Female High School Music Directors Implementing Transformational Leadership: Rejecting the Music Director Stereotype

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Abstract

As I am reaching the end of the Master of Education Program at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia, I have been provided with numerous opportunities to reflect on my personal experience in music education in Canada. I have been a musician for most of my life – as I am getting more comfortable in my current role as a high school band teacher, I have been reflecting on how difficult it has been to obtain this role as a woman and how my leadership style has been criticized by male colleagues who dominate the profession (Bovin, 2019). Although the situation is improving, the stereotypical music director has a top-down approach and prioritizes music results over students' needs (Shouldice, 2017). However, education in North America is evolving towards a student-centred approach to teaching in all subjects. In this paper, I reject the social construct of high school music directors and their requirement to have authoritative, top-down, transactional (traditionally masculine) leadership traits in order to be successful (i.e., get musical results). I argue that the most effective high school music directors have student-centred leadership traits more aligned with transformational (traditionally feminine) leadership. I consider myself to have the latter style of leadership and I have seen my students flourish both generally and as musicians. Regardless of criticism, I believe this is the best way to teach music – the application of this paper is based on my own teaching experiences in high school music education. The implication of this paper is that it would contribute to the scholarly conversation of the acceptance and successes of transformational leaders in music education. Further, all areas of music education would be inclusive and welcoming to all music educators, and students would be a part of learning communities based on genuine care.

Keywords: female music director, transformational leadership, gender bias, stereotype, student-centred learning, music education

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Chapter One: Introduction

In the music world, women have been struggling for decades, and perhaps centuries, to prove themselves as effective leaders. There is no question that women are just as capable musicians as men, and women have earned the majority of music degrees in the United States and elsewhere for decades (Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Jane 2018). Women as music educators are plentiful, but they mainly hold positions as elementary music educators – the number of female music directors in a secondary school setting is significantly low (Fischer-Croneis, 2016). In 2015, only 21% of U.S. secondary school band teachers were female (Bovin, 2019). Throughout my learning in the Thompson Rivers University (TRU) Master of Education (M.Ed.) program, I began to question this occurrence and I have determined it has to do with erroneously assigned gender roles – women are perceived as caring and nurturing, and thus better suited for elementary music education, while men are perceived as authoritative and direct, and thus better suited for high school music education (Shouldice, 2017). There also exists the inferiority complex where elementary music is often perceived to be inferior to high school music (Lesser, 2017), and female leaders are often considered inferior to male leaders (Matheson & Lyle, 2017). Following these common perceptions, the unfortunate logic is that women ought to teach elementary music and men ought to teach high school music.

Topic Development in the M.Ed. Program

I began the M.Ed. program at TRU just over two years ago, and three courses in particular have helped me develop an interest in the topic of leadership in music education. The first of the three is *Philosophy and History of Education* where we had to develop and condense our own philosophy of teaching in a short amount of space (in about 750 words). Especially after reading Nel Noddings' *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternate Approach to Education*

(2005), I developed three main values regarding my own philosophy of teaching: student-centred learning, gender equality in music education, and genuine caring relationships. This course helped me understand that I truly value ethics of care in schools and helped me remember that although music educators are seen as teaching music, we are actually teaching people, each with their own thoughts, feelings, emotions, backgrounds, and capabilities.

In *Principles and Processes of Leadership*, I began an understanding of my own leadership style and why I do not need to adapt to the traditional top-down leadership approach in high school music education. Many music educators believe they need to either adapt to top-down leadership or stay out of the profession altogether, and this is especially the case for women. The instructor for this course also happened to be a music educator, and as I submitted assignments throughout the course that related to music education, it was really helpful to receive their feedback as someone who knows this world as well. After submitting my final assignment that aligns transformational leadership theory and traditionally feminine leadership theory, and suggesting high school music educators ought to align themselves with transformational leadership traits, the instructor gave it a lot of praise and suggested I continue with my research as I had the beginning of what could be a thesis, research paper, or capstone paper.

In *Research Methods*, I discovered the array of literature that touches on gender biases in music education, especially regarding women as high school music directors. As I have struggled to decide if I have a place in high school music education when my physical image and leadership style do not match the stereotypical high school music director, it was enormously liberating to read a number of different studies on the very topic of gender bias and music education. Even though this problem is current and prevalent, it was helpful to discover that

researchers and music educators have begun to shed light on this problem as it has further helped me realize that I indeed have a place in this profession, as is the case with any music educator.

The Socially Constructed Music Director

As a current high school band teacher, I had to face obstacles in order to obtain the position and I constantly feel pressured to prove myself to male colleagues. I was becoming aware of male colleagues with the same credentials and teaching experience as me obtaining high school music directing positions before I did. In some cases, they actually had fewer credentials and less teaching experience than I did. Further, whether it is through interactions with highly acclaimed male adjudicators at music festivals or even my male student teachers who are just starting out in the field, it is assumed that I am a novice and so I am treated as such until I prove otherwise. The reason why this is the case is because the music world has created a social construct of the stereotypical music director – a dominant, authoritative, aggressive, demanding (and often white) male. Sears (2014) conducted a qualitative study on four band directors and focused on their personas and their processes of crafting a teaching identity. In a powerful statement, they write:

> His statuesque figure towers above the musicians. Black tuxedo tails fall behind him; his grey hair is artistically disheveled. He raises his hands and inspects the performers, discerning their readiness to play. He enjoys the suspense for a moment and Beethoven's Fifth begins. M, music; M, Maestro; M, man. (p. 5)

Despite my extensive background and formal training in directing music, my struggle is because I do not fit the stereotype – both physically and in terms of leadership style. I spent several years struggling to break out of elementary music education where I had no formal training, and where many female music educators are placed and kept (as noted above).

I have been a musician for the majority of my life in either secondary, post-secondary, or professional bands, and I have observed the typical band director persona in countless people. The persona to which I am referring include stereotypically masculine qualities of a band teacher such as assertive, aggressive, and confident (Draves, 2018). They often follow what I will refer to as transactional or traditionally masculine leadership traits. I have observed many band and choir directors keep a narrow focus on musical results, often through an authoritative, top-down leadership approach.

It is not strictly the case that only men exhibit the stereotypical music director traits. However, women find that they often have to adapt their leadership styles to fit the norm in order to be accepted (Draves, 2018; Fischer-Croneis, 2016) and so I have also witnessed women with the same stereotypical persona. Likewise, I have witnessed male music directors exhibit what I will refer to as either transformational or traditionally feminine leadership qualities of mentorship, communication, and relationship-building, which is extremely refreshing. However, these male leaders are usually celebrated for being caring, but female leaders are often told to toughen up or that they are not right for the profession. This is also true for the military (Matheson & Lyle, 2017), another realm with which I have experience, and on which I will elaborate later.

Significance of the Topic

There are a number of reasons why there is significance to this topic, but I will briefly speak on two. When the leadership tradition of this profession starts to get questioned and rejected, it allows for music educators to feel more comfortable with their authentic teaching selves and not have to adapt who they are to fit the perceived normalcy. Steele (2010) discusses teacher efficacy and wrote that it is “the set of beliefs a teacher holds regarding his or her own

abilities and competencies to teach and influence student behavior and achievement regardless of outside influence or obstacles" (p. 73). When we begin to erase perceived normalcies in the teaching profession, and especially the construct of the stereotypical music director, it allows for teachers to develop genuine teaching personalities - most of us will agree that our favourite and most memorable teachers are those who were authentic and taught from the heart (Palmer, 1997).

Further, if high school music education is not seen as a profession that requires a rigid leadership structure, I think that more people are likely to either remain in the profession or pursue it in the first place. This would allow for more diversity within the field. Bovin (2019) discusses the issue of retaining women in the field of high school music education - once they are in the high school level, women often either move to elementary or middle-school education or they leave the profession altogether when they feel that they no longer belong. It is also the case that some men who feel they do not fit the stereotype of a music director choose to teach at the elementary level as they feel the profession is too rigid (Lesser, 2017; Shouldice, 2017). The profession would have more diversity if it was perceived as being inclusive, allowing for more teacher autonomy and authenticity.

Presenting the Argument

In this paper, I reject the social construct of high school music directors and their requirement to have authoritative, top-down, transactional (traditionally masculine) leadership traits in order to be successful (i.e., get musical results). I argue that the most effective high school music directors have student-centred leadership traits more aligned with transformational (traditionally feminine) leadership. I argue this because literature has emerged showing that transformational leadership is more appropriate than transactional leadership in school settings. Harris (2003) states that transactional leadership is an approach that is more concerned with an

organizational purpose rather than people and where conformity is the norm. However, they state that because schools are dynamic, schools "require a leadership approach that will promote and sustain organizational change and development" (p. 17), i.e., transformational leadership, which is more concerned with moral values and building relationships where both leaders and followers benefit (Harris, 2003). Further, music education progresses and diversifies when teachers challenge social constructs and teach from authenticity. Sears (2014) argues that when music teachers challenge expectations, they form more organic and authentic teaching identities. They also state that "the perception that the performance of traditionally masculine behavior is the key to quality teaching and professional respect must be challenged from within" (p. 10). Lastly, creating a caring environment in music classrooms is important for building a sense of community and recognizing students as individuals. Shouldice (2019) mentions high school music teachers and the "misplaced gratification in festival scores" (p. 62), and that there is not enough of a focus on developing students. In a qualitative study of a music program conducted by Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz (2003), a significant finding was "the degree of importance students place on the social aspects of their ensemble membership" (p. 204). This ties into Noddings' (2005) concept of caring in schools: "The structures of current schooling work against care, and at the same time, the need for care is perhaps greater than ever" (p. 20-21).

Overview of the Paper

This paper will begin with a literature review regarding three main themes: transformational leadership in schools, diversifying the profession of music directing, and the ethics of caring in music education. The differences between transformational and transactional leadership will be discussed (and how they are linked to traditionally feminine and masculine leadership, respectively), and why transformational leaderships is what is needed in schools,

especially in music education. I will elaborate on the struggles of women as leaders in general and gender biases in music education. I will also speak specifically to student-centred learning in music and how high school music teachers are teaching beyond the curriculum due to the nature of the subject. Following this section will be an application of the main themes, which involve the concept of unapologetically authentic music educators, applying ethics of care in music education, and empowering young musicians and music educators. The paper will conclude with the implications of student-centred high school music education (i.e., how all parties benefit from this framework) and final thoughts.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter presents some of the literature regarding the topic of leadership and music education and I have observed a number of themes. The literature aligns with transformational leadership, diversifying the profession of music education, and the ethics of care in music education. This chapter proceeds with a summary of my findings that provide evidence for my argument.

Transformational Leadership

Regarding schools, workplaces, or any other type of organization, there appears to be a shift away from traditional leadership where the leader is synonymous with "boss," and more of a shift towards a reformed style of leadership where the leader is more along the lines of a mentor or server who cares about communication, collaboration, and relationship-building. These two types of leadership can be described as transactional leadership and transformational leadership, respectively. There exists a field of literature on such leadership styles and I will summarize what several authors have published.

Transactional versus Transformational Leadership

Although there are many different leadership theories, this paper will outline two main contrasting theories: transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Harris (2003) describes transactional leadership as follows:

> Implicit in this theoretical position is a crudely abstracted leader-follower dichotomy, in which leaders are superior to followers and followers depend on leaders. In this way leadership consists of doing something for, to, and on behalf of others. It is also premised upon tasks being delegated to the followers and the followers completing these tasks … The transactional leadership or management approach is concerned largely with

> structures, emphasizing organizational purposes rather than people. (p. 16)

Transactional leadership follows a top-down approach where the leader is seen at the top of a hierarchy and the followers are beneath them. The focuses consist of task completion and the organization as a whole instead of the people who are completing the tasks and are a part of the organization.

Transformational leadership, however, is quite contrasting to transactional leadership, and as described by Harris (2003), the theory:

> focuses on the moral values and value-laden activities of a leader and how these are disclosed to the other colleagues (Duignam & MacPherson, 1992) … Blase (1989) argues that leaders acting in this mode try to use power with or through other people, rather than exercising control over them. (p. 17)

The focus is no longer a top-down approach where the leader controls the followers, but rather, the leader is on the same level as the individuals and finds ways to empower them.

It is also possible to align transactional leadership with traditionally masculine leadership, and to align transformational leadership with traditionally feminine leadership. Saseanu, Toma, and Marinescu (2014) discuss biological differences between men and women, which result in innate characteristics that are typically associated with men (authority, power, and analytical thinking) and characteristics that are typically associated with women (maternal instinct, altruism, highly complex communication skills, attention to details, and aesthetics). As such, the authors state that "transformational leadership is better matched with the women's characteristics, because they distinguish themselves through vision, charisma, and inspiration, attributes considered to a large extent, feminine values" (Saseanu et al., 2014, p. 146). Further, regarding leadership and organizations, they state:

> Women consider that successes within the company come from the ability to manage and develop employees, while men consider that the most important aspect is visibility and awareness of internal policies. Additionally, unlike women, the leadership style adopted by men is authoritative and targeted at task completion. (Saseanu et al, 2014, p. 146)

Even though the article makes an important connection, it is worth noting that not all women display traditionally feminine leadership traits, and likewise with men and masculine leadership traits.

Transformational Leadership in Schools

There are several pieces of literature that attest to the idea that traditional (transactional) leadership is outdated and that school leaders ought to be implementing transformational leadership. In an interview with Tom Sergiovanni, Brandt's (1992) publication shows that Sergiovanni also believes that transactional leadership is also outdated:

> I think the door is open now to a kind of revolution. We're beginning to recognize that schools are special places where people care about teaching and learning. They're not like most organizations; you can't apply organizational principles to places characterized by sandboxes, books, and children. Schools are more like families and small communities where, if you can develop the right substitutes, you can throw traditional leadership away. There's no need for it ever again. (p. xiv)

Although this publication is from almost thirty years ago, it shows that there was a call to shift away from traditional leadership to a "substitute" type of leadership that recognized communities and relationships, e.g., transformational leadership. In a more recent publication, Saseanu et al. (2014) confirm that transformational leadership is a new concept that has been brought forth in

recent decades, "which is highly focused on motivating the employees, in order for them to surpass professional interest and to get emotionally involved in the organization" (p. 146).

Balyer (2012) conducted a qualitative study with an ethnographic research design involving 30 teachers from six different schools. The results of the study revealed that "school principals demonstrate high levels of characteristics of transformational leadership in terms of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation behaviors" (p. 581). They conclude that transformational leadership is substantial for schools to move forward as principals would help staff and students develop and collaborate through mentorship.

Harris (2003) describes how there are those who are pushing schools to operate like businesses as if they have profits that need to be maximized (where "profit" is a metaphor for academic results). They also state that "schools are ultimately concerned with the development of students who are not only employable, but also autonomous, responsible, moral individuals who are effective members of society" (p. 12). Further, they write how transformational leadership encourages teacher collaboration, which increases teacher motivation and improves teachers' self-efficacy (Harris, 2003).

Feminine Leadership and Gender Bias

As mentioned, there is support that shows how transformational leadership traits are closely aligned with traditionally feminine leadership traits, e.g., communication, collaboration, mentorship, and relationship-building. Similarly, there is support that shows how transactional leadership traits are closely aligned with traditionally masculine leadership traits, e.g., power, authority, and domination (Matheson & Lyle, 2017). However, there is evidence that shows that

women experience a gender bias as feminine leadership is often considered inferior compared to masculine leadership.

Matheson and Lyle (2017) conducted an institutional ethnography to review literature and current practices in order to investigate female underrepresentation in leadership positions in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). They conclude that the CAF has created "a military community that continues to normalize, if not sanction, gender bias" (p. 25). Saseanu et al. (2014) conclude that "there is still the tendency to consider successful behaviours in a leadership position as being typically masculine" (p. 147). As such, women have struggled to obtain leadership roles in many different fields as it is often perceived that they are not fit for leadership. Matheson and Lyle (2017) conclude in their study that there is evidence that the CAF inhibits the rank succession of women. Saseanu et al. (2014) discuss a glass ceiling for women in leadership that represents the discrimination they face that prevents access to management positions.

However, it has been claimed that it is not the case that feminine leadership is inferior to masculine leadership. At the very least, feminine leadership has been considered to be complementary, and by some, it is fundamental for successful leadership. Saseanu et al. (2014) claim that "the development and use of the feminine leadership characteristics in the economy, in politics, and in the society are fundamental elements of prosperity in a world that is increasingly more competitive" (p. 148). Matheson and Lyle (2017) state that there is research that indicates "the traditional feminine qualities of cooperation, mentoring, and collaboration are important factors in effective leadership" (p. 23). They also state that a study conducted by Shimanoff and Jenkins (1991) indicates that men and women have proven equal regarding performance in leadership roles.

Sergiovanni (Brandt, 1992) concludes that the reason why there is a bias against women in leadership is because most of the researchers who have studied leadership have been men. As a result, leadership theories were developed based on achievement and competitiveness rather than community building – the concept of success has been defined in a masculine way to mean self-actualization, whereas women tend to define success in terms of community and sharing. They also state that literature on successful schools show that there is an underrepresentation of female principals, but also that there is an overrepresentation of female principals amongst successful principals, implying that it is not the case that feminine leadership is inferior to masculine leadership.

Diversifying Music Directors

I have elaborated on leadership styles and biases against women as leaders. As mentioned, there exists a socially constructed music director that is essentially an authoritative, powerful, demanding (often white) man whose focus is musical results from the ensemble – whether the ensemble is a band, orchestra, choir, or some other musical group. In other words, the socially constructed music director possesses transactional, or traditionally masculine, leadership traits. Draves (2018) claims that masculinity is also a social construct: "Since masculinity is a social construction, those within the society or culture define it" (p. 96). I will now draw attention to evidence that shows how this bias is prevalent in the music world and the harm it causes.

Social Construct Harms

Because the social construct of the male music director exists, this has resulted in a low number of women in the profession. Women often do not believe they are capable of becoming a successful music director and so they either leave the profession or do they not pursue it

altogether. Sears (2014) quotes a female elementary music teacher when they described their research on the persona problem of how expectations of masculinity shape female band director identities: “Ha! High school band director. I knew that wasn’t in the cards for me, so I didn’t even try” (p. 10). Further, principals often buy into this stereotype as well and are more inclined to hire males for high school band positions. Delzell (1993) noted the issue of males receiving more employment opportunities as music teachers in secondary schools in their examination of high school band teaching positions. Kopetz (1988) mentions that males were generally preferred over females by evaluators to receive a formal interview for a secondary instrumental music position. There is a history of male dominated professions making it difficult for women to want to enter these fields (Matheson & Lyle, 2017), and the result is also a scarcity of women in the field of high school music.

Because music directing is male dominated, it has created a struggle for women who have decided to enter the field anyways. A number of authors in the research studies I have reviewed include that their participants make mention of *The Good Ol’ Boys’ Club* in music directing (Bovin, 2019; Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Sears, 2014). What this is referring to is a network of male music directors who exclude those who do not look and act like them, and often do not show support, respect, or even basic human decency (e.g., sexual harassment or sexually inappropriate treatment) particularly towards women in the field (Bovin, 2019). As such, this makes it a challenge for women in the profession to network, experience mentorship relationships, and pursue professional development (Fischer-Croneis, 2016). To make matters worse, because of the low number of women in the profession to begin with, many female music directors claim they do not know any other female directors with whom to network, resulting in feelings of exclusion and isolation (Draves, 2018).

There is also the issue of female music directors being treated differently based on gender alone. There exists the issue of double standards - for example, a participant in Bovin's (2019) study stated that their strong leadership is seen differently because it is exhibited by a woman and not a man: "a strong female comes across as a bitch and a strong man comes across as tough" (p. 39). Likewise, with participants in Fischer-Croneis' (2016) study, "An assertive man is a great band teacher; an assertive woman is, using the words from one of the study's participants, a 'spitfire' or 'bitch'" (p. 196). There is also the issue of not being taken seriously or underestimated because of gender (Fischer-Croneis, 2016; Draves, 2018). Female music directors are often subjected to a mistaken identity, e.g., assumed to be an assistant (Fischer-Croneis, 2016), or they are undermined by male colleagues and are often defending themselves as professionals (Draves, 2018).

As a result of the already mentioned harm, it has been concluded that many female music directors have reported that they have felt the need to adapt their leadership styles to be more in alignment with a stereotypical music director, i.e. a transactional (traditionally masculine) leadership style. Fischer-Croneis (2016) quoted one of their participants:

> You have to [create such a persona] in the profession. To be taken seriously and to be successful, I think that you have to have a little bit masculine, aggressive demeanor, especially with high school. To be taken seriously as a high school band director with your colleagues, the other band directors, and professionals, I take on that persona. (p. 188)

In Draves' (2018) study of two female band student teachers, they explored the participants' teacher identity and how they were formed. They conclude that the participants' identity construction, beliefs, and expectations regarding the band director role had been influenced by

other music directors, and that they developed masculine traits in their identities as such. Regarding the band director persona, Sears (2014) writes, "Females are not likely afforded the freedom to explore non-masculine identities without intense scrutiny and criticism" (p. 10). It is an unfortunate reality that women in male dominated fields often feel the need to conform to masculine traits in order to fit in, and it is no different in the world of music directing.

Authentic Teaching Identities

When music educators of any gender choose to reject the assumption that they must fit a stereotype in order to be successful, they begin to form teaching identities of their own and become much more authentic educators. Palmer (1997) writes a powerful message to all teachers that we must reclaim our identity and integrity in order to be authentic teachers who teach from the heart. They write (their italics), "*good teaching cannot be reduced to technique: good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher*" (p. 16). They also write that we must respect the diversity of teachers if we are to allow them to flourish. Further, they discuss vulnerability, and when teachers reduce their vulnerability by teaching from a constructed persona instead of their true identity, then they become disconnected from students, subjects, and even themselves. If this is true for any discipline, it is true for music education as well.

Sears (2014) also discusses vulnerability in the context of music education. They claim that diversifying music educators' personalities by challenging the traditionally masculine persona, we take risks and forge our own teaching identities – even though this involves fear and vulnerability, it pushes the field of music education forward and creates space for those who feel like they do not belong. They write, "Who could we become as individual teachers, as a collective profession, if women and men band directors could truly define themselves and form

organic, authentic, and original teaching identities?" (p. 10). Authentic teaching identities are necessary for teachers to flourish and for fields to progress.

Steele (2010) discusses three characteristics that are associated with successful music educators: nonverbal communication, teacher self-efficacy, and servant leadership. Regarding teacher self-efficacy, they state that there is no one definition of what makes an effective teacher, and that effective teachers display a myriad of characteristics and behaviours. They write, "Self-efficacy is the set of beliefs a person holds regarding his or her own capabilities to produce desired outcomes and influence events that affect his or her own life" (p. 73). Despite the existence of the socially constructed music director and others' beliefs that they need to fit this persona or leave/stay out of the profession, the traits of effective teachers include those who teach with authenticity to the best of their capabilities.

Ethics of Care and Music Education

At the foundation of my argument for ethics of care and music education is Noddings' (2005) *The challenge to care in schools: An alternate approach to education*. They argue that schools are too focused on academic achievement and developing university-bound students, and as a result, there is a disconnect between school staff and students where students do not feel cared for. Noddings asserts that a caring relationship involves two actively participating sides: those who are providing the care and those who are being cared for. Both must understand this dynamic if the caring relationship is to be effective. For instance, it is possible for an educator to care, but if they are providing the wrong type of care that the cared-for actually needs, then it is no longer a caring relationship, e.g. educators who care about academic achievement arguably *care*, but not necessarily in a way all students (the cared-for) need. This can also be applied in music education – arguably the stereotypical music director *cares*, i.e., about performances and

musical results, but caring about the ensemble and its achievements instead of the wants and needs of the individuals within the ensemble will leave students feeling a lack of care, thus, the caring relationship is ineffective.

Student-Centred Learning

Allsup (2003) published an ethnographic study with an attempt to expand the normative view of instrumental music education by forming small musical ensembles, or in other words, "mutual learning communities" (p. 24). The study involved nine high school students who were split into two groups that either created music for traditional instruments or with rock band instruments. The study found that the groups developed interpersonal relationships, peer learning, peer critique, and that members took care of each other. Allsup (2003) refers to democratic teaching and learning as outlined by Paulo Freire:

> Paulo Freire (2000) called attention to the interdependent nature of democratic learning environments, emphasizing that "a dialogic relationship – communication and intercommunication among active subjects who are immune to the bureaucratization of their minds and open to discovery and knowing more – is indispensable to knowledge. The social nature of this process makes a dialogical relationship a natural element of it" (p. 99). (Allsup, 2003, p. 27)

They also discuss the development of caring relationships in schools and that teachers need to teach *with* their students, rather than *to* their students. This echoes Noddings' (2005) idea of caring relationships that involve two actively participating sides instead of one doing the caring *to* another.

Parker (2016) discusses a similar idea in their intrinsic case study with four choral teacher participants. The purpose of the study was to explore the participants' experiences of creating

and sustaining community within their public school choirs, and the conclusion was that all of the participants placed their students at the centre of the choir, viewing their director role as one of support and care. Parker (2016) refers to the I-It relationship versus the I-Thou relationship where the latter "describes individuals who seek relationships with the world, with others, and with spiritual beings" (p. 222). They mention Noddings as well and write that a caring teacher is one that is completely with the student, flowing energy to the cared-for. Even though the participants in this study agreed that students were at the centre of their teaching, Parker (2016) still found that the participants saw their choirs as one entity instead of a collection of individuals. They define the Latin term *communitas* at the beginning of the publication as meaning fellowship and partnership, stating that it "does not involve a merging of identities; rather, the gifts of each person are alive to the fullest" (p. 222). Because the participants appeared to view their choir as a merging of identities, Parker (2016) writes, "the findings in this study underscore the barriers within competitive school music programs that may prevent experiencing *communitas*" (p. 234). Just as Noddings (2005) acknowledges there are a lot of teachers who care, it appears to be the same for music educators, but the things towards which they are giving care needs to align with what the recipients want and need. In some cases, it appears that music educators (caregivers) see their positions as more of an I-It relationship where they care about the ensembles as a whole instead of an I-Thou relationship where the educators are caring for each individual.

One of the three characteristics that Steele (2010) associates with successful music educators is servant leadership (along with nonverbal communication and teacher efficacy). A music teacher that is also a servant leader focuses on students as individuals and creates caring and learning communities. Also, a servant leader is one who is focused on others instead of

themselves. As transactional leadership incorporates a top-down approach to leadership, Steele (2010) quotes Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2003) who discuss an effective servant leader as one who "puts oneself at the bottom of the pyramid so that one can focus on unleashing the energy, excitement, and talents of those being served" (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003, p. 102). This aligns with the idea that classrooms (and school structures in general) ought to follow transformational leadership theory that keep students at the centre – it would follow that this is the same for music education.

Beyond the Curriculum

As mentioned with regards to Parker's (2016) study with high school choral teachers and *communitas*, high school music programs are largely concerned with community-building. Even though the participants in this study appeared to care about their ensembles as a whole instead of the individuals who comprise it, they still believed they were creating a community that was foundational for the success of the group. They also believed they fostered interpersonal relationship-building with the students. Although most teachers in any subject will likely agree that a sense of community and relationship-building is a positive thing to have in their classrooms, music classes often cannot function properly without everyone working together as a community, based on the nature of the subject. This is an example of music teachers teaching beyond what is written in the curriculum, i.e., working as a part of a community.

Adderly, Kennedy, and Berz (2003) published a qualitative study that involved 60 high school student participants – 20 each from band, choir, and orchestra. The purpose of the study was to investigate the world of the high school music classroom. They conclude that students joined music ensembles for musical, social, academic, and family reasons. They state, "The social climate emerged as a pervasive element in the study as students noted the importance of

relationships for their well-being and growth" (p. 190). They also note the psychological benefits based on students' responses to interview questions: personal qualities, personal growth, emotional outlet, and atmosphere. Another powerful statement they make is that "many of the findings [from this study] support earlier research, providing a stronger case for the claim that students are intellectually, psychologically, emotionally, socially, and musically nurtured by membership of performing ensembles" (p. 204). Even when music educators are hitting all of the points in the curriculum, the natural offshoots involve this list of benefits to students. As such, music educators need to be cautious that they are fostering these offshoots in a positive manner – for instance, it is possible for music educators to invoke psychological and emotional damage in students (on which I will elaborate in the next chapter). In this case, it is particularly important that music educators have a student-centred teaching philosophy.

Summary

There is a vast amount of literature on both leadership theories and leadership styles that are most suitable for schools and classrooms. From the literature I have read, there appears to be a consensus on the fact that schools are dynamic structures that are always changing and progressing – it only makes sense that we abandon outdated styles of leadership and replace them with styles that put the needs of the individuals first before the needs of the structure. Further, there exists literature that attest to gender biases in leadership where women and feminine leadership styles are often perceived as inferior and not effective, especially in male dominated fields such as high school music education. Fortunately, literature is emerging that is addressing this bias both in general and specific to music education. This literature is calling for the acceptance of women and feminine leadership in order to diversify male dominated fields and also because perhaps it is a necessary addition to the success of organizations. Research is

also showing that effective teachers teach with authenticity as opposed to conforming to a perceived norm or trying to adapt to stereotypical personas. Lastly, in music education or in any classroom, the transactional leadership style has become outdated and teachers ought to develop student-centred teaching styles that create genuine, caring relationships and allow students to grow in a multitude of ways. This is especially important in music education that has perhaps considered transactional leadership as the norm for far too long.

In concluding the Literature Review chapter, the next chapter will involve an application of my findings from the literature mentioned. As a current high school band director, these findings that support this paper's arguments will show to have important significance in my own role at my school.

Chapter Three: Application

After a review of the previously mentioned literature, it is important to discuss how these findings can be applied in a practical setting. As mentioned, I am currently a high school band director, and in this chapter, I will elaborate on my personal experiences and describe my current teaching position. Further, I will explain how I am currently teaching to what I have initially argued, i.e., that the most effective high school music directors have student-centred leadership traits more aligned with transformational (traditionally feminine) leadership, and how I will continue to implement this in my teaching. This will include countering the social construct of a music director, teaching to my own identity, and implementing ethics of care in my teaching.

Practical Setting

In this section, I will describe my current teaching position, which is where the argument of this paper has an important significance and where it can be applied in a practical setting. I have already mentioned that I experienced struggles to obtain my current position as a high school band director. A part of my persistence involved turning down elementary music jobs in which the district kept placing me (and falsely telling me that I would lose my employment with the district if I turned these offerings down). Further, this included not letting others convince me that I was not ready to teach secondary music, even though I hold a Bachelor of Music in Secondary Education (which included extensive music director training), a Bachelor of Education in Secondary Music Education, had been a brass instrumentalist in band since I was 12 years old, played in post-secondary bands for six years, and played in professional military bands for six years prior to my first (and current) secondary music director position. I should also mention that I had no formal elementary music training in university and was not technically qualified for the position, according to my school district's standards. Until recent years, I still

struggled to understand that I had the abilities and competencies to be successful in high school music because I bought into the music director construct and did not think I could adapt to it. Since I have been in my current position for several years now, I am still underestimated and undermined by male colleagues, and even by male students when I first started at the school - a setting which I will now begin to outline.

Current Position

Since I had known I wanted to be a music teacher, I always knew I wanted to teach high school music. I never had the desire to teach elementary music. This became especially apparent after I taught it full-time for three consecutive years. There is an underlying assumption that elementary music is inferior to secondary music, and thus best suited for women, which largely downplays the importance and difficulty of teaching elementary music. In Shouldice's (2017) study, they mention that there is "the perception that men are less nurturing than females and thus less suited for elementary teaching" (p. 50). Aside from the gender biases and social constructs already mentioned, I believe this also comes from the fact that elementary music requires teaching some of the fundamentals of music (or I suppose, simpler music concepts than secondary music), which is arguably the most important stage of learning music.

Regardless of what is being taught, I can confirm that teaching elementary music is unbelievably challenging and requires an enormous amount of patience, classroom management skills, and perhaps most importantly, a passion to teach it. Shouldice (2017) explains that the participants in their study who were male elementary music teachers initially pursued secondary music positions as they did not perceive elementary music as valuable, challenging, or fulfilling because it "consisted of singing cute songs or playing games" (p. 56), but after teaching elementary music, the participants eventually came to the realization that elementary music is

very important, and perhaps even more important than secondary music because this is where children learn the foundations of music. I also agree and it is perplexing for me to see so many female music teachers with secondary music training teaching elementary music. Just as secondary music is a male-dominated field, elementary music is a female-dominated field - many of whom are colleagues I know personally and either aspire to teach secondary music in the future or feel like they are now stuck in elementary music.

Regarding feeling stuck in elementary music, after I was offered a fourth consecutive elementary music position, I decided to reach out to one of the school district principals to talk about if continuing a stream of full-time consecutive elementary music positions was going to hurt my chances of climbing out of the elementary music pool. As Delzell (1993) and Kopetz (1998) have observed, principals tend to give high school music positions to males over females. I should clarify now that in my school district, elementary music positions are placements by the district and high school music positions are filled by school principals who interview and hire applicants themselves. The district principal did confirm that most school principals look at teachers' most recent experiences instead of university qualifications. It was then that I decided I needed to turn down this elementary music position offering. Luckily, about a week later, I was given an interview opportunity at my current high school and was afterwards hired for the position. I was quite surprised because, as I have mentioned, male colleagues with equal or less experience and qualifications than me were getting interviews and job offerings well before this opportunity for myself arose.

When I started at my current school, I was working with two other music teachers - both of whom were males, and one of whom was one of the mentioned males with less experience than I had and essentially no formal high school music education qualifications, yet was hired

two years prior - I had also applied for that position two years prior and did not even receive an interview. He was actually a pleasant person to work with, but the older male colleague who fits the mentioned stereotypical music director quite precisely caused me to second-guess if I was right for the position - he often told me I needed to yell more, needed to be more demanding, that the music comes first, and that we are in competition with the neighbouring schools. He actually often told the kids, "I yell because I care." He also often underestimated my musicianship - when I first played my euphonium (the brass instrument I play) for my students, he said in front of everyone, "Wow, you can actually play," which means the default assumption was that I probably could not. He also said to me several months into the year, "You're really musical, you know?" I laugh about this because I obviously know - I have two university degrees in music and pursued a career in music.

Later in the year, this teacher took a personal leave of absence and has since retired. It was slightly disturbing to me that after he left, even the students would tell me that I need to yell at them more when they play wrong notes. The senior students were often telling me I need to be more like this stereotypical teacher, but the interesting part is that my senior band eventually won the Adjudicator's Pick at a music festival as I led them through some pretty challenging repertoire - without yelling. As the years proceeded, and fewer and fewer students had worked under (not *with*) the previous teacher, the bands, jazz bands, and choirs at our school still continued to win top standings at various music festivals - all without any of us yelling, demanding, or putting the music first before students in the name of competition.

Applying Findings in my Teaching

Now that I have described the practical setting for this application chapter, I will refer to the findings in the literature review chapter. My current high school music position resonates

with these findings because the social construct of a music director has created a barrier for myself, has caused me to struggle with my own leadership style, and I have found a lot of success with student-centred teaching. The following sections will outline philosophies that I have adopted since I have started the TRU M.Ed. program and how I have been implementing them into my teaching practice. I will also encourage other music educators to consider the same philosophies, regardless of gender or age group of the students they teach.

Countering the Stereotypical Music Director

I have made it apparent that I believe the socially constructed music director is harmful in a number of ways, including resulting in a low number of women in the field of high school music, and that those who do not fit the stereotype often feel isolated, excluded, or adapt their personas to match the stereotype. As I have mentioned, when I first started working in my current position, I began to doubt if I was a good fit for the job as it seemed like others were making me feel incompetent or that I needed to change certain aspects of my leadership. After reviewing literature on leadership theories, and especially on leadership theories in schools, I reject the push for transactional leadership in music classrooms.

The more I teach, the more comfortable I get with who I am as a leader. Even though colleagues and students have told me I need to yell more, demand more, and not tolerate wrong music notes, I have always known that this is not someone whom I aspire to become. As Harris (2003) mentions, there are schools that try to operate like businesses and maximize the educational equivalent of profits. For a music program, the equivalent of maximizing profits would be high-achieving music groups who win awards and competitions. This is far more aligned with transactional leadership theory where the leader is largely concerned with the structure, emphasizing organizational purposes rather than people (Harris, 2003).

The transactional music leader is someone who is aggressive, dominant, and commanding (Draves, 2018). One of the participants in Draves' (2018) study said that the term "director" suggests an authoritarian or dictatorial disposition. They also said that they "embodied teacher-centred qualities and focused on performances" (p. 96). A colleague of mine who knew I was writing this paper shared a TikTok video from user Nanny-Maw (2020) impersonating an angry, loud high school band director who would aggressively tap their baton on the music stand and yell such things as "How many times do I have to say it?" What was most disturbing was the comment section where users wrote the following:

> One time our band director brought a bag of rocks and threw them at us.
>
> My high school band director once threw a music stand at someone.
>
> It's the fact this nearly sent me into a PTSD episode.
>
> My old band director slammed the door so hard it broke off the hinges.
>
> This is the band director that ruined being a musician for me.

These are just several comments out of 8,100. It is really troubling that some music directors think this is acceptable and necessary behaviour. I am further perplexed by how a significant number of people have told myself and others to aspire to be just like the stereotypical band director. Not only is it harmful to the profession itself as it excludes those who do not fit this standard, but it is clearly harmful to students - psychologically and physically! I wish I could say only a small percentage of music directors act out violently towards their students, but I cannot count how many people have told me their high school music director broke things and/or threw things at the students, ranging from decades ago to recent years.

To restate the main claim of my paper, and as I have just explained, I reject the social construct of high school music directors and their requirement to have authoritative, top-down,

transactional (traditionally masculine) leadership traits in order to be successful (i.e., get musical results). I argue that the most effective high school music directors have student-centred leadership traits more aligned with transformational (traditionally feminine) leadership. Saseanu et al. (2014) conclude that transactional leadership theory is closely aligned with traditionally masculine leadership traits such as authority and power. Because music directing has been a male-dominated (and white-dominated) field, I believe the stereotypical music director was created as a result of a non-diversity of participants that exhibited the same types of traits, i.e., masculine leadership traits. However, this does not mean that what is commonly displayed is the correct way of directing music.

Now that more women are entering the field, we are bringing with us a traditionally feminine style of leadership that is closely aligned with transformational leadership theory (Saseanu et al., 2014). Even though I do not exhibit the stereotypical traits of a music director, I still consider my leadership style effective - I do not have to get angry, throw things, break things, yell, threaten, and demand musical results in order to develop my students as musicians. This can be said with any school subject, so I reject the idea that music is one of the exceptions where transactional leadership traits are the most suitable when transformational leadership traits have been argued by professionals as the most suitable in schools (Balyer, 2012; Brandt, 1992; Harris, 2003).

Teaching to our Identities

As I am progressing through my teaching career, I now realize that it is not the case that I need to grow into the stereotypical music director persona, but rather, I needed to grow more comfortable with my own identity as a teacher. I believe that as teachers make our way through university and eventually in our first years of teaching, we are often caught up with lesson plans,

resources, curricula, and even fancy teaching attire. Regardless of our subject areas, early on in our careers, we equip ourselves with all kinds of tools, take the words of experienced teachers as gospel, and form a rigid picture in our minds of what good teaching looks like. I cannot count how many high school music teachers have told me, "I teach this way because that's how my band teacher taught when I was in high school band," or "that's how my practicum teacher taught." Palmer (1997), who claims that good teaching comes from teachers' identity and integrity, states:

> If we stopped lobbing pedagogical points at each other and spoke about who we are as teachers, a remarkable thing might happen: identity and integrity might grow within us and among us, instead of hardening as they do when we defend our fixed positions from the foxholes of the pedagogy wars. (p. 21)

Although it can be difficult for new teachers to speak in front of a room full of students among other difficulties that come with the first few years of teaching, I believe educators ought to start allowing their true identities to emerge through their teaching as early as possible. This is something I actively try to do as I care less and less about saying something embarrassing, saying a joke that does not get any laughs, etc., as I am aware through my own experience as a student and through the observation of other teachers that the best kind of teachers are those who teach with passion and authenticity, not those who have perfected a stereotypical persona.

I also believe that even those teachers who have adopted stereotypical personas are not stuck and hopeless. Palmer (1997) writes:

> Recovering the heart to teach requires us to reclaim our relationship with the teacher within. This teacher is one whom we knew when we were children but lost touch with as we grew into adulthood, a teacher who continually invites me to honor my true self - not

> my ego or expectations or image or role, but the self I am when all the externals are stripped away. (p. 19)

These externals for music teachers might involve competitions, awards, how we look in the eyes of colleagues, or anything else that involves the ego. We need to ask ourselves who our authentic teaching self is - we need to ask what our authentic hopes and dreams are as educators, not what our egoic hopes and dreams are. It is never too late to try to reclaim this authentic teacher relationship within ourselves.

I will quote Sears (2014) again when they ask, "Who could we become as individual teachers, as a collective profession, if women and men band directors could truly define themselves and form organic, authentic, and original teaching identities?" (p. 10). To this, I answer that we can become truly happy teachers who find authentic joy in the art of directing music and developing people as musicians. As stressful as running a high school music program can be sometimes, I often stop and remember that I have such a fulfilling career where I get to be myself and genuinely interact with large groups of people who constantly grow and flourish as musicians and as people in general. Of course it is really satisfying to take prestigious awards back to the school after entering competitive music festivals, and many students do in fact find joy in participating in them as well. However, we ought to see that these are surface joys - joys that satisfy the ego. These joys are fleeting and are usually quickly forgotten about by others. I consider myself a fan of the National Hockey League, and I often have to stop to think about who won the Stanley Cup in the most recent season - awards and championships are egoic and fleeting joys that do not actually make a group the centre of the universe, despite what some music directors might think. I am not saying music education should not involve competitive music festivals, but I am saying that they ought not to be the focus for high school music groups.

According to Palmer (1997), once we strip away external influences, our true teaching selves emerge. I actively work on conveying passion through my teaching and encourage all educators to do the same. I recognize that this is a difficult task as putting our passions on display for a room full of people is an exercise in vulnerability - something with which many people struggle, teachers or otherwise. Exercising vulnerability on a daily basis can indeed become exhausting, but I believe teaching with a persona that is not true to our identities is much more exhausting. Teaching is exhausting, regardless of what we do - we might as well exhaust ourselves in a way that creates joy and fulfillment, i.e., teach with our authentic identities.

Implementing Ethics of Care

I have discussed Noddings' (2005) ethics of care in schools, and how they describe a genuine caring relationship as one with two actively participating parties - the carer who is providing the right type of care and a cared-for who is choosing to receive this care. It is not enough for high school music directors to care about the ensemble's performances and musical achievements because this is not going to provide the right type of care for all individuals within the group. Perhaps some students will happily receive this type of care, but this will leave many feeling a lack of care for themselves as individuals. This is also linked to Parker's (2016) discussion of I-It versus I-Thou - when music directors care about the ensemble's achievements, they are viewing the ensemble as an 'it' instead of a group of individuals. Educators ought to recognize that our classes are made up of individuals with different abilities, backgrounds, socio-economic statuses, desired class outcomes, and infinite components of their personal lives to which we will never be privy. This applies to all educators, but it particularly applies to music educators and other performing arts educators as our classes are routinely subjected to public performances, i.e., vulnerability.

I also think that many high school music directors need to remember that not all of our students aspire to be professional musicians. In fact, the number of high school music students who go on to study music at the post-secondary level is quite low - in the last three years, three of my school's former students have pursued studies in post-secondary music. I could not find statistics on this but based on my own students and discussions with other music directors, high school music programs seem to have around one or two graduating students per year who study post-secondary music afterwards - I assume this would be higher in fine arts schools and perhaps private schools. It is odd to me when high school music directors tell me that they apply university standards to their high school classes, e.g., "My director in university expected us to (fill in the blank), so I expect my students to do the same."

High school music directors are very likely to hold a Bachelor of Music, which is one of the most stressful undergraduate programs with a rather high burnout rate (Koops & Kuebel, 2019; Teasley & Buchanan, 2016), and so it is quite unreasonable to hold our high school music students to the same standards that our university music directors projected onto us. High school music directors who treat students as if they plan to become post-secondary music majors appear to me to be out of touch with who their students are as individuals. Again, they *care* by holding their students to high standards, but it is not an appropriate type of care that most students need. In most cases, high school music classes are electives - they often take the class for the joy of making music, being around like-minded colleagues and friends, and escaping stresses from their academic classes or even personal lives. Many high school music students are not asking to be held to university-level standards. For those who are, I have provided those students with challenging music theory workbooks, extra musical repertoire and technique exercises, and one-on-one discussions of what post-secondary music looks like and how to prepare for it.

What care looks like is always going to vary from student to student when we recognize them as individuals. Sometimes, the counsellors will place students in my senior music classes when they sometimes have no prior music knowledge and do not want to be there - my care for these students is going to look a lot different from students who have been playing their instrument since elementary school. In some cases, when students have overall attendance issues in school for various personal life struggles, my care for them involves acknowledging them for being in the room with an instrument in their hands and finding one positive thing to say to them, which can be as simple as "Good morning, good to see you." When we recognize our music ensembles as a group of individuals and not just a single entity, and actually take the time to get to know these individuals, we are far better equipped to build genuine caring relationships that Noddings' (2005) hopes to see in schools.

Allsup (2003) mentions Freire's (2000) concept of democratic learning where students are an active part of their learning processes. Regarding music education, I have found that students find it quite meaningful when they are included in the process of selecting music pieces to rehearse and perform. There have been times where I have selected several pieces of music that I have been rehearsing with the groups, and I hold votes from the students to help me decide which pieces to perform. Festivals often have a 20-minute performance time slot, and so we need to narrow down our selections. When students feel like they have a part ownership of the ensemble, my experience is they want to work harder and they enjoy doing so.

Recently, my senior band wanted to perform the last movement of the musical work, *Lincolnshire Posy* by Percy Grainger at a music festival with only three weeks before the performance when we had not rehearsed it before. I was convinced that it was too challenging with such a short time frame, but an overwhelming majority voted in favour, so I decided to

submit it as one of our performed pieces. The students were really excited, so they worked really hard to learn their parts and responded really well to my directions in rehearsals. It is beside the point that the group was awarded a gold standard in the festival, but of course the students were ecstatic to receive this. In other scenarios, students have voted on pieces that I did not particularly like, but I am discovering the joy and passion that stems from my students when they are given some ownership of the repertoire they get to rehearse and perform. This ties into one of Steele's (2010) three characteristics of effective teaching - servant leadership. Contrary to a transactional leader who views themselves at the top of a pyramid of subordinates, the servant leader is at the bottom of the pyramid to support the individuals within it. I believe high school music directors ought to be servant leaders, not dictators. We need to remember that we are not directing paid musicians who work for a professional organization. Our high school music students are not there to serve us - we are there to serve *them*. Even such, I argue that directors of professional music groups ought to exhibit servant leadership as well, but that is beyond the scope of this paper.

The professor whom I mentioned earlier who was also a music educator commented on my final assignment in *Principles and Processes of Leadership*:

> I remember one particularly mean adjudicator (that made my students cry) saying to my group that the music is and must be #1. Despite their passionate performance, it wasn't technically perfect and he let them know that. I was mad and thought (inside voice), it's not the music that's number one, it's the students! I don't conduct music, I conduct STUDENTS.

A music director who is a servant leader will know that the individuals in their groups are people first and musicians second. They will also know that we are to teach *with* our students, not *to* our

students. Of course, music educators are the professionals with formal training and experience, but it is my take that we use our expertise to mentor our students and provide guidance for them, and not just tell them what to do for the sake of the music.

One final component I would like to discuss regarding implementing ethics of care in music education is our responsibility to create safe and inclusive communities for our students. Parker (2016) defines the term *communitas* as recognizing individuals in a group as well as the gifts they bring to the group instead of looking at the group as having one identity. In most school communities, there exist sub-communities where students tend to gravitate depending on their skills, interests, and where they find other students similar to themselves. In some cases, it can be to find protection from some of the negative aspects of school such as bullying.

Generally speaking, fine arts departments are where many sub-communities tend to develop as they are typically perceived as safe spaces with positive and welcoming environments (which include both performing and visual arts). As a high school music teacher, I feel like I have a duty to both allow and promote a safe and inclusive sub-community to develop in my music program. When we put the music before the students, we create an exclusive and elitist environment that is not welcoming to everyone.

I spoke to a choir student at my school several years ago who was graduating that year and said he used to play saxophone in band (before I began teaching at the school). I asked him why he was not in band anymore and he said it is because his band teacher told him when he was in Grade 10 that he was no longer welcome in the band program because he was not good enough. Luckily this student was able to remain a part of the choir community, but it is exceedingly bothersome that this teacher was essentially banishing students from being a part of a music community because of skill levels.

I have mentioned students tend to get placed into my classes by counsellors, even when they do not have any prior music experience. There is absolutely no reason why these students cannot be a part of our school's music community - even if their skill level remains behind the others for the duration of the school year, and even if they decide music is not for them and do not pursue it in the following school year, the least we can do is help them feel welcomed and help them make positive connections with other students so that they find their experience in music to be an enjoyable one.

Summary

Working through my courses in the TRU M.Ed. program has really opened my eyes to what effective music education should look like, especially at the high school level. Regardless of the course or the literature I have read, it was often the case that I was trying to apply my learning to my high school music directing position. Together with my argument for transformational leadership in music education and the literature review in this paper, I have concluded that there are three main practical ways to apply my findings in high school music education. This involves countering the social construct of the stereotypical music director, finding and teaching from our authentic teacher identities, and implementing ethics of care into our music programs. The following and concluding chapter will summarize the claims that I have presented. It will also discuss implications and will conclude with overall final thoughts.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

In this final chapter, I will recapitulate what I have written in this paper. First, I will summarize and connect the first three chapters. Following this section, I will discuss both the theoretical and practical implications of my argument. I will conclude this paper with my final thoughts.

Summary

I am convinced that high school music directors are most effective when they reject the stereotypical director persona and teach according to their authentic identities. As schools are dynamic organizations that are shifting towards student-centred and caring focuses, high school music directors ought to do the same and shift away from traditional, top-down music leadership. If transactional leadership styles are growing more and more outdated in any type of organization, then there is no reason why high school music education needs to try to hold onto it and consider it necessary to teach effectively.

In the Introduction, I have outlined the problem of the lack of women in the field of high school music education. I came across a variety of research on this problem as well as research on leadership in education through my learning in the TRU M.Ed. program, which created a sense of inquiry within myself and prompted me to delve deeper into published literature. I determined that there is a social construct of a music director that is essentially an aggressive, authoritarian white male, which is creating a lack of diversity in the profession. Because schools are dynamic establishments that are constantly changing, I reject this music director social construct and argue that high school music directors ought to be transformational leaders. As I narrowed down the focus of this paper and explored more literature, I determined three main

themes related to my argument. I have presented those themes in the Literature Review in Chapter Two, as summarized below.

The first section in the literature review is transformational leadership. I defined the concept, contrasted it with transactional leadership, and presented literature that emphasizes transformational leadership in schools (Balyer, 2012; Harris, 2003). In addition, I have presented literature on the existence of gender bias in leadership where women are often seen as inferior leaders because their leadership style tends to differ from that of men's (Matheson & Lyle, 2016; Saseanu et al., 2014). However, I have shown literature that claims that traditionally feminine leadership is both an effective style of leadership and perhaps a necessity for the success of organizations (Brandt, 1992; Matheson & Lyle, 2016). The second topic in the literature review is diversifying music directing where I outlined the social construct of a music director in more detail and presented harms of this social construct, including struggles for women to enter the field in the first place (Delzell, 1993; Kopetz, 1988), issues with exclusivity and isolation (Draves, 2018; Fischer-Croneis, 2016), facing double-standards (Bovin, 2019; Fischer-Croneis, 2016), and feeling the need to adapt to the stereotypical music director persona (Draves, 2018). I also present literature on why teaching with authenticity is a part of being an effective teacher (Palmer, 1997; Sears, 2014), which reaffirms the harm of teaching to an expected persona. The last topic presented in the literature review is on ethics of care in music education, which is centred around Noddings' (2005) ethics of care in schools, i.e., caring relationships that involve active participation from both those who are giving the care and those who are receiving it. Ethics of care in music education include student-centred learning (caring for students as people more than caring about musical results) and teaching beyond the curriculum (building a sense of community and developing relationships).

After analyzing the literature and determining three main themes, I have practically applied the findings to my current position as a high school music director and made claims that other high school music educators could follow. I communicated my own struggles as a female high school music teacher in terms of both breaking into the field and within the field. Further, I established that we ought to reject the social construct of the music director, teach from our authentic identities, and incorporate ethics of care in our teaching. I have drawn on my personal experiences to outline examples of what this looks like.

Implications

This paper is progressive in that it illuminates the issue of a lack of diversity in high school music education and the accompanying problems through research evidence and personal experience. Further, I have presented literature on transformational leadership and its necessity in schools, literature on the social construct of the music director, showing how it has been harmful for people who do not fit this stereotype, and literature on ethics of care as effective and necessary in school settings - particularly in high school music education. Lastly, I have connected the findings to my own experiences as a high school music educator, which applies this paper's argument directly to a setting in the real world, making it a strong and effective argument. What follows are both theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical Implications

I have contributed to the larger conversation by continuing to shed light on the industry-wide problem of a lack of diversity in high school music education, which has resulted in exclusivity in the field. The intent is not to point fingers or put the blame on anyone, but rather to make others aware of the problem. Those who are in positions of privilege often do not realize it,

and so discussing barriers with those who do not have them has the potential for said privileged people to help dismantle these barriers.

This is the case for both music education and leadership in general – women still struggle to break into leadership positions in male-dominated fields (Matheson & Lyle, 2016) and this is in part of the assumption that the traditionally feminine leadership style of mentoring, communicating, and collaborating is inferior to the traditionally masculine leadership style based on authority, aggression, and assertiveness. Saseanu et al. (2014) claim that feminine leadership is in alignment with transformational leadership, and that masculine leadership is in alignment with transactional leadership – as organizations such as schools are viewing transactional leadership as outdated and are in favour of transformational leadership, it follows that traditionally feminine leadership is certainly not inferior. The idea of women bringing such leadership traits to organizations ought to be welcomed and encouraged.

I have mentioned that it is not the case that only women bring transformational leadership to the table, and likewise with men and transactional leadership. I have seen male transformational leaders in both the military and high school music education. These types of male leaders are often celebrated for being strong, effective, and caring individuals. However, it is often the case that when women incorporate these leadership qualities, a double standard comes into play and they are seen as weak (Matheson & Lyle, 2016). I have mentioned the double standard at the opposite end of the spectrum where women exhibiting transactional leadership traits are seen as nasty and shrill, whereas men are seen as powerful.

Again, my intent with this paper is not to point fingers, but these double standards for women in leadership are real and they are damaging. They also exist in high school music education. I very likely have male colleagues who do not even realize this is the case for their

female colleagues and would perhaps feel enlightened should they read this paper. My intent is to contribute to the larger conversation of women in leadership and to help educate those who are a part of the world of music.

Practical Implications

The changes I would like to see happen because of this paper start with readers simply understanding that there is a lack of diversity in high school music education, both physically and in leadership styles. My hopes are that women understand that there is a place for us in high school music education, and that typically feminine leadership traits, which are closely aligned with transformational leadership traits, are arguably more effective in high school music directing than the traditional authoritarian music director traits. When high school music education becomes a welcoming place for women, we would feel included with a stronger sense of belonging. This would increase networking and mentorship for women within the field as the exclusive *Good Ol' Boys' Club* would not be so prevalent. The social construct of a music director would begin to dissolve, meaning that the field would attract more women and non-white males, allowing for these professionals to feel more comfortable teaching with authenticity instead of to a perceived persona standard.

I also believe that these changes would have a positive impact for men in music education as well, considering the social constructs of the high school music director and the elementary music educator are also damaging for men. Many men stay away from elementary music because it is a female-dominated field, and men who are transformational leaders might think that they do not have a place in high school music education. If all areas of music education are inclusive and welcoming, music educators will feel comfortable pursuing the areas where their passions lie.

Lastly, my suggested changes to music education would be beneficial to students. I have discussed the harms that a top-down leadership approach causes music students, i.e., psychological and physical harm as well as harm from being cast out of a music program community based on skill levels. Students want to feel cared for in schools, but when teachers are out of touch with the type of care students need, then there is no genuine caring relationship (Noddings, 2005). They want to feel a sense of belonging, a sense of community, and build relationships with their colleagues and teachers. High school music programs have a strong potential to allow this to happen based on the vulnerable and collaborative nature of the performing arts, and music educators have the duty to allow these components to develop in music programs for the benefit of our students. This means having a student-centred teaching philosophy where music educators understand that our students are people first and musicians second.

Final Thoughts

Just as the world is becoming increasingly progressive overall, I believe this is also the case in the world of music. Marginalized groups such as women, people of colour, the LGBTIQA+ community, people in poverty, and those with disabilities (to name a few) are becoming more accepted and recognized as people who deserve the same rights and opportunities as non-marginalized groups of people. However, these groups are still a long way from equality and equity.

As such, I would like to acknowledge the progression of the music world. I play in a military band that did not allow women to join until the 1980s. Now, about one-third of the band's members are women. Orchestras did not allow women to join until the early 1900s, and even so, they were usually only allowed to play typically feminine instruments such as the violin

or the harp. However, there are certain areas of music other than leadership where there are damaging social constructs, e.g., the perceived standard that brass instruments are for men. Roberts (2018) states that in 2014, 97% of orchestral trumpet and trombone players in American orchestras were men. Further, they write that 63% of American orchestra's members are men, and these percentages align with the mentioned military band comprising of two-thirds of men.

Even though things are progressing and improving for those who are marginalized in the world of music, there is a lot of improvement that needs to happen for a truly fair and balanced field. High school music education is one of those areas – things are improving, e.g., *the Good Ol' Boys' Club* is diminishing, there are more women teaching at the high school level, and more men are exhibiting transformational leadership in high school music education. However, it is my perception that progression is not happening at a rate I would consider fast enough. A part of this is because many are still convinced that music must be directed with authority and aggression, i.e., with a transactional leadership style, even though many organizations are viewing this type of leadership as outdated and inferior to transformational leadership. Progression appears to be happening at the same rate of older generations aging out and newer, more progressive generations advancing, but it should not be the case that we have to wait decades for a more equal playing field in high school music education. Change can happen faster when we shift our focus away from musical results and more towards a music education philosophy of student-centredness, and understand this as good leadership, not weak or inferior leadership.

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