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Caring Climate, Empathy, and Student Social Behaviors in High School Band

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The purpose of this study was to explore connections among perceived caring climate, empathy, and student social behaviors in high school bands. Nine high school band directors (N = 9 schools), along with their students (N = 203), completed an electronic questionnaire for variables of caring climate, cognitive empathy, affective empathy, social behaviors, and victimization. A multiple linear regression was performed and results showed that cognitive empathy predicted positive social behavior. Results from T-test and ANOVA found that students had higher perceptions of caring climate when (a) teachers remained at the school for more than five years, (b) bands had smaller enrollments, (c) schools were Title One schools, and (d) when students did not hold leadership positions in band.

Keywords: *caring climate, adolescence, social behavior, high school band*

Caring is an important quality of human relationships. In education, caring involves the valuing of the students, their capabilities, interests, and learning styles, and it also involves the caring attitudes of the teachers and the overall school environment. Noddings (1988) believes that caring is needed in education in order to guide the moral and social development of students.

Teachers may already feel they care about their students, but caring can be perceived differently. According to Noddings (2005) in order for caring to occur, both the carer (e.g., teacher) and the cared-for (e.g., student) must contribute to the relation. If either party fails to complete the caring relation, a caring relationship does not exist. For example, if the teacher tries hard to care, yet the student does not perceive the teacher's care, there is no caring relationship because both parties did not contribute to the giving and receiving of care.

Schools facilitate most social relationships established by adolescents. Researchers suggest that establishing a caring school environment enhances positive student development (Battistich and Hom 1997). Establishing a caring school environment seems ideal, however caring starts with individual relationships,

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and in the case of schools, teacher-student relationships. The development of caring teacher-student relationships has shown positive effects on students' academic performance, strengthens socialization, and generates fewer delinquent behaviors (Bergin and Bergin 2009; Fraser and Walberg 2005; Schlichte, Stroud, and Girdley 2006). Caring teacher-student relationships have helped students at risk or of historically underachieving groups (Alder 2002; Fowler et al. 2008; Howard 2002). While care can carry different meanings in diverse cultures and ethnicities (Lewis et al. 2012; Rolón-Dow 2005; Valenzuela 1999), caring has been defined from both the student and teacher perspectives (Fedderson 2007; Hayes, Ryan, and Zseller 1994; Lee and Ravizza 2008).

Several studies have described how teachers establish care in their classrooms: getting to know the students, using appropriate self-disclosure, helping with work, being flexible, and setting high academic and behavioral expectations (Deiro 1996; Fraser and Walberg 2005; Johnson 2006; Ravizza 2005). Some teachers take care to a different level by serving as an unofficial counselor to their students (Edgar 2012; Teed 2002). Creating positive caring teacher-student relationships could help students to make positive decisions regarding their behavior and how it relates to others.

While teacher-student caring relationships are important, student social behaviors and their interactions among each other also contribute to the classroom environment. Research pertaining to the social behavior of students in schools has mainly focused on elementary and early adolescence. While antisocial or bullying behaviors peak during early adolescence (Olweus 1993), bullying behaviors still occur in older adolescence. Studies have shown that 30% to 75% of students were involved in bullying behavior – in the role of bully, victim, or both (Demaray and Malecki 2003; Nansel et al. 2001). Bullying studies have taken the form of self-report frequency, peer-nominated frequency report, and teacher report. Bullying can be direct (physical violence), indirect or verbal (spreading rumors or name calling), relational (manipulation of friends or ostracizing), or cyber (use of social media and text messaging) (Wang, Iannotti, and Nansel 2009). Bullying occurs in males and females with the most common harassment being indirect behaviors (Olweus 1993). Victims of bullying can suffer from anxiety, depression, loneliness, and suicidal thoughts (Olweus 1993). Regardless of the type of bullying, negative social behavior problems in schools continue to be problematic to society.

School efforts to defuse bullying problems include zero tolerance strategies or implementing bully prevention programs that promote prosocial behaviors. Emphasis of these behaviors is rooted in early elementary school because children are taught and encouraged to play nicely together, help the teacher, share toys, and take turns (Ladd, Birch, and Buhs 1999; Pianta, Nimetz, and Bennett

1997). Some teachers refer to teaching morals as the *hidden curriculum* or *character education* because of the inference to learning how to "get along" with others (Johnson 2006; Noddings 2005). Studies have found that creating a caring environment could inform positive behaviors for students.

Empathy—experiencing an emotional connection with another—is also linked to behavior. Research indicates that empathy has two branches: cognitive empathy (the ability to understand another's emotion) and affective empathy (the ability to feel another's emotion). Empathy and the acquisition of empathy are components of social and emotional development, and have demonstrated relationships with social behaviors (Eisenberg 2005; Gano-Overway 2013). Experts suggest that empathy is a motivator for engaging in prosocial behaviors because it requires a desire to help another person (Eisenberg 2005). Similarly, a lack of empathy may be associated with negative behaviors. Feshbach (1997) suggests that if someone were able to understand or feel another person's negative emotion, he would be less inclined to continue with the negative behavior. Succinctly, if a person can empathize and relate to other humans' emotions, then he should have less negative behavior toward others. Conceptually, caring climates—which require empathy—encourage people to consider others' feelings and engage in caring behaviors themselves (Noddings 2005, Battistich et al. 1997).

High school bands are able to foster a caring community for students and teachers because of the group-oriented performance goals. Typically chosen as an elective in high school, band participation provides students with a sense of belonging and builds connected feelings to each other and to the program (Abril 2013; Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz 2003; Laine 2007; Melton 2004). Band students are required to work together in large ensemble performance settings, which can strengthen the band community. Battistich et al. (1997) suggest that building a caring community creates feelings of connectedness with others, which provides students with a sense of attachment, belonging, and safety. Music participation in secondary schools provides adolescents with opportunities to develop musical and nonmusical skills that can benefit their overall well-being.

Sports and physical education researchers have begun to explore the influences that caring climates can have on student social behaviors. Gano-Overway (2013) explored the relationships between caring climate, empathy, and social behaviors in middle school physical education classes. She also investigated the differences between genders and examined bullying prevalence within physical education classes. Using structural equation modeling, Gano-Overway's model found that caring climate, mediated through empathy, showed significant positive effects through cognitive empathy, which led to effects on prosocial behav-

iors. Caring climates negatively predicted antisocial behavior, and all findings were invariant across gender.

This study is based on Gano-Overway's (2013) study with modifications to the design and to some of the measures to accommodate high school band classes. There are commonalities between bands and team sports, such as group-oriented goals, work ethics, and the teaching and mentoring of students' social, emotional, and psychological development (Criss 2010).

Bands provide students a place to learn and grow as individuals and as a group. High school band students have reported strong connections to the band program because it felt like 'home,' and they felt a strong sense of belonging (Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz 2003; Laine 2007). Although many students have reported a homelike connection to band, this does not suggest that the band environment is free of negative social behaviors. Melton (2004) found high school band student leaders abusing the power of their leadership position to harass other members. Despite the harassment that these band students have endured, students who were harassed chose to remain in band. The social connections that some band members feel with each other and with the teacher can have profound effects on their lives (Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz 2003; Hoffman 2008; Nagel 1999; Robinson 1997). High school band is a group that can harbor caring environments well.

The purpose of this study was to explore the connections between student perceived caring climate and student social behavior in high school bands. The following research questions were devised to gain further understanding of the caring climate, empathy, and student social behaviors found in high school bands.

1. How do perceived caring climate, cognitive empathy, and affective empathy influence student social behaviors in band? and

2. To what extent do perceptions of caring climates differ by teacher attributes (i.e., gender, years of teaching experience, years teaching at present school), student attributes (i.e., gender, ethnicity, instrument, years of band participation, victimization), school elements (i.e., school size, socioeconomic status), and band program elements (i.e., band size, band success)?

Method and Procedures

An email explaining the study was sent out to 32 Florida high school band directors in Miami-Dade County. Volunteer directors who responded were sent information electronically that included instructions, consent and assent forms, and the *Band Climate Questionnaire* links. The electronic questionnaire was completed by the band director and by students who returned consent and assent forms. The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

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Participants

Participants were Florida high school band teachers (N = 9) and their students (N = 203). Sampling was limited to high school band directors who were members of the Florida Bandmasters Association and who taught public high school in Miami-Dade County. Miami-Dade County was selected because of the various levels of band enrollment, various degrees of band program success, representative socioeconomic status levels, demographic diversities of students in urban and suburban settings, and because every high school has only one band director. Of the 32 band directors who received the email, nine teachers completed the study (N = 9 teachers). The teacher response rate was 28.1%.

Frequency counts of teacher demographics (Table 1) were collected in order to better understand the teacher sample. Eight of the nine high school band directors identified as male and the remaining teacher identified as female. Three of the teachers identified either as White Non-Hispanic while the remaining six identified as Hispanic. The teacher sample had varying years of teaching experience.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Participating Band Directors (N = 9)

Characteristic	*n*	%
Gender		
Male	8	88.9
Female	1	11.1
Ethnicity		
White Non Hispanic	3	33.3
Black Non Hispanic	0	----
Hispanic	6	66.7
Other	0	----
Teaching Experience		
1st Year	0	----
2-5 Years	3	33.3
6-14 years	4	44.4
15 or more years	2	22.2
Years teaching at present school		
1st year	0	----
2-5 years	6	66.7
6-14 years	3	33.3
15 or more years	0	----

A total of 235 students attempted to complete the questionnaire but 20 were immediately eliminated from the study due to incomplete responses (missing more than half of the questionnaire). An additional six questionnaires were eliminated because of careless responses (some students selected the highest response for the entire survey), and another six surveys were eliminated because scatter plots revealed certain scores as outliers. Hence, 203 student questionnaires were used. The student response rate was 84.6%.

School and band information were also collected to better understand the community environment. Five of the nine participating schools were large, with total school enrollment larger than 2500 students; six of the nine schools were classified as Title One Schools. When looking at band enrollment, six medium size programs with 51–150 students dominated the sample.

While student participants came from nine different schools, the distribution of students was not equal across schools. Schools were assigned pseudonyms to protect the identities of participants. Band directors were asked to report the top band's ratings from the FBA District Concert Music Performance Assessments for the past three years to reflect each band program's expectations and level (see Table 2). Rankings are Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor.

Table 2
Student Distribution Among Schools and Overall FBA MPA Concert Band Ratings

School	*n*	%	2012	2013	2014
A	49	24.1	Superior	Superior	Superior
B	17	8.4	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
C	10	4.9	Superior	Good	Good
D	22	10.3	Excellent	Excellent	Good
E	45	22.2	Superior	Superior	Superior
F	20	9.9	Superior	Good	Excellent
G	14	6.9	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
H	15	7.4	Excellent	Excellent	Superior
I	11	5.4	Superior	Excellent	Excellent

Among the 203 student participants, not all of the demographic information was answered. The student gender ratio of this study was 2:1 (i.e., 131 males, 66 females). Student ethnicity was White Non-Hispanic (42), Black non-Hispanic (13), and Hispanic (132). The remaining 11 students identified with Other and 5 did not respond. Grades of respondents included ninth grade (29), tenth grade (13), eleventh grade (62), and twelfth grade (55). Instrumentation included woodwinds (88), brass (76), and percussion (31). Student responses regarding years of participation in band were 1–2 years (50), 3–4 years (63), or 5 or more

years (83). Finally, student responses indicated that 68 students held a leadership position; 131 did not.

Measures

Students and teachers completed the *Band Climate Questionnaire,* which measures variables of caring climate, cognitive and affective empathy, negative and positive social behaviors, and demographic information. The present study was inspired by a study on caring climate provided in physical education classes (Gano-Overway 2013). The same measures with slight word adjustments to accommodate the band setting, were used to investigate the variables of perceived caring climate (Caring Climate Survey or CCS, Newton et al. 2007), cognitive and affective empathy (Basic Empathy Scale or BES, Jolliffe and Farrington 2006), and positive social behaviors (Child Social Behavior Questionnaire or CSBQ, Warden et al. 2003).

The *Caring Climate Survey* (Newton et al. 2007) contains 13 items and uses a 5-choice Likert-type scale with the neutral choice in the middle (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not Sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). In order to accommodate for the high school band setting, some wording changes were consistently used. The original survey mentions *camp leaders* and *kids* several items, and the revised version for this study was changed to *band directors* and *students*, respectively, throughout the measure. For example, the original item *The leaders respect kids* was changed to *The band director respects students.*

The Basic Empathy Scale (BES) is a 20-item survey that measures the two subscales of empathy: affective and cognitive (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2006). Affective empathy is the ability to share feelings (e.g., *After being with a friend who is sad about something, I usually feel sad;* 11 items), while cognitive empathy is the ability to understand feelings (e.g., *I can understand my friend's happiness when he/she does well at something;* 9 items). The BES uses a 5-choice Likert-type scale with the neutral item of *Neither Agree nor Disagree* (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Research supported adequate factor and construct validity with good internal consistency for the subscales (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2006). Three goodness-of fit indices suggested that the two factors (cognitive and affective) supported validity of the measures (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2006). Reliability for both cognitive empathy and affective empathy were both good (cognitive empathy α = 0.79 and affective empathy α = 0.85). Results for the reliability of the pilot test was moderately strong (cognitive empathy α = 0.71 and affective empathy α = 0.62).

Portions of the *Child Social Behavior Questionnaire* (CSBQ) were used to assess student positive student behaviors (Warden et al., 2003). The original measure had five subsections with four items each that measured Practical Prosocial Behavior, Relational Prosocial Behavior, Overt Antisocial Behavior, Relational Antisocial Behavior, and Victimization. The current study used the two prosocial subscales (similar to Gano-Overway, 2013) to measure positive social behaviors, which had shown consistent reliability (α = 0.72, Warden et al., 2003). The prosocial measure was revised to accommodate the band setting as well as provide age-appropriate language for adolescents. For example, the original student item *Helping another child in class with their work* was changed to *I helped another student with their schoolwork*. The original eight-item measure had two items that were omitted for this study because they could not conform to the band setting (i.e., *Letting another child in your class play with his/her game or toy; Sharing crisps or treats with another child during playtime or dinnertime)*. Two new items were added to the positive social measure that met the high school band setting. *I helped another student learn their music* was similar to *I helped another student with their schoolwork*, but was specific to helping behavior in music. *I tried to get students to work together* was also added to the prosocial measure because of the opportunities bands have to work together in small groups. This revised version of the positive social behavior section of the CSBQ is referred to as the *Music Positive Behavior Questionnaire* (MPBQ). The format of item responses was changed from a three-choice Likert option (*often, sometimes, or never*) to a four-choice frequency scale (*A = none, B = 1-2 time(s), C = 3-4 times, D = 5 or more times*). The original Likert options refer to frequency, however, *never* is the only option provided that can equate a number. The ambiguity of rating scale terms such as *often* or *sometime*s can be interpreted differently (Payne, 2003). Instead, frequency options were provided to gain a more accurate account of behavior. Instructions read, *How many times did you do the following IN BAND in the last 30 days*, with response options being *A = none, B = 1-2 time(s), C = 3-4 times, D = 5 or more times*. "In band" was defined for students and teachers as *any large ensemble class, rehearsal setting, or planned band activity where the band teacher is in charge of the band students*. Cronbach's *alpha* was used to test reliability during the pilot test (α = 0.86).

Three additional questions from the CSBQ that measured negative social behaviors were used along with items from the Bully Scale (or BS, Espelage, Bosworth, and Simon 2000) to measure negative social behaviors. The scoring for the behavior measure was adjusted to reflect frequency responses identical to the MPBQ that measured the number of times certain behaviors occurred within the past 30 days (*A = none, B = 1-2 time(s), C = 3-4 times, D = 5 or more times)*. The

combination of the new negative behavior scale tested a 0.61 reliability using Cronbach's *alpha*, therefore it was omitted as a stand alone measure.

A victimization section was added to the design of the study because of a study that had suggested that band students were victims of bullying and other negative behaviors within band (Melton, 2004). The victimization scale from the CSBQ (Warden et al. 2003) was used with slight wording revisions to accommodate the high school band setting and used identical frequency response scoring as used in the other social behavior measure. For example, *Being hit by another child in your class* was changed to *Being hit by another student in your class*. All items were re-worded when needed to reflect the instrumental ensemble setting and piloted to check for reliability using Cronbach's *alpha* (see Table 3).

Table 3
Reliability for Variables using Cronbach's alpha (N = 203)

Variable	*α*
Caring Climate (CC)	0.89
Affective Empathy (AE)	0.79
Cognitive Empathy (CE)	0.78
Positive Social Behavior (PSB)	0.86
Victimization (V)	0.75

Results

To answer the first research question—How do perceived caring climate, cognitive empathy, and affective empathy influence student social behaviors in band?—student mean scores were used for the listed variables (Table 4). Pearson correlations were analyzed to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the predictors and the outcome variable. Cognitive Empathy (CE) displayed significant relationship with Positive Social Behavior (PSB) (r = .222, p < .01) and Caring Climate (CC) (r = .201, p < .01). As students' cognitive empathy increase their positive social behaviors and perceptions caring climate both increase.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics by Variable (*N* = 203)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*Min.*	*Max*
Caring Climate (CC)	57.73	6.18	38	65
Cognitive Empathy (CE)	35.85	4.28	26	45
Affective Empathy (AE)	35.10	6.60	13	53
Positive Social Behavior (PSB)	22.13	5.80	8	32
Victimization (V)	14.16	2.53	4	16

A multiple linear regression was performed regressing Positive Social Behaviors (PSB) on Caring Climate (CC), Cognitive Empathy (CE), and Affective Empathy (AE). With PSB as the outcome variable, the omnibus regression was statistically significant $F_{(3, 199)} = 3.43$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .049$ (Table 5). The significant variable was CE with 0.22 standardized beta weight. For every one standard deviation increase in CE (SD = 4.28), PSB will increase by 0.22 of a standard deviation (SD = 5.8). Cognitive empathy accounts for 4.9% of the variance in positive social behaviors in high school band. The other predictors of CC and AE were non-significant.

Table 5
Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Positive Social Behavior (N = 203)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	*SE*	*β*	*t*	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
CC	.00	.07	.00	.00	.99	.98	1.02
CE	.30	.10	.22	3.14	.002	.96	1.04
AE	-.00	.06	-.00	-.02	.99	.94	1.07

Note: $R^2 = .049$

To answer the second research question — To what extent do perceptions of caring climates differ by teacher attributes (gender, years of teaching experience, years teaching at present school), student attributes (gender, ethnicity, instrument, years of band participation, victimization), school elements (school size, socioeconomic status), and band program elements (band size, band success)? — a series of *t*-tests and analysis of variances (ANOVA) were used to gain an understanding of existing relationships. Perceptions of caring climate divided by group were performed using independent sample *t*-tests, single sample *t*-tests, and one-way ANOVAs. To simplify reporting, results are discussed by significant and non-significant results.

Teacher Experience at School

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether student perceptions of caring climate differed by the amount of years the teacher had taught at the school. Years teaching at the same school was grouped into three categories (2-5 years, 6-14 years, and 15 or more years). Student perceptions of caring climate differed by group of years teaching at the current school, $F_{(2, 200)} = 14.47$, $p < .01$, $eta^2 = .13$. Post hoc tests using Tukey HSD found significant differences between groups one (2-5 years) and two (6-14 years) (M = -4.37, SE = .86, $p < .01$), and one (2-5

years) and three (15 or more years) (M = -4.57, SE = 1.43, $p < .01$). No statistical significance was found between groups two (6-14 years) and three (15 or more years) (M = -.20, SE = 1.43, p = .99). Results suggest that student perceptions of caring climate were higher when teachers had remained at the school for more than five years.

Student Leadership

Students were asked whether they held a leadership position in band (68 students replied yes and the 130 students replied no). An independent sample t-test was conducted and results were statistically significant, $t_{(196)} = -2.24$, $p < .05$. Students in band leadership positions perceived caring climate differently from students who did not hold a leadership positions. Leaders perceived caring climate lower than non-leaders. Cohen's d effect size was calculated and considered a small effect size d = -.33 (Gamst, Meyers, and Guarino 2008).

School SES

Teachers reported the schools' socioeconomic status (SES), which were then grouped by Title One (58.6%) or Non Title One schools (41.3%). The assumption of homogeneity of variances test for SES did not hold, $F = 4.18$, $p < .05$. Although independent t-tests are robust to this assumption, the t-test was calculated using a formula in which equal variance was not met. Statistically significant differences were found in perceptions of caring climate for SES $t_{(201)} = 4.17$, $p < .01$. Students in Title One Schools reported higher levels of caring climate in high school band compared to students in non Title One schools. Cohen's d effect size was moderately strong, d = .6.

Band Size

Band enrollment was divided into three groups to determine whether Caring Climate differed by band size (less than 50 students, 51-150 students, or more than 151 students). However, only one band was represented in the smallest group, therefore, the data was re-grouped in two categories—less than 150 students (66%) and 151 or more students (34%). An independent sample t-test was used to determine whether student perception of caring climate differed by band enrollment. Results indicate that student perceptions of caring climate differed by band enrollment groups, $t_{(201)} = 3.26$, $p < .01$. Students felt a lower sense of caring climate as the bands increased in size. Cohen's d effect size was moderately strong d = -.47.

Teacher and Student Perceptions

A single sample *t*-test was used to determine whether perceptions of caring climate differed between teachers and their students. The teacher's Caring Climate mean score was used as the test value. Students perceived caring climate differently than teachers, $t_{(202)} = -3.85$, $p < .01$. This suggests that teachers have higher perceptions of caring climate compared to their students.

Single sample *t*-tests were also performed for each school. Data files were split according to school and each teacher's raw score was used as the test value for their school (see Table 6). Schools A, E, and G had significant different perceptions of caring climate between the teacher and their students. Teachers in schools A and E perceived the caring climate higher than their students, while the teacher at school G was the only teacher who perceived caring climate statistically significant lower than the students.

Table 6
Perceptions of Caring Climate by School (*N*= 203)

School	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Test Value	*t*	*df*	*p*
A	49	54.15	6.51	61	-7.36	48	<.01
B	17	62.47	2.94	63	-.74	16	.47
C	10	56.90	5.36	57	-.06	9	.95
D	22	55.81	7.38	59	-2.03	21	.06
E	45	60.24	4.46	65	-7.16	44	<.01
F	20	59.87	5.20	59	.75	19	.45
G	14	60.17	4.83	56	3.23	13	<.01
H	15	55.07	6.03	58	-1.88	14	.08
I	11	57.27	5.16	54	2.10	10	.06

Victimization

Victimization data was not normally distributed. The negatively skewed data suggests that victimization of bullying was non problematic in the sampled high school bands. Sixteen was the highest score in victimization, suggesting that no victimization was reported for that student. Sixteen was also the mode of the data, with median at 15 and mean at 14.16.

The data was divided in two groups, those who reported no victimization and those that reported any victimization in band (see Table 7). The two groups' perceptions of caring climate were compared using a Kruskal-Wallis test. Assumptions of homogeneity of variance and similar distributions were met after ranking data, creating rank scores for each participant, then finding the absolute difference of the rank score and the mean rank score. Homogeneity assumption

was non significant ($F_{(1, 201)} = .77$, $p = .38$). Kruskal-Wallis test was performed and perceptions of caring climate were significantly different among victimization groups, $X^2 = 12.37$, with a small effect size of .06. Results suggest that students who reported any victimization in band reported a lower lever of perceived caring climate.

Table 7
Groups of Victimization on Caring Climate ($N = 203$)

Group	*N*	*Mean Rank*
Victimization	113	89.09
Non Victimization	90	118.21

Individual means for caring climate and victimization were used to compare perceptions of climate within a particular school (see Table 8). Schools B and H reported the most amount of victimization, however school B also reported the highest mean school of caring climate. School H reported the second lowest caring climate score and the highest level of victimization in band.

Table 8
Caring Climate (CC) and Victimization (V) Means Reported by School ($N = 203$)

School and Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*
A	49		
CC		54.15	6.51
V		14.01	2.53
B	17		
CC		62.47	2.94
V		13.65	3.52
C	10		
CC		56.90	5.36
V		14.50	1.18
D	22		
CC		55.81	7.38
V		14.13	2.74
E	45		
CC		60.24	4.46
V		14.29	2.42
F	20		
CC		59.87	5.20
V		14.95	1.50
G	14		
CC		60.17	4.83

	V		14.06	2.52
H		15		
	CC		55.07	6.03
	V		13.87	3.20
I		11		
	CC		57.27	5.16
	V		14.00	2.49

Non-significant results were found for whether perceived caring climate differed by student gender. Teacher gender difference could not be calculated because there was only one female teacher participant. Student perceptions of caring climate grouped by band success were non-significant. Student attributes ethnicity, years participating in band, grade in school, and instrument did not influence perceptions of caring climate. Student perceptions of caring climate did not perceive differently by years of teacher experience. School size also produced non-significant results.

Discussion

Perceptions of caring climate in this study suggest that high school bands have caring environments. Teachers and their students generally have similar perceptions of the band caring climate, with teachers having slightly higher levels of perceived caring climate compared to their students.

Significant positive relationships were found between cognitive empathy and positive social behavior, which supports previous research (Eisenberg 2005; Roberts and Strayer 1996). As students' scores increase in cognitive empathy, positive social behavior will also increase. Positive social behaviors are positively linked with the ability to understand someone's emotions.

When reviewing student demographics and perceptions of caring climate, student gender had non-significant results, which aligns with previous research (Gano-Overway 2013; Hayes, Ryan, and Zseller 1994). These results support Noddings' assertion that caring is genderless and that everyone is responsible for caring (2005).

Student perceptions of caring climate grouped by ethnicity also had non-significant results. Previous research has indicated varying student perceptions of teacher care based on ethnicity (Hayes, Ryan, and Zseller 1994). Research has also shown that students perceive teacher caring higher when ethnicities between teacher and students match (Rolón-Dow 2005). While this study could not focus not on teacher ethnicity due to sample size, the majority of the school band teachers in this sample had matching ethnicities between the teacher and a large portion of the students. Perhaps the amount of matching ethnicities of Hispanic

students along with their Hispanic teachers added to the overall effect that the band climate is caring. Perceptions of caring climate in high school band categorized by matching teacher and student ethnicity is worthy of further investigation.

Other student attributes of grade, instrument, and years participating in band did not affect their perceptions of caring climate. However, when categorizing student reports of victimization into two groups, results found that students who did not report any victimization perceived caring climate higher than students who did report any victimization. If a student is feeling victimized by any level of bullying, perception of the caring climate appears to weaken. While there is no research found that directly studies victimized student perceptions of caring climate in schools, studies have focused on caring teachers who have helped at-risk students (Alder 2002; Fowler et al. 2008; Howard 2002; Lewis et al. 2012; Rolón -Dow 2005; Valenzuela 1999).

Although overall victimization did not seem to be problematic in this sample of high school bands, there were students who reported being victimized, statistically non-significant but humanly noteworthy. Of the students that reported victimization, most of the reported bullying acts were either psychological or social bullying. Being left out of an activity was reported as the most frequent act of bullying, followed by being picked on by another student in band class. The least reported was physical bullying. This supports Olweus' (1993) research that most bullying comes in social and psychological formats. Future studies on bullying should concentrate on the psychological and social acts of bullying and the effects it has on the victim and the overall caring environment.

Students were asked whether they held a leadership position in band and their leadership status did influence perceptions of caring climate; students who held leadership positions in band perceived the caring climate lower than did the non-leaders in band. Student leaders are helpful in running a band program (Criss 2010), however further research is needed to understand how the student leaders are portraying the band climate.

Analyzing teacher attributes of years teaching and years teaching at current school had varying influence on student perceptions of caring climate. While the overall years of teaching experience was non-significant, the amount of years teaching at the current school affected perceptions of the caring climate in band. Student perceptions of caring climate increased when the teacher had stayed at the school for more than five years. This aligns with other research findings that suggest that the development of caring climate takes years to mature because of the need to develop the teacher-student relationships (Deiro 1996; Johnson 2006; Noddings 2005; Ravizza 2005). The high school band environment is an

example of the multiple years a student can have the same teacher, hence a longer time to establish a caring relationship.

Band size based on enrollment had varying student perceptions of caring climate according to the group. The students in the smaller band programs had higher perceptions of caring climate compared to students in the larger bands. The larger band group had two schools versus the smaller band size had the remaining seven schools. One of the large group schools was a magnet school and had the largest amount of participants, which could have affected the band size variable outcome. However, results suggest that the smaller more intimate setting of student-teacher ratio could possibly ease establishing caring teacher-student relationships, which is an important part of caring climate (Deiro 1996; Johnson 2006; Noddings 2005; Ravizza 2005).

Finally, when socioeconomic status (SES) was also grouped in two based on school criteria, Title One or Not Title One. Results suggest that band students in Title One schools perceived caring climate higher than students in schools not classified as Title One. Although school SES was determined using Title One school status, student perceptions of caring climate were high despite the potential financial problems they may have been facing at home. Results of this study conflict with previous studies in which students of historically underachieving and underserved groups perceive caring lower than students not in these groups. However, the same studies found that caring climates can help students in traditionally underachieving groups (Alder 2002; Fowler et al. 2008; Howard 2002; Lewis et al. 2012; Rolón-Dow 2005; Valenzuela 1999).

Conclusion

This study found that caring climates were present in the high school bands sampled. Teachers and students generally perceive the caring climate similarly, with the teachers having slightly higher levels of perceived caring climates compared to their students.

When looking at the relationships among perceived caring climate, empathy, and student social behaviors, cognitive empathy and positive student behaviors had positive relationships. Positive social behaviors are positively linked with the ability to understand someone's emotions. Perhaps if students are better able to understand how someone is feeling, there may be outcomes of positive social behavior. While this relationship is not causal, future research can continue to explore the connections between empathy and social behavior.

Student perceptions of caring climate were not significantly different by gender, ethnicity, grade, years participating in band, instrument, band success, school size, or the amount of years the teacher has taught in their career. Although these student, teacher, band, and school elements were non-significant, it

is important to remember the sample size regarding the amount of schools participating in this study. Of the 203 usable student surveys, data represented nine schools with unequal distribution ratio of students per school. A replica of this study with a larger school sample size may have varying results.

Of the significant results, student perceptions of caring climate differed by years the teacher was at the present school resonated strongly with literature on caring in the classrooms. When the teacher was at the current school for more than five years, student perceptions of caring climate increased from previous years. This places emphasis on the time it takes to develop caring teacher-student relationships. High school bands are in a position to build caring relationships because of the multiple years students take the course.

Perhaps the building of caring teacher-student relationships contributed to student perceptions of caring climate and size of the band program. Students in this study perceived caring climate higher when in smaller band programs. Aligning with other studies in caring research, quality time and building one-to-one relationships between the teacher and the students could be a factor in caring perception. Maybe larger band programs do not feel as much of a caring climate because there are so many people involved. However, with the sample of schools in this study being small, a replica with a larger sample is worthy for further investigation of perceptions of caring climate by band size.

Student leadership also had significant results as students who held leadership positions perceived the caring climate lower than those who did not hold a position. One might suspect that students would accept additional responsibilities if they felt an attachment to band, linking the caring environment to their attachment. Perhaps the additional work and responsibilities assigned to the leaders weakened their caring perspectives. Is there a shift in perceptions of caring climate from the student leaders? If so, when does that occur? The area of student leadership and caring climate is necessary is worthy of investigation.

Caring is an essential part of human relationships and high school bands are in a position to foster a caring climate that can influence student behavior. Student perceptions can differ according to group, but the fundamental need to feel cared for is undeniable, especially for adolescent students who need social and emotional stability. Band is already a place where a lot of students feel at home, and based on the results of this study, caring climate can help influence student social behaviors toward others.

About the Author

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