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The misfit of music in a higher education government institute for Emirati women: An ethnographic study exploring the pursuit of music as an activity in a conventional Islamic setting.

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education

School of Education Durham University

September 2022

The misfit of music in a higher education government institute for Emirati women: An ethnographic study exploring the pursuit of music as an activity in a conventional Islamic setting.

Abstract

People appear to have a natural disposition toward music. Although music's presence is evident in all cultures, for many Muslims it not only lacks value as an activity, it is perceived to be incompatible with Islamic principles. This study investigates the complexity involved in navigating the clash of perceptions when engaging in music as an activity, especially within the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as a traditional Muslim country.

The thesis examines a music club activity facilitated by the researcher, a non-Muslim instructor of English who is untrained in teaching music but has years of experience running extracurricular music activities. The club takes place in the women's campus of a government higher education institution for UAE nationals and explores the music involvement of nine participants. Two of the participants were Western staff members - one male, one female - and the rest were Emirati female students.

This ethnographic study used semi-structured interviews and participant observations to explore the club members' involvement with the activity over the space of an academic year. Of interest to this investigation were three aspects: first, the perceptions participants encountered towards music within the Muslim community; second, the factors contributing towards participants' involvement in music activity even though they acknowledged its disapproval among Muslims and third, the experience club members encountered engaging in music as a collaborative pursuit.

Activity theory (AT), also known as cultural historical activity theory (CHAT), recognises the multifaceted nature of human action. It provided the analytical lens that could incorporate the complexities and challenges of a music activity in an Emirati context. However, AT has been criticised for giving greater focus to the culture and history associated with the activity itself and overlooking the cultural and historical factors impacting participants' contribution to an activity. With its focus on the experience of club members collaborating to achieve the activity object of producing music, this study aims to add to activity theory as an area of knowledge. Most importantly given the polemical viewpoints held toward music and until recently its lack of presence for students aged over 13 years, there is a dearth of research in the area of music in the Emirati education system. This study will contribute to this under-represented field of academic knowledge.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis, which I submit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is my own work and has not been previously submitted for a degree in Durham University or any other institution.

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Dedication

To my mum who would have savoured the moment!

1 My historical cultural music - In the world but not of it

In this chapter, I outline my background and role in relation to the research context. I also outline ideas key to understanding my involvement in the Music Club and its development. The following section is a personal response to the experience of operating and interacting in a reality I was familiar with, but unaware that my connection to the familiar prevented me from seeing the reality happening around me every day.

Figure 1-1 Picture of Union Square in New York City by Gregory T Donovan p.3

1.1 Converging of worlds

Inside the book *Spatializing Culture: The ethnography of space and place*, (Low, 2016), is a black and white photograph of a busy Union Square in New York City (Figure 1.1). Low (2016) does not say when it was taken but asks the reader to identify aspects about the picture they find interesting. Personally, I was drawn to the transient nature of people and things from various unconnected realities, cultures and perspectives that, for a fleeting moment share the same space, place and time as they collide within the photograph. Where did they come from and what were their backgrounds? What was the purpose of the visit? What happened in the place? Despite the time that has passed since the picture was taken, we too as outside observers are connected to the moment captured inside the photo. Whether it is the trees, people, buildings, perspectives, feelings or anything that captures our interest, as we actively engage with the scene, we cross infinite boundaries of time and space.

This study is about traversing in and outside abstract and concrete boundaries connected to cultural perceptions and expectations. We interpret the world based on our own experience and

leave the scene having acquired things along the way, but we can only explore and relate to another world in relation to how we relate and interact with our own. The values and constructs of others only have meaning if they can be measured and understood in relation to our own personal experience. Like the people in the picture, I interacted in the same space, at the same time, in the same world. I had expectations of how the people and the systems contained in that world space operated. Attitudes and approaches that did not coincide with what I considered as ordinary were mentally filed as *strange* or *wrong*. Therefore, I could only make sense of what was different when it was compared against what I understood to be normal.

Where music was concerned, my background and understanding told me it was an activity which was normal and acceptable. Any disapproval of music usually revolved around perceptions related to a particular style. Even if some individuals disliked certain genres, I believed overall people enjoyed listening to music and saw it as a beneficial activity. Contemplating an anti-music perception did not feature as a concept because in my experience that notion did not exist. It is difficult to see and evaluate what you believe does not exist and have not encountered. We therefore project our normal onto others unaware that in another space our normal is construed as being outside the usual. As a product of a British education system, I was taught cultural others and outsiders were of educational interest when their differences and eccentricities were compared to and measured against British/European cultural and social standards. It was an attitude I deplored because of my own experience growing up. This study is about being mindful of overlooking the value of the ordinary lived experience against the obsession we have with sensationalising difference. When I explained to people that my research was about an approach to music taken by many Muslims, I observed several responses, some of which I held initially.

Where music was concerned, I was never engaged in a conversation where it was considered unacceptable. That anyone should be anti-music was incomprehensible and as a result, I thought the orthodox Islamic approach to music was strange. Music was then of interest in this context and becomes an artefact symbolising young women's attempts to fight against the oppressive lives we as non-Muslims are taught to believe they lead. Even more fascinating was the cultural misfit and curio image of Emirati young women involved in a group playing pop/rock music. I wanted the students to showcase to University College and wider community what they had achieved as young musicians because at the time the band's existence and attachment to the university was and still is unique. There was nothing like it and I wanted the band to be a research focus. As the study developed, I soon recognised by considering the Muslim perspective of music as strange and even wrong, I was exhibiting the very attitude I disliked. I realised that the ways in which we are educated and socialised are deeply engrained and do not change overnight

(Andrews, 2012; Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Before going into more detail about the research rationale, the following section gives a brief summary of my background.

1.1.1 My music world and norm – Music exposure in and outside the home

As a family, we were avid radio listeners, a domain governed primarily by my father and though he did not necessarily control what we listened to, he managed the resources such as radios, cassette players and record players. Growing up, I had private violin and piano lessons but found them uninspiring and tedious. In school, music lessons belonged to the classical music of Radio Three and not the pop, rock, disco and smatterings of soul my friends and I listened to on the radio. I liked music lessons and was always top in exams but was not allowed to take it as a GCSE - something I have never quite comprehended. I did play percussion and drums in the school and citywide school jazz orchestra. As a teenager, I taught myself the guitar using books and the drums when my school acquired a kit, which at the time for a girls' grammar school in the 1980's was quite innovative. Although I did not know what I was doing, during the turbulent phase of dealing with the stress of adolescence, they became a means by which I could escape to a different place physically and mentally in the space and time I devoted to practice and playing.

Extracurricular experience began in a secondary school as an English teacher in Northern England. I ran a guitar club for students which was also attended by interested members of staff. In fact, the school actively encouraged staff involvement in the extracurricular music groups that existed. Through such a set-up, groups were sustainable especially in the event of the club leader leaving. It meant there would be another staff member ready to run the activity.

As some students expressed an interest in learning instruments such as the drums and electric guitar, I started a school rock band which performed at numerous school and community events. As a teacher in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) I continued running music clubs.

1.1.2 Continuing my music norm in United Arab Emirates

In the UAE, the setting for this research, University College (a pseudonym), already had an extracurricular music club led by a male staff member. I offered to teach the guitar and was later asked to take it over. University College (UC) was extremely supportive and financed the purchase of additional resources such as guitars, a drum kit and amplifiers. In keeping with extracurricular activities, I had run previously, it was a club accessible to any student or staff interested in music. Including staff also meant there was a level of sustainability as they were in a position to continue with the club should I need to leave.

As more people joined, the club eventually evolved into a band which performed for numerous campus wide events. After one such occasion, a visiting journalist published an article about the band with their consent in the National newspaper. Although received positively, it was overshadowed by negative reactions in the Muslim community accusing band members of breaking religious and cultural norms.

According to the Islamic school of thought practiced in the UAE, music involvement was met with strong disapproval, yet I was involved with Muslim students in a music activity for several years and never knew this. For the first time, I was confronted with a different approach to music engagement. It was a worldview governed by Islamic cultural and religious intricacies far removed from my personal, cultural and mental experience. Within this cultural backdrop, uncovering the influence behind the members' attraction and decision to learn music as an extracurricular activity at University College became the matter I wanted to explore.

1.1.3 Different worlds views collide – Music experience in the United Arab Emirates

The research is important for several reasons. Firstly, studies about Muslims and music in the government sector of education are scarce and tend not to include the United Arab Emirates and its neighbouring countries (Berglund, 2008; Halstead, 1994; Harris, 2006; Izsak, 2013b). At the time of writing there was no research on music set in the UAE state sector that I was aware of, nor were there any studies on music as an extracurricular activity in a traditional Islamic setting. Secondly, the research features female Muslim students interested in learning to play instruments. To my knowledge, no such study had been conducted in the Emirates. Thirdly, I realised, as a female member of staff who facilitated a music activity in a government-run university and could play several instruments, that I was already positioned to investigate the matter should I wish to pursue it. Lastly, and perhaps of greater importance, was my epiphany moment. Prior to this study, I believed that I had a more inclusive, accepting and less monochromatic approach to the world. Why? Because every day I was cognizant that I lived in the shadow of a worldview where everything centred around a Western culture and its perceived dominance (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016; Lorde, 1998; Shaw, 2014) Anything else was viewed exotic, primitive or just ignored.

As a woman born and raised in the UK of Black British background, I am shaped by being part of two parallel worlds. Although at times the worlds overlapped in a similar way to the music I listened to, in the main the worlds existed and still exist independent of each other. Growing up, the paradigms were marked by the physical boundary of a door or the on/off button of an

appliance. Through the radio, I tuned into the virtual world of mainstream popular culture represented by British/American rock and pop. Through the physical music boundary of the church and schools I attended, I learnt culturally acceptable choral and classical music. Such music genres reflected the ideology that belonged to the 'dominant outside world' with its people and their associated values. It was therefore important that I knew and understood how that dominant world operated because I was considered the outsider.

The other world inside the home belonged to a people, culture and associated standards different to the world outside. I could identify with both but was not always sure where I fitted in. The freedom of expression associated with the world outside ran contrary to the values and respect we were encouraged to foster at home. The disrespectful values I was taught in that world were to be left outside and, like shoes at the threshold, not brought into the house. When I closed the door behind me, I stepped physically into another domain. For me, music and education were the conduits between these two worlds. As I switched on the radio or TV to listen to music in a virtual space, or played music with my guitar or drums, I entered another world where I could make choices about what I wanted to do. Most of all, when I entered a space where, irrespective of background, the aim was to play music even if, in relation to culture and race, it mattered, they were eclipsed by the experience of making music with others.

At school through to teacher training college I read stories of white protagonists and learnt only of white experts in every field I studied. I was taught there was only one accepted way to analyse and perceive the world (Gillborn, 2005). In the UAE I felt an affinity with Emiratis. I knew what it meant to be othered and forced into a '*you're different from us*' cultural box. People were more interested in pointing out eccentricities that made us different or strange - the strange food, speech, fashion, music or cultural mores all of which were compared to and measured against British/European cultural and social standards. Where music was concerned, I had assumed it was a natural part of a normal educational setup. I wanted to explore the cultural and religious perspective of music, which was far removed from my personal, cultural and mental experience. Through being a teacher facilitating a music club, however, I was unaware of the extent to which I was a product of the dominant world I criticised.

I wanted to examine how students managed the attitudes they encountered toward music. I also realised that my queries, observations and interpretations were rooted in my non-Emirati Muslim

comprehension of the world in which I was operating. Such interests were based on a world governed by my educational and knowledge bias.

1.1.4 Structure of the thesis

This opening first chapter has outlined the context surrounding the world in which I was raised and how music is an acknowledged and accepted daily presence. I engaged in music at home and at school in a listening and creative capacity. Chapter 2 sets the context of the music club within the United Arab Emirates. It explores the main arguments concerning music's perception within Islam from its religious texts such as the Quran and Hadiths. Chapter 3, looks at literature explored as part of this research related to music as an activity. That music is found everywhere and our perceptions toward music begin at home. It looks at its importance to young people as a tool for navigating a modern global world and how some institutions in Middle Eastern Muslim countries have addressed the issue of music as part of education. My methodological approach to researching the Music Club is explained in Chapter 4. After a brief summary of activity theory which is used to analyse the data, I outline the methodological approach taken to conduct the study. I also introduce the participants and the working environment and reflective considerations around the insider-outsider researcher as a participant observer.

Chapter 5, the first findings chapter, explores the perspectives participants have encountered at home and in the wider community connected with music participation as a Muslim. Chapter 6, the second of the finding chapters, looks at factors contributing to participants' decision to engage in music. Chapter 7, the final findings chapter, explores their experience of engaging in a music activity. In Chapter 8, the discussion and conclusion chapter, I argue that despite the negative perceptions toward music activity in Islam and the Muslim community, Emirati members' engagement with music is intentional act. Equally intentional is the officially sanctioned access to music they are given by those with overall power. The final part of the chapter includes my reflections that, despite my experience and knowledge of what it is like to be a cultural other in the UK, I am a product of an educational system that has taught me there was one way of viewing the world. Being immersed in a culturally different environment by interacting with others in their cultural space, exposed what I was previously unable to see; that just like those who have culturally othered me, I have projected onto the Islamic view of music my one-sided western way of seeing the world. I resolve the contradiction by concluding that whether or not I agree with the Muslim perception of music is immaterial - I need to accommodate and acknowledge there are different ways viewing music as an activity. The music club played an integral part in re-evaluating that position.

1.1.5 Summary

In this brief chapter, I have outlined the music background and perceptions that governed my understanding and experience of music. It is a world which was musically rich and diverse; there was something in music that can benefit everyone as it benefitted me even if there are differences regarding its importance as an activity.

The next chapter gives contextual background related to the UAE because of its importance to the thesis. It is the place where the music club and its participants are situated and the place where a different view of music met my world. Also explored in the chapter are the religious and cultural perceptions that exist within the region concerning music activity.

2 Conflicting attitudes surrounding music in the UAE context

The first part of this chapter gives a historical and cultural overview of the United Arab Emirates a traditional Islamic state. The second part looks at the religious context, which is the fabric of life in the region and its impact on music activity.

The initial reason behind the research was based on my interest as a non-Muslim who, where music is concerned, came from what felt like an alternate reality regulated by its accompanying perceptions and standards. I was facilitating a music ECA in an Islamic university in the UAE and was now aware that my previous music experiences bore little resemblance to the conventional Islamic approach. The next section on the UAE as a modern and developed society, provides the general context surrounding music activity.

2.1 The UAE: A world of contrasts

Situated southeast of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates is sandwiched between Qatar and Oman and borders the Persian Gulf as shown in figure 2.1. The UAE is a confederate of seven different Emirates and has existed as a country since 1971.

Figure 2-1 The UAE and neighbouring countries (www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east)

Since the discovery of oil in 1958, it has witnessed a programme of rapid modernisation. Revenues gained from oil production have been invested in the development of the infrastructure by targeting key areas including industry, health and education (Al-Ali, 2008; Morton, 2011). Establishing itself as a global commercial and economic presence has required accommodating, learning and utilising commodities such as education and language, primarily English to reflect

and enable participation in the dominant world space (Bryson, 1996; Foucault, 1982; Nash, 1990; Swartz, 2012). Consequently, many workers from across the world have found employment throughout the UAE in fields such as business, hospitality, health, education and other forms of work. With financial backing and expatriate manpower, living standards for Emiratis have been transformed from that of a third world nation into one of the most developed countries in the Arab world (Al-Ali, 2008; Dahl, 2010; Gallagher, 2019).

2.1.1 Dealing with the impact of change

The most significant impact is experienced through the juxtaposition of old and new worlds, where Emiratis from previous generations remember life before the oil and the subsequent transitional steps of transformational change (Davidson, 2005). For those twenty-five or younger, that aspect of their history is a relatively distant past. They now benefit from the repercussions of government endeavours and have access to provisions and opportunities that were unavailable to many of their parents. They have free health care, free education from kindergarten to undergraduate level and have embraced a lifestyle driven by the demands of a global and technological world. Although the UAE has experienced a fast pace of change that has exposed it to broader educational, technological and intercultural experiences, it has managed to curtail the impact of change to its cultural attitudes and values (Dahl, 2010; Davidson, 2005).

Despite being constantly subjected to perceptions and standards outside their cultural sphere that run contrary to mainstream Islamic ideals, Emiratis retain essential principles integral to their culture that reflect their religious and conservative beliefs. For young Emiratis, the exposure is further compounded by their ability to access a wider and more diverse world through the media, the internet and the technological devices also used to support the Western based education they are immersed in during their time at school. Part of their modern identity includes accommodating a global world which for some Emiratis incorporates their interest in music activity. At the same time, they find themselves in the position of having to wrestle with knowing that their interest in music is perceived as running counter to cultural protocols associated with Islam.

2.2 Making sense of the music conflict

Despite maintaining a religious/cultural view that music is not acceptable, it is listened to privately and played in practically every public space. However, rules about other things not

allowed in Islam such as the consumption of pork and alcohol, are quite clear. They are strictly forbidden and are not advertised, promoted, sold in supermarkets or included as ingredients in food. In the UAE, non-Muslims can consume them in licensed establishments, such as hotels. They can also be bought from specially licensed shops, and, with the appropriate identification, alcohol can be purchased for personal use. Under Islamic law, these amendments do not apply to Muslims. Where music is concerned however, there are no statutory laws or reprisals. In fact, practitioners are not openly labelled as wrongdoers and yet there are many who fervently believe music has no place amongst those claiming to uphold Islamic principles (Baig, 2008; Izsak, 2013b; Shiloah, 1980). An in-depth analysis of music within Islamic cultural tradition and religious text is beyond the scope of this thesis, but the next section explores some of the prevalent attitudes amongst Muslims within the region.

2.2.1 Values linked to music activity in conflict with Islamic principles

The perceptions and position of music as an activity can be separated into two principal outlooks. In general, those holding a conventional perspective believe music is anti-Islamic and should be prohibited, whilst those taking a less traditional position would say that music for Muslims is acceptable within reason. To provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, this section sheds more light on why these perceptions towards music exist amongst Muslims in the region.

From an orthodox point of view, the prohibition of music is based on the opinion that every aspect of human action, including inner thoughts, should draw Muslims to God (Nasr, 1997; Shiloah, 1980). Instead, by listening to and singing songs, music panders to people's desire to indulge in idle behaviour. In so doing they waste time learning an instrument or participating in activities to satisfy emotional feelings rather than serve and focus on God (Salhi, 2013; Urkevich, 2014). Those who take a more liberal stance believe music is allowed as long as it does not contravene Islamic principles (Niyozov & Pluim, 2009; Salhi, 2013). Individuals must ensure the music they engage with is not given to profanity or connected to behaviour associated with drugs, alcohol, illicit sex or rebellious, anti-social conduct (Al-Qaradawi, 2013; Saeed, A, 2006).

Al Faruqi (1985) draws attention to several areas that need addressing when considering Islam and music. First, the validity of the source of information enunciating an official Islamic stance; second, the association made between music and non-music activities; and third, the use of particular terminology (Al Faruqi, 1985). The first two of these are discussed briefly in the following section and the third is covered in relation to terms and labels mentioned in connection with categorising music activity.

2.2.2 Verifying the source: Music activity disapproval in Islamic religious texts

In reference to the first area regarding the validity of the source, for Muslims the overall authority would come from the Quran which is believed to be the actual word of God. It does not however, contain any specific references to music (Bedford, 2001; Halstead, 1994; Merriman, 2014; Otterbeck, 2012). As a result, some verses in the Quran have been interpreted as making indirect references to music as an activity. This is illustrated in the following excerpts, which are often used to support the position that music is not allowed.

> "So, abstain from the pollution of the idols and abstain from false vain words."
>
> (22:30)
>
> "And of the people there is he who buys 'vain talk' so that he may lead others astray from the path of Allah without (real) knowledge and takes it (the revelation of Allah) for a mockery for these shall be a disgracing chastisement (punishment)."
>
> (31:6)

Muslim scholars interpret verses (*Ayats*) containing terms such as "vain words" or "vain talk," (*idle* is sometimes used instead of *vain*) as implicit references to the vanity of activities such as music, which they believe contaminates individuals by diverting their attention away from God. The fact still remains that such verses make no direct mention of music. As a result, one can justifiably claim music is acceptable for Muslims (Bedford, 2001; Izsak, 2013a), but Aljabri (2017) argues that the lack of specific references to music in the Quran does not necessarily make music engagement conclusively acceptable.

In seeking further clarification, Muslim scholars turn to the sayings (*hadiths*) of the Prophet Muhammad which were written and collated after his death. The underlying issue with written material not produced by the person to which they are ascribed is the problem of authenticity. How can one attest the source? A full analysis of the intricacies connected to Islamic text is not possible within the scope of this thesis. There is also the criticism by writers from an Islamic tradition who find the western styled critique negative and acerbic (Goldziher, 2021; Kamali, 2014; Schacht, 1949). Although there are six scholarly traditions Islamic writers use, what can be ascertained from the literature is those by Muhammad al-Bukhari (194- 256 AH 810-870 CE), Muslim al-Hajjaj (202- 261 AH, 817/8-874/5 CE) are considered the most reliable and to a lesser degree those of Abu Dawud (275 AH, 817-888 CE), (Berg, 2013; Karimov & Doniyorov, 2019). They contain some references to music activity, but they are not emphatic in their prohibition. For example, there are several versions where Aisha narrates a story of being chastised by Abu Bakr a companion to Mohammad for allowing *musical instruments* into the prophet's house.

> 949. Narrated Aisha: Allah's Messenger came to my house while two girls were singing beside me the songs of Buath (a story about the war between the two tribes of the Ansar, the Khazraj and the 'Aus, before Islam). The Prophet lay down and turned his face to the other side. Then Abu Bakr came and spoke to me harshly saying, "Musical instruments of Satan near the Prophet?" Allah's Messenger: turned his face towards him and said, "Leave them." When Abu Bakr became inattentive, I signalled to those girls to go out and they left.
>
> (Bukhari Volume 2, Book 15, Number 70)

The musical instruments are two girls who Abu Bakr refers to as instruments of Satan. Mohammad responds to the reprimand by telling Abu Bakr to leave them alone. The inference is that it is acceptable for young girls to sing. What the story does not clarify is whether or not musical instruments are permitted. Abu Bakr considered they were either tools or instruments used by Satan to distract Mohammad, or their actions of engaging in music itself as a prohibited activity went against Islamic principles. What is clear is that initially Aisha did not realise she had done anything wrong and only told the girls to leave when Abu Bakr was concerned with something else.

In another version shown below, Bukhari records Aisha saying the story occurred during Eid and the girls were not professional singers. It thus showed that young children were not employed as singers because singing professionally is not approved.

> Narrated 'Aisha: Abu Bakr came to my house while two small Ansari girls were singing beside me the stories of the Ansar concerning the Day of Buath and they were not (professional) singers. Abu Bakr said protestingly, "Musical instruments of Satan in the house of Allah's Apostle!" It happened on the 'Eid day and Allah's Messenger said, "0 Abu Bakr! There is an 'Eid (festival) for every nation and this is our 'Eid (festival)."
>
> (Bukhari Volume 2, Book 15, Number 72)

What the above version also shows is Mohammad acknowledged that singing was found amongst all nationalities and an accepted part of festivities. It could therefore be argued by those with a more open approach, he permitted singing under the condition that people were not professional singers, it was performed by young girls and was for celebratory events. This is shown in the last version of the same event where Aisha explains the two girls were playing drums.

> Narrated Aisha: That during the Mina days, Abu Bakr came to her, while there where two girls with her, beating drums, and the Prophet was (lying) covering himself with his garment. Abu Bakr rebuked the two girls, but the Prophet uncovered his face and said, "O Abu Bakr! Leave them, for these are the days of Eid (festival)."
>
> (Bukhari Volume 4, Book 56, Number 730)

Bukhari records that drums were played by the girls and the prophet did not reprimand them. They were therefore allowed to sing accompanied by drums. The main message that can be taken

from all three versions is that Mohammed took a more lenient approach to singing than Abu Bakr by not supporting him to prevent the girls from singing.

The issue of music is however not corroborated at the sole testimony of Aisha and her experience with the girls. Mohammad takes a starker approach to music in the following extract also recorded by Bukhari from either Abu Amir or Abu MalikAl-Ashari

> …that he heard the Prophet saying, "From among my followers there will be some people who will consider illegal sexual intercourse, the wearing of silk, the drinking of alcoholic drinks and the use of musical instruments, as lawful.
>
> (Bukhari Volume 7, Book 69, Number 494v)

Mohammad foresees a time when people will legitimise the use of musical instruments. Those considered illicit are not specified but it is clear that the prophet condemns musical instruments in this recounting of events. In the collection of Hadiths by Muslim, bells are branded as belonging to Satan.

> It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah said "Bells are the musical instruments of the Satan"
>
> (Muslim 2114 Book 37, Hadith 159)

Dawud records in the 52nd chapter Mohammad's reaction to being exposed to the sound of a flute played by a shepherd. He did not want to hear it, but notable is that like the girls singing, he does not instruct the person with him to stop listening to the music nor does he tell the shepherd to stop playing. Dawud also notes in his amendments that Mohammad uses the word "dislike," indicating the act was not unlawful.

> It was narrated from Sulaimän bin Musã that Nãfi' said: "Ibn 'Umar heard the sound of a wind instrument, and he put his fingers in his ears, and turned away from the road, and said to me: '0 Nãfi', can you hear anything?' I said: 'No.' He took his fingers out of his ears and said: 'I was with the Messenger of Allah, and he heard something like this, and did something like this." Abu Dawud said: This is a Munkar Hadith.
>
> (Sunan Abi Dawud, Hadith: 4924 p323)

As recorded by the three scholars Bakhari, Muslim and Dawud who are considered acceptable among most Islamic clerics, Muhammad does not prohibit music but his sayings show he did not fully endorse it as an activity. However, that has not prevented many Muslim countries from having a rich music tradition spanning several centuries (Baily, 2004; Marcus, 2007; Nasr, 1976; Poupazis, 2014; Quadros, 2014). It can also be seen why music with drums was allowed to assist with celebrating events such as weddings and religious festivals.

2.2.3 Music associated with activities and values not permitted in Islam

The second point relates to values and behaviour forbidden for Muslims. Al Faruqi (1985) addresses the tendency to perceive one set of circumstances as the direct consequence of another where music and non-music activities are concerned. The same verses mentioned previously from the Quran used to support the position that music is not allowed, list the attitudes and behaviour that Muslims must not entertain or be associated with.

> "So, abstain from the pollution of the idols and abstain from false vain words."
>
> (Ayat 22:30.)

Islam as a monotheistic religion declares emphatically that as followers of one God, they must not give their attention to idols or anything that takes a Muslim's devotion away from Allah. Muslims believe music is not a tool which draws people to worship God. It does the opposite. With the effort and devotion required to develop and hone musical dexterity and skill, engaging in music is seen as a spiritual pollutant enticing people away from focussing on Allah (al-Kanadi, 1986; Baig, 2008; Nasr, 1997). Music is therefore linked to that of an idol that requires focus on itself rather than obeisance to God. The second half of the verse entreats Muslims to *"abstain from false vain words,"* is also found in the following verse from the Quran.

> And of the people there is he who buys 'vain talk' so that he may lead others astray from the path of Allah without (real) knowledge and takes it (the revelation of Allah) for a mockery for these shall be a disgracing chastisement (punishment)."
>
> (Surah Luqman, verse: 6)

Reference to "*vain words"* or "vain *talk* "cannot be directly correlated to music especially if the piece performed has no lyrical content. The focus however is not on the action but on the word vain that describes the act. The meaning of vain in English relates to arrogance or conceit. In the context of this verse vain is not necessarily about self-indulgent vanity in praise and worship of oneself and one's musical ability. In such cases vain words or talk could be construed as a form of idolatry where the individual engaging in music gratifies the self as the focus of meeting their emotional needs (Baz, 1961; Bloom, 1987). For Muslims, the word vain relates to the Arabic term *lahw* and refers to anything considered futile or pointless. Music from this perspective is an activity played in nightclubs, bars or any place where music is used to pass or waste time. Music in other words lacks purpose because it is does not enhance the believer's knowledge and understanding of Allah.

Unlike the verses used from the Quran to support the prohibition of music, Hadiths are more explicit with the behaviour connected to music. The following attributed to Bukhari puts music in the same category as behaviour considered forbidden in Islam. Music is believed to cause anti-Islamic behaviour such as drinking alcohol, promiscuity and anti-social conduct.

> From among my followers there will be some people who will consider illegal sexual intercourse, the wearing of silk, the drinking of alcoholic drinks and the use of musical instruments, as lawful.
>
> (Bukhari Volume 7. Book 69 Hadith 494B)

There are notable references to music association with the extravagance of dressing in silk, indicating that music activity is also connected to what is worn at the time music is performed. The hadith also foreshadows a change in behaviour and attitudes that will transpire in the future. People will believe revelling in illicit activity such as drinking alcohol, sexual immorality and playing musical instruments (ma'azif) is acceptable (Philips, 1994; Shiloah, 1997).
Therefore, the chosen recourse is to denigrate or censor the tool. There is the tendency of giving music activity the same properties as non-music activities. It means that instead of seeing music as an entity in itself with its own qualities, its value is measured against activities that are different.

> ... the common practice of attributing to musical activities the characteristics of non-musical activities. There is the misconception in many minds that a condemnation of certain specific practices with which music has sometimes been associated necessitates or implies a condemnation of music itself.
>
> (Al Faruqi ,1985)

Condemning music because of its connection with certain activities, Al Faruqi (1985) observes, is a common line of argument. As part of learning and interpreting events we use such ways of thinking to try to identify the similar/dissimilar, negative/positive or good/bad qualities of things and people we are trying to compare (Jenkins, 2014; Tajfel, 1982). This line of deduction is flawed, however, because if music is bad when associated with things that promote bad behaviour, it must therefore be good when connected with things that induce good actions (Frith, 2013). Surgeons who use music to focus on an operation for example, use it for good. The same applies to parents singing melodic nursery rhymes to calm distressed children or athletes playing up tempo tracks to increase the intensity of their training, all use music with good intentions. Under such conditions, music can therefore be good - unless it is so inherently bad that whatever it touches is irredeemably soiled.

Despite this, there are many people from differing Islamic backgrounds who actively engage with music. It is clear from the literature that most Muslims, in particular those from the Arabic Gulf, take the more conventional view that music is not compatible with Islam but there appears to be

a lack of clarity between official or religious protocol and its application to personal life (Adely, 2007; Alamer, 2015; Aljabri, 2017; Good-Perkins, 2019; Izsak, 2013b; Shiloah, 1980).

Many of those who subscribe to the conventional approach, believe music is an unnecessary distraction that does not aid the devout follower in their faith (Saeed, A, 2006). Everything that is done should be significant in the eyes of God; something of significance draws the Muslim to Allah. Music on the other hand, is often linked to wasteful, anti-social conduct (Sherriff, 2014). The anti-music response is not confined to Islam. Although today music is accepted as part of worship in mainstream Christianity, it has not always been the case.

Prior to Islam, early Christian leaders' disapproval regarding the role of music was prevalent, especially because of its connection with immoral, self-gratifying activities of ancient Greek and Roman life. Debates centred around the use or non-use of instruments and whether or not the music created should be enjoyed. Third and fourth century writers Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria and St. John Chrysostom entreated true believers to sing a cappella and not to play instruments (Wood, 2014). They believed that playing instruments to augment worship detracted attention from God because they replace the voice as the natural gift God created to honour Him (Warren, R., 2006). Augustine also comments on his struggles with music's ability to exact intense emotional reactions (Warren, R., 2006; Wood, 2014). Calvin in his entreaties on music writes about its power to stir peoples' hearts and concludes that music must therefore be used wisely. (Burch Brown, 2006) The most important issue is that the use of instruments to accompany singing in church is a later addition. Apart from the reconciling of music to support worship in services, one of the main differences between the two faiths Izsak (2013b) notes, is in Christianity there is the separation of the holy from the profane. In other words, there are two divisions which show sacred music is separated from secular music. What is classified as sacred and holy, is based on Biblical text, something used by the church intentionally created to exhort God, or an act of worship that is part of an individual's personal or corporate devotion to God. For committed Christians, anything else with its lack of concern for spiritual matters is categorised as secular music. It can

corrupt what is good and lead devout believers away from God (Burch Brown, 2006; Stephens, 2018; Tucker, 2009). Muslims, on the other hand, do not separate music into the secular and sacred, according to Izsak (2013b), but they do have categories and labels that are applied to different types of music and activities. This is explored in the next section in relation to Al Faruqi (1985)'s third point regarding the use of terminology to classify music.

2.2.4 Terms and labels used to categorise music

Al Faruqi (1985)'s refers to four classifications which should be considered in relation to music; **Halal** (*recommended*), **mubah** (acceptable), **mukruh** (disapproved) and **haram** (*forbidden*). Al Faruqi (1985) applies the terms to music in the Hierarchy of handasah al sawt, or *the Hierarchy of the sound arts,* as shown in Table 2.1.

The table gives an overview of how music is perceived within Islam. Baig (2008) criticises Al Faruqi's (1985) grading of music arguing that it is not supported according to Islamic law, however, it does provide a clearer understanding of the concept of music and musical terms from a Muslim perspective. For Muslims, the closer music's connection to religious and liturgical motives, the more it is not considered to be music (Berglund, 2008). To put the Quran, or any religious text Muslims consider holy to music, is considered blasphemous. The other end of the table beyond the opaque barrier, is for music categorised as prohibited and refers to anything deemed intense or passionate. For Muslims predisposed toward music, it is the boundary they must not cross (Al-Qaradawi, 2013).

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Hierarchy of handasah al sawt genres (Al Faruqi, 1985)</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Non-musiqa
(not music)</td><td>Quranic recitation</td><td rowspan="6">Legitimate
(Halal)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Religious Chants
Call to prayer (adhan)
Eulogy chants Liturgical chants
Pilgrimage chants</td></tr>
<tr><td>Nasheed (Chanted Poetry with virtuous themes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Family and celebration music (lullabies, wedding songs, women songs</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Musiqa
(music)</td><td>Occupational music fishermen songs, caravan chants and shepherd songs</td></tr>
<tr><td>Military music/marching songs</td></tr>
<tr><td>INVISIBLE BARRIER</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Vocal/instrumental improvisations
Serious metred songs
Music associated with pre-Islamic or non-Islamic origins</td><td>Controversial
Halal, mubah, makruh, haram</td></tr>
<tr><td>OPAQUE BARIER</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sensuous music connected with unacceptable content</td><td>Illegitimate
(Haram)</td></tr>
</table>

Table 2-1 Hierarchy of handasah al sawt genres (Al Faruqi, 1985 p.8)

The boundary also addresses the issue of the intention of the person involved in music. Where there is profanity and overtly sexual lyrics, the purpose is evident in that the creator entreats the listener to respond to the lyrical content associated with the music they hear. The table extremities, are less problematic than *the* area marked by the *invisible barrier*. As there is no official ruling against such actions, the four terms of halal, *mubah,* makruh and haram are used to indicate how contentious these can be for Muslims. Any of the four could be considered appropriate depending on the school of thought one follows or the perspective someone decides to take. The zone's complexity for Muslims needs acknowledging when exploring music as an activity in an Islamic setting (Izsak, 2013b).

2.2.5 Summary

The UAE is a traditional country which strongly upholds to its religious and cultural values. In the midst of the different cultural backgrounds, Muslims are exposed to music which is an area of conflict in Islam. Within Islamic religious text there is evidence to support those for or against music activity. Clarity can be gauged according to the intention behind the activity and the values associated with what the music promotes. As shown in the opaque area of the table of the Handasah al sawt, the cultural and religious attitude toward music activity becomes more controversial when involvement includes listening to and playing certain types of music and musical instruments. There is however an appeal for music amongst young Muslims despite the strong feelings that exist to dissuade them from engaging their interest. The next chapter investigates the notion that our music interest begins through the experiences and perceptions we are exposed to.

3 Literature review: Recognising the value of music activity

This chapter examines literature related to music involvement and its application to the context of the UAE as a Middle Eastern Islamic state. Music, as one of the favourite activities of young people, has woven its way into the fabric of life in the UAE. Young Emiratis are exposed to music through diverse media platforms and different cultures that have a presence in the UAE. Emiratis wanting to participate in creating the music they hear every day, have to wrestle with the cultural and religious criticism levelled at their interest. The negative reactions add a further level of complication for those desiring to develop their creative or musical ability. They find themselves having to make sense of the conflict and ambiguity surrounding their interest in music whilst wanting to be faithful to their Muslim principles.

Literature exploring the human relationship often begins with the premise that we have an inherent affinity with music (Boyce-Tillman, 2019; Høffding & Schiavio, 2019; McDermott & Hauser, 2005). In relation to this study there is the matter of how we develop an interest in music in the first place especially if it is not perceived to have any value as an activity. The literature demonstrates that being exposed to music through parents and other family members sets the stage for our initial interest as children. Then as young people we develop our own music preference outside our parents especially in relation to pop music.

3.1 Exposure to music through the family

One of the primary ways we are introduced to music is through interacting with our parents especially as part of the mother and child relationship. Before and after birth, singing is used as a valuable tool for calming children, lulling them to sleep creating a comfortable atmosphere and forging the mother and child bond (McPherson & O'Neill, 2010; O'Neill, 2015; Savage, 2013; Small, 1999, 2011). The process involves learning to recognise our mother's voice whilst simultaneously experiencing the sounds and music she hears from the environment in which she interacts (Gilboa, 2014; Maiello, 2001; Martens, 2013). Singing is also a tool parents use to assist with the process of their children's enculturation. Through the lyrics of songs, parents transfer to them the behaviour, attitudes, values and cultural norms the child must learn to assimilate into society (Manturzewska, 1990; Morrison, Demorest, & Stambaugh, 2008).

As children get older they develop perceptions about music through direct interactions with family members (Campbell, 2007; McPherson, 2000; McPherson & Davidson, 2002; Ng &

Hartwig, 2011). By hearing conversations about musicians and musical genres, children learn what their parents perceive as good and bad in relation to music (Bushong, 2002; Frith, 2013) and they in turn adopt the values and attitudes displayed at home (McPherson, 2014; Piragasam, Majid, & Jelas, 2013; Savage, 2013; Winner & Martino, 2000). As parents control the home environment, children are directed by the choice of music their parents allow them to listen to or prohibit on the devices they allow them to access (Campbell, 2010; Savage, 2013).

While our initial music interests can be linked to being exposed to the music our parents and family members engage with, it does not adequately address the desire to produce music as a creative pursuit. According to the literature, parents play an important role in children's interest with engaging in music as a creative activity. (Corrigall & Schellenberg, 2015). Children are given toy instruments to play (Tommasini, 2013), and those with access to real instruments at home or those coming from families with skilled musicians, have opportunities to take their inaugural creative steps into music. Through "musicking" (Small, 1995, 1999) or "*dabbling,"* according to Stebbins (2005) children can experiment with sounds to produce music as a creative act. Finnegan (2013) refers to such music exposure as our music pathway where parents' perceptions affect the level at which music is potentially accessed.

Although it is beneficial to come from a family where we are exposed to music or parents have a music background, research has found it not to be a major factor influencing the reason to play a musical instrument (Borthwick & Davidson, 2002; Finnegan, 2013). Of more importance is the value parents place on supporting their children's musical interest (Costa-Giomi, 2004; Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003). They do so by creating an environment where music is highly valued, routines surrounding the activity are in place and through supervising their child's practice. What can be drawn from the literature is our interest in listening to and creating music begins at home. When children observe family members engaged in music they transfer the message to their children that music is of value (Borthwick & Davidson, 2002; Finnegan, 2013; Stebbins, 2005). However, the literature also illustrates that for many young people music takes on its own importance in their lives. This aspect is explored in the next section.

3.1.1 Value of music for young people

If value is measured according to the time spent voluntarily involved in an activity, then music is of great value to young people (Baker & Bor, 2008; Lamont & Maton, 2008; Miranda, 2013). Under 25 year olds, as the main music consumers worldwide, dedicate around three hours to

music listening (Kotarba, 2013; McKeown-Green, 2014; North, Hargreaves, & O'Neill, 2000; Small, 2011; Welch, 2005). In Geringer, & Brittin's (2019) study, students from grades 6- 8 students listened to music for under 3 hours and grades 9-12 spent over 4 hours. The younger students spent less time listening to music, which suggests that it becomes more important as students get older (Baker & Bor, 2008; Lamont & Maton, 2008; Miranda, 2013; Williams, Geringer, & Brittin, 2019). There were also differences between male and female adolescents (Brown, Childers, Bauman, & Koch, 1990; Lyle & Hoffman, 1972; Rideout & Robb, 2019). Rideout and Robb (2019), in their research on the media activity of young people aged 8-18 years it showed listening to music was the preferred activity for females. Although music is important to boys, overall, males spend more of their time with video related activities such as gaming. 73% of girls, compared to 59% of boys, chose to listen to music rather than engage with other activities. It demonstrates music plays a valuable role in the lives of young women (Rideout & Robb, 2019). Considering that young people have access to a variety of activities covering the virtual, social and media platforms, that females still choose to spend their time engaging with music is worth noting. The technological transformations that have occurred within the UAE have meant that young Emiratis are able to access multiple media platforms over the internet through their electronic devices. Many of the studies, however, do not account for the experience of young Muslims and their music listening habits.

3.1.2 Pop music the preferred choice for the younger generation in the West

In the literature there is an overall preference in terms of the music young people choose to engage with and studies show they prefer listening to popular music. Pop is a generic term for commercially produced music widely accessible across various media platforms such as the radio, TV and internet (Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall, & Tarrant, 2003; Regev, 2011; Roszak, 1995). Pop music, at one time used interchangeably with rock music, is a style in itself, covering a fusion of genres such as rock, techno, rap, dance and hip-hop, all repackaged to appeal to a large proportion of young people.

In North et al.'s (2000) research of 13 to 14-year-olds in north west England, although participants listened to rock and rap, their overall preference was for pop and dance. 20 years later pop remains the number one choice for young people. The UniDays study (Shaw Roberts, 2018) tracing the music preferences of 16,000 undergraduate students found that 66% listened to pop, 44% to R&B and 45% to Hip Hop. It also documented a 15% rise in students listening to classical music, which students in North et al's study strongly disliked, alongside folk and opera.

The trend continues, according to the findings from Radio Joint Audience Research (RAJAR) of 2020 report where in comparison to 2019, 59,000 more under 25s listened to Classic FM, a radio station specialising in classical music (Classic FM February 6th 2020. Although the report displays a 14% to 15% decline in techno and drum 'n' bass music and there is an shift in attitude towards classical music, pop remains the overall choice for young people (Shaw Roberts, 2018).

On a more global scale, the organisation International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) published results from its "*Engaging with music,"* report of 43,000 young people from 21 countries (IFPI, 2021). It showed that worldwide pop music is popular amongst young people with rock music as the next preferred choice. Noticeable from the report is of the 21 countries listed, there are none from the Caribbean and Middle East. There are 54 countries in Africa, but South Africa is the only African country with participants and although India and China were part of the 21 countries, their results were not included. Some countries such as the UK and UAE have a diverse representation of people but that depends on where they live in the country and how they wish to be identified. The results would therefore need a greater breakdown to ascertain which groups in relation to ethnicity and even religious background contribute to the IFPI (2021) findings on music engagement, but it is clear that even on a global scale, pop continues to be the choice of many young people. Why then does it command such interest given the plethora of music genres that are available to young people? One of the reasons is pop music represents the most recent developments of the reality relevant to them (Miranda, 2013; Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010; Rideout & Robb, 2019; Tanner, Asbridge, & Wortley, 2008). Pop as the preferred choice is part of a marketed package containing artefacts, terms and attitudes associated with concepts young people believe reflect their current reality (Frith, 2017; MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002).

On the other hand, another question is whose context is being reflected in their music choices? In other words, *who* is behind the commercialised music young people are encouraged to listened to (Hargreaves, North, & Tarrant, 2006, 2015). According to Thompson (1994), pop is created and performed by older teens and young adults. As the creators and performers of music, older teens are able to identify with the issues that matter to other young people like themselves. Behind the scenes, however, pop is driven by those who are marketing a product with the intent of attracting the adolescent mind. Young people's music listening preferences are really the choice of commercial marketers advocating values and products promoting a world view that appeals to adolescent consumers who are trying to navigate their pathway in life (Denisoff, 2020; Homan, Cloonan, & Cattermole, 2017). The music is specifically manufactured

to appeal to adolescents' desire to fashion their own identity by challenging cultural norms and values (Bushong, 2002; Coyne & Padilla-Walker, 2015; Frith, 2004, 2013; Hunnicutt & Andrews, 2009). It has led to some writers recommending that music programmes help students to develop a greater critical perspective of the world surrounding the popular music they listen to (Bosacki, Francis-Murray, Pollon, & Elliott, 2006; Miranda & Claes, 2004). The concern some writers have are similar to the anxieties expressed by Muslim clerics especially relating to messages that are endorsed in the pop music young people are exposed to. Bosacki et al.,(2006) suggests students are taught to critically evaluate music that is available to them as consumers and the media marketing strategies employed to attract them.
Research has shown that listening constantly to the same music with lyrics and images extolling anti-social messages is shown to impact the behaviour of young people negatively, rather than encourage them to live responsible and respectful lives (Baig, 2008; Rentfrow, 2012; Sloboda & O'neill, 2001; Thompson, 2020). For Bloom (1987), what is good for young people to engage with musically is embodied in classical music. It is what he deems as the apex of respectable music and the opposite of pop and rock. Classical music symbolises the height of culture, etiquette and morality. For the Muslim cleric, what is good is a mind devoted to a lifestyle according to principles laid down in the Quran and Hadiths and worship focussed on Allah - without music. Alternatively, if engaging in music activity has the capacity to produce negative attitudes and behaviour within young people, it should also mean music has the ability to affect attitude and behaviour positively (Coyne & Padilla-Walker, 2015). Young people should be encouraged to listen to music advocating prosocial messages such as peace, social harmony and cohesiveness, which should have a positive effect on adolescents and promote positive values. In their research, Coyne & Padilla-Walker (2015) found there was little evidence to suggest prosocial music affected behaviour positively. They also found there were few prosocial songs aimed at young people. Given that young people find music type important, if the music created or listened to does not reflect their music preference, it limits their ability to choose songs with prosocial values. It could be one of the reasons why the results did not impact behaviour. As Coyne & Padilla-Walker (2015) do not mention the type of music they used, it is difficult to know whether there was a correlation between prosocial music and music preference.

What the literature does show are problems that are attributed to music are not necessarily due the music itself. They are linked to those who deliberately target young people at what is considered an impressionable stage of their lives with lyrics promoting themes of an adult nature (Bosacki et al., 2006; Lozon & Bensimon, 2014; Thompson, 1994). However, studies also show lyrics are not the main reason why some young people listen to music (Boyle, Hosterman, &

Ramsey, 1981). As illustrated in the next section, there are other reasons why young people prefer to engage with music as an activity (Lonsdale & North, 2011).

3.1.3 Why young people engage with music

When listening to music one of the questions to consider is why are adolescents drawn to some types rather than others? As some people believe the content found in pop and rock to be offensive, it means really, they object to the subject matter transferred through the lyrics the music supports (Coyne & Padilla-Walker, 2015; Frith, 1981; Otterbeck, 2018). But how much impact do the lyrics have on young people's music preference?

For youth, Boyle et al. (1981) found that although important, lyrics were not a major contributory factor to the enjoyment of songs. Other elements were more essential. Moving on from exploring genre type preferences, Boyle et al. (1981) investigated elements that influenced young people's choice of music. There were eleven factors to consider: danceability, hearing the song on the radio, harmony, instruments, lyrics, melody, mood, peer influence, rhythm and sentiment. 397 individuals, from Grade five to college students, were asked to rate the above factors in order of importance for affecting their music choice. Rather than being swayed by the lyrics, the results showed the most influential factor was the melody, especially for 15–16-year-old students. The melody is important for helping the listener differentiate between songs and replicate tunes through singing, whistling and humming (Gómez, Klapuri, & Meudic, 2003). However, why melody plays an important role was of interest. From Boyle el al's (1981) findings, the answer was connected to *mood*, the factor considered next important to melody as a feature in songs especially for females.

The adolescent phase of life is noted as a difficult time for many teenagers, where they encounter a period of emotional upheaval. To manage this phase, they turn to music to regulate their moods and find solace in its ability to gratify their emotional needs (Denault & Poulin, 2016; Saarikallio, Randall, & Baltazar, 2020; Sloboda & O'neill, 2001). As well as using music to manage their emotions, it is also used by adolescents to pass the time, fill silences, create a good atmosphere and alleviate feelings of loneliness. It is company in the absence of other people, an accompaniment to studying or working and an aid to concentration (Lamont, 2011; Lonsdale & North, 2011; Rentfrow, 2012). All such uses of music for the orthodox Muslim are frowned upon.

It shows that for many young people there is intentionality to the music activity rather than passive listening or listening for pleasure. There is agency behind the act if music is used to help them meet their emotional needs. For others as shown in the following section, the sense of

agency goes even further, as music is used to help them navigate the realities associated with interacting in different cultural spaces.

3.1.4 Accessing a different cultural world through music activity

Music activity is more complex for some adolescents than merely listening for pleasure. It is used with the purpose of managing the different spaces such as the world at home, at school or university, with friends and in one's own private space. It is key to inclusivity and being accepted by fellow students (Jones, 1988; MacDonald et al., 2002). Minks' (1999) study looks at the role pop plays in the lives of students in an American elementary school. The students learned that belonging to the class community required intentionally listening to and being familiar with the pop music played on the local radio (Green, 2014). The person from a different cultural background could gain access to the world through being familiar with the music of their peers who belong to the dominant cultural world.

In Minks' (1999) study she captures how pop music functions through one of the participants Najah who was born in Palestine. To be accepted into the world of her peers she needed to learn and understand her American classmates and their culture. Being able to participate in singing lyrics to songs played on the local radio at the end of weekly music lessons meant she as the outsider could identify with and fit in with her peers. Minks (1999) connects Najah's experience to that of biculturalism, an acculturation process which involves managing or navigating two or more cultural realities whilst trying to maintain one's own heritage (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Padilla, 2006). Boski, Jarymowicz, & Malewska-Peyre, (1992) and (Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre, (1997) describes the experience of moving between the different cultures as cultural frame switching (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Schwartz, Birman, Benet-Martínez, & Unger, 2017). As well as having to study and acquire information about the dominant culture (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006) the bicultural child uses tools such as music as gateways into the world of their cultural other. Listening to music in such cases is an intentional act (Green, 2014) driven by the purpose of wanting to connect with the cultural other. Minks (1999) also alludes to the problems created with trying to balance different cultural worlds as part of the bicultural experience. For Najah it meant making choices that eroded some of her Arabic identity (Minks, 1999). Najah anglicised her name and distanced herself from things associated with being Arabic while at school, only to resume her cultural links when back at home.

Parallels can be drawn from Najah's experience with that of Emiratis. Even though they are the dominant group in their country, as young people they balance their own culture alongside a

world driven by the Western values that surround them. It influences their education and what they learn as popular culture through the films they watch, the magazines they read and the music they listen to through the technical devices they use.

Navigating the different cultures involves three aspects (Meca, Eichas, Schwartz, & Davis, 2019). Firstly, there must be a resolution of cultural variances. It includes recognising the conflicts between the different cultural structures by diminishing disparities and acknowledging alterative views as acceptable and valuable. Secondly, where there is a fusion of the different cultures, a third in-between liminal space is created to act as a bridge between the two worlds. Thirdly, the space allows for cultural switching where the individual can navigate between the different worlds through the use of concrete and virtual tools (Meca et al., 2019; Ward, Ng Tseung-Wong, Szabo, Qumseya, & Bhowon, 2018; West, Zhang, Yampolsky, & Sasaki, 2017). For the UAE and many Arabic countries in the region, they have made room for the outsider to co-exist in a shared but separate cultural liminal space which can be both physical as well as virtual. It is a temporal space where cultural switching occurs as the different parties dip in and out of music related cultural spheres. In the process, students are exposed to the methods that will help them to operate within the world of the dominant culture, even if they cannot totally embrace its worth - especially in the area of music education (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005).

3.1.5 Value of music in education

Aside from its everyday presence in the family and society and importance to young people for managing their experience in the world, music is often perceived as an activity that does not merit educational importance as an area of learning (McPherson & O'Neill, 2010; O'Neill, 2015; Savage, 2013; Small, 1999, 2011). In the UK for example, music is said to be a valuable part of education and is a mandatory subject in schools. It augments the National Curriculum's disproportionate focus on areas such as science, technology, English and mathematics (STEM) by providing students with an opportunity to develop their creative abilities (Barrett, 2006; Hargreaves, 2012; Kokotsaki & Newton, 2015; Odena & Welch, 2007). Compared to more STEM subjects however, music is perceived as superfluous to curriculum needs. It is relegated to the less prestigious area of leisure and often found having to account for its value as an area of learning (Bamford, 2006; Burgess et al., 2008; Harland et al., 2000; Holochwost et al., 2017; Robinson, 2001).

In addition, despite the importance music plays in the lives of young people, in the formal educational setting music for many students has little interest. In research by North et al. (2000) year 9 pupils between the age of 11-14, viewed music lessons as the least interesting subject. The

study had a large sample of 2465 students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and was conducted in 22 secondary schools across North Staffordshire. It showed there were three main reasons for this. Lessons did not reflect their musical experience; the content was unappealing and lessons planned excessively meant there was less flexibility. The situation has not witnessed significant change as shown in Kokotsaki's (2016) research tracing the transition of students from primary to secondary school. It found irrespective of gender, there was a decline in attitude towards music by the end of the first year at secondary school where music lacked value. Pupils referred to similar reasons for their dissatisfaction with music as found by North et al. (2000). They wanted a greater level of autonomy and hands-on interaction within the music learning experience. As noted during their adolescent years, music is shown to increase in its importance for young people (Boyle et al., 1981; McLellan & Steward, 2015; Saarikallio et al., 2020) Paradoxically, it is during this stage that music decreases in its appeal for young people as a subject at school. As a recurring theme in studies which chart the decline of music's interest for young people during their school career are that they need "an element of choice within a supportive and comfortable teaching environment.

Kokotsaki (2016) draws attention to the recurring themes in UK formal music education of the need to consider the interests of young people. If there is real concern about addressing their needs, it requires acknowledging their desire to have "*an element of choice,*" p.217. However, if the choice of students need to be recognised, how would that be accomplished? The answer has been given in the second part of the quote which adds the conditions that surround the activity. Student choice does not simply entail acknowledging their preferences which, according to the literature is pop or a fusion thereof, it incorporates accommodating the context attached to the preference. They need to access the support which enables them to exercise their choice and develop in their exploration of music (Abbs, 2003; Stebbins, 2005). To endorse an approach which considers the learner would require a conceptual shift in teaching pedagogy (Kokotsaki, 2016). Requests for a pedagogical shift which allow the curriculum to reflect student preferential choice, has been raised as part of the music education discourse on several occasions (Allsup, 2003; Randles, 2013; Ross, 1995). But what would that shift look like? If indeed, as the research shows, young people are the main music consumers, it would seem logical to include them as part of good practice, in curriculum planning decisions rather than devaluing what they value. To fully endorse good practice as Kokotsaki (2016) points out, would also mean a remake or overhaul of how music education is approached.

Some teachers have responded by taking a less formal attitude toward music lessons. Green's (2002) now seminal study on how musicians from a non-formal music background acquired their

skill, and the garage band experience of Jaffurs (2004) have paved the way for more opportunities to consider different ways of making lessons more appealing as part of a music curriculum approach. (Abramo, 2011; Folkestad, 2006; Smart & Green, 2017; Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010). The participants in Green (2002) study had taught themselves using a variety of methods, but mentioned the importance of relationships in learning and required enlisting the help and support of others including friends. Green's (2014) study when applied to the classroom, showed students encountered difficulties with fellow members over rehearsal times and places, disagreements with song choices and controlling personalities. To address the challenges and determine how the task is executed, Green (2014), suggests exploiting established friendship group interface. It means students are more likely to co-operate and support each other over the course of making music. Such suggestions also apply to the dynamics of an extracurricular activity. However, as Younker & Hickey (2007) argue, voice needs to be given to all where possible. This can also be interpreted as the person in control, the teacher must use their power to protect and be inclusive of all. There may be those who come to an ECA who may not have an established group of friends. In the ECA unlike the classroom, students are not compelled to stay in the music making space. Students under such circumstances leave not due to a of lack of interest, but because of a lack of inclusivity. It raises issues related to the extent at which the facilitator is able to make the ECA student centred if it does not protect the vulnerable.

However, it is evident the issue of music's value touches upon other topics. Even though young people are the group most impacted by music, where formal education is concerned, it shows their views and choices hold little value in comparison to the adults who make decisions on their behalf. Music's lack of importance not only applies to education in countries such as the UK. Attitudes concerning music's lack of educational worth are found in the United Arab Emirates.

3.1.6 Music education in the UAE: enculturation or personal development?

In the UAE state sector, music has not been a priority as part of its educational reform. Instead, greater emphasis is placed on developing skills based on STEM subjects, Science, Technology, English and Maths. It means there is little in the way of subject diversity and choice, especially in secondary schools. (Gallagher, 2019; Marsden, 2009; Sowa & De La Vega, 2008; Warner & Burton, 2017). Although music is available for children up to primary level, it is not yet an established mandatory subject in secondary schools. In recent years there have been moves to address the matter but currently there is no research which explores music as a subject in the Emirati state sector. For Farah & Ridge (2009), its lack of presence from the secondary curriculum

raises the issue that the needs of students as holistic learners are not adequately reflected in the school system (Alamer, 2015; Bartkus, Nemelka, Nemelka, & Gardner, 2012; Farah & Ridge, 2009).

Gardner's (2000) work on multiple intelligences acknowledges that people learn and process information differently. Some students learn through visual representations and others through musical cues (Armstrong, 2009; Gardner, 2000; Gardner & Hatch, 1989). As music is one of Gardner's identified multiple intelligences, it means the focus given by programmes of study to intelligences such as memory and verbal ability limits the chances of students if their preferred area of processing information is through music (Armstrong, 2009; Gardner & Moran, 2006). Multiple Intelligence theory is not without critics, who call into question the validity of evidence used to support the separate distinct areas (Waterhouse, 2006). Whether or not the areas are questioned, Gardner's (2000) work has made people consider a different approach to learning and has been used by teachers to diversify their learning and teaching strategies.

Due to the benefits students gain from participating in music, Farah & Ridge (2009) urge greater attempts to raise music's profile in the UAE, even if it is not valued academically. For students who are above the age where music is provided in Emirati government schools, or individuals who have musical ability, there are few avenues available for them to develop their interest (Farah & Ridge, 2009; Gallagher, 2019; Ridge, Kippels, & Farah, 2017). Some students who want to take their interest further, as Farah & Ridge, (2009) observe, can access music through informal extracurricular activities (ECAs). Given the perception of music found within the Emirates, it is not surprising that it is not fully accommodated within the education system. Developing a greater presence of music in schools in the region is filled with complexities. It requires an approach which appreciates the religious attitudes driving widespread cultural mind-sets. It needs to acknowledge the role music already plays in the lives of young people and it needs to allow students an opportunity to access and develop untapped music skills. The following section explores studies where there has been music provision within the Middle East in an Islamic educational setting.

3.2 Perceptions of music education in the Middle East

This section examines research on music educational provision in the region. All apart from one based in Saudi Arabia, are from countries which have some music presence in an educational setting (Adely, 2007; Alamer, 2015; Aljabri, 2017; Good-Perkins, 2019). As expected, the studies

acknowledge the orthodox Islamic position but also show the conflict people encounter as they wrestle on a personal level with challenges of endorsing music educationally.

3.2.1 Acknowledging conflicts between the religious and personal perspective on music

Alamer's (2015) research is conducted in Saudi Arabia, a neighbouring country to the UAE. It is considered more conservative in comparison to most Arabic countries in the region. As part of the study, it asks teachers and Imams to respond to the notion that music and giftedness are connected. The Imams in keeping with their role as Islam clerics, took a blanket approach in their disapproval of music activity (Baz, 1961; Otterbeck, 2021; Sharif & Ijaz, 2015). If music is forbidden in Islam, the ruling would apply to music education. The Imams considered any activity forbidden where the purpose could be connected to music. Thus, implicit with agreeing to a concept connecting giftedness with music would mean the Imams attribute some value to music. It would also mean they sanctioned educationally an activity believed to be a damaging influence (Baz, 1961). Acknowledging such views would be breaking away from the very values which they are meant to uphold as custodians of religious tradition (Burr & Dick, 2017; Thibodeaux, 2014).

The Saudi teachers who were interviewed were not musicians and commented that music was a "wonderful" and "beneficial" activity. They also felt the Saudi musicians and singers they listened to were gifted and that there were benefits associated with music involvement. Their response however, highlighted that because something is *wonderful* and *beneficial* does not automatically make it synonymous with *acceptable.* (Bedford, 2001; Halstead, 1994). The teachers expressed feeling guilty when watching Arabic music programmes or attending music events. Even if they felt being a musician required a high level of skill, they could not commit to supporting music as a curriculum subject and were not in a position where they could support students who were musically inclined.

Oman in contrast, is one of few countries in the Arabic Gulf that allows formal music lessons in government schools. Music is compulsory for students aged 5 to 16 and they are taught mainly by non-Omani Arabic music specialists from countries such as Egypt and Tunisia. Aljabri (2017) investigated strategies for introducing Western classical music into four Omani schools - two primary and two secondary. The presence of music in Omani state education has not eradicated religious scepticism, this time traced through parental attitudes and teachers not involved in music. In trying to implement Western classical music Aljabri (2017) found there were misconceptions about the perception of Western classical music among the parents. Their

experience of Western music was based on views that it was connected with liberal values and conduct which they did not want to expose their children to (2017; Marcus, 2007; Nasr, 1976; Poupazis, 2014; Shiloah, 1997). The fears for the majority of parents were alleviated when they attended introductory music lessons and witnessed first-hand what children would learn and experience in lessons.

Some parents were opposed to music irrespective of whether or not it was permitted for Muslims, but adherents to music could see no justification for its prohibition and even supported individuals wanting to pursue music as a career. Instead, they disapproved of orthodox opinions from neighbouring countries such as Saudi Arabia because the critical stance was inconsistent with observed behaviour as many Arabic singers were from Saudi. A similar point was raised by Alamer (2017) when addressing Imams about the increased popularity of music events in Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries. In response, the Imams believed the presence of music events and its appreciation especially among the young was due to those who advocated principles outside Islamic regulation (bin Awang, Majid, & bin Yusof, 2018; Izsak, 2013b; Otterbeck, 2021). The Imams believed young people listen to music due to a lack of understanding regarding religious requirements. It meant the Imams believe that if young people had a greater understanding of music's position in Islam, they would make more responsible choices about their music activity (Bosacki et al., 2006; Coyne & Padilla-Walker, 2015). Equally the privately sponsored companies endorsing music events and television programmes do not have Islamic interests as the focus. The views of young people were missing from Alamer's (2015) study. In contrast, Good-Perkin's small-scale research was based on work with students in a non-governmental university in the UAE. It examines the perceptions of former music students concerning a short programme on Western and Arabic music they had completed.

The five Arabic participants, like the Saudi teachers in Alamer's (2015) research, were equally aware of the religious perception toward music and recognised it was one of the primary reasons for music's lack of value. The prevalent religious views also explained the dearth of music education provision in the Gulf region the students experienced. As a result, they were undecided about its inclusion in the K-12 school curriculum and struggled with their personal views and cultural expectations surrounding the value of music education. Their apprehension about incorporating music into the school curriculum conveyed concerns about possible repercussions due to entrenched cultural and religious attitudes. Any change they believed would be a slow process. The only Emirati on the programme could not see governmental

support to provide music in Emirati schools as a mandatory mainstream subject (Good-Perkins, 2019).

3.2.2 Music education: A tool of western globalisation

In studying Arabic and Western classical music, the students in Good-Perkins' (2019) study, personally appreciated the programmes' educational value. It was a tool which encouraged them to move outside their own cultural mind-set and develop a broader cultural perspective. This is particularly important for countries such as the UAE, where a diverse range of cultures interact on a daily basis. As participants referred to their ability to incorporate cultural others and their music through the programme, it also enabled them to access skills associated with the culturally dominant whilst upholding the social and linguistic aptitudes of their own cultural background. Access to a tailored music programme, Good-Perkins (2019) argues, can "preserve Arabic musical traditions in a manner that withstands the pressures of globalisation," p.9, For traditionalists opposed to the popularity of music such as the Imams in Alamer's (2015) study, the difficulty lies in trying to navigate the pervasive effects of globalisation and the numerous problems that it brings. The globalised world encourages embracing the outsider, but it still involves embracing a package constructed by those who dominate the rules of engagement for the globalised world of the dominant cultural other (Al-Khouri, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017). This is demonstrated with the Omani teachers in Aljabri's (2015) research who taught music but were sceptical of the music programme for different reasons.

The teachers were being encouraged to teach Western classical music which was an area of concern because Western was symbolic of a hidden purpose. It was really part of the government agenda to replace the Arabic approach to music in schools with Western style under the pretext of progression. Their reservations were understandable, as in many schools in Middle Eastern countries educational reform has meant replacing the traditional (Arabic) teacher approach with modern (Western) pedagogical teaching styles (Ashour & Fatima, 2016; Gallagher, 2019; Shiloah, 1980; Warner & Burton, 2017).

From participants' responses in both Alamer's (2015) and Good-Perkins' (2019) study, there is pessimism that countries like Saudi and the UAE can make music a mainstream curriculum subject in the future, but the words "slowly, very slowly", of one participant (Good-Perkins, 2019, p.8), provides a sign of hope. Through the experience of engaging with classical music, the participants felt traditional or classical Arabic music could be used as a tool to bridge the transition of music into a formal educational setting. In the UAE, music in government primary

schools is mandatory. The Emirati Ministry of Education have established programmes to identify and support students with music abilities and there have been plans to establish music and the arts as part of the mainstream curriculum until students leave Secondary school. Although the plans at the time of writing this thesis have yet to be implemented, that the UAE have made these steps is significant.

As already mentioned, Oman the UAE's neighbouring country, already follow an Arabic music programme as part of the national curriculum. The following section looks at Aljabri's (2017) attempt to introduce Western classical music into four Omani schools.

3.2.3 Tentative steps of music education in the Middle East

In the above section, we observe the underlying issues concerning music. With its inclusion in the national curriculum for government schools, there appears to be a more accepting attitude to music in Oman. Among parents, however, openness for further music development is impeded by erroneous beliefs based on images associated with the West. On one hand, the West evokes notions of progress, advancement and influential power on a global scale, whilst on the other, the West is connected with hedonistic values promoted by Western artists in videos and lyrical content which is totally incompatible with an Islamic lifestyle. In reality, parents are not against Western music itself but what they think it represents. The studies also demonstrate that education for Muslims is not merely about acquiring academic knowledge, even though excelling academically is important. It should encourage and provide a platform that instils moral values into its people. It is not a role just for families, it is also for schools and the government who serve society. What is worth noting is the music teachers' initial response to implementing Western classical music is similar to the reaction of the Imams in Alamer's (2015) research. Music is the Trojan horse of the outside cultural other. It is a tool of expansion which can lead to the eventual eradication of Arabic or Islamic tradition (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Meca et al., 2019; Minks, 1999).

Aljabri's (2017) reflections were also of interest. He recognised the need to use students' experience to access Western classical music – a medium which the Omani students had little prior knowledge. Initially they displayed their enjoyment in exploring sounds they could produce with instruments, but after the novelty of experiencing something different had subsided, they voiced their dislike of Western classical music describing it as boring just like their peers in places like the UK. They needed an experience they could relate to and Aljabri (2017) drew from their familiarity with Arabic rather than Western pop to forge a connection with Western classical

music. It illustrated that students were open to trying something new when it was presented in a more accessible format (Clauhs & Cremata, 2020; Papinczak, Dingle, Stoyanov, Hides, & Zelenko, 2015; Vasil, 2019; Wang, 2019).

Contained within studies by Aljabri (2017) and Good-Perkins' (2019) were glimmers of hope. There were signs that the attitude toward music education can change especially since the reason behind its inclusion in the curriculum was not to embrace values endorsed by the global world, but to provide opportunities to develop and enhance the learning potential of all students. In the first instance, that there was official permission for music education research to be conducted was a step forward. Secondly, there is a music presence in society as demonstrated with both studies. The exposure to music artists, styles and TV programmes is the *slowly, slowly* medium providing a platform to procure changes in attitude and educational approaches. Thirdly, even if it is not fully mandatory, the music presence in UAE society has seeped into the education institutions indirectly, as observed with the participants exposed to both Western and Arabic classical music in Good-Perkins' (2019). From a traditional family and generational perspective, Arabic music, in comparison to Western music, for some Muslims is more acceptable and the participants felt a connection to the Arabic music with which they were raised.

3.2.4 Music activity for Muslims - an intentional act

Evidenced is the participants' desire to demonstrate agency by administering an element of autonomy over their music activity. In Jordan, where Adely's (2012) study took place, many young people expressed ambivalence toward the disapproval of music as the majority of Muslims listened to it. Young Jordanians spend their time engaged in listening to music at home, but Adely's (2007) participants were engaged in the more controversial area of playing instruments (Berglund, 2008). They performed at school for national events and played traditional songs. The participants in the study were able to manage the apparent paradoxes and defended their music involvement by emphasising that what they played was not morally corrupt. They noted the inconsistency of interpretations where music that stirs emotion is considered haram and music such as national and traditional songs are considered acceptable. In such cases, folk music and patriotic anthems should be considered haram as they clearly break Islamic protocol on two fronts: they arouse intense sentiments and are unequivocally created with that intended purpose.

The participants' strong sense of justification and ownership for playing music, Adely (2007; 2012) believed, was rooted in the endorsement they received from the family - the primary source of authority in their lives. It supports the view that the family is key to music involvement, but also that they provide additional support. If a young Muslim woman is engaged in music in a government institution, there must be those who endorse the action. Participants felt their interest in music was officially approved because what they did was within the confines of school, and sanctioned by the government. Along with their music activity, they were accepted by the ruling authority, demonstrating that it supported their attempts as young women to define their place and identity within the cultural context.

3.2.5 Summary

In the Middle East, not only are there few countries where music education is compulsory, the literature shows that where it is part of a formal curriculum, it remains a contentious subject (Adely, 2007; Aljabri, 2017). Negative responses to music are based on possible fears that may accompany music involvement; that it has the ability to lead people astray from good behaviour; that there is in the West a lack of concern that children are exposed to music with adult themes and that music is another tool of global expansion. (al-Kanadi, 1986; Otterbeck & Ackfeldt, 2012; Shiloah, 1997). The reality is however, music with an educational approach is different as the focus is to develop skillsets and attitudes that enhance and broaden their learning potential. Aljabri's (2017) results show that fears can be alleviated if there is a format for those who are sceptical about music to express their feelings and misgivings. It also shows using the musical background of students helps them access a different music experience educationally. Most importantly engagement with music as a Muslim is an intentional act, especially when an individual takes the activity beyond listening to another level by choosing to create music through learning an instrument. The music creative act as a choice becomes even more purposeful when the context of an orthodox Islamic setting is taken into consideration.

Why individuals would choose to participate in creating music when it is perceived to have no cultural or educational value is an enigma. Even more of a paradox is being involved in music when it is surrounded by religious and cultural stigma. Such issues are factors that drive the interest of research for this study.

4 Research methodology

This chapter looks at the methods used to conduct the study. It outlines my ontological and epistemological position as a researcher. It then deals with how the questions were devised and why I chose the research design and methodological approach used in this study to assist with answering the questions and analysing the data. I also detail the challenges of trying to navigate the misfit identity connected to facilitating the club as an insider whilst being an outsider in the role of a researcher Grbich (2012). The following section looks at my philosophical position and how it informed my approach to the study.

4.1 Research Paradigm: Ontological and epistemological approach

We live in a society with people from diverse backgrounds who possess views about how the world and others operate. We learn our perceptions about music and its value through means of socialisation, which occurs through cultural and social intuitions such as the family, religion and education. The social constructionist perspective maintains the belief system and knowledge we possess that shape our understanding of music are influenced through our interaction with others (Lock & Strong, 2010; Martin, 2013). As the perceptions and beliefs, we possess are shaped by our interaction with others, they are not necessarily a true reflection of reality and several factors need to be considered. Firstly, it should not be assumed that one particular form of knowledge or way of perceiving the world of music has greater precedence over another (Allen, 2005; Burr, 2015). Secondly, our perceptions and knowledge are historically and culturally situated, which means our understanding or perceptions about music activity are related to the time, place, social and economic context of the world in which it is connected (Kallio, 2015; McKerrell, 2016; Scott, 2011; Shively, 2015). Lastly, attitudes and behaviour toward music change over time (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Elder-Vass, 2012; Thibodeaux, 2014).

Whilst I agree the perceptions we have need to be questioned, to say they are not a true reflection of truth is also a part truth. Our experience is our truth and reality until we are confronted with another; that does not fit with our understanding of reality and one we cannot dismiss (Foot & Groleau, 2011; Jaworski & Goodchild, 2006). To contend with the misfit, we use artefacts such as our educational upbringing, familiar practices from our reality and thought processes connected to the existence we are acquainted with to analyse and interpret unfamiliar aspects of the other world. Such processes then help us to modify our perceptions to accommodate what we have experienced. It means the less we encounter, interact with and explore other world views and

cultural perceptions, the more we are limited in our ability to understand the lived experience of others (Allen, 2005; Burr & Dick, 2017; Miller & Holstein, 2017). To assist with understanding the complexities surrounding music as an activity within the context of the UAE, I used activity theory. It acknowledges that human activity and interaction can be observed and understood from the multiple perspectives. The following sections gives an overview of activity theory.

4.1.1 Activity Theory: A multidimensional approach to activity

Activity theory (AT) also referred to as cultural historical activity theory (CHAT), takes a comprehensive approach to an activity such as music. It explores how people learn through being involved in a purpose-driven collective act. It not only examines the who, what and how a music act is committed, it takes into account the contextual factors that contribute to the activity (Engeström, 1987; Engeström, Miettinen, & Punamäki, 1999).

AT stems from work associated with the Russian psychologists Vygotsky, Luria and Leontiev who observed that individuals used and adapted tools to augment the learning experience. People also made sense of the process by drawing from the historical and cultural context where the activity was situated (Roth & Lee, 2007; Welch, 2007). Engeström (1987) who is considered pivotal to AT's development outside Russia (Daniels, 2016; Roth & Lee, 2007; Wertsch, 2009) uses Vygotsky's model which Engeström terms *First-generation Activity Theory* (Engestrom, 2000; Engeström, 1987, 2006; Engeström et al., 1999; Leont'ev, 1978) as a basis for his *Second Generation* activity system illustrated in figure 4.1 as a poly-segmented triangle activity system. The activity consists of *subjects* who use tools or *artefacts* to achieve an overall *object* (aim). The subjects interacting as a *community,* perform different tasks through the *division of labour* and devise *rules* to ensure the activity object is accomplished (Burnard & Dragovic, 2015; Engeström, 2001, 2018; Lee, 2011).

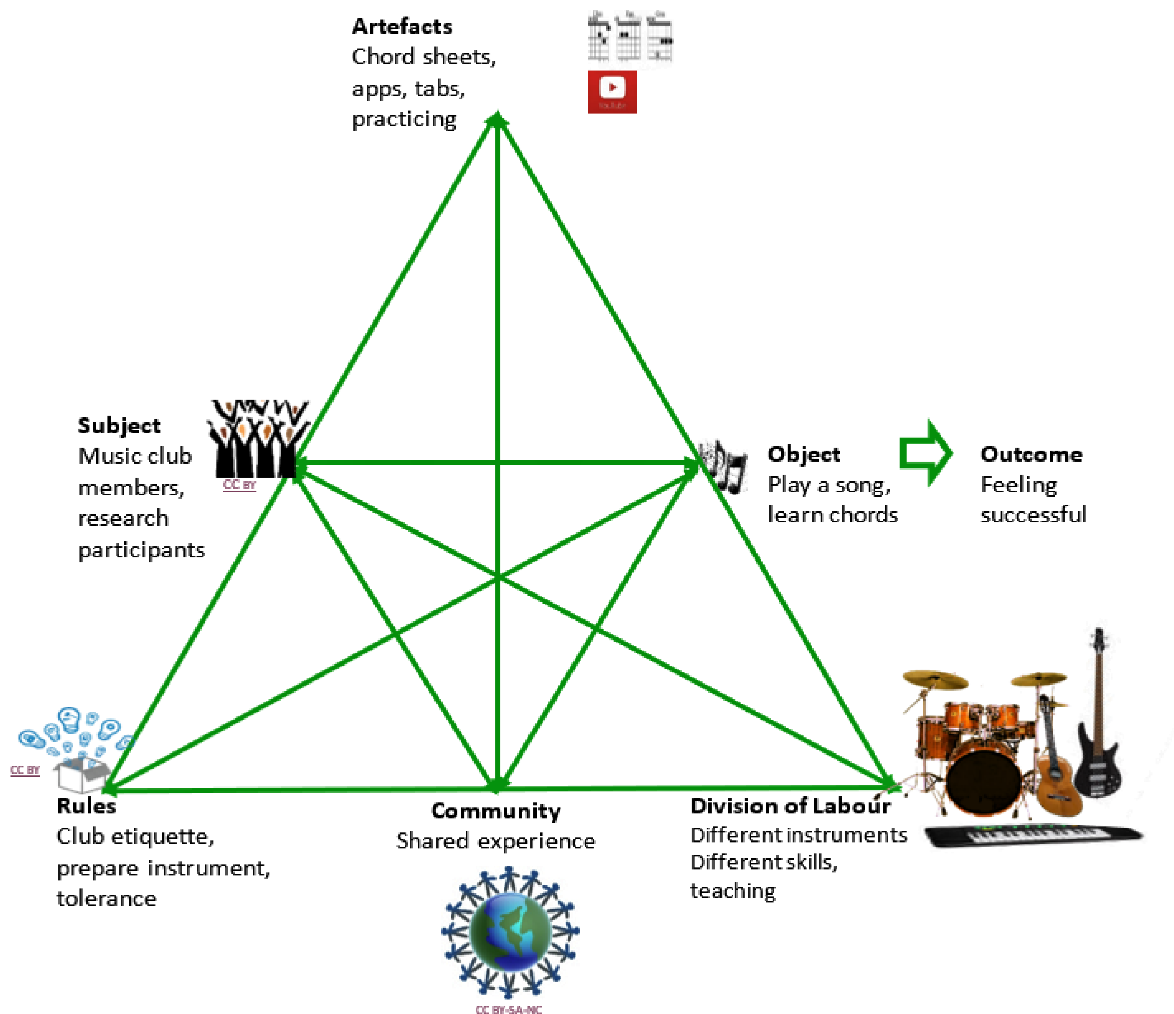

Figure 4-1 2nd Generation activity theory adapted from Engeström (1987) p. 31

With the interchange between the multiple elements, it is foreseeable that tensions also referred to as contradictions, arise as a consequence of working in a collective activity (Engeström, 1987, 2001; Kuutti, 1996; Smolcic, 2013). There may be tensions resulting from the convergence of the different elements, which in turn contribute towards change and the creation of additional activity systems (Figure 4.2).

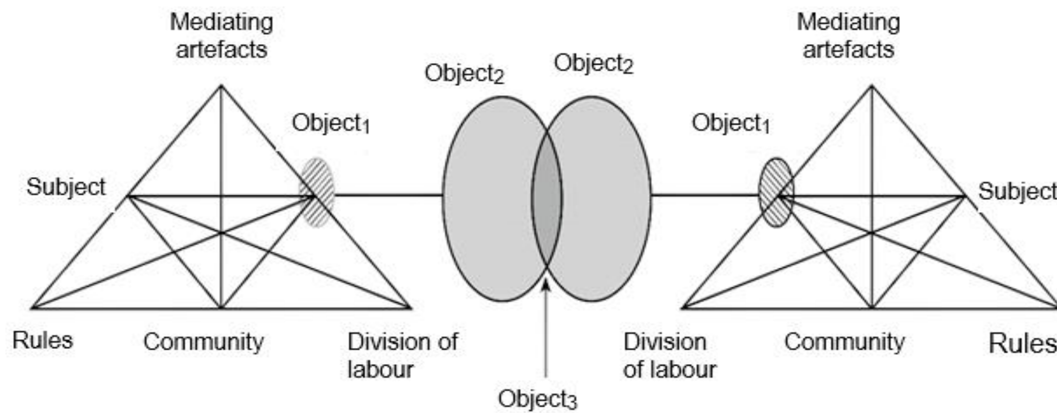

Figure 4-2 3rd Generation activity theory (Engeström, 2001 p. 136)

Between the two activity systems in 3rd Generation activity theory a 3rd object space is created as the object takes on greater emphasis. Defined as “the sense-maker” (Kaptelinin & Miettinen, 2005), the object holds the activity together as it provides purpose and *intentionality* behind the act (Kaptelinin, 2005; Kaptelinin & Nardi, 2018; Kuutti, 2005)**.** Of the two models, I used Engeström’s et al's (1999) 2nd Generation (figure 4.1) to focus on the members and the music club as an activity system which is the single unit of analysis.

4.1.2 The cultural and historical contribution needed for greater balance

I used activity theory because even though I wanted to understand and enhance the participants involvement in music, the framework acknowledges explicitly rather than implicitly the many factors that contribute to the collaborative act. As well as different components such as rules, artefacts and division of labour that exist within the triangular model activity system, Taylor (2009) also notes the role played by the agents outside the system. They are the unseen controlling presence governing the conditions under which individuals and communities connected to activity systems are allowed to operate (Benoit-Barné & Cooren, 2009; Fairhurst & Cooren, 2009; Taylor, 2009). The unseen presence presides over and reinforces the unwritten cultural rules and values and are part of the history of the activity system (Benoit-Barné & Cooren, 2009; Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Finnemore, 1996). Yet, despite Engeström’s (1999) acknowledgement of “the fundamentally cultural and societal nature of activity,” (Engeström 1999, p.22), criticism is made of the focus Engeström places on exploring the structural intricacies of the activity system, as opposed to the cultural and historical context surrounding the activity and its subjects (Barahona, 2015; Nussbaumer, 2012; Roth, 2009; Zinchenko, 1996).

Having found its niche as a framework in analysing organisational structures, Roth (2009) criticises AT for losing sight of the agents' contribution to the activity and their subjective influences. Aspects of the human experience such as issues related to identity, ethics, emotional, moral and physical response are not addressed (Sannino, 2011). Yet, AT's acknowledgement that human action is embedded in the complexity of its cultural and social setting is one of the main factors for using it in this study (Brøske, 2020; Burnard & Dragovic, 2015; Foot & Groleau, 2011). To address areas connected to the participants' understanding of the context around them and their ability to achieve the activity object, AT uses several questions (Engeström, 2001; Kaptelinin, Kuutti, & Bannon, 1995; Kaptelinin & Miettinen, 2005). How they contribute to constructing my research questions are covered in the following section.

4.2 The research questions

The initial stages taken to develop questions entailed trying to establish why I was interested in this study. Essentially, the majority of this thesis is centred around answering the why – why am I interested in this study? Why is there an anti-music stance in Islam? and why are club members interested in being involved in music? Flick, (2018) reminds the researcher they usually construct questions that are related to and derive from their own respective, contextual stories. Decisions about particular questions are therefore based on issues which are personal interests.

Developing questions was not a straightforward process. There were many areas that were of interest but it was not possible to address them all. To assist with the issues there were certain approaches that helped. Firstly, the researcher according to literature needs to identify the research problem (Flick, 2009; Punch, 2013; Seidman, 2012). From this basis Creswell and Poth (2017) recommend generating a "central" but broad question and then afterwards sub questions. This approach helped especially when coupled with Flick's (2018) belief that the researcher's interest and background influences the researcher. The study interest centred around wanting to know why the participants were involved in music. To explore *why* they decided to join the music club entailed looking at *why* they wanted to learn a particular instrument and *why* they were interested in music in the first place. To explore beyond the foundational issue of *why*, time was spent trying to produce the perfect question. Marshall & Rossman, (2014) state that usually as part of a developmental process questions are shaped by relevant concepts. They therefore suggest the use of literature to assist with the construction of the questions. Knowing that the rudimentary question could be refined, I turned to literature related to activity theory to compose the main question and the sub questions. AT helped give the questions depth and direction by

focussing on the participants' relationship with the activity purpose and what they do to achieve it as part of the group (Engestrom, 2000; Engeström, 2001).

> Who are the subjects of learning, how are they defined and located?
>
> Why do they learn, what makes them make the effort?
>
> What are the contents and outcomes of learning?
>
> How do they learn, what are the key actions or processes of learning?
>
> (Engeström, 2001) p. 2.

I used the above questions as a basis for formulating the following research questions:

1. What perceptions have participants encountered toward music as an activity?
2. What were influential factors contributing towards participants' involvement in music as part of the music club?
3. What did participants' experience through their involvement in music as a collaborative activity?

Connected to the question of *why,* was the participants' experience related to the culture, history, context and interpretation of how they perceived and interpreted the world. It also meant there was an opportunity to explore a different way of thinking outside my own cultural experience. Throughout the thesis process, the overall question and sub questions were continuously being amended as in figure 4.3. It depicts the process of developing research questions adapted from Creswell and Poth (2017) to reflect my experience.

The diagram shows that formulating and amending questions are an important part of the study.

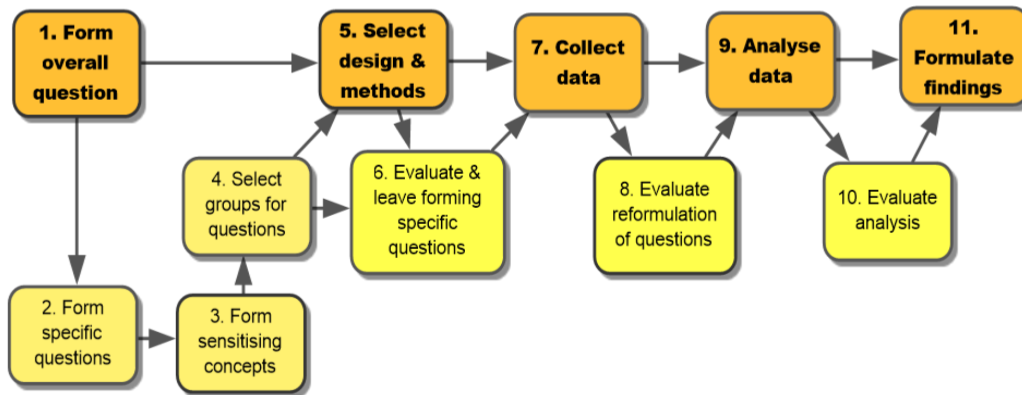

Figure 4-3 Formulating the research question within the research process (adapted from Creswell & Poth, 2017 p.51)

It was also necessary to keep in mind the research rationale guiding the questions as it could be lost as part of the research developmental process. Also, whilst the literature provided guidance to developing and addressing questions, the implementation process was complex and lengthy. The diagram itself is a tidier version of what really occurred as the questions would sometimes be driven by what was encountered through the literature. An important part of the research process became keeping in sight the reason for the study of why participants were interested in playing music. Behind the question itself were also matters related to my own rationale for wanting to pursue the study. The reasons were influenced by the belief that we switch between various cultural and social realities (Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; West et al., 2017) and that we negotiate, remodel and amend our views to accommodate or reject attitudes that do not fit our known reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Bhaskar, 2010). Acknowledging the subjective reality of individuals as an important part of the research meant a qualitative methodological approach was more applicable for this study.

4.2.1 Qualitative research method

Qualitative research deals with depicting natural occurrences and trying to understand and explore the lived reality. For Creswell (2012), the research process incorporates the broad philosophical and theoretical perceptions initiating the researcher's interest. The research procedure is often depicted as a straight forward linear process (Creswell, 2012; Punch, 2013). It charts the pathway as starting from point A and getting to the endpoint through a series of sequential steps. Typically the researcher will identify a research topic, formulate questions, find an appropriate conceptual framework and methodology and continue the process until the

research is completed (Maxwell, 2012; Smith, 2015). It was a plausible strategy as Knapp (2017) observes but the linear approach failed to deal adequately with the nature of discovery that is a prominent feature of the qualitative study (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Holliday, 2016). Flick (2018) argues that the circular process is more in keeping with the unpredictable nature of the qualitative research experience (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Flick, 2018). The idea behind the circular model is that the researcher can start at any stage within the process. However, like the linear process, the circular model still does not capture the reality of a qualitative study. On starting somewhere in the circle, the researcher follows the circle trajectory - it is therefore still linear. At the core of an activity including research activity, are many complexities, which are inherent within the qualitative research design based on a linear or circular research model (Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Silverman, 2013).

4.2.2 Choosing a research model

There are a variety of qualitative research typologies or methods that can be used, and some writers have produced a list of approaches they considered to be the main qualitative research strategies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Grbich, 2013; Holliday, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Creswell (2012) looks at the range of approaches to provide a list of what he determines as the five major research designs. He names them as *case study, narrative inquiry*, *phenomenology*, *grounded theory*, and *ethnography*. His reasons for choosing these strategies are based on seeing them used in multiple fields such as health, education, behavioural science and social science and believing they best support a systematic approach to gathering and analysing qualitative data.

Most if not all five strategies contained aspects that could comply with this study, but I was looking for the perfect fit for my research. Initially of interest was pursuing the music club as a *case study*. Due to many interconnected themes that contributed to the story in its entirety, the case study would need to address the complexity surrounding the educational and institutional system within which the music club as an activity and its participants were embedded (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2009). To present a full picture of the activity as a case study would entail navigating through local and system wide levels of authority and cultural networks which I would not have access to. It would also require more time than was readily available if I wished to build the music club as a rounded case. The story focus of the *narrative inquiry* was a factor that also appealed as a research strategy. This was especially because the initial research rationale was based around the original club members involved in the activity as a band prior to the research. The aim of the thesis was to explore their story (Creswell, 2012; Wells, 2011). When they left, the narrative focus of the study changed. As most new members had little to no experience of creating music as a group,

the emphasis of study developed into exploring the culture that developed around the participants' engagement in music activity. The research strategy needed to accommodate the change and flexibility as the club progressed rather than focus on the story of band members who had left.

Phenomenology "as a manner or style of thinking," (Merleau-Ponty, 2013, p. viii) investigates the essence or essential elements underpinning the participant's perception and experience. It acknowledges the meaning that individuals attach towards their way of perceiving music (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Noted for being abstract and introspective, Merleau-Ponty (2013) criticised it as "*descriptive psychology*," (p. viii). One of the issues with phenomenology is with bracketing where the researcher detaches or puts to one side (brackets) their own experience, prejudice, and preconceived ideas (Creswell, 2012; Grbich, 2013). Although it is important to acknowledge researcher bias in any study (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Harding, 2013), in phenomenology it remains a contentious issue due to the lack of consistency and consensus regarding how this should be conducted and monitored (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Even if there was an agreed system, it is difficult to achieve a state of perfect detachment (Moustakas, 1994). To employ bracketing more effectively as the researcher, would require having to establish distance mentally and physically whilst focusing on the activity and participants. Most importantly, it would mean changing how I manage the club as facilitator whilst being the distant researcher. Taking those measures would require needing to adjust how I operate as facilitator which means the research would be affected. The same issue applies to *grounded theory.*

Like phenomenology, it required the researcher to keep a neutral stance through maintaining distance from the study. Initial familiarity with theoretical literature was also discouraged because it prevented the researcher from being neutral (Charmaz, 2014; Simpson, 2002). Even if the researcher does not immerse themselves in literature however, they are already immersed in their lived reality. Complete neutrality would require erasing the imprint of one's upbringing, education and experience. The cultural impression which colours how we view of the world and others is what I acknowledge in this research. Another problem connected with grounded theory is the data analysis process. Due to its meticulous approach, saturation in data (Charmaz, 2014) and emphasis on detailed coding, grounded theory is a method recommended for the seasoned researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

It may have been possible to choose one but to address the question I chose an approach that could be adapted (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Flick, 2018). (Grbich, 2013; Holliday, 2016). Procedures

are not methodically set in stone but as tools. They are there to assist the researcher in their attempts at meeting their objective of answering the research question.

> Although these procedures have a strong historical attachment to the methodology within which they originated, they are flexible entities and can be lifted out, used and adapted to suit the needs of individual researchers in order to answer aspects of a research question.
>
> The evolutionary nature of qualitative research means that it is most appropriate that you hunt through the toolbox to find the best tool/s for the job at hand and, where none quite fits, be prepared to adapt several in order to seek the best answer to your research question.
>
> (Grbich, 2012)

They are genres which are not an end in themselves. It therefore meant the designs are artefacts to be used by the researcher. This was especially the case when considering the second quote which depicts the tool's developmental quality, as a feature of the qualitative study. It was necessary to use a tool that considered the context surrounding the research. "*Where none quite fits"* (Grbich, 2012) p.4 necessitated revising and adjusting other tools to meet the research requirements. Similarly, Holliday (2016) states that the strategies are not totally exclusive "*researchers do not have to choose between them*" p. 14. Implicit within the qualitative research paradigm was room for flexibility. The research strategy can be modified to meet the requirements of the study. Of the five, I chose an ethnographical approach to collect the data. The reasons are detailed in the following sections.

4.2.3 Using an ethnographical approach

Ethnography requires that the researcher gets to know and be familiar with the people and context of their study (Miller, 2017; Silverman, 2013; Stinnett, 2012). As an employed member of staff, I was already part of the setting and could build on the relationships I had established with club members (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Grbich, 2012; Holliday, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

I used an ethnographical approach as a means to capture the world that governed and informed the local and religious culture surrounding the music club members (Fetterman, 2009; Van Maanen, 2011b). The perimeters of the study centred around the group of people in the music club who operated in the physical place and space where anything related to the music club occurred (Grbich, 2013). It also included the non-physical abstract space; the perceptions associated with being involved in the club and the interactions that took place within a typical and paradoxically non-typical Emirati higher educational context. Most importantly, it meant the study incorporated the two main roles I had as club facilitator who managed the club and the researcher who studied its members. Both were achieved in the role of participant observer. It is

the strategy more directly associated with ethnography as a data collection method (Holliday, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

4.3 Data collection

This section details matters related to the data collection strategy and process involved with collecting the data. The data collection period took place over an academic year from October to May/June and the principal method was as a participant observer during music sessions. It covers access to the site, the sample and the collection method. After a brief overview of University College, the site of the place where the music club is situated, I present some of the ethical issues encountered during the research process.

4.3.1 University College: A brief overview

University College, is one of the numerous higher education establishments and universities that operate throughout the UAE. Many are satellites of a variety of overseas institutions that accommodate a range of students both national and international; Muslim and non-Muslim. They are private fee-paying bodies. University College is one of several popular internationally accredited government funded universities with campuses across the Emirates. As with all organisations in the state education sector, it is primarily for UAE nationals and is not co-educational. Emirati men and women do not attend the same campus and are taught separately. It offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in industry related areas such as Computer Information, Business, Engineering and Applied Media. Courses are taught in English and everyone whilst on campus is expected to converse in English. It also aims to provide programmes which enable students to develop their individual skills within a supportive and fun environment. Until recently, Principals and leadership teams of the various campuses were mainly Western Expats. Through a programme of Emiratisation, moves have been made to address the imbalance. Now the different sites associated with UC are managed by Emiratis but its teaching staff is still composed predominantly of non-Emiratis.

4.3.2 Ethical considerations: Selecting the research sample

Gaining access to the research site and the group was not problematic because I was a staff member, and I ran the music club as part of the extracurricular activities offered at University College. However, I did not assume I would be granted permission to conduct the research and ethically I still observed the organisational and administrative protocols. The first step I took

before I went through the official channels was to find out if club members would allow me to do the study about them. It was of little benefit if I obtained authorised consent only to find they objected to the study. I then contacted the Principal, who asked for a copy of the research questions (Appendix 1) and proposal, which had already been endorsed by my university ethics committee. He gave his approval via email to conduct the study.

I created a boundary for gathering data as recommended (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The period was limited to the academic year because as an employee I could guarantee I would have direct access to University College and the participants. I called the project 'A Year in the Life of a Music Club.'

As mentioned previously, because I ran the activity as part of the extracurricular activities provided and sanctioned by University College, I already had access to the participants who were members of the club. Due to the anti-music sentiments held by some Muslims, when recruiting students, the matter of consent was an important factor. I had to establish whether being involved with the music club would be an issue for their families. I considered getting consent forms for parents to sign agreeing to their daughter's participation in the club but felt it would make something intended to be fun too formal and deter students from joining. To overcome the issue, I asked students if they had an instrument at home. The presence of an instrument such as a guitar or keyboard I interpreted to mean playing music was accepted at home. Those who did not have musical instruments said they were allowed to play in college but not at home or they intended to buy one. I was satisfied with any of these responses.

In keeping with the ethical standards observed by Durham university, I followed the recommendations of British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018). Researchers are required to ensure those involved in the study are respected. Firstly, I informed students showing an interest in joining the activity that I was studying the club. I gave potential and existing club members a brief synopsis of what the study entailed for me as researcher and for them as participants according to the ethical guidelines laid out by the university and BERA. Part of the BERA requirements included safeguarding participant private and personal information. For anonymity, I let them know their names and the name of University College (a pseudonym) would be changed. I stored collected data on a USB flash drive and laptop which was password protected and could only be accessed by me. Those taking part in the study were also informed in writing (Appendix 2) about what the research entailed and their rights surrounding their participation. I explained that although some sessions would be recorded as audio, there would be no video recordings. To be inclusive of those who may want to join the club but not the study, I made it clear they did not have to take part and those who joined had the right to withdraw from the

research at a later stage if they wished. When asked if I could have their consent to be part of the study, all gave instantaneous verbal permission thus authorising me to include them in the research. The form was distributed to participants who became club members and attended sessions. Those who signed the form were included as participants.

4.3.3 Participants

As shown in Table 4.1, there were nine participants in total. Seven were Emirati women students between the age of 19-22 and two were members of staff: An American woman and an Irish man both around 50 years old. The table also shows the level of experience participants had the club in relation to the instruments they played whilst attending the club. Where there is more than one instrument, the one they engaged with for the majority of time at sessions or wanted to learn is highlighted in bold. For example, although at the start of the study Nadine was confident with playing the keyboards and had done so prior to the research, she spent most of her time learning the guitar and

Name & UC course	Experience	Instrument	Nationality	Group interaction	Religion	Time of joining
Facilitator Researcher English	Experienced Beginner	**Guitar, bass, drums, keyboard,** Ukulele	British Caribbean	Teacher	Non-Muslim	Beginning
Nadine Engineering	Beginner Experienced	**Guitar** Keyboard	Emirati Lebanese	Students Friends	Muslim	Semester prior to research
Ohoud Engineering	Beginner Some experience	**Guitar** Drums	Emirati Omani			
Miriam English General Studies	Beginner	**Drums**	American	Teacher	Non-Muslim	Semester 2 February
Jayson General Studies	Beginner Experienced	**Bass** Ukulele	Irish			
Dhabiya Computer Studies	Beginner	**Drums**	Emirati	Students Friends	Muslim	Semester 2 February
Khadija Computer Studies	Beginner	**Keyboard**	Emirati			

Badour Applied Media	Experienced Beginner	**Drums** Acoustic guitar	Emirati Filipino	Students Friends Original/Band members	Muslim	Semester 2 March
Basma Applied Media	Experienced Some experience	**Bass** Acoustic guitar	Emirati			
Balquis Applied Media	Experienced Some experience	**Keyboard** Acoustic guitar	Emirati			

Table 4-1 The participants involved in the music club

started it as a beginner. Basma on the other hand learnt to play the bass and acoustic guitar previously when she was a member of the club. When she re-joined, her major input was through the bass guitar, highlighted in bold.

An important part of understanding the social dynamics in the club is noting the friendship/group interaction. Friends Nadine and Ohoud, joined the club around the same time so did Khadija and Dhabiya who were also friends. Badour, Basma and Balquis were in the band that was part of the original club. They had left the club but returned towards the end of the study. It was possible to accommodate more members but managing a group larger than ten people would limit members access to instruments and limit the level of attention I could give to support their learning. This was important because as shown if members were beginners, they would need more input.

4.3.4 The Music Club

The music club existed as a university activity and like other legitimate activities, academic or non-academic, it was given a designated place. Figure 4.4, illustrates the position of the room as the physical setting for the music club.

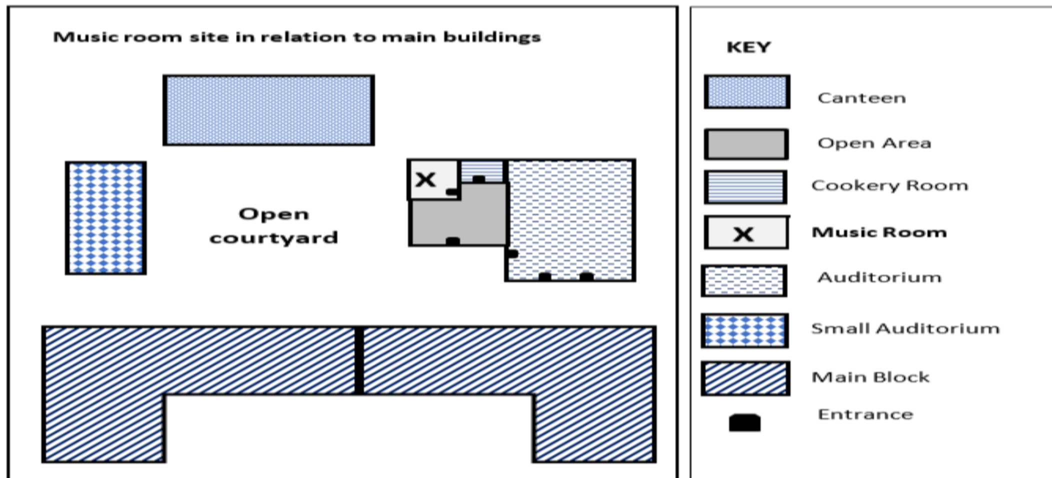

Figure 4-4 Position of the music room on UC campus

It was placed outside away from the main building thus enabling club members the freedom to play music without feeling restricted. It meant that if members wanted to practice, they would not disturb lessons taking place in the main building. It also meant students passing by, whether they were on the way to the canteen or going to lessons, were able to hear the music if the club was operating.

Those who were interested in the activity could find out from the student office where it was held. Where participants played, was governed by where in the room an instrument was positioned (figure 4.5). This depended on the size and how easy it was to move and reassemble. The keyboard which was amplified and especially the drums were always in the same position in the room. Students playing these would usually be in the same place. The classical guitars and ukulele were easily portable however, the bass guitar, bass ukulele and electric guitar needed amplification and their mobility in the room were dependent on the length of lead attachments connecting them to a power source. However, those playing these instruments usually occupied the space in front of the drums and keyboard.

Before leaving the club, the original members Badour, Basma and Balquis, took ownership of the room. They met there early before the start of lessons to hang out, socialise, practice and to play their own music. They used to eat there during break and lunchtimes. It still had their pictures on the wall and the white-board marker pens they had bought to plan performances and make notes. The newer members, Nadine and Ohoud, were beginning to mark out their space. On one side of the room, they put the songs they learnt on a display board, chord sheets and guitar tabs however they had not developed a strong attachment to the room as shown by the previous club members.

Essentially, however, the music club space was more than just an area where students came to learn how to play an instrument. In the concept of community as a geographical location, it was the place where they could go outside the family, outside of traditional Islamic views, outside of college academic demands and outside of professional expectations; the music room was a space where these aspects were not precedent even though they existed.

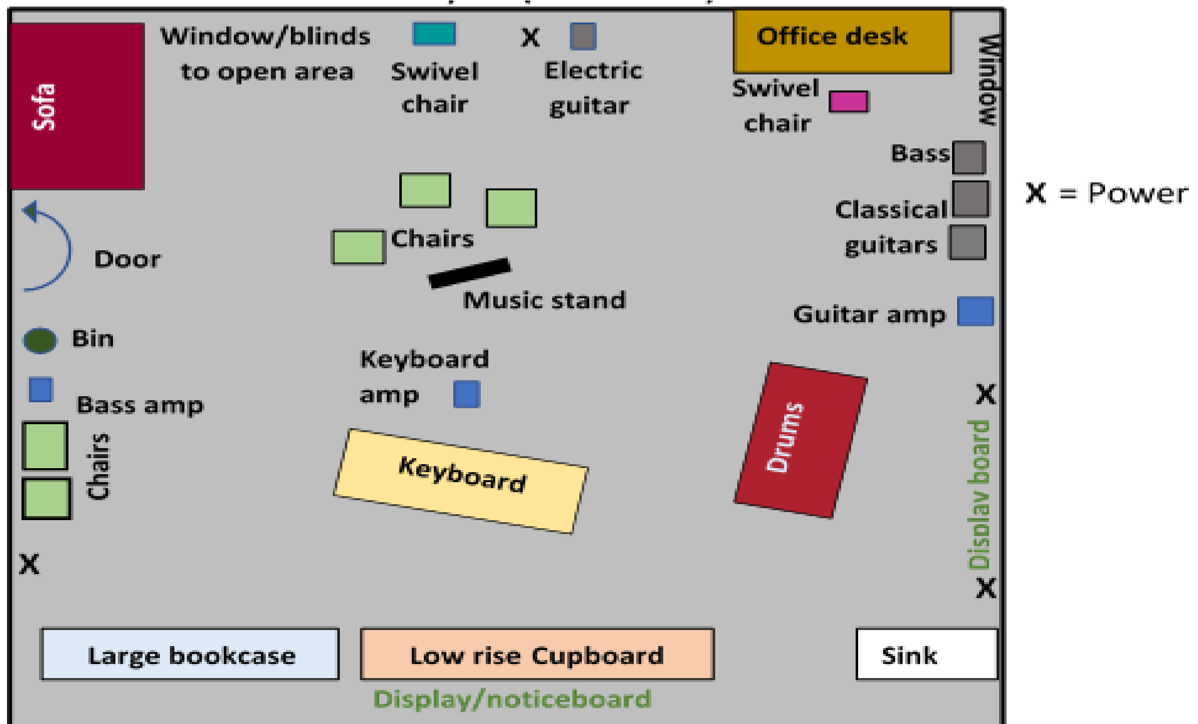

Figure 4-5 Music room set-up with instruments

I continued to manage the club in the same manner as I had done before by making the club accessible to anyone wishing to participate at any time. It is for this reason that ongoing sampling was ideal. I allowed and encouraged anyone interested in learning an instrument including colleagues to attend sessions during the research. To exclude staff participation in the music club and gear it solely towards the Emirati students for the sake of the research would have made it more convenient and manageable as a study but it would also have changed how I have hitherto operated. I wanted to adopt a more natural approach rather than allow the music club to be predetermined by the research.

The club was also subject to the schedules that vied for the same time slot whether they be exams, extra lessons, project requirements, illness, appointments or college events. Attendance was purely voluntary, and members came and went of their own volition. I was therefore aware from my experience of running the club, the nature of the sample would most likely change over the course of the research. Interactions between the participants and me as the facilitator were not

bound by classroom protocol and there was a more relaxed relationship between us (Brewer, 2000; O'Reilly, 2008). Being more informal and adaptable helped to build a rapport with club members but at times as researcher, it created challenges (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998; Van Maanen, 2011b). The matters are addressed in the next section.

4.3.5 Participant observer, an outsider on the inside

I was a member of staff and club facilitator and I needed to continue running the activity whilst simultaneously gathering data. The role of participant observer meant I could maximise the benefits of being part of the research setting (Grbich, 2013; Ingold, 2014). It helped to maintain a level of normality with the club members as I did not need to familiarise myself with the locality and the participants (Ellen, 1984; Huisman, 2008). I was also aware being familiar was considered a disadvantage for the participant observer. One of the main issues characterised as '*going native'* was concerned with the researcher becoming so embroiled in the study it impeded their judgement. Instead, there is the need to maintain a level of distance (Brewer, 2000; O'Reilly, 2008, 2009). Where I was concerned the challenge, I faced as participant observer was in connection with being both an insider and outsider.

The insider – outsider paradox is an aspect of participant observation which arises for ethnographic researchers (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2001; Hammersley, 2006; Johansson, 2015; O'Reilly, 2009). Describing the experience of participant observation as a double role, Johansson (2015) recalls her insider knowledge on returning as instructor and researcher to the place she had studied. She knew the organisation as a previous music student and performing as a musician. As an instructor she taught the organ, supervised students and formulated programmes of study whilst conducting research (Johansson, 2015). Being on the inside was not just advantageous because of her relationship with the community, it provided greater access to data not readily accessible to someone from the outside.

I related to Johansson's (2015) experience but unlike her however, I saw the position as being more complex than a double role. I participated with members to help them achieve their goal of playing music. I monitored members' level of interaction and how they accommodated each other. Of great importance in my role as music club facilitator was my relationships with participants individually and as a community. When I tuned into conversations between members, watched body language, people dynamics, group interactions and asked questions, it was to develop an environment conducive to music as a collaborative activity. As participant observer however, the focus was with the research protocols in mind and not necessarily for the

music interaction. It involved accessing information through listening to, observing and conversing with members about what they did. As a result, I needed a greater level of discernment as the roles often blurred. Needing to be cognisant of my inside knowledge of participants, the setting and the system, especially in the initial stages of the study impeded upon my freedom to engage naturally with the activity creatively and socially. In other words, at times I felt I needed to familiarise myself with the outside researcher role in the club context.

I also saw myself as an insider because I was familiar with the cultural protocols and system and shared some of the biographic characteristics of the club members (Al-Ali, 2008; Gallagher, 2019; Warner & Burton, 2017). With the participants who were staff we were of a similar age and identified through what was associated with our life experiences as Western expats. We were also transient workers enjoying the benevolence of a welcoming Emirati Government which made room to accommodate us on many levels. We lived the ups and downs as teachers as we swapped similar stories. Where the students were concerned, although I am not Emirati or Muslim, I felt we connected through gender on areas related to being women in music and the cultural expectations. I too was raised to ensure that I did not do anything to disgrace my family or the community. I understood the importance of adhering to religious protocol but could also relate to undercurrent concerns that their way of life was being replaced by a globalised perspective that conflicted with cultural values (Al-Khouri, 2012; Aljabri, 2017). As matters relating to Islamophobia were voiced amongst those I taught, I felt I understood what it was like having to provide a lens for people unaware they manifested attitudes which divulged their lack of understanding regarding issues of race. They had never lived or experienced what it was like to contend with deep seated attitudes. I therefore felt I identified with Emirati women who had to deal with outsiders unable to see past their own veil of ignorance as they obsessed over symbols of oppression they interpreted as a head scarf and abaya (the black over coat). I believed I was able to identify with members in such areas and it gave me a sense of connection.

Being *inside* a place or space or connecting over areas such as gender and religion did not however, make me an insider. By default, I was an outsider (Jáuregui, 2016; Merton, 1972; Paechter, 2013). I did not possess the specialist knowledge of female Emirati Muslim students, a woman from the southern states of America, nor a southern Irish male raised during the 1970s/80's. In this respect, I was a non-member *outsider* who also had to incorporate the role of detached researcher. I felt at times I was forced in the name of research to ask probing and unusual questions which crossed what I considered were personal boundaries. Such issues detailed in the journal fieldnotes, provided an avenue for documenting challenges that emerged

trying to manage the different identities I possessed whilst doing the study (Alvesson, 2003; Bourke, 2014; Kaptelinin & Nardi, 2012; Nencel, 2014; Ortlipp, 2008b).

I began the study thinking I was an insider because I could connect with participants on many levels and would become more of an insider as I became more familiar with the group. What transpired as the research progressed, is the more knowledge and experience I gained, the more I realised I was not an insider. I eventually took the position that I was an outsider with a partial view of music which did not include a Muslim perspective. It was therefore helpful to have in place other ways of collecting data to reflect what happened in relation to the activity. I used three methods. I wrote fieldnotes which also acted as a journal, audio recorded sessions and conducted interviews with most club members (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Tedlock, 1991).

4.3.6 Audio recording club sessions

One of the methods I used for collecting data was to audio record sessions. My role as club facilitator required supporting members, especially those new to the club, with learning to play music, incorporating them into the community and providing opportunities for them to perform. As a result, it was not possible to give full focus to observing activity interactions. To address the matter, I audio recorded the music sessions. Videoing the activity was the initial preference as the lens of the camera would act as the eyes of the researcher (Flick, 2018). Conversely, the camera is an obtrusive presence for some and an invasion of privacy for others. Even though some participants may be opposed to its use, some may have acquiesced due to a sense of obligation to me as the facilitator. Additionally, some students at UC are opposed to being photographed or having their faces shown openly on media, digital and social platforms. Ethically using videos as a means to collect data would pose problems (Dooly, Moore, & Vallejo, 2017; Schuck & Kearney, 2006). To maintain a sense of what happened in sessions whilst retaining as natural an environment as possible necessitated being mindful of cultural and religious protocol. As a solution, I asked students for permission to audio record the weekly sessions using my tablet and/or phone. Although limited, it helped capture more than I could observe or hear during sessions.

The audio recordings were also part of the triangulation of data used to supplement other data collected during the study (Schuck & Kearney, 2006). Apart from audio recordings of the music sessions, the other source of data collection came through writing fieldnotes as a journal after weekly music meetings.

4.3.7 Fieldnotes Journaling

I kept a weekly journal which recorded the events that took place in the music club. The intention was that it would serve as fieldnotes to depict observations that had taken place during sessions. It would also be a way of reflecting on what had transpired during the music club. I asked participants to keep their own journal but very few responded and as a voluntary activity, members were not obligated to acquiesce to my request. Writing a journal helped with keeping a record of my version of events however, there were several drawbacks. Marshall and Rossman (2014) advocate making journal entries immediately after the event with perhaps a leeway of a day. Immediately recording events means details and responses are captured quickly. A long period between incidences and the journal entry, can result in a loss of detail (Clifford, 1990; Emerson et al., 2001; Mulhall, 2003).

The reality of trying to keep a journal, even on a weekly basis posed problems. The music sessions lasted for 1 to 1 ½ hours, sometimes longer after which I would have lunch, prepare for and teach my next lesson. This left no room for the immediate recording of events. Some were written later at the end of the day, but sometimes work demands and even tiredness took its toll and journal entries were written later than the next day. There were several occasions where I wondered about the benefit of writing about a session that I had audio recorded. Afterall, they were I believed, more or less the same thing in a different format. Whilst recovering from an operation during the data collection period, I decided to transcribe some sessions and without referring to the journal notes, I could remember much of what had transpired at the time of the session. This made me believe that the recordings much like recalling a film, triggered memory associations which enabled me to relive, picture and experience many of the things I felt at the time of the event (Ortlipp, 2008b). As a result, towards the end of the study, when I had recovered from surgery and returned to work, journal accounts were more sporadic. When it came to transcribing the data for that period, as before, I thought listening to the sessions would trigger strong memories. Whilst I could remember some things, there were evident gaps in my memory when fewer journal accounts were recorded, and this was heightened by the length of time between the event and the eventual transcription.

From the experience, I believe writing a personal reflective journal response soon after the event, even if the time span amounts to days, is better than no response at all. It helped to expose and situate the thoughts and attitudes that were prevalent at the time of writing. Ortlipp (2008a) refers to this as the research trail. As part of researcher validity, it showed how the thoughts that have arisen as part of the research process influence researcher directives and directions. The

journal also helped to explore the challenges and difficulties faced with managing the various roles related to work as I tried to reconcile whether time taken from developing classroom practice and given to pursuing the research was of value. The act of journaling cemented some thought processes and contained in the journal were my hidden thoughts as gems – some I wrestled with because I did not like to admit what I was doing and thinking. The journal element of field notes asked inner questions and was indicative of being interviewed by the thesis itself. It was acting as the voice of the research process which at times exposed my real thoughts and vulnerability.

4.3.8 Semi-structured interviews

In this study, I used interviewing as another data collection method. It was used to give participants an opportunity to express their own relationship with music as an activity through the interview topic (Kvale, 1995; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It was especially valuable for addressing participants' understanding of music as Muslims and influences affecting their interest in music. A research interview as described by Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) is an organised and directed conversation which aims to give those interviewed the opportunity to describe their experiences, articulate their feelings and present the world from their perspective. It therefore requires careful listening, questioning and follow-up questioning (Kvale, 1995). The Interviews helped to explore attitudes and clarify my interpretation of responses to incidents that occurred and assumptions I had made. Interviews enabled me to explore and clarify matters that arose from events and behaviour that occurred in weekly sessions with participants during or outside the club (Bryman & Cassell, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2017).

In the main there are three types of interviews: *Fully structured, unstructured and semi-structured.* There is tight control over the format of *fully structured* interviews whereas *unstructured* interviews allow the respondent more freedom to talk about a topic without being guided by the interviewer. *Semi-structured* interviews lie somewhere in between the two (Qu & Dumay, 2011; Silverman, 2013). They require using a set of prewritten questions to guide the interview, but respondents are given the opportunity to expand their answers. The main difference between the three approaches is the amount of control the interviewer has over the direction of the interview (Stuckey, 2013). The semi-structured interview is the method that I used because I wanted to explore club members experience with music from their perspective (Boyce-Tillman, 2019; Engeström, 2001; Green, 2002; Zeserson, Saunders, Burn, & Himonides, 2014). The questions provided direction to the interview by addressing areas relevant to the research (Appendix 2). There were warm up questions at the beginning and questions requiring more in

depth answers were planned for later in the conversation. The flexibility within the planned structure meant I could explore further areas raised within the interview. It also gave participants the opportunity to expand on their answers if they wished (Brewer, 2000). The prepared questions helped to refocus the interview conversation onto areas I wanted to learn about and expand on (Qu & Dumay, 2011; Stuckey, 2013). Given the role in the interview taken by the interviewer who drives the interview, it can be argued Kvale & Brinkmann's (2009) picture of interviews as a conversation is a partial reflection of what occurs. Conversations in a casual informal interchange allow for an exchange of ideas or a taking of turns (Svennevig, 2000; Warren, M., 2006). Although there is two-way interaction in interviews, the researcher's personal voice is silenced in their need to remain distant. Additionally, the person interviewed does not take turns in managing the direction of the conversation or getting to know the interviewer by asking them personal questions. The aim of as interviewer is to probe inside the world of the interviewee and elicit relevant information. I explore this aspect of interviews further in the next section as part of a reflexive process.

4.4 Adopting a reflective/reflexive perspective.

4.4.1 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the way by which the researcher addresses how they have affected the research through their own knowledge, experience, values and anything else that may influence the research (McDonald, 2013; Winter, 1996). As part of the reflexive process, I looked at my position within the study and the way it may have influenced how I collected and analysed the data and produced the findings (Harding, 2013; McDonald, 2013).

One of the areas was related to conducting interviews. As a conversation, Kvale (1995) depicts two metaphorical approaches to interviewing: *the miner* and *the traveller*. In relation to the miner, he relates the interview technique to using questions to probe beyond the surface level and dig deep for hidden nuggets of information. The traveller on the other hand, interacts with the local inhabitants within their own terrain, asking questions which enable participants to voice their own version of events concerning their own world to weave their story at the end of the journey.

I related more with the traveller because the miner was reminiscent of the people who, in a quest for gold and hidden gems, disregard the person who owns the nuggets and the terrain in which the nuggets are embedded. Instead, like the traveller, I wished to interact with the people and their environment but on their terms and listen to their story. However, the traveller analogy as

described by Kvale (1995) still gathers things from people they find 'interesting' even if they are stories. I saw them as intentionally the same as they both want to get something from the event. The miner wants nuggets and the traveller stories. Both illicit responses that uncovered what lay beyond the surface, but uncover what? This is outplayed during an interview with Basma who is one of the original club members. I ask her a question about her music interest.

In the interview, when she replied that she no longer liked Arabic music, as a logical progression I could have asked her a question to elaborate on this point. Behind that course of questioning was a deductive line of thinking. It was technically saying '*That as an Arabic person, I thought you would like Arabic music. Why don't you like it anymore?* Really, I was saying, *'As an Arabic person, you are meant to like all Arabic music. Your reply is not what I consider a normal response. It is contrary to what I have been programmed to expect from you.*'

When I have mentioned this as being an issue to some of my white associates, they state that making assumptions or generalisations about people from different cultural backgrounds is unacceptable, or just because someone is X, it does not mean they behave as or like Y. For me, that is obvious and ordinary and more often than not, that is where the understanding for them ends. Therefore, there is little understanding of why asking Basma in the name of research, *why she does not like Arabic music anymore* may be an issue. For them it is the appropriate distance required to explore a topic in more depth. In one sense I agree, but what I wish to express here is that Basma's response was a stark reminder of the agitation I have felt and feel when asked similar questions directly related to culture or ethnicity. The question asked is often based on ideas and information constructed around certain expectations of a people group. This is illustrated in the BBC III short video series *Things Not to Say to…* which records people from different minority groups responding to questions they are asked on a regular basis. Whilst it is a comical look at the sometimes-well-meaning inquirer, it also demonstrates how certain questions have more meaning for the recipient rather than the inquirer. As such, the one asking the question as the outsider, does not understand or realise the question is associated with negative connotations which the interviewer is now representing. In light of this therefore, had I asked the follow up question *Why don't you like Arabic music anymore?* I would be in allegiance with those who delve for gems of information but belong to and represent a world of misrepresentations which in one breath advocates tolerance and in another devalues belief and cultural systems that do not fit with their own. For me Basma's question was one of several ethical issues that emerged from the study. Even if I did not ask *Why doesn't she like Arabic (her) music anymore*? I did think it. In my thoughts, I had committed the act because I am a product of my education and environment. I

was therefore unable to deal with this question and my response immediately and needed to process it at a later stage.

4.4.2 Dealing with researcher/facilitator identity

An issue that was a positive, yet challenging factor, was related to my already established acceptance and relationship with the participants and confidentiality. Occasionally, there were conversations where the subject matter was of a more personal level. I made the decision that I would not include them, and I stopped the recordings. I did this because I wanted to continue to preserve the trust and confidentiality that I already had with some club members. Participants often wanted to share everyday stories with me as they had done prior to the research. I wanted them to know I had not changed and could still be involved with the content of their general conversations which, if controversial would not be committed to tape. This meant there were sometimes some things said particularly where the details may be culturally taboo, I chose not to recount or retell (or reflect on) in my journal entries. I could still have continued with the recording and then say I would not use the information. However, I felt this would be ethically problematic especially with students because I was in a position of authority and control, it meant if students did not want personal information recorded, they may not wish to offend by declining the request, or they may not have the courage to voice their objections. I decided to make the decision for them, and on one occasion I was thanked for doing so.

Secondly, my familiarity with the participants had an impact on when I decided to start recording the sessions. I wanted them to feel at ease before asking if I could record them. On reflection, however, I can see that the problem was not purely because I was concerned for them. Just as some people feel the camera invades their privacy, I realised I felt the same about taping sessions. I had recorded students playing music but doing an audio recording of everything that takes place was not something I had done before and therefore recording sessions would change the dynamics of the club. Not wanting to audio-record sessions from the beginning of the research was also about my own insecurities. In wanting participants to feel at ease, it was actually about me wanting to feel ready to invite the recording device into what was essentially my space. In the end, with their permission, I chose to record the first part of sessions to gauge the reaction. The participants were unphased but on analysing the data I felt it would be better to record whole rather than part sessions. Doing so meant I could get a better sense of progression in sessions. The audio recordings were also a way of allowing the music club as the artefact and main conduit for the object to have a voice and perspective as part of the data.

Thirdly, I wondered why I assumed the role of facilitator rather than other terms. Maybe it was due to how I perceive myself as teacher. Someone who guides the learner through the process of learning rather than a teacher led instructional approach to teaching. However, in listening to the session recordings, I realised this idea of being a facilitator is a partial reality as there is more instruction during sessions rather than student led discovery (Brown & Campione, 1994; Cross, 1998; Sfard, 1998). What was interesting was my disappointed reaction to what I found because in my world a teacher who does not facilitate is viewed negatively. For me facilitation is about providing tools and guidance on their use. Knowing how to apply them to a variety of contexts gives students the ability to exercise their own creative freedom. However, of interest, the session recordings saw contextual changes in my teaching style over the year. It even led to students attending their first live classical concert with the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra. They enjoyed it so much that they responded by organising and attending another classical performance with an internationally renowned violinist.

4.5 Analysing the data

In the literature, analysing whilst collecting simultaneously is advocated as a preferable approach (Charmaz, 2014; Harding, 2013; Silverman, 2013, 2015). It was a personal ideal but, difficult to officiate due to the daily teaching demands such as lesson preparation, marking, various project meetings and needing to transcribe session recordings. After the preliminary steps of trying to collect and analyse concurrently, I came to the conclusion that even though It was not perfect, collecting the data first and analysing it afterwards was more appropriate to my situation. Much of the analysis was completed after the data were collected and transcribed. From the first set of fieldnotes however, I began to think about what had transpired in club sessions. This meant I mentally analysed the data in the context of how I processed what I observed and recorded in relation to why they were engaged in creating music. Issues raised from this mental analysing also influenced decisions I made about how I wanted to proceed with club members and the running of the following session.

The following section looks at the process entailed within the data analysis process. It first looks at the method used to transfer audio collated data from interviews and recorded sessions to text. It then looks at the method used to code the data and the process involved in producing the themes in relation to the findings.

4.5.1 Transcribing collected Data

Most if not all data transcription began with the initial stage of converting visual observations, audio recordings or notes into written form (Flick, 2018; Silverman, 2013). During and after the data collection period my journal notes which were already committed to Microsoft Word documents, were filed in a folder. All collected data were stored on a USB flash drive which was in my possession at all times or on a password protected laptop, iPad or phone.

The audio recordings of interviews and weekly sessions needed to be transcribed as written text into a Word document. I was aware that I could summarise the recordings and transcribe salient and relevant parts - and where sessions were concerned this is what I did initially. The benefits gained through the process of transcribing one's own data were advocated in the literature. I had also described the procedure as arduous in my journal but it enabled me to make mental connections as I became familiar with the information and through the process I became more immersed in the data.

As part of the transcribing, I corrected grammar if it interfered with the general understanding and omitted most interjections such as *err…*, *erm… so…*, because I felt they detracted from the flow of the transcribed text. They were included if they signalled pause for thought or rephrasing of an idea, but generally recordings were transcribed verbatim. I sent the transcripts to the participants to see if they were an accurate rendering of the interview. They were asked to modify any part which they felt did not represent what they wanted to say. No one amended or expressed their disapproval of the transcripts.

4.5.2 The coding process

For the method of analysis, I wanted one that would assist with sifting through the data to find what lay beneath the surface or tip of the activity system triangle through being involved with music and the music club. To achieve that aim entailed a more inductive approach where the researcher looks for patterns and themes whilst examining the data (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Therefore, I adopted coding as the method of analysis to see what emerged as possible connecting themes.

Coding is the system used to arrange data into categories which are based on emerging ideas or themes (Hammersley & Atkinson 2010; Marshall & Rossman 2011). For Braun & Clark (2006) the concept of *emerging themes* demotes the researcher into a more passive role, and they suggest the need for greater clarification when using the term. As an alternative, they advocate the use

of thematic analysis where writers can recognise, analyse and describe patterns from the data. After formulating codes based on notable aspects of the data, I searched through the data to review and define themes before writing the findings. This form of analysis created more in-depth exploration of the data.

To code the data, I used NVivo a computer software programme to analyse qualitative data for several purposes. The primary reason was because when I have analysed data without CAQDAS (computer assisted qualitative data analysis software) using a more traditional method, it generated a large volume of notes, highlights, quotes and categories all scattered amongst streams of paper, with post it reminders everywhere all which need researcher memory and management. This aspect of working with data is a feature of qualitative research that can be overwhelming and impractical (Atkinson, 2016; Odena, 2013; Quinlan, 2008; Shaffer, 2017). I chose to consolidate all data from journals, sessions and interviews in an NVivo project as a more efficient method for managing paper-based data. I also felt it could assist with providing a more varied analysis of the data because it could make links that I may overlook.

The process I followed as part of thematic analysis was first to take the expressions used by the participants (in vivo) as the initial codes to help me focus on the participants' perspectives rather than my own interpretations. This was done by going through each transcript and selecting a word or phrase I believed summarised the sentence as a code or NVivo node. I had thought that using a CAQDAS like NVivo in the coding process would save time and be easy to manage. The phase, much like transcribing, was time consuming. It also generated a vast number of codes as recorded in one of the journal entries.

> Presently, splitting paragraphs to analyse every sentence. This is time consuming. So far it has not been easier as I initially thought. I feel I have many ideas… although good, it requires constant scrolling, some categories are in the main, duplicates of others…So I scroll up and down the list. I was going to analyse all the data in this manner first and then cluster the ideas later for themes, but I've decided, I will narrow the fields before I continue with the next phase of coding.
>
> (Journal)

Going through the data sentence by sentence made the data source fragmented. To regain a more holistic view of the data I worked with, I moved to analysing a chunk at a time to get the gist of either a paragraph or several sentences together. At certain points during the first stage of analysis, there was a vast generation of nodes which were reduced to a more manageable number (Gibb, Schulz 2014). This was where I could see the benefit of using NVivo. I was able to delete duplicates, merge similar nodes and re-organise them under 15 umbrella themes. To capture the perceptions and manage the complexed nature of music experience of club members as an activity, I used activity theory as an analytical lens to interpret the data as the second stage of the coding process.

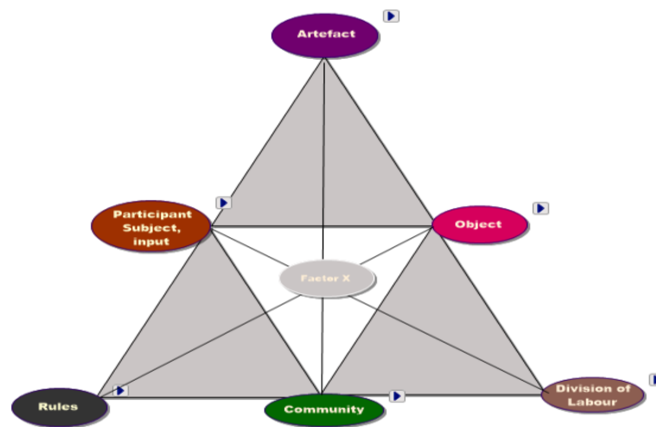

Figure 4-6 Activity theory colour coded constructs condensed

After revisiting the data and literature, I decided, because activity theory was used to guide the questions, it was logical to use activity system components of *subject*, *artefact*, *object*, *rules*, *community*, *division of labour* and *outcome* as headings or themes to further structure the data analysis process (figure 4.6).

The codes that were originally generated were then reallocated to the activity theory themes/constructs. Initially, I added an extra construct to cover the experience participants underwent in trying to learn and engage with music. At the time, I felt this process was not adequately addressed in the activity system. I placed it as occurring in the middle of the triangle and called it *factor X* until I was able to adequately allocate its codes to different parts of the activity system. I went through the process again of reducing these into themes that reflected what was expressed during interviews and what happened during sessions. This meant it took longer than originally planned to analyse the data because of the continual back and forth checks between what was logged in NVivo, to ensure the transcripts and the original sources were

aligned. I had spent much time examining the codes through NVivo and working with the activity theory concepts to assist with focussing the coding process. I began to realise that I had lost sight of the story behind the generated themes.

As the 3rd and last stage of analysis I decided to revisit the data this time I would summarise each of the sources and then manually code each interview and each session. Having already generated general headings from the in vivo codes and themes, I used these to assist with the manual coding of the summarised data. This was done to get the overall story. Using Microsoft Word in a table

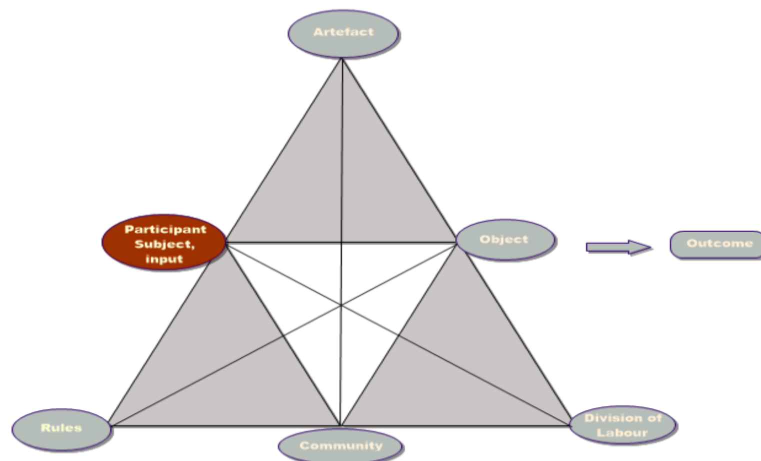

Figure 4-7 The highlighted activity system component developed in Chapter 5 (figure 5.1)

format, I could see four general headings from the activity theory proforma. *Input*, this related to the perceptions and influences the participants (subjects) encountered before the club. It also *described* the reasons or purpose (object) for joining the club; *during* referred to what they did whilst they were involved in the music club (*community*) and finally the *outcome*, which is the summary of the overall experience. Initially, I tried to generate charts, cluster and scatter diagrams through NVivo using the results of the findings, however I did not feel they adequately represented the data.

I wanted something that incorporated the activity theory model and concepts, captured the complexity of the process but showed succinctly the relationship between the different activity theory concepts. Using the mind map software programme called *Inspiration® 9* helped to achieve this. I had used it throughout the research to help manage different stages of the research process. From the components of the AT triangular model, I decided to create a visual representation of the findings as a tree diagram to get a clearer and more composite overall view. In figure 4.4 beside each heading is a small arrow which when selected in the computer

programme displays the main findings as chapter headings with their sub themes. In figure 4.7, the highlighted part of the triangle represents the findings that were found in relation to the first findings chapter.

4.5.3 Validity and reliability: Research trustworthiness

Research validity and reliability refer to the measures that were taken to ensure the results of this study can be verified. Firstly, the terms need to be addressed in relation to this research.

Research validity and reliability have been contentious issues within qualitative studies (Noble & Smith, 2015; Silverman, 2013). The arguments centre around concerns that they are less reliable due to their use of opaque methods with unsupported findings based on personal judgements (Patton & Cochran, 2002; Punch, 2013). Quantitative studies on the other hand, are considered more rigorous as they can be assessed in relation to the three main areas of v*alidity, reliability and generalisability. Validity* refers to whether or not the findings represent the data. Reliability on the other hand, measures whether the research tool will produce consistent results and *generalisability relates to the extent* which the findings can be applied to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Punch, 2013; Shaffer, 2017). Due to their different philosophical approaches and purpose, some writers question the rationale of using terms *validity, reliability and generalisability* as measurements of rigour equally for quantitative and qualitative research traditions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Lather, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Noble & Smith, 2015; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

Qualitative studies, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, should be judged according to their trustworthiness using the following alternatives and in brackets are the quantitative equivalents. *Truth value* (validity) refers to whether the research truthfully represents the participants' interpretation of reality. *Consistency and neutrality* (reliability) refers to the trustworthiness of the methods that have been used in the study and the clarity of decisions made by the researcher. Lastly, *applicability* (generalisability) is the degree to which the results can be transferred or applied to another setting (Noble & Smith, 2015) (Dugar, 2017). Based on the terms used by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Slevin & Sines' (1999) use *truthfulness, consistency and transferability* as similar categories that can be applied to qualitative research and are terms I believe are more appropriate for this study.

Truthfulness acknowledges the existence of multiple realities, which means there are different ways in which reality or truth can be perceived (Allen, 2005; Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Burr & Dick, 2017; Elder-Vass, 2012; Engeström, 2000; Lock & Strong, 2010). This aspect was one of the

factors driving this study as outlined in section 4.1 at the beginning of the chapter. It meant recognising that researcher views of truth influence observations and interpretations. To address the issue, there were different data collection types; a journal, session audio recordings and interviews that together helped to centre on participants' version of events (Coffey, 1999; Gerard Forsey, 2010; Polkinghorne, 2005; Spradley, 2016; Van Maanen, 2011a). Also, after the interviews, participants were given copies of the transcripts which they could amend.

Peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2012) as part of a peer support group the researcher belonged to provided many opportunities to check and test the perceptions acquired during the research process. From the beginning of the research, a weekly journal outlined the researcher's observations. It also documented the development in their attitudes and thoughts as part of the reflexive process (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017; Cunliffe, 2002; Sultana, 2007). In connection with truthfulness and ethical considerations the researcher tried to ensure how the participants' views and the reality of circumstances surrounding them and their community were respectfully represented within the study.

Where *consistency* is concerned the study outlines the reasons why certain decisions were made during the research process. Some were guided according to literature relevant to the study and methodological pathway (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Flick, 2018; Holliday, 2016; Silverman, 2015). Other choices such as the research setting and sample, were made according to the circumstances of a lived reality (Dunleavy, 2003; Silverman, 2015). The reasons influencing decisions however, were documented throughout the study and shown in the journal writing process of the data collection and the accompanying literature notes. They were matched against the recorded sessions and student responses in interviews and thus provided triangulation (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The researcher as the facilitator of the music club, invested the equivalent of an academic year to build upon already established relationships. Prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Smith, 2015) also required recognising the complexities that are associated with being in lengthy interactions with participants. There was the need to find the balance between familiarity and neutrality (Jáuregui, 2016; Kanuha, 2000; O'Reilly, 2009). In such instances, the AT activity system component of object served as a neutral realignment. It helped to keep the research aim and the role of the participants at the forefront of interactions. Also, the relationship that existed in relation to student and teacher dynamics helped to maintain a professional distance.

Transferability, as the last area, refers to whether or not the findings can be *transferred* to other contexts or groups (Noble & Smith, 2015; Slevin & Sines, 1999). Due to the context and unique

nature of my study, it was not intended to be applied to other groups. However, just as there are connections with other studies from the region (Good-Perkins, 2019; Aljabri, 2017) I believe there are some aspects from the findings that can be transferred into other similar contexts.

4.5.4 Summary

This chapter has detailed how I approached conducting this study and how the reason for doing the research was impacted by my view of reality. In relation to music in an Islamic context, it demonstrates that we influence and are influenced by how we interact with and perceive the reality around us. Our understanding of reality also affects our perception of music and interaction with cultural others.

Through the components subject, artefact object, rules, division of labour, and community that contribute to the activity as a system, activity theory's recognition of the multifarious nature of activity provided a lens to make sense of the participants' interest in an activity negatively regarded within their cultural and historical context. The chapter outlines the participants and how they became part of the study. It details the researcher's decision to collect data as a participant observer which is one of the main strategies used by ethnographers to gather data but it also acknowledges the insider-outsider dichotomy associated with the role.

The chapter details the three main data collection tools that were used to get a full picture of participants' experience. Audio rather than video recording of sessions in keeping with cultural, ethical protocol. Semi-structured interviews to get participants views on music activity in relation to the cultural and religious climate around them and their music interest. Lastly, the weekly journal that was kept from beginning of the study which record my version of events and reflexive thoughts in relation to the research process.

I analysed the data over several stages using NVivo where initial codes were generated using participants' expressions (in vivo). They were classified into groups and sub-groups. The next stage involved relating the group categories to the activity theory activity system triangle components through NVivo whilst revisiting the data. The final stage of the process was to recapture the participants' story by coding manually the summaries of the interviews and sessions. The results were presented in a tree format using Inspiration® 9 a mind-map computer programme to represent the activity theory triangle components.

Much of the evidence used in the findings chapters were taken from the interviews and sessions. They helped to give the participants a stronger voice in the results and also can be measured

against views of the researcher that surface in the reflexive accounts found in the journal. The next chapter addresses the findings in relation to the three research questions found at the beginning of section 4.2.

5 Findings Part 1: Perceptions participants encountered toward music activity

This chapter looks at the findings in relation to the first of three research questions.

What perceptions have participants encountered toward music as an activity?

It investigates the attitudes and observations they experienced toward music activity and their understanding of perspectives especially within the Muslim community.

As activity theory was used as an analytical lens to develop the research questions and

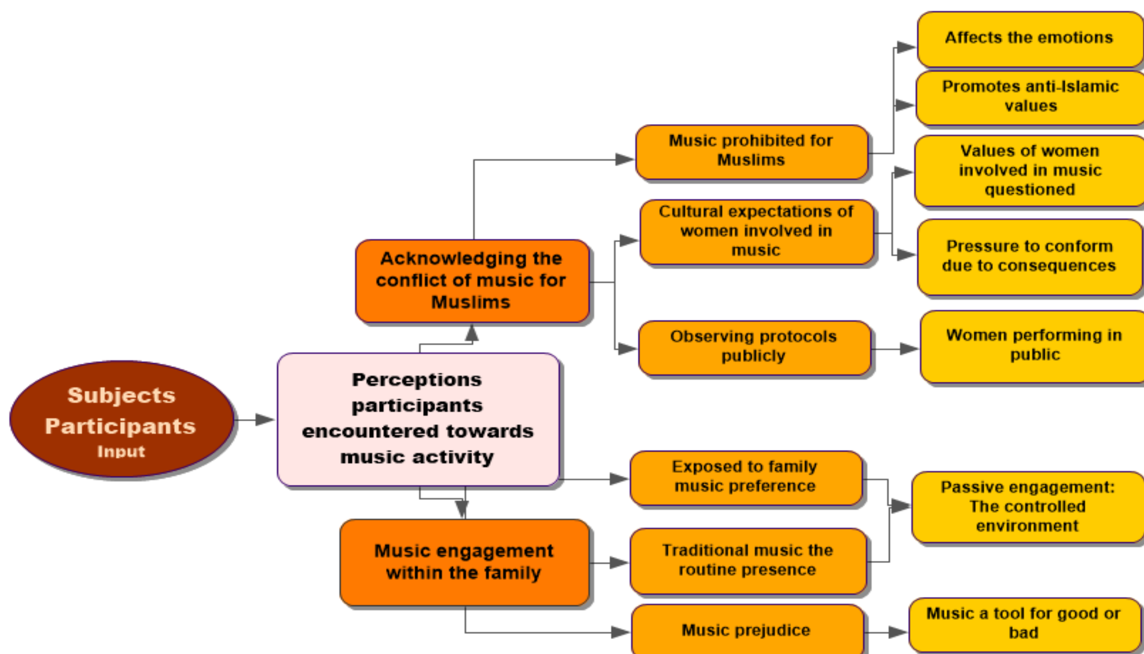

Figure 5-1 Perceptions of music activity participants encountered

consolidate the themes generated from the first stage of coding, it is used to help present the findings for each question.

In figure 5.1, the results show participants' attempts at trying to make sense of the attitudes they encounter. In connection with the activity theory activity system triangle, it is the cultural and historical input participants experience as the subjects of the activity (Langemeyer & Roth, 2006; Roth & Lee, 2007). Based on the results, the chapter is divided into two main parts. The first shows the participants' acknowledgement of religious and cultural sentiments that exist toward music as part of the Muslim community. The second part explores participants' music engagement in the family where according to the literature encounters with music begin (Savage, 2013; Stebbins, 2005; Swanwick, 2012).

5.1 Acknowledging the conflict of music for Muslims

In relation to the first research question, the results show participants knew the unwritten rules and associated replies. This is similar to the response of participants in research on music activity conducted in other Islamic settings (see for example, Adely, 2007; Adely, 2012; Alamer, 2015; Aljabri, 2017; Good-Perkins, 2019). Where people in this study were concerned, none referred directly to the teachings of the Quran or Hadiths as evidence. Instead, like respondents in other music based research conducted in the area, club members responded with perceptions and attitudes they had acquired. The findings also demonstrate that even though they knew that music was problematic, they queried perpetual views held within the Muslim community. In the following section we see the views of three students Dhabiya, Nadine and Badour who were more outspoken on the matter of music in Islam.

5.1.1 Music prohibited for Muslims

To show they were aware music is not allowed, three of the Emirati members Nadine, Badour and Dhabiya used words such as *haram, forbidden* or *not allowed*. They also explained what it represented for them. Dhabiya a newcomer to the group, was a beginner who had attended several sessions (see table 4.1). During the interview, I raised the issue of music not being permitted for Muslims by saying that as different attitudes existed towards music in different Muslim countries, music was acceptable for Muslims depending on where you came from.

> Dhabiya: … For Islam, it's not allowed, it's haram because when you hear music, you think of a lot of things, think about your feelings and go deeper and deeper, so that's why they call it haram, but for us we like this…
>
> Interview

From the extract, we see that Dhabiya responded with the official line that music in Islam is haram or not allowed. The reason for the jurisdiction concurs with ruling expressed by teachers of Islamic law. According to her understanding, listening to music is prohibited because of its power over mental and emotional reactions (Nasr, 1997; Sloboda & O'neill, 2001). Listening to music is a problem because it not only enables individuals to connect and engage with their feelings, it provides access to things more profound (Baz, 1961; Bedford, 2001). Exactly what the *things* are and Dhabiya does not specify but according to her, music is not allowed because it is seen to possess the ability to influence the thought process. The explanations she encounters that are proposed by music's opponents are the factors, she finds attractive. For Dhabiya and those like her, reasons against music from the non-music

fraternity do not reflect what she experiences as her current reality (Frith, 2017; Miranda, 2013; Tanner et al., 2008; Thompson, 2020). Her response demonstrates an active moving away from the objective reality of the cultural and social norm she has received from those who link music's unacceptance with its influence on the emotions. She believes there is nothing wrong with activities that bring enjoyment and pleasure. It can be seen that in Dhabiya's world, the unacceptable has become more acceptable and added to this, she is not alone "… *but for us we like this* ..." The *us*/*we* is a disconnection from those Muslims who do not have the mind-set, attitude or understanding as the *us*/*we* in the Middle East. The *us/we* belong to the unquantified, nebulous yet existing number of those who belong to a remote and imagined community of like-minded people (Anderson, 2006; Eales, Gillespie, Eckerstorfer, Eltag, & Ferguson, 2020; Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012). Within the music club she is in contact with the *us/we,* which is not an abstract, illusionary group, but contains people who share similar views to those she possesses.

Where perceptions and attitudes towards music are concerned, Nadine, similar to Dhabiya also acknowledged the religious and societal position she had received that music is haram.

> Nadine: … in an Arab country it's kind of criticised to have anything related to music because in our religion it's haram. It's forbidden.
>
> Interview

The statement demonstrates her knowledge of the official line of thought. Those engaging with music will be subject to reproach for their interest. The rule does not simply apply to the UAE and other Gulf states; it is applicable to all Arabs who are followers of Islam.

The explanations supporting the view that music is forbidden, however, are not adequate justifications to which Nadine can wholeheartedly subscribe. She is aware there are aspects surrounding the disapproval of listening to music and engaging in music activity. Like Dhabiya, she explains in the following excerpt, listening to music is prohibited because it affects the emotions especially if the lyrics through being explicitly suggestive and sensual are used to entice people to go break religious boundaries.

> Nadine: It really depends... So, … in Islam they say that if the song doesn't, for example, describe a girl's body, or it doesn't flirt with a girl— her lips, her eyes, her face— they say that it's okay it's okay…
>
> Nadine: …If it doesn't speak about love, if it doesn't speak about bodies or they don't describe a girl or something... or it doesn't flirt with, with a girl— her lips, her eyes, her face— they say that it's okay, I think that's fine. People might listen to it. But if it goes beyond that, it's considered haram
>
> Interview

Nadine explains listening to music is acceptable as long as certain protocols are observed. Whilst listening to music for Nadine is a matter of interpretation, one must ensure the music

listened to does not stray into areas considered haram in Islam (Al Faruqi, 1985).The music must not speak explicitly about love. This is not a reference to the love displayed to show a respect for others. The love Nadine alludes to is of a sexual nature such as speaking blatantly about the opposite sex and the female body. Playing an instrument is also not allowed for the same reasons. According to Islam, the performer must not engage with the audience using sexually explicit gestures or movement. Nadine also recognises there are rules in every religion which people contravene.

> Nadine: …this is kind of like in all of the religions in the world, sometimes even if you know that this is forbidden you still do it because you don't really consider it as haram.
>
> Interview

In the above extract, Nadine is not advocating breaking the rules. As she has expressed, they as Emiratis, reside in a multicultural society and its world of multiple faiths. She has observed that people irrespective of their religious background try to make sense of the world in which they interact and the rules by which they must abide. Sometimes there are no plausible explanations given which satisfactorily supports the reasoning behind things categorised as forbidden. To say something is prohibited because it is part of the religious requirements may be plausibly sufficient for some. Others need to understand the reason behind the existing rubrics. If not, they will make their own decisions about how the rule should be applied. Nadine raises the point that there are some things people do that are more harmful than listening to music.

> Nadine: I mean, there are a lot of worse things people do other than listening to songs. And so, to me I really think I would— if, if I'm really convinced one day that songs are haram, or that it would harm me or make me do something bad, I can stop… But I haven't really gotten to that point where I realise because we have been doing lots of other things that are forbidden,
>
> Interview

This is one of the reasons why Nadine and those engaged in the club find it difficult to accept there is anything wrong with music activity. She believes that there is no power within the songs themselves to harm her or influence her in such a way that she behaves badly. If there are valid reasons that conclusively show music is wrong, she would stop listening to it.
Badour another interviewee expressed her love for music. She does this in relation to the criticisms she received because of people's belief that music is wrong.

> Badour: …ah, the criticisms like, saying to me why are you listening to music. you know musi c is not good, like that…
>
> Badour: …they said that music is haram
>
> Interview

Haram for Badour refers to the negative labels people give to music and also use to criticise her musical involvement whilst at the same time they enjoy listening to music. In so doing, whether or not they wish to admit it, their actions rather than their words show they promote her and music as an activity.

> Badour: Yeah, this is what I don't understand. You're saying to me music is not nice, but you're listening to me sing, why? But when you listen to me it makes you happy right? … Even my father's listening to music and he's telling me don't do this? Why are you listening to music! (laughing)
>
> This is what I want to ask to people. Like you're saying music is not good but you're still listening to it. And me, don't you think you're being someone you're not? You're being someone else.
>
> Interview

Badour here refers to concepts which are used to support viewpoints against music. Firstly, there are those who believe "*music is not nice*." This phrase "*not nice*," has several connotations. It refers to that which is bad and therefore not good and the person absorbed in music should use their time more effectively doing something more beneficial. Secondly, some songs feature adult singers. This is met with disapproval amongst ardent Muslims especially when their singing is accompanied by tuned instruments such as the guitar and if the singer is a woman performing in front of a mixed audience, this is "*not nice*." Thirdly as a contrast, Badour is more conscious of the reciprocal nature of music as an activity. The person who listens to music, listens to something created and performed by someone else. The actions of people such as her father, are in conflict with what they verbally express. They enjoy listening to music but are critical of it as an activity. There is therefore an indirect criticism of those connected with creating and performing the songs they listen to. In fact, their actions contravene the belief systems associated with the reality to which they profess to uphold. Instead, they promote the very world they encourage others to avoid. Finally, like Dhabiya she also raises the issue that those who listen to music do so because it affects their emotions; it makes them feel happy. There is nothing wrong with this reason. People who listen to music do so because they want to be taken to a world which produces this positive aspect in their lives, but even though some people listen to music because it makes them feel good, they are ready to denounce it.

Badour believes therefore, she is unlike those who betray their true selves in the public arena. Those very people with their message of conformity and open admonishment of music, succumb to the pressure of those around them. However, in their private space outside the judging eyes of others, those very critics are music lovers. It is therefore difficult for her to understand and accept the oscillatory attitudes and standards of those who have a closed

mind-set. Badour does not wish to endorse people willing to deny themselves in order to be accepted by those around them.

5.1.2 Cultural expectations of women involved in music

There are experiences and mind-sets demonstrated towards music which not only pressurise people to conform but warn them of the consequences awaiting those who deviate from the cultural and religious norms of their world. Sometimes the behaviour and attitudes sanctioned by the larger, institutional world may not reflect the views of the smaller, local community in which the music club operates. There is a noticeable music presence nationally and regionally. The over-riding message that is transmitted is that one can freely engage with music. The central standard is to ensure emotions are kept pure as indicated earlier by Dhabiya. Some club members encountered perceptions which did not comply with Dhabiya's interpretation that playing music is acceptable. They felt it was particularly the case when women are involved in music activity.

> Researcher: ... and during the time when you've been in the music club, have you been criticised?
>
> Badour: Yes, and worse, …because they were afraid of my, you know the reputation. you're saying to me that this girl will not have a good future. Her life will not improve. Because she's just doing music…and then what? Whatchya gonna do...
>
> Interview

Badour's interpretation is that for women, their music interest may come at a price. Some believe being involved in music would not augment a young woman's prospects. Even amongst the participants, music has no future potential and they see it as just a hobby.

> Khadijah: It's (music) a hobby.
>
> Interview

> Ohoud: I don't see it (music) as important, it's just fun….it will not help me in the future
>
> Interview

Ohoud is clear in her convictions that music is not something she will pursue. It is simply an activity she does for fun. We see this in the following extract from Basma's interview.

> Basma: …it's good to have a little bit of fun and then a little… a lot of work, but then you relax sometimes, playing what you like.
>
> Researcher: So, the music club is not work for you.
>
> Basma: No, it's not work. It's fun for me that's why enjoy it
>
> Interview

Basma sees music as something you do that takes you away from unpleasant work. Because music is enjoyable and relaxing you can indulge a little bit but the more time is to be given to work. For Badour, however, her interest in music is much stronger than seeing it as a hobby and there are people she has encountered who believe engaging in music could potentially jeopardise her future as a woman. They believe it is necessary that she aligns herself with the required behaviour and appropriate values that can protect her reputation and improve her future prospects (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Nash, 1990). She on the other hand, expresses passionately her desire to become a musician in the following extract.

> Badour: I have a very strong passion in music and I know some people will tell me that this has no future… in the future I really want to be a musician. From the first time I heard rock 'n' roll I said I want to be a musician, I don't want to be like the same as everyone, I want to be myself. That's what I love. I have a very strong passion in music and I know some people will tell me that this has no future. You have no future with it. Music is nothing you won't gain, you won't improve.
>
> Interview

Nadine also states that being part of a band was one of her dreams. She had ambitions of performing publicly in-front of others since she was a child.

> Nadine: ...for me to get into a band. This has been something I always wanted to do… I would die to go to that. I would definitely die. I would let everybody know that I have a band, because this is something I've always wanted to do.
>
> Interview

She recognises there is criticism aimed at people who want to play music and refers to the experience members encountered when they were part of the band.

> Nadine: ... I can't remember whether it was on Instagram or somewhere else. But people were like, "Oh these girls must just graduate from UC and go marry and sit in their houses." And I was like, no, they shouldn't! I mean it's a girls' band: they shouldn't quit. That's a really good step. I mean, that's the step for people like me to start with what I wanna do.
>
> Interview

For, Nadine, involvement in music affects them as women in other ways. If a woman who wishes to get married makes explicit her love for music, even though she has not contravened the laws of the land she risks jeopardising future plans of getting married.

> Nadine: To some certain families it's kind of negative. If you go to a family that doesn't listen to music because it's forbidden, and they would ask about the girl and… if she's a fan of a certain singer [or] band, they might get upset and they might cancel the marriage.
>
> Interview

In Nadine's world marriage is of great importance and one must not engage in activities which endanger one's future prospects in this area. On a national level, there are rules and opportunities that exist equally for both genders but Nadine does not use a generic term of

reference to denote that the negative impact of music involvement is experienced by both genders. She clearly believes the attitude is imposed on women and it is costlier for them than it is for a man. Nadine does not explain the reasons behind the perspective, but she feels some rules and principles that govern her world reflect locally grounded perspectives and are based on mind-sets which restrict the freedom of women more than men.

Although I did not get an opportunity to interview Balquis, this is part of her story before joining the music club the second time around. She was one of the original club members who played keyboard for the band. She left because she was due to be married, but before leaving, she informed me her mother instructed her not to tell her future husband that she played music. She was visibly upset that she was unable to continue attending the club and we talked about it on several occasions. At the time, Balquis struggled with the situation because not only was playing music important to her (Adely, 2012; Campbell, 2002), it was clear she would miss the strong relationships she had formed with the band members who had now become an important part of her life. After the wedding, she stopped coming.

The disapproval is based on the conviction held within the community that someone who enjoys listening to and playing music panders to their own will and is self-indulgent. Members of the community call into question the values of someone who enjoys listening to and playing songs linked with licentious conduct and associated images portrayed in the music. Such a person is not seen to uphold values corresponding with Islamic standards. Such attitudes are unbefitting a woman intending to marry their son, join their family and live in their household. The future bride needs to value those unwritten rules that apply to the world in which they as a community operate and she must be willing to raise children who also respect that world. The woman actively involved with music is demonstrating a break from traditional ways and entertaining actions and thoughts which belong to the modern world and its global Westernised practices. Those values do not conserve and respect the virtually unchallenged protocols that have been passed down through the generations. The modern way is to question and challenge cultural standards. A Muslim woman listening to music permits modern conventions and disregards established protocols. This is not the accepted behaviour of someone governed by the ideals and ways Islam. The man choosing a wife will look for a woman with principles compatible with his world and she would be expected to already possess the values which will be in alignment with the patterns of his world and compatible with Islam. For students like Nadine, possessing such attitudes are part of religion and ensure people stick to what they know and understand.

> Nadine: Because you know in religions, we have these Muslims that are so, tied to whatever we have in the Islamic world. Now, I'm not gonna say that this is a good or a bad thing, because in the end if he's a religious person then that's up to him - it's a free country.
>
> Interview

Nadine then as an appendage makes it clear that her opinion is not a criticism of religion or religious convictions. To outwardly oppose them would not be wise. An alternative is to acknowledge that one's positionality concerning belief, is the personal right of those who live in a free country. The irony is if it really is a free country, there would be no limitations on involvement with music and the performing arts for Muslims in the UAE who wish to engage in music. On the other hand, there is truth in Nadine's statement. If the country were not free, it would adhere to the strict religious protocols found in forms of Islam practiced previously in countries such as Iran and Afghanistan where there was stringent control over access to music (Baily, 2001; Baily, 2004; Otterbeck, 2004). As music is not prohibited in the UAE, the country has chosen to exercise freedom and extend that to others. Therefore, observed restrictions are not in place because of legislation enforced by those ruling the country. They exist because of perceptions within a society that are governed by rules which maintain local community customs. These are then enforced but not with the leverage of national law because individuals involved in music are not breaking the law and subsequently cannot legitimately be punished. (Adely, 2007; Adely, 2012; Brøske, 2017; Otterbeck, 2008). People are therefore free to pursue their interest. In so doing however, they will have decided to disregard the rubrics instilled in them if not through the family, then through their interaction with others in the local community. Those who breach the boundaries by engaging in things musically connected, may not feel the weight of national law, but may feel the consequences in their social and personal world (Carson, Lewis, & Shaw, 2014; Izharuddin, 2018; Reddington, 2016). Despite this, people in the music club made the choice to follow their interest in the world of music.

5.2 Music engagement within the family

This section looks at how, for the majority of members, there was a music presence and genre of music which governed the home's environmental space. For some participants, it was the beginning of their enculturation journey into the world of music. For others, the family attitude to some genres also influenced the perceptions participants held towards certain forms of music. The first part of this section deals with how the initial experience for some members was influenced by those dominating music played at home. The second explores

the attitudes some members possessed towards the music that was seen to dictate the family space. The final part looks at prejudiced attitudes encountered toward some music genres.

5.2.1 Observing protocols publicly

Where the family is concerned, pursuing the appeal of music can present other problems not encountered by someone from a Western background. For example, when performing as part of a musical act, being photographed is by and large an expected part of the territory. In fact, public recognition is often seen as a matter of celebration for family members of the person photographed. Requesting permission to have a picture taken is a recent development which serves to respect an individual's right for privacy. In the UAE, the majority of Emirati women do not wear a burkha or veil to cover their faces publicly, however, requesting an Emirati woman's permission before taking a photograph has always been the expectation and many would object to their picture being taken for public display without seeking their authorisation. It is more important when the uncovered face is also associated with music. The picture of a female member playing music in public can cause major problems for immediate and extended family members in the community (Al-Qaradawi, 2013; Caidi, Beazley, & Marquez, 2018; Ebrahimi & Salaverría, 2015). Therefore, being involved in music and its close association with the act of public performance can be a matter of concern for some club members. With Basma, whilst being involved with music was not a problem, she recognised that possible repercussions associated with a picture of her playing music could be problematic for her and the family.

> Basma: Maybe, my picture being in the newspaper. This is a big problem for me, err… for my family and for me.
>
> Interview

This is a reference to when Basma, Badour and Balquis along with two other students who were also club members were part of a band. As usual, they were asked to provide music for an in-house UC women's campus event. It was attended by the press who impressed with their performance wrote and printed an article about them in the national newspaper. It was accompanied by a picture of several band members. They heeded the rule of covering their hair in public according to cultural expectations but it was not enough (Adely, 2012; Izharuddin, 2018). The combination of having their pictures taken openly with their instruments led to public scrutiny. In the article, Basma's picture was not shown, but the incident affected her greatly. Prior to this episode, she was the motivating force behind the band and enjoyed the thrill of giving performances. After the article, Basma was more

conscious that if she continued playing to a live audience, even if professional photographers could be managed, it would be virtually impossible to prevent people from using their smartphones to video or take pictures of the band and then post them on social media without permission. The ramifications of such an event would affect all family members as they too would be subject to criticism and disapproval in the community. Nadine understands Basma's anxieties even though she is from a family background where she enjoys a level of autonomy. This freedom however is restricted by those who do not share the same openness exhibited in her family and therefore restrict others from taking part in music activities. She feels the brunt of the burden is laid at the feet of women who as daughters are discouraged from joining music groups.

> Nadine: It's like I wanna do whatever I want. But if it comes to my friends or my colleagues in school or the other people, they would be like their families are kind of close-minded and they wouldn't have their daughters being in a band and everybody is going to criticise them and everything.
>
> Interview

If a woman is in a band singing, playing an instrument and actively doing so in front of a mixed audience, in the community it suggests the family endorses their daughter's face being shown openly when men may be in the audience. It suggests they also condone the morally corrupt behaviour and attitudes linked with playing music (Al Faruqi, 1985). Nadine believes such perceptions belong to those families who in their narrowmindedness close the door of opportunity to their own daughters. In their readiness to condemn they also prevent others from exploring the good that can be achieved as part of a music experience. The next section addresses the role played by the home and family in terms of music as a listening experience.

5.2.2 Exposed to family preferences

Interviewees were asked if they liked music and as club members, I assumed their answer would be yes. The question was an introduction to the part music had been playing in their lives and at home. Several participants mention that their family listened to music at home.

> Researcher: ...and your family listens to music as well?
>
> Dhabiyah: yes, the olden music...
>
> Khadijah: They like the Arabic old music,
>
> Interview

Dhabiya and Khadijah's families as shown in the above extract listen to Arabic music which they refer to as old. Ohoud's family also listens to music as demonstrated in the following.

> Researcher: Does your family listen to music?

Ohoud: Yes… all my family.

Researcher: What sort of music do they listen to?

Ohoud: Actually, they listen to the old music but my sisters this generation

Interview

In this excerpt which is expanded upon in the next section, there is no direct reference to any specific genre. But like Dhabiya and Khadija she uses the term "old" to refer to typically traditional music played at home.

In Badour's family, although she comments on her mum's interest in rock, she refers to being exposed to the R&B music her father listens to.

Researcher: What about your family are they interested in music?

Badour: My mum. My mum has a passion in music because when she was young she told me that she liked to be in a band and that's why she told me I got her [my] passion from her not from …my dad, it's from her because my dad is R&B.

Interview

We also see in the interview that she listens to both R&B and Rock. Of notice is that she mentions her mum's passion for music but makes no reference to the type of music she prefers to listen to.

Nadine explains exposure to music happened through being introduced to music around her that others listened to when she was young.

Nadine: So, when I was young, I would listen to whatever people are listening because I thought it was fun to know what they are listening.

Interview

Later in the interview she expands on the music choices of those in the family influential to her listening experience. She narrates how at home she was introduced to a song called *I Will Survive.* By Gloria Gaynor.

…Yeah, once we had the karaoke on at home. We used to do this when we were young. We would put the music on the YouTube, and we'd have a microphone, and we'd sing. So, once my sister came to us and she was like, "I wanna sing a song called 'I Will Survive!" And we were like, "What? What kind of song is this?" She said, "I'll show it to you and then we all sing it together." And she was singing, and dancing and she was so, hyper and… so, whenever we sing karaoke, this song has to go in and we all sing together.

Interview

From Nadine's experience, it is clear that music was a family affair shared by young siblings who enjoyed the pleasure and energy that was created from a YouTube Karaoke music experience. It also demonstrated that even in such free interactions, someone takes charge and dictates what everyone will listen to. In this case it was a song her older sister chose but

it is still part of her now adult memory and music experience. The next section looks at data related to the role of Arabic music as part of their music interest.

5.2.3 Traditional music: The usual presence

In Ohoud's home, those who dominate the general space influence what everyone in the house listens to. The overriding music experience for the family is centred around a particular type of Arabic music. It is played on the oud which is an instrument similar to the lute and associated with traditional Arabic music.

> Ohoud: Actually, they [the family] listen to the old music but my sisters this generation
>
> Researcher: Give me an example of what music they listen to in your family. You said they listen to the old…
>
> Ohoud: Actually, I don't know the name…it's Arabic music. But it's played with the oud.
>
> Interview

Ohoud does not express an intense dislike toward Arabic music neither does she say she likes it. Yet, she is clearly not indifferent. This is implicit within her answer where she describes Arabic music as *old,* a term of reference demonstrating that she feels it is not her preferred choice nor is it music she enjoys. Old music is the concomitant genre of the older generation to which her parents belong. Conversely, for Ohoud and her sister as members of the new generation, they listen to the contemporary music that represents them as young people. The traditional music played at home symbolises for Ohoud and her sisters that which belongs to the past. As part of that world, just as it is linked with artefacts of tradition such as the oud, it is also connected with a traditional mind-set and traditional behavioural expectations which are required of those who adhere to the old ways. Ohoud and her sisters, however, as members of the current generation, are advocates of music belonging to their newer modern world (Lamont et al., 2003; North et al., 2000), which takes them away from music and the associated attitudes to which they do not necessarily subscribe. Instead, they prefer to listen to something which is not Arabic music.

Basma in her interview also mentions that she listened to Arabic music and does not highlight any other major influences she encounters at home or as part of the family. She simply accepted this was the music presence in her normal existence. Unlike Ohoud however, she openly admits to disliking it.

> Basma: Before I used to listen to Arabic… I don't know…, I don't know why I listen to Arabic [music] because I don't like it...

Interview

Arabic music was the everyday sound of her general and personal world even if it was something she did not like. It was readily available and was the accepted, unchallenged white noise of habitualisation within the given reality of her cultural and environmental space (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Gergen, 2001; Miller, 2017). As part of that world in accordance with the tacit rules of engagement, you do not know *why* you do something, you just *do*. The rules or protocols govern an unexplained compliance of what, who, how, where and why something is allowed to take place. In the environment, there is no negotiated space where she enacts a choice. Much like other participants, the space which is dictated by others becomes part of the lived experience. For Basma, at home music was just a presence she did not connect to anyone of significance, and it therefore allows her the freedom to make the personal choice of trying something different. For Ohoud and Basma however, whether or not music was a dominant feature of the home environment, it was the blurred intangible presence of their world where for a time they were the passive recipients of other people's music choices.

5.2.4 Music prejudice

In Badour's story, music is part of the home experience but there are perceptions about what is considered good and bad music. She was the only Emirati participant who made no mention of listening to Arabic music personally or within the family. There was also no music type that appeared to dominate the lived-in space at home. Badour experiences music prejudices from her father. He listens to R&B and influences the home environment by specifically expressing his aversion to rock music. His criticisms are founded on perceptions about what he perceives as good music quality. Rock is dismissed as an unpleasant listening experience.

> Badour: Yeah, he likes only R&B. He doesn't like, you know, the kind of music that gives a headache. Yeah, he doesn't like it.
>
> Researcher: He thinks rock 'n' roll gives a headache?
>
> Badour: Yeah because he told me it's all screaming. Then I told my dad that's metallic [heavy metal]. That's not rock 'n' roll. He doesn't know the difference.

Interview

Her father's objections are that rock music is really just loud noise, and it is not beneficial to those listening to it (Crowcroft, 2017; Frith, 1981; Lozon & Bensimon, 2014). His criticisms are not religiously or morally situated and are of a less controversial nature. Interestingly, Badour does not mention the irony behind her dad's music preference given that in comparison to

rock, R&B is known for having lyrics of a sexually explicit nature. If he did condemn rock for its immoral content, it would in return be asking questions of his own music partiality. Badour's father instead sees the good in R&B and is happy to listen to it but draws attention to the bad in another music genre. In the same manner, there is good and bad in all things depending on one's interpretative stance. Concentrating entirely on the negative elements of music whether it is related to music listening, its creation or the manner in which it is used, fails to acknowledge the benefits that can be gained from music engagement.

> Badour: I understand because there are some people you know they are like good and bad. Some people when they play music, they do it in a bad way. But there are good people. When they play music, they do it in a good way.
>
> Interview

Badour just enjoys music because of the good she has found. Contrary to what others like her father think and feel, people like her are involved in music in a good way (Adely, 2007; Adely, 2012).

The students do not always emphasise the negative perceptions they have encountered about being involved in music. Ohoud, for example, does not mention the attitudes of people who were against music during her interview, but the subject was discussed at the close of a music club session and whilst she is very much aware of the issues surrounding the topic, it was decided that music in itself is neither good nor bad. The issue lies with how one chooses to use it as shown in the following journal extract.

> ...we (Ohoud and I) continue to talk about the different attitudes that abound in Islam towards music. We concluded that music itself is okay. It is the individual who has the power to use it for good or bad.
>
> Journal

Whilst some use music to promote its negative side, there are those who, like the people attending the music club are drawn to the good for which it can be exercised. Music is essentially a tool, an artefact, a means to an end. That it is created and used by the individual means essentially the power is not in the tool itself. It lies in the power that is imbued upon it by the individual who uses it, or the power it is perceived to possess by the outsider observing its use.

5.2.5 Summary

Through the religious instructions the Emirati members had received and the perceptions they had encountered, they acknowledged music was not allowed. The rule was clear and

from the findings it was evident that although both were viewed negatively, listening to music was more tolerated than playing.

From the perceptions, they could see that there were certain elements associated with music that were an issue. Most, in terms of lyrical content, conduct and music type, were connected with anti-social behaviour, sexual propriety and the need for those involved in music to preserve cultural standards. Participants encountered other perceptions which viewed certain genres such as rock as lacking music quality and being loud and that music added no value to an individual's future prospects. Yet despite the religious and cultural views, members drawn to the creative element of music activity still chose to take part in the club.

For participants, they knew the ruling and explanations, but they could not see anything wrong with music itself as the act. If it was clear that it was bad as one participant said, they would not practice music. The issue therefore was not the rule but about the conditions and explanations used to justify the ruling. The directives and clarifications they are taught, are open to interpretation, after all, as individuals they are respectful in their behaviour and the music they play and listen to is not offensive. They also believe the perceptions need to reflect the modern world with its diverse cultures and ways of interacting, by being more open to different approaches.

In the family, the participants experienced a more open-minded approach. It was the place of their first music encounter and music was as an accepted part of their everyday lives. Even if the music listened to was not their preference, it was not prohibited and provided a basis on which they can develop their interest in music further.

6 Findings Part 2: Factors contributing to participants' involvement in music activity

The preceding chapter looked at the attitudes and perceptions participants encountered toward music. This, the second of the three findings chapters, looks at the results that address the second research question.

> What were influential factors contributing towards club members' involvement in music and the music club?

Given the cultural and religious context, the chapter explores participants' interest in music activity. It looks at the purpose or reasons that contribute to them deciding to join the music club. The results are presented in the figure 6.1 and in relation to the activity theory triangle, the purpose is the object component or sense maker of the activity system. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first deals with the participants' listening experience and their desire to make connections with the outside world. The second part of the chapter looks at their desire to engage with music through playing an instrument.

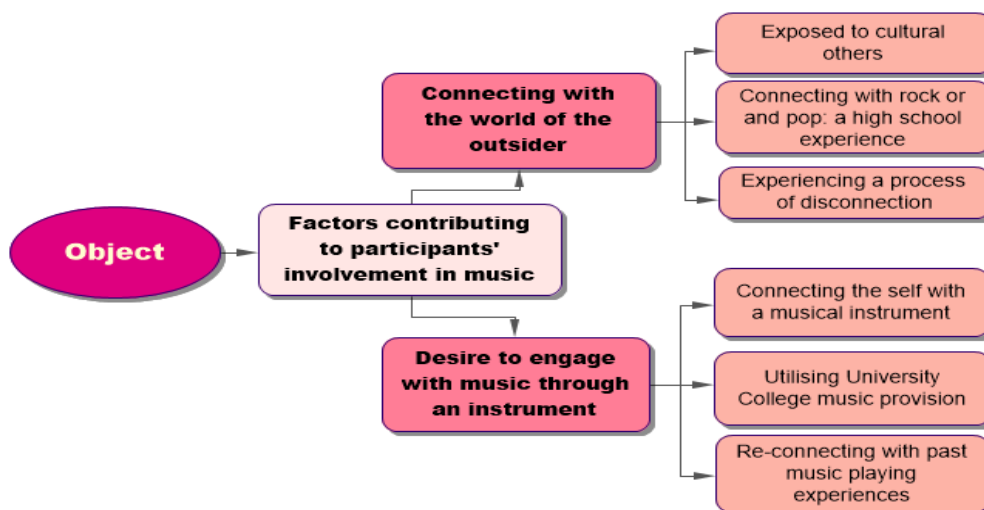

Figure 6-1 Factors contributing to participants' interest in music activity

6.1 Connecting with the world of the outsider

The first part of the chapter begins by exploring how the UAE's quest toward modernisation has led to an interest in connecting with other nationalities. The participants' exposure to

different cultures and perspectives were factors which influenced their desire to engage with music. It looks at how they develop an interest in rock and pop music during high school and how others felt a disconnection from Arabic music.

6.1.1 Exposed to cultural others

In the UAE, it is difficult to ignore the vast number of foreign workers and their families who make up over 80% of the country. Both expatriates and UAE nationals, especially 2nd generation Emiratis have encountered cultural others from diverse backgrounds and traditions. But despite the diversity of people, participants such as Nadine have observed there is limited interaction between Emiratis and the foreigners who have come to work in their country. With the backdrop of modernity and development as underlying motivational factors, Nadine recognises there is a readymade opportunity for individuals to gain from interchange with people from different backgrounds.

> Nadine: But to me, I really think that with all of this progressing, with all of this multi-cultural thingy, in the end we should get in touch with other countries, with other cultures … but with, I mean with the modern life, we're opening to multi-cultural societies and we're getting in touch with other people from other countries. We can see their traditions, their cultures, their everything, so we can relate to them.
>
> Interview

For Nadine, a facet of living in a modern society means forging a connection with other cultures by being exposed to the varied worlds and lives of others. With the far-reaching tendrils of the internet and the addition of globalisation, it is possible to observe, learn and access practically every facet of another reality. Many of the participants have connected to the wider world through the music they listen to at home. This is shown in the following extract.

> Researcher: So, your family listens to music. What sort of music do they listen to?
>
> Dhabiya: From countries. They like Indian music, any music, they enjoy [it].
>
> Researcher: they like any music, and what about you?
>
> Khadijah: They like the Arabic old music, like Fairuz and Um Kalthoum.
>
> Dhabiya... and my dad
>
> Khadijah… and my dad, Abdel Halim
>
> Interview

Khadijah and Dhabiya talk about family members listening to music and famous singers from different places such as Egypt and Lebanon. Dhabiya also mentions her family enjoying Indian

music and this exposure has played a role in her interest in wanting to engage with and replicate the music she has encountered.

> Researcher: … And have you played an instrument before?
>
> Dhabiya: Piano once. I played an Indian song, a new one. Bollywood singer.
>
> Researcher: Ok. Where did you play this?
>
> Dhabiya: In my iPad at home,
>
> Researcher: There's a piano on your iPad?
>
> Dhabiya: Yes, piano, drums err … Yes, it's an app. You can see, wait. This one for drums, all kinds of drums. Rock, electric, anything
>
> Interview

Dhabiya mentions enjoying all music types but links her music playing experience with attempting to recreate a Bollywood song. As I wanted to explore her experience with instruments, I did not pursue where she had heard the song or why was she interested in a Bollywood singer. What it did demonstrate was her encounter with music from another cultural world inspired her to connect to music creatively. Even though she did not have the real instruments, she relates being able to play the song on the piano. Through using apps from the internet, she is able to transform her iPad into different musical instruments digitally to reflect the music she wants to play.

Badour prior to the start of the study was the drummer in the previous band and as well as playing pop rock, had performed covers of Japanese pop music for University College events. In her last session before the Ramadan break, she mentioned accompanying her mother for two months on a visit to her mother's friend in Japan. I wanted to know if she would find time to practice playing music whilst she was there. Her response was different to what I had expected.

> Researcher: So, you'll be playing music in Japan
>
> Badour: Yes, because I know in Japan, there are so many talented musicians, so hopefully, if she (the person they are visiting) knows someone, she can let me meet them.
>
> Researcher: So please give me the details because I want to Skype you when you're there and find out how you're doing what you… Please, please, please (Laughter) and we can have a group Skype.
>
> Session

I was expecting either a *no* to practice because she was on holiday, or an intentional *yes* but knowing in reality practice was unlikely to happen. Badour however, saw playing music as an opportunity to connect with the many talented people in Japan who also play music. What it

also illustrated, was her mother's openness to forge connections with someone from a different nationality, paved the way for her to be open to exploring the music of another cultural group. However, according to protocol, Badour was not in a position where she could initiate the contact. She had to move within the perimeters of culture where someone such as her mother's friend would introduce her to cultural others. Even if the aim was not realised, there was an expressed desire to connect with people involved in the Japanese music scene.

Of all the participants, Nadine's approach to music was most diverse. It is reflected in her music listening experience where her musical tastes develop to encompass a more multicultural eclectic feel. She listens to Frank Sinatra, Yanni a Greek contemporary musician and organised us to see Gidon Kremer a renowned Latvian violinist when he visited the UAE with the Kremerata Baltica orchestra. In the following extract, she expresses her attraction to everything including Japanese and Korean music whilst growing up.

> Nadine: I listen to everything. Generally everything. Each stage of my life I get to listen to a particular genre of songs. So, when I was young I would listen to whatever people are listening to because I thought it was fun to know what they are listening to.... and then in high school, after the Korean/Japanese era, I went to kind of rock-pop songs.
>
> Interview

> Nadine: I was a fan of [Korean pop]—well, that concert was superb because it was a comeback for Super Junior…it was amazing seeing them dancing in front of me. I never really thought I would be able to travel to Korea. I never thought I'm gonna see Super Junior in front of me and (f)x and Exo and SHINee and all of those bands.
>
> Interview

Nadine's interest in Korean music is not just the music itself. Similar to Badour, there is a desire to connect with the people behind the music. She goes a step beyond Badour by joining the Korean club and visiting Korea prior to being a music club member. Leading to Nadine's involvement in the music club however, there are junctures connecting the music she listened to and played with stages of her development. Of the phases, two combined points can be garnered from her experience. First, the influence of music at the high school stage in the first extract and second the type of music that she chose to engaged with. Both of these aspects can be found in the experience of other participants as shown in the following sections.

6.1.2 Connecting with rock and pop: a high school experience

The high-school or, teenage phase of participants' life, played an integral role in developing their music further (Lamont et al., 2003; North et al., 2000). For club members, this is the stage where the purpose behind the music experience becomes more selective. Not only did music prevalent in the home environment become less significant, most expressed a

preference for rock. This music genre for the participants who expressed it as their preferred choice, was connected to the high school stage, a reference to both a place and phase of development. We see this illustrated in the penultimate interview extract from Nadine in the previous section. It shows she was directed by the music of people around her. When she attended high school, she depicts this as the stage where she began making her own choices about what she wanted to listen to. She moves away from the music of others and is initially attracted to Japanese and Korean pop before developing an interest in rock-pop music.

Basma, states clearly that her music journey coincided with high school, and it can be seen that during this point, she has been exposed to different music experiences.

> Basma: I started to listen to rock music when I was in high school… Before I used to listen to Arabic… I don't know why I listen to Arabic because I don't like it… I don't know, but when I started high school, I started to like the band, the punk rock bands.
>
> Interview

Basma makes no mention of the people who had influenced her. She is clear in the conversation that her introduction to rock coincided with being at high school. Sandwiched in the middle however, is a sense of disconnection from the Arabic music she once listened to. This is a recurrent theme for several Emirati participants. To demonstrate this further, I continue with Basma's response.

6.1.3 Experiencing a process of disconnection

According to Basma she still listens to Arabic music even though she does not know why. Her choice of rock over Arabic reflects what she wants to connect with as part of her everyday experience. Not evident in the transcription is the intonation and voice inflection showing that for Basma, Arabic music is something she no longer relates to and there is an air of finality. It indicated that she has closed the door on that area as a music genre.

We observe with Basma the efforts with trying to negotiate and reconcile two seemingly different worlds; one *Arabic,* the other *rock or pop*. Arabic is related to a traditional Emirati/Arabic background whereas rock represented the modern, progressive experience of the world connected to high school and punk.

Ohoud mentioned she listened to Arabic music at home but began listening to music in the later stages of being in high school. She does not specifically relate the place to a genre but later in the interview she expressed that she enjoys listening to pop music, the genre she perceives is associated with her generation who are the youth of today.

Researcher: What music do you listen to?

Ohoud: Rock, pop… this generation what they like.

Interview

Emirati participants as the new generation, interact within an inherited world where Arabic music symbolises what is old. Such views are similar to those held by their peers in the UK toward classical music where it is perceived to bear little relevance to their everyday music experience. Instead young people want to engage in music they personally connect with as they negotiate their sense of being in a modern world (Lamont et al., 2003).
As indicated in section 6.1.1, Khadijah and her friend Dhabiya mention their families' music preferences. After listing a number of Arabic artists their parents listen to, I interpreted it as an indication they also liked the same music that was heard at home. From the conversation, it can be seen that despite their knowledge and exposure to revered Arabic artists, they possess similar views to Ohoud and believe Arabic music belongs to the domain of the previous older generation.

Of interest was Khadijah's response where like Basma she expresses only liking English music not Arabic. I was particularly interested in the use of the term *English* to refer to music as a genre as Nadine also mentions English in relation to music.

Nadine: …then I was really attached to Korean music and English music, and I was over, like, watching the bands, watching the concerts and everything.

Nadine: And now I listen to all of these types, but now I'm kind of listening to mostly oud and Arabic songs, if… I listen to the new pop songs… I kind of listen more to music I can relate to.

Interview

That both Nadine and Khadijah use English in the context of music was of interest especially because the Palestinian student in Minks (1999) study also refers to music as English even though she listened to American pop. *English* for many students in the UAE is the mode of communication through which they are taught the majority of lessons during their time in formal education. Therefore, where the music they listened to is concerned, English for the participants refers to the language of the lyrics rather than where songs originated.
Illustrated through the demarcation between *Arabic/rock/English* or *old/new* is the transition of the *then but now* sense of development in the music journey. They had witnessed their own personal evolving and felt a greater level of purpose in the context of listening to music. For some the Arabic, they listened to is now replaced by English, rock or pop. Equally, they are no longer connected to the old-fashioned music of their parents but attracted to life and spirit generated by what is modern and current.

Badour, as we saw in the previous chapter, is exposed to the R&B her father listened to and does not mention Arabic music. Yet even though she listened to R&B sometimes, her preferred music listening choice was rock and her reasons for doing so was related to the energy the music generated.

> Researcher: … What sort of music do you listen to?
>
> Badour: Rock 'n' roll … or sometimes… I listen to pop like pop rock. Sometimes I listen to R&B but not much but mostly rock 'n' roll… because it gives me excitement when I hear the beats.
>
> Researcher: And what's exciting about the…
>
> Badour: Because when I choose to hear rock 'n' roll, I get to hear the instruments how they play especially the background of the drums how it gives me a goose bumps. It's such a good feeling to listen to rock 'n' roll because I just like the beats, the sound of the instruments. That's why I choose it. If I choose R&B I don't hear many instruments. I hear more like electronics that's why I don't listen to it much.
>
> Interview

R&B is not rejected because it is not relevant to youth. For Badour, R&B does not produce the same emotional effect that is generated when listening to rock. She also associates rock's appeal over R&B with what she perceives as greater creative sophistication. She feels the sound of the beats; the sound of the different instruments rather than the electronic blend of R&B. Listening is now related to the ability to create a response whether the reaction is through the instruments or through the physical. The next section looks at the factors that influenced their reasons for wanting to play their chosen instrument.

6.2 Desire to engage with music through an instrument

Here music in relation to activity theory, becomes an artefact of mediation not simply to assist with learning or gaining music knowledge. It is used by participants as a vehicle to build and expand their connection with others who share similar musical interests, values and style even if they have different cultural and historical backgrounds.

Club members, especially those who are Emirati have taken the interest in music beyond that of their peers who are satisfied with their experience as music listeners. The section investigates the students' desire to engage in a more creative music experience by learning an instrument to play music. The instrument forged a bridge between them and the style of music they preferred and some believed certain instruments were associated with pop and rock. For some members, instrument choice was connected to the instrument's sound which some participants felt was an expression of themselves. For others, the club was a convenient opportunity to fulfil an aspiration of engaging in music creatively through learning to play an

instrument. It finally shows that for some, the music club was the place to re-connect with past experiences of playing music with others.

6.2.1 Connecting the self with a musical instrument

In the club, the most popular instruments among members were the guitar and keyboards as noted by McPherson, Davidson, & Evans (2015) and drums. Club members did not have to compete with male students exercising control over certain instruments, (Nysæther & Schei, 2019; O'Neill & Boultona, 1996), I wanted to know the motivation behind the participants' choice of instrument. In their responses, Badour, Balquis and Khadijah explained they or a family member possessed an instrument at home and although it may have been an influential factor, the results suggest there were other reasons contributing to their engagement in music. Some members believed certain instruments were easier to play in comparison to others. They described how they liked an instrument's look and sound.
Khadijah for example, had been introduced to the keyboard before at high school. On joining the music club, she wanted to play the piano and her initial reaction when asked why she chose it, centred around feeling that it was less demanding than other instruments.

> Researcher: Why did you learn the piano by the way?
>
> Khadijah: Because I feel it is very easy more than the drums and guitar…and the sound is soft and quiet.
>
> Interview

In looking for something not too difficult to learn, she was probably aware that her prior knowledge would make learning less complicated. Of interest to me, however, was the next part of her response, "*…and the sound is soft and quiet*." She associates the keyboard with a gentler feel that for her is attractive. Khadijah here demonstrates she is different to her friend Dhabiya and the rest of the participants who are drawn to the noise and force behind rock.

> Researcher: You like rock music? Why do you like rock music?
>
> Dhabiya: I don't like silent music; I like violent one.
>
> Researcher: What do you mean by violent music? What do you mean by that?
>
> Dhabiya: It's noise. I enjoy being in noise
>
> Interview

Dhabiya is clear she dislikes silent music. Instead, she is drawn to the vigour found in the style she listens to. Ohoud also voices the same views as Dhabiya. Having explained she listens to rock expresses the reason behind her preference is that she enjoys its loudness.

Researcher: When you say this generation what they like, why do they listen to that music, this generation?

Ohoud: I think it's because they like something loud, noisy.

Researcher: And this generation is who?

Ohoud: Us (laughing)…

Researcher: And you like…?

Ohoud: (smiling) Noisy

Interview

Ohoud believes that classical on the other hand is connected to people who are *calm*. Her interpretation of calm is not associated with positive images. Calm is displayed by people who lack emotion. It is the sentiment she equates to classical music and is the type that is not for this generation.

Researcher: ...and classical is for which type of person?

Ohoud: I think like they're calm. It's like they're not sensitive to anything (laughing).

Researcher: They're not sensitive? What do you mean?

Ohoud: Unemotional (laughing)

Interview

Khadijah the only participant who specifically mentions choosing the keyboard because of its soft sound is also attracted to the quietness of pop music. She therefore chooses the keyboard as the instrument she feels can replicate the softness of music which appeals to her.

Khadijah: …because I like pop music because it's erm... (she giggles)

Researcher: Go on, go on

Dhabiya: Find it soft?

Khadijah: Yeah and err …it's same [as] my feelings, so, I feel comfortable when I listen to pop music. I like it.

Interview

The implication here is that the soft, quiet music she is attracted to reflects her temperament, "it's same [as] my feelings." In exploring the soft music of pop with what she conceives as a soft instrument, the keyboard for Khadijah can be seen therefore, as an embodiment of how she perceives herself and how she believes she is perceived by others - at least in this case by her friend Dhabiya. Both the music and keyboard are imbued with her own characteristics and serve as personified reflections of herself. The keyboard is the tool to help her explore

and connect her with the affinity she feels inside with the music style she sees as her extended self.

Her friend Dhabiya on the other hand, is the opposite. She, along with Ohoud and the majority of participants, had expressed their love of rock and like Ohoud, she enjoys its strength and intensity. She initially opted to play the guitar which is one of the main instruments commonly associated with rock but changed her mind on seeing the drums when she first attended the club. She immediately recognised the greater capacity the drums possessed to generate the dynamic energy associated with rock. Where the instrument as an artefact is concerned, Dhabiya is aware there are learning tools such as music apps and other on-line resources where people can learn to play music on an instrument. She realises the experience of playing the drums is further enhanced as part of a tangible, rather than virtual experience.

> Dhabiya: I think there are a lot of videos on YouTube, so I can manage that and learn it in home. But drums … we don't have, drums, also guitar… and it's not available. It's available in YouTube, but like it's not like you're playing it in your hands. You are touching it. It's different
>
> Interview

Creating music is not merely an abstract activity. There is the need to engage kinaesthetically with an instrument as part of the music learning process. The enjoyment comes from the actual manipulation of an instrument to create sound. The music club enables participants who do not have ready access to resources, the opportunity to engage with instruments they would not normally be able to play such as the drums. Unlike playing through the virtual musical instrument found on a mobile or computer application, the chance to engage parts of her physical self with parts of the physical instrument, brings to life for Dhabiya the music experience of learning the drums.

6.2.2 Utilising University College music provision

This section shows how some members were attracted to the club because it offered the opportunity to learn an instrument with the help of an instructor. In the Emirates, there are schools that provide music as part of the curriculum or as an extracurricular activity. We can see through the experience of some participants, for example, Khadijah and Nadine that initially school was their avenue into the world of playing an instrument. However, as they progressed into high school, some have said music was not available to them as a subject or activity.

Khadijah: I have piano at my house and guitar, but guitar is for my sister. Piano for me coz I was play piano in primary and secondary school and then I stopped because in high school I had to study and focus on my studies

Interview

Nadine: I don't know. It's like, you know when you go to from grade one to five, it's like one school, we had a band and then when I went to grade six it was another school, so, they didn't have a band. So, when we were younger it was a subject that we need to have, but then when we've grown older to grade six - seven, we didn't have a subject called 'Music'. So, they didn't have a band. They didn't have instruments and everything.

Interview

There are Western based music institutes available offering private tuition for those wanting to learn an instrument. If they do not wish to attend the lessons they provide, students can be taught at home. Although the climate is slowly shifting in this area, not many Emiratis, men or women, consider the option of being taught privately whether it be at home or as part of an institute. Therefore, if lessons are not available at school, this affects their capacity to access opportunities available to pursue music on a practical level. Badour as part of her experience wanted to learn the guitar when she was younger but despite wanting to be taught, she did not have an instructor to teach her.

Badour: … actually, I was interested when I was young, but I never had the opportunity to learn. I used to learn a little bit of acoustic, but I didn't continue because I didn't have someone to teach me... actually it's my brother's guitar because he doesn't know anything; he just plays. So, I did the same thing and I wanted someone to teach me.

Interview

We see Badour's attempt to play the acoustic guitar. In reality, it belonged to her brother who she thought would be able to teach her what he had learnt. To her disappointment however, this did not happen because she says "…he doesn't know anything. He just plays." She does not elaborate on what he does, but she feels he has nothing to offer because he has learnt nothing she feels is worth knowing. She needs a proper teacher who is not her brother. This opportunity to learn music through the guidance of a teacher came when she joins the music club at high school. The instrument she plays however, is not the guitar she had originally intended to learn.

Researcher: So, you had a music club at school?

Badour: Yeah

Researcher: …and what sort of instruments?

Badour: All the instruments. They have the violin, they have a piano but only one piece. That's why sometimes every week the teacher would switch the girls. That's why there was no time. That's why when he taught me the bass, it was just in one day, then someone else came. He kept switching. It gave all of us time every week.

Interview

Badour has the opportunity to play bass but there is a lack of consistency in her ability to play due to limited access to the bass or a change in teacher. As a result, she played on a few occasions when it was her turn. This lasted only for one academic year. In the music club at University College, she plays the drums another change of instrument, but it demonstrates that Badour is willing to utilise any available opportunity to engage with and create music.

6.2.3 Re-connecting with past music playing experiences

Badour was the drummer of the five-piece rock band associated with the club. They had stopped attending mainly due to the ramifications of a printed article about them, but a year later they expressed an interest in wanting to return.

> Today on the way back from a lesson, I bumped into 2 of the students from the original Music Club who left about this time last year. They asked if they could join again because they have a very light timetable and have nothing to do. I said of course they were more than welcome to join.
>
> Journal

Their desire to return came as a surprise. They had almost finished their course and wanted something to fill the time. This may have been the case, but they had experienced the world of music through the club and what it had to offer. They wanted to recapture some of it before they left.

> Badour: My lessons there are okay, but sometimes I do wish it end, so I can go to the club …it's just, I guess it's really exciting when you get to play with the band. It's really nice because it's something that makes me happy when I'm there…
> …yeah you need to know how to cooperate with each other because if you're in a band you're not individuals you're a group. It's like you're working together to make the music nice.
>
> Interview

> Basma: It was really fun… the band, we were really close friends. I enjoyed [playing] a lot of songs. When we did *I'm Yours* outside in the garden. It was really fun. And also, *No Thank You* was really fast. It's like all the energy, you have all the energy it's really good.
>
> Interview

They knew what it was to work together to create a song, the energy and graft behind a performance, the joy of success, the ability to express through an instrument and the comradery of being with others like you. They had tasted what the music club could offer. Returning to that, even if there were just two of them as original members was much better than doing nothing. It is at this point I want to look at one other member Balquis, who is mentioned more in passing in section 1.1.2, chiefly because I was unable to get an interview with her before the club ended for Ramadan. She was the keyboard player in the band and along with Badour and Basma, was one of the original members of the club. Because she was engaged to be married, she was also the first member to leave as her husband did not want

her to attend the club anymore. After the marriage, I did not see her round the campus and therefore thought her days of music had finally ended. A year or so later, not long after Basma and Badour had re-joined, I saw her when I was on the way to the music club.

> I decided to go down at 9.30 before the Sheikh started his talk and, on the way, I met Balquis. She was the third key player in the original band, and she played keyboards. It was great to see her, and she said she would make her way across to the music room later.
>
> When I got there Basma and Badour were already there and enthused about Balquis. I could see written all over them *it's like the old days.*
>
> Journal

Balquis came back because she too having enjoyed the collaborative experience of music with her friends was unable to put music to rest. In some sessions, before leaving to get married, she had learnt to play a few chords on the guitar and despite not attending the club she was obviously still playing music. At home, her husband heard her playing the guitar and liked it. He said she could join the club as long as she did not perform. Even though the dynamics of the club had changed since they left, it was great to see that she and the others were still interested in music.

6.2.4 Summary

In relation to findings related to research question 2, this chapter shows the influential factors contributing to members' interest in the music club. The use of activity theory's triangular model showed that music was used by participants to help them realise their goal of creating music. The UAE is a diverse multicultural society. For some members, music was the point of contact connecting them to the world of the outsider and their fellow peers who listen to the same or similar music. For others, the music club helped them connect further to the music they enjoyed.

Music enabled them to engage with the energy, power and characteristics of the music they listened to. At the same time, it was seen as an extension of their personality as some chose the instrument to fit with the music style they perceived it was connected to. Loud music was for the drums whilst soft music was for the keyboard. In keeping with the literature most participants were from families where there was a music presence (Campbell, 2010; Campbell, Connell, & Beegle, 2007; Corrigall & Schellenberg, 2015). It is clear that participants took advantage of the access to music that was available to them whether it was through the internet sites found through their portable devices or through joining school-based activities. As participants had played music previously at school, their reason for engaging in music as a club member was to resume an interest. However, the underlying factor is the agency behind

the act. The students' decision to engage in music as club members was simply because they wanted to which in itself has great impact in the context of the UAE.

7 Findings Part 3: Participants' experience involved in a collaborative music activity

This is the last of the three findings chapters. It addresses the results in response to the third research question which explores participants' engagement with music within the setting of the music club. The chapter includes data from the two members of staff, Miriam and Jayson who were also members of the music club.

> What did participants' experience through their involvement in music as a collaborative activity?

The findings show there was more to being part of the club than learning to play music. An important aspect of participants' music experience was related to the community component

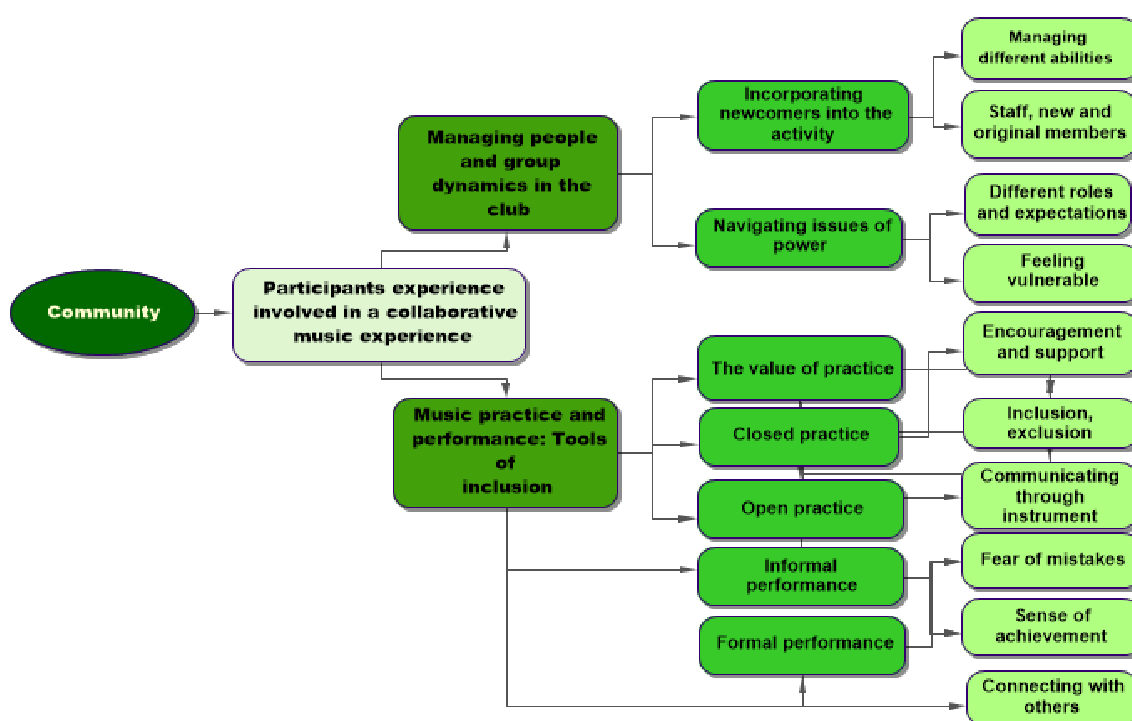

Figure 7-1 Community - Participants' collaborative music experience

of the activity system and the challenges of being part of a collaborative activity (figure 7.1). The chapter is divided into two main parts. The first deals with managing the group dynamics of the club. Part of the experience involved participants gaining access to the club, incorporating new members into the club and helping them find their place alongside other

club members. It included managing different participant roles, different objectives and the different ability levels that were part of the music making activity. The second part of the chapter is related to the role played by practice with building community and instilling confidence in members. The following section explores the dynamics of music activity with different groups of people and their varying abilities.

7.1 Managing people and group dynamics in the club

The music club was open to anyone who wanted to attend anytime during the academic year. One of the challenges involved accommodating newcomers with their differing music abilities alongside those inside the club who had been attending for a longer period of time. Ohoud and Nadine at one stage were the only members for several sessions. They felt that a bigger group of students would help to enhance the music learning experience. They proceeded to take responsibility for recruiting more people at Activity Day an event where students enrol for different extracurricular activities. It resulted in having to deal with the dilemmas that arose from trying to manage the change in members and incorporate outsiders into the community.

7.1.1 Incorporating newcomers into the club

The outsider was usually a beginner who knew little about the club and lacked the confidence sometimes displayed by more established members. Insiders on the other hand were participants who knew how the activity operated and could enter the music room space without the endorsement of another club member. They exercised a sense of ownership in the club space and over certain resources. An important part of the collaborative music experience for participants involved insiders making new members feel welcome.

> Researcher: … How was your first visit to the music club?
>
> Dhabiya: I love it because you are friendly. And we find also good materials, the drums… it's good. You have three guitars and a lot of drums and piano
>
> Interview

For Dhabiya as a new club member, the facilitator played an important role in first impressions. Her initial experience is described in terms of the friendliness the facilitator exhibits. Ohoud also raises the friendliness of the facilitator as a factor she likes about the club.

> Researcher: What other things have you learnt apart from…

> Ohoud: Actually, I make err… like you're being my friend (giggle). The staff being my friends. This is nice.
>
> Researcher: Explain what you mean by that for you
>
> Ohoud: It feels like I can talk to you like I talk to any of my friends instead of saying you're a teacher I cannot say that! (R and O laugh).
>
> Interview

Ohoud had the opportunity to build a different relationship with staff. Rather than the teacher to student level of interaction, she felt an affinity with the staff and refers to them, including the facilitator, as friends. She and Dhabiya see being incorporated into the club is connected with the way they are treated by staff. Miriam and Jayson the two staff members, were also asked to comment on their experience on joining the club. Both mentioned that being welcomed into the community was an important aspect of their experience and they felt accepted by those already on the inside of the group (Huhtinen-Hildén & Pitt, 2018; Murphy, Rodríguez Manzanares, & IGI Global.; Pitts, 2007).

> Researcher: …I just wanted to find out how you feel you are fitting in, and what your thoughts are about the whole thing.
>
> Jayson: …I don't feel any awkwardness from the girls when I'm in the room. I think they're very accepting. I think the students are smashing… They haven't made me feel unwelcome.
>
> Interview

Jayson measured being welcomed by the way the other members made him feel. As the white male and clearly an outsider, for him being welcomed equated to how he felt. When he was in the music room amongst the *girls*, he did not feel uncomfortable. Miriam's response was also based on feeling. Similar to Jayson she felt welcomed because even though she was a member of staff learning alongside the students, she felt a sense of ease in the club space.

> Researcher: What about learning with his students has that been for you?
>
> Miriam: … (learning with the students) ...very welcoming and very easy to be there (in the club).
>
> Interview

From Journal notes, however, several incidents in music club demonstrated there was more to being accommodated into the club than members feeling welcome (Block, 2018; West et al., 2017). The next section illustrates the challenge of trying to manage the interplay of the various of different groups and subgroups in the music club with their varied expectations and abilities.

7.1.2 Navigating issues of power

One of main challenges centred around re-incorporating the return of Basma and Badour, two of the original members into the new version of the club. The issues are mentioned in the following journal entry.

> Today… I bumped into 2 of the students from the original Music Club who left about this time last year. They asked if they could join again because they have a very light time-table and... I said of course they were more than welcome to join… but I was worried about the effect they would have on new members. I wanted to introduce them first so that they are part of the group, and that they did not take over.
>
> In truth, I'm not sure how to tackle this, but for now, I'm going to carry on as normal and manage things as they develop.
>
> Journal

The desire to return to the music club whilst welcome would present problems. Main concerns were related to their level of ability which was much better than those attending the club and could result in them asserting themselves over less confident members (Green, 2014; Hallam, Creech, & McQueen, 2018). Other issues centred around navigating and maintaining a safe interactive music space, as the room now belonged to other members who had joined since they left (Boostrom, 1998; Holley & Steiner, 2005; Hunter, 2008). The safe space was to a safeguard the new members who may feel intimidated by their experience. The following events showed that fostering an inclusive environment where people could contribute to the music making experience and feel a sense of belonging, required monitoring and managing the return of the original members into the club.

The first scenario involved Khadijah who had attended the club for a few meetings. In one session after leaving the club to make copies of songs for the group, I return to find her waiting for me before entering the room even though I had left the door open.

> When I got back it was half an hour later and I saw Khadijah one of the new members from two weeks ago, walking around outside.
>
> 'Why didn't you go in?' I knew why. 'You're a bit shy of the others aren't you.' I replied answering the question for her. She smiled bashfully. 'Don't worry, come with me. I'll introduce you to them.'
>
> Journal

The three original members Basma, Badour and Balquis who Khadijah did not know, were in the room and she was on her own without her friend Dhabiya. Although she did not possess the confidence to enter a room full of strangers, she could easily have left before I arrived, but her waiting was an indication of her desire to continue engaging in music with unfamiliar people if she had support. Ideally in this scenario, as a division of labour, established club members adopt the role of accommodating those on the outside fringes who have not yet

found their niche inside the club. However, if Khadijah does not enter the room, established members do not have the opportunity to include her.

The second incident involved Jayson who responded in a same manner as Khadijah when confronted with a similar situation. As I would not be able to attend the club for several weeks, I asked the original members to run sessions whilst I was away. Jayson, as a member of staff agreed to lend his support by overseeing the club in my absence. He later detailed his reticence to enter the room when the same group of students occupied the space.

> Jayson: … but last week I came, and you weren't here, and they were doing their thing. I was cool and again I didn't want to be stepping in and pulling them back because they seem to be very comfortable with what they were doing.
>
> Sessions

At this stage Jayson, unlike Khadijah, was not a brand-new member. He had been attending the club for several months and played music with everyone. Yet in my absence when the original members were in the room he did not want to enter because they were *comfortable* in the space, yet he was not comfortable enough to join them because *"they were doing their thing"* and *"(I the facilitator) was not there."* The two scenarios were with the same group of original members and demonstrated they sent a non-verbal message that the space was theirs. The comfortable in-group interaction between them, without the direct intention of doing so, was enough to instil a sense of uneasiness in those outside their group. They thus favoured their own by not actively making it easy for the outsider to join (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). In the third instance Miriam exhibits the same behaviour by waiting for me to arrive before entering the room.

> Miriam was waiting on her own outside the Music room. I asked her why she didn't go in? She knew the code to the room and besides that, inside I could hear Ohoud playing; she could have gone in. She said she just wanted to wait for me. At the time I accepted the answer, but now as I write this, I find it odd. Why did she want to wait for me? I wonder if there was perhaps a different reason. Did she feel a little uncomfortable or not at ease because there was someone in the room she did not know? She had already met Ohoud on her first lesson, so she did know her but maybe not well enough to claim a place in the room in her own right.
>
> Journal

Miriam had been attending the club at this juncture for a month but wanted me to accompany her even though she had the right to be in there. Unlike Khadijah who was entering a room of unfamiliar people and Jayson who did not want to intrude on the group of friends, for Miriam there was just one person whom she had already met. Her position as teaching staff and its associated authority generally meant she did not need permission from a student to enter a classroom. Of interest, Ohoud already present was playing the drums. She therefore had control over the drums and room as the primary access to resources.

Participants had already described members as welcoming, yet in not entering the room their behaviour demonstrated that feeling welcome does not necessarily mean you feel accepted as part of the interactive space. The space took on the presence of the occupier and was given meaning by the people dominating the means of interaction (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1991; Redmond, 2010). Those who were there first in terms of longevity of membership, were assumed to have dominance or to command some position of authority in the club. This is especially evident when considering Miriam and Jayson were the authority in connection with their teacher roles. In the context of the music club there was a change in their status. Those wishing to gain access to the music club space symbolised by the room, needed to be endorsed by the facilitator or have whatever gave them as the outsider confidence to enter the space and claim their spot without me. Feeling welcomed needed to be accompanied by being acknowledged through the invitation of the occupier who accepted them into the activity space.

The original members demonstrated their dominance in the club through musical aptitude and ownership connected to the past. Together they resurrect the past and play their own songs thus excluding those outside their group and inside the club. Even when the original members were teaching new members, they excluded others through adopting songs they were familiar with but were difficult for a beginner to access. Although it is not done deliberately it kept the distance between themselves and others (Block, 2018; West et al., 2017). As shown in the following extract, it was the facilitator who wanted to support new members and was concerned that they find their niche within the club. At the same time the original members needed to be encouraged in their desire to explore their own music creativity.

> Dilemma – do I let the oldies get on with their own stuff? If the newbies (newcomers) come, I didn't want them to play the stuff the oldies were doing. I wanted them (the original members) to understand Wednesday was where new members would be taught but I also didn't want to upset the old members. (I wanted to say it's just as much their club as it is mine – but at this moment I feel I'm acting as though it's my club – or more the club belongs to more people than them and me, it's now bigger than that – I wanted control again I guess). What I said was we'll play the new songs first then do theirs after. They were ok with this.
>
> Journal

The journal excerpt showed the facilitator feared that original members reclaim the music room as their space (Thompson, Russell, & Simmons, 2014) at the expense of the less able newcomers. I wanted to protect the beginners. What could be gleaned from the extract however, was that I also had to acknowledge my place within the club as I too felt the club was mine. The data showed that I was challenged by the return and presence of the original members because I also needed to remember the club space belonged to us all.

Staff members attended the club to learn music but were acutely aware that in the club space they took on a different identity. Both wrestled with the concept of their identity in the music club context and found it difficult at times to embrace the total picture of being students. They may be authority figures and instructors in their subject, but as members of the music club community, they were the beginners and needed the same level of input alongside the other learners. In the club context, the original members were the comparative experts or authority figures. Whilst staff had authority within the context of their role as employees, they recognised the power lay in the hands of the Emirati students. If the students did not like the activity, they exercised their power by not turning up. If they objected to the music, they could show disinterest and non-compliance. If they felt threatened or strongly disapproved of something that occurred within a session, it would be acted upon by the authorities and could even result in the closure of the activity.

Jayson was the only male participant. His observations and thoughts as non-Muslim, Western, expat male demonstrated his awareness of these as aspects of his identity in the club setting.

> Jayson: I'm a guest in their society… I'm employed to be here, so they have to accept me in the classroom…. They're not obliged to accept me here (in the music club). The girls could say to you, no, we don't feel comfortable with him here. Then I'd go. That'd be absolutely no problem. It's their club, they are here performing. But the very fact that they've allowed me to come in and they allowed me to participate. I feel very, very privileged. Because … in a classroom …, I'm there as an authority figure. Though they still treat me with respect here, I'm not that authority figure. So, I'm seeing, again, another side to them. I'm seeing how they relax. I imagine as time goes on, they get even more used to me, more of those barriers will consciously slip away, I would guess.
>
> Interview

Jayson realises the power the students have within the music club. It belonged to them, and they had accommodated him into their space. Jayson does not explain what he perceives as disrespectful, but they could express their discomfort with his presence to management if they wished and object to him attending the club. Instead, during sessions there was no indication from any member that they did not want him to be there. In fact, it appeared that the facilitator and Jayson were the only people wanting to ensure protocols were observed regarding his presence as a male. This was evident when he was about to enter the room and the facilitator was concerned that students covered their hair in accordance with religious protocol but was told by students not to be alarmed. Students were also asked directly about how they felt about Jayson being in the club. They were unperturbed with his presence.

Miriam also felt a sense of unease with the students but for different reasons. She described them in the following extract from her interview.

> Miriam: I feel self-conscious about what I'm doing because they're listening to me and I'm listening to them, and I am like if I get this wrong, they kick me out (laughter).
>
> But on the other hand, it's also really nice to be in such a nice supportive, committed group of people that there's no judgement, there's no I'm better than you, there's no I'm gonna tell you how to do this right, it all just let's try to do this.
>
> Interview

In the quote, Miriam reservations about being a club member are connected with feeling she was under the scrutiny of club members. They were the ones who could make her leave if her playing was not acceptable. Like Jayson, she found herself in a position of vulnerability which they did not exploit, neither was she dismissed nor treated disrespectfully by club members. Instead, the students extend a metaphorical hand to draw her and Jayson into the group. Miriam feels their encouragement and support and uses in the last line of the quote the inclusive pronoun "us" rather than "them." The collaborative community for her and Jayson is an open and accommodating music learning experience even if roles are reversed.

The students are now in the position of incorporating and connecting with the outsider who wants to be part of the creative music environment. One of the artefacts that becomes a means by which members interact and connect is through the means of practice as shown in the next part of the chapter.

7.2 Practice and performance: Tools of inclusion

An aspect of the experience of engaging in music came through listening to how participants were affirmed and supported during sessions as they played and practice. This occurred either non-verbally or verbally. Non-verbal interaction was of interest because although it was an important part of the playing experience it was overlooked in initial observations between participants. Sessions were divided into three components closed practice, open practice and informal performance. I use the term closed because in that context participants practice alone or in small clusters or units with minimal verbal interchange between groups.

7.2.1 The value of practice

By being part of a music activity, it was important for members to practice if they wanted to benefit from club sessions. In this study, members acknowledged that practice assisted with their improvement when learning to play an instrument. Despite this, it was a discipline that was difficult to sustain with most participants especially because this club was voluntary and practice was not a mandatory requirement. What appeared to have greater impact was its

use in forging a connection with others. Ohoud's reasons for not practicing were not due to time constraints. She found practicing itself was difficult.

> Ohoud: …I came every week, but I didn't practice… (because) it was hard. …I couldn't change fast. …Our first chords were D, A, G and then move to D. that was the hard thing to change from D to G… I spent one week practicing and practicing and then I got it. You were surprised, you were shocked. I remember that day (laughing)… You said to me how many weeks did you practice, and I said it took me one week (smiling).
>
> Interview

Evident in this interview section is despite the difficulty Ohoud encounters transitioning from one chord to another, the determination she experiences to improve takes over. She had spent one week of practicing and felt the benefit not just from overcoming a difficulty. She mentions more noticeably an occasion where being able to overcome a particular challenge gave her a sense of achievement which was connected to being acknowledged by the facilitator. In another excerpt, she explains that practicing is also driven by wanting to engage with songs as part of the playing experience.

> Researcher: Can I ask you why did you practice?
>
> Ohoud: Because I want to get it. Because I found the songs that I like playing with the guitar, that's why.
>
> Interview

Ohoud's reason for practice was wanting to "*get it.*" Getting it is qualified in the second sentence. She has found songs she wants to play but to do so required the discipline of practice. If she wanted to be part of the music making experience, she needed to understand through practice how to use the guitar to play songs. She expresses in the following extract two things that were really behind her decision to practice.

> Ohoud: The difference is I thought that it was hard. That's the problem. When you say it's hard, it's hard. Just forget about it [or] you never get it... If you put in your mind it's hard, then... you don't practice you don't play. I changed my mind after I saw Nadine playing.
>
> Interview

First, she needed a change in attitude. She had told herself that playing was difficult and believed the mind-set. It resulted in her not wanting to practice which meant she did not play music and could not achieve the activity object of playing songs she liked. Secondly, she wanted to be able to play music like her friend Nadine. At the beginning of the year as part of the music club she performed at Activity Day the twice-yearly event for recruiting club members. With another occasion in mind, Ohoud explains that through more practice, she taught herself to replicate the fingerpicking part of songs she likes using YouTube. As we listen to her, she not only gets praise from the facilitator but from her friend Nadine. She feels

confident and wants to play her part at the next Activity Day. Other than developing skills and playing songs she enjoys, practicing was induced by wanting to be included and accepted into the community through improving skills (Johansson, 2015).

Practice for Basma and Badour signified inclusion in relation to playing your part in achieving a group goal. Here practice happens on two levels; the individual or small group practice and the larger practice involving the coming together of other musicians to hone and develop the song. In Badour's case, the practice begins with the chosen song and through purposive listening (Green, 2014) she practices her part. Purposive listening is one of three main listening strategies: *distracted, attentive* and *purposive*, popular musicians use to learn songs (Green, 2002; Green, 2014) Distracted listening refers to listening to music for enjoyment and without a specified reason. Attentive listening involves more engagement and may include identifying parts of the song that is interesting, but there is no particular aim. Purposive listening is more intentional and is used specifically to learn a song. Through listening, the aim is to decipher a song's structure, chords, tone, rhythm anything that helps the listener to reproduce part or the whole song into a recognisable format.

> Facilitator: …How do you practice the drums?
>
> Badour: At first, I practice by looking at you tube because every time they (the band) choose a song, I would look at you tube and …even though I don't have drums at home I just imagined that I have the drums… And I tend to listen to the beats and try to memorise it so that when I come back to College I can practice.
>
> Interview

Without a drum kit, she adapts the home into a virtual practice space with its virtual set of drums to accompany real music. There is another added stage for Badour as she needs to transfer the virtual to the actual by trying to include more practice with the real drums in the real music room. However, what is practiced in isolation with an instrument, is not enough. As Basma recognises, practicing your part assumes a different façade when conjoined with the parts others bring. Your input only has meaning when it finds its niche within the whole. This can only be accomplished when presented to the rest of the group.

> Basma: Putting the song altogether is more demanding. Because you can do your beats, and you can complete your part, but then that other part is not really there until you really practice. It takes a lot of time to put it right.
>
> Interview

The practiced contribution like a sacrificial offering, is brought to a creative music space to be combined with other practice offerings. The practice is transformed from learning for the self to learning for others, because your part is needed to complete the overall look and feel of

the song. In the practical application of playing together, what the participant has practiced is evaluated to see how it corresponds with the song's crafting. The collective effort enables group members to assess whether or not contributions can be accepted or rejected according to the requirements of the chosen song. This aspect is acknowledged by Badour who is also aware that what she initially practices is up for scrutiny.

> Badour: Sometimes, if I learn from YouTube - the timing and the beats… their beat is different and then when I go to practice with my friends the beat is different. So, I ask how I can match to their beats. So, I tried to create my own ways and I'm happy that it actually fits along the timing… I tried to make my own beats that would match with them. I try more and more until if I find something and if they like it they will say yeah that beat!
>
> Interview

Badour and Basma can generate good rhythms and beats, but they have allowed themselves and what they have created to be subject to the will of the group. Implicit with what both Badour and Basma express therefore, is the need to be open to change according to the values and judgement of others.

Jayson's proclivity to practice was instilled into him as a young boy learning the piano. This attitude was transferred into learning the bass and meant he was able to witness development from the onset. As a beginner, he appreciated the role additional practice played outside sessions in furthering progress.

> Jayson: … The thing I really need is playing with other people, because when you practice it at home, you kind of know how the videos going to go in the end, you get into a loop. You get complacent, but playing with other people…
>
> Sessions

Practice was done privately, or with the virtual support of media based tools. In that environment, he dictated the level and rate of learning. In the community environment however, as experienced by Badour, it was a negotiated space where others influenced the pace and direction of what was performed. The collective group in shaping the song therefore, shaped and modified you and your ability to play and interact with others.

Club members were told the value of practice, but some were not able to do so regularly. Practicing with the instrument was not always possible such as in Badour's case where purchasing a drum kit is costly (Lamont et al., 2003; McPherson & Davidson, 2016). As expressed earlier, she made her own arrangements by using other tools to achieve the purpose. Others felt the constraint of time regarding work demands and for Miriam it was also coupled with family commitments. Some such as Ohoud did not have the instrument and a lack of practice made her feel excluded.

Researcher: What made you buy a guitar?

Ohoud: …Maybe because at the festival, I saw Nadine playing and you were playing and so I was jealous, and I said I just want to play… because I didn't know how to play. Nadine knew how to play the guitar (emphasised).

Researcher: So, you wanted to be like Nadine?

Ohoud: Not actually like Nadine. I wanted to know what to do… the difference is I thought that it was hard… [if] you don't practice you don't play. I change my mind after I saw Nadine playing.

Interview

She makes references to the first of two Activity Day events as a contributing factor for deciding to practice. Wanting to play music was superseded by peer rivalry. Ohoud recounts how her attitude to practicing changed because her friend Nadine who had her own guitar could practice amore and was a better player than she was. When performing on the 1st Activity Day, Ohoud recognised that music as a communal act involved moments of musical connection. To share the connection required having the ability to contribute to what is played. She was unable to fully join in with the music being created despite being present in the same space and playing the same song. She therefore felt disconnected from both her friend and the facilitator through her inability to play chords and keep up with the music pace. This sense of not belonging was the motivation behind her deciding to purchase a guitar so she could practice and play with others comfortably should the occasion arise again. Just as practice aids inclusion, for some members if was also one of the reasons why they were excluded. As Ohoud mentioned earlier, "[if] you don't practice, you don't play."

7.2.2 Closed practice

The closed practice was the place to develop instrumental skill through listening, amending and affirming. It helped to build the confidence to play openly in front of the group and to see how the practiced part corresponded with others overall. The central emphasis was for members to apply the knowledge or skills required to play their part of the song with others. They worked according to their own pace or in a small group with someone recognised as having the ability to teach or give guidance. Questions were asked and responded to, and techniques or song parts were honed through repetition. The main focus was on the individual rather than the group as a whole and it tended to be the noisiest part of sessions. The noise was also the product of members working or communicating through their instrument rather than the clamour of people endeavouring to be heard through shouting. In the following is an example from the sessions of closed practice where Nadine and Ohoud practice a section from *Hello* by Adele. In the following extracts from Sessions, verbal exchanges are written in

bold whilst bracketed sections in italics describe what occurred alongside the verbal exchange.

> Nadine: **So**, *(guitars are played but there are two different keys)*. **Capo** *(to Ohoud. She removes it. There are 2 strums from the guitar and Nadine sings)* ***Hello, it's me… I was wondering if after all this time you'd like to meet.... To go over… everything*** *(… Nadine and Ohoud play the guitar, but Ohoud has a little problem playing in time with Nadine)*. **Play E** *(to Ohoud. Nadine continues singing the song)* ***hello from the other side…*** *(there is a problem at this point as Ohoud is out of time. Nadine recognising this, helps by calling out the chords to Ohoud in Arabic/English)*. **Em, C, G, D Em C G D…**
>
> Ohoud: **Em**
>
> Nadine: **Ok** [Arabic]**…before Em G D C and after Em G C D**
>
> Ohoud: **Em C…** *(trying to get the fingering and chord sequence right)*
>
> Nadine: **Em G C … Em C G**
>
> Nadine: **Shub, shub E E G G sah** *(yes)*! **Badain** (again) **G G C C. Em C** (*she plays a wrong chord)* **…argrh, C G**
>
> Ohoud: **And the Em** *(in the background I'm still trying to break down the drumbeat for Miriam. There is a slow drumbeat. This single strum on the guitar, is played with the drums)*.
>
> Sessions

In the excerpt are two groups Nadine with Ohoud playing the guitar and the other Miriam on the drums with the facilitator instructing. In previous sessions Nadine was given the task of helping Ohoud. On this occasion, she assumes the role and without any prompting supports Ohoud's endeavours by calling out chords. It signals where players are in the song and guides them through parts seen as potentially difficult. The facilitator is comfortable with Nadine's ability to instruct and does not interfere. Ohoud's reaction is also interesting. She assumes the role of student. There is no sense of resentment in her response with Nadine. Instead, there is a quiet contented compliance with the different relationship that now exists between her and her friend who in the music club is also her teacher. Ohoud allows this level of interaction and carries out directives without objection. Part of her acquiescence is also due to Nadine's manner. As she corrects and amends errors, there are no suggestions in the cadence of her speech of arrogance, ridicule or anything that can be construed as negative. Whilst intonation is not always summative evidence of attitude and sometimes needs facial expression to equate meaning, Ohoud's response shows that she is comfortable. So too is Nadine who exhibits no aggravation or impatience when repeating her instructions and addressing errors. In fact, there is a kind, affirmative encouraging manner in her voice. She also naturally affirms her friend through a simple *sah* (*yes* in Arabic).

In the following example of closed practice, a new song *Stand by Me* was introduced to the group in a session attended by the original members and Jayson. Basma who usually plays

bass is now on guitar and works with Balquis on keyboard whilst Badour and Jayson (drums and bass respectively) practice separately. With the original members, we observe the communicative exchange of knowledge and skills as they teach and support each other. They try to replicate the song (Burnard & Dragovic, 2015), and having learnt the basics interact with each other through their instrument.

> (Jayson starts playing the bass and I hum the bassline. The guitar and keyboards are now playing stand by me).
>
> Facilitator: **Could you pass me the [other] bass?** *(Basma continues playing the guitar accompanied by the drums. She plays the guitar well but stays too long on C before going to D. She stops. There is talking between her and Balquis. I'm trying to listen to what they're doing as well as listen to Jayson. Balquis is explaining to Basma, the structure of the song. She plays the chords and how it is timed on the keyboards).*
>
> Balquis: **D** (*she plays the chord on the keyboards. I make a lot of noise whilst trying to connect the bass guitar to the amp).*
>
> Facilitator: **Sorry!** (*The girls are still practising the song in the background… Badour, has tried to develop the beat further playing a more syncopated beat on the bass drum. Instead of one and two and three and four and, she is trying to play one and two and three and four and. It is much more difficult when playing single beats on the hi hat).*
>
> Sessions

In the extract, Jayson interacts with the facilitator verbally but musically to others through the bass. He starts practicing his part and I join in by humming the same bass melody and the others through their instruments contribute to the musical interaction or conversation. Initially, the drums and guitar were in communication together as Badour accompanied Basma. The interchange continues with Badour on drums and the guitar played by Basma. Also observed is the verbal and collaborative interchange shown in brackets between Basma and Balquis, is more frequent in comparison to her other friend Badour. This could be the result of the music room set-up (figure 4.5) where the guitars could move easily anywhere in the room whilst for most sessions the drums and keyboard stayed in the same place. Basma on guitar could sit next to the drums but in this scene, positions herself by the keyboard. Balquis gives instructions but unlike the relationship between Ohoud and Nadine there is a more equal footing because they have more experience at playing music.

Basma is not wrestling with developing dexterity, technique or learning finger position and in the extract, it is shown through the lack of detailed demonstrations and repetitions. She is more interested in the chords according to the contextual structure, pace and rhythm of the song. When Basma stopped playing, it communicated an awareness of a problem with the sound she was unable to resolve. On the other hand, at the beginning of the previous extract, Ohoud unaware of the error with her sound continues to play until corrected by Nadine.

Stopping meant knowing something is wrong with the sound. Noticeably, the drums by not continuing mirrored the exchange and withdrew from the interchange. This allows Balquis to provide assistance firstly with a verbal exchange and then a simple demonstration which leads to more closed practice. The rest of us Badour, Jayson and I, use the closed practice time to work on the song's syncopated rhythm before bringing it into the wider more open context of the club. The next section demonstrates how open practice was used in the club as a support tool and a development from individual and small group practice sessions.

7.2.3 Open Practice

Open practice was the joint collaborative effort brought into the open communal space. It helped participants to learn the importance of being aware of each other and the contribution everyone made to the song. It normally began with counting as a lead in for the start and to set the pace of the song. The goal was to perfect the overall sound, eradicate errors and even though there were interruptions the general aim was to play without stopping. It also involved being aware through *conscious listening* of how your part fitted in with what others were playing. Conscious listening is slight addition to the listening methods popular musicians use to learn songs Green, (2002). It was not aimed at learning but was part of the learning experience observed in open practice sessions.

In the session where members were working on Adele's *Hello*, in open practice there was an attempt to play regardless of errors made by others. It was not indicative of a lack of care; it was a supportive act to draw attention away from the mistake and the person making it. Secondly, detracting from the error trained everyone to continue regardless of problems and thirdly, through conscious listening, the person could be guided back into the fold by playing or coming into the song at an appropriate point.

> Facilitator: … **two three and** *(they play together to the verse. I add the Arabic drum which seems to throw the drums a little, but she seems to get back in time when I keep it simple)*. **Can you do the singing now?** *(The singing confuses Miriam, and she cannot pick up the beat. The guitars, mainly Nadine, continue)*. **Hello, it's me.** *(Nadine continues singing the song but Miriam has lost the beat and is trying to fix it. She can get the bass and snare. I leave her for a while to see if she can, but I eventually intervene).*
>
> Sessions

Club members demonstrated they could play part of the song successfully. When everyone was playing together, I took the opportunity to creatively augment the overall sound by adding another Arabic drum as another instrument. The extra percussive sound caused problems for Miriam but despite the mistakes she was able to join in with everyone again.

This was achieved because the rest continued playing and through conscious listening, she was able to resume with a timely beat. In the second round of playing Nadine's singing also caused problems. Although Miriam was unable to redress the error, whilst the others in their support continued playing, she had the opportunity to find her place again in the song using the bass drum and snare before I interceded. The extract is also another illustration of conscious listening which demonstrate the need for participants to be audibly aware of what was happening around them. At the same time, they had to ensure the part they played was in sync with what everyone else was playing. There was the need to be conscious of others and the music that was being produced as part of an overall sound.

In the following example of open practice everyone started after the customary count, but Balquis stopped due to an error on the keyboard. As part of open practice, the rest continued hoping she could rectify the mistake.

> Basma: **One, two, three, four**
>
> *(They all play together very well until there is a mistake with the keyboards, and she stops. The rest Basma, Jayson and Badour)* carry on for a bit.
>
> Facilitator: **Ok, so, what's wrong there? What happened?** *(Some talking but no answer)*. **Ah, you played the D. Is that the D?**
>
> Balquis: **Yeah**
>
> Facilitator: … *(I decide to let her work it out)*. …**What needs to change with that one?** *(Balquis plays a chord)*. **Play the D again.** *(Basma, plays the guitar to help for two bars. When Balquis plays the chord the first time, she gets it right. The second time she gets it wrong)*. **Listen.** (*Basma plays again on the guitar and Balquis plays along but stops. Afterwards in a conversation with Basma in Arabic, and Balquis mentions D major*).
>
> Balquis: **Aha! D major!** *(Both giggle)*.
>
> Facilitator: **Yes, absolutely. So, what did you have to do to change that? Show me what you played.**
>
> Sessions

This exchange showed the awareness that at a certain point in the song the overall sound was not right. She needed to play Dm not D major. Interestingly, the drums, bass and guitar, knew the sound they produced regarding the notes, rhythm and pace was correct. In stopping, the keyboardist was aware her sound did not blend with the other instruments, and the others by continuing provided the space needed to address and rectify the issue. Basma took the opportunity to assist with solving the problem again by using her instrument rather than relying on a verbal exchange. The question here was why did Basma assist Balquis rather than Badour the other original member or Jayson? One answer was based on the type of instrument they played. Both Basma and Balquis play chords or melody. Their addition to the music sound required listening to the blend of notes that everyone played together. Jayson

also needed to listen to the blend of notes, but his main task at this juncture was to add rhythm to the beat along with the drums played by Badour who keeps everyone together by setting the pace. Another answer centres around the leadership role they assumed in the club. They are able to play two different instruments at a proficient level by ear and between them guide the group by managing the song through what they and others play.

Through conscious listening and open practice, the work is to enhance the overall sound as a whole group effort. Even though there are intermittent attempts at starting, when a mistake is made, the problem is managed by more adept members or the facilitator. They re-establish focus through counting to draw people back together into the same music space so they can continue to toward achieving the aim of learning the song.

7.2.4 Informal performance

Informal performance refers to the small-scale performances that took place within the music club setting and the fulfilment of the group objective. It was the outcome of practice endeavours and was done after several open practices. Like the open practice, it starts with a count in, but it is not used as a teaching tool to develop instrumental skills. In the informal performance members play from start to finish. Sometimes they would record the performance.

> Basma: **One, two, three, four** *(everybody plays together. After the intro, I start to sing. Jason gets the E minor wrong, so I call out the notes whilst trying to sing. After going through the whole song, we finish more or less together. It sounded quite good).*
>
> Facilitator: **That's the songish!** *(They all laugh)* **not quite how he sings it, but that's it. All right so you've got the idea!**
>
> Sessions

The above extract shows that, similar to the open practice, there are still mistakes. The small-scale performance enables the players to get the composite sound. It gave them the experience of working together to fulfil the object of the activity. It simulates playing in front of an audience and as everyone contributes, there is a sense of progress.

> Facilitator: **Ready? One, two, three, four** *(we play together whilst being recorded. I also sing the song. Occasionally I add a bit of rhythm and then remember I need to keep it simple. When we go back into the verse after the chorus, Ohoud gets lost. I call out the chords. However, she changes after I call the chords which means her changes are slightly late)*. **Ok, when I say G, it means you need to change to the G then, not afterwards yeah. One, two, three, four**. *(I call out the chords, but it means I can't concentrate so much on what I am playing. However, we managed to get through the song without any major upsets)* **... two three and end**.
>
> Sessions

In the extracts as part of the performance there were mistakes, but the aim was to go from start to finish with as few errors and interruptions as possible. Also, there may be some guidance from the facilitator to assist those players who show signs of difficulty. This is shown where I call out the chords for Ohoud when she loses her place in the song. As the informal performance is not the place used to teach individuals openly, they can sometimes stop playing as they are unable to maintain the pace of playing showed by the others. Providing a little guidance means they are not forced to give up. By continuing to play with everyone else, they are included in the group playing experience. The problems can be addressed later with more closed practice.

> After tackling the chorus and its intricacies, we played the whole song from top to bottom. There were a few mistakes but despite that we were happy with the results.
>
> I was now beginning to feel the music group is moving forward. Why we were doing more with songs and getting the sense of what it's like to play music as a group. There's something euphoric that happens when it comes together. This is doubly compounded when there is a performance for others.
>
> Journal

The successful completion of an informal performance leads to a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment as the individual through the group effort recreates a song. In the informal practice, the song can be finely modulated, embellished or deemed ready to be recorded or played to an audience outside of the club on events such as Activity Day.

7.2.5 Formal performance

Formal performance was the more official act of playing in front of an audience outside of the familiar club setting. It required organisation prior to the performance for example they needed to know which songs they wanted to play and are able to perform. Ohoud and Nadine used the bi-annual event of Activity Day to do this. Nadine had performed publicly before but for Ohoud this inaugural occasion was a chance to demonstrate what she had learnt. She had taught herself to finger pick was keen to play this at the music club stall.

> ...as I walked towards the venue, I could hear the sound of music but was not sure whether or not it was coming from the sound system. It sounded gentle and not the usual upbeat tempo often played at these events. On entering the room, I soon realised Ohoud was the person behind the dulcet tones. She was amplified with a voice mic attached to her guitar and was doing the finger picking she had shown me yesterday. I was filled with a rush of excitement – or was it pride? It sounded great and I could see a number of students watching from a distance with admiration.
>
> Journal

In her interview, Ohoud talked about the event.

> **Researcher: ...Can you tell me what happened?**

> Ohoud: …I was feeling like I don't want to play, I felt embarrassed *(laughing)*…I was on my own and I was like no one will come, no one will come. Then suddenly I found everyone was coming when I started [and they said] *you can play* (*smiling)*…I feel like an oud player because I feel then when they're happy, I'm happy and they like it.
>
> Researcher: … Why didn't you want to play?
>
> Ohoud: I don't know. I was feeling embarrassed because I was thinking that I will do something wrong with the guitar.
>
> Researcher: …and did they care if you did something wrong?
>
> Ohoud: I did something wrong, but they didn't know that it was wrong.
>
> Researcher: How has that affected you? How has that made you feel since then?
>
> Ohoud: I just want to play more… They actually encouraged me… they like stuff like this, they like to listen.
>
> Interview

As Ohoud relived the experience of performing publicly, it was evident that the event had impacted her. As part of the occasion, she underwent the anxiety of three possible embarrassments which made her fearful of playing. The first was the reaction to being on her own. This was two-fold. Her embarrassment was the result of feeling vulnerable without the music club community support around her. At that time, the club consisted of four of us and because we were all busy for the first hour, she would feel self-conscious on her own. Next, she wanted the support of the outside community as an audience. She would be embarrassed and ashamed if no one was there to listen to her play. The second embarrassment was the fear that she would make mistakes. In the music club, there was no requirement for perfection because errors were part of the music club experience. In the public domain, the shame or embarrassment connected to making mistakes instilled fear because mistakes may be noticed by the audience. Ohoud did not mention what she thought would happen, but the implication was people who made errors were prone to criticism and ridicule. Ohoud explained she was initially embarrassed and made mistakes whilst playing. She soon realised the listeners were unaware of the errors because the music was unfamiliar to them. Instead, they responded with support and encouragement which made her want to play more so she could relive the experience again. The final embarrassment was connected to the shame of disapproval because the audience may dislike what they hear. The dislike may be religiously based, or a dislike of the music type played, but Ohoud realised that people listened to her play because they were drawn into her world and encouraged her involvement with music by listening.

> Ohoud: …if we play in front of people, I think they will come more …they will be very interested… I think… I can teach them, and they could teach me something else.

The result for Ohoud is her fears were allayed. Through playing music in a safe public setting, there was a mutual positive response. The audience not only found the music acceptable; they actively stopped to listen. She continued to play and emboldened by their endorsement saw potential for inviting more people to become involved in creating music.

7.2.6 Summary

The results of Chapter 7, the last findings chapter show that although on a surface level the participants joined the club to learn an instrument and play music as the primary aim, it was only part of the music experience. To accomplish the activity object of learning an instrument to create music, required establishing a community space conducive to learning music.

As the community, the music club needed to be a space where those established on the inside accommodated newcomers as the outsiders into the physical and virtual musical club space. It incorporated managing the differing expectations, abilities and power relationships between new and established members. It also involved the staff members having to wrestle with their identity as learners within the club space. The only male participant was very aware of the power dynamics in relation to himself and the Emirati women. As a male, he was overshadowed by their collective hidden yet present power. For participants, affirmation and acceptance came through being able to partake in the music activity through the division of labour element of the activity system. Playing music with others also involved the use of tools such as practice and the adherence of club etiquette to create a purposeful and creative environment. Members felt a sense of achievement when through playing their instrument they contributed to the performance of a song during club sessions or publicly within the University College setting. They also felt frustrated if they were unable to contribute to club sessions because they were unable to practice. The reality of playing music was therefore about fostering values that aimed to endorse inclusivity by actively connecting the outsider to the inside music space.

8 Key findings in light of the literature related to the research questions

This chapter deals with the findings relating to the three research questions.

1. What perceptions have participants encountered toward music as an activity?
2. What were influential factors contributing towards participants' involvement in music as part of the music club?
3. What did participants experience through their involvement in music as a collaborative activity?

It explores the literature that supports as well as challenges the findings whilst offering new insight into existing literature.

8.1 Making sense of perceptions toward music engagement

Research question 1: What perceptions have participants encountered toward music as an activity?

Considering the controversial nature of music in Islam, one of the main rationales for this thesis revolved around why Emirati participants would choose to engage in it as an activity (Alamer, 2015; Baig, 2008; Shiloah, 1997). To address the rationale required verifying whether Emirati members had encountered and acknowledged beliefs that music was not permitted. It then needed to look at their understanding of the perceptions surrounding music activity. Whilst activity theory acknowledges the cultural and historical in relation to both the music activity and the participants' engagement, the findings add the religious factor as an important element of their music experience participants (also the subjects) bring to the activity (Barahona, 2015; Nussbaumer, 2012; Roth, 2007).

As students were engaging in an activity many Muslims declared was not permitted, the permissibility of music activity for the Emirati members was more complex than the *allowed/not allowed* debate raised in the literature (Al Faruqi, 1985; Izsak, 2013a; Nasr, 1976). Findings related to perceptions Emirati participants have encountered surrounding music's permissibility are discussed under four areas: religious, community, family and education. The Religious relates to

the beliefs and rules participants encountered concerning music. Community looks at the sense of being part of a group of people who share the same interests and apply protocols important to the community. Family relates to the initial music interest acquired and modelled in smaller units and lastly education is concerned with the participants' experience of music as a formal educational activity. The following subsection looks at the findings related to religious perceptions Emirati participants encountered toward music.

8.1.1 Religious perceptions towards music

Regarding religious perceptions, is engaging in music allowed or not? From the findings three of the six Emirati participants who were interviewed, made direct reference to the belief that music is not permitted. All three specifically used the Arabic word "haram" which refers to something that is not allowed. It is a term that many Emiratis recognise and two of the three participants use it to show they understood the view that music is prohibited was the overall official stance taken in Islam (Adely, 2007; Alamer, 2015; Aljabri, 2017; Brøske, 2017; Good-Perkins, 2019). One Emirati member gave a detailed account of perceptions she encountered and described why some people were opposed to music. Other members were less precise and, making indirect links to music, mentioned some actions were not allowed. Most however, showed they were aware of certain views related to music content, its style, its effect on the emotions, concerns related to performing to mixed crowds and other views which demonstrated people believed music was incompatible with Islam.

At no time in the data however, did any of the Emirati students mention religious texts such as the Quran or Hadiths in support or opposition to the perceptions. Neither do they mention trying to explore religious teaching for themselves as mentioned by the Imams in Alamer's (2015) study. The findings also demonstrated that the participants' understanding of perceptions they encountered showed matters of religion were connected to rulings governing people's behaviour and the activities they are allowed or not allowed to do (Al-Qaradawi, 2013; Baig, 2008; Baz, 1961). Religious concerns were music had the ability to affect behaviour and make people act in ways not conforming to Islamic principles. Whilst in Islam music may be connected to bad conduct, the participants' response according to the findings chapters was music does not cause bad behaviour. Music does not make a choice. It is a tool and like any object, how music is used depends on who uses it (Niyozov & Pluim, 2009; Salhi, 2013). People are the ones who decide how music is used. People are therefore responsible for their behaviour and actions.

Secondly, ascertained from the findings, was that participants believed those against music were especially concerned with the negative effect it is perceived to have on people's attitudes. Views were based on the notion that music is a tool used to pander to the individual's feelings. Rather than emphasise music's direct influence on behaviour, the participants' perceptions were related to music's capacity to influence people's moods. They recognised it was perceived as a self-gratification tool which encouraged individuals to connect with and engage more deeply with their feelings and contemplate on things other than God. They also knew that as Muslims they were not allowed to gratify emotional senses. Despite acknowledging the belief, findings showed engaging with their emotions was an aspect participants found attractive. Instead of music's sometimes perceived negative effects, as documented in literature (Denault & Poulin, 2016; Saarikallio et al., 2020; Sloboda, 2001; Sloboda, O'Neill, & Ivaldi, 2001), engaging with music provided a counterbalance to intense feelings generated by changeable moods. Some members mention that listening to or playing music, made people feel happy, energised or relaxed when stressed. Others talk about the energy and drive derived from listening to certain music types. Where Islam is concerned however, music should not fulfil the role of making people feel better. That part of people's lives should be fulfilled by God (Salhi, 2013; Urkevich, 2014).

Thirdly, participants had acknowledged the perception that in Islam some music genres were thought unacceptable or met with strong disapproval. In chapters 5 and 6 Emirati members refer to heavy metal and hard rock as examples of such music styles. They recognised they were problematic chiefly because they are connected to being loud and abrasive (Crowcroft, 2017; Otterbeck, 2018). From a religious perspective, they are forbidden and as Nasr (1976) and Izsak (2013b) mention, they are not perceived to promote an attitude of spiritual focus. Yet this study shows that even if rock is viewed by many Muslims as unacceptable, (al-Kanadi, 1986; Baig, 2008; Bedford, 2001; Otterbeck, 2018), overall, it is the participants' preferred choice for listening to and learning to play music. Whilst rock is perceived negatively within the community, for those subscribing to a liberal approach, if the lyrical content does not contravene Islamic principles, it should be considered acceptable.

Students acknowledged the religious protocol through their outward behaviour. It was displayed explicitly when they stopped playing music during the call to prayer (Adhan). Not playing an instrument during the Adhan whilst conceived as participants simply being considerate, demonstrated their awareness of implicit expectations they believed they must observe out of reverence. In relation to literature on the Islamic perception of music, Al Faruqi's (1985)'s *Hierarchy of sound art* (Table 4.1), although not comprehensive, provides a greater understanding for those who are not familiar with how music is perceived for many Muslims.

As anything connected to music is viewed as sinful, playing music through the obligatory call to prayer would be considered disrespectful. Even if the music was in quiet reverence, Emirati participants would be perceived as actively inviting music into the space used specifically to call people into relationship with God. Equally during Ramadan, an important religious month of fasting, even though University College was open and some activities continued during the period, Emirati students chose not to attend the club to play music (Harris, 2006; Izsak, 2013b). Although the findings show club members respected religious protocol, they also show there was an awareness of implicit lines they as Muslims must not cross. There is nothing in the Quran or recognised Hadiths to say music is not permitted or allowed during religious festivals such as Ramadan. However, choosing to play music during Adhan or Ramadan would be an explicit statement raising concerns to others about their beliefs and respect for Islamic religious protocols. It is the world they have inherited which is governed by religious rules and expectations. They not only influence perceptions about how they should behave, the religious views impact their desire and capacity to engage with music activity.

We observe in the next section from the findings the challenges Emirati members encounter regarding the perceptions found within the community. The findings show their attempts to understand and interpret standard religious teaching they have inherited surrounding religious belief and how they are expected to behave according to the people they interact with in the local and wider Muslim community.

8.1.2 Community perceptions

Relating to the first research question, it can be seen from the findings that negative music perceptions were reinforced within the Islamic community. In Chapter 5, Emirati members understood they were part of the universal religious group of Muslim believers who identify with and subscribe to Islamic standards (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1982). Any Arab country belongs to the community and as Emiratis, they were members of the imagined community (Anderson, 2006) of diverse people many of whom they had not met nor had a personal relationship with. Nevertheless, the participants were conscious of their shared identity expressed through the "we," "us" and" our" which illustrated their sense of belonging to a universal Islamic community. It exists external to them (Berger & Luckmann, 1991) and they as part of that body were unified through aligning themselves with Islam's key concepts and principles. However, the findings show participants encountered views that music activity was for those who do not adhere to values which govern people who belong to the community. It was the terrain of the foreigner whose standards fall outside the principles of Islam, (Alamer, 2015; Bedford, 2001; Izsak, 2013a;

Otterbeck & Ackfeldt, 2012) especially since anything or anyone connected to music is criticised in the Muslim community particularly in the Arabic Gulf region. Emirati members were aware, as observed in the findings, that they reside in a free country and can therefore enjoy and participate in many activities if what they do is legitimate (Halstead, 2007; Bennett, 2005).

As music is not prohibited within the UAE or for Emiratis, members engage in music as a practical and creative pursuit without the threat of the community reporting them to the authorities for breaking the law. However, their involvement is not acknowledged as acceptable in the community, therefore in the Emirates, the term "prohibited" does not fully encapsulate its application to music activity (Al Faruqi 1985). The terminology Al Faruqi (1985) recommends instead is "*disapproval"* rather than prohibition. Participants are more conscious of disapproving reactions that are displayed by community members who are driven by the desire to see people abide by unwritten rules related to music type (traditional/rock), content (songs must not refer to love, boy/girl relationships), behaviour etiquette (performing to a single sex group) and value (music's lack of worth) which are communicated through others who belong to the local and imagined community. The findings show that the internalisation of institutional religious norms (Berger & Luckman, 1991) not just in the way things are done in the community, but in the way in which people are meant to think and the attitudes they are meant to possess, have not been entirely embraced by Emirati members. Instead, the participants see that pursuing music requires fellow Muslims to have a more open mind set. This is demonstrated with the students in Good-Perkins (2019) study in the UAE and Adely's (2007) research with Jordanian girls. The aspiration to create and perform music deviates from local community norms. It equally generates the feeling that their music interest means they do not fully fit into the community. Interestingly as observed in the findings, when the participants mention the community relating to music, the "we", "us" and" our" terms associated with their religious identity are exchanged for "they" and "them" which verbally highlight a degree of separation from the community over the issue of music. For several members, it means they do not desire to conform to mainstream perceptions so they can fit in. Some participants were aware that some of their friends choosing to be like everyone else, did not take part in music because they were afraid of what people would say (Adely 2007; 2012). The participants note that such behaviour as evidenced in chapters 5 and 6, results in denying who they are as people.

Community expectations are just as binding as those taught by Islamic clerics and in Chapter 5 the repercussions from the community appear to have more of an impression. Not adhering to rules can impact one's acceptance in the community and worse still impact your reputation and chance of being considered for marriage. But as this thesis demonstrates possible repercussions are not

enough to prevent members from being involved in music. However, participants were aware that women needed to exercise care about their music involvement. Their interest could give the impression that they were rebellious and promoted the negative values the community believed were present in songs participants in music listened to and created. As raised in Chapter 5 they were aware that public displays in response to music such as dancing and singing when men are present would cause criticism (Harris, 2006; Izsak, 2013). As the music club took place on the women's campus, such issues were not major problems, but members were mindful that they adhered to expectations such as for example ensuring their hair was covered in the presence of men who were not part of the immediate family. Although most Emirati women in UC covered their hair with a typically black scarf (shaila), many students chose not to. Some would cover their hair whilst they were being taught by male staff members. It was the custom for the men to knock on the door to ensure women had time to prepare themselves before entering the space. Such protocol also applied to the music club. This was also the case when a male member of staff joined the club. During sessions, participants usually had their hair covered but because I as a female was running the club, students were not concerned but made sure they observed the protocol when men were in the area. Participants were also conscious they adhered to rules concerned with having their faces displayed publicly. Some participants were aware of views where being photographed, especially if the picture was connected to music, would not only damage their reputation but would have a negative impact on their family and wider family network in the community. Such matters are issues that they as Emirati Muslim women needed to consider and manage as part their music involvement. The community ensure societal and religious norms are observed (Bennett, 2005; Halstead, 2007), and wants its members to abide by the principles it honours as followers of Islam. There is the fear that values promoted in the music participants listen to will be replicated in their behaviour. Although participants recognise these perceptions exist, they also possess attitudes toward those who are dismissive toward music.

Findings in chapters 5 and 6 show participants felt music opponents within the community are close minded (Adely, 2007; Adely, 2012; Aljabri, 2017; Good-Perkins, 2019). Instead of seeing the benefits and potential for good music can offer (Al Faruqi, 1985), they believe those that are close minded make judgements driven by the fear of what music may influence people to do. Their underlying concern is that young people swayed by music, will make choices that have a negative impact on them as individuals in the community (Alamer, 2015; Benoit-Barné & Cooren, 2009; Brummans, Cooren, & Chaput, 2009). Participants however, want the community to trust they will make responsible choices and decisions that reflect and respect Emirati and Islamic values.

8.1.3 Family Perceptions

Where perceptions toward music in the family are concerned, overall, Emirati members experience a more open-minded approach to music at home with their parents and other family members (Al-Khouri, 2012; Inglehart, 2008; Inglehart & Baker, 2000). What is observed in the study is the appreciation for music especially as a listening activity. Most perceptions encountered in the family about music listening were centred around matters related to music type. Most participants expressed that their parents preferred Arabic or traditional music to rock or pop. Participants viewed Arabic music as old fashioned and the genre listened to by the previous generation. It was traditional by name and nature and the medium for old fashioned people (Green, 1997; North & Hargreaves, 1999; North et al., 2000). Pop and rock on the other hand, were music styles which were recognised by participants as music for the now generation (Frith, 2017; Hargreaves et al., 2015).

There is only one participant who experienced parental disapproval through her father. Due to his openly critical stance on music, he was not given an opportunity to support his daughter's music creativity. Whilst commending her daughter's interest, the participant's mother made the decision not to tell her husband. Observed in that piece of data is participant's overall experience of music in the family shows the polarised views held within UAE society. On the one hand, there are those who engaged in an activity which is in direct opposition to religious and public expression. There is no open discouragement regarding music activity involvement, in fact there appears to be an element of tolerance, but neither was there positive encouragement as people interested in music were mindful that the values of people having such an interest were considered questionable. Conversely, we observe those who are mindful of the world in which they operate, and aware of prevalent attitudes, but support their children's interest by sanctioning their involvement in music. Parents therefore protect their daughter's interest and give warning signals along the way that there is the need to be watchful as not everyone will approve of what they do. What is observed through the findings therefore, are that the parents and family members of the Emirati participants listen to and engage with music within the home, but are aware of the need to exercise caution.

8.1.4 Educational perceptions

In relation to the previous sub sections, the findings show they had heard and experienced views about music connected to Islam, the community and family. In contrast to these areas, there was comparatively very little they had encountered related to perceptions and beliefs about music's

place within education. The lack of findings could be related to music not being a mainstream curriculum subject (Farah & Ridge, 2009; Gallagher, 2019; Ridge et al., 2017).

In keeping with Good-Perkins (2019), the participants' own perceptions in association with music and education showed overall, that they believed music was something worth learning. It was an activity they wanted others such as friends and, when they married, future family members to learn. Despite this however, music appeared to have limited worth. In the first instance, it was viewed as an easier alternative to their strenuous Engineering programme of studies and secondly, it was just a hobby. What the findings show is that in spite of their positive approach toward music activity, regarding its educational value, the participants had a similar attitude to those found in the literature. Regardless of people's affinity with music (Boyce-Tillman, 2019; Høffding & Schiavio, 2019; McDermott & Hauser, 2005), it is generally not perceived to have importance as an area of learning (McPherson & O'Neill, 2010; O'Neill, 2015; Savage, 2013; Small, 1999, 2011). Space given to learning something that can help relax or enhance one's wellbeing such as music, the participants termed as free time away from unpleasant or obligatory learning activities. The implication is that true learning is hard, to be endured and not enjoyable. That which takes our minds away from 'hard work' and helps us relax, is superfluous to our needs and therefore relegated to being just for fun or a recreational past-time we do when we are free (Stebbins, 2005). In short, because music is perceived as a pleasant, relaxing and an enjoyable activity, it must not be as important as other subjects or activities and time could be better spent on something more arduous and less pleasant but of greater worth.

8.2 Factors influencing the participants' involvement in music activity

Research question 2: What were influential factors contributing towards participants' involvement in music as part of the music club?

This part of the chapter considers the findings related to the second research question, concerning the influential factors that contributed to the Emirati students' involvement in music. As with the previous sections it is divided into four subheadings of religious, community, family and education.

8.2.1 Religious influence

In relation to religious influences, the findings from all chapters especially 5 and 6, show that Emirati participants felt endorsed in their music interest. They adhered to the more open interpretation of religious and cultural expectations found among Imams in Aljabri's (2017) study and in teachings of clerics such as Al-Qaradwari (2013) who believed music was permitted if people behave in ways that are respectful to Islam. Although there were religious concerns held by those following stricter forms of Islam (Bedford, 2001; Otterbeck & Ackfeldt, 2012; Saeed, Abdullah, 2006; Shiloah, 1997), the study showed Emirati students believed their involvement in music did not mean they adopted or endorsed sentiments that ran contrary to their religious beliefs. They were therefore validated because their intentions were pure. For example, they observed religious protocol such as the call to prayer when they stopped playing their instruments until the chant ended, and during Ramadan they chose not to attend the club. Where conduct regarding the opposite sex was concerned, they were in a women's only campus where the only men allowed access to students were the male members of staff employed by the university.

In relation to concerns in Islam related to music's impact on people's emotions, the findings show the students displayed no uneasiness with this aspect of their music interest. Emirati participants in the club were attracted to music activity because they wanted to be part of an audio experience. Music for them was about the sound and the way it made them feel. Findings from chapters 5 and 6 show several participants mentioned being attracted to the loudness of music not necessarily because of volume but because of the energy and vigour the loudness generated. They knew people disapproved of loud music especially types such as rock because of beliefs surrounding its ability to impact behaviour negatively. However, participants made no attempt to hide their enjoyment of rock or music considered loud and energetic. If the music they listened to or created was loud, it was not to make statements synonymous with rebellious behaviour feared by those opposed to music (McDowell, 2017; Otterbeck, 2008, 2018). They make no mention of aspirations to imitate insubordinate behaviour or a mind-set typically associated with rock (Boyle et al., 1981; Greenberg et al., 2016; Lamont & Webb, 2010). Instead, they were attracted to and wanted to replicate the sound of the songs they enjoyed.

Members who identified with music's energy were also attracted to instruments they felt could replicate a similar level of vitality. Those who liked the noise of rock for instance, also liked the energetic sound produced by drums. My findings are in line with Nysæther & Schei (2019) whose study shows there are females who play the drums and are interested in rock. However, they are still perceived as the domain for males as stated by Carson et al. (2014). Green (1997) and O'Neill

& Boultona (1996) found that girls tend to want to sing and learn the keyboards. Whilst in my research the keyboards generated some appeal, there was nominal interest in singing. Where the drums were concerned however, three of the six Emirati participants wanted to play them (see Table 4.3 of the participants). This is not found in many studies as noted by Green (2014) and Carson et al. (2014) who also observe that women drummers are still atypical. The popularity of drums among the students could be due the daff (an Arabic drum) being one of the few instruments considered legitimate by most Islamic clerics (al-Kanadi, 1986; Alam, 2019). However, none of the participants legitimize their interest in the drums with the condoning of the daff in Islam. It was clear from the findings they were fascinated by the energy they felt could be derived from being able to play them. Even though one student later swapped the drums for the guitar, all three were explicit in their attraction to intensity music generates, especially rock.

From the results of Chapter 6, only one of the Emirati participants actively expressed their objection to loud rock preferring instead the quiet and softer forms of pop Frith (1981) Campbell, Connell, Beegle; Christenson & Peterson (2007). In keeping with the literature, this participant wanted to play the keyboard. It was the instrument she believed capable of not only producing the music she liked, but she felt they were both embodied representations of her and her personality. Despite the difference from the other club members with liking quiet music, she does identify with the group by acknowledging the instrument and music she liked made her feel calm and relaxed. Even though the mood created was not sensual or intense, it was clear from the findings that music interest and preference were still related to how the music affected their emotions.

Given the lack of encouragement for Emiratis to engage in music in the Emirates, the findings from this part of the chapter show students' engagement with rock or pop to manage their emotions through their preferred music styles crosses lines. Whilst they identify with music usually associated with young people, Hargreaves, North & Tarrant (2006; 2015) in their research note for the younger generation, rock and pop are tools which help them meet and manage emotional needs not catered for in the traditional or classical music styles which they are encouraged to pursue in schools but find boring (North et al., 2000; Randles, 2013). The young adults in this study are attracted to music for similar reasons to their non-Muslim peers, however, its impact on their emotions has more religious implications for them as Muslims.

8.2.2 Community influence

From the findings, participants make little reference to the local community's part in influencing or encouraging music interest. Instead, the data shows participants found themselves identifying with the world and music styles of the cultural other through their interactions with people outside the community (Dahl, 2010; Davidson, 2005; Gallagher, 2019).

As second generation Emiratis, participants experience a world different from one their parents would have encountered as young people. They are aware of the expat community employed to work in their country that exists alongside them. Whilst participants live separate lives according to religious and traditional protocol, as they express their interest in different music types belonging to the cultural other, music becomes the bridging tool used to cross cultural boundaries. The students' initial connection with traditional Arabic music expands to include other cultural music forms as part of their explorations. Students also mention being able to connect with a wider world of their peers through the channels afforded to them by technological developments.

Emirati students as observed from the findings were influenced through their connection to the music of their peers. Like the worldwide community of Muslims which they had not met but were part of as followers of Islam, they automatically belonged to another imagined community, in this case the community of young people. Evident in finding chapters 5 and 6 was the feeling they belonged to this community not simply because of their age, but because they shared the same interest; music, but not just any music. It needed to emit the level of energy and passion they believed was not found in classical or traditional music. Having an interest in classical music as a dated and less vibrant music form, did not have the kudos of pop and rock. Instead, listening to classical was not only for boring people, it was for the older generation and therefore excluded you from the community of young people (Hallam, Stockdale, Bain, & Allen, 2019; O'Neill, 2002; Rentfrow, McDonald, & Oldmeadow, 2009). The participants also referred to and identified with the music they like as English in the same way as the Palestinian participant in Mink's (1999) research. It was a reference to the music that was not Arabic in style. In this study what the Emirati students do demonstrate between them that is not widely seen in the literature, is their knowledge of a wider world of music listening experience. They not only mention different types of Arabic artists from the region, but they have also listened to music from Korea, Japan and India. Music, therefore, as seen from the findings, was about connecting with others in the global community.

8.2.3 Family influences

Club members' initial access to music came through their exposure to it as part of their ordinary lives at home. By allowing access to music within the family, parents of the participants played a large part in the enculturation of their children into music activity, albeit unintentionally. As the Emirati club members were not prevented from listening to music at home, it placed them on a pathway where they were able to explore music more creatively if they wished (Finnegan, 2013; Gilboa, 2014; Loewy, Stewart, Dassler, Telsey, & Homel, 2013). Participants state in the home space parents or an older sibling were the gateway to music as a listening activity (Blacking, 1990; Savage, 2013; Swanwick, 2012). None indicated they came from a background where music was disliked. There is an open and supportive attitude as found in Adely's (2007) study of Jordanian High school girls, where students expressed being encouraged and endorsed by their parents. Even in one case where a member encountered negative attitudes toward music from her father, he was really opposed to what he considered was bad music which he defined as just noise. He on the other hand listened to R&B but did not mention the disapproving comments levelled at the lyrical content promoted in his preferred style of music. He enjoyed music – even if another style was openly disliked.

Within the home space, the participants' understanding and enjoyment of music was developed through observing the music activity that took place amongst family members. From childhood, regardless of what they were told, at home participants witnessed and absorbed the real belief system and attitudes that operated toward music. If music was played openly, it meant that in their actions parents as the chief controllers of that space, sanctioned music activity (Morris, 2013, 2016). As observed in findings Chapter5, with their own interest in music, parents paved the way for their children to follow in their footsteps. Thus, in this study participants manifested values toward music found within the family which they as young adults develop as they journey further along the metaphorical music pathway initially trodden by their parents as shown in research by (Campbell, 2007, 2011; Finnegan, 2013). The interest in music and other music styles, lays a platform of openness to explore other music activities including the more contentious area of playing a musical instrument. The participants are now old enough to build on the foundation their parents or other family members' have set.

Where playing an instrument was concerned as the creative outlet, this study shows many participants were not from a family of musicians. One member mentioned her grandfather played the oud, and another her brother the guitar but none were from families where parents or siblings played to a high standard. There was no instrumental input or support from parents apart from

the non-Muslim staff members mentioned in Chapter 4 whose parents sent them to piano lessons when they were children (McPherson & Davidson, 2002; McPherson et al., 2015). Although there are studies that demonstrate children are more likely to pursue music if they are from a family of musicians (Cooper, 2001; Corrigall & Schellenberg, 2015), the results of this study corroborated with literature showing it was not a prerequisite for musicians to come from backgrounds where no one played an instrument (Borthwick & Davidson, 2002; Howe & Sloboda, 1991). Given the cultural and religious context, the fact that Emirati members could listen to and play music is additional evidence of their parents' acceptance and support of their music interest (Corrigall & Schellenberg, 2015; Hallam, 2010; Stebbins, 2005).

In the findings as a comparison to the Emirati students, the non-Emirati staff members explained that as children they were actively encouraged by their parents to learn an instrument at an early age (Cogo-Moreira & Lamont, 2018; McPherson & Davidson, 2016; Roulston, Jutras, & Kim, 2015). Despite not having an instrumental music background, their parents' attitude and value of music was evidenced in sending them to lessons, and for the parents of the male staff member there was also a financial commitment (Corrigall & Schellenberg, 2015; Costa-Giomi, 2004; McPherson, 2000; Roulston et al., 2015). Although parents showed they supported their children's interest, investing in extra music lessons did not feature with the Emirati participants. From the literature, the lack of extra investment could be connected to implications related to music's lack of importance outside the family. For example, if music lacked value as a commodity it would not make sense to invest resource in the way of money and time in a venture that has little future prospects. There are no recognised career prospects, social kudos or religious benefits. Additionally, most if not all places offering music tuition in the Emirates are Western styled organisations and part of the learning approach would involve playing publicly to a mixed audience. For some parents seeing their children perform under such conditions would be an issue. As can be seen in findings chapters 5 and 6, despite enjoying music and supporting their children's interests, performing publicly would become an area of concern because as their children matured, engaging in music openly in a mixed gender setting would have a negative impact for the family (Halstead, 1994; Izsak, 2013b).

Instead, more applicable to this study was the approach taken by Fulford, Ginsborg, and Goldbart (2011) who define a musical family as one where music is accessed in the home environment either through creating music or through listening to recorded music. Students considered as coming from a musical family, can therefore be determined according to the level of access they have in relation to music as a listening or instrumental activity. The findings show several Emirati students were attracted to playing music because, as found among the students in studies of

Brøske (2017), and Adely (2004, 2007), they not only had the opportunity to engage with music in the safety of their home, but also found additional support in the safety of an official government sanctioned educational space. The study therefore raises the matter of how positive support is defined in the context of places such as the Emirates where there is a different relationship to music activity.

8.2.4 Educational influence

With reference to findings related to the third research question, this subsection considers the part played by education as an influence on participants' music interest. According to findings in Chapter 6, the results showed that exposure to music in a formal educational setting was varied. Overall, as three of the seven Emirati participants engaged with music at school, three did not and one makes no mention of her music history. For the three who had music experience, it was part of their lower secondary school activity, where they played an instrument and engaged in music on a more practical level. One of the participants played a range of instruments and performed at events. In comparison to the other two, her varied experience was not typical. Instead, most had played either the keyboards or the guitar which are popular instruments according to McPherson et.al (2015). However, there was a music presence in some schools in the UAE which some participants were able to utilise. Two refer to their involvement in music at school as one of the reasons for joining the club. One wanted to continue with the instrument she played, the other wanted to relive the satisfaction of performing in front of others. The influence of education on participants was summarised by one student who saw music as another lens through which to explore and gain knowledge.

In the findings, where education as an informal influence is concerned, many participants referred to high school as having an influential role on their music interest. (Abdul Kader, 2018; Gallagher, 2019; UAE, 2019; Warner & Burton, 2017). High school, for members, was the metaphorical reference to the secondary or teenage stage of development. Over this part of their lives, there was a change in their music engagement and preference. They were influenced by the different kinds of music activity they were exposed to during this time. Campbell (1998) identifies the period as a second phase of music enculturation, where school, rather than home, provides a gateway to access an alternative music experience. For most participants, the alternative experience is the exposure to the world of rock and pop (Minks, 1999; Nakkula & Toshalis, 2020; Saarikallio et al., 2020).

As high school students, they were influenced by the music that belonged primarily to the young. It connected them to the world of their peers and represented their reality and things that were important to them (Lamont et al., 2003; Moir, 2016; Papinczak et al., 2015), whereas for most participants the music played at home was really the voice of their parents who belong to a world relevant to the older generation. As young people, the Emirati participants related more to music and attitudes that reflected the modern world they interacted with through their informal education (Cremata, 2017; Denisoff, 2020; Henson & Zagorski-Thomas, 2019). Music was also a bridge connecting participants to the world of their cultural others. The rock and pop they listened to was also part of the remote acculturation influences documented by (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012). In their music preference, they are united to people from their generation who also prefer listening to artists from the same style of music. Through rock and pop they can connect with other likeminded people who also belong to the virtual world of an imagined global community (Anderson, 2006).

8.3 Experiencing music as part of the Music Club

Research question 3: What did participants experience through their involvement in music as a collaborative activity?

This section of the chapter discusses the findings of the third and last research question. It looks at the participants' experience and associated feelings as partakers in a collaborative music activity. It considers Emirati students' experience engaging with each other and three non-Muslim staff which includes the facilitator. Overall, the findings show that after the initial feelings of excitement, participants encounter the challenges associated with learning new skills and incorporating others in the actual and virtual music space. They find that an important part of the collaborative music experience, is learning to be inclusive and supportive of those who join the creative music space.

8.3.1 Religious experience

In relation to research question three, findings in this subsection address participants' involvement in the club as a religious experience. Much of the literature associating music with religious experience (Arnold, 2019; Boyce-Tillman, 2019; Brown & Hopps, 2018) link it to the spiritual act of worship where it helps people engage in a spiritual encounter with a higher power and generates feelings of wonder (Belzen, 2013; Miller & Strongman, 2002). As shown in context

Chapter 2 and findings Chapter 5, most Muslims would not consider associating music with such definitions of a religious experience. Participants therefore do not link music with connecting to a higher power, the presence of God, or experiencing a sense of wonder. In this study, the religious experience as depicted by (Głaz, 2021) also relates to the way members are shaped and impacted by their interaction with others and the world around them. Their involvement in music, provided opportunities for members to reflect on themselves as individuals as they discover new abilities and face challenges and limitations. Connected with the experience they encounter happiness, excitement and the sense of achievement or what Juslin, Liljeström, Västfjäll, & Lundqvist (2010) term as positive feelings. Equally, there were difficult times where participants experienced negative emotions of discouragement, anxiety (Juslin et al., 2010) and inadequacy. The participants' music experience was not continually gratifying their emotions.

The findings show there were three main stages that occurred as part of the effect on their emotions. Firstly, participants especially newcomers, had feelings of excitement associated with being part of something different or new. Some had never played an instrument or were embarking on learning to play an instrument that was different to one they had played before. Others had played an instrument and even possessed one at home but had only played music by themselves. As new members, they were given basic instructions and implementable tasks which they could learn in a short space of time using their chosen instrument. Despite their lack of knowledge and experience, being able to both play something and contribute to the group, generated intense feelings of achievement and the thrill of success because of what they had accomplished. This stage of initial elation is short lived and lasts for a few sessions as participants enter the next phase of their music engagement in the club.

For the second stage, the results show that participants experienced a dissipation of the positive emotions of elation and excitement they initially felt. The experience is similar to negative feelings of boredom found amongst Omani students in Aljabri's (2017) research when the novelty of playing Western classical music quickly disappears. In this study however, new club members experienced the reality of what being involved in music individually and corporately entailed if they wanted to progress with playing music through playing an instrument. In comparison to their initial experience, there was limited gain as members put in hours of practice to develop and implement instrument adroitness and music understanding in a group context. They encountered feelings of discouragement and frustration. It is also the stage where some people stop coming to sessions. To overcome the challenges members displayed perseverance and resilience. Despite the difficulties some members encountered, they continued to attend the sessions and were driven by their own desire to improve and create music with others and not by themselves.

The third stage is where participants push through challenges and with little prompting from the facilitator can play songs that were practiced in sessions. It is this achievement that evokes feelings of success, but unlike the first stage, participants can trace their progress. As part of their present achievement, they appreciate the difficulties and challenges they have encountered and overcome. Also, based on the belief that they can share their accomplishment with others, it instils within them the desire to perform in a more public space.

8.3.2 Community experience

In this subsection, the findings show that a major factor of members involved in music was related to being part of the community experience. We observe that students wanted to enhance their experience through forging connections with others. One avenue was to expand the group by enrolling new members interested in music from the wider university clientele. They used the activity recruitment fairs held at the beginning of semesters one and two to canvass for students. The results show there were challenges trying to integrate newcomers into the collaborative music space.

Students demonstrated their interest in music by registering for the activity. Unless the results are considered in the context as outlined in Chapter 2 and the findings of Chapter 5, there is nothing remarkable about such an outcome. In view of the perceptions found within a traditional Muslim community, that students chose to add their name to the list and come to the activity were factors I as a Non-Muslim Westerner had overlooked at the time. In my experience as outlined in Introduction Chapter 1, even though I had lived and taught in the Emirates for several years, I was not fully aware of the perceptions toward music. I assumed music was standard formal education provision. Music, however, was not an expected norm. Students who enlisted with the club were choosing to attend an activity disapproved of by some people in University College and the wider community. On the other hand, it should also be considered that as the participants were willing to reach out to the community for members, it indicated they did not expect to encounter adverse reactions. It also demonstrated that they anticipated some students would be interested even if they did not want to commit to the activity.

The club as a community consisted of a range of people with differing abilities who were accepted regardless of commitment level and music experience. There were challenges associated with incorporating recruits into the club from the wider community (Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999). Newcomers needed to be accepted into space already inhabited by others. They also needed help with navigating the club space, being acquainted with the music making resources

and being aware of the basic protocols that were part of the club values. A similar process is seen in Mink's (1999) research where students from immigrant families used music activity to enter the space of their classmates. It allowed them to learn how to engage with their American peers who belonged to the leading culture. However as Emiratis, the students in this study are members of the most powerful and dominant group in the UAE. Music is not used to learn about or be accepted into the community. On the contrary in relation to other young Muslim women in the UAE, their interest in pursuing music, put them in the minority.

The participants' experience as newcomers shows they felt accepted into the club by the facilitator and existing club members who are described as friendly and welcoming. They also enjoyed the different relationship they had with staff as found in research by Pitts (2007) and (Varvarigou, Creech, Hallam, & McQueen (2011), The two staff members were aware of the different role they had in the music club space among the students. They commented on how welcomed they were made to feel and on the non-judgemental attitude and respect they were shown. There was also a "renegotiation of boundaries and relationships" (Pitts (2007), where they and the facilitator were referred to as a friends. We also observe one student inviting staff members to Iftar the meal eaten at the end of a fast day during Ramadan to meet her family and, as Hallam (2015) notes, adults and students not only benefit from the experience of working together, but from the different level of interaction that can develop between them. Whilst newcomers say they felt welcomed, there were situations where their experience in club sessions did not corraborate with what they said. Observed from the findings of Chapter 7 were social dynamics related to what actually occurred as part of the physical interactive space in the music room.

Several newcomers when faced with a room of more established members, were reluctant to enter unless the facilitator was present. Ascertained from such findings in relation to the third research question, is that despite being made welcome and accepted unto the community, new members were outsiders until they found their own niche within the music club space. In other words, established members were welcoming but their historical connection to the club unintentionally projected messages which made newer members reluctant to enter the music space. This aspect of the historical and cultural experience in relation to the participants involved in the activity is not fully explored in activity theory (Langemeyer & Roth, 2006) yet the original members bring to the activity a history that affected the interaction level of those wanting to engage in the music space, as was observed on the return of the original members to the club. They were imbued with authority by others because of their music ability, the length of time they were associated with the club and their connection with the band which was the initial interest

for this study. Through their prior knowledge and connection with the room (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1991), they dominated the activity. The area still bore signs of their past ownership of the space; the posters, pictures, message board with pens. Not much had changed from their previous occupancy and they resumed their positions in the room playing their own music on instruments they used to play. Their presence changed the overall dynamics and resulted in newer members not wanting to intrude in the club space if they were on their own. The findings showed that this did not only happen to students who were new. It was also the experience of both staff members. It is again reference to the renegotiation of boundaries and relationships. As employees of UC, they had the authority to enter the room but did not. The facilitator was required therefore to manage the interaction in the club as a community to ensure new recruits were not excluded from the music experience. As the authoritative presence, the facilitator helped newcomers lacking confidence access the music space more easily by accompanying them into the room. With the support of the facilitator, new recruits could enter the music room and access the creative space used by the community once inside. From the results it was clear that a major part of the community experience involved more than people feeling welcomed into the activity. It involved those already established in the activity being more proactive with helping interested newcomers access to the music space and resources.

To experience playing music, the music space needed to be inclusive of newcomers. Being inclusive was not just about guaranteeing those new to the activity felt comfortable and confident enough to enter the room. The inclusive space ensured music played was accessible and achieveable for newcomers in relation to their ability. The faciltator played a major role in monitoring students access to instruments especially those limited in number such as the bass and drums and breaking songs chosen by members into achievable and playable parts.

Once inside the club, members realised that to achieve the activity goal of creating music, as part of the division of labour it required learning the role the participant and their instrument played in replicating a song. It involved spending time outside the club to do extra practice and recognising that the inability to play one’s part affected the overall product. Whilst errors could be covered by the group, for some members mistakes made them feel exposed. It was evident that being unable to play was associated with feeling discouraged, frustrated and disconnected from the community because of feeling unable to contribute to the music as a collaborative act. It was a demotivating element of being part of the community experience. Even though they were accommdated through the practice that was part of the music club sessions, they were aware that had they practiced, they and others in sessions would experience greater progression. They felt their responsibility to the community. They did not want to let other members down or prevent

them from developing musically. Established members offered verbal support to encourage the person to keep going and not give up. Overall, the more experienced members helped to reinforce an atmosphere of encouragement and support for people to engage in music. The facilitator helped new comers and those less confident access the music and space but would also highlight the importance of practice.

When the different instruments were able to contribute to the community music experience it was observed in the findings there was a level of energy they experienced. The energy was witnessed through the sound participants generated as they practiced their parts, engaged in clarifying conversations and instructions and gave their eventual mini performance of song sections. This aspect is found amongst High School students enrolled on music programmes in Burnard & Dragovic (2015) study. Although they were younger musically trained students and therefore dissimilar to the Emirati students, the participators felt a connection with the vitality of taking part in music. They enjoyed the dynamism and fusion of sounds associated with an interactive and organically creative learning space.

The participants' music engagement was intentional. It was one of the ways they could be in touch with the interest and concerns of their generation and a key to inclusivity and acceptance. Their desire to listen to and replicate music is their response to the affinity they have with other young people who also listen to the same type of music but belong to a different culture. Interacting with the different cultural spheres required the restructuring of themselves as they balanced the different worlds they encountered. This is found in research by Ferguson, Iturbide, & Raffaelli (2020) and Benet-Martínez et al (2002), illustrating young people's attempts at dealing with the impact of a global world on their cultural space (Meca et al., 2019). Whilst remaining loyal to their own culture, the results show there was the added dimension of having to learn how to navigate and interact with the domain of the outsider. The different worlds with their different mindsets and labels of identification contend for space in the lives of young Emiratis (Meca et al., 2019; Ward et al., 2018; West et al., 2017). They are exposed to global trends and a Western styled education of development as seen particularly in government education initiatives (Coll & Magnuson, 2014). The shift is seen with the participants in Adely's (2007) and Good-Perkins' (2019) studies who transition in and out of the satisfaction and challenges they encounter as part of the music experience. The fusing of worlds could also be seen demonstrated with both Omani and Jordanian governments where through education, they create an official space for music as part of the school curriculum. It meant allotting time, personnel and resources including a place where music is practiced and accepted. In recognising cultural incongruities, they make the required decisions and adjustments to enable interaction with their cultural others. The choice

they made as part of their music engagement to access and connect with the wider world, creates a transitional space for navigating and learning the nuances of their peers as cultural others.

In this study, there were still the tenuous unresolved areas where members acknowledged there were conflicting views and attitudes concerning music. They chose not to concentrate on disparities and having validated their own music involvement made little attempt to justify their interest in music to others as observed in research on the bicultural experience. Through their music interest participants were aware of the nebulous expanse of different views and spaces they interacted with and switched between, but the results show they disengaged from the negatives and unresolved issues to occupy the creative music space of the music club community. For members, the music club was the temporary music oasis – a conduit between cultural, personal, religious and educational approaches. The temporal switching allowed the individual to access, experience and learn from the world of cultural others with the knowledge they will return to the familiarity of their own.

8.3.3 Family experience

The family experience was the support members received with their engagement in music. Where playing an instrument was concerned, many participants were not from a family of musicians but nevertheless engaged in music activity. In relation to research question three, the findings show parents continue to back their daughters' music interest by permitting the purchase of instruments such as guitars and allowing them to be played at home. Even the original member who left the band when married, found her husband enjoyed listening to her play the guitar and supported her return to the club.

As part of the division of labour, members encountered the family experience through small units in the music club that assisted them with learning an instrument. They provided help in weekly sessions for newer or less instrumentally confident participants. They helped members with the role they and their instruments were expected to contribute to a song. Participants, therefore, developed a relationship interacting with each other through the small groups related to their musical instrument rather than intermingling socially.

Primarily, the family experience occurred through members receiving support. They were connected to someone who played the same instrument they wanted to learn or were interested in playing. Some members were of a similar level but often as shown in research by Gramm (2021), Green (2014) and Jaffurs (2004), help was solicited from participants who were more able than others. Like an older sibling, the person believed to be more adept at playing became the person

giving support. They were called upon by the facilitator or fellow peers to explain, demonstrate, teach and transfer knowledge to other participants in relation to the instrument and the role it played in a song. In turn reciprocators of the support watched, copied, followed and listened to the instructions they were given. This was seen in findings Chapter 7 and is also in keeping with research by Gramm (2021) and Green (2014). It was especially the case with those wanting to play the acoustic guitar and was mainly due to the availability of two guitars and members bringing their own. It was possible therefore for groups of two or more people to work together to learn key guitar skills which enabled them to play simple songs. Also, their portability as instruments meant participants could move outside the room if they needed a quieter space. Participants wanting to learn instruments limited in number such as the keyboard and drums shared. Some participants learnt what to play by being shown what to do on a different part of the instrument. Connection with the music entailed providing members with the skills to play as part of the smaller units which gave them the capacity to participate in playing music with others (Burnard & Dragovic, 2015; Green, 2002).

The findings also showed established members identified themselves according to their instrument. Participants referred to themselves as "I play the guitar," or were acknowledged as "the guitar player." Bass guitar players distinguished themselves from other guitarists "I play bass," however as guitarists, there was an overlap in the use of language and resources. Guitar players used accessories such as a tuner, read tabs, spoke about strings and frets, complained their fingers hurt on the metal strings. There were also differences, the guitarist learned to play chords, strum and fingerpick whilst the bass player plucked strings, played riffs and patterns, referred to the low notes and linked with the drums. These were part of the experience members encountered through their interaction with others playing the same or similar types of instrument. Through the small groups, participants learnt the implicit rules and expectations associated with the role of their instrument in connection to others. The results also showed they soon realised it was their responsibility to learn and practice their part of the song or section if the activity aim was to be accomplished.

Green (2014) recommends letting students discover for themselves how to play songs utilising the dynamics of friendship groups. Teachers should interfere as little as possible only offering direction when asked. In Chapter 7, the results did show friends worked together on fashioning the songs according to the different parts they played. However, the approach raised several issues. Firstly, allowing people to grow and progress as they explore may work if you start together as a group, but observed in this study, were the challenges of co-opting people from the outside into a setting where friendships or family units were already established. The findings of Chapter

7 show that whilst members were friendly, it was difficult for outsiders to be accepted into the friendship space of an already established group of friends. The facilitator had to manage the situation so the music club maintained an inclusive environment and was not exclusive. Participants needed to know the facilitator would support them in accessing the music space, the music groups and the music resources without having to fend for themselves. This was especially the case where there was a limited number of instruments such as with the drums and keyboards. Connecting people with family units according to instrument type helped to accommodate the newcomer into an established setting.

Secondly, letting students discover for themselves with little interference from the teacher is a feature of how popular musicians learn. It is however, only part of the experience. Green (2014) does suggest teachers use some traditional methods for students engaging with pop music. In the club as an extracurricular space, the results showed participants wanted some guidance from the facilitator and not be left to explore by themselves in the initial stages. Being guided meant they wanted to be told or given tools that enabled them to play the song. As someone who had taught themselves to play modern band instruments (see the introduction chapter), I had wanted to create the music style I enjoyed listening to, but I also needed some basic tools to enrich the process. It entailed someone showing me what to do. There were many songs I wanted to play but they were too complicated for my ability, and I needed someone to adapt the music to my level and show me what to do with the instrument. It required an initial stage of input from an instructor. This experience was brought into the activity. Participants were shown what to do through the small unit setup but the results also show progress was enhanced as part of their self-exploration when participants practiced what they were shown or tried to learn.

The results also demonstrated that there were members who took on the role of encourager and it was an important part of the "family" experience. Encouraging and endorsing others was not related to ability. It was connected to participants of all levels recognising someone's contribution to the activity and non-verbally or verbally encouraging the input. Non-verbally, members encouraged others through laughter, little smiles but observed from the findings of Chapter 7 was the use of their instruments as a tool to approve participants. If another instrument could join someone because they recognised what was played, it meant you gained their support and approval. It also provided an opportunity for people to practice their part. However, noticeable in findings Chapter 7, was the more adept player would often be the one encouraging a less confident player. This was seen particularly with the original band members who accompanied others. Verbally, the findings show that members endorsed others using words of affirmation such as "yes," "we did it," "that sounds good," but the results show members were more critical of

themselves rather than others. Participants would be dissatisfied with what they had done or draw attention to a mistake. The encourager would not respond to the mistake negatively by belittling the person. This was one of the non-verbally communicated rules transferred to participants from other players during the sessions and the facilitator. It not only helped to create a safe space, it was also part of the discipline needed for performing publicly should the occasion arise. If participants learnt to play through mistakes unless the players themselves alerted the audience to the fault through their reaction, the audience did not usually notice an error had been made.

8.3.4 Educational experience

Members within the club came from families where music was endorsed, but the kinaesthetic physical experience occurred outside the family in an educational setting. From the findings of this study, there were differing levels of educational experience found among participants. Prior to UC, in findings Chapter 5 and 6, several members had some exposure to music at school but for others the club was their first opportunity to engage with real instruments. Although music was not part of the formal curriculum, its existence within the formal educational context of UC made it a legitimate option for students. Also, noted in literature from the region, there is little provision for music in the state sector for students post 16 to learn to play an instrument (Farah & Ridge, 2009; Ridge et al., 2017). The club therefore provided the added prospect of being able to benefit from in-person instruction from the facilitator and other students (Farah & Ridge, 2009; Ridge et al., 2017). As demonstrated in the previous section, sessions provided a basic understanding of instrumental music engagement. They were based on the format for learning to play modern band instruments. It entailed being taught key skills for the guitar, keyboard and drums and provided participants with a basic framework and tools they could later adapt for themselves. Students playing the acoustic guitar learnt to use accessories such as a tuner and capo to play or sing songs in keys that were more convenient. Some also learnt to strum percussively to produce a more rhythmic feel to augment the songs they played. Drummers were taught the different parts of the kit, how to hold sticks and how to play a basic beat and drum fill. Participants learning the keyboard, learnt basic patterns to create chords and play notes. All were taught the importance of timing and the fundamental rule that playing to the beat helps to keep everyone together. Having rules as part of the educational experience gave members structure and quick results. The findings showed the participants needed more sustainable tools than sticking to rules.

Like the popular musicians in Green's (2002) study, one of the major skills I had learnt was to play intuitively through developing a feel for a song without relying heavily on the music. Playing songs

participants enjoyed required developing auditory skills. Rather than listening to music for pleasure, participants tried as part of their learning experience to reproduce on their instruments a similar rendition of what they heard. Whilst emphasis was placed on developing an overall feel for a song rather than relying on music theory, some beginners wanted usable tools. The results showed that although beginners had some basic tools in relation to being able to play their instrument, they found playing intuitively challenging. As a result, some were unable to move to an intuitive feel of pulse of a song. Others wanted more instruction relating for example to what parts of the drum kit were played according to the breakdown of a beat. Whilst learning the rules and applying them to their instrument worked initially, the results demonstrated that brand-new members relied heavily on the rules they were given. It was turned into their "must do" rule. This was seen in Chapter 7 where for example they used to count 4/4 beats to help with playing and changing to different chords, notes and drum patterns. They also knew what to play, at a certain place and the number of times it should be played to feel the instruction was effective. The concept of *feel* lacked the identifiable structure counting the beat provided.

The structure I recognise as structure was not seen as one that typified the learning style of some. The aspect of learning style is not addressed in Green (2014) study within the formal school context as a student's specifically preferred learning style would not necessarily be accommodated through an informal approach to music. The findings of this study showed that, despite comprehending the rules, participants were not always able to implement what they knew. Being unable to contribute to the activity resulted in members feeling frustrated and dissatisfied with their progress. It was also evident from the results that developing an intuitive feel was a skill which is learnt and acquired over time with practice and familiarity. Because the original students were familiar with styles and had much playing experience, it was one of the reasons why could play basic songs as with 'Stand by me' having heard them once or twice, and recognise their errors when playing and correct them. One of the important tools to remedy students' frustration was through practice sessions where they could practice the areas of difficulty with the facilitator or other participants.

As a sanctioned extracurricular activity, the club was the place where they and their music interest were supported and accommodated even though for post 16 students it is not generally catered for in the UAE (Farah & Ridge, 2009; Kelly, 2019; Ridge et al., 2017; Roberts, 2006; Stebbins, 2005). The findings also show the club was a place to nurture competences such as teaching, leadership and organisational skills, that would probably remain undetected. Whilst such skills could be developed through other subjects, for some students, music was another area which enabled

them as participants to develop different skillsets using their music interests and preferences (Gardner, 2000; Gardner & Hatch, 1989).

Within the formal education setting of UC a government run institution, students experience the support of the institution as the official endorsement of the music club. The management are the unseen yet tangible background presence who played the most important role behind the participants' involvement in music (Adely, 2007). As shown by (Benoit-Barné & Cooren, 2009) and (Taylor (2009), management are the overall authority and without their approval, there would be no music club activity. Approval alone however was not enough. As music activity, formal or informal was not an expected component of the UAE educational experience, proper endorsement came from those with authoritative power. As the official management, UC provided students access to the activity under the legitimate umbrella that governs student activities. They not only provided space in the weekly timetable and a room for the activity to occur, but they also went further by funding a range of instruments and resources to make music accessible and help enrich the educational experience of their female students.

8.4 CONCLUSION

This study revolves around a group of Emirati female students who were members of a music club at UC, a higher educational institute in the UAE. It shows the challenges and complexities associated with their music interest and their awareness of the stigmas and beliefs questioning their values. They belong to the world of their predecessors whose constructs have been transmitted to them through the family and community (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). They are also members of the young generation who belong to the world that represents the present and determines the future. As young people, they have encountered different perspectives, cultural groups outside their community and educational experiences different from that of the former generation. They are also aware of other worlds that intrude upon their lived space. The participants navigate other cultural realities as they try to incorporate different worlds associated with their music interest. It is a world space inhabited by people like them from diverse backgrounds who relate to music styles and interests popular and relevant to now. They are connected to each other through the technological devices, internet applications and websites they use to navigate global and music platforms. What was once listened to, is a part of their present identity, but not totally representative of what they prefer to listen to now. The cares and values of the previous generation are imperative, but a modern lifestyle includes managing the consequences of being exposed to a creatively aesthetic global world.

Where the club was concerned, the participants engaged in music as collaborative pursuit and felt they benefitted from their involvement. Some instructed and nurtured other members, whilst some represented the club. Others experienced show casing their talent and skill to an attentive crowd which implicitly endorsed the public display of music. As members shift in and out of cultural spheres and musical worlds, they needed a formally approved space which recognised their engagement in music simply as another form of educational expression. As people who belong to a modern world they traverse different spaces, but the music creative space where they can learn to play instruments with others, needs to be validated, supported and resourced by those who are in official positions of power.

8.4.1 Implications of the study

This is one of the few studies on music thus far conducted in the UAE. It is at the time of writing, the only research that explores music as an extracurricular activity in a government institution of higher education. There are many places in the UAE where music activity exists as outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. Even though it is not officially prohibited, amongst traditional Muslims, music is not an approved activity. The context of music in the Emirates is therefore a complex relationship.

Based on the findings of this study there are several implications to consider. The factors surrounding the cultural and historical research setting need to be discerned to better understand the significance of the study. As mentioned at the beginning in the introductory chapter, our own cultural and historical experiences can hinder us from fully appreciating what occurs around us. During the course of this study, I have been greatly aware of how my educational experience has taught and conditioned me to perceive the world and others. I believed music was the norm for all including people in the UAE. As part of my educational upbringing, I was taught to question that which is not the norm, but the norm is culturally and historically related. What is clear is despite the differing attitudes, the educational programming I have received analyzes and questions the world through a veil which perceives what is different through a Western cultural and educational bias. The cultural historical and educational bias – our plank or beam in the eye that influences how we interact with and navigate our interaction with others needs to be acknowledged and unpacked, but it is difficult to acknowledge and unpack what we are unable to see, especially if one is looking at and absorbed by other interests.

As an expansion on the above, activity theory's recognition of the cultural and historical voice in the activity system provides an inroad to better appreciate the world surrounding the

participants' interest and experience of music as Emirati students (Cole, 1998; Cole & Engeström, 2007). However, from this study, Langemeyer & Roth's (2006), criticism that research developments in AT have placed more emphasis on the cultural and historical of the activity as a system, is a reminder of the role both play alongside religion in relation to the participants' music interest. It means that the students' participation and contribution to the study is voiced and considered in light of the time and space in which they and the club exist. It is important therefore to contextualise the activity in relation to the participants (Kuutti, 2005).

Nonetheless, allowing for the different cultural and historical voices within the activity system, required making room to consider the voice of the club itself. Doing so exposed the club's own issues linked to its history and former ways of operating. We observe this aspect in action as the club's past meets the club's present with the reappearance of the original members. On their arrival, they found the club, which had once belonged to them as their space, had developed without them. They, as the older generation, needed to adapt to an environment around them which even though appearing similar, was different to the one they had left previously. The original members' desire to replicate music, meant needing to replicate the past by excluding those who do not fit. It raises issues related to integrating less confident students into free to explore, informal and creative music environments, especially if they are built around utilising ready-made friendship groups as Green (2014) suggests. As the strong, or musically able can exclude the less able from the creative music space, rules of engagement are required to ensure there is a welcoming and inclusive creative space.

The religious element, due to its influence on participants' level of engagement in music, is an important aspect of this study and has implications for music activities in the UAE context. There will be people who will find it difficult to reconcile the teaching they have received with what music represents in Islam. Their views and right to be heard need to be considered and accommodated as shown in Aljabri's (2016) study in Oman. An implication from this study is the need for adjustment. In the UAE, where music is a recent addition to the curriculum, a level of caution needs to be exercised especially since fears about music are based on what is observed in popular media connected to the negative behaviour associated with commercialised music. In considering music in an educational context people need to be aware that music as a collaborative activity allows people to develop positive values and skills that engender responsibility, co-operation, and an awareness of others' needs. Music can co-exist within the state sector in a safe setting or space where students can feel supported in their efforts to move outside their proximities of comfort in activities which may be challenging. Redmond (2010) notes that the safe space can provide opportunities where people within the group feel safe to express thoughts

which may conflict with the thoughts of some group members and even the community, but their attempts to engage are done within a safe environment.

Other than the UAE, Odena (2012) reminds us there are countries where creative music lessons are also a relatively new feature of the school programme. In contexts where there is little precedence for music activity, teachers, the community and management need time to adapt and reflect on the position of music in the educational space. A more student-centred approach requires considering that participants also need time to adjust as not all will be disposed to working freely. In relation to considering the time to accommodate incorporating a less teacher focussed method, Odena (2012) also notes engaging in autonomous creative music activities are usually operated by individual teachers. It therefore raises the next implication related to support which is a key feature of this study. For people involved with music as an activity they may work in isolation, but they need the support of the institution and management. There needs to be the provision of a protected space where there is not a conflict of interest due extra academic related activities taking place at the same time. It would be timetabled time where everyone staff and student as a participator or facilitator, are free at the same time to attend extracurricular activities such as music.

Whilst the issue of music activity remains controversial amongst Muslims in the UAE, it has not been fully rejected as an activity. Music is accessible to all people through various internet sites and streamed music platforms many of which are not banned in the UAE. The main issue for governing bodies is the nature of the content that is available. It is difficult to manage the influx of music which promotes standards that are also a matter of concern for some people in non-Muslim countries. From this study, the implications show there is a need for popular music genres to promote and support themes that embrace unity, goodness, self-respect rather than endorsing messages that encourage social and religious irreverence. If it is not managed, there is the foreseeable problem that exists in the west where a music industry driven by the dictates and values of commercial consumerism are less concerned with the moral wellbeing of its listeners Coyne & Padilla-Walker (2015).

Nonetheless, people are trusted by the governing authority to be responsible for their own behaviour when listening to music. For young people engaging in the music club however, the activity served the purpose of enabling them to generate rather than merely listen to music. Students were more concerned with the opportunity it gave them to play real instruments collaboratively rather than virtual instruments in insolation. It enforced attitudes of co-operation and inclusivity, whilst simultaneously instilling the need for perseverance and overcoming

difficulties; skills that were important for progressing with learning. The small group set up in a specified space within a higher education organisation means more people can be supported in their music learning if they are interested, but it also means its existence will not infringe upon students who are not concerned with music. The music provision for women in UC provides a supportive space to explore a different way of working with, learning from and being supported by their peers.

Overall, the findings of this study give an insight into the challenges young Emirati women encounter trying to manage their interest in music. It shows their attempts to navigate the cultural and religious sensitivities surrounding music activity found inside their community. At the same time, it also demonstrates their desire to identify with and interact with a global world where music as a listening and creative experience is accessible. Through their involvement in the club, however, playing music is about acknowledging and accommodating others in their attempts to develop their interest in music as a creative act. As young Emiratis, they are the product of past investments aimed at equipping successive generations with the ability to embrace a different world as shown in the following excerpt from the UAE Ministry of Education.

> The UAE believes that today's generation has excellent skills, mentalities and ways of thinking appropriate to the technical boom that has reached the entire world. The UAE is certain that the old education methods, traditional practices and rigid curricula are of no use to those who grew up in this era and neither interest the seekers of knowledge nor help them achieve their ambitions. Rather, this generation may fall behind their peers in the developed world or lose their creativity and creative abilities. Therefore, in recent years, those in charge of education have decided to reformulate the education system to keep pace with the thinking of young human minds, just as God intended them to be born in this era of great technological development that knows no bounds.
>
> UAE Ministry of Education (2019, p. 10)

Engaging in that space to improve educational standards requires equipping young people with the skills to engage in a modern world with its access to different life experiences. As acknowledged by the UAE Ministry of Education, it also requires allowing those who are creative in different ways to be given space to develop their abilities within a supportive environment.

8.4.2 Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in terms of its scale and scope. The information in this study is derived from the views of a small number of participants. As a small ethnographical study, which is centred around a music group that operated inside a women's only higher education institute in the UAE, the study is limited to one educational setting. As government run educational provision in the UAE separates students according to gender, the study does not feature the views of male

Emiratis, neither does it include the views and experiences of other women in Higher Education institutions in the state sector.

8.4.3 Suggestions for future research

There are numerous possibilities for further investigation in this untapped area of educational research. As highlighted throughout the study, although people disapprove of listening to music, it can be heard as part of life in the UAE. A quantitative study looking at music listening activity in the Emirates which covers demographics, age, gender, nationality, religion and preference, would provide evidence to show what people actually do where listening to music is concerned. In the same manner, an investigation could be taken to see the extent to which people in the Emirates engage in learning an instrument. It would include the type of instrument if they take lessons and how long they have been playing.

From this study, the results show that whilst participants listen to traditional or classical music it is not their preferred choice. This is corroborated in many studies. However, many music lessons still insist on following a classical programme in schools and as a consequence, music lessons are one of the least valued and enjoyed school subjects. Therefore, by including the student voice in the construction of the music curriculum, it will help to ensure interests and ideas relevant to them can be represented in a music curriculum, but it can also reflect the values that are crucial to their identity as Emirati Muslims.

8.4.4 Closing remarks

Jorgensen (2003) observes that we inhabit a world of contrasts and change which impacts our understanding and the way we routinely interact. At the beginning of this study like the busy scene captured in the picture of Union Square, New York in the opening chapter, I in the transitory role of expat teacher, entered the UAE and interacted with its world of diverse realities. I initially identified with the familiar and contemplated differences as strange. On returning to my world having exited the scene, I am constantly aware of the impact facilitating a music activity in the Emirates and being involved in the study has had on me as a teacher. This thesis therefore, is really about the journey of my own personal awakening. It has provoked and challenged my perceptions of what is viewed and accepted as reality. As an outcome, it has made me ask deeper questions of myself as I accommodate, manage and adapt to different cultural spaces in my daily life and educational practice as a person of colour.

The social constructionist caveat requiring us to be aware of our proclivity to make assumptions resonates very clearly. Although I may understand and know I am governed and shaped by my upbringing, I am not always aware of how they influence the way I judge and assess the world of others. From the study, I have learnt I am still susceptible to conjectures and notions of people groups. In other words, I recognise that regardless of my knowledge and experience, through being born and raised in the UK, I am fashioned as part of my schooling to fit within the British educational system using its Western lens. I have therefore been shaped to circumnavigate and view the West as the primary educational approach. I need to remember that I will perpetuate notions that reflect my education bias especially when I look for the strange and unfamiliar in the life of others despite the many encounters of this as a negative experience I have had in my own life.

As a counterbalance, activity theory's recognition of the multifaceted nature of human action has provided a platform to observe and analyse action from different angles rather than through a lens with limited scope. The activity system components of AT act as a source for analysing classroom practice and helps me realise the importance of the cultural and historical context in which an activity and its agents are rooted, connected and enveloped.

Where participants engaging in an activity are concerned, I am more cognisant of the importance I place on establishing an inclusive environment for those involved in collaborative activities. As the facilitator, I believe a crucial aspect of my role requires cultivating a safe environment. It entails incorporating all who enter the music room as a creative space, especially those who are newcomers and beginners irrespective of their ability, music background or position within the school community. I believe the informal music experience of students and staff learning together helps students build confidence and self-esteem as they observe teachers also wrestle with new concepts. I have observed the benefits of implementing as part of the learning experience, opportunities and space within the classroom for participants to support each other in small units whilst they practice what they are learning.

Finally, as part of my educational practice, in AT there is the reminder that the beliefs and perceptions behind tensions surrounding an activity and its agents are steeped in the history and cultural context in which the act is situated. It has made me aware that when looking at places like the UAE, sometimes it is easy to question or judge societal attitudes and authoritative powers according to our norms believing they should provide more interest and support for activities such as music. Rather than being quick to criticise, I as practitioner need to acknowledge the shifts in approach that have occurred and the progress that has been accomplished by those in leadership rather than simply analysing an activity in its current form. Ultimately, it means I must accept I

hold perceptions from my own reality about what is considered the norm to judge others. I have a role to play with implementing less judgemental attitudes toward approaches and systems that do not coincide with my norm.

Appendix 1

Members participation in an extracurricular music club in the Women's campus of University College in the UAE.

Questions for semi-structured interview

1. **Music experience individually and collectively?**
   Why participants choose to join the music club
   Participants preference for playing music (individually or as part of a group? Why
   Benefits of being a member of the music club
   Challenges of being a member of the music club

   What experiences shape students' development as members of music club?
   Challenges encountered planning for the club/community/cultural day event
   Learning experience from teaching another student
   Practice experience in and outside the club

   What skills are developed and applied as part of the Music Club activity?
   Views encountered toward being involved with music
   Experience of listening and playing music
   Experience playing a musical instrument since joining the music club
   Aims from being a member of the club
   Experience of teaching and learning from other student

2. **What learning processes do students experience whilst learning to use their instruments?**
   Challenges experienced trying to learn your instrument
   Strategies used to overcome challenges learning something new
   Difficulties encountered something new e.g., chord, beat

3. **What influence does the perception of peers and the wider college community have on student engagement in club activities?**
   How did you learn about the music club?
   Family/friends views about involvement in the music club
   Feeling playing to other students

1. Some of these questions will be asked at the start of the research. Others will be used later in the research.
2. In the light of what may emerge from observations and the analysis of data, these may be amended to reflect events as they unfold during the research.

Appendix 2

Shaped by the past, creating the future

Participant Information Sheet

Title: **Composed by Music: The effects of an extra-curricular music activity on students in an Emirati women's college**.

You are invited to take part in a research study which will explore:

The interactions of participants within the club.
How participants engage with the music club.
The learning process experienced by students as they learn their instruments.
Skills that may be acquired through participating in club activities.
The musical identity that may develop as a result of participating in the music club.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is conducted by Jackie Small as part of PG studies at Durham University. This research project is supervised by Dr. Dimitra Kokotsaki, from the School of Education at Durham University.

The purpose of this study is explore what students experience during their time in the Music Club.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to be part of observations, individual/group interviews, journals/diaries and focus group discussions. Your experiences will be collated in the form of interviews and stories. Observations, interviews and focus group discussions will take place during the music club or class time.

Your participation in this study will be, over the course of the college year September - June.

You will also be asked to do interviews which will be arranged with the researcher.

You are free to decide whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences for you.

All responses you give or other data collected will be kept confidential. The records of this study will be kept secure and private. All files containing any information you give are password protected. In any research report that may be published, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify you individually. There will be no way to connect your name to your responses at any time during or after the study.

If you have any questions, requests or concerns regarding this research, please contact me via email at J.Small**** or by telephone at +9715 *******

This study has been reviewed and approved by the School of Education Ethics Sub-Committee at Durham University (date of approval 16/10/15)

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www.durham.ac.uk
Durham University is the trading name of the University of Durham

Declaration of Informed Consent

I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to explore the experiences of students who participate in the Music Club.

□I have read the participant information sheet and understand the information provided.

□I have been informed that I may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the study without penalty of any kind.

□I have been informed that all of my responses will be kept confidential and secure, and that I will not be identified in any report or other publication resulting from this research.

□I have been informed that the investigator will answer any questions regarding the study and its procedures. J Small School of Education, Durham University can be contacted via email: mailto:g.a.faure-bryan@durham.ac.uk mailto:Jackelyn.small@durham.ac.uk or telephone: 009715 *****.

□I will be provided with a copy of this form for my records.

Any concerns about this study should be addressed to the Ethics Sub-Committee of the School of Education, Durham University via email (Sheena Smith, School of Education, tel. (0191) 334 8403, e-mail: Sheena.Smith@Durham.ac.uk).

____

Date Participant Name (please print) Participant Signature

I certify that I have presented the above information to the participant and secured his or her consent.

____

Date Signature of Investigator

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