent variables. Dependent variables include student's interest in choir, a first reason for signing up for choir, why is choir a class to sign up for, and how a student's family feels about them being in choir. The test run included the chi square analysis and frequency plot.

### *Study Group Description*

The study group for this research included a group of 105 8<sup>th</sup> grade choir students from one NKC middle school. The group of students came from 2 classes, one of which included 50 students, the other included 55 students. The two classes are elective full-year choir classes that meet every day for 45 minutes. The students were asked to participate anonymously in the survey. The survey was proctored by another teacher. The school is predominantly White with 77% of the students being White. The Hispanic student population is 9%, and the Black total is 7%. The Free and Reduced Lunch percentage of the school is 22.7%, with a total enrollment of 972 students.

### *Data Collection and Instrumentation*

An anonymous questionnaire was given to the student by a proctoring teacher. The questionnaire had specific questions for the students to answer dealing with motivation and why

they are in choir. The questions were the same for both classes of students. The questions were answered by circling the best answer for the question. The survey was given 1 time to each class. A total of 105 8<sup>th</sup> grade students responded to the survey, 50 from class A and 55 from class B. The responses were recorded to an Excel spreadsheet. The letters the students circled as answers were recoded as numbers to be able to complete the analysis. The survey is can be found is Appendix A.

### *Statistical Analysis Methods*

A Statistical Package (ASP) software was used to complete the statistical calculations in this study. Microsoft Excel was additionally used to compile the totals used in the research. The Chi-Square analysis was used to determine results as well.

### Findings

To help answer Research Question #1: *What intrinsic or extrinsic factors motivate 8<sup>th</sup> graders to sign up for choir?*, the following questions were included in a survey for the students.

To determine how many girls versus boys there are in the surveyed group, and to aid in the setup of the independent variable, the students were asked to identify their gender.

Table 1

*Question: What gender are you?*

VARIABLE: Gender

	FRQ.	CUM.	%	CUM.	FREQUENCY PLOT
x < 1	0	0	0	0	
x = 1	40	40	38.1	38.1	*****
x = 2	65	105	61.9	100	*****
x > 2	0	105	0	100	
TOTAL	105		100		

Key: #1 – Boys            #2 - Girls

The Choir classes surveyed included 50 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade class A and 55 students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade class B. The classes were combined for this survey. The findings for Table 1 show that 40 of the 105 students were boys or 38.1% of the researched group. The girls made up 65 of the 105 surveyed students or 61.9% of the group.

The determine the interest student had in choir before signing up, the second question is used for these findings.

Table 2

*Question: What was your interest in choir before you signed up for choir?*

VARIABLE: Interest in choir

	FRQ.	CUM.	%	CUM.	FREQUENCY PLOT
x < 1	0	0	0	0	
x = 1	36	36	34.3	34.3	*****
x = 2	25	61	23.8	58.1	*****
x = 3	44	105	41.9	100	*****

x > 3	0	105	0	100	
TOTAL	105		100		

Key: #1 – Interested but apprehensive #2 – could not wait for choir #3 – was not interested at all

The findings in Table 2 show that all 105 students responded. Table 2 shows the breakdown from the findings. There were 36 students or 34.3% of the group who answered: “I was interested, but apprehensive.” 25 or 23.8% of the groups answered: “I could not wait for choir,” and the largest sum 44 students or 41.9% of the surveyed group answered: “I was not interested at all.” The findings tell us that close-to half the group did not have an interest in choir before signing up for the class. There was also another third of the class who indicated that were “interested” but “apprehensive.”

The next question was geared towards finding motivation for signing up. The students were asked for their #1 reason for signing up for choir. They had 4 choices as their answer.

Table 3

*Question: What was your #1 reason for signing up for choir?*

VARIABLE: #1reason for joining choir

	FRQ.	CUM.	%	CUM.	FREQUENCY PLOT
x < 1	0	0	0	0	
x = 1	33	33	31.4	31.4	*****
x = 2	17	50	16.2	47.6	*****
x = 3	5	55	4.8	52.4	**
x = 4	50	105	47.6	100	*****
x > 4	0	105	0	100	
TOTAL	105		100		

Key: #1 – All of my friends are in choir, so I wanted to be #2 – the teacher seemed fun  
 #3 – Another teacher, administrator, or coach suggested I take choir #4 – I like to sing

Table 3 gives the first indications of intrinsic motivation when it comes to signing up for choir. The plot says that 33 students or 31.4% of the students surveyed answered: “All of my friends were singing up, so I wanted to.” There were 17 students or 16.2% of the group who answered: “The choir teacher seems fun, so I decided to sign up.” Only 5 students or 4.8% of the students answered: “Another teacher, coach, administrator, or counselor told me to sign up.” The largest group of students at 50 or 47.6% of the group answered: “I really liked to sing, and I wanted to learn more about singing.” This frequency plot in Table 3 is interesting in that it starts to show the beginnings if some potential intrinsic motivation happening among these 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

The next question deals with choir class and what makes it a class to sign up for. Again, this question is geared toward finding students’ motivation for signing up for choir.

Table 4

*Question: what makes choir a class to sign up for in middle school?*

VARIABLE: Why choir

	FRQ.	CUM.	%	CUM.	FREQUENCY PLOT
x < 1	0	0	0	0	
x = 1	36	36	34.3	34.3	*****
x = 2	61	97	58.1	92.4	*****
x = 3	4	101	3.8	96.2	**
x = 4	4	105	3.8	100	**
x > 4	0	105	0	100	

Key: #1 – my friends are in choir      #2 – I love to sing, and want to get better  
 #3 – encouraged by parents      #4 – encouraged by other teachers, coaches, principals, etc.

The results in Table 4 again show signs of intrinsic motivation among the students. There were 36 students or 34.3% of the group who answered: “My friends are in the class.” The largest

number of students at 61 or 58.1% of the students surveyed answered: “I love to sing and wanted to learn more and become a better musician.” The next two answers had the same results. 4 students or 3.8% answered: “I was encouraged to sign up by my parents.” Again, another 4 students and 3.8% of the group answered: “ I was encouraged by teachers, coaches, administrators, or counselors.” Table 4 shows some more positive signs of intrinsic motivation going on. 58% of the surveyed group indicated they wanted to be in choir to “become a better singer” or “learn more about singing and become a better musician.”

The following question examines how a student’s family feels about their choice of choir. This can also show indications of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation.

Table 5

*Question: How does your family feel about your choice of choir?*

VARIABLE: How does family feel

	FRQ.	CUM.	%	CUM.	FREQUENCY PLOT
x < 1	0	0	0	0	
x = 1	49	49	46.7	46.7	*****
x = 2	14	63	13.3	60	*****
x = 3	41	104	39	99	*****
x = 4	1	105	1	100	
x > 4	0	105	0	100	
TOTAL	105		100		

Key: #1 – love it      #2 – excited, but it takes time      #3 – doesn’t care one way or another  
 #4 – don’t even know I’m in choir

The results in Table 5 help determine some of the support a student might feel and determine some potential intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for choir. The results show 49 students or 46.7% of the group answered: “My family loves that I’m in choir.” There were 14 or

13.3% of the students surveyed who answered: “My family is excited, but it takes a lot of time away.” There were 41 students or 39% of the group who answered: “My family doesn’t care one way or another that I chose to be in choir.” Only 1 student answered: “My family doesn’t even know I’m in choir.” These results are interesting. With 47% of the students answering “My family loves I’m in choir,” this can lead to greater support or greater extrinsic motivation for students in that with support from their family, they feel motivated to succeed in the choir class itself. In that same sense, with 39% of the group answering: “My family doesn’t care I’m in choir,” this can add more self-motivation or intrinsic motivation in that students are signing up for choir because they want to, not because they have the all-out support from their family.

The next question deals with how a student’s peers feel about them being in choir. Again, intrinsic or extrinsic motivation could potentially be measured here.

Table 6

*Question: How do your peers feel about you being in choir?*

VARIABLE: How do peers feel

	FRQ.	CUM.	%	CUM.	FREQUENCY PLOT
x < 1	0	0	0	0	
x = 1	16	16	15.2	15.2	****
x = 2	88	104	83.8	99	*****
x = 3	1	105	1	100	
x > 3	0	105	0	100	
TOTAL	105		100		

Key: #1 – friends are jealous                      #2 – don’t care                      #3 – don’t even know I’m in choir  
 #4 – I don’t tell my friends, I don’t want them to know

The results from Table 6 show some more interesting findings from the survey. There were 16 students or 15.2% of the group who answered question 6 with: “My friends are jealous

they aren't in choir." The results show that 88 or 83.8% of the students answered: "My friends don't care that I'm in choir." Only 1 student answered: "My friends don't even know I'm in choir." The final answer: "I don't want my friends to know I'm in choir, so I don't tell them" had no responses. With 84% of the students answering that "my friends don't care I'm in choir," this shows a strong indication of indifference of what peers think about choir.

The final question round the survey out by finding out what students think about choir after at least 1 year of the class.

Table 7

*Question: How would you describe your interest in choir after 1 year of the class?*

VARIABLE: Interest in choir after

	FRQ.	CUM.	%	CUM.	FREQUENCY PLOT
x < 1	0	0	0	0	
x = 1	62	62	59	59	*****
x = 2	19	81	18.1	77.1	*****
x = 3	7	88	6.7	83.8	***
x = 4	17	105	16.2	100	*****
x > 4	0	105	0	100	
TOTAL	105		100		

Key: #1 – it's one of the hi-lights of my day                      #2 – it's alright, but if I have the chance, I'd do something else                      #3 – I should not have signed up                      #4 – As long as my friends are in choir, I will be too

The results in Table 7 show that 62 students or 59% of the group answered: "Choir is a hi-light of my day and I can't wait to sign up in high school." There were 19 or 18.1% of the students surveyed who answered: "Choir is ok, but if I had the choice, I'd do something else." There were 7 or 6.7% who answered: "I should not have listened to everyone about signing up



for choir, it’s not for me.” Finally, 17 or 16.2% of the surveyed group answered: “As long as I have friends in choir, I will be in choir too.” The results favor an intrinsically motivated student with 59% of the students saying choir is for them, it’s a “hi-light.” I will dive into this more later when I discuss my conclusions.

Several chi-squared crosstab/contingency analysis were done to answer the research question #2.

*RQ #2: Is there a difference of intrinsic or extrinsic motivational factors between middle school boys and middle school girls?*

Table 8

Summary of Chi – Square Test for Interest in choir between boys and girls.

Source	Boys	Girls	Chi Sq	df	p-value
Interested, but apprehensive	13 (32.5%)	23 (35.3%)			
Could not wait for choir	13 (32.5%)	12 (18.4%)			
Not interested at all	14 (35%)	30 (46.1%)	2.84	1	0.241

Significance when  $p \leq 0.25$

The data in Table 8 shows a crosstab/contingency or Chi-Square test comparing results of answers from boys and girls. The question on the survey was: What was your interest in choir before signing up? As you can see, there were a total of 40 boys who participated in this survey and 65 girls. There were 13 or 32.5% of the boys who responded that they were “interested, but apprehensive.” Another 13 or 32.5% of the boys responded that they “could not wait for choir.” Finally, 14 or 35% of the boys responded that they were “not interested at all.” The girls responded as well. There were 23 or 35.3% of the girls said they were “interested, but apprehensive” before signing up for choir. There were 12 or 18.4% who responded they “could not wait for choir.” Finally 30 or 46.1% of the girls said that they were “not interested in all.”

The Chi – Square was 2.84 with a df of 1. The p –value was 0.241, and since the alpha value is 0.25, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference of opinion between boys and girls. Comparing the means, the difference was more girls were interested but apprehensive. According to the data, there is some difference between boys and girls when it comes to deciding on singing up for choir.

Table 9

Summary of Chi – Square test for the number 1 reason for signing up for choir.

Source	Boys	Girls	Chi Sq	df	p - value
All of my friends were in, so I wanted to	10 (25%)	23 (35.3%)			
The choir teachers seemed fun	6 (15%)	11 (16.9%)			
Another teacher, administrator, coach, or counselor told me I should	4 (10%)	1 (1.5%)			
I really like to sing and wanted to learn more about singing	20 (50%)	30 (46.1%)	4.70	1	0.194

Significance when  $p \leq 0.25$

Table 9 shows the data for the crosstab/contingency or Chi – Square test to help determine the differences of why boys versus girls and what their #1 reason was for joining choir as an elective. There were 40 boys and 65 girls who participated and answered this question. Of the boys; 10 or 25% said: “all of my friends were in choir, so I wanted to be too.” There were 6

or 15% of boys who answered: “the choir teacher seemed fun.” Only 4 or 10% said: “another teacher, coach, administrator, or counselor told me to sign up,” and finally 20 or 50% answered that they: “really like to sing and wanted to learn more about singing.” Of the girls: 23 or 35% said that: “all of my friends are in choir, so I wanted to be in choir too.” There were 11 or 17% who answered that: “the choir teacher seemed fun.” Only 1 girl said: “another teacher, coach, administrator, or counselor told me to sign up,” and finally 30 or 46% said: “I really wanted to sing and learn more about singing.” The Chi – Square for Table 9 was 4.70 with a df of 1. The p – value was 0.194 and since the alpha level is 0.25, we must reject the null hypothesis. Girls seemed to be inclined to sign up for choir if they had friends in the class, they also showed more interest in signing up for choir because they liked singing and wanted to learn more about singing. This indicates different motivational factors do affect student’s decisions to take choir.

Table 10

Summary of Chi – Square test for why is choir a class to sign up for.

Source	Boys	Girls	Chi Sq	df	P - value
My friends are in choir	9 (22.5%)	27 (41.5%)			
I love to sing, I want to get better, I want to learn more	25 (62.5%)	36 (55.3%)			
I was encouraged to sign up by my parents	3 (7.5%)	1 (2.5%)			
I was encouraged by other teachers and administrators	3 (7.5%)	1 (2.5%)	7.45	1	0.058

Significance when  $p < = 0.25$

Table 10 gives the data compiled when a crosstab/contingency was done to analyze the differences on the decision to sign up for choir between boys and girls in middle school. There were 9 or 23% of the boys who responded that choir is a class to sign up for because: “all my friends are in the class.” Another 25 or 63% of the boys said that they: “love to sing, wanted to get better, wanted to learn more.” There were 3 or 7.5% who said they were “encouraged by their parents,” and also 3 who said they were encouraged to sign up by: “another teacher, coach, administrator, or counselor.” As for the girls: 27 or 41.5% indicated they would sign up because: “all of my friends are in choir, so I want to be in choir.” There were 36 or 55% of the girls who said they: “love to sing, want to get better, I want to learn more.” Only 1 or 2.5% said they were “encouraged by their parents,” or were: “encouraged by another teacher, coach, administrator, or counselor.” The Chi – Square was 7.45 with the df at 1. The p – value was 0.058, and since the alpha value is 0.25, the null hypothesis has to be rejected. When deciding why choir is a class to sign up for, it was clear that girls had some social or extrinsic motivators. Over 40% of the girls indicated a reason to sign up for choir is that their friends are in the class. On the other hand, 62% of the boys indicated they enjoyed singing and wanted to get better which shows some intrinsic motivation going on. This again would indicate that there are different motivational factors that go in to making the decision to take choir, whether the student is a boy or a girl.

Table 11

Summary of Chi – Square test for Interest in choir after 1 year in choir.

Source	Boys	Girls	Chi Sq	df	p - value
Choir is one of the hi-lights of my day	25 (62.5%)	37 (57%)			
Choir is alright, but if I have the chance, I'd do something else.	8 (20%)	11 (17%)			
I should not have signed up for choir	1 (2.5%)	6 (9.2%)			
As long as my friends are in it, I will be too.	6 (15%)	11 (17%)	1.99	1	0.572

Significance when  $p \leq 0.25$

The data in Table 11 was found using a crosstab/contingency study to determine the differences between boys and girls when it comes to interest in choir after 1 year in choir. Out of 40 boys surveyed, 25 or 62.5% said: “choir is one of the hi-lights of my day.” Another 20% or 8 said: “choir is alright, but if I had the chance, I’d do something else.” Only 1 boy indicated they should not have signed up for choir, and 6 or 15% said: “as long as my friends are in it, I will be too.” They girl’s results were as follows. Of the 65 girls surveyed, 37 or 57% said: “Choir is one of the hi-lights of my day.” There were 11 or 17% who indicated that choir is alright, but if they had to chance to take something else, they would. Only 6 or 9% said they should not have signed up for choir and 11 or 17% said: “as long as my friends are in it, I will be too.” The Chi-Square was 1.99 with the df at 1. The p-value was 0.572 and since the alpha value is 0.25, we must accept the null hypothesis which would mean intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have no effect on student enrollment in choir.

### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

The null hypothesis stated that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, have no effect on a middle school student's choice to sign up for choir as an elective class. The results of this study indicate that there are areas of significant difference when it comes to middle school student's reasons for signing up for choir, and differences between middle school boys and girls reasons and motivation for signing up for choir. Several of the questions given to the students indicate a significance of difference statistically when it comes to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in middle school student's choices. The following questions gave results where the null hypothesis had to be rejected. There is a significant difference when students were asked for their number one reason for signing up for choir. Out of the 105 students surveyed, 46% of the girls indicated they signed up for choir because they really liked to sing, and always wanted to be in choir. For the same question, 50% of the boys answered with the same response. This would show a strong indicated for intrinsic motivation among boys and girls when signing up for choir. There was also significance in the statistics when students were asked why choir is a class to sign up for. The results the girls had both indicators of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation where 55% responded that they love to sing and wanted to make themselves better, and then 41% answered they signed up because their friends were in the class. The boys only showed more intrinsic with 62% answering they love to sing and wanted to know more about it. With more girls in the survey, the answers varied more.

There was only one question where the null hypothesis was accepted. The students were asked to describe their interest in choir after one of more years of the class. Over half of the boys

and girls surveyed responded that choir is a hi-light of their day and they love to sing, again showing signs of intrinsic motivation among middle school students. There was some response to indicated extrinsic in this question, but much smaller percentages as compared to intrinsic motivators.

The results of the study indicated some surprising findings when it comes to motivation among middle school choir students. Research has suggested that it is common to perceive middle school student choices geared toward what those around them say they need to do. This could be family, teachers, coaches, friends, media, etc. The surprise was the amount of influence intrinsic motivation has on students when it comes to deciding on an elective class like choir. In nearly every question, the highest percentage of students (both boys and girls) answered with a response that would indicate intrinsic motivation. The response “I love to sing, and I want to learn more about singing” was used in several questions. This was a common response among those questions. This was a surprising show of self-motivated learners.

This knowledge of more intrinsically-driven students (by the results of this survey) can aid in the recruitment and retention of students in middle school choir. If teachers can find ways to make students feel good about what they are doing in choir, then this should be an ignition source for a passion of singing and learning more about it. Of course, there are students who need that extrinsic motivation as well, and we must teach to them, and motivated to them as well, but understanding the how a middle school student interested in choir in motivated can aid in the future of middle school choir programs.

School districts looking for better involvement in their middle school choir programs can look directly at how middle school boy or girl is motivated. Districts can better align motivational factors, like signing up with friends, providing great music with great music

learning, and providing the opportunity to explore choir, which, based on the research could lead to better numbers. The same can be said for teachers. Teachers should be willing to look at and understand how their students are motivated and what motivates students to participate in a choir class. Understanding what students want and what they think about when signing up for an elective class like choir can lead to better motivation in the choir classroom which can cause better teaching and better learning.



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## Appendix A

### **Middle School Motivation Survey**

The following survey is being conducted to help determine what motivates a middle school student to select a class like choir. The hope is to find out what internal and external motivators lead to the decision to take choir in middle school. The students surveyed will be kept anonymous.

Please circle the best answer.

**1. Indicate your gender.**

- **Male**
- **Female**

**2. How would you describe what your interest in choir was before you came to middle school.**

- I was interested, but apprehensive
- I could not wait for middle school choir!
- I was not interested at all, I joined because it sounded fun

**3. What is your number 1 reason you had for signing up for choir in middle school?**

- All my friends were in signing up, so I decided to
- The choir teacher seemed fun, so I thought the class would be
- Another teacher, administrator, or coach suggested I take choir
- I really like to sing, and I always wanted to be in choir

**4. What makes choir a class to sign up for?**

- My friends are in the class
- I love to sing, and I want to make myself better
- I was encouraged by my parents
- I was encouraged by teachers, coaches, principals, or counselors

**5. How does your family feel about you singing in choir?**

- a. They love it!
- b. They are excited, but it takes a lot of time
- c. My family doesn't care one way or another
- d. My family doesn't know I'm even in choir!

**6. How do your peers feel about you singing in choir.**

- a. My friends are jealous!
- b. My friends don't care one way or another
- c. My friends don't even know I'm in choir
- d. I don't tell my friends I'm in choir, I don't want them to know

**7. How would you describe your interest in choir now that you have had one or more years of it?**

- a. Choir is one of the hi-lights of my day, I love singing!
- b. Choir's alright, but if I have the chance, I'd do something else.
- c. I should not have signed up, it wasn't for me!
- d. As long as my friends are in it, I will be too.

