

**THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE ON HISTORICALLY BLACK  
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY (HBCU) COLLEGE STUDENT BAND SELECTION**

by

KuRonde Washington

Liberty University

School of Music

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Music Education

Liberty University

June 2024

### **Abstract**

This research reveals the effects of social media presence on Historically Black College and University (HBCU) college student band selection. This quantitative correlational research study investigates the impact of social media presence and engagement on how HBCU band students select the college band they wish to attend. Variables in the digital space are the students' influence of choice and social media. The researcher surveyed 75 HBCU band students from various athletic conferences to determine what social media content factors influence how college and university band students perceive and rank band programs. Participants were selected based on active college or university band program participation from an HBCU (Historically Black College and University) band located in Florida. Each participant gained access to the survey using their mobile devices. All participants completed a survey containing Likert-type questions during the closing of their band rehearsal. The bar code was open to participants for thirty minutes in the researcher's presence. The survey was closed after the researcher left the participant's band rehearsal to ensure research efficacy. The results indicated significant social media factors influencing following and joining an HBCU band program. This study is necessary to understand the influence of technology on college and university band students. Furthermore, this study could provide verifiable research data to band directors and department chairs to help them understand technology's influence on music education.

*Keywords:* College Band Students, Social Media Engagement, Band Evaluations, Social Media Followers, Music Education, Music Technology, Algorithm.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

This study intends to examine the effect of social media presence on Historically Black College and University (HBCU) college student band selection. In years prior to the invention of social media platforms, students interested in learning more about an HBCU band would need to travel to the nearest city to see them perform in a sporting event, parade, or competition. Additionally, prior communication channels within the community were limited and lacked the effectiveness to access large amounts of information without leaving their home.

With the invention of the cell phone, communication is accessible to citizens in remote parts of the world and metropolitan cities. Cell phone usage has also made real-time communication vital to business owners and consumers.<sup>1</sup> Anthropologists have compelling studies about online communities. However, HBCU band data has not been studied regarding ethnographic online influences from social media. Studies have revealed that social media is embedded in everyday social life, which is evident in the 1.25 billion global Facebook users.<sup>2</sup> The rise of social media platforms has emerged as a place where people gain information on topics relative to their interests with only access to the Internet as a requirement.

Using Edward Thorndike's Law of connectionism, based on active learning, noted that frequency makes associations grow stronger when used and conversely for sporadic associations. Thorndike's Law applies to social media usage. As more people use it, the more familiar they

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<sup>1</sup> Gabriella E. Coleman, "Ethnographic Approaches to Digital Media," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39 (2010): 487–505, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25735124>.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Miller, Elisabetta Costa, Nell Haynes, Tom McDonald, Razvan Nicolescu, Jolynna Sinanan, Juliano Spyer, Shriram Venkatraman, and Xinyuan Wang, "Academic Studies of Social Media," In *How the World Changed Social Media*, 1st ed., 1:9–24. UCL Press, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1g69z35.9>.

become with it. Additionally, Lee writes, “Learning is achieved when an individual can form associations between a particular stimulus and a response.”<sup>3</sup> This behavioral phenomenon supports the idea that social media can influence the perception of an HBCU band and affect the decisions of potential members. This chapter details the framework for the problem and reveals the research questions. Additionally, this chapter explains the significance of social media-based marketing for HBCU bands and the effects of its implementation into their operational procedures.

## Background

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were established before 1964 with the principal mission of educating African Americans. Although originally established for people of color, HBCUs also enroll students of other races.<sup>4</sup> Clark writes that two styles of American marching bands exist in schools: predominantly white or historically black.<sup>5</sup> Most bands use corps style in white schools, defined by a roll step, backward marching and sliding, and an eight to five-inch step size, while historically black schools use a show style, which incorporates a high step in which the foot is lifted and the knee is tucked into a 90-degree angle.<sup>6</sup> Generally, the showband style incorporates popular music specific to the African American tradition. This style

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<sup>3</sup> Chris Lee, “Instructional Design Models and Theories:Connectionism,” Arizona State University, February 8, 2018, <https://teachonline.asu.edu/2018/02/instructional-design-models-theories-connectionism/#:~:text=Connectionism%20theory%20is%20based%20on,particular%20stimulus%20and%20a%20response>.

<sup>4</sup> “Fast Facts: Historically Black Colleges and Universities,” National Center for Education Statistics, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=667>.

<sup>5</sup> Robert H. Clark, “A Narrative History of African American Marching Band: Toward A Historical Understanding,” *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 41, no. 1 (2019): 7, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26776563>.

<sup>6</sup> “Corps Style Band,” Academic Accelerator, accessed February 2, 2024, <https://academic-accelerator.com/encyclopedia/corps-style-band>.

includes but is not limited to music genres such as jazz, gospel, R&B, and hip-hop. Conversely, the corps style incorporates mainstream popular music. Although there are various band techniques, HBCU band styles incorporate their interpretation of historical and regional ideas into their presentations.

Within the HBCU experience, marching band is usually one of the highlights of each college or university. However, some bands may not receive the exposure needed to recruit and retain the best musicians each year without successful marketing plans and scholarships. Before the invention of the Internet, band directors in small HBCU colleges would need to drive to each school to showcase their band and conduct recruiting events. Band trips could exceed the normal work hours each night and strain travel budgets. Directors in small colleges also had to endure additional departmental constraints due to their small enrollment numbers. Paul W. Whear and Weston Noble have authored journal articles detailing the problems in college band recruiting. Whear wrote about the problems of small college bands in the '60s, while Noble discussed the problems and advantages of small church-affiliated college bands.<sup>7</sup> However, those same issues still exist today.

Whear writes, “Without a feeder program, instrumentation must remain on a pot-lock basis.”<sup>8</sup> Although some school bands are in better shape than others, most HBCU bands still face recruitment issues. Recruitment in any band style can be a daunting task that requires months of

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<sup>7</sup> Paul W. Whear, “Problems of the Small College Band,” *Music Educators Journal* 46, no. 4 (1960): 76–78, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3389309>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



planning and a method of executing each plan. However, those tasks have become more easily manageable with social media integration.

Although the Internet has only been around for less than 50 years, social media, as it is known today, is a fairly new concept. According to Sefton-Green, the pedagogy in research on social media interactions and relationships has significant educational potential.<sup>9</sup> Researchers can study social media interactions to determine company product usage and gain stakeholders' feedback about essential issues. Many HBCU directors desire to grow their programs in size and musicality. However, with social media usage, trips to neighboring states to showcase their band can be simplified to recording, editing, posting, and sharing content, freeing up time to execute other tasks. The content posted by each school on the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube can be shared and commented on by supporters and potential students for instant feedback. Additionally, other factors such as alumni support, high school band camps, and overall popularity can be observed through the questions posed in this research survey.

Kaplan and Haenlin write, "Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content."<sup>10</sup> Social media encapsulates the lives of most individuals in our everyday lives. With the increased technology, students can access information much faster than their predecessors. Additionally, students can decide what HBCU band is trending or not

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<sup>9</sup> Sefton-Green, Julian. "Youth, Technology, and Media Cultures." *Review of Research in Education* 30 (2006): 279–306. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4129775>.

<sup>10</sup> Kaplan A. M., Haenlein M. (2010). Users of the World, Unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 61.

each week or in real-time. As social media becomes more intuitive and accessible for users, marketing through these avenues allows directors to showcase their musical programs to students and followers worldwide. Currently, most high-school and college bands have incorporated media teams into their staff to increase the online presence of their music programs.

Although the use of social media is not the only factor affecting the perception of how potential students view HBCU bands, social media accounts by most HBCU bands reveal the level of support each organization receives from the community. The support HBCU bands receive through social media platforms has made HBCU bands more accessible to a larger audience while simultaneously advertising for their colleges and universities. While social media usage may not be typical for every HBCU band, some phenomena can be observed and quantified through data analysis showing the influence of college bands' social media engagements on how band students select the college they wish to attend.

### **Theoretical Background**

Several theories support the idea that there are relationships between an HBCU band's social engagement and where potential students select to enroll. The social learning theory suggests that when experiencing things in the world, those things are internalized and later externalized.<sup>11</sup> This theory identifies how humans receive, retain, and later perform information. Mcalister measured the major concepts of social learning theory with a study of adolescent cigarette use smokers that their peers and family are influencing. He found partial support in the

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<sup>11</sup> David Scott, "Philosophies of Learning," In *On Learning: A General Theory of Objects and Object-Relations*, 159–72. UCL Press, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1b0fvk2.17>.

usage of his model. Conversely, Akers' experiment was highly supported using adolescent drinking and drugs using the social learning theory.<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, a phenomenological approach helps to ascertain the relationships between the potential student and the HBCU band's social media presence. According to Pike, phenomenological analysis pays special attention to the structure of the immediate lived experience. Pike conducted a study analyzing the participants' responses to their music experiences. The study focused on recording the subjective responses from the participants while focusing on being non-critical.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, a longitudinal can be applied to this research to substantiate the long-term effects of social media exposure on potential students. Feezell completed a study on whether exposure to political advertisements through Facebook yields an agenda-setting effect by raising participants' perceived importance of political issues. Feezell's study revealed that participants exposed to political ads through Facebook showed increased salience, which is consistent with participants not shown political advertisements.<sup>14</sup>

Smith, Wade, and Jowers also completed an analysis of social media posts and platforms from students at an HBCU. Their study revealed that entertainment apps accounted for 68% of

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<sup>12</sup> Marvin D. Krohn, William F. Skinner, James L. Massey, and Ronald L. Akers. "Social Learning Theory and Adolescent Cigarette Smoking: A Longitudinal Study." *Social Problems* 32, no. 5 (1985): 455–73. <https://doi.org/10.2307/800775>.

<sup>13</sup> Alfred Pike, "A Phenomenological Analysis of Emotional Experience in Music," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 20, no. 2 (1972): 262–67, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3344092>.

<sup>14</sup> Jessica T. Feezell, "Agenda Setting through Social Media: The Importance of Incidental News Exposure and Social Filtering in the Digital Era." *Political Research Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (2018): 482–94. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26600486>.

their social media content.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, their study revealed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, students from underserved populations used cell phones as the primary source of engagement with coursework.

### **Societal Background**

With technology becoming more affordable and accessible, students' use of electronic devices such as phones and tablets in schools indicates that technology is increasingly becoming a part of our daily lives. A study completed by Martin, Wang, Petty, and Wilkins revealed that 17% of their participants began using social media at nine or younger.<sup>16</sup> According to Valkenburg and Piotrowski, "Social media allows users to control when, what, and how they express themselves, and to whom."<sup>17</sup> This freedom of expression can be an advantage to marketing products, specifically HBCU bands.

Jennifer Johnson explores motivations for choosing black colleges in her qualitative study that used 48 African-American alums of various HBCUs. Johnson's study reveals that isolation and alienation influence students to attend an HBCU.<sup>18</sup> Patton, Jenkins, and Keith Jr. also detail black students' intellectual experiences and decision-making in higher education. Their research adds a methodological guide to understanding educational experiences through

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<sup>15</sup> Kim Smith, Jeannette Wade, and Joseph Jowers, "From Entertainment to Empowerment: A Call for Social Media Literacy Education at an HBCU," *Journalism & mass communication educator* (2023).

<sup>16</sup> Martin, Florence, Chuang Wang, Teresa Petty, Weichao Wang, and Patti Wilkins. "Middle School Students' Social Media Use." *Journal of Educational Technology & Society* 21, no. 1 (2018): 213–24. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26273881>.

<sup>17</sup> Valkenburg, Patti M., and Jessica Taylor Piotrowski. "SOCIAL MEDIA." In *Plugged In: How Media Attract and Affect Youth*, 218–43. Yale University Press, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1n2tvjd.16>.

<sup>18</sup> Jennifer Michelle Johnson, "Pride or Prejudice? Motivations for Choosing Black Colleges." *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* 56, no. 4 (2019): 409.

African-centered frameworks. The research from these scholars provides an additional layer of support for the rationale for studying why students select HBCUs.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As early social media became prevalent among users in the United States, its primary purpose was to find friends and extend networking opportunities. MySpace, Facebook, and other dot.com sites were some of the first to become internationally known. However, as time has progressed, social media sites have been transformed into a place of constant interaction.<sup>19</sup> According to Miller, past social interactions on social media were searchable and persistent, and now the focus is trending towards scalable sociality.<sup>20</sup> The sociality that Miller reveals in his study provides the rationale for why social media usage has frequently been used to make marketing decisions, specifically HBCU band school choices.

### **Purpose Statement**

This quantitative study addresses the gap in the literature pertaining to HBCU bands and potential students selecting colleges and universities based on their social media presence. While most research available explores predominantly white institutions (PWIs), there is almost no empirical research exploring the reasons black students choose to attend HBCUs.<sup>21</sup> The gap is especially true regarding peer-reviewed research on HBCU topics. This research aims to

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel Miller, Elisabetta Costa, Nell Haynes, Tom McDonald, Razvan Nicolescu, Jolynna Sinanan, Juliano Spyer, Shriram Venkatraman, and Xinyuan Wang. "Academic Studies of Social Media." In *How the World Changed Social Media*, 1st ed., 1:9–24. UCL Press, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1g69z35.9>.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Debbie Van Camp, Jamie Barden, Lloyd Ren Sloan, and Reneé P. Clarke., "Choosing an HBCU: An Opportunity to Pursue Racial Self-Development," *The Journal of Negro Education* 78, no. 4 (2009): 457–68. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25676099>.

statistically analyze social media trends with HBCU bands and their followers. Furthermore, this research explores the rationale for students selecting HBCU bands. The study focuses on each band's social media interactions and how potential students perceive them. Central to the study were two HBCU bands from Florida: one with 295 members and the other with 96 members.

### **Significance**

Understanding how participation in the HBCU college band is affected by social media usage is vital to students and faculty members. This study provides insight into college students' selection of HBCU bands through social media. This study leads students to self-discovery about their motivations for selecting HBCU bands. Research completed herein contributes to the body of knowledge on social media usage and HBCU band culture. The researcher addresses the brevity of peer-reviewed resources in this area and provides a way for HBCU band directors to quantify the effects of social media on band enrollment.

The theoretical significance of this study addresses the assertion that a band's social media presence affects the decisions students make to join HBCU band programs. Stigler, Beckler, and Murphy have developed explicit theoretical models to analyze different effects of advertising. According to Stickler, Beckler, and Murphy, "In the presence of unobservable characteristics such as quality or taste, firms may use advertising implicitly to signal value to their customers."<sup>22</sup> Similarly, students are considered customers of some for-profit higher education entities.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, IBM uses social media analytics to identify trends related to

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<sup>22</sup> Daniel A. Akerberg, "Empirically Distinguishing Informative and Prestige Effects of Advertising," *The RAND Journal of Economics* 32, no. 2 (2001): 316–33. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2696412>.

<sup>23</sup> Stephanie Riegg Cellini, "For-Profit Higher Education: An Assessment Of Costs And Benefits," *National Tax Journal* 65, no. 1 (2012): 153–79, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41791117>.

an offering or brand and derive the customer's sentiments towards those services.<sup>24</sup> The same theory can be applied to HBCU bands' social media pages to recruit students. Studies show that social media's contributions to the enrollment of HBCU band students are essential to justifying media marketing usage in HBCU bands.

The empirical significance of this study is to address the gap in peer-reviewed literature related to how students select HBCU band programs based on social media interactions. Camp, Barden, Sloan, and Clarke write, "Research findings suggest that some differences may exist regarding what factors students consider when making college choices."<sup>25</sup> These differences are significantly different regarding each student's ethnicity and social background.

Cumberledge writes, "Researchers have also shown that college marching bands are a major recruitment tool for universities when students choose a school primarily to become a marching band member."<sup>26</sup> Additionally, via surveys, the researcher seeks to explore students' perspectives and how they perceive the HBCU band's social media content and use the information to improve recruitment and retention in HBCU band programs. According to Palmer, Wood, and Arroyo, "Only 29% of black men at black colleges persist to degree completion within six years."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "What is Social Media Analytics," Topics, IBM, accessed, September 21, 2023, <https://www.ibm.com/topics/social-media-analytics>.

<sup>25</sup> Debbie Van Camp, Jamie Barden, Lloyd Ren Sloan, and Reneé P. Clarke., "Choosing an HBCU: An Opportunity to Pursue Racial Self-Development," *The Journal of Negro Education* 78, no. 4 (2009): 457–68. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25676099>.

<sup>26</sup> J. P. Cumberledge, "The Perceived Influence of Social Media on High School Band Students' Decision to Participate in a College Marching Band. Update: Applications of Research in Music Education," 38(3), 38–47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123320905340>

<sup>27</sup> Robert T Palmer, J. Luke Wood, and Andrew Arroyo, "Toward a Model of Retention and Persistence for Black Men at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)," *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men* 4, no. 1 (2015): 5–20, <https://doi.org/10.2979/spectrum.4.1.02>.

The practical significance of this study is that it provides relevant information on how students select HBCU bands based on their social media presence while revealing strategies to attract and increase student enrollment in HBCU bands. This study may influence other music practitioners to consider the advantages of employing social media to connect students to their music programs. Additionally, band directors can leverage social media to attract more attention to their music programs. Natke and Thomas said, “Academic music programs could enhance a band’s entertainment value via better-trained members and recruiting more highly skilled musicians.”<sup>28</sup> With increased visibility, music programs can attract better musicians and build sustainable programs.

### **Research Questions**

Social media may be considered an essential role in most businesses’ marketing strategy, but it is crucial to understand that education is also a business, and music education through the HBCU marching band is also a part of this concept. Doug Evans writes, “Most companies use images that exemplify socially desirable behavior and the attributes of those who engage in a behavior through media platforms.”<sup>29</sup> Similarly, it is essential to understand students’ interactions with these platforms regarding their decisions to attend HBCU bands.

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<sup>28</sup> Paul A. Natke & Elizabeth A. Thomas, “Does a marching band impact college Football game attendance?” A panel study of Division II, *Applied Economics Letters*, 26:16 (2019): 1354-1357. DOI: 10.1080/13504851.2018.1558339.

<sup>29</sup> Douglas W. Evans, “Social Marketing Campaigns and Children’s Media Use,” *The Future of Children* 18, no. 1 (2008): 181–203, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20053124>.



Additionally, this study aims to understand how HBCU students use social media to pursue their musical dreams of being a member of a collegiate band. The researcher examined the survey data to find participant correlations and themes.

To further explore these concepts, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between HBCU band enrollment and social media followers?

RQ2: How does post-engagement influence a student's decision to join an HBCU band?

### **Hypotheses**

Research Question One may be addressed with the following hypotheses:

*RQ1: Is there a relationship between HBCU band enrollment and social media followers?*

H1: There is no significant relationship between HBCU band social media followers and HBCU band enrollment.

Variables: Student Influence of Choice, Social Media

Research Question Two may be addressed with the following hypothesis:

*RQ2: How does post-engagement influence a student's decision to join an HBCU band?*

H2: There are no significant social media factors influencing students' selection of HBCU bands that may include the student's access to financial resources, school course offerings, location, popularity, and student academic success.

### **Core Concepts**

Social media presence, students' influence of choice, and HBCU marching bands are the core concepts of this study. In the past, access to the Internet was viewed as a societal attainment,

as mobile devices were expensive. Besides checking email and browsing shopping sites and online games, the Internet was not very popular amongst younger users.<sup>30</sup> For years after the development of the Internet, social media sites were commonly used to post profiles and share content across the network. Additionally, networks were limited in how each platform could implement concepts due to the lack of people with access to the Internet.<sup>31</sup> The concept of social media has grown into an environment where being popular can be considered digital currency. Social media users with the most followers typically garner the most attention. The same can be true with HBCU bands with sizable followers, which usually have considerably large bands.

As potential HBCU band students decide to select a post-secondary institution, they can become overwhelmed with options. Distance from home, amenities, social life, and tuition costs could positively or negatively affect the decision to attend each HBCU. While marching band is not the only reason for selecting an HBCU, it is the determining factor in college selection in most cases. According to Texas Southern University band director Brian Simmons, students join his program because “It is the best available option at a school where resources are rarely plentiful.”<sup>32</sup> The HBCU band’s social media posts can also influence students to join a band. These posts can be entertaining, persuasive, or informative and provide fresh attention to HBCU band programs each time they make a post and interact with their fans.

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<sup>30</sup> Venkatraman, Shriram, “The Social Media Landscape: People, Their Perception and Presence on Social Media,” In *Social Media in South India*, 25–55. UCL Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1qnw88r.8>.

<sup>31</sup> Chenda Ngak, “Then and Now, A History of Social Networking Sites,” CBS News.com, last modified July 6, 2011, <https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/then-and-now-a-history-of-social-networking-sites/2/>.

<sup>32</sup> Kristie Rieken, “For HBCUs, bands are about more than show to the Black community: This is family,” *The Tennessean*, last modified September 19, 2023, <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/education/2023/09/19/hbcus-bands-are-about-more-than-the-show-for-black-community/70851794007/>.

In addition to the musical value that HBCU bands provide to students and families, there are academic opportunities that students can receive in an HBCU band that they would not be afforded in a primarily white institution (PWI). These academic opportunities include scholarships specifically earmarked for African-American students and the possibility of joining Greek organizations that serve for the betterment of students of color. Furthermore, students who attend HBCUs are also afforded the ability to learn from the experiences of graduates that resemble their demographics, which can be considered as an opportunity to pursue racial self-development.

According to Cantey, Bland, Mack, and Davis, HBCUs have exceeded their original purpose's expectations and provided over 150 years of access to higher education in the black community.<sup>33</sup> Although HBCUs continue to provide quality academic programs, Camp, Bardem, Sloan, and Clarke reveal that the percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded to Students at HBCUs has declined from 35% to 22% as of 2002.<sup>34</sup> Conversely, black undergraduates continue to attend HBCUs for their social, historical, and emotional benefits.<sup>35</sup>

### **Identification of the Variables**

This study uses statistical modeling to reveal the correlation between social media engagement and student enrollment in HBCU bands. The predictor variable in this study is social media followers, and the criterion is HBCU band enrollment. Race-related reasons are important

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<sup>33</sup> Nia Imani Cantey, Robert Bland, LaKerri R. Mack, and Danielle Joy-Davis, "Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Sustaining a Culture of Excellence in the Twenty-First Century," *Journal of African American Studies* 17, no. 2 (2013): 142–53, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43525452>.

<sup>34</sup> Van Camp, Debbie, Jamie Barden, Lloyd Ren Sloan, and Reneé P. Clarke, "Choosing an HBCU: An Opportunity to Pursue Racial Self-Development," *The Journal of Negro Education* 78, no. 4 (2009): 457. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25676099>.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

variables as well. The researcher uses a quantitative correlational research design to complete this study. Miksza, Shaw, and Hodges methodology for correlational research supports the rationale for selecting this research design. Shaw and Hodges said, “Researchers investigating descriptive or correlational research questions commonly use surveys or observational methods to gather data.”<sup>36</sup>

Surveys provide an efficient method of obtaining relevant information about people and their interests. This method is the best for analyzing the data revealed in this research. Additionally, this research method was used successfully by Stach in his study on the impact of media on suicide.<sup>37</sup> Mavere also used this method in his research into the effects of social media networks on education in higher learning institutions in Tanzania.<sup>38</sup> Mavere used logistic regression techniques to find relationships between suicide publicity and suicide in the real world.<sup>39</sup> Stach also used logistic regression to address the controls in meta-analyses. Because the present study involves two independent variables, and the hypothesis projects no significant differences between those variables, the correlation approach is most appropriate.

The participants in this study consisted of students who attended HBCUs in Florida. The participants’ demographics are 18-25 years of age, from various backgrounds and cities across the country. The rationale for selecting the participants is the access to participants and their

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<sup>36</sup> Peter R. Miksza, Julia T Shaw, Lauren Kapalka Richerme, Phillip M Hash, Donald A Hodges, and Elizabeth Cassidy Parker, Abstract, *Music Education Research: An Introduction* /. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2023.

<sup>37</sup> Steven Stack, “Media Impacts on Suicide: A Quantitative Review of 293 Findings,” *Social Science Quarterly* 81, no. 4 (2000): 957–71, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42864031>.

<sup>38</sup> Steven Alexander Mavere, “The Impact of Social Media Networks on Education in Higher Learning Institutions in Tanzania: A Case Study,” In *Education in Tanzania in the Era of Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by Joe L. P. Lugalla and J. Marriote Ngwaru, 150–63. Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvh8r02h.18>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

geographical distance from the researcher. The researcher has the participants complete a survey through Microsoft Forms after their band rehearsal detailing the purpose of this research. The results are analyzed to reveal any correlations between the collection samples.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Algorithm:** A procedure for solving a mathematical problem. The sequence presents a unique method of addressing an issue by providing a particular solution.<sup>40</sup>

**Analytics:** Data sources that are included under “analytics” are the content that the channel publishes, interactions related to the content published, the number of followers, and some information on these followers.<sup>41</sup>

**Historical Black College and University (HBCU):** institutions of higher education in the United States founded before 1964 for African American students. The term was created by the Higher Education Act of 1965, which expanded federal funding for colleges and universities.<sup>42</sup>

**Marching Band:** a group of musicians who march simultaneously while playing their instruments.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> John Mueller, and Luca Massaron, Algorithms, Second edition, Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2022.

<sup>41</sup> April Ursula Fox,. Social Media Analytics Strategy : Using Data to Optimize Business Performance, 2nd ed. Berkeley, CA: Apress L.P., 2022.

<sup>42</sup> M. Stefon, "Historically Black Colleges and Universities." Encyclopedia Britannica, September 24, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/historically-black-colleges-and-universities>.

<sup>43</sup> “Marching Band,” Cambridge Dictionary, accessed October 14, 2023, [https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/marching-band#google\\_vignette](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/marching-band#google_vignette).

**Post Engagement:** Social media engagement is the process of communicating (engaging) with an online community and measuring the effectiveness of your activity across every social media platform.<sup>44</sup>

**Predominantly white institution (PWI)** is the term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment. However, most of these institutions may also be understood as historically White.<sup>45</sup>

**Social Media:** A form of mass media communications on the Internet (such as on websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).

**Viral:** Viral content includes any form of online content spread at an extraordinary rate. A viral post usually achieves a massive reach and high engagement on social media in the form of views, likes, shares, and comments. This post type can be an image, video, or written content that catches a broad audience's attention through its relatability, emotional impact, and usefulness.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Qualtrics, "What is social engagement," accessed September 24, 2023, <https://www.qualtrics.com/experience-management/customer/social-engagement/>.

<sup>45</sup> Kofi Lomotey, "Predominantly White Institutions," *Encyclopedia of African American Education*, 524. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010. <https://sk.sagepub.com/reference/africanamericaneducation/n193.xml>.

<sup>46</sup> Thea Serrano, "The Anatomy of a Viral Social Media Post: Best Practices and How To Leverage It," Thrive Agency, accessed September 24, 2023, <https://thriveagency.com/news/the-anatomy-of-a-viral-social-media-post-best-practices-and-how-to-leverage-it/>.

## Summary

While some HBCU band directors utilize social media to market, promote, and recruit students, others do not capitalize on the benefits of social media's cost-effective marketing tools. Band directors and students born in the technology age may view social media as a tool to interact with new and current friends. Additionally, students can view, comment, and rate their favorite HBCU band and debate with fans and peers worldwide about a band's most recent performance. These performances are presumably on the Internet forever and become how students perceive a band to be. Conversely, without posting social media content, bands may be unknown amongst many HBCU band followers in the United States.

Regardless of the size of the HBCU band, social media coverage can be crucial to the relevance and growth of a band program. Students and fans have the Internet in the palms of their hands throughout the day and are equipped to like, share, or comment on content they like or do not like. While most band directors love positive feedback, negative feedback can alter the progression and perception of a school and, ultimately, the band program. Social media allows all users to judge content without background knowledge and can potentially influence others to have the same outlook on an HBCU program regardless of their affiliations.

As social media users become more accustomed to instant feedback and validation from users that they are unfamiliar with, HBCU bands are also encouraged to create memorable content more frequently than they have done before smartphones and social media applications. Students who use social media have particular platforms they prefer to use over others and tend to spend most of their time discovering new topics and ideas about their favorite subject. While band directors may be content with how they market and recruit new members to their program, they should be mindful of the shift in thinking amongst potential students, find the value in

emerging technology, and use it to serve their programs best. Conversely, the HBCU bands that do not embrace technological advancements in community interactions are left behind. This research aims to find the correlation between how students view the HBCU band's social media engagements and what makes them elect to attend their institution.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### HBCU Band History

The first HBCUs were founded in Pennsylvania and Ohio before the American Civil War. These schools were named The Institute for Colored Youth, later Cheyney University, and Wilberforce University in Ohio. Initially, the school aimed to provide basic education to black youth so that they could become teachers or tradesmen.<sup>47</sup> According to Stefon, following the Civil War, HBCUs were funded by the Freedmen's Bureau, which operated to help formerly enslaved people adjust to freedom.<sup>48</sup>

The Second Morrill Act of 1890 established 19 land-grant institutions for historically black universities. According to the act, the institution's programs are intended to strengthen research, extension, and teaching in the food and agricultural sciences.<sup>49</sup> HBCUs formed after the Second Morrill Act acquired their land through private contributions.

The 1890 land-grant system consists of the following 19 universities:

Alabama A&M, Alcorn State University, Central State University, Delaware State University, Florida A&M University, Fort Valley State University, Kentucky State University, Langston University, Lincoln University, North Carolina A&T State University, Prairie View A&M University, South Carolina State University, Southern University, Tennessee State University, Tuskegee University, University of Arkansas

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<sup>47</sup> Stefon, M., "Historically Black Colleges and Universities," Encyclopedia Britannica, March 9, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/historically-black-colleges-and-universities>.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> NIFA, "1890 Land-Grant Programs," USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, accessed March 18, 2024, <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/about-programs/program-operational-areas/1890-land-grant-institutions-programs>.

Pine Bluff, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Virginia State University and West Virginia State University.<sup>50</sup>

Research has revealed that HBCU bands did not exist in any form before the 1900's.

Although records are unavailable for each HBCU, the earliest recorded HBCU bands were Tuskegee in 1895, Alabama A&M in 1903, and Tuskegee Institute in 1907.<sup>51</sup> When they were formed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, bands were usually formed as clubs, operated in small numbers, and did not keep records, hence the lack of verifiable information about their existence. However, as prior research done by Clark has added to the brevity of research on HBCU college bands, this research provides a brief account of the history and purpose of HBCU bands.<sup>52</sup>

According to the Birmingham Times:

Sterling Stuckey, University of California, Riverside, Professor Emeritus, and other historians connect black college band showmanship to influences from 13th-century West Africa and the Egun masqueraders of the Yoruba tribe, who would play musical instruments and dance during funeral processions. Other historians point to black drill sergeants, who introduced melody and foot-stomping syncopation into their cadence counting, permanently altering the standard Western marching call.<sup>53</sup>

Band instrumentation in HBCU bands is generally the same in each athletic conference.

However, Albert Austin Harding, former Director of Bands at the University of Illinois from

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<sup>50</sup> NIFA, "1890 Land-Grant Programs," USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, accessed March 18, 2024, <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/about-programs/program-operational-areas/1890-land-grant-institutions-programs>.

<sup>51</sup> Robert H. Clark, "A Narrative History of African American Marching Band: Toward A Historicultural Understanding," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 41, no. 1 (2019): 5–32, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26776563>.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Birmingham Times Staff Report, "History of African-American Marching Bands," *Birmingham Times*, August 18, 2016, <https://www.birminghamtimes.com/2016/08/history-of-african-american-marching-bands/>.

1905 to 1948, influenced the concept of wind ensemble instrumentation as defined by band programs.<sup>54</sup> As musical techniques developed in the late 1800s and early 1900s, bands used a military-style approach to music-making and entertainment. The current show style of HBCU bands is similar to the format that minstrel bands used in the late 1800s. The uniforms that were worn by the minstrel bands were bright with epaulets and drew attention. According to W.C. Handy, before a minstrel show, a parade was held to attract people to purchase tickets to the show.

Handy writes:

The drum major, not an ordinary drum major beating time for a band, mind you, but a performer out of the books, an artist with the baton. His twirling stick suggested a bicycle wheel revolving in the sun. Occasionally, he would give it a toss and then recover the glistening affair with the same flawless skill. The drum major in a minstrel show was a character to conjure with; not infrequently, he stole the parade.<sup>55</sup>

The drum majors' intricate showmanship in minstrel shows is prevalent in most HBCU bands' styles. However, Dr. William P. Foster pioneered and revolutionized the popular show pageantry style that incorporates popular music and dance movements with traditional military drilling techniques that most HBCU bands use. Milburn writes that while Foster imitated bands like the University of Illinois and the University of Kansas, his innovations transformed the craft

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<sup>54</sup> Joseph Manfredo, "Albert Austin Harding and His Influence on the Development of the Instrumentation of the American Collegiate Wind Band," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 125 (1995): 60–74, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40318726>.

<sup>55</sup> W.C. Handy, *Father of the Blues: An Autobiography*, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1941), 34-35, [https://archive.org/details/fatherofbluesaut00wcha\\_0/page/34/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/fatherofbluesaut00wcha_0/page/34/mode/2up).

into something relevant to his audience.<sup>56</sup> Being cognizant of the audience and their reception to musical performances is one of the many strengths of HBCU band pageantry.

According to Malone, Leander Kirksey conceived the idea of starting a program for black students in instrumental music in public schools in Florida in 1942.<sup>57</sup> This initiative by Kirksey allowed Bethune-Cookman and Florida A&M programs to flourish. Foster developed his style of pageantry at Tuskegee Institute, where he was the director of bands and orchestra in 1944, which garnered the attention of the president of Florida A&M University (FAMU).<sup>58</sup> The president saw Foster's potential and offered him a job to bring his talents to Tallahassee and organize a band to promote the university in 1946.<sup>59</sup> During the early 1900s, when sporting events would occur, sports was the main event; however, as minstrel bands became popular and advertisement to public events, it could be argued that HBCU bands were formed with the same goal in mind and were ultimately infused during halftime of sporting events.

### **Current HBCU Bands**

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there are 99 HBCUs. Of those, 50 are public institutions, and 49 are private nonprofit institutions.<sup>60</sup> While most HBCUs focus

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<sup>56</sup> Claire Milburn, "The Development of Marching Band Traditions at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: The Human Jukebox versus the Sonic Boom of the South," *Journal of historical research in music education*, 43, no. 2 (2022): 211.

<sup>57</sup> Jacqui Malone, "The FAMU Marching 100." *The Black Perspective in Music* 18, no. 1/2 (1990): 59–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1214858>.

<sup>58</sup> Nicholas Thomas, "The Professional Career of African-American Bandmaster William Patrick Foster," *Research Perspectives in Music Education* 18 (2), (2016): 22, <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/contentone/fmea/rpme/2016/00000018/00000002/art00002?crawler=true>

<sup>59</sup> "William P. Foster," Florida Division of Arts and Culture, accessed February 18, 2024, <https://dos.fl.gov/cultural/programs/florida-artists-hall-of-fame/william-p-foster/>.

<sup>60</sup> "Fast Facts: Historically Black Colleges and Universities," National Center for Education Statistics, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=667>.

on academic offerings, a few institutions offer viable music programs. The presence or lack of music programs at each institution can be related to various factors beyond the scope of this research. However, at the time of this research, over 50 documented HBCU music programs are available for students interested in pursuing post-secondary music options.

Although a rubric is not available on their website, it can be argued that academically, HBCUs are ranked objectively by tuition and fees, graduation rate, and acceptance rate. Bestcolleges.com lists the top seven HBCUs as of February 2024 in Figure 1. Although this list is not extensive and final, it helps the reader understand each institution's value.

*Figure 1. Top Historically Black Colleges and Universities Rankings Summary. Image by Bernard Grant, Ph.D. February 2, 2024. BestColleges.com.*

RANK	SCHOOL	IN-STATE TUITION	OUT-OF-STATE TUITION	ACCEPTANCE RATE
#1	<b>Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University</b> Tallahassee, FL	\$3,152	\$14,524	35%
#2	<b>North Carolina A&amp;T State University</b> Greensboro, NC	\$3,540	\$17,050	57%
#3	<b>Hampton University</b> Hampton, VA	\$26,198	\$26,198	80%
#4	<b>Delaware State University</b> Dover, DE	\$7,038	\$16,960	59%
#5	<b>North Carolina Central University</b> Durham, NC	\$3,728	\$16,435	76%
#6	<b>Winston-Salem State University</b> Winston-Salem, NC	\$3,401	\$14,057	81%
#7	<b>Oakwood University</b> Huntsville, AL	\$18,974	\$18,974	72%

Conversely, the U.S. News authors Morse and Brooks rank the same institutions based on results provided by quantitative and qualitative measures that experts have proposed as indicators

of high academic quality.<sup>61</sup> The rankings are listed in Figure 2. Additionally, the authors explain how to decipher the information provided in their research.

*Figure 2. Historically Black Colleges and Universities.* Image by Robert Morse and Eric Brooks September 17, 2023. Best Colleges U.S. News and World Report.<sup>62</sup>

<b>Name/Rank</b>	<b>Tuition and Fees</b>	<b>Undergraduate Enrollment</b>
<b>1. Spelman College</b>	\$30,058	2,374 (fall 2022)
<b>2. Howard University</b>	\$33,344	9,809 (fall 2022)
<b>3. Florida A&amp;M University</b>	\$17,725 (out-of-state) \$5,785 (in-state)	7,709 (fall 2022)
<b>4. Tuskegee University</b>	\$22,679	2,100 (fall 2022)
<b>5. Morehouse College</b>	\$14,734	2,567 (fall 2022)
<b>6. Xavier University of Louisiana</b>	\$27,870	2,696 (fall 2022)
<b>7. Hampton University</b>	\$29,312	2,794 (fall 2022)

According to Morse and Brooks:

Indicators include a combination of graduation and retention rates, social mobility, first-generation student graduation rates, college graduates earning more than high school graduates, and graduate indebtedness – which account for 52% of the HBCU rankings. The weight of the HBCU peer assessment factor is 20% of the rankings. This is the same weight that the peer assessment score has in the overall rankings. Other input measures count as 28%.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Robert Morse, Eric Brooks, “Historically Black Colleges Rankings,” last modified September 17, 2023, U.S. News, <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/hbcu>.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Morse, Eric Brooks, “Historically Black Colleges Rankings Methodology,” last modified September 17, 2023, U.S. News, <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/historically-black-schools-methodology>.

Although musical rankings are subjective, sports media sites such as Andscape, HBCU Gameday, and Sports Illustrated have begun covering the rankings of HBCU bands each week during the football season. The rankings are made by a committee co-chaired by Jackson State University Director of Bands Emeritus, Professor Dowell Taylor, and Dr. Julian E. White, FAMU Director of Bands Emeritus. Additionally, the rankings qualify the best HBCU band from each Division for an opportunity to compete at ESPN's Band of the Year HBCU Band championship.<sup>64</sup> Grant, executive director of the MEAC/SWAC Challenge and Celebration Bowl, writes, "For many years, the Honda Battle of the Bands showcase has taken place, and typically, eight HBCU bands were selected to perform together on one field, but no champion was crowned."<sup>65</sup> The most current rankings at the time of this research are listed in Figure 3.

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<sup>64</sup> "HBCU Band of The Year Rankings: Southern University on top," The Celebration Bowl, accessed March 2, 2024, <https://www.thecelebrationbowl.com/hbcu-band-of-the-year-rankings-southern-university-on-top/>.

<sup>65</sup> "There Will Now be a HBCU Marching Band National Championship Competition," The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (2023). <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2845779890?pq-origsite=summon&sourcetype=Scholarly%20Journals>.

*Figure 3. Division I and II Rankings. Image by Dr. Julian E. White and Professor Dowell Taylor, November 28, 2023. The Band of the Year Rankings.<sup>66</sup>*

<b>Division I Rank and Name</b>	<b>Division II Rank and Name</b>
1. North Carolina A&T	Savannah State
2. Norfolk State	Virginia State
3. Jackson State	Florida Memorial
4. Texas Southern	Winston-Salem State
5. Bethune-Cookman	Tuskegee
6. Prairie View A&M	Central State
7. Southern	Morehouse
8. Tennessee State	Kentucky State
9. Florida A&M	Miles
10. Alabama State	Benedict

HBCU bands represent their community, and their influence can be seen globally in commercials, movies, presidential inaugurations, holiday parades, reality shows, and sporting events. Additionally, HBCU bands enhance events with their unique musical presentations. Although HBCU bands have graced America’s largest stages for generations, at the time of this

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<sup>66</sup> “HBCU Band of The Year Rankings,” Band of The Year.com, accessed March 2, 2024, <https://bandoftheyear.com/rankings/>.



research, the Jackson State University band has joined an extensive list of HBCU bands to have performed at the Super Bowl.<sup>67</sup>

As HBCU bands become recognizable nationally through media publications, their influence can arguably affect the enrollment of HBCUs. Significant HBCU band placements in national television include but are not limited to:

- Grambling University, Coke Commercial 1981.<sup>68</sup>
- Bethune-Cookman University, Cadillac Commercial 2006.<sup>69</sup>
- Alabama State University, “Bama State Style,” Lifetime Series 2015.<sup>70</sup>
- Bethune-Cookman University, “Marching Orders,” Netflix Series, 2017.<sup>71</sup>
- Jackson State University & Florida A&M University, Pepsi Commercial 2021.<sup>72</sup>
- Prairie View University, “March,” CW Series, 2022.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Gary Estwick, Ariana Triggs, “Black Excellence at its Best: Celebrating HBCU Marching Bands from Musicianship to Twerks,” *The Tennessean*, February 24, 2024, <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2024/02/14/what-is-hbcu-marching-band-style-black-culture-of-precision-showmanship/72579141007/>.

<sup>68</sup> Band History, “GSU Tiger Marching Band,” Grambling State University, accessed March 17, 2024, <https://www.gram.edu/academics/majors/arts-and-sciences/music/band/history.php>

<sup>69</sup> B-CU Band, “Performance Resume,” Bethune-Cookman University, accessed March 17, 2024, <https://www.cookman.edu/band/performance-resume.html>.

<sup>70</sup> “Bama State Style,” Episode List, *IMDB*, accessed March 17, 2024, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3967374/>.

<sup>71</sup> B-CU Band, “Performance Resume,” Bethune-Cookman University, accessed March 17, 2024, <https://www.cookman.edu/band/performance-resume.html>.

<sup>72</sup> WFTV News Staff, “FAMU Marching 100 to Appear in First Ever Pepsi ad Featuring HBCU Bands,” *WFTV9*, December 3, 2021, <https://www.wftv.com/news/local/famu-marching-100-appear-first-ever-pepsi-ad-featuring-hbcu-bands/DOTB6YNKSNBSTEEVPOGZBJZERA/>.

<sup>73</sup> “March,” Episode List, *IMDB*, accessed March 17, 2024, [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt16310620/episodes/?season=1&ref\\_=tt\\_eps\\_sn\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt16310620/episodes/?season=1&ref_=tt_eps_sn_1).

- Florida A&M University, “Louis Vuitton,” Fashion Week, 2022.<sup>74</sup>

HBCU bands included in product endorsements such as apparel, sports drinks, and automobiles credit their growth to being visible in local and national publications. In recent years, brands have created campaigns specifically targeted to HBCUs. According to Forbes, brands like ESPN, Under Armour, Jordan Brand, and Lebron James Brand have signed product endorsement contracts with the athletic departments of some notable HBCUs.<sup>75</sup> Howard University and Florida A&M University’s bands have also benefited from these endorsements, and viewers can see the band in recent performances wearing exclusive products from Lebron James and Jordan Brand embroidered with their marching band logos. In an interview with The Tennessean's publication, Zyrin Gougis reflected on the influence of HBCU bands in media. Estwick and Triggs reveal that watching the movie *Drumline* as a youth influenced Gougis to join a marching band in New Orleans at nine.<sup>76</sup>

### **Attracting Students**

Cooper writes, “Schools compete to attract parent consumers because they need the parents to choose them in order to remain open.” Parents’ natural protective instincts enable them to consider institutions where they have the most piece of mind and are fiscally responsible. For schools of higher education to attract consumers, they must engage socially and respond in a

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<sup>74</sup> Jacqueline Laurean Yates, “Florida A&M Marching 100 Delivers Electrifying Performance During Louis Vuitton Fashion Show,” *Good Morning America*, June 24, 2022. <https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/style/story/florida-marching-100-delivers-electrifying-performance-louis-vuitton-85641459>.

<sup>75</sup> Aronte Bennett, “HBCUs: Right on Target,” *Forbes*, October 7, 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/arontebennett/2022/10/07/hbcus-right-on-target/?sh=74bfdbce12bb>

<sup>76</sup> Gary Estwick and Ariana Triggs, “Black Excellence at its best: Celebrating HBCU Marching Bands from Musicianship to Twerks,” *The Tennessean*, February 14, 2024, <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2024/02/14/what-is-hbcu-marching-band-style-black-culture-of-precision-showmanship/72579141007/>.

manner that attracts and retains students. The same logic applies to attracting fans and new HBCU band members. White explains, “People enjoy things they can identify with and enjoy the mass movement. You have all of this energy channeled in the same direction...high emotional impact and content, that is what people like.”<sup>77</sup>

Palmer, Koenig-Lewis, and Asaad state that the intensification of market-based pressures facing higher education providers has led many to adopt new marketing and corporate branding strategies.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, according to Jabbar, “Schools’ position in the marketplace, based on enrollment, funding, and performance, as well as their perceptions of competition, affect how school leaders respond to market pressures.”<sup>79</sup> The school leader’s response will include strategic methods of creating marketable materials to increase market viability. Furthermore, Jabbar writes, “Status is the extent to which schools in the local education marketplace view other schools as competitors.”<sup>80</sup> Status is also the community’s perception predicated on the results of standardized performance assessments.

As the student demographic in HBCUs becomes more diverse than in the past, institutions reflect diversity in their faculty and staff. According to Clements, college recruiters should emphasize the social aspects of participation in bands, choirs, and orchestras to enhance

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<sup>77</sup> Jacqui Malone, “The FAMU Marching 100.” *The Black Perspective in Music* 18, no. 1/2 (1990): 59–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1214858>.

<sup>78</sup> Adrian Palmer, Nicole Koenig-Lewis, and Yousra Asaad, “Brand Identification in Higher Education: A Conditional Process Analysis,” May 19, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.01.018>.

<sup>79</sup> Huriya Jabbar, “Every Kid Is Money’: Market-Like Competition and School Leader Strategies in New Orleans,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 37, no. 4 (2015): 638–59, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43773530>.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

the recruitment process.<sup>81</sup> Historically, higher education academic institutions use bands to recruit students. Strategic methods to attract students and parents may include adopting new academic programs, expanding extracurricular programs, and screening out students.<sup>82</sup>

Wilson quotes the Pew Internet and American Life Project in a statement: “The internet is a central and indispensable element in the lives of American teens and young adults.”<sup>83</sup> This statement by Wilson supports the fact that Chandler-Gilbert Community College (CGCC) in Phoenix is utilizing social media to attract students and as a teaching method. According to Wilson, CGCC uses Facebook to connect with students, disseminate information, and assess student learning.<sup>84</sup> Connecting with supporters and potential students is a common form of communication in higher education.

Recruiting and retaining students is a process that new and veteran HBCU band directors may develop throughout their careers. Although the recruiting methods vary with each institution, technology has improved information sharing. According to Malone, in the 1920s, Florida A&M president Lee would take the band around Florida on recruitment tours to encourage blacks to send their kids to school.<sup>85</sup> This method of recruiting is used widely among HBCUs to increase institutional awareness in the community. Though research has revealed

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<sup>81</sup> Allen Clements, “Minority Students and Faculty in Higher Music Education,” *Music Educators Journal* 95, no. 3 (2009): 54, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30219215>.

<sup>82</sup> Allen Clements, “Minority Students and Faculty in Higher Music Education,” *Music Educators Journal* 95, no. 3 (2009): 54, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30219215>.

<sup>83</sup> Cynthia D Wilson, “Making Connections: Higher Education Meets Social Media,” *Change* 45, no. 4 (2013): 51–57, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23594991>.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Jacqui Malone, “The FAMU Marching 100.” *The Black Perspective in Music* 18, no. 1/2 (1990): 59–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1214858>.

several challenges to minority recruitment in college music programs, college presidents employ their bands to assist with recruitment efforts.

According to Clements, these challenges include:

1. The failure of institutions to offset the lack of college preparation. Some music programs that exist have the stigma of being remedial.
2. Many music programs lack a critical mass of minority music students and faculty who can act as role models and make new students comfortable.
3. Black music students often complain that professors treat them like remedial students.
4. Many minority students who are first-generation college students fail to get enough emotional support from home.<sup>86</sup>

Recruitment is needed to sustain enrollment in marching band programs and the general population of college students. According to Cumberledge, videos of performing ensembles, including marching bands, may be the strongest recruitment tool for music departments.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, Cumberledge reveals that “Carlson surveyed administrators at higher education institutions that were members of the National Association of Schools of Music. In the administrators’ opinion, performing ensemble reputation was considered the most important factor for incoming first-year students during college choice.”<sup>88</sup>

As Cumberledge mentioned, video representation of performance ensembles is the strongest recruitment tool for bands. With this in mind, HBCU bands listed in the top ten of this research have included videos on their social media pages that have garnered millions of views. For example, in Division I, Southern University’s band’s latest Bacchus video on YouTube has

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<sup>86</sup> Allen Clements, “Minority Students and Faculty in Higher Music Education,” *Music Educators Journal* 95, no. 3 (2009): 54, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30219215>.

<sup>87</sup> Jason P Cumberledge, “The Benefits of College Marching Bands for Students and Universities: A Review of the Literature,” *Update*. 36, no. 1 (2017): 45.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

earned 22k views in one month, while Jackson University’s latest Usher tribute on the same platform has over 361k views in three months at the time of this research.

### **Demographics**

HBCUs were established to provide educational opportunities for students of color when they were not allowed to attend PWIs. However, currently, most universities educate a vast number of Black and Latino first-generation college students compared to white first-generation students. According to Benson and Lee, Black and Latinx first-generation students have outnumbered first-generation college students by 21%.<sup>89</sup> HBCUs enroll 10% of White, 4% of Latino, and 1% of Asian American students at the undergraduate level.<sup>90</sup> Additionally, HBCUs frequently serve lower-income populations, suggesting an inferior academic quality to some potential students.

Faculty demographics are also considered a factor in HBCU student’s college selection. A 2017 Department of Education report revealed that the overwhelming majority of full-time faculty in the U.S. identify as White, and approximately 20% identify as Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, and multiracial.<sup>91</sup> While socioeconomic factors may also determine where students attend college, it should be noted that 62% of first-

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<sup>89</sup> Janel E Benson, and Elizabeth M. Lee, “First-Generation Students at Selective Colleges”, *Geographies of Campus Inequality: Mapping the Diverse Experiences of First-Generation Students* (New York, 2020; online edn, Oxford Academic, 17 Sept. 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190848156.003.0002>, accessed 11 Feb. 2024.

<sup>90</sup> Dina C Maramba, Robert T Palmer, Denise Yull, and Taryn Ozuna, “A Qualitative Investigation of the College Choice Process for Asian Americans and Latina/Os at a Public HBCU,” *Journal of diversity in higher education*. 8, no. 4 (2015): 258.

<sup>91</sup> Bridget Turner Kelly, Joy Gaston Gayles, and Cobretti D. Williams, “Recruitment without Retention: A Critical Case of Black Faculty Unrest,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 86, no. 3 (2017): 305–17., <https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.86.3.0305>.

generation students received loans to pay for college, while 29% of families' income was less than 35k.<sup>92</sup>

According to the National Center for Education Statistics:

Black enrollment at HBCUs fluctuated between 1976 and 2022, with a peak in 2010 (266,000 students). Meanwhile, the total number of Black students enrolled in all degree-granting post-secondary institutions (both HBCUs and non-HBCUs) was more than twice as high in 2022 as in 1976, despite annual declines since its peak in 2011 (3.1 million students), including throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast, although Black enrollment in HBCUs fell from 219,000 in 2019 to 212,000 in 2020, it rebounded to 219,000 in 2022. As a result, the percentage of Black students enrolled at HBCUs fell from 18 percent in 1976 to a low of 8 percent in 2014, then rose to 9 percent, where it has remained through 2022.<sup>93</sup>

### **Factors Affecting College Choices**

Perna writes, “Econometric models posit that an individual makes a decision about attending college by comparing the benefits with the costs for all possible alternatives and then selecting the alternative with the greatest net benefit, given the individual’s personal preferences.”<sup>94</sup> Freeman reveals several factors that affect the decision to enroll in post-

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<sup>92</sup> Bridget Turner Kelly, Joy Gaston Gayles, and Cobretti D. Williams, “*Recruitment without Retention: A Critical Case of Black Faculty Unrest*,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 86, no. 3 (2017): 305–17., <https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.86.3.0305>.

<sup>93</sup> “Fast Facts: Historically Black Colleges and Universities,” National Center for Education Statistics, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=667>

<sup>94</sup> Laura Walter Perna, “Differences in the Decision to Attend College among African Americans, Hispanics, and Whites,” *The Journal of Higher Education* 71, no. 2 (2000): 118, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2649245>.

secondary education. According to Freeman, a relationship exists between higher education and African Americans' economic participation.<sup>95</sup> Additionally, Freeman writes, "African Americans who receive a higher education also have non-monetary benefits as they are more likely to educate their children."<sup>96</sup>

Studies investigating HBCUs neglect the role of the student in the decision-making process for selection in a media-driven society. Furthermore, Freeman identifies the focus of the available research on college selection for black students as not culturally specific. Freeman posits that researchers should recognize the need to understand the choice process for minority students better.<sup>97</sup>

Although parents are a factor in educational decisions, most students have their college choices selected before beginning their senior year in high school. Faulk writes, "In the case of educational decision-making, Black parents draw on their previous experiences in organizations—often colored by personal encounters with racism—to inform the decisions they make about their children's schooling."<sup>98</sup> Parents generally want their children to have the same or better access to educational knowledge and experiences that they may have encountered.

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<sup>95</sup> Kassie Freeman, "Increasing African Americans' Participation in Higher Education: African American High-School Students' Perspectives," *The Journal of Higher Education* 68, no. 5 (1997): 523–50, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2959945>.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Kassie Freeman, "Increasing African Americans' Participation in Higher Education: African American High-School Students' Perspectives," *The Journal of Higher Education* 68, no. 5 (1997): 523–50, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2959945>

<sup>98</sup> Deborah Faulk, "College Choices, Choice Dilemmas: Black Advantaged Parents' Views of Their Children's College Options," *Social Problems*, August 4, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spad038>



According to Cooper, parents enter the educational marketplace with differing values, beliefs, and resources when selecting their preferred school.<sup>99</sup>

McDonough found that a student's religion, the institution's academic reputation, and relatives motivated Black students to attend HBCUs.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, Koch and Swinton find that "HBCU students favor institutions with higher graduation rates and campuses that expend greater proportions of their budgets on instruction and student services."<sup>101</sup> Hossler and Gallagher's model of the college choice process proposes that students make their decisions in 3 stages: predisposition, social networks, and choice phase.<sup>102</sup> In the predisposition stage, students decide to continue post-secondary education. After deciding to continue education, students look to their social networks and examine external information to help inform their decision-making process. In the third stage, students narrow down schools and decide where to enroll.<sup>103</sup>

Prior research suggests that factors affecting a student's college decision vary across racial/ethnic groups. Perna found that receiving financial aid has a stronger positive effect on the probability of college enrollment for Black and Hispanic college applicants than other

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<sup>99</sup> Camille Wilson Cooper, "School Choice and the Standpoint of African American Mothers: Considering the Power of Positionality," *The Journal of Negro Education* 74, no. 2 (2005): 174–89, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40034542>.

<sup>100</sup> Dina C Maramba, Robert T Palmer, Denise Yull, and Taryn Ozuna, "A Qualitative Investigation of the College Choice Process for Asian Americans and Latina/Os at a Public HBCU," *Journal of diversity in higher education*. 8, no. 4 (2015): 259

<sup>101</sup> James V. Koch, and Omari H. Swinton, "Pulling Back the Veil: What Determines HBCU Campus Enrollments" *Social Science Quarterly* 103, no.2 (2022): 321.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> James V. Koch, and Omari H. Swinton, "Pulling Back the Veil: What Determines HBCU Campus Enrollments" *Social Science Quarterly* 103, no.2 (2022): 321.

ethnicities.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, financial aid in the form of music scholarships may also influence students' choice to attend HBCUs and participate in a band program. HBCU bands offer students scholarships based on their musical abilities, academic merit, and the program's instrumental needs. According to Cumberledge, research reveals that many college students choose a university because of the marching band program.<sup>105</sup> Additionally, Cumberledge found, "For some students, the desire to wear a uniform outweighs the academic and financial considerations."<sup>106</sup>

### **Social Media Usage**

Social media platforms are apps, short for applications that allow users to share digital media content on an electronic device. Apps have changed the way that university students communicate. Through these apps, users can communicate worldwide in real-time. According to Wang and Perry, more than 90% of university students have a Facebook account.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, users create social media communities with shared experiences and interests. Wenger's application of communities of practice is the fundamental premise of social media platforms. According to Wenger, "Communities of practice is a method to promote organizational learning through information sharing."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Perna, Laura Walter. "Differences in the Decision to Attend College among African Americans, Hispanics, and Whites." *The Journal of Higher Education* 71, no. 2 (2000): 117–41. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2649245>.

<sup>105</sup> Jason P. Cumberledge, "The Time Usage of College Music Majors, Non-Music Majors, and Marching Band Participants," *SAGE Open* 7, no. 2 (2017): 215824401770524.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Yu-mei Weng, and Tonya Perry, "Chapter four – University Student Use of Facebook," *Handbook of Social Media in Education Consumer Behavior and Politics*, Volume 1, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-90237-3.00004-7>.

<sup>108</sup> Masoud Hemmasi, and Carol M. Csanda. "The Effectiveness of Communities of Practice: An Empirical Study." *Journal of Managerial Issues* 21, no. 2 (2009): 262. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40604647>.

Research by Shields and Peruta reveals that “Students reported that social media does not impact their matriculation decision when asked in a survey. However, in interview settings, most students reported using social media platforms to learn more about higher education.”<sup>109</sup> Additionally, Cumberledge reports that research from Rutter reveals that colleges and universities are using social media technology to attract prospective students. According to Rutter’s research, metrics showed a positive effect on using social media for recruitment when institutions attract a strong following and like count on Facebook and Twitter.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, the results are stronger when the universities interact with the users on each platform.

Often, schools compete for the same students, with the only determining factor being who may have won the national sports title for that year. In contrast, others may boast notable successes of notable alums of their favorite school. Status and popularity create interest amongst potential students to use as leverage to attract new and returning clientele. As students develop a digital space that caters to their particular interests, they also express educational goals in those interests. Mjos writes, “Cable and satellite television channels pioneered the addressing of niche audiences, but the internet now facilitates increasing opportunities for providing ‘customized content’ for traditional media.”<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Allison Shields, & Adam Peruta, “Social Media and The University Decision: Do Prospective Students Really Care?”, *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 29:1, 67-83, DOI: 10.1080/08841241.2018.1557778.

<sup>110</sup> Richard Rutter, Stuart Roper, Fiona Lettice, “Social Media Interaction, The University Brand and Recruitment Performance,” *Journal of Business Research*, Volume 69, Issue 8, 2016, Pages 3096-3104, ISSN 0148-2963, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.01.025>.

<sup>111</sup> Ole J. Mjos, *Music, Social Media and Global Mobility : MySpace, Facebook, YouTube*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011, Accessed March 5, 2024, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Taylor writes, “As HBCUs have endeavored to become more competitive in certain contexts, these institutions may be ignoring a critical method of twenty-first-century competition: competing on the Internet.”<sup>112</sup> Software Applications, known on mobile devices and abbreviated as apps, are integrated into the functionality of most media devices that humans use in their everyday lives. If there is a need for a service, there is often an app that can fulfill each user’s digital request. According to Consumer Affairs data, almost all Americans own a mobile phone, and on average, get their first phone at 11.6 years old.<sup>113</sup> Additionally, each year, Americans spend an average of 4 hours and 30 minutes on their phones daily, with 67% of that time on social media.<sup>114</sup> U.S. local and federal agencies are also amongst the percentage of social media users. Norris and Reddick reveal that 94% of local governments have created social media accounts.<sup>115</sup>

This research explores Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok as HBCU band media content sources and typically share the same features: users can create, watch, and share digital content. However, TikTok, one of the newest social media apps, is the most trending at the time of this research. Zahn writes, “TikTok, which boasts more than 170 million U.S. users,

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<sup>112</sup> Zachary W Taylor, “Now You’re Competing”: How Historically-Black Colleges and Universities Compete (and Don’t) on the Internet: *Revista De Universidad y Sociedad Del Conocimiento*.” *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 15 (2018): 2. <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/now-youre-competing-how-historically-black/docview/2147563351/se-2>.

<sup>113</sup> Alexis Bazen, Kirsten Schmitt, “Cell Phone Statistics 2024,” *Consumer Affairs Journal of Consumer Research*, accessed March 15, 2024, [https://www.consumeraffairs.com/cell\\_phones/cell-phone-statistics.html#:~:text=ownership%20by%20age-.Almost%20all%20Americans%20\(97%25\)%20own%20a%20mobile%20phone.,%25\)%20or%20smartphones%20\(76%25\)](https://www.consumeraffairs.com/cell_phones/cell-phone-statistics.html#:~:text=ownership%20by%20age-.Almost%20all%20Americans%20(97%25)%20own%20a%20mobile%20phone.,%25)%20or%20smartphones%20(76%25)).

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Michael Landon-Murray, “Social Media and U.S. Intelligence Agencies: Just Trending or a Real Tool to Engage and Educate?” *Journal of Strategic Security* 8, no. 3 (2015): 67–79, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26465246>.

has emerged in recent years as a fixture of American life, shaping popular culture, supercharging the growth of the influencer economy and challenging some of the nation’s largest companies, such as Meta and Google.”<sup>116</sup> Each of the bands listed in this research has at least one of the social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok. Figure 4 illustrates the social media followers of each Division’s top ten HBCU bands at the time of this research.

*Figure 4 Division I Social Media Followers*

<b>Division I</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>TikTok</b>	<b>YouTube</b>
Jackson State	121k	91k	N/A	73k
Prairie View A&M	21k	21k	N/A	N/A
North Carolina A&T	43k	2.4k	N/A	28k
Tennessee State	21k	12.9k	1k	5.6k
Southern	125k	276k	29k	123k
Florida A&M	40k	29k	N/A	6.7k
Norfolk State	15k	12k	N/A	10k
Texas Southern	13k	15k	N/A	8.5k
Bethune-Cookman	10k	16k	N/A	4.1k
Alabama State	15k	19k	N/A	12k

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<sup>116</sup> Max Zahn, “Possible TikTok ban in US: What’s at stake and what comes next.” March 13, 2024, *ABC News*, <https://abcnews.go.com/Business/possible-tiktok-ban-us-whats-at-stake/story?id=108040803#:~:text=TikTok%2C%20which%20boasts%20more%20than,such%20as%20Meta%20and%20Google.>

Figure 5 Division II Social Media Followers

<b>Division II</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>TikTok</b>	<b>YouTube</b>
<b>Savannah State</b>	2k	6.2k	N/A	873
<b>Virginia State</b>	11k	3.3k	N/A	1.8k
<b>Florida Memorial</b>	9.5k	6.7k	N/A	1.5k
<b>Winston-Salem State</b>	3.5k	873	N/A	N/A
<b>Tuskegee</b>	5.5K	2.1k	N/A	75
<b>Central State</b>	1.3k	337	N/A	N/A
<b>Morehouse</b>	3.7k	839	N/A	N/A
<b>Kentucky State</b>	2.2k	7.2k	852	N/A
<b>Miles</b>	3.7k	3.6k	N/A	97
<b>Benedict</b>	5.8k	3.9k	N/A	4.3k

This research explores the relationship between HBCU band enrollment and social media engagement. Brian Simmons, Director of Bands at Texas Southern University, reveals in an article in *The Tennessean* his rationale for students enrolling in Texas Southern University band.

According to Simmons:

They are here because it is the best option at a school where resources are rarely plentiful. They are also here because playing in bands like the Ocean of Soul is not about school participation or knocking out an extracurricular activity. By joining, just like their brethren in HBCU bands at Southern and Howard and Florida A&M and all the others, they become part of a treasured hallmark of the Black community, which is eager to love them like family and celebrate with them. It has been this way for decades, but the bands are enjoying fresh attention in the age of social media and online streaming.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Kristie Rieken, For HBCUs, Bands are About More Than the Show to the Black Community: This Family, *The Tennessean*, September 19, 2023, <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/education/2023/09/19/hbcus-bands-are-about-more-than-the-show-for-black-community/70851794007/>.

Although various factors contribute to enrollment, this research provides quantitative data for future researchers to analyze. Using YouTube videos, band websites, and still images from Facebook and Instagram, Figure six illustrates the estimated number of participants in each HBCU band in the top ten bands in Division I and Division II during this research.

*Figure 6 Estimated Band Members in Division I*

<b>Division I</b>	<b>Estimated Band Members</b>
Jackson State	300
Prairie View A&M	300
North Carolina A&T	200
Tennessee State	220
Southern	215
Florida A&M	295
Norfolk State	250
Texas Southern	140
Bethune-Cookman	225
Alabama State	260

Figure 7 Estimated Band Members Division II

<b>Division II</b>	<b>Estimated Band Members</b>
<b>Savannah State</b>	110
<b>Virginia State</b>	114
<b>Florida Memorial</b>	95
<b>Winston-Salem State</b>	110
<b>Tuskegee</b>	65
<b>Central State</b>	125
<b>Morehouse</b>	60
<b>Kentucky State</b>	70
<b>Miles</b>	150
<b>Benedict</b>	110

Social media attracts students seeking to view musical content and interact with supporters of their favorite HBCU band. Research on the brain reveals that the nucleus accumbens, the area of the brain that directs motivation to seek rewards, is developing during adolescence.<sup>118</sup> Social media allows HBCU bands to influence adolescent students much earlier than when they become adults. Bradshaw and Vaillancourt write, “The implication of developmental differences in adolescents need high excitement and low effort to get them engaged, both of which are afforded by the structure of social media.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Samantha Bradshaw, and Tracy Vaillancourt, “Freedom of Thought, Social Media and the Teen Brain.” Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2024, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep57753>.

<sup>119</sup> Samantha Bradshaw, and Tracy Vaillancourt, “Freedom of Thought, Social Media and the Teen Brain.” Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2024, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep57753>.



Research by Smith, Wade, and Jowers revealed that, in an analysis of posts from the social media platforms of 14 students at an HBCU, 68% of their time is spent on entertainment, 17% on uplifting, and 14% on empowerment.<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, 85% of African Americans, across all age demographics use the Internet to connect with each other, gather information, and conduct business daily.<sup>121</sup> Vasalou, Joinson, and Courvoisier write, “A range of instrumental uses sustain users’ motivation to keep coming back, such as posting photographs and changing the status update.”<sup>122</sup> In particular, users regularly share personal information and involve others in their activities.

According to Schultz, “Interactions depend on the characteristics of brand posts, which can drive various user behaviors such as liking, commenting, or sharing.”<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, Schultz reveals that post types on different days of the week and hours of the day prompt different numbers of interactions and comments.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Kim Smith, Jeannette Wade, and Joseph Jowers, “From Entertainment to Empowerment: A Call for Social Media Literacy Education at an HBCU,” *Journalism & mass communication educator* 78, no. 4 (2023): 420.

<sup>121</sup> Zachary W Taylor, “Now You’re Competing”: How Historically-Black Colleges and Universities Compete (and Don’t) on the Internet: Revista De Universidad y Sociedad Del Conocimiento.” *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 15 (2018): 2.  
<https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/now-youre-competing-how-historically-black/docview/2147563351/se-2>.

<sup>122</sup> Asimina Vasalou, Adam Johnson, and Delphine Courvoisier, “Cultural Differences, Experience with Social Networks and the Nature of “True Commitment” in Facebook,” *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, Volume 68, Issue 10, October, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2010.06.002>.

<sup>123</sup> Carsten D. Schultz, “Proposing to Your Fans: Which Brand Post Characteristics Drive Consumer Engagement Activities on Social Media Brand Pages?,” *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, Volume 26, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2017.09.005>.

<sup>124</sup> Carsten D. Schultz, “Proposing to Your Fans: Which Brand Post Characteristics Drive Consumer Engagement Activities on Social Media Brand Pages?,” *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, Volume 26, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2017.09.005>.

Research by Matabane and Merritt addresses media usage and its effect on college choice for black students. Their research examined the pro-social effects of Black media content positively depicting HBCUS and the relationship between the needs associated with college choice, demographics, and reliance on social networks. According to Matabane and Merritt, “Stepwise regressions show in college choice.... males were more social network reliant, while females were more media reliant.”<sup>125</sup>

Similarly, the most tangible impact of increased interest and HBCU enrollment due to media relevance and visibility was during the airing of *A Different World*. *A Different World* is a television show with an all-black cast that depicts undergraduate students’ lives on an HBCU campus using the fictitious name Hillman College. Jane writes, “According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, HBCU enrollment increased by about 26% between 1976 and 1994, with the largest rise between 1986 and 1994 during the height of the television show *A Different World*.”<sup>126</sup>

Band directors have also addressed the drawbacks of the availability of social media usage in HBCU bands. Before the invention of the smartphone with all of its camera capabilities and connection to users worldwide, fans would have to travel to see their favorite band and maybe see them perform once a year. According to Milburn, bands could plan three or four

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<sup>125</sup> Paula Whatley, Matabane, and Bishetta D. Merritt, “Media use Gender, and African American College Attendance: The Cosby Effect,” *The Howard Journal of Communications* 25, no. 4 (2014): 452.

<sup>126</sup> Alexandra Jane, “Reflecting on the Cultural Impact of *A Different World* 35 Years Later,” *The Root*, September 25, 2022, <https://www.theroot.com/reflecting-on-the-cultural-impact-of-a-different-world-1849578998>.

shows yearly, then repurpose each one for away games. However, now, with streaming and live services, the expectation from fans is that there will be a new show every week.<sup>127</sup>

Rutter reveals that social media usage is extremely high among potential college students, particularly ages 15-19.<sup>128</sup> This research focuses on HBCU students in Gen Z, the generation born between 1997 and 2012, according to Dimock.<sup>129</sup> This generational group is significant due to their ability to grow up in an era with access to technology from the start of their lives.

While Gen Z students have shown experience with using mobile devices for communicating, This researcher can assume that Gen Z HBCU students have mostly experienced accessing the web through mobile devices. Dimock also writes, “Recent research has shown dramatic shifts in youth behaviors, attitudes, and lifestyles – both positive and concerning – for those who came of age in this era.”<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, Davis found that “Teens who use the Internet to talk with their friends experience stronger self-concept clarity, whereas teens who use the Internet primarily to experiment with their identity (which occurs far less frequently) experience weaker self-concept clarity.”

Most Americans communicate using mobile devices; however, Gen Z users may spend the majority of their time communicating and interacting on social media platforms. Researching

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<sup>127</sup> Claire Milburn, “The Development of Marching Band Traditions at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: The Human Jukebox versus the Sonic Boom of the South,” *Journal of historical research in music education*, 43, no. 2 (2022): 224.

<sup>128</sup> Richard Rutter, Stuart Roper, Fiona Lettice, “Social Media Interaction, The University Brand and Recruitment Performance,” *Journal of Business Research*, Volume 69, Issue 8, 2016, Pages 3096-3104, ISSN 0148-2963, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.01.025>.

<sup>129</sup> Michael Dimock, “Defining Generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins,” *Pew Research Center*, Jan 17, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

Gen Z HBCU students reveals the phenomenon of social media addiction. Matsuzaka, Avery, and Stanton found that social media use integration is positively associated with social media addiction among black women at the average age of 24.<sup>131</sup> Additionally, research suggests that relative to White Americans, Black Americans report a greater use of social media, with women reporting a greater use than men.<sup>132</sup>

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposes that individuals adopt new technology based on its use and perceived ease of use and usefulness.<sup>133</sup> Also, the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) posits that cognitive and behavioral factors combine to influence an individual's social behaviors.<sup>134</sup> Larose, Lin, and Eastin determined that past social media usage experiences and individuals' deficient self-regulation determined social media use.<sup>135</sup> Additionally, research has neglected to account for users' ability to use current technology for information and entertainment. According to Larose and Eastin, Internet self-efficacy is a powerful predictor of Internet usage.<sup>136</sup>

Recent research from the Pew Research Center identifies Americans' Social Media Use for 2021 and provides statistics for their research. According to Gottfried of the Pew Research

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<sup>131</sup> S Matsuzaka, Avery, L. R., & Stanton, A. G., "Black Women's Social Media Use Integration and Social Media Addiction," *Social Media Society*, 9(1), <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221148977>.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Angelili Nikolinakoum Joe Phua, and Eun Sook Kwon, "What Drives Addiction on Social Media Sites" The Relationships Between Psychological Well-Being States, Social Media Addiction, Brand Addiction, and Impulse Buying on Social Media, *Computers in Human Behavior*, Volume 153, April, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2023.108086>.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

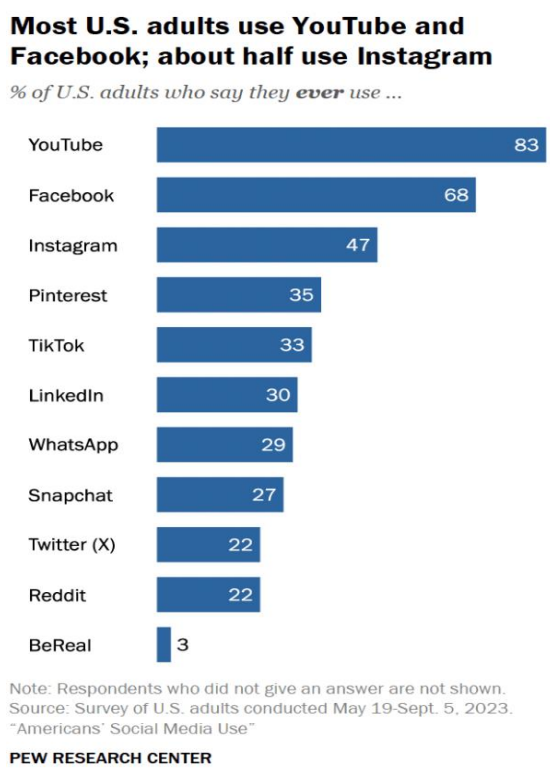
<sup>135</sup> R. Larose, D. Mastro, M.S. Eastin, "Understanding Internet Usage: Social Cognitive Approach to Uses and Gratifications, *Social Science Computer Review*, 19 (4), 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1177/089443930101900401>.

<sup>136</sup> R. Larose, D. Mastro, M.S. Eastin, "Understanding Internet Usage: Social Cognitive Approach to Uses and Gratifications, *Social Science Computer Review*, 19 (4), 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1177/089443930101900401>.

Center, “YouTube and Facebook are by far the most used platforms among U.S. adults.”<sup>137</sup>

However, 78% of adults 18 -29 use Instagram. Figures 7, 8, and 9 show the most recent research on social media users by usage, age, and education.<sup>138</sup>

Figure 8 Social Media Statistics 2024



<sup>137</sup> Jeffrey Gottfried, “Americans’ Social Media Use,” *Pew Research Center*, January 31, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2024/01/31/americans-social-media-use/>.

<sup>138</sup> Jeffrey Gottfried, “Americans’ Social Media Use,” *Pew Research Center*, January 31, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2024/01/31/americans-social-media-use/>.

Figure 9 Social Media Usage by Age

### Who uses each social media platform?

Usage of the major online platforms varies by factors such as age, gender and level of formal education.

% of U.S. adults who say they ever use \_\_\_ by ...

AGE	GENDER	RACE & ETHNICITY	INCOME	EDUCATION	COMMUNITY	POLITICAL AFFILIATION
Facebook	67	75	69	58		
Instagram	78	59	35	15		
LinkedIn	32	40	31	12		
Twitter (X)	42	27	17	6		
Pinterest	45	40	33	21		
Snapchat	65	30	13	4		
YouTube	93	92	83	60		
WhatsApp	32	38	29	16		
Reddit	44	31	11	3		
TikTok	62	39	24	10		
BeReal	12	3	1	<1		

Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 19-Sept. 5, 2023.

Figure 10 Social Media Usage by Education

### Who uses each social media platform?

Usage of the major online platforms varies by factors such as age, gender and level of formal education.

% of U.S. adults who say they ever use \_\_\_ by ...

AGE	GENDER	RACE & ETHNICITY	INCOME	EDUCATION	COMMUNITY	POLITICAL AFFILIATION
Facebook	63	71	70			
Instagram	37	50	55			
LinkedIn	10	28	53			
Twitter (X)	15	24	29			
Pinterest	26	42	38			
Snapchat	26	32	23			
YouTube	74	85	89			
WhatsApp	25	23	39			
Reddit	14	23	30			
TikTok	35	38	26			
BeReal	3	4	4			

Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 19-Sept. 5, 2023.

## Chapter 3: Method

### Overview

This quantitative correlational research study examines the impact of an HBCU band's social media presence and engagement on how HBCU band students select the college band they wish to attend. It also explores what social media factors influence a student's decision to join an HBCU band. Furthermore, Credo's Social Learning Theory guides this research, in which socialization envisions an ordered change in a person's feelings and behaviors.<sup>139</sup> Socialization, as used in this context, occurs through social media applications. This research aims to understand HBCU students' feelings toward an HBCU band's social media presence and explore the correlation of social media followers to HBCU band enrollment. The research focuses on data collected from a survey administered to current HBCU band members with questions centered on social media post categories and platforms.

### Research Design

This study implemented a quantitative correlational method to explore the relationship between HBCU bands' social media presence and enrollment. The objective was to predict what social media factors influenced HBCU band enrollment by considering each student's age, major, and computer literacy. This research investigates the correlation between the independent variable of social media presence on platforms Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok and band enrollment and the dependent variable of HBCU band students. Furthermore, this research uses Pearson's correlation to show the strength of the linear relationship between each

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<sup>139</sup> Thomas E. Wren, "Social Learning Theory, Self-Regulation, and Morality." *Ethics* 92, no. 3 (1982): 411. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2380729>.

variable.<sup>140</sup> Although this research examines the strength of relationships between variables, it does not determine causal relationships.

### **Research Question and Null Hypothesis**

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between HBCU band enrollment and social media followers?

RQ2: How does post-engagement influence a student's decision to join an HBCU band?

The null hypotheses for this study were:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between HBCU band social media followers and HBCU band enrollment.

H<sub>2</sub>: There are no significant social media factors influencing students' selection of HBCU bands that may include the student's access to financial resources, school course offerings, location, popularity, and student academic success.

### **Setting and Participants**

#### **Setting**

The researcher procured data for this study by enlisting the participation of students currently enrolled in an HBCU band in Florida. Every survey was completed online using a QR code or hyperlink given to each participant. All research surveys were distributed to each student

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<sup>140</sup> K. Stewart, "Pearson's correlation coefficient," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, February 16, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pearsons-correlation-coefficient>.



by their band directors to ensure efficacy and equality. Email addresses were removed from each survey to ensure confidentiality.

### Participants

Current HBCU band members comprised the population for this research. The participants' enrollment years range from the first to the fifth year of college, and their majors vary across disciplines. The survey was voluntary and open to all students enrolled in an HBCU band. It was distributed to participants between 18 and 34; however, the results were provided by participants between 18 and 24. Additional feedback was provided by current high school and HBCU band directors. See the figures below for demographic details.

*Figure 11 Age Demographic*

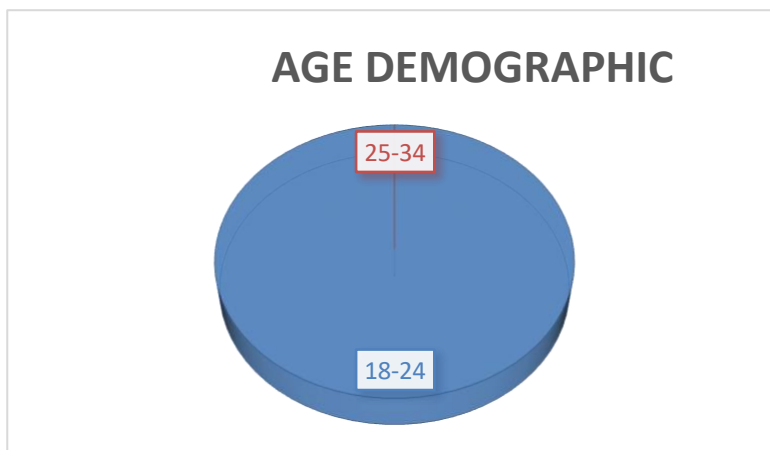


Figure 12 Classification.

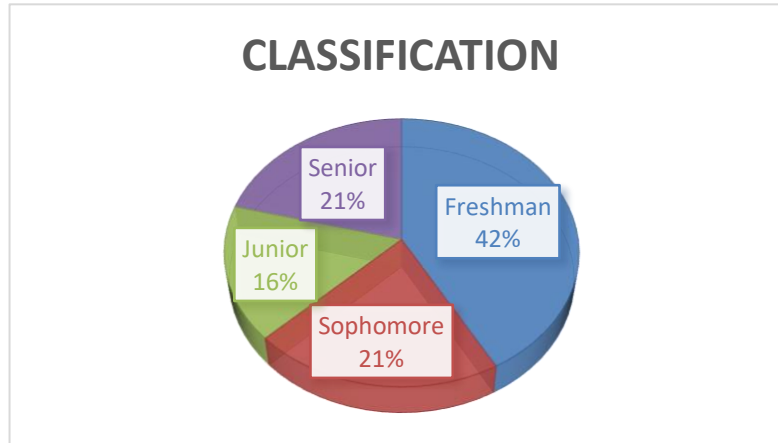


Figure 13 Gender.

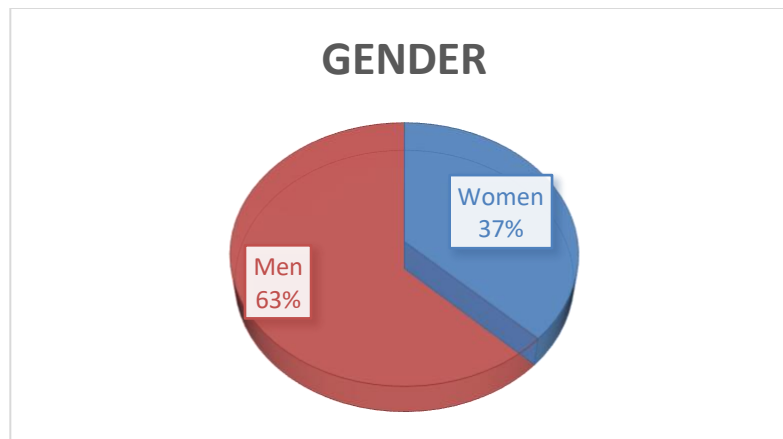


Figure 14 Major of Study

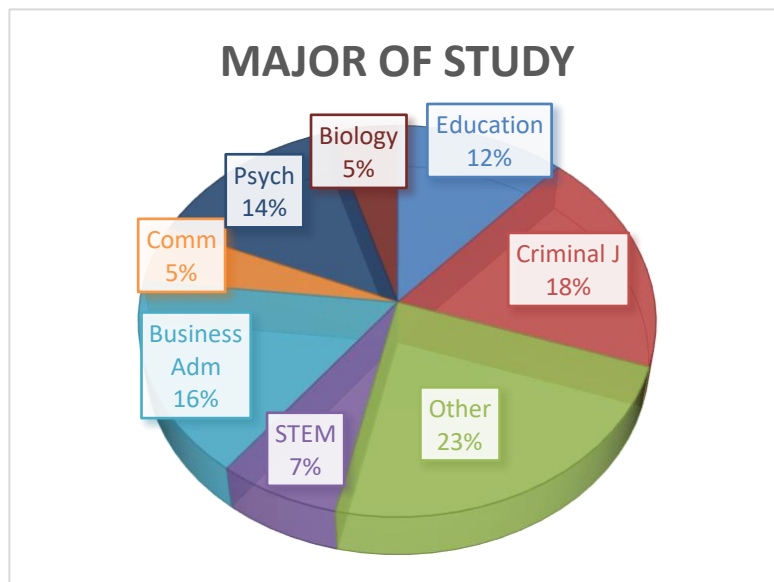
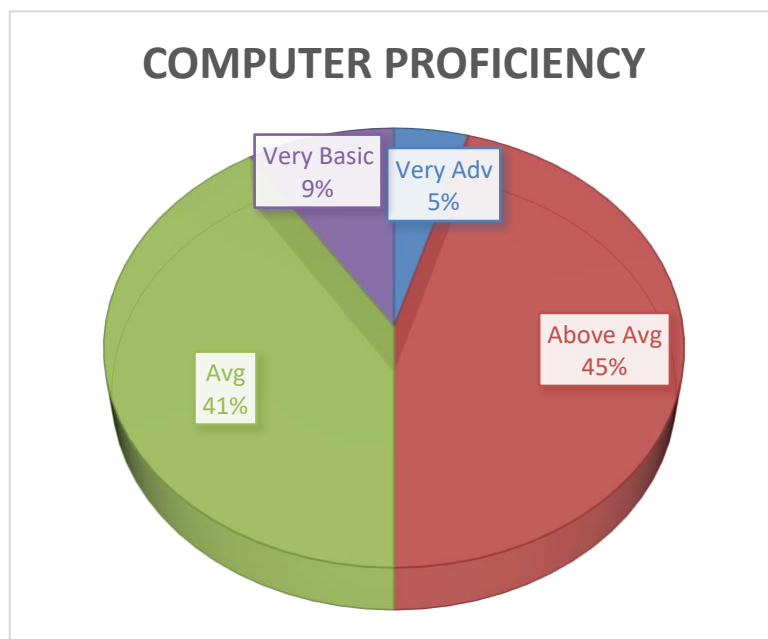


Figure 15 Computer Proficiency



## Instrumentation

The instruments used to complete the research and supplement the findings are an email interview and an online survey. The survey used in this research is a Likert-type scale measuring the attitudes of HBCU students and an email interview for current high school and HBCU band directors. The Likert Scale, named after social scientist Reniss Likert, devised the scientific approach in 1932.<sup>141</sup> According to Jamieson, Likert scales are used widely in social and educational research. Likert or Likert-type scales are considered an alternative to the Thurstone approach to measuring attitudes.

According to Berstein:

Likert presents an example using proportions of 0.13, 0.43, 0.21, 0.13, and 0.10 in five categories. Thurstone's method generates cited values of  $-1.63$ ,  $-0.43$ ,  $+0.43$ ,  $+0.99$ , and  $+1.76$  using a simplified algorithm described in Thurstone's original article. A close approximation to these values may be obtained by (1) adding the proportion of observations below a given interval and one-half the proportion within the given interval and (2) converting this sum of proportions to a  $z$  score. In the case of the second interval, the result is the  $z$  score corresponding to  $0.13 + 0.5 \times 0.43$  or  $0.345$ , which is  $-0.40$ . Likert's scaling method was simpler—give unit scores to the categories.<sup>142</sup>

However, the researcher must consider scale size, direction, and the derived data's ordinal nature.<sup>143</sup> Bratton and Hale write, "The Likert scale is built on the premise that groups of related questions measure a subject's attitudes about an issue addressed by those questions."<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> S. Jamieson, "Likert scale," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, February 23, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Likert-Scale>.

<sup>142</sup> Ira H. Bernstein, "Likert Scale Analysis," *Encyclopedia of Social Measurement*, 497, 2005, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-12-369398-5/00104-3>.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> Katherine A Batterton, and Kimberly N. Hale, "The Likert Scale What It Is and How To Use It," *Phalanx* 50, no. 2 (2017): 32, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26296382>.

Likert's survey uses several formats; however, this research uses a five-point Likert-type response. Each response is measured from zero to five, with 0 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. A Likert-type response reflects ordinal data used to make statistical measurements.<sup>145</sup> Figure 16 illustrates a Likert-type response. This study uses the scale type illustrated in Figure 16 and reflects the attitudes about the influence of HBCU band's social media presence. The results in this research are compared using parametric statistical methods. For the present study, each participant spent at least five minutes to complete.

Figure 16. Illustration of a Likert-Type Response

EXAMPLE OF A FIVE-POINT LIKERT SCALE				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Dr. Geoff Norman, an expert in the field of medical education research methodology, reveals the validity of Likert-type scale data through research using real and simulated data.

According to Sullivan and Artino:

Educators and researchers also commonly create several Likert-type items, group them into a "survey scale," and then calculate a total score or mean score for the scale items. Often, this practice is recommended, particularly when researchers are attempting to measure less concrete concepts, such as trainee motivation, patient satisfaction, and physician confidence—where a single survey item is unlikely to be capable of fully capturing the concept being assessed.<sup>146</sup>

Over the years, experts have argued that researchers should use the median as the central tendency for Likert scale data. However, other experts contend that if there is an adequate

<sup>145</sup> Katherine A Batterton, and Kimberly N. Hale, "The Likert Scale What It Is and How To Use It," *Phalanx* 50, no. 2 (2017): 32, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26296382>.

<sup>146</sup> Gail M, Sullivan, and Anthony R. Artino Jr., "Analyzing and Interpreting Data from Likert-type Scales," *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, vol. 5, 4, 2013, 541-2, doi:10.4300/JGME-5-4-18.

sample size of at least five to ten observations per group, parametric tests can be used with Likert scale ordinal data.<sup>147</sup>

### Procedures

Liberty University's IRB approval was needed before collecting data for this research study. Appendix A of this document contains a copy of the IRB approval letter. Upon approval, the researcher issued a recruitment letter to several HBCU band directors. Afterward, the band directors shared the link to the survey through Band App, a media app that allows directors to create personal media accounts, similar to Facebook. However, this app is used exclusively to communicate with members of each band.

Additionally, an administrator must give users access to each group on the app. The band directors communicated through the Band App to each participant that participation was voluntary and non-compensating. The survey was open for two weeks after the band directors shared the link in the app. This research includes data from HBCU students enrolled in the Spring of 2024.

The researcher used a Likert-style survey as the principal tool for collecting data. The researcher strategically organized and scaffolded the survey questions to assist users in providing responses that would support the research needed to answer the research questions. The survey questions reflect demographic data, social media platform usage, and users' computer proficiency, providing additional research study results. Matanda and Mawere also present that online surveys and questionnaires are the preferred collection tools in quantitative research.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ephraim Matanda, and Munyaradzi Mawere, "Quantitative Research Designs," In *Research Methods and Statistics for Cross-Cutting Research: Handbook for Multidisciplinary Research*, 69, Langaa RPCIG, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2z6qds4.9>.

In order to maintain the confidentiality of each participant, their email addresses and names were not included in the data collection process. Additionally, each participant was asked to complete the survey by their band director and use their personal electronic device. Each respondent was asked to indicate their level of agreement with each item in the survey by selecting a response from 1 (extremely unimportant) to 5 (extremely important). Sample items from this scale include brand reputation, post engagement, and social media content quality. The email questions for the band directors were limited to the following questions:

1. Are you a band director of a public or private school
2. What demographic do you serve?
3. How long have you served in your current position?
4. How does your band utilize social media?
5. Briefly state why you believe that a band's social media presence is important when selecting an HBCU band.

The researcher collected the survey data using Microsoft Forms and exported the data to Excel for analysis after the study. The researcher organized and transferred the data into figures that can be displayed in the research study. The survey data was kept on a personal server and password protected.

The researcher used Google to locate and determine if each HBCU band has an existing and active social media account for Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Afterward, the researcher located each HBCU band used in this study's social media pages and recorded the followers and estimated band members for each page. Although most band directors did not respond to email inquiries, estimated enrollment data was acquired through visual social media

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data. The researcher placed each band's estimated enrollment data and followers into a table in Microsoft Word and completed a Pearson Correlation test.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher utilized the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation technique to construct and analyze the statistical data found in the surveys. The researcher also used the Pearson technique to measure a correlation between band enrollment and social media followers and the relationship between HBCU students' social media preferences and what HBCU band program they would join. Cozzarelli and Karafa utilized the Pearson method when reporting a correlation of two items of interest using a 7-point Likert-type scale. They computed the scores by averaging across responses to individual items.<sup>149</sup> Using this method, Cozzarelli and Karafa also found that the two items were positively correlated,  $r(154) = .76, p < .001$ .<sup>150</sup> In addition to the study mentioned above, Creswell states that the Pearson method is the most appropriate for reporting the statistics in this research due to its ability to show the magnitude and direction of association between two variables measured on a scale.<sup>151</sup>

The researcher performed a Pearson Correlation Test in Microsoft Excel using the data from band enrollment and social media followers for each Division of HBCU bands and the data collected from the surveys. The researcher used the formula =PEARSON(B2:B11, C2:C11) to calculate the coefficient (  $r$  ). According to Turney, a value between 0 and 1 represents a positive

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<sup>149</sup> Catherine Cozzarelli and Joseph A. Karafa, "Cultural Estrangement and Terror Management Theory," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 1998 24:3, 256. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167298243003>.

<sup>150</sup> Susan E. Morgan, Tom Reichert, and Tyler R. Harrison, *From Numbers to Words : Reporting Statistical Results for the Social Sciences*, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017.

<sup>151</sup> John W. Creswell, and J. David Creswell, *Research Design :Qualitative and Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2018), 159.



correlation, while a value between 0 and -1 represents a negative correlation.<sup>152</sup>  $N$  represents the number of pairs in the test, and its value is calculated using the formula  $=\text{COUNT}(C2:C11)$ . The formula for the T statistic is  $=(F3*(\text{SQRT}(F4-2)))/(\text{SQRT}(1-F3^2))$ . The degree of freedom (DF) is  $F4-2$ . The P value is determined using the formula  $=\text{TDIST}(F5, F6,2)$  using a two-tailed test.

The researcher also created scatter plots to determine if relationships existed between the variables. Additionally, the researcher performed a Pearson Correlation Test in Microsoft Excel using the data collected from the surveys to determine if relationships existed between each response. After performing each Pearson Correlation test, the researcher found evidence to refute assumptions between social media followers and band enrollment, while additional tests support a relationship between HBCU students' social media preferences and what HBCU band program they would join.

### **Summary**

This research aims to quantify the relationship between an HBCU's social media presence and the band a student would potentially join. This relationship may exist through social media popularity, brand awareness, and the quality of posts. This chapter summarizes the procedures to achieve a substantive argument supporting the researcher's assumptions. Additionally, it presents the instrumentation and methods used to conduct this research.

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<sup>152</sup> Shaun Turney, "Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) | Guide & Examples, *Scribbr*, May 13, 2022, [https://www.scribbr.com/statistics/pearson-correlation-coefficient/#:~:text=The%20Pearson%20correlation%20coefficient%20\(r,the%20relationship%20between%20two%20variables.&text=When%20one%20variable%20changes%2C%20the,changes%20in%20the%20same%20direction.](https://www.scribbr.com/statistics/pearson-correlation-coefficient/#:~:text=The%20Pearson%20correlation%20coefficient%20(r,the%20relationship%20between%20two%20variables.&text=When%20one%20variable%20changes%2C%20the,changes%20in%20the%20same%20direction.)

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

### **Overview**

This quantitative research study analyzes the strength of HBCU band's social media trends and student engagement. This study also compares enrollment in HBCU bands to students' interest in HBCU band's social media sites. A survey given to current HBCU band students using Microsoft Forms demonstrates the relationship between HBCU band social media presence and student interactions. Email interviews provide relevant examples of social media's influence on their student's choice to join an HBCU band.

### **Research Question and Null Hypothesis**

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ<sub>1</sub>: Is there a relationship between HBCU band enrollment and social media followers?

RQ<sub>2</sub>: How does post-engagement influence a student's decision to join an HBCU band?

The null hypotheses for this study were:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between HBCU band social media followers and HBCU band enrollment.

H<sub>2</sub>: There are no significant social media factors influencing students' selection of HBCU bands that may include the student's access to financial resources, school course offerings, location, popularity, and student academic success.

### **Results**

The researcher included current HBCU band students as the demographic in this research. Students were given a Likert-type quantitative survey link by their band director and

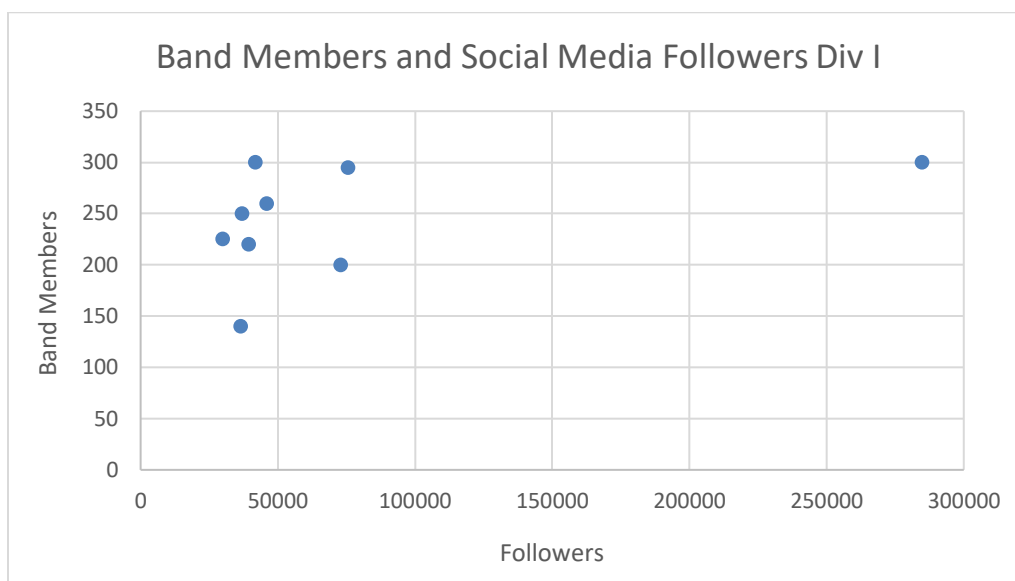
completed it anonymously. The students were ages 18-25 and first through fifth-year HBCU band students (see Figure 12). The researcher received the results from the survey through Microsoft Forms and exported the data into Microsoft Excel for analysis. The researcher used the 10 Division I HBCU bands to test the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between HBCU band social media followers and HBCU band enrollment. The Pearson Test for Division I results revealed a coefficient of less than  $(r) < 1$ , confirming  $H_1$ . The descriptive statistics for Division I are shown in Figure 17.

*Figure 17 Descriptive Statistics for Division I*

Descriptive Statistics for Division I	
Coefficient (r):	0.035749985
N:	10
T Statistic	0.101180905
DF:	8
P Value:	0.92189678

A scatter plot, shown in Figure 18, was created using the band member enrollment and social media followers data in Figure 6 to show the relationship between the variables and support RQ<sub>1</sub>. Figure 18 displays the estimated band members and social media followers for HBCU bands in Division I. Furthermore, upon analysis, all pairs in Figure 18 reveal a non-linear connection between Division I's social media followers and band members.

Figure 18 Band Members and Social Media Followers

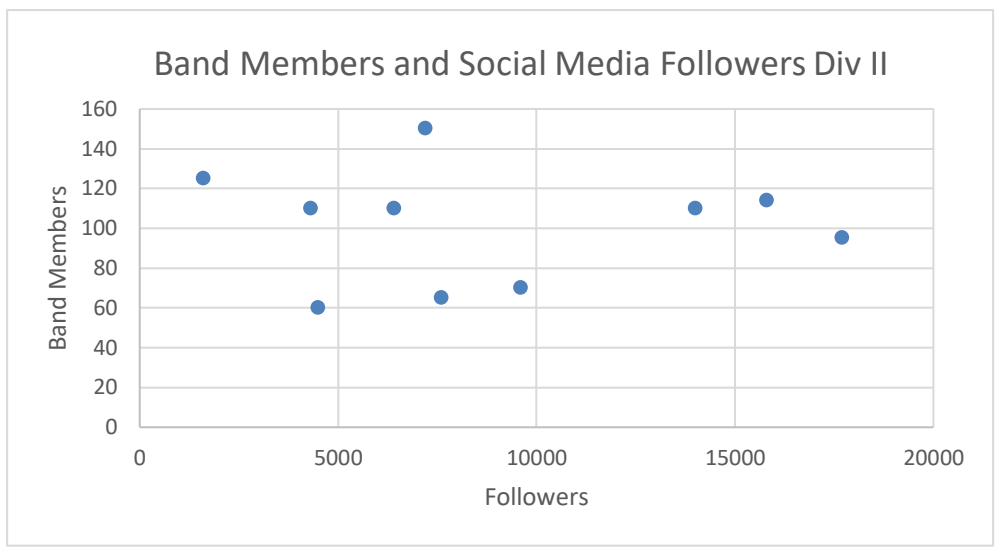


Division II bands were tested in the same manner as Division I. The Pearson Test for Division II results revealed a coefficient of less than  $(r) < 1$ , also confirming  $H_1$ . Figure 19 demonstrates the descriptive statistics for Division II. Figure 20 displays the estimated band members and social media followers for HBCU bands in Division II. Figure 20 also reveals no relationship between social media followers and band enrollment in Division II. The P value is absent in Division II, as the results indicated a strong negative correlation between band members and social media followers. Moreover, all pairs in Figure 19 reveal a non-linear connection between Division II's social media followers and band members.

Figure 19 Descriptive Statistics for Division II

Descriptive Statistics for Division II	
Coefficient (r):	-0.024850686
N:	10
T Statistic	-0.070310067
DF:	8

Figure 20 Band Members and Social Media Followers Div II



The researcher’s Likert-type quantitative survey data was analyzed in Excel and revealed evidence to refute H<sub>2</sub>. When selecting an HBCU Band program to join, students in the survey were asked 19 questions about how much each social media factor matters to them. The survey questions were also scaffolded to answer R<sub>2</sub> regarding the influence of post-engagement. The survey revealed that the most frequent response to HBCU band post-engagement was somewhat important and extremely important, and it directly addressed R<sub>2</sub>.

This chapter reveals several key social media factors from the survey; however, Appendix B of this research lists the complete survey questions and responses. Figure 21 displays the survey question results on post-engagement, and Figure 22 displays where students gain awareness about each HBCU band program.

Figure 21 Post-Engagement

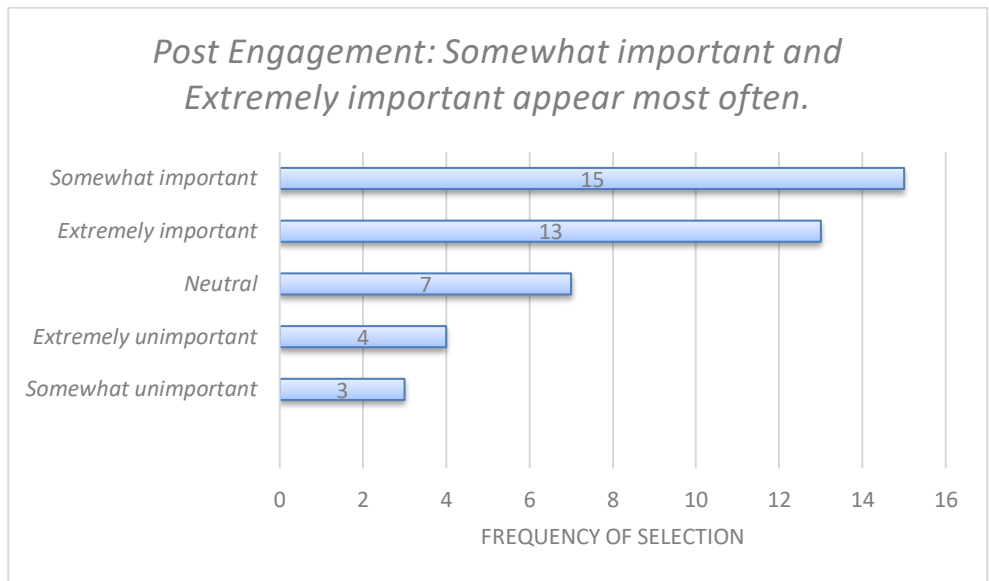
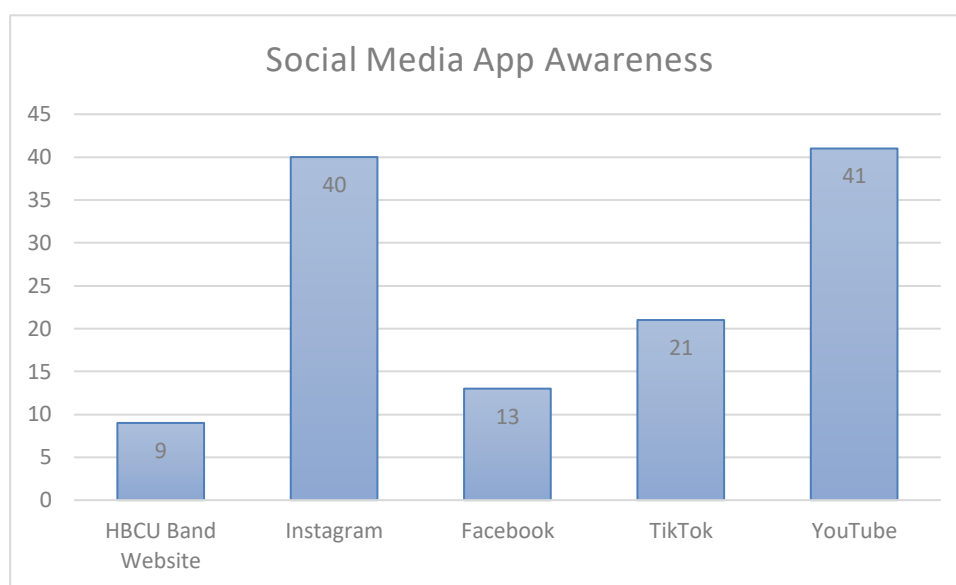


Figure 22 shows the results of the survey on social media app awareness. The survey revealed that the most popular social media platforms for HBCU band students to gain awareness of band programs are YouTube and Instagram. TikTok, the newest platform, is third, followed by Facebook and HBCU websites. Although the results are anonymous, two students submitted extended responses to express their rationale for using social media apps to learn about HBCU bands.

*Figure 22 Social Media App Awareness*



Student A states that:

Social media has allowed band heads (band enthusiasts) from all over the country to view any band-related events they are not fortunate enough to attend. Since social media has become a platform to watch band-related events, it also gives potential collegiate students an unlimited range of footage from which to view any band program, regardless of group size or location. The footage that students can access can either convince you to go somewhere or not. Having a social media presence is beneficial for the existence of bands. For example, our school is a small private university that is not as popular as other schools. However, because of social media, our content spreads in areas we would not be known in and helps our directors recruit new students.

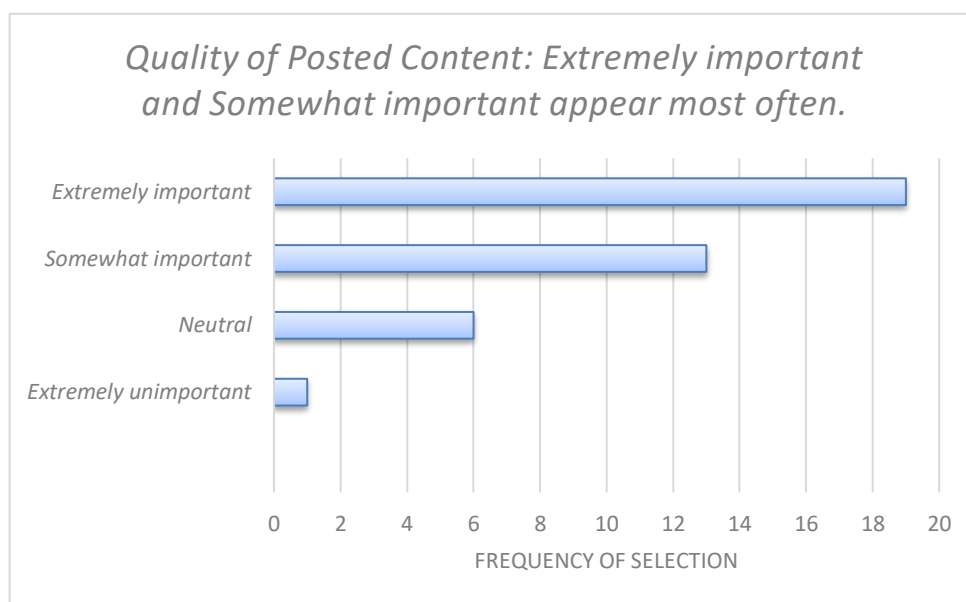
Student B states that:

Bands with a strong social media presence help their program reach more people and students than other methods. Social media allows more students to like and want to potentially join your program. It is also a quick and effective way for students to receive information about auditions and performances near their hometowns.

Other social media metrics discussed in the survey were the quality of the posted content, showcasing musicianship, playing new music, and brand and reputation. The results of each social media factor are listed in Figures 23, 24, 25, and 26.

Student's responses showed that the quality of posted social media content matters most when selecting an HBCU band. Extremely important is the most frequent response, and extremely unimportant is the least frequent response. The results are illustrated in Figure 23.

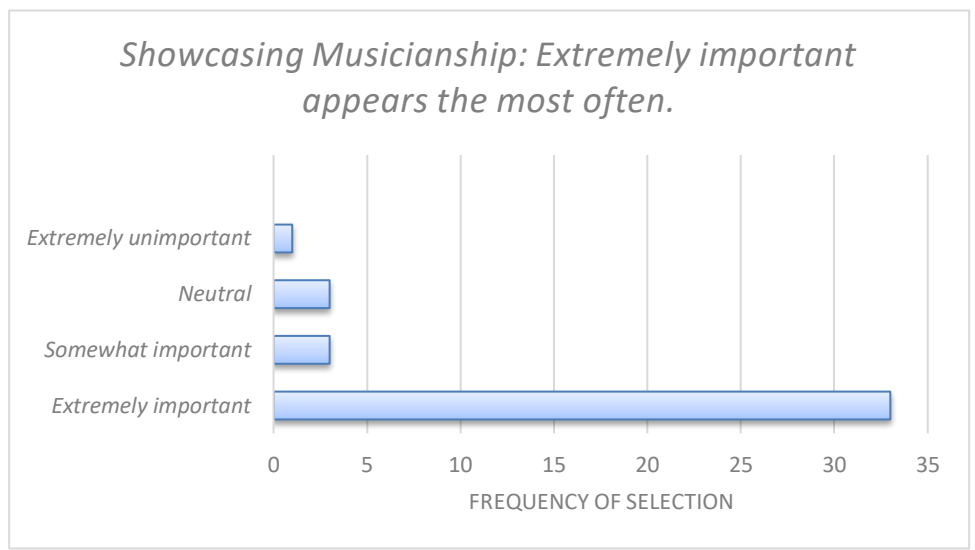
*Figure 23 Quality of Posted Media Content*





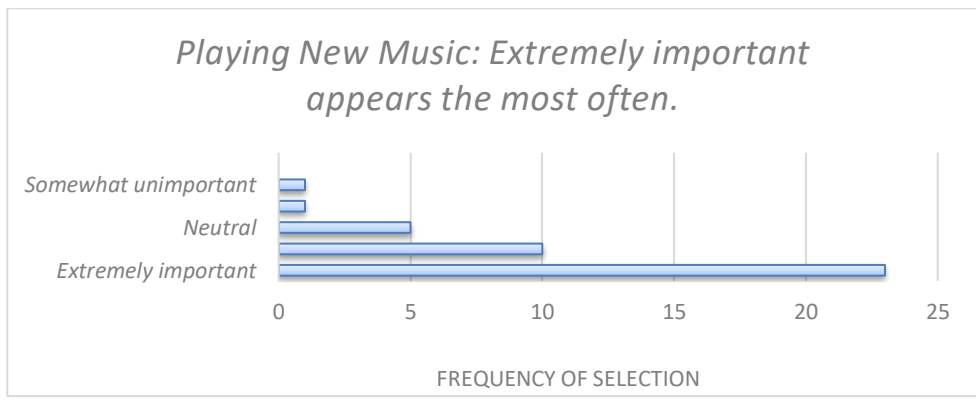
HBCU band students showed showcasing musicianship as extremely important when selecting an HBCU band to join. The most selected response by participants is extremely important. Less than five participants were neutral or viewed showcasing musicianship as extremely unimportant. Figure 24 illustrates the results for musicianship.

Figure 24 Showcasing Musicianship



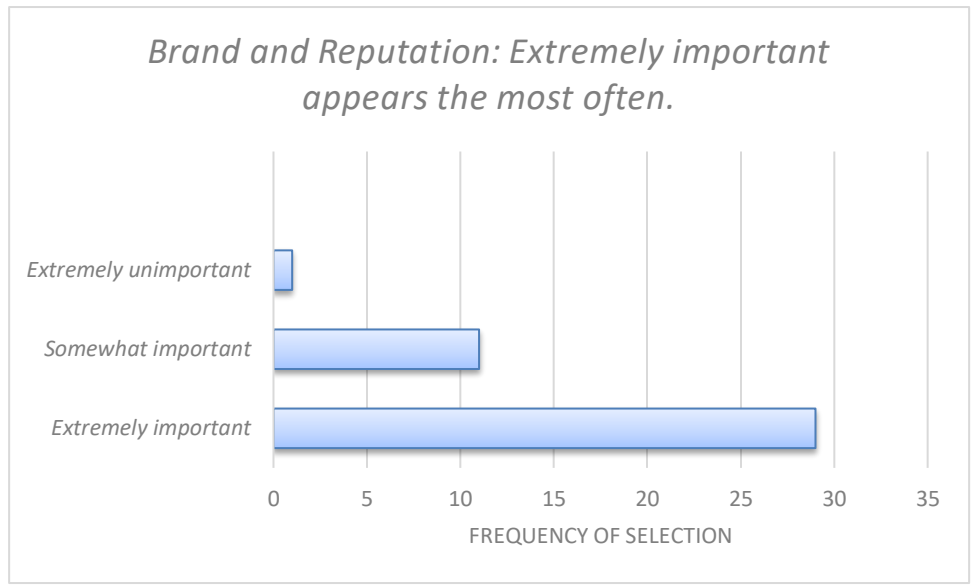
The survey further revealed that showcasing playing new music is extremely important to participants when joining an HBCU band. Ten or fewer participants chose the response as somewhat important, neutral, or extremely unimportant. Figure 25 illustrates the responses to the survey question, showcasing playing new music.

Figure 25 Playing New Music



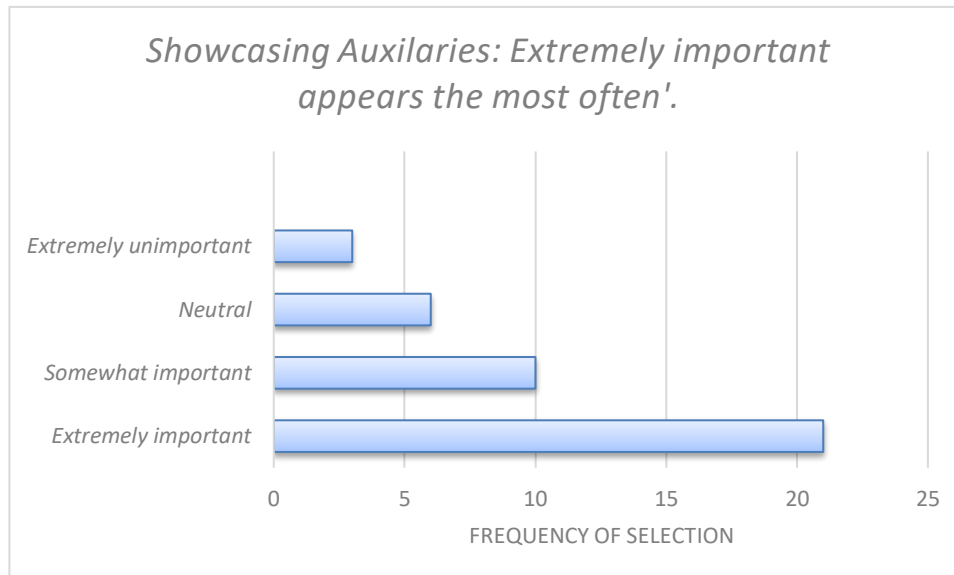
Additionally, the survey revealed that an institution's brand and reputation were extremely important to participants when joining an HBCU band. 11 or fewer participants selected somewhat important or extremely unimportant. Figure 26 illustrates the responses to the survey question, Brand and Reputation.

Figure 26 Brand and Reputation



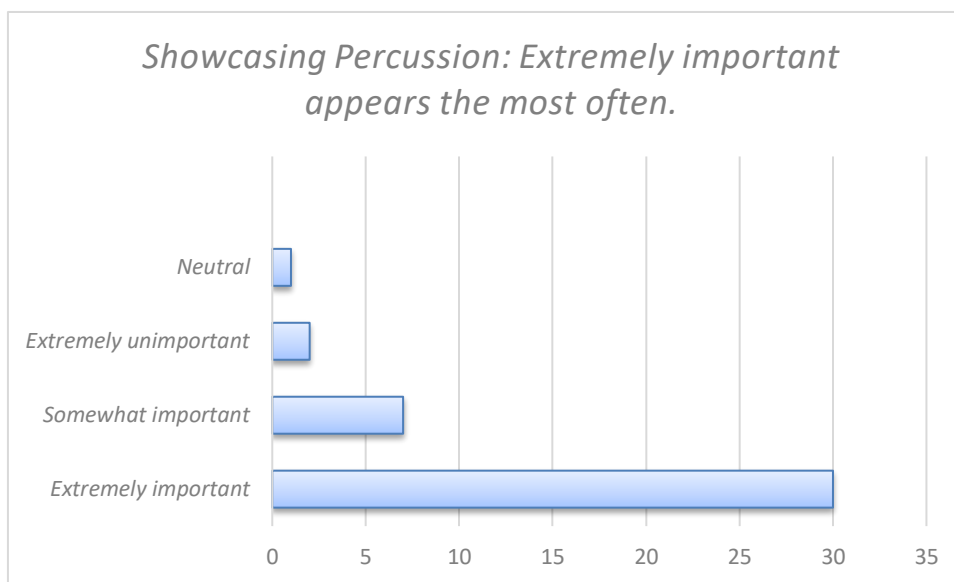
The selection extremely important, appeared as the most frequent response for showcasing auxiliaries. Ten or fewer participants selected somewhat important, neutral, or extremely unimportant. Figure 27 illustrates the responses to the survey question, showcasing auxiliaries.

*Figure 27 Showcasing Auxiliaries*



Showcasing the percussion section and showcasing musicianship appeared in the results from the survey as the most important social media factor for HBCU band students, with showcasing musicianship showing a frequency of selection of 32 and showcasing percussion at 30. Figure 28 illustrates the responses to the survey question, showcasing percussion.

*Figure 28 Showcasing Percussion*



### **Email Interviews**

Six current band directors provided written email responses concerning their experiences with the influence of social media in their band programs. Each band director's identity is kept confidential to avoid risks associated with participation in this research. Participants will be identified as Band directors A, B, C, D, E, and F. The following is a transcription of each participant's responses to each question.

Band director A enthusiastically shares his experiences with the influence of social media on the students in his band. Band director A states:

1. *Are you a band director of a public or private school?* A public high school and a private university.
2. *What demographic do you serve?* Middle-class high school and low socioeconomic university students.
3. *How long have you served in your current position?* About 14 years.
4. *How does your band utilize social media?* My band program has someone in place who runs all of our social media accounts, which allows me to focus primarily on running the band. We use our platforms to send out announcements to events we will participate in, fundraisers, and highlighting different facets of our program.
5. *Briefly state why you believe that a band's social media presence is important when selecting an HBCU band.*

I believe people want to be a part of something that is already great. Some may want to help make it better, while few want to be the reason it is great. For example, when shopping, you want the best for your money. Your band's social media presence is the most effective way to market and advertise your band program. Whether the program is great or on its way to greatness. The consumers (students) are always on social media, and seeing is believing. To the point of saying that if you did not post it, it did not happen! In short, when you can advertise your program to the consumer, they can see if they like it, and it builds the desire to want to join. Without it, you

will simply be pulling kids in out of the hallways the old way, and we know that is a struggle!<sup>153</sup>

Band Director B also shares his experiences with the influence of social media on the students in his band program. Band director B states:

1. *Are you a band director of a public or private school?* A private university
2. *What demographic do you serve?* Predominantly Black or African American, #4 HBCU according to US News and World Report.
3. *How long have you served in your current position?* In my second year here, but education for about ten years.
4. *How does your band utilize social media?* Our band's social media accounts are fairly new, so we do not have much content yet. However, our goal is to promote everything that our band does. We can also send out recruitment information through our social media platforms.
5. *Briefly state why you believe that a band's social media presence is important when selecting an HBCU band.* Social media provides an insight into what their experience may be like when they arrive at said university. It is simple math; people like things they can see and connect with. Kids want to be a part of something great! If you look at the band programs with the bigger social media followings, you will notice that their bands are bigger than bands with smaller followers and have higher performance

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<sup>153</sup> Interview with an HBCU band director, July 8, 2024.

quality than bands who do not. Kids these days are all about right now; you have to stay relevant.<sup>154</sup>

Band director C also shares his experiences with the influence of social media on the students in his band program. Band director C states:

1. *Are you a band director of a public or private school?* Public middle school and Private university.
2. *What demographic do you serve?* Primarily white or caucasian middle school suburban students and predominantly black HBCU.
3. *How long have you served in your current position?* Third year in public school and fourth year in a private HBCU.
4. *How does your band utilize social media?* Due to my being fairly new here, my public school band does not have a social media account yet, but my goal is to establish a presence this year. However, the university that I work for has a social media presence. We use it like most bands, posting cadences, halftime shows, and auxiliary clips.
5. *Briefly state why you believe that a band's social media presence is important when selecting an HBCU band.* Social media is the easiest way for HBCU bands to connect with their audience. This is the first line of visual confirmation a person has when deciding on what band to choose. If I am telling a student about our institution/band and they ask "who," that tells me we have not impacted them enough on today's

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<sup>154</sup> Interview with an HBCU band director, July 10, 2024.

media platforms either because there is not any content or not enough.<sup>155</sup> Developing new content each week during peak football season is extremely important, even if it is something small like a sectional fanfare or how-to-tune drums; keeping people engaged is the key.

Band Director D also shares his experiences with the influence of social media on the students in his band program. Band director D states:

1. *Are you a band director of a public or private school?* Public school
2. *What demographic do you serve?* The majority are black or African-American, and they are from the lower to upper middle class.
3. *How long have you served in your current position?* About 16 years.
4. *How does your band utilize social media?* My school uses social media to make announcements to parents, fans, advertise, and almost everything. It is the easiest way to get information to a lot of people at one time.
5. *Briefly state why you believe that a band's social media presence is important when selecting an HBCU band. Social media provides.* Social media provides a potential recruit with a glimpse into how active a program is, how popular it is, and whether values align. Social media now allows for programs to build fan bases of all ages so that recruitment can start with students at an earlier age. The more active you are online, the more people you can possibly influence to join your program. Currently, the most popular HBCU and high school bands have media teams. As a band director, you can not do all the work yourself; having that media team supporting you helps showcase multiple aspects of your program to the world. Additionally, you can be

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<sup>155</sup> Interview with an HBCU band director, July 11, 2024.



personable and interact with fans and potential recruits with contests, TikTok challenges, and recruitment opportunities. The opportunities are endless. Social media is your business card to the world.<sup>156</sup>

Band Director E also shares his experiences with the influence of social media on the students in his band program. Band director E states:

1. *Are you a band director of a public or private school?* Public school
2. *What demographic do you serve?* Majority African-American low socioeconomic students. I serve in a school that gets negative publicity in the mainstream media. However, our students defy the public perception and outshine schools with diverse demographics and socioeconomic advantages.
3. *How long have you served in your current position?* About 14 years.
4. *How does your band utilize social media?* I have been using social media to advertise and promote my band since I was hired. I always felt that if I made the image good enough, people would be interested and attracted to it, like a good movie trailer. Social media allows me to let everyone see the work we are doing in our building. The only drawback is that we may go viral for the wrong reasons. There was a time I can remember when my band was late to a football game because our buses were late. In addition to that, we were on yellow buses, so by the time we arrived at the game, it was seven minutes before halftime. The principal at the time was extremely upset that we were late and made us enter the stadium without warming up and straight to the stands. We played a low concert B flat for about 30 seconds before I received the death stare look from the principal. We had no choice but to play our first song so the

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<sup>156</sup> Interview with a public school band director, July 13, 2024.

dancers could show off their new costumes, which were very nice; however, the band sounded a mess. Needless to say, the dancers went viral for their costumes, and the band sounded so bad that people had to watch the video with the sound off. This is why being prepared is so important to instrumentalists; we never know who is recording or where the footage may end up.

5. *Briefly state why you believe that a band's social media presence is important when selecting an HBCU band.* Social media allows our high school band to showcase our talents to people who would not normally get to see and hear us perform. It is more important on the collegiate level as our students cannot travel to different cities and states to evaluate potential HBCU bands. As a kid, I had to wait until someone had the tape. My friends and I would exchange band tapes each week. However, it was still limited to our region. Current students can watch HBCU bands in real-time as often as they like or as much as the band they like posts content. Content is key to recruiting potential students and showcasing what you can offer them. If you do not post content, kids feel you do not exist. It does not mean that your program is not good. However, your program is not relevant to potential kids. There have been many instances where a student has asked me about a band that I am unfamiliar with. The first thing we do is pull up the bands' YouTube clips. If we cannot find anything, or the content that we do find is lackluster or low in views, the kids quickly dismiss the school as trash.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Interview with a public school band director, July 13, 2024.

Band Director F also shares his experiences with the influence of social media on the students in his band program. Band director F states:

1. *Are you a band director of a public or private school?* A public school
2. *What demographic do you serve?* A mixed diverse demographic.
3. *How long have you served in your current position?* I am in my third year here, but education for almost 20 years.
4. *How does your band utilize social media?* My band uses it to capture all the moments we create. That could be opening a new instrument, showing alternate fingerings, announcements, show clips, etc. It is all about how creative you can be with it.
5. *Briefly state why you believe that a band's social media presence is important when selecting an HBCU band.* It is about exposure. People are unaware of the many great programs that exist. Also, as a director, one should recruit as many as possible. The directors must sell their program to the public. In this new age of technology, it would be in one's interest to use these resources for the betterment of the band program.

### **Summary**

This study aimed to explore the social media factors that influence HBCU students to join band programs. The results in this chapter can significantly help HBCU band directors identify what social media factors drive students' decisions to join an HBCU band. Social media metrics are evolving and becoming more accessible to users. When used properly, social media metrics can be used as data to inform and assist directors with making executive marketing and recruiting decisions.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

### **Overview**

The use of modern technology has changed the way that we communicate personally and educationally. Band directors face the challenges of standing out and gaining the attention of potential band members amongst other popular social media accounts. This research explores the social media factors influencing HBCU band students to join a particular band program. This study aimed to quantify the potential factors that motivate HBCU band students to like, follow, and share content from HBCU bands and potentially join those programs. The researcher used a correlational method to determine if any relationships exist between the number of social media followers and band enrollment. The researcher also surveyed band directors and HBCU band students to determine what social media factors influence their decisions.

### **Discussion**

Two research questions guided this research. RQ<sub>1</sub>, whether there is a relationship between HBCU band enrollment and social media followers, addresses the gap in research about the influence of social media on HBCU band enrollment. Although the research question does not prove causal effects, it opens the conversation about the possibilities of social media usage in recruitment and marketing strategies for HBCU bands. Furthermore, this research can add substantive feedback to band directors seeking to increase their enrollment through social media marketing strategies directly related to the interests of current HBCU band students.

The survey questions that address RQ<sub>1</sub> explore students' interests but do not establish a cause for the relationship between social media followers and band enrollment.

Additionally, the null hypothesis stated that no significant relationship exists between social media followers and band enrollment. The results from the research conducted for RQ<sub>1</sub> reveal no

significant relationship between social media followers. Although some bands have large followers, it cannot be proven that their enrollment is directly related to their number of social media followers. Although some implications can be made regarding why HBCU band enrollment does not align directly with social media followers, this research focuses on verifiable research. Furthermore, while factors such as financial aid, administrative, and alumni support could also influence the growth or lack of growth for an HBCU band program, they were not considered variables in this study. In order to draw a scientific conclusion, this research focused primarily on the most relevant data available online and in person.

Since the average college-aged student was born during the technology age, it makes sense to market to them methods that they use on a daily basis. With this in mind, HBCU bands must stand out amongst the many HBCUs with similar offerings. Being creative with social media platforms can allow bands to influence students to follow their brand. As a band becomes more relevant on social media, its content can be shared with other people with the same interests, creating excitement to where the public anticipates seeing their favorite band's performances.

According to Simone:

Most musicians and band directors would agree that unique culture, talent, and techniques make the sound of an HBCU band stand out. "You know, the march from the band room to the stadium is just, it is nothing like it. The fans are on the side of you cheering with the pom poms, you know," said Newton. The junior, a second-year Human Jukebox trombone player, said HBCU bands are a recruitment tool for the school. "We are the ambassadors of the school, so everybody wants to see what we are going to do," said Newton.

Although bands may be popular and band members consider them to be recruitment for their school, other factors may influence the recruitment and retention of band members. This

researcher can also imply from the survey data that endorsements from major brands can positively impact enrollment, as 32% of the participants marked it as extremely important. For reference, when students see FAMU and Howard University band students adorned in their exclusive Jordan Brand and LeBron James apparel, new students may also like to have that same experience. Students can see these endorsements via social media platforms and begin following these bands based on their relationships with popular apparel brands. If other HBCU bands cannot offer comparable amenities, enrollment may suffer.

Educational leaders should consider students' interests in the survey data and use this research to improve their institution's marketability to potential students. Although educators may use data to drive instructional tasks, this research uses statistical data to solve and improve real-world social media marketing strategies specifically for band directors. Furthermore, band directors can use the questions used in this research to gain insights on attracting and retaining potential students in their band using social media platforms.

Additional research for RQ1 also revealed that the size of a band does not influence its popularity; however, the band's quality may impact its reception. Additionally, strategic social media marketing can influence fans and potential members to join their organization. Paid ads on Facebook and Instagram have also placed relatively unknown band programs into a marketing space that creates the perception that their bands are more relevant and popular than bands that did not use those forms of brand marketing. For example, Florida Memorial, a band founded in 2020, was selected to represent the United States in a Bandafolies festival in France in 2023.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Carolina Borges, "FMU Marching Band Reacts After Invitation to Perform at Festival Des Bandafolie in France," *7 News Miami*, July 11, 2023, <https://wsvn.com/news/local/miami-dade/fmu-marching-band-reacts-after-invitation-to-perform-at-festival-des-bandafolie-in-france/>.

This opportunity could not have been possible without the frequent usage of social media marketing campaigns designed to intrigue and attract fans and potential students. The international attention that Florida Memorial garnered from their France trip will surely influence potential students who are unsure about joining their band. Furthermore, the social media attention from this French performance can positively separate the Florida Memorial Band from bands of similar size and demographics.

RQ<sub>2</sub> poses what social media engagement factors influence a student's decision to join an HBCU band. The null hypothesis states that there are no significant factors influencing students' selection of HBCU bands that may include the student's access to financial resources, school course offerings, location, popularity, and student academic success. However, the results from the survey provide a comprehensive list of factors that influence a student's decision to join an HBCU band. Each survey question reveals the interests of current band members and can also assist directors in determining what to focus on when building their bands' social media platforms. Although the survey does not list every social media factor, band directors and students can benefit from learning how each factor may affect their bands' social media presence.

This researcher can imply that the quality of social media content can affect the enrollment of an HBCU band. According to the survey data, 46% of the participants felt that the quality of a band's social media content is extremely important. Although this data is not causal, it is worth considering for improving a band's public perception. According to Carly Lynn from Instagram's marketing team, one of the most important factors in reaching people is consistently

posting reels.<sup>159</sup> Reels are short videos of up to 90 seconds showcasing personal, unique content. The posts should be engaging, niche, and hook the audience within the first three seconds. Bands can share their content across social media platforms to increase their online presence.

The advantages of making frequent media content is that people can engage with the content, develop an awareness of the band, and possibly join the organization. Lynn also suggests that creators use high-resolution imagery when posting.<sup>160</sup> Most bands referenced in this study employ a professional media team that maintains their band's social media accounts. For band directors unfamiliar with technology or may not have the budget for professional videographers, a student with a good camera and editing software is comparable. The most important social media detail for directors is ensuring their content is readily accessible to potential students and supporters. The study has revealed that students are on their phones most of the day on social media platforms, so having relevant and engaging media content is extremely important in maintaining relevance in the HBCU band community.

Often, when bands are overwhelmed with rehearsals and performances, their band's social media account may fail to provide up-to-date content. With regards to this, social media accounts catering to HBCU bands have become popular in filling in the gap in the HBCU band community. With plentiful social media accounts on each platform, only those with the best quality and attention to detail garner the most views on their content. Band directors should

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<sup>159</sup> Carly Lynn, "How to Grow With Reels," *Creators@Instagram*, May 27, 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7fOmjMoaFa/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==](https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7fOmjMoaFa/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==).

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.



become familiar with the operators of these accounts and establish a rapport. The ability of these platforms to reach users in their market could help extend their reach to wider audiences.

The conversations from the email correspondence with current high school and HBCU band directors revealed similar views among each participant. The band directors' conversations align with the literature referenced in this chapter by Lynn from Instagram. Each participant strongly believes that social media can positively or negatively influence the perception of their bands to potential students. Furthermore, participants believe that HBCU bands are unknown to the general public without a social media presence. Although some bands may have been popular ten or twenty years ago, it does not necessarily mean they have maintained relevance amongst current band followers.

The survey results also revealed that 35% of the participants felt that the frequency of posts was extremely important. This information can be extremely valuable for directors who do not understand the power of social media. Some educators who are reluctant to learn new technology may find the results of this research useful in changing their views on the influence of emerging technology on students and their interests. The results also align with Lynn's statement, which shares research that reveals that successful content creators with the highest follower growth rates produce ten posts weekly.<sup>161</sup> This researcher can confidently conclude that some social media factors influence HBCU students to join a band.

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<sup>161</sup> Carly Lynn, "How to Grow With Reels," *Creators@Instagram*, May 27, 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7fOmjMoaFa/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==](https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7fOmjMoaFa/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==).

### **Limitations**

There are limitations to conducting this type of study. Convincing participants to complete the survey can prove to be a daunting task. Only individuals interested in HBCU bands beyond playing an instrument may choose to participate. Additionally, with the rigors of HBCU band rehearsals and academic courses, researchers must find time to solicit band directors and willing participants during their non-peak hours. Furthermore, knowing which school provided the data can also limit the data set, as some schools prefer not to share details that may alter the perception of their organizations, add personal bias to the study, and affect the validity of the survey responses.

Access to participants may also limit the results of replicating this study. Some researchers may have more access to participants than others, limiting the study's scope and reliability. Researchers with strong relationships in band communities may find greater success in obtaining research participants. Other factors like personal and business relationships and social climate may limit participants' responses. Additionally, the lack of access to participants to complete the survey questions on time may alter the results, as certain studied social media elements may change during the study.

Theoretically, the study is limited by the types of survey questions posed to the participants, potentially overlooking additional social media factors that may add validity to the study. Additionally, the primary researcher is responsible for securing all participants used in the study, limiting the range and demographic of data that could conceivably support or refute each research question. Furthermore, the majority of the participants in the study are from the state of Florida, limiting the experiences from other socioeconomic and regional social media perspectives.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study suggest several recommendations for future research. This researcher recommends the following:

- With scholarly articles on HBCU bands being scarce, this researcher recommends that future scholars add to the brevity of research on all HBCU bands. As each scholar develops new topics or adds to prior research, future students can access documents that can be studied and shared infinitely.
- Future scholars should focus on developing cross-curricular research methods, as this study also connects music education with evolving technology.
- Future studies can incorporate the newest social media platform each year and compare their usage with prior studies.
- Repeat the study with a larger sample group in a different state and demographic. Encouraging participation at large HBCU band events such as battle of the bands can greatly increase the validity of the research.
- The study can be conducted using high school students in the ninth grade and repeated with the same group at the end of their senior year. This two-part study can allow for baseline and post-test data used to answer a range of research questions.
- Conduct similar research using long answer written questions for online surveys and incorporate in-person interviews into the study.
- Consider various age groups when conducting similar research.
- Conduct similar survey questions to community members about the need for instrumental band programs in their communities.

## Conclusion

Social media platforms have arguably become the most used form of communication worldwide. As mentioned in this research, Americans spend an average of 4 hours and 30 minutes on their phones daily, with 67% of that time on social media.<sup>162</sup> With this in mind, music departments must take advantage of the percentage of time Americans spend on their phones. HBCU band directors are responsible for maintaining a positive and inviting public perception of their programs, and much of this is made possible with social media advertising. Whether bands are posting videos or announcements, the research reveals that what you post will greatly affect the feedback from fans and potential students.

Conversely, technology has overwhelmed teenagers with violent imagery, such as school shootings and large crowd insurrections. Additionally, a 2021 CDC report reveals mental health issues in teenagers due to the pressures of social media. According to the CDC, 22% of high schoolers seriously considered suicide, and 57% of teen girls felt sad or hopeless, up 21% from the last decade.<sup>163</sup> Although most marketing takes place online, it is imperative to create balance.

In conclusion, despite popular belief, large social media followers do not equate to large band enrollment. Enrollment at most HBCUs can vary depending on the amount of administrative support. Research reveals that most administrators would like a great band,

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<sup>162</sup> Alexis Bazen, Kirsten Schmitt, "Cell Phone Statistics 2024," *Consumer Affairs Journal of Consumer Research*, accessed March 15, 2024, [https://www.consumeraffairs.com/cell\\_phones/cell-phone-statistics.html#:~:text=ownership%20by%20age-.Almost%20all%20Americans%20\(97%25\)%20own%20a%20mobile%20phone.,%25\)%20or%20smartphones%20\(76%25\).](https://www.consumeraffairs.com/cell_phones/cell-phone-statistics.html#:~:text=ownership%20by%20age-.Almost%20all%20Americans%20(97%25)%20own%20a%20mobile%20phone.,%25)%20or%20smartphones%20(76%25).)

<sup>163</sup> Savannah Sellers, "Teens Under Pressure: Mental Health & Social Media," *NBC News*, <https://youtu.be/gPwgfJafvdl?si=DruEDm7QCAKUUpwMq>.

though most administrative budgeters are unaware of the continuous costs associated with this effort.

Social media provides an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds an opportunity to be relevant in mainstream society. Bands can become viral and popular overnight by being trendy or fashionable; however, it may not be sustainable if it is inconsistent. Band directors are encouraged to engage with emerging technology and utilize new communication and interaction methods with their students.

Although music has been around for centuries, music technology and social media are emerging technologies that are sure to continue to be integrated into society. As technology continues to develop, its usage in academia follows. Furthermore, band directors should become familiar with marketing and social networking methodologies that improve the operation and management of their organizations. As students communicate using newer forms of technology, adults must stay informed of the latest trends and technological advancements and incorporate those technologies and trends into their operations.

Students are attracted to familiarity, so having a familiar social media presence is key to engaging with and earning the respect of potential students. With every post made, students and fans can determine whether or not a post is worth liking and commenting on something positive or negative. Each post on social media platforms lives infinitely on that server or in someone's archives, so band directors must screen each post for quality control, as this research reveals that the quality of each post is extremely important when selecting an HBCU band.

The band director's feedback in the email interviews further substantiates this research. Each director confirms that social media is an extremely important part of their workflow and how they communicate with the public. In particular, most of their current students learned about

their programs from watching video clips on social media platforms. Similarly, most private and public schools have social media accounts on almost every platform.

This research has revealed that HBCU band students spend a great deal of time on their phones and gain most of their daily information about current events online, so band directors should also post to their band's social media pages to influence students to follow and join their organizations. By continuing to explore the social media concept and surveying students' interests, band directors can learn more about the needs of their students and the efficacy of their music programs. Furthermore, band directors, as well as students, can benefit from identifying viable music programs using technology in their own homes. Moreover, this research provides insights and guidance to educators to implement alongside their current methodologies.

### **Summary**

This chapter discusses the rationale for the study and how this research study can influence other scholars to consider studying HBCU band-related topics that can add to the brevity of available research. Additionally, this chapter reflects on how band directors can use the data in the study to find innovative communication methods to implement in their current workflows. This chapter also discusses how potential students interact with social media platforms to discover new and old HBCU band footage.

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## Appendix A – IRB Approval

Date: 5-13-2024

**IRB #:** IRB-FY23-24-1311

**Title:** THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE ON HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY (HBCU) COLLEGE STUDENT BAND SELECTION

**Creation Date:** 2-4-2024

**End Date:**

**Status:** Approved

**Principal Investigator:** Kuronde Washington

**Review Board:** Research Ethics Office

**Sponsor:**

### Study History

<b>Submission Type</b> Initial	<b>Review Type</b> Expedited	<b>Decision</b> <span style="color: red;">Approved</span>
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### Key Study Contacts

<b>Member</b> Kuronde Washington	<b>Role</b> Principal Investigator	<b>Contact</b> [REDACTED]
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<b>Member</b> Kuronde Washington	<b>Role</b> Primary Contact	<b>Contact</b> [REDACTED]
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<b>Member</b> Wayne Singleton	<b>Role</b> Co-Principal Investigator	<b>Contact</b> [REDACTED]
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## Appendix B – Consent Form

### Consent

**Title of the Project: The Effects Of Social Media Presence On Historically Black College And University (HBCU) College Student Band Selection.**

**Principal Investigator:** KuRonde Washington, Doctoral Candidate. School of Music at Liberty University.

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, and a current HBCU band member. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

#### What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to determine what social media factors influence HBCU band selection.

#### What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in an online survey using Microsoft Forms. The survey will take approximately five minutes to complete.
2. Submit the survey at the end of the form.

#### How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. **However**, benefits to the HBCU music education society may include a thorough rationale for implementing social media usage in recruiting and advertising music programs.

#### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies and/or shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted and/or all hardcopy records will be shredded.

#### Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

#### What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

#### Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is KuRonde Washington. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Wayne Singleton at [REDACTED].

#### Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered*



*and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

**Your Consent**

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. [You will be given a copy of this document for your records/you can print a copy of the document for your records.] If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the KuRonde Washington using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Subject Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature & Date

## Appendix D – HBCU Band Selection Survey Questions and Results

5/20/24, 4:06 PM

HBCU Band Selection Survey

### HBCU Band Selection Survey

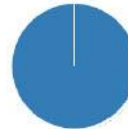
44 Responses

03:50 Average time to complete

Active Status

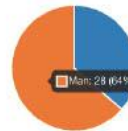
1. How old are you?

18-24	43
25-34	0



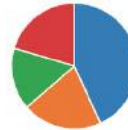
2. What is your gender?

Woman	16
Man	28
Non-binary	0
Prefer not to say	0



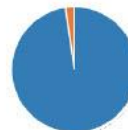
3. What is your classification ?

Freshman	19
Sophomore	9
Junior	7
Senior	9
Graduate Student	0



4. Where are you from?

United States	43
International Student	1



5/20/24, 4:06 PM

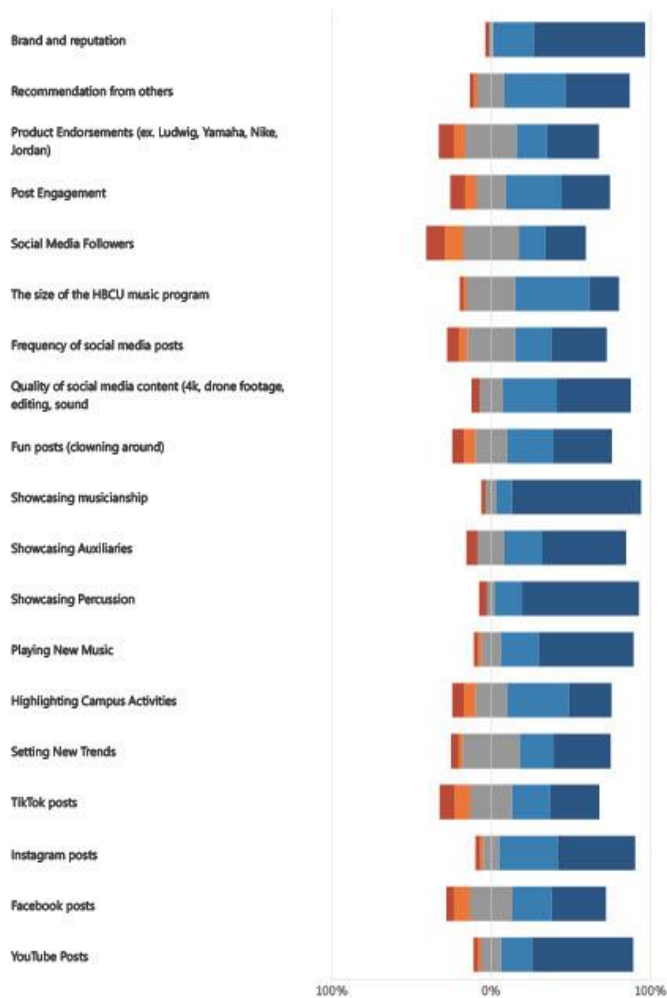
HBCU Band Selection Survey

9. How often do you use social media to research HBCU bands?



10. In selecting an HBCU Band program to join, how much does each of the following social media factors matter to you?

Extremely unimportant    Somewhat unimportant    Neutral    Somewhat important    Extremely important

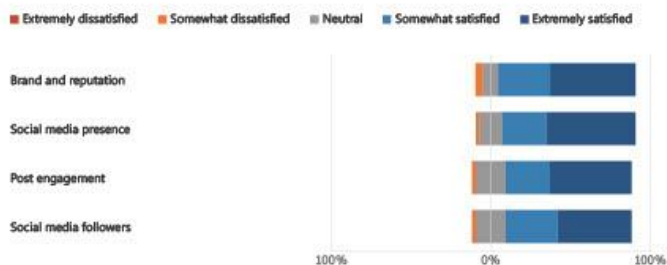


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5/20/24, 4:06 PM

HBCU Band Selection Survey

11. How satisfied are you with your current HBCU music program regarding the following social media factors?



12. From which apps do you gain awareness of HBCU music programs ?

HBCU band website	9
Instagram	40
Facebook	13
TikTok	21
YouTube	41

